Youth, Transition & Social Research

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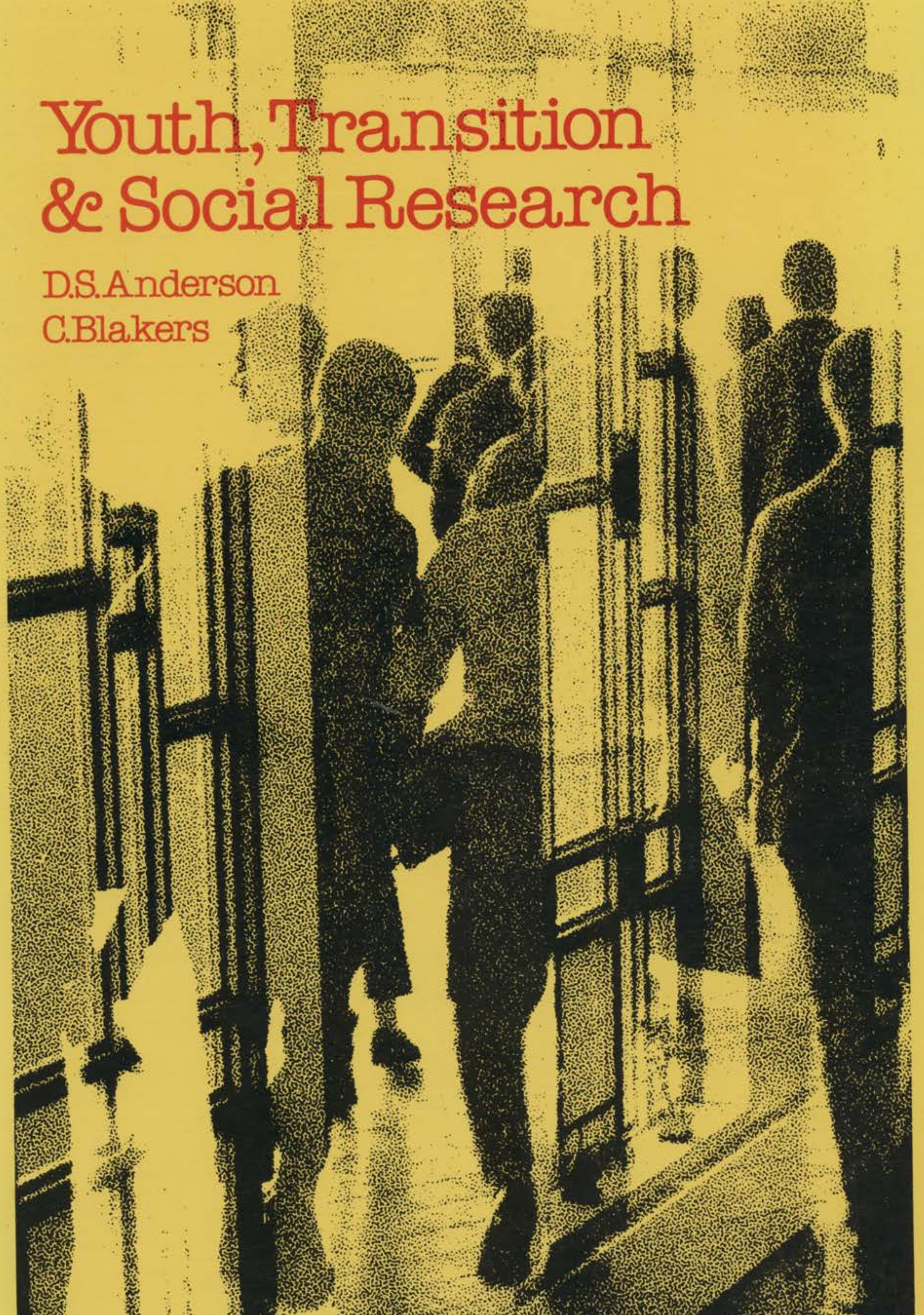

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D.S.A.
C.B.

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Notes on Contributors

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Dr Don Anderson is Professorial Fellow in the Department of Sociology, Institute of Advanced Studies at The Australian National University. From 1968 to 1978 he was Head of the Education Research Unit at ANU. His research studies have been on the professions, higher education and adolescents.

BIDDLE, B.J.
Professor Bruce J. Biddle is Professor of Sociology and Professor of Psychology at the University of Missouri, Columbia, USA. He is also Director of the Center for Study of Social Behavior. He has made major contributions to the study of role theory and has recently been the director of an international team studying youth in Australia, France, Norway and USA.

BLAKERS, C.
Mrs Catherine Blakers has long experience in education as a teacher in schools and tertiary institutions, as a parent involved in the establishment of the ACT Schools Authority and for the last ten years in education research. She has been Research Officer for the Australian Council of State School Organisations and more recently has worked with Dr Anderson at the ANU in a number of projects focusing on transition of students from school.

BURKE, G.
Dr Gerald Burke is Senior Lecturer in Education at Monash University. He has a long-standing interest in education and employment trends and policies and through his publications has contributed to wider understanding of issues in these areas.

HANCOCK, G.
Dr Greg Hancock was for over seven years a full-time Commissioner of the Commonwealth Schools Commission and is now Chief Education Officer of the ACT Schools Authority. In addition to having an influential role in policies and programs affecting young people, Dr Hancock has contributed to the study of education policy in federal systems.

KARMEL, P.
Professor Peter Karmel is Vice-Chancellor of The Australian National University. He was Vice-Chancellor of the Flinders University of South Australia from 1966 to 1971, and before that Professor of Economics at the University of Adelaide. He was Chairman of the Tertiary Education Commission from 1977 to 1982. He has been President of the Australian Council for Educational Research since 1979 and was chairman of the 1972 Interim Committee of the Australian Schools Commission. He has written extensively on participation in post-secondary education and on youth policy.

KEMMIS, S.
Dr Stephen Kemmis is Associate Professor of Education in Curriculum Studies at Deakin University. He is well known for his work in Action Research and in Evaluation and has recently been involved (with Fensham, Power & Tripp) in a series of case studies of school alienation and transition to work. He has also published widely in these and other areas.

KING, E.J.
Professor Edmund King is Emeritus Professor of Education in the University of London and editor of *Comparative Education* (Carfax Press, Oxford). He has been for many years interested in education in many industrialised countries, particularly Britain and Western Europe. In 1980, he visited Australia as Commonwealth Visiting Fellow under the auspices of the Commonwealth Department of Education. He is the author of many books and articles, focusing in recent years on educational response to technological and social change in a comparative perspective, especially in relation to the over-15s and post-compulsory education generally.

KIRBY, P.
Mr Peter Kirby came from the Commonwealth Department of Employment and Youth Affairs (now Industrial Relations) to be Deputy-Secretary of the Victorian Ministry of Employment and Training. His interest in young people and in transition problems, policies and programs has been long-standing and influential. He was a member of the Australian Education Council's Standing Committee until this Committee was dissolved, and is now a member of the Victorian Transition Education Advisory Committee.

McKINNON, K.
Dr Ken McKinnon was foundation Chairman of the Commonwealth Schools Commission and is now Vice-Chancellor of the University of Wollongong. His interest in schooling and young people has been wide-ranging and influential not only in policy and practice but also in deepening the understanding of issues. The Schools Commission publication, *Schooling for 15 and 16 Year Olds* stands as a testimony to the scope and depth of his influence.

PAK-POY, P.
Sister Patricia Pak-Poy is a Council member of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace and has thus been deeply concerned in wider social issues affecting young people. At the same time, through her work in Adelaide, she has first hand experience of transition programs and their outcomes.

POWER, C.
Professor Colin Power is Professor of Education at the Flinders University of South Australia. Since 1967, his major research interests have been in the study of curriculum implementation, teaching and classroom interactions. He also has a continuing interest in the evaluation of curricula innovations and educational policy. One of his current research projects (with Fensham, Kemmis and Tripp) is a series of case studies of school alienation and transition to work. He is the author of many articles on a wide range of research studies and issues.

SWEET, R.
Mr Richard Sweet is Chief Student Counsellor in the Counselling Research Unit of the NSW Department of Technical and Further Education. His recent research activities have included some interesting statistical analyses of the teenage labour force and labour market and of teenage unemployment. These have been the subject of a number of Research Reports published by the Counselling Research Unit.

TAYLOR, K.
Dr Keith Taylor is Senior Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Melbourne. He has also been Secretary of the Australian Psychological Society. His principal research interest has been vocational decision-making and the measurement of vocational interests. He has published widely in the field.

Introduction

Don Anderson and Cath Blakers

Leaving school has always had its difficulties for the individual student whether he was going on to further education or into the workforce, but until fairly recently these difficulties were not seen as constituting a social problem. Students left school for tertiary education or jobs. Many of them undoubtedly felt themselves translated into a world which, for all its excitement, seemed alien and unsympathatic and for which they were ill prepared either by schooling or by tertiary education. A great many drifted into rather than chose their jobs and careers; learned the work and how to get on with their fellow workers; found their place in the hierarchy; got used to regular hours of work and leisure and expected to spend the rest of their lives at the same work if not the same job. Many, on the other hand, found their initial jobs unsatisfying or unsatisfactory and changed jobs frequently until they eventually settled down or were forced to do so by increasing personal responsibilities. This was all part of the process which is now called Transition.

Now, for the first time in 40 years, concern with transition is the concern of the society and its governments because young people cannot get jobs. People look for causes and remedies. Clues about the causes are provided by research of one kind or another; the remedies by policies, programs and other action. Up to this point research has not contributed greatly to the remedies; they come rather from the views held by members of government and their advisers.

The term 'transition from school' is in essence a broad one which might cover many aspects of the development of the student into an independent adult member of the community; it might include, for example, physiological development, the acquisition of legal and political rights and of economic independence and the assumption of adult roles and responsibilities. But as it is most used at present, it focuses narrowly on the relationship between school and work.

For most researchers, as for most policy-makers, transition from school means from school to work or further education which in turn leads to work. Recent circumstances have forced an extension of meaning so as to include unemployment. Students are now seen as passing from school to further education, employment or unemployment, and the questions being asked by policy-makers, many researchers and practitioners in schools are:

How do we prepare students to get jobs?

Why do some students fail to get jobs?

Who are these 'at risk' students and what preparation/training/remediation do they need?

How do we prepare students for the possibility/probability of unemployment?

The focus of all these questions is 'work': the getting of a job and the consolation of those who do not. This concept of the problems of transition is based on a number of established assumptions about work and its importance to the purposes and development of both the society and the individual. Work is assumed to be paid employment of the kind to which our society has become accustomed over the last two or three hundred years, and particularly in the last one hundred and fifty years: a concept of 'work' based essentially on ever-increasing material production rewarded by money and status. In the process, the individual has become closely identified with the work he does. His sense of his own worth and capability depends in a large part on his ability to get and hold a job and on the kind of job he holds. Similarly his style and standard of living are related to the rewards which the community accords to various occupations. Thus, 'work' in the sense of paid employment which is materially productive or serving the materially productive has become central to the way of life of our society—important to the society for its development and progress, and to the individual for his sense of self-respect and satisfaction.

In its parallel development over the last century and a half, education has, practically and ideologically, served the needs of the 'work' oriented society, grading and selecting its students for appropriate occupations, promoting the close relationship between qualification and occupation and reinforcing established attitudes and structures. This basic purpose of education has persisted despite the increased emphasis in the last twenty years on the needs of the individual and despite the ample evidence that schooling in particular confirms rather than reduces the inequalities which arise from social advantage or disadvantage.

The term 'transition' in its current usage is an expression of particular assumptions about school and work. It covers a range of issues. Under its banner come questions about standards of literacy and numeracy; the role and responsibility of the school in vocational training; preparation of students for work; the development in students of a 'work ethic' and other appropriate attitudes; student aspirations and expectations; alienation from schooling; employer views and requirements; the availability of work and changing patterns of work. Because levels of youth unemployment appear to indicate that the process of transition is not working satisfactorily, assumptions are made that the reasons lie with the schools or the students or both. Attention therefore focuses on making the process smoother and more effective. Transition policies are then directed to the better preparation of students for work through schooling and through post-school remedial programs.

The results of this concern with transition and its implied expectations can be seen in the increasing emphasis given by schools and school systems over the last few years to 'basic skills', to career education and counselling, to work experience programs and to various early intervention and transition programs. It can be seen also in the policies and programs of governments. The five-year Commonwealth Transition Policy announced in November 1979 and a further development of it announced in January 1981 illustrate and epitomise the response to the issues of Transition in terms of policies and programs. A similar interest in the area is evident in the large number of research studies which are directed in one way or another to the process of transition from school to work, many of which also unquestioningly accept the assumptions behind the relationship.

This concept of the real nature of the 'transition' issue as being the transition of the student from school to work largely ignores the wider social issues as they are analysed in the chapters by Karmel and King. There are, in effect, two transitions: one affecting the individual and the other the society. As a society we are being forced from a period of relative stability and considerable affluence and optimism by fundamental changes in technological development and in economic, social and industrial patterns.

The young person leaving school is between two worlds. His expectations, his self-concept and his self-esteem have been formed by a process which began in his earliest years; they have been shaped—positively or negatively—by schooling, by family background, by social mores and pressures transmitted through family, peers, friends, associates and, not least, through the media. For all but the most independent-minded of young people, the individual's expectations and concept of his own worth will be related, directly and indirectly, to the job he gets or hopes to get at the end of his education.

This is the reality of the relationship between school and work: that the school has been an essential part of the social processes by which young people have been inducted into the modes and attitudes of the society. Schools socialise the young for adult roles. And 'work' has been central to this process and has become central also to the individual's self-concept and identity.

To remove 'work' as the prop for the society and its schooling forces us to ask more fundamental questions about our culture and the aims and role of schooling. What motivates human beings to learn, if the carrots of good jobs, status and so on are less available. In a sense, this is an old problem rather than a new one, though it has not been given the recognition it might have had. Its existence has been evident in student complaints about irrelevance of schooling, in the 'switched-off' attitudes of many students, in the numbers of early school leavers. For these the motivation of good academic results leading to a good career simply has not worked and schooling on the whole has offered them little in the way of meaningful alternatives.

Transition from school, if it is to be realistically approached, raises some fundamental questions about the society, work and education; in particular:

What changes are taking place in the society which are likely to affect concepts and patterns of work and the role and patterns of schooling?

What are the implications of these changes for concepts/patterns of work and schooling and for the structures and processes of the society?

What concepts of and policies for youth and education generally become appropriate to a changing society?

Much of the discussion in this book has focused on the issues raised by the current high levels of youth unemployment. At many points, assumptions that the remedies to youth unemployment lie with the schools has been questioned, as have other assumptions about the society and its processes. These issues, important in themselves, also provide the occasion for a critical examination of the relationships between research policy and action as these affect the transition of students from school.

The interest of researchers in the process of transition has been reflected for the last two or three years in an increasing number of applications to the former Education Research and Development Committee (ERDC) for grants supporting research in the area. In order to provide itself with a basis of up-to-date information on which to assess the priority which should be given to research into transition, the ERDC in 1980 commissioned a bibliography which would cover recent and current research into transition from school. The bibliography,[1] published in October 1980, listed 483 items of reference out of which over 160 studies were annotated.

Following completion of the bibliography, the ERDC agreed that there would be value in arranging a seminar to bring together as participants research workers from a variety of disciplines, some senior policy-makers and some persons who had practical experience working with young people in transition or other programs or in unemployment. The prime purpose of the seminar was seen as being to bring together these people with their different perspectives on the transition process and provide opportunity for exchange, interaction and the development of some common identification and understanding of the issues.

Within this framework, the specific objectives of the seminar were:

1. To put researchers in touch with one another and make them aware of current work and issues.

2. To lay a foundation for subsequent work towards achieving some common approaches to definitions, concepts, categories and methods.
3. To identify areas where research is needed.
4. To provide some information which would allow ERDC to decide priorities within the general area of transition studies and between it and other areas of research.
5. To stimulate consideration among participants of the place of research in policy and action.

Negatively as well as positively, the seminar highlighted a number of fundamental issues arising from the different aims and perspectives of the participants. Much of the discussion revolved around the relationship between policy and research, focusing (no doubt inevitably) on the Commonwealth Transition Program as an expression of a particular policy. There was general agreement that a relationship should exist between research and policy in the sense that research should contribute to improved policy and practice, and that policy-makers and workers involved in programs should be able to draw on the results of independent, systematic and reliable research studies. Despite this general agreement in principle, it became fairly clear that researchers and policy-makers are on the whole unaware of each other's concepts, work, motivations and constraints.

There was considerable agreement on the need for policy research and very little common understanding of what this might mean—whether analysis of policies being implemented and their effects; research leading to the formulation of policy; evaluation of programs resulting from policy; even the distinction between programs and policies. Arising from this, some of the debate revolved around the issues of 'Who frames the questions?' Policy-makers made a plea for researchers to at least be aware of relevant questions. The researchers, on the other hand, were inclined to respond by saying that the policy-makers rarely defined researchable questions and that in any case by the time the investigations were finished the issue was no longer relevant.

There was an uneasiness among the researchers about involvement in research on questions framed by policy-makers because of possible constraints on academic freedom and erosion of academic standing and recognition. One senior academic said that 'policy research has dangerous overtones for researchers'. Probably if the group had been pushed further the academic researchers present would have divided on their willingness to undertake contract research (even with the freedom to publish results) and on applied research, that is, working on someone's practical problem as against working on studies which have as starting points some set of theoretical propositions. Nevertheless there was not any strong reaction against a proposal which was put forward in the debate that because social science lacks theories of any great generality it is more fruitful, if one's interest is to gain insights into underlying social processes, to work on significant social problems and be sensitive to unexpected outcomes than it is to work within a theoretical model.

Researchers also showed a sense of powerlessness and of isolation from the 'real' world; a feeling that they could not really influence policy or action. One of them asked, 'Will all this research on transition make any difference?' and the general response was sceptical. This tended to lead them back into the academic world of research within predetermined theoretical frameworks and to avoid research into the practical problems which face those making policy or implementing programs.

If the seminar did nothing else, it emphasised an urgent need for systematic exploration of the relationship between research, policy and action so as to ensure that all three are mutually supportive. But the seminar in fact went considerably further in identifying issues raised by transition and other issues underlying research and its relationships with policy and action.

The book comprises re-written versions of the papers which were presented at the seminar plus a chapter contributed by B.J. Biddle which gives an American perspective on research and social policy. It concludes with a chapter by the editors which attempts to draw out some of the lines of thinking and analysis emerging from the contributed chapters.

Part I of the book contains analyses of recent social trends (Karmel and Sweet) and of existing government policies in the transition area (Kirby).

Part II, Viewpoints, presents a policy-maker's view of the problems and the research (McKinnon) and other different perspectives: economic (Burke), psychological (Taylor), practical (Pak-Poy) and international (King).

Part III, Research into Transition, commences with a critical review of recent research (Anderson) and is followed by three chapters on research methods appropriate for the formulation of social policies (Power, Kemmis and Biddle).

The concluding chapter attempts to bridge the gulf between research and policy; or more accurately between what researchers and policy-makers do, by arguing that the linear model, implicit in much of the previous discussion—research policy action—does not represent what happens. Rather, it is asserted that policy decisions come first and the role of research is to define, develop and evaluate. This is illustrated in a case study of the development and implementation of a policy for youth.

An appendix contains one of the most important technical papers prepared for the seminar. In it Dr Hancock points to the imprecise meanings of core concepts in the debate on transition from school. He illustrates how a thesaurus of terms could be developed by taking nine key words or phrases and listing for each its present uses.

Reference Note

1. D.S. Anderson and C. Blakers. *Transition from School: an Annotated Bibliography of Recent Australian Studies.* Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1980.

PART I

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF TRANSITION

1 Social Trends and Developments

Peter Karmel

This chapter is intended to provide a context for the ensuing discussion of current research and future research needs relating to policies and practices in the area of transition from school. It is divided into three major parts:

present trends
future probabilities
possible prescriptions

The ideas contained in the chapter are not original ones; they encompass material from papers given by me over the past eighteen months and from the work of others. Some of the propositions are not derived from proven research results; they require further investigation and research. In other cases, directions of future research are indicated.

Present Trends

The trends discussed below relate to developments over the past 10 or 15 years and to those variables which are relevant to the problems of transition from school and which are quantifiable.

Employment of the Young

Full-time employment for young men and women aged 15 to 19 years has been declining steadily since 1966; the number of full-time jobs has declined by about 100,000 as against an increase of about 245,000 in the population in the age group. The decline has been particularly severe for females, about 30 per cent over the last 14 years compared with 10 per cent for males. In 1966, 58 per cent of the 15 to 19 years age group were in full-time jobs; today the proportion is 38 per cent. Until the early 1970s this decline was offset by increasing retention at secondary school, but from the mid-1970s onwards, it has manifested itself in greatly increased rates of unemployment. However, by international standards, participation in full-time employment in this age group is still relatively high in Australia.

Table 1.1 shows the decline in full-time employment of the young over the past 15 years. It also shows that part-time employment has increased a great deal, although in the case of females insufficiently to offset the decline in full-time employment. Part-time employment among the young has been largely the employment of students. This is because, until recently, young people who were in receipt of unemployment benefits have lost their benefits if they earned only a little income.

Table 1.1
Employed Persons aged 15 to 19 Years, Australia
1966–1981 (in thousands)

	Males			Females		
August	Full-time	Part-time	Total	Full-time	Part-time	Total
1966	318.8	18.9	337.7	296.2	17.5	313.7
1967	301.2	27.3	328.5	287.2	16.4	303.6
1968	291.9	25.2	317.1	281.2	19.5	300.7
1969	294.6	25.3	319.9	270.7	19.8	290.5
1970	296.1	28.2	324.3	278.4	20.8	299.2
1971	297.2	25.1	322.3	268.2	25.6	293.8
1972	284.0	28.1	312.1	267.1	33.9	301.0
1973	298.0	37.2	335.2	259.9	41.9	301.8
1974	294.5	31.8	326.3	253.2	46.4	299.6
1975	281.2	43.2	324.4	240.0	51.2	291.2
1976	285.2	41.0	326.2	226.3	54.6	280.9
1977	282.0	50.1	332.1	220.9	65.5	286.4
1978	275.2	57.7	332.9	227.7	70.2	297.9
1979	285.9	57.0	342.9	204.8	70.8	275.6
1980	287.8	62.3	350.1	219.6	81.3	330.9
1981	293.1	64.6	357.7	213.8	80.5	294.3

Youth Unemployment

Unemployment began to rise significantly in Australia from 1975. However, the increase has been particularly pronounced among the 15 to 19 year olds and the 20 to 24 year olds. As far as the former group is concerned, it now stands at 11 per cent for males and 17 per cent for females. For those in the age group 20 to 24 years, unemployment stands at 8 per cent for males and 9 per cent for females, and for those 25 years and over it stands at 3 per cent for males and 5 per cent for females. Recent trends in unemployment by age are set out in Table 1.2.

Many factors can be adduced as contributing to youth unemployment. Clearly, the general state of the economy is of considerable importance. When the demand for labour slackens, it first affects new entrants to the workforce. These are, for the most part, young people, and the level of youth unemployment will naturally be sensitive to the level of economic activity and the rate of economic growth. One school of thought regards this as the main explanation for youth unemployment in Australia,[1] and postulates that a reduction in youth unemployment must await general economic growth. This view is based on the high correlation between youth unemployment and unemployment generally.

However, this correlation is not perfect, and youth unemployment has risen relative to adult unemployment over the past five or six years. In any event, even if the present high levels of youth unemployment were triggered off by the decline in the general level of economic activity, this trend may not be reversible; that is, an increase in economic activity may not produce much of a decrease in youth unemployment.

A second explanation relates to the high level of juvenile wage rates relative to adult rates, and argues that youth unemployment could be cured by a reduction in relative juvenile wage rates. While there appears to have been some increase in male juvenile wage

Table 1.2
Unemployment Rates,[a] Australia, 1966–1981

August	15–19 Years	20–24 Years	25 Years and Over	All Ages
	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent
1966	3.2	1.9	1.2	1.6
1967	3.3	2.3	1.3	1.7
1968	3.4	1.8	1.2	1.6
1969	2.9	2.0	1.2	1.5
1970	3.2	1.6	1.1	1.4
1971	3.7	2.1	1.2	1.7
1972	5.8	3.1	1.9	2.5
1973	4.7	2.3	1.3	1.8
1974	5.8	3.2	1.7	2.4
1975	12.9	5.9	3.0	4.6
1976	14.2	6.4	2.9	4.7
1977	18.0	7.6	3.3	5.7
1978	16.8	9.2	3.9	6.2
1979	17.4	8.2	3.5	5.8
1980	16.7	8.8	3.6	5.9
1981	13.9	8.5	3.7	5.6

[a] Based on number looking for full-time or part-time work.

rates relative to adult wage rates, this is not the case for females.[2] In present industrial circumstances the bias against employing juveniles may be too great to be offset by any practicable decline in real juvenile wages.

Third, there are a number of structural factors which have, over the past 10 to 15 years, conspired against job opportunities for the young. These include the low level of productivity of a significant number of young workers (partly through attitudes to work), the high level of costs of on-the-job training for young workers who may be highly mobile, the increasing participation of women in the workforce, and the technological changes which have modified the job structure so that the proportion of unskilled and semi-skilled jobs suitable for unskilled and inexperienced young people has been steadily falling.

The causes of youth unemployment are complex, and there is likely to be no single explanation. Irrespective of the emphasis placed on one or other of the possible causes mentioned above, youth unemployment is likely to be with us for some time, and it is unlikely to be eradicated by any practicable measure of economic expansion or reduction in relative wages. It is important to emphasise that the incidence of unemployment among the young is itself very uneven. For example, it is much higher among 15 year olds than among 19 year olds; it is higher for earlier school leavers; it is higher among females; it is higher for certain ethnic groups within the community.

We do not know a great deal about the effects that unemployment of the young has on the employability of them when adults. The incidence of unemployment among adults is lower than among young people, but those with a poor employment experience as young people may have difficulty in holding jobs within the mainstream of adult employment. Youth unemployment expressed as a proportion of the age group is, of course, lower than as a proportion of the workforce. However, unemployment among teenagers in this sense is still two to three times as high as unemployment among adults. The significance of youth unemployment also relates to whether it is made up of many people experiencing short periods of unemployment, or of few who remain unemployed

Table 1.3
Unemployment by Age, Australia, November 1981

Age	Number Looking for Work*	As Proportion of Workforce	As Proportion of Age Group
	'000	per cent	per cent
15	4.7	24.2	5.7
16	14.1	19.5	17.1
17	19.5	14.8	12.8
18	22.1	11.7	9.7
19	23.8	11.3	9.2
20	17.3	8.2	6.5
21	19.8	9.6	7.6
22	12.2	5.9	4.8
23	15.4	7.6	6.1
24	9.6	4.9	3.9

* Not attending school and looking for work.

for long periods. Table 1.3 contrasts the incidence of unemployment as a proportion of the age group with its incidence as a proportion of the workforce.

Retention in Secondary School

After rising over a long period, male retention rates to the completion of secondary school levelled out in the early 1970s and then declined noticeably. For females, the rate is only just beginning to level out. Female retention to the completion of secondary school is now significantly higher than male retention, namely 37 per cent and 32 per cent respectively. By international standards this is not a high level of retention. Table 1.4 sets out trends over recent years.

Table 1.4
Apparent Retention Rates to Completion of Secondary School, Australia 1967–1980

	Males	Females	Persons
	per cent	per cent	per cent
1967	26.5	18.7	22.7
1968	28.5	21.2	25.0
1969	31.1	23.7	27.5
1970	33.0	25.5	29.3
1971	34.1	26.9	30.6
1972	35.7	28.9	32.4
1973	35.2	30.8	33.1
1974	34.1	31.6	32.8
1975	34.6	33.6	34.1
1976	34.6	35.3	34.9
1977	34.0	36.6	35.3
1978	33.1	37.3	35.1
1979	32.4	37.2	34.7
1980	31.9	37.3	34.5

It may be worth pointing out that retention to the third-last year of secondary school has not ceased rising, and is now approximately 90 per cent; to the penultimate year it has levelled out at 53 per cent. Significant differentials exist among socio-economic classes. These are illustrated by comparing retention to the final year of secondary school in government schools with that of non-Catholic non-government schools—29 per cent and 88 per cent respectively.

Participation in Tertiary Education

The rate of transfer of young people completing secondary school to institutions of higher education has been declining. Over the years 1974 to 1977, 42,000 school leavers entered universities or colleges of advanced education each year. In the last two years, the figure has been 38,000. This stability and subsequent decline has occurred at a time when the number of young people in the final year of high school has been rising. As a result, whereas 55 per cent of those in the final year in 1973 proceeded to higher education, only 42 per cent proceeded in 1980; indeed, had the rate at which such young people enrolled in higher education in 1974 been maintained in 1981, the number of entrants direct from school would have been nearer 50,000 than 40,000. Put in another way, the proportion of those aged 18 years who proceeded direct from secondary school to higher education has fallen from 18 per cent to 14.5 per cent in the seven years from 1974 to 1981. Recent trends are illustrated in Table 1.5.

It might be thought that the reason for the reduction in the number of students admitted to universities and CAEs direct from school is that it has become more difficult to gain admission. In fact, the contrary has happened: although minimum entry standards have been maintained, for most courses in most institutions, admission has become easier rather than harder to gain. From this it can be inferred that significant numbers of young men and women, who in previous years might have been expected to seek places in universities and CAEs (probably in pre-service teacher education courses) are no longer seeking entry. It is likely that many of them are obtaining full-time employment, thus making it even more difficult for young people with low school achievement to obtain jobs. Again, here is an area requiring research.

The decline in the participation of the young in higher education which is illustrated by the above statistics appears to be related partly to the changed perception of the economic value of a degree or diploma, and partly to a decline in the real value and availability of financial assistance for students. The former is related to changes in the supply and demand situation for graduates (in particular, the large increase in the supply of graduates that has built up over recent years and the sharp decline in the demand for teacher education graduates), and to a common belief (not borne out by the facts) that a degree now carries low employability. The latter has resulted from the reduced real value of tertiary education assistance allowances, as well as an increased stringency in the means test, and perhaps, above all, from the progressive elimination of teaching scholarships, which at their peak numbered 50,000. Notwithstanding this, the extent to which participation in higher education is sensitive to financial assistance from the Government is not certain, and also calls for additional investigation.

The decline in the participation of the young in higher education has not been reflected in total enrolments because it has been accompanied by an increase in the participation of older people, together with a shift from full-time to part-time study. This is illustrated in Table 1.6, which also includes data for the TAFE sector.

While the number of young people moving direct from school to institutions of higher education has fallen somewhat, the number proceeding as full-time students to TAFE institutions has been rising quite rapidly. This is illustrated in Table 1.7. This may be connected with the changed perceptions of the value of higher education, but it is not certain.

Table 1.5
Students Commencing Higher Education Direct from School as a Percentage of Final Year Students in the Previous Year, Australia 1974 to 1981

	Males	Females	Total
	per cent	per cent	per cent
Universities			
1974	32.3	25.1	29.1
1975	31.7	24.7	28.4
1976	30.5	23.0	26.9
1977	28.8	21.4	25.0
1978	26.9	19.0	22.9
1979	26.2	17.7	21.8
1980	25.9	18.1	21.8
1981	25.3	18.1	21.5
Colleges of Advanced Education			
1974	20.2	31.6	25.4
1975	21.0	31.0	25.7
1976	20.2	29.0	24.4
1977	20.0	27.3	23.6
1978	19.9	25.4	22.7
1979	19.2	24.7	22.0
1980	18.4	22.4	20.5
1981	18.8	21.9	20.4
Total			
1974	52.6	56.7	54.5
1975	52.6	55.7	54.1
1976	50.6	52.0	51.3
1977	48.9	48.4	48.6
1978	46.8	44.4	45.6
1979	45.4	42.4	43.9
1980	44.2	40.5	42.3
1981	44.1	40.0	42.0

Most of these students have completed only four years of secondary schooling, and it does not seem likely that they include many who would otherwise have gone to universities and CAEs. Further investigation is needed. However, there is little doubt that the transition programs sponsored by the Commonwealth and State governments have contributed to some increase in full-time TAFE students.

Future Probabilities

Futurology is a hazardous business. Nevertheless, there are some near certainties that can be written into the scenarios of the next twenty years.

Table 1.6
Enrolments in Tertiary Education 1974 to 1981

	1974	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Universities (Students)						
Total	142,300	157,900	159,400	160,100	162,500	165,900
Full-time	92,600	102,400	100,600	98,200	98,100	98,900
EFTS[a]	125,300	140,900	140,700	139,700	140,100	142,600
Advanced Education (Students)[b]						
Total	107,200	142,900	153,600	159,200	161,600	165,100
Full-time	65,100	85,500	85,500	83,300	78,200	76,700
EFTS[c]	86,200	114,200	119,500	121,300	119,900	120,900
Total Higher Education (Students)						
Total	249,500	300,800	313,000	319,300	324,000	331,000
Full-time	157,700	187,900	186,100	181,500	176,300	175,600
EFTS	211,500	255,100	260,200	261,000	260,000	263,500
TAFE (Enrolments)						
Streams 1–4[d]	382,900	478,400	501,200	528,200	573,700	
Stream 5[d]	88,600	109,800	119,300	126,300	128,100	
Total Streams 1–5[d]	471,500	588,200	620,500	654,500	701,800	

[a] Calculated using weighted student units.
[b] Excludes advanced education in TAFE and in non-government tertiary institutions.
[c] Calculated using arbitrary weights.
[d] Excludes Northern Territory.

Table 1.7
Full-time Students Aged 15 to 19 in TAFE
Australia, 1974 to 1980
(approximate estimates only)

1974	20,500
1975	26,100
1976	28,500
1977	31,100
1978	33,900
1979	36,000
1980	40,600

Demography

Whatever happens, population growth over the next twenty years will be slower than that for the past twenty, and there will be some ageing of the population. Enrolments in primary schools will decline up to the late 1980s and then, because of a likely increase in the number of births, will probably rise temporarily—but this is not absolutely certain. Secondary enrolments will continue to rise for a few more years, will then decline, and probably rise in the early 1990s. Tertiary enrolments will continue to increase slowly during the 1980s, but the main sector of increase will be TAFE; as far as the 1990s are concerned, tertiary enrolments will be maintained only if participation among the older age groups continues to increase.

Labour Market

As I have already pointed out, full-time employment of the young has been declining in absolute terms in Australia since 1966. This trend is almost certain to continue. Alongside it, there has been a great increase in part-time employment. The growth of part-time employment relates not only to the young, but to all ages, particularly to married women. This trend also seems certain to continue.

The high levels of unemployment among the young which have been so evident for the past five or six years are likely to remain with us. This is so even if the main cause has been the general slack in the economy. The workforce will grow by rather more than one per cent per annum for the rest of the century; that is, by about 60,000 per annum. In addition, the present level of unemployment is about 400,000, and there is an unknown but substantial number of people who have withdrawn from the workforce or are under-employed, but who will seek employment if economic conditions improve. It is unlikely that the rate of economic growth could be so high as to create enough additional employment to produce full employment in the sense of the 1960s. In any event, structural factors certainly bear some responsibility for high levels of unemployment, and they are likely to continue. Youth unemployment is, and will continue to be, concentrated among certain groups of young people, in particular among those who leave school early with low achievement and poor motivation.

Changes in the labour market are reflected in the ways in which incomes are earned. Two-income families are common, and may become more so. The sole-parent family is also a phenomenon of increasing incidence. Increased part-time employment brings with it the possibility of the one-and-a-half income family or of the two-half-income family.

There is also the distinction between the formal and the informal economy. If the formal economy is described as comprising those transactions which are counted in the calculation of gross domestic product, there remains a host of transactions of economic value which can be regarded as the informal economy. These include do-it-yourself activities, the bartering of services, cash received but not returned as income for tax purposes, and illicit transactions. I exclude the unpaid services of housewives because these are not negotiable. The balance between the formal and informal economies has been changing, and the future may bring an increase in the significance of the informal economy. This may affect the proportion of one's life-time that is spent working in the traditional sense. The distribution of work over one's life-time may change and the significance of leisure may heighten.

Technological Change

The main consequence of technological change appears likely to be a sharpening of the struggle about the distribution of society's income. The general thesis of the recent Report on Technological Change in Australia is that technological change is inevitable and should be welcomed as a means of raising living standards and widening options. However, it will lead to some, relatively minor, disruption, and certain adjustments following the introduction of new technologies may have to be softened by Government action.

It is important to emphasise that the problems of technological change are not technological. Technological problems are solved by technological change. The real problems of technological change are human, economic and social. The Myers Report did not face up fully to these problems. The *human* problems relate to what to do about displaced workers and bankrupted businesses which cannot compete with the new technology. The main *economic* question is: do the benefits outweigh the costs? There certainly are costs, including the costs of protecting the weak. Thus, without adopting a

Luddite approach, it is still sensible to ask whether the rates at which new technologies are introduced should be influenced by subsidisation or taxation.

However, the *social* questions seem to me to be the most profound and the most difficult. How much will society have to adjust to make living with the new technology acceptable? What measures are needed to ensure an equitable distribution of the greater production made possible by the new technology: among members of society; between work and leisure; between material goods and the quality of life? Is it possible within our given social structure to solve these distributional problems? These issues are vitally related to the distribution of income, as indeed is the all-pervasive problem of inflation. They reflect deep conflicts in society.

Moreover, the conflicts appear in yet another way. In spite of the de-skilling of certain kinds of jobs, it seems likely that the trend towards a job structure involving, on average, a higher level of skills will continue. The decline in unskilled work has been going on for some time. Changes in Australian industries and occupations have, on average, reduced the proportion of lower skilled manual and clerical tasks, and have increased the proportion of what may be called intellectual tasks.[3] This is illustrated in Table 1.8 taken from the Myers Report; the occupations requiring higher qualifications (professional, technical, clerical, services) have been increasing relatively, whereas those which include the less skilled have been diminishing.

If this trend continues, the formal labour market will become increasingly biased against low achievers, particularly the young, inexperienced and ill-motivated. Their productivity may well be lower than the minimum socially acceptable real wage, and this will produce an 'under class' who will have difficulty in operating within the mainstream economy. There have always been low achievers, but in the past there have been jobs

Table 1.8
Employed Persons by Occupation
Australia, 1967–1981

	1967	1970	1973	1976	1979	1981
	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent
Professional, technical, etc.	10.0	10.5	11.4	13.0	13.8	14.8
Administrative, executive and managerial	6.3	6.2	6.0	6.1	6.5	6.3
Clerical	15.4	16.6	16.3	17.5	17.0	17.3
Sales	8.3	8.4	8.7	8.7	9.1	8.8
Farmers, etc.	9.4	8.3	7.9	7.1	7.2	7.1
Transport and communication	6.1	6.1	6.2	5.6	5.5	5.3
Tradesmen, production-process workers and labourers n.e.c. and miners, quarrymen, etc.	35.9	35.3	34.6	32.5	31.2	31.0
Service, sport and recreation	8.5	8.6	9.0	9.6	9.7	9.4

available for them at the going rates of pay. It may become increasingly difficult to fit these people into the labour market. If this is so, we will have to take measures to raise their productivity or to ensure that some of the product made possible by the new technologies is distributed to them. There is also the probability that the various interest groups which struggle for their share of the national income will ignore more than ever the interests of those who are on the fringe of the labour market. It is worth noting that, when unemployment was very high in the 1930s, the measure of unemployment was 'unemployment among trade union members'. Today, unemployment is concentrated among weaker groups, and concern about unemployment on the part of the unions is much less than it was 50 years ago.

Pluralism

There has for many years been an increasing tolerance of other people's values. However, this growing tolerance of pluralism has been of a private kind. There is now a public posture that pluralism is good in itself, and should be supported by governments. It is now said that we live in a multi-cultural society, and there should be institutional arrangements to support such a society. This position may well lead to conflict between the mainstream values of society and the value systems of minority groups. Multiculturalism, whatever it means, is likely to have a significant influence on education, and on the transition from school, particularly as it affects educational and economic opportunities.

The General Atmosphere

The general atmosphere in which education at present operates ranges from the critical through the disillusioned to the downright hostile. While some improvements in the climate may reasonably be expected, constraints on public spending, both as a result of deliberate economic policy and as stimulated by the so-called tax revolt, are likely to impinge with special severity on educational expenditure. The demands for accountability on the part of educational institutions, and for relevance in the courses that they offer, are likely to continue. It is worth noting that demands for accountability and relevance are to some extent mutually inconsistent. The detailed discharge of accountability requires some degree of precision in the definition of educational objectives. Such precision is possible only if the objectives are narrow; thus, competency testing is a form of accountability relating to the particular objectives of minimum skills in literacy and numeracy. On the other hand, if educational institutions are to offer courses that are relevant for living in the socially complex and technologically sophisticated world of the future, they must be prepared to range widely in their activities and to function in many roles. Strict accountability in circumstances of plural objectives is almost impossible.

Growth Prospects

As pointed out above, demography itself will lead to little or no growth, and possibly even to some decline, in enrolments in educational institutions; and the general atmosphere is unlikely to permit much growth in the educational resources available per enrolment. Consequently, growth in educational activity over the next 20 years is likely to be slow, and educational institutions will face the problems of management in a no-growth situation. The maintenance of an adequate rate of innovation and of sufficient opportunities for bright young teachers and researchers will be at the heart of the problems facing educational administration. Reduced opportunities for promotion will almost certainly exacerbate industrial relations. From a number of points of view, we are likely to be moving into an era when social conflict rather than economic growth predominates.

Possible Prescriptions

The present trends and future probabilities that I have just outlined reinforce the importance of work in the field of transition from school. Clearly, society will have to pay more attention to the range of activities available to young people.

Since many of these activities take place in educational institutions, or at least are related to education and training, the objectives of educational institutions have come under scrutiny. Two major inquiries (*Inquiry into Education and Training*[4] and *National Inquiry into Teacher Education*)[5] have recommended further discussion on the aims and objectives of schools, without themselves pursuing this difficult question in any detail. Institutional education as we know it has many goals and plays many roles. Consensus on the goals of education can be achieved only if they are generalised to the point of trivialisation; otherwise there is argument, if not about the goals themselves, at least about the weights that should be attached to the various goals, many of which compete with each other.

Two points, however, can be made which are relevant to a discussion on transition from school. First, education is both a preparation for human activity and a life experience. As a preparation for human activity it has a wider role than merely being a preparation for work. Work is only one aspect of human activity, and perhaps it is to become a less important one. Young people spend a considerable proportion of their waking hours in educational institutions, and it is better that they do so willingly in a creative environment than unwillingly in sordid conditions. Thus, even if additional educational expenditure does not produce gains in educational achievement, it may still be worthwhile to provide a better environment for students. Second, the relationships between the nature of society and the nature of education are close ones. Educational institutions, including the curriculum, reflect the social and technological relationships within society, and society is itself moderated by the nature of education.

In tackling the problems relating to youth unemployment, there are two classes of options. The first class involves taking action to steer young people into employment; the second involves action to steer young people out of the full-time labour force.

Steering young people into employment would require economic measures to provide jobs, and educational ones to make young people more employable, and might involve some or all of the following:

Economic measures

- subsidise employment in the private sector
- require employers to have a workforce with a balanced age distribution
- create employment in the public sector
- reduce relative juvenile wages.

Educational measures

- improve basic skills
- improve life competencies
- offer pre-employment courses including some vocational skills.

It should be noted that the educational measures alone will not create more jobs, although they may improve the competitiveness of the young for the existing pool of jobs; that is, they may result in a fairer distribution of work.

Steering young people out of the full-time labour market would require economic and educational measures to hold them in education and training, and might involve some or all of the following:

Economic measures

provide appropriate financial support for education and training

organise arrangements to permit part-time employment combined with part-time training.

Educational measures

raise the compulsory school leaving age

diversify secondary school and TAFE curricula

provide skill training on a full-time basis.

I do not propose to attempt to classify the present educational and manpower programs which are directed to the problems of transition. However, I offer the following as a set of practical prescriptions warranting further investigation.

Compulsory Schooling

There seems to be no support for extending the age of compulsion beyond the 15 or 16 years limitation that is the current Australian requirement. It is, however, important to ensure that within the ten years of compulsory education proper attention is directed towards basic communication skills. People without these skills are clearly disadvantaged. I am not advocating 'back to the basics' in the narrow sense in which it is often interpreted. Communication skills include more than the technical skills of writing, reading and speaking, and need to be taught in the context of communication being itself a social activity. In the modern world language skills also include the language of numbers; the importance of an adequate mathematical background for life in a modern technological society should be stressed.

At a recent conference, Jean Blackburn suggested that the curriculum should include a study of work as a major human activity. In Jean Blackburn's words:

> Students gain little assistance in understanding the effects of technological change, why different kinds of work command different rewards and are performed under different conditions, why some important work like child rearing is unpaid, what the role of the trade unions is, how major investment decisions affecting the availability and nature of work are made.[6]

Post-compulsory Secondary Schooling

Changes in the structure of secondary schooling need to be considered; in particular, the development of comprehensive two-year institutions to include the last two years of high school and some TAFE activity needs canvassing. Two-year institutions exist in the Australian Capital Territory, although they might be made more comprehensive by linking them with TAFE. There is evidence that young people in the ACT in Years 11 and

12 now have much more positive attitudes to their schooling than the same group had eight years ago when the schools were six-year high schools. Two-year matriculation colleges have been in operation in Tasmania for some time. The combining of these with technical colleges to form community colleges is at present taking place—a move which is being monitored and evaluated by the Tertiary Education Commission and the Schools Commission jointly. Any move to two-year colleges will be a major institutional change, but it may be one which can be accomplished in the coming years as secondary enrolments level out and then decline—a situation which is likely to create surplus school plant.

The development of such institutions will require the diversificaton of the curriculum. The adult atmosphere of two-year colleges and a diversified curriculum, covering both academic and vocational perspectives, should encourage some young people to extend their formal education. There would be few who would want to encourage retention to the age of 18 or 19 years by compulsion—the holding of unwilling students in school is not a desirable option. But if students can be attracted into education/training courses, so much the better; participation in full-time education or training is still comparatively low in Australia for the 15 to 19 year age group.

Informal Education

More attention might be devoted to education and training outside the formal educational system and by non-traditional means. In particular, the possiblity of education/training taking place in the workplace needs to be investigated; and the use of modern electronic communication for learning requires continuing education.

Recurrent Education

There should be little argument about the desirability of promoting recurrent education in the sense of people having access to educational/training programs through their lifetime. Such a development fits in with the changes in the labour market and in income patterns which were noted in the earlier part of this chapter. The changes that have already occurred in the age structure of students in higher education and in the full-time/part-time balance of study reflect the commitment of many people to the concept of recurrent education. However, changes in educational provision, in the organisation of the trades and professions, and in industrial conditions, will be necessary; these will require thought and investigation.

Apprenticeship

Complaints about the apprenticeship system in Australia have been endemic for forty years. Not only are we dependent on the willingness of employers to accept apprentices, but the apprenticeship system provides skill training for only a limited portion of the workforce. There seems to be little reason why skills cannot be taught on an institutional basis provided sufficient opportunity is given for practical experience. Most semi-professional and professional people are trained in institutions. There would seem to be considerable advantage, at least in terms of the supply of skilled workers, in supplementing the present apprenticeship system with other forms of training. Quite apart from this, some of the problems of unemployment of the young might be solved if young people were seeking *training* rather than *employment*. This approach would involve paying training allowances instead of wages. It could apply not only in the traditional trades, but also in activities like nursing.

A Youth Guarantee

Most young people who complete secondary school satisfactorily can obtain a place in an institution of higher education if they want one—even though they may not be able to enrol in the institution or the faculty of their first choice. Entry to TAFE institutions is virtually open (other than for apprenticeship). Nevertheless, there are significant numbers of school leavers (some 40,000–50,000 per annum) who neither enrol in full-time education nor obtain a full-time job. Should not the community guarantee an educational or training opportunity to all young people on leaving secondary school? The concept of the *youth guarantee* is an answer to this question.

Consideration might be given to such a guarantee for a period of, say, two to three years after leaving school. This would not involve compulsory education or training, nor would it involve educational institutions only. It could occur in the business place (bank, retail store or factory), or in special institutions, or by special arrangements in which the educational system, employers and trade unions all had a responsibility. In particular, a combination of part-time education and part-time employment might be encouraged. It is of interest to note that, while many in full-time employment undertake part-time education and many in full-time education undertake part-time employment, the combination of part-time education and part-time employment is not greatly exploited.

Financial Support

The implementation of a youth guarantee would require a rationalised system of financial support for the young which would provide the right incentives or, at least, avoid the wrong ones. In Australia, young people have access to financial support on a not ungenerous scale. A number of schemes operate, but they do not constitute a coherent whole. Apart from differences in benefits, there are differences in means tests and in study conditions. In fact, the main schemes are administered by three separate government departments: Education, Social Security, and Employment and Youth Affairs. Thus unemployment benefits are higher than tertiary education allowances, and the latter are means tested on parental income. Until quite recently young people on unemployment benefits had no incentive to enage in part-time employment—this situation has improved with the liberalisation of the requirements in the recent budget. It is also the case that those on unemployment benefits are not permitted to study for more than six hours per week. Manpower training schemes pay significantly larger allowances than tertiary education allowances; some people are trained for specific occupations on comparatively generous wages (for example, nurses). Rationalisation is called for.

With an integrated system of financial support for the young, we should be able to get the incentives right. Young people could be encouraged into training schemes of various kinds, or into combinations of part-time work and part-time education/training. By these means unemployment as such would be reduced. This is not a confidence trick achieved by merely redefining the problem; rather, it aims at providing a richer range of human activities for young people.

Conclusion

The practical steps that I have just outlined are not, of course, a recipe for Utopia. They do not prescribe for an ideal, or even an acceptable, distribution of social activity or of income. They will not create employment or produce economic growth. They are, however, intended as feasible prescriptions for practical problems and they should lead in the direction of fairer treatment for disadvantaged groups within our society, as well as towards raising the competence of the individual in undertaking human activity.

Nevertheless, there are many uncertainties, not only in respect of the social and economic conditions which will prevail during the next 20 years, but also in respect of the causes of our present problems and the effects of action taken to deal with them. It is to the research necessary for narrowing these uncertainties that this seminar should be devoted.

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2 Changing Patterns of Work and Education[1]

Richard Sweet

Since unemployment began to rise in 1975, Australian debate on the teenage labour market has been dominated by the issue of youth unemployment. This is unfortunate on two counts. It has obscured some fundamental changes in patterns of teenage employment, and it has led to the economic issue of unemployment being viewed through youth and education coloured bifocals, thus distorting analysis of both its origins and its appropriate solutions.[2]

Teenagers constituted 35 per cent of the unemployed in May 1964 and 28 per cent in May 1981. In the period which saw the onset of the current recession, teenagers' share of total unemployment scarcely changed. It was 30 per cent in May 1974 and 30.3 per cent in May 1975.[3]

Justification for viewing transition from school to work as a critical policy issue must lie elsewhere than in unemployment, the age structure of which has remained largely unaffected by economic recession. The answer is to be sought in long-term structural changes in teenage employment patterns; changes which will, in the long run, have a more profound effect on transition from school to work than the recent economic recession.

Part-time Workers

Although part-time work among married women has dominated Australian discussion of part-time work,[4] part-time work among teenagers can, when employment is classified by age, sex and hours of work, be shown to have been Australia's fastest growing employment category since the mid-1960s (Figure 2.1). Although teenage part-time work has recently received brief mention in the economics literature[5] and has been referred to by Karmel[6] in a recent well publicised paper, it generally remains a little understood phenomenon.

Since 1964 teenage part-time work has grown both absolutely (Table 2.1) and as a percentage of all teenage employment (Table 2.2), with its growth being particularly rapid since 1972. In August 1970, 8.6 per cent of the teenage workforce were part-time workers, growing to 22.3 per cent by August 1981. The growth has particularly affected girls. Whereas in August 1970 there was little difference between the percentage of male (8.9 per cent) and female (8.3 per cent) teenage employees holding part-time jobs, by August 1981 the gap had widened, with 27.4 per cent of female and 18.1 per cent of male teenage workers being in part-time employment. In August 1970 girls constituted 46.6 per cent of the teenage part-time workforce. Eleven years later their share had grown to 55.5 per cent.

Growth in the number of teenagers working part-time coincided with a drop in the number holding full-time jobs. Although, as Karmel has indicated,[7] the number of new part-time jobs almost offsets the full-time jobs that disappeared during the 1970s, this is

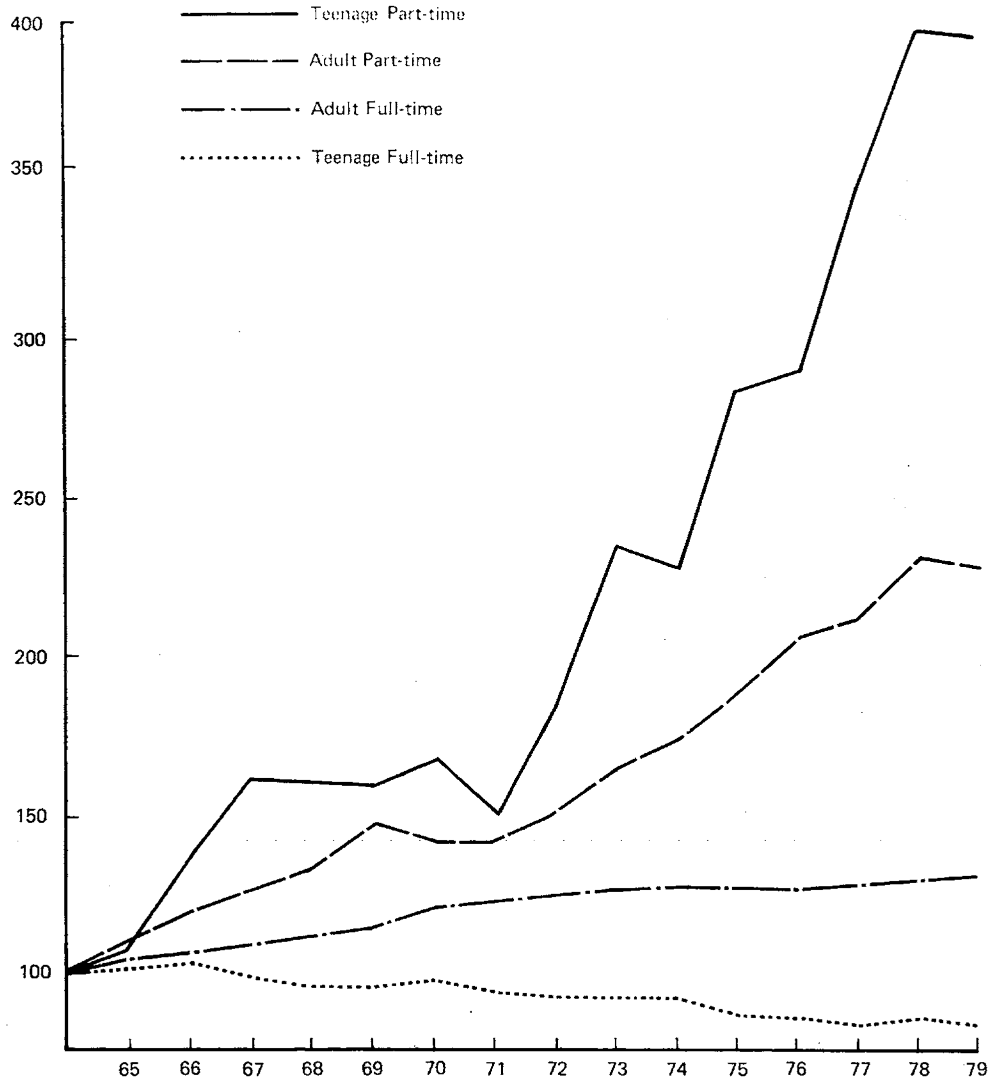

Fig. 2.1 Growth in adult and teenage full- and part-time employment, August 1964 to August 1979
For all categories August 1964 = 100

true only on aggregate.[8] The overall 1 per cent decline in teenage employment that occurred during the 1970s hides some very large underlying changes. It is particularly important to realise the extent to which these changes have disadvantaged girls. Whereas 2.8 per cent of teenage boys' full-time jobs disappeared between 1970 and 1979, 25.9 per cent of all full-time jobs for teenage girls that existed in 1970 had disappeared by 1979. The number of part-time jobs gained by teenage boys exceeded the number of full-time jobs lost by 20,000. Teenage girls on the other hand suffered a net loss of 26,500 jobs. The 71,500 full-time jobs that they lost were compensated for by only 45,000 new part-time jobs (Table 2.3).

When occupation is added to sex and hours of work as a basis of analysis the complexity of changes in teenage employment increases, and it becomes even more apparent that

Table 2.1
Full-time and Part-time Employment of Persons
Aged 15 to 19 Years, 1964–1981

August	Full-time Male	Full-time Female	Full-time Total	Part-time Male	Part-time Female	Part-time Total
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
1964	313.7	276.1	589.8	14.6	17.6	32.2
1965	316.8	283.4	600.2	16.4	19.0	35.4
1966	316.3	289.6	605.9	21.4	22.4	43.8
1967	295.8	282.7	578.5	28.2	23.8	52.0
1968	286.8	276.4	563.2	25.9	25.4	51.3
1969	292.1	269.1	561.2	26.0	25.0	51.0
1970	294.1	276.3	570.4	28.8	25.1	53.9
1971	291.3	259.1	550.4	24.6	24.1	48.7
1972	281.4	258.6	540.0	27.3	32.4	59.7
1973	291.9	249.6	541.5	36.4	39.3	75.7
1974	292.0	247.3	539.3	30.4	43.1	73.5
1975	276.6	233.4	541.1	41.6	49.9	84.0
1976	279.4	220.2	499.6	40.7	52.8	93.5
1977	275.2	217.2	492.4	49.8	62.7	112.5
1978	275.2	227.7	502.9	57.7	70.2	127.9
1979	285.9	204.8	490.7	57.0	70.1	127.1
1980	287.8	219.6	507.4	62.3	81.3	143.5
1981	293.1	213.8	506.9	64.4	80.5	145.1

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics.[9]

Table 2.2
Part-time Workers as a percent of all Workers
Aged 15 to 19, 1964–81

August	Males	Females	Total
	percent	percent	percent
1964	4.4	6.0	5.2
1965	4.9	6.3	5.6
1966	6.3	7.2	6.7
1967	8.7	7.8	8.2
1968	8.3	8.4	8.3
1969	8.2	8.5	8.3
1970	8.9	8.3	8.6
1971	7.8	8.5	8.1
1972	8.8	11.1	10.0
1973	11.1	13.6	12.3
1974	9.4	14.8	12.0
1975	13.1	17.6	15.2
1976	12.7	19.3	15.8
1977	15.3	22.4	18.6
1978	17.3	23.6	20.3
1979	16.6	25.6	20.6
1980	17.8	27.0	22.0
1981	18.1	27.4	22.3

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics.[10]

Table 2.3
Net Job Creation by Sex and Full-time/Part-time Status, Teenage Workers August 1970–August 1979

		Employed Persons			
		August 1970	August 1979	Net Change	Per cent Change
		'000	'000	'000	per cent
Full-time	Male	294.1	285.9	−8.2	−2.8
	Female	276.3	204.8	−71.5	−25.9
	Total	570.4	490.7	−79.7	−24.0
Part-time	Male	28.8	57.0	+28.2	+97.9
	Female	25.1	70.1	+45.0	+179.3
	Total	53.9	127.1	+73.2	+135.8
	Total	624.3	617.8	−6.5	−1.0

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics.[11]

trends in full- and part-time employment have occurred in separate sections of the labour force (Table 2.4). As a general rule trends in full- and part-time employment do not balance one another within occupational groups. For instance a loss of 21,000 full-time clerical jobs for girls between 1971 and 1976 was accompanied by the creation of only one-eighteenth the number of part-time jobs, and the number of part-time sales jobs gained by boys was ten times the number of full-time jobs lost.

Most of the new part-time jobs were created in the sales and service categories. In general full- and part-time teenage workers tend to hold different types of jobs, both across and within major census occupational categories (Tables 2.5 and 2.6). Distinct occupational patterns also emerge when adult and teenage part-time workers are compared

Table 2.4
Net Job Creation and Elimination by Sex, Full-time/Part-time Status and Occupation, Teenage Workers 1971–1976

	Male		Female	
Occupational Group	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
	N	N	N	N
Professional, Technical	−3321	−259	+644	−285
Administrative, Executive	+206	+2	+64	+8
Clerical	−11250	−262	−20960	+1175
Sales	−190	+1926	−801	+6165
Farmers, etc.	−3611	+94	+113	+270
Miners, etc.	−428	−32	+9	−1
Transport and Communication	−2224	−414	−2326	−170
Tradesmen, Labourers	+12657	+86	−5452	+228
Services, Sport and Recreation	+1807	+1869	−2710	+2712
Armed Services	+238	−71	+140	+1
Other	−3502	+371	−3346	+890

Source: Census of Population and Housing, 1971 and 1976.

Table 2.5
Occupational Distribution of Teenage Full-time and Part-Time Workers, 1976

Occupational Group	Males Full-time	Males Part-time	Females Full-time	Females Part-time
	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent
Professional, Technical	2.0	1.9	10.7	3.4
Administrative, Executive	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.1
Clerical	10.7	3.8	48.3	17.4
Sales	6.2	32.2	18.5	42.7
Farmers, etc.	7.3	9.0	1.0	2.3
Miners, etc.	0.4	0.1	0.0	0.0
Transport and Communications	3.1	2.5	1.3	1.1
Tradesmen, Labourers	62.9	28.5	1.0	4.7
Services, Sport and Recreation	3.1	14.7	9.4	22.2
Armed Services	3.0	0.6	0.5	0.1
Other	0.9	6.3	0.9	6.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: 1976 Census of Population and Housing.

Table 2.6
Occupational Distribution of Selected Full-time and Part-time Teenage Workers by Minor Groups, NSW 1976[a]

	Males Full-time	Males Part-time	Females Full-time	Females Part-time
	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent
Clerical Workers				
Book-keepers, Cashiers	10.5	16.0	5.9	46.1
Stenographers, Typists	0.1	0.6	26.5	7.5
Other Clerical Workers	89.4	83.4	67.6	46.4
Services, Sport and Recreation				
Fire Brigade, Police, etc.	12.6	1.4	0.1	0.2
Housekeepers, Cooks, etc.	28.2	28.1	17.3	37.0
Waiters, Bartenders	10.8	29.2	9.7	36.4
Caretakers, Cleaners	10.7	26.2	1.0	7.8
Barbers, Hairdressers, Beauticians	7.9	0.7	36.0	2.8
Launderers, Dry Cleaners, Pressers	6.2	0.8	4.4	1.8
Athletes, Sportsmen, etc.	6.2	3.3	0.4	0.9
Photographers and Camera Operators	23.4	0.3	0.4	0.6
Other Service, Sport and Recreation Workers	14.0	10.0	30.7	12.6
Tradesmen, Production-Process Workers, Labourers[b]				
Toolmakers, Mechanics, Plumbers, etc.	31.8	12.5	—	—
Electricians	11.4	4.1	—	—
Carpenters, Cabinet Makers, etc.	9.3	5.3	—	—
Millers, Bakers, Butchers, etc.	5.7	4.5	—	—
Packers, Wrappers, Labellers	0.6	10.7	—	—
Storeman and Freight Handlers	5.2	19.2	—	—
Labourers n.e.c.	13.7	26.8	—	—

[a] Entries show each occupation as a percent of the major group to which it belongs.
[b] Minor groups containing very small proportions omitted.
Source: 1976 Census of Population and Housing.

Table 2.7
Occupational Distribution of Adult and Teenage Part-time Workers, 1976

Occupational Group	Males Adults	Males Teen-agers	Females Adults	Females Teen-agers
	per cent	per cent	per cent	percent
Professional, Technical	21.6	1.9	18.2	3.4
Administrative, Executive	6.9	0.2	2.8	0.1
Clerical	5.8	3.8	26.8	17.4
Sales	7.4	32.2	13.7	42.7
Farmers, etc.	12.2	9.0	3.7	2.3
Miners, etc.	0.4	0.1	0.0	0.0
Transport and Communication	7.2	2.5	1.9	1.1
Tradesmen, Labourers	24.1	28.5	5.9	4.7
Service, Sport and Recreation	11.7	14.7	25.5	22.2
Armed Services	0.4	0.6	0.0	0.1
Other	2.4	6.3	1.5	6.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: 1976 Census of Population and Housing.

(Table 2.7). The teenage part-time workforce appears to be quite distinct, forming a separate and relatively new category in Australia's highly segmented workforce. It consists of teenagers working as sales assistants, cashiers, short-order cooks, wrappers, packers, waiters, waitresses, bartenders, cleaners, storemen and labourers, and the retail industry dominates as their employer.[12]

Most of these jobs are very brief. 1976 census data show that 67 per cent of teenage part-time workers worked for less than 15 hours per week. In August 1978 teenage part-time workers who were also at school worked an average of 7.2 hours per week.[13]

It is important to appreciate that most of these jobs involve low levels of skill and require almost no training. In general teenage part-time workers are less likely to be found in skilled work requiring further education or training than are either full-time teenage workers or part-time adult workers. Relatively fewer teenagers than adults are part-time professional or technical workers. Relatively more part-time than full-time teenage workers are labourers or storemen, and fewer are tradesmen or typists.

Another important characteristic of the teenage part-time workforce is that it largely consists of school students. Over the course of a year roughly 60 per cent of all teenage workers are school students (Figure 2.2), with the proportion of non-school students being highest among girls. In August 1978 15 per cent of all Australian school students aged 15 to 19 held a part-time job and a further 3 per cent were looking for one.[14] The proportion of school students is at its peak in December and January and at its lowest in February and March. This suggests that there is a significant tendency for the first experience of work after leaving school to be a part-time job. Of those part-time workers who are school students most are very young. In August 1979, 72 per cent were only 15 or 16 and in August 1981, 74.4 per cent were aged 15 or 16. The constancy of this percentage suggests a high rate of labour turnover and an employer practice of discouraging the employment of older students. The low age of the workers, together with the low weekly duration and low skill level of the jobs, implies that most are very poorly paid.

A new category of workers is emerging whose status in the workforce is marginal. They hold jobs that offer minimal training, are relatively unskilled, are of brief duration,

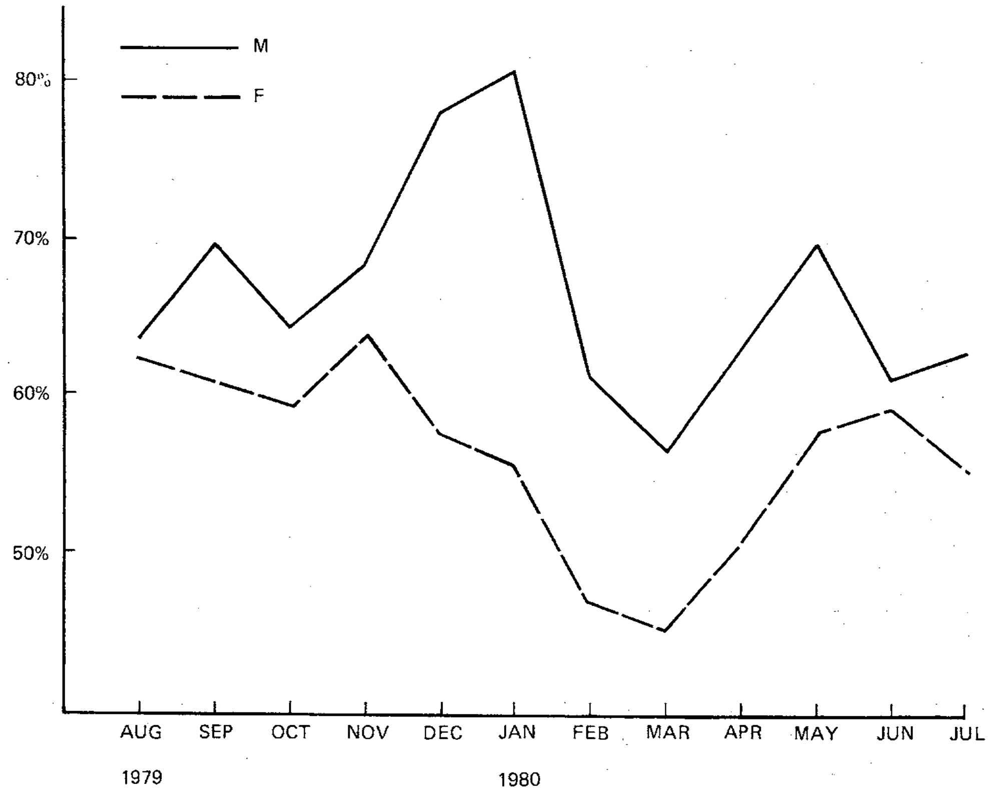

Fig. 2.2 School students as a percentage of teenage part-time workers, August 1979 to July 1980
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics[18]

usually seasonal, temporary or casual, and offer pocket money rather than a living wage. Part-time workers are frequently non-unionised,[15] are more likely to be exploited than full-time workers,[16] and enjoy significantly lower levels of job satisfaction than full-time workers.[17] More than a fifth of all teenage workers are now at best on the fringe of the labour market, and part-time employment needs to be counted together with unemployment as an indication of failure to make a satisfactory transition from school to work. In May 1976, of those who had left school in 1975 and entered the labour force but not tertiary education, 19 per cent were unemployed and 5 per cent held part-time jobs.[19] In March 1980, of a comparable group who had left school in 1979, 27 per cent were unemployed and 9.1 per cent were in marginal part-time jobs.[20] As a form of unsatisfactory transition to work, part-time employment among recent school leavers seems to have increased at a faster rate than unemployment between 1976 and 1980.

These new part-time jobs have not been created because rising wage costs have caused employers to substitute part- for full-time teenage workers. Occupational trends (Table 2.4) indicate that a simple substitution has rarely occurred. Furthermore most of the observed relative increase in juniors' rates in the 1970s did not occur in the occupational areas where teenage part-time employment grew,[21] and teenage part-time employment grew most rapidly at a time when the cost advantage of part-time relative to full-time teenage labour was decreasing.[22]

A shift in the economy towards the service sector provides a partial but incomplete answer, as does an attempt by the retail industry to minimise costs by more appropriately scheduling labour to peak demand periods. Many new jobs in the service sector are full-time, and other industries with fluctuating demands—for example, public transport and good quality restaurants—cope by using broken shifts with penalty loadings rather than by using part-time labour. These examples offer the key. Labour that is skilled or powerful is rarely disposable, and changes in the basic organisation of work in the retail and service industries lie behind the growth of the teenage part-time workforce.

Of particular importance has been the growth of the fast-food industry with its emphasis on product standardisation and a high degree of specialisation of labour. These techniques, together with automation and economies of scale, have been widely used by the retail industry to increase productivity. The introduction by supermarkets of strip retailing, electronic stock-control and re-ordering, out of hours shelf re-stocking, reduction in the variety of brands and sizes stocked, reduction in the range of non-shelf stock on hand, electronic weighing and pricing equipment and cash registers with inbuilt time recorders are examples.

The skill content of many jobs in the retail industry such as selling, cooking, waiting and butchery has been reduced. Weighing, cost and change calculation and stock ordering can now be automated. Selling, wrapping and packing, use of the cash register and stock re-ordering, previously performed by the one employee, can now be fragmented among several. Self-service displays, pre-packaging and product standardisation have made it possible for the skill of selling to be made redunant.

This reduction, fragmentation, automation and elimination of skills has made it possible for cheap, inexperienced and minimally trained labour to be hired for a few hours a day instead of expensive, experienced, skilled and trained full-time labour.

Changing Patterns of Full-time Work

The Australian economy has been reducing its need for teenage labour for at least fifteen years. In the intercensus period 1966 to 1971, a period of low unemployment and high economic growth, the number of employed teenagers shrank by 97,785 or 14.5 per cent. Between the censuses of 1971 and 1976, when economic growth slowed and unemployment rose sharply, 8,867 teenage jobs disappeared and the teenage workforce shrank by 1.5 per cent. The reduction in the number of employed teenagers was eleven times as great in the intercensus period that preceded current high unemployment levels as in the intercensus period that saw their commencement. This is of great significance, for it suggests that reduced demand for teenage labour arises less from economic recession than from underlying longer-term structural changes in the economy.

Data from the 1971 and 1976 censuses allow the implications of these changes for teenage employment to be explored. Tables 2.8 and 2.9 show trends in adult and teenage employment in those occupations (in minor census groups) containing 1 per cent or more of male or female teenage civilian employees in either 1971 or 1976.[23] Taken together they include roughly 85 per cent of male and 92 per cent of female teenage employees in each census. Gaps in tables produced from the 1971 census do not allow age trends in these occupations to be broken down separately for full- and part-time workers. However, knowledge of trends within major occupational groups (Table 2.4) gives a reasonable estimate of those areas where full-time employment has varied.

The generality of the decline in white collar and clerical jobs is one of the most prominent trends in teenage employment in the period. Substantial numbers of jobs as clerks, typists, book-keepers and cashiers were lost by teenagers of each sex. A very substantial decline (−56.3 per cent) in the number of teenage male book-keepers and

Table 2.8
Employment Trends in Selected Occupations by Age, 1971–1976, Australia, Males

Occupational Category	Teenagers		Adults	
	N	percent	N	percent
Draftsmen and Technicians	−3430	−47.3	−16206	−17.4
Book-keepers and Cashiers	−2806	−56.3	−10456	−28.8
Other Clerical Workers	−8573	−23.8	+31792	+14.2
Shop Assistants and Related Workers	+2282	+10.7	+ 3542	+ 3.0
Farmers and Farm Managers	+ 470	+12.2	−17014	− 8.4
Farm Workers	−2652	−13.1	−14581	−15.5
Drivers, Road Transport	− 546	−16.8	+ 5083	+ 3.1
Postmasters, Postmen & Messengers	−1820	−47.5	+ 958	+ 5.0
Toolmakers, Mechanics, Plumbers, etc.	+5520	+11.8	+ 5187	+ 1.6
Electricians and Related Workers	−2701	−14.5	+ 9297	+ 8.4
Metal Workers not elsewhere classified	+ 700	+13.3	− 4101	− 7.3
Carpenters and Related Workers	+3135	+19.6	− 2032	− 1.9
Painters and Decorators	+ 626	+13.0	− 1441	− 3.2
Bricklayers, Plasterers and Construction Workers	+1197	+16.2	+ 3763	+ 3.9
Compositors, Printing Machinists, etc.	− 876	−18.9	− 1273	− 4.4
Millers, Bakers, Butchers, etc.	+ 197	+ 1.8	− 663	− 1.0
Storemen and Freight Handlers	+1689	+17.7	+ 2263	+ 2.6
Labourers not elsewhere classified	+3882	+17.4	+16182	+ 9.3
Housekeepers, Cooks, etc.	+1546	+89.2	+ 3720	+22.0

Source: Census of Population and Housing 1971 and 1976.

Table 2.9
Employment Trends in Selected Occupations by Age, 1971–1976, Australia, Females

Occupational Category	Teenagers		Adults	
	N	percent	N	percent
Nurses	+ 1681	+10.0	+ 24346	+36.0
Draftsmen and Technicians	− 630	−17.1	+ 2817	+22.6
Book-keepers and Cashiers	− 402	− 4.8	+ 7946	+18.2
Stenographers and Typists	−12144	−30.9	+ 12407	+ 9.4
Other Clerical Workers	− 6157	− 7.8	+111661	+49.1
Shop Assistants and Related Workers	+ 6207	+13.3	+ 15518	+10.2
Telephone, Telegraph and Telecommunication Operators	− 2350	−48.2	+ 310	+ 1.5
Tailors, Cutters, etc.	− 3172	−34.1	− 5963	−11.6
Packers, Wrappers, Labellers	− 654	−19.7	− 4907	−17.8
Housekeepers, Cooks, etc.	− 237	− 3.3	+ 11652	+11.6
Waiters, Bartenders	+ 1019	+27.7	+ 4708	+16.7
Barbers, Hairdressers and Beauticians	− 1206	−14.7	+ 186	+ 1.5
Service, Sport and Recreation Workers, etc.	+ 850	+14.8	+ 10689	+49.7
Farm Workers	+ 747	+33.0	+ 16653	+84.4

Source: Census of Population and Housing 1971 and 1976.

cashiers accompanied a significant drop (−28.8 per cent) in similar adult employment. However, with this exception a decline in teenage white collar and clerical employment coincided with an increase in similar adult employment. 30.9 per cent of teenage typists' jobs disappeared at the same time as the number of adult typists rose by 9.4 per cent. A 7.8 per cent drop in the number of junior female clerks accompanied a sharp 49.1 per cent rise in comparable adult employment. Teenage boys lost 23.8 per cent of their clerical jobs while adult male clerical employment increased by 14.2 per cent.

The decline of the office junior can be attributed to a number of factors including economic recession, technological change and a restructuring of work patterns.

Within manufacturing industry economic recession has affected the white collar jobs of both adults and teenagers, but teenage employment has declined at the faster rate. Within the expanding service sectors of the economy, adults have gained the lion's share of new white collar jobs. Whilst teenage clerical employment in these sectors has often risen, it has risen little, and the net result of trends in different sectors of the economy has been an overall reduction in teenage employment.

A shift towards part-time work is likely to be important in many of the cases where adult women gained jobs at the expense of teenagers. The teenage part-time workforce, consisting largely of students, would rarely be able to compete for the new part-time office jobs, most of which are available only during standard hours.

Similarly, growth in typing jobs in the business services sector represents a restructuring of work away from full-time permanent employment towards casual, part-time, seasonal and temporary work that is more likely to suit married women who can rely on a second household income than teenagers who cannot.

In some cases technological change explains the job losses. The widespread use of computerised accounting systems and automated money handling and cash transfer is likely to lie behind the general drop in jobs for male book-keepers. Automated preparation of statements and accounts in the finance and investment industry and computerised invoice preparation within wholesale trade has eliminated typing jobs for both adults and teenagers, with teenage employment suffering disproportionately.

Copy typing, filing, making the tea, delivering messages and answering the phone, all traditional juniors' tasks, have been affected by technology. The dry photocopier has almost wiped out copy typing, computers have automated much filing, tea and coffee-making machines are forcefully marketed as labour-saving devices, and telex and courier services have intruded into message delivery.

Technological change in the telephone system has been important in reducing teenage employment. Replacement of small and manual exchanges by centralised and computerised exchanges has substantially reduced the number of junior female telephone operators. Roughly half of the overall 48.2 per cent drop occurred in the communications industry, and in New South Wales 70 per cent of junior female telephone operators disappeared from the communications industry between 1971 and 1976. A reduction in maintenance costs has been an important reason for introducing highly reliable computerised exchanges and for centralising these exchanges.[24] Teenagers have borne a disproportionate share of the consequent loss of electrician's jobs. The overall 14.5 per cent decline in the number of teenage electricians was concentrated in the communications industry, where the decline was of the order of 50 per cent in five years.

STD dialling and PABX exchanges with automatic call transfer, call holding and direct in and out dialling have substantially reduced the need for telephone operators in industry and commerce, and again teenagers have been the heaviest losers of jobs.

STD dialling and the expansion of the telex network for business communication have greatly reduced the need for a telegram service. The rapid 47.5 per cent reduction in the number of junior male postal workers stems largely from these changes, with the rise of contract courier services in place of directly employed junior messengers accounting for the balance of the reduction.

A striking feature of teenage employment between 1971 and 1976 was the 47.3 per cent decline in the number of teenage boys working as draftsmen and technicians, accompanied by a 17.3 per cent drop in comparable employment among girls. The number of male technicians, both teenagers and adults, declined in almost every industry sector. The only major exception was the communications industry where substantial numbers of adult, but not teenage, electricians were reclassified as technicians. The generality of the decline suggests a restructuring of skills whose origins go beyond changes in the profitability and economic viability of particular industries. Within manufacturing industry, where much of the decline occurred, technicians' jobs declined faster than total male employment. In other industries rising total male employment accompanied declining technician employment.

In some instances technological innovation lies behind the decline in middle level skills. In the petroleum products, food and chemical industries, automated production process control and automated testing equipment have eliminated much of the monitoring, testing and analysis functions performed by technicians. Computerised techniques in surveying, cartography and architecture have reduced the need for middle level skills. Within many industries highly reliable solid state technology and replacement maintenance have eliminated much skilled repair and maintenance work.

Competition from alternative sources of labour is another important factor, particularly in the case of architectural drafting, where a surplus of under-employed architects has competed for technician level jobs.[25] In most industries decline in technician employment coincided with significant growth in the number of professional engineers, architects, chemists and physicists. Whether this is due to an upgrading of skills or to creeping credentialism is for the moment less important than its effect in reducing teenage employment.

Teenagers lost jobs in some trades, notably printing as the result of new computerised technology, and hairdressing where changes in consumer tastes and do-it-yourself equipment have reduced the demand for labour. However, with the exception of nursing (where future growth appears unlikely), the only significant increase in skilled full-time teenage employment between 1971 and 1976 seems to have occurred in some of the skilled trades. Growth in teenage employment in the metal, mechanical and building trades, which was concentrated among teenage boys rather than teenage girls, coincided with either static or declining adult employment. This trend is anomalous.

Teenagers do not generally come out of the labour market more favourably than adults. When adult employment in an occupation increased between 1971 and 1976, teenagers either gained jobs at a slower rate or lost jobs. When employment in an occupation declined, teenagers generally lost jobs at a faster rate than adults. Where declining employment in an occupation was concentrated in one or two industries adults were more likely than teenagers to offset these losses with increasing employment in other industries. Where teenage employment grew in the period, the jobs gained were most frequently part-time and unskilled.

Yet in some of the skilled trades teenagers appear to have gained jobs at the expense of adults, and a recent analysis[26] indicates both that teenage job creation in these trades continues and that teenagers appear to have maintained their advantage relative to adults. Explanations for this trend are not simple. It is tempting to link it to reports of shortages of skilled tradesmen, particularly in the metal trades,[27] that stem both from a decline in migration as a source of new tradesmen since the early 1970s[28] and from high rates of wastage among skilled tradesmen as a consequence of declining wage differentials between skilled and unskilled workers[29] and poor working conditions.[30] On this analysis the jobs have been created less from economic growth than from attempts to counteract adult wastage with apprentice labour.

It is frequently held that the amount of unskilled work is declining and that the workforce is becoming more skilled as the result of technological innovation.[31] Whether or not this is the case with the workforce as a whole, it is clearly not the case with teenagers. During the 1970s dead-end unskilled part-time work offering minimal training grew substantially, and it is significant that the number of teenage boys working as labourers grew by 17.4 per cent. This growth accompanied a decline in white collar work, clerical work, work that represents the starting point of careers, and many categories of skilled work.

The highest rates of decline frequently occurred in the most skilled occupations—draftsmen, technicians and book-keepers. In many instances technological innovation was an important factor in the decline in skilled teenage employment: telephone operating, electrical work, book-keeping, printing, postal work and, to a lesser extent, hairdressing are examples. Within white collar work, occupations associated with courses of training—typing and book-keeping—declined faster than general clerical work.

A conclusion from one of the classic studies of the impact of technology upon skills, that automation does not inevitably mean lack of opportunity for the unskilled,[32] could well have been written with Australian teenagers in mind.

Educational Responses

Changing patterns of teenage employment have coincided with changing patterns of interaction between schools and the labour market. To begin with, the educational composition of school leavers has changed dramatically since the early 1960s.

Trends in New South Wales (Table 2.10) are fairly representative of trends in other States. More than half of the generation that began secondary school in 1962 left school

Table 2.10
Estimated Percentages of Successive Generations of New South Wales Students Leaving Secondary School at Four Points

	Per cent Leaving			
Year 7 Generation	Pre Year 10	Post Year 10	Post Year 11	Post Year 12
1962	53.3	22.2	3.1	21.4
1963	47.5	25.3	1.6	25.6
1964	42.3	27.3	1.9	28.5
1965	32.7	33.9	2.7	30.7
1966	30.4	35.5	2.5	31.6
1967	27.2	36.4	3.0	33.5
1968	24.8	37.4	4.0	33.8
1969	23.0	39.9	4.1	33.0
1970	22.9	40.7	3.0	33.5
1971	22.9	38.3	4.5	34.4
1972	19.8	39.7	4.9	35.6
1973	17.5	41.8	4.9	35.7
1974	15.7	43.6	6.0	34.7
1975	14.8	46.2	6.2	32.8
1976	13.9	47.9	—	—
1977	13.3	—	—	—

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics.[33]

without gaining a School Certificate. Roughly one in five entered the labour market, or further education, after Year 10, and slightly over a fifth completed six years of secondary schooling.

By the end of the 1970s there had been a dramatic reduction in the proportion of early school leavers, with less than a seventh of each generation now entering the labour market without at least completing Year 10. The group leaving school after Year 10 has more than doubled and now approaches 50 per cent of each generation, and the proportion completing Year 12 has grown by roughly 50 per cent to close to a third of each generation.

Although discussion of school retention usually centres on retention to Year 12, some of the most striking changes in the interaction between schools and the labour force have occurred prior to Year 12. Assuming a linear relationship between school attrition and ability,[34] the figures point to significant changes in the ability mix of those entering the labour market from various points of schooling. The reduction of the early school leaver group suggests that fewer able students now leave school prior to Year 10, and as more students now continue to Year 12 it is likely that the group leaving school after Year 10 now contains more of the less able and less of the more able than it did in the mid-1960s. As a consequence of its more than doubling its relative size, the range of abilities that it contains has almost certainly broadened.

It has been argued elsewhere[35] that the changing educational composition of school leavers poses significant problems for employers, notably those of apprentices to the skilled trades, who continue to use a Year 10 qualification as a selection device, and that much of the debate over school leavers' basic standards can be interpreted in terms of employers' failure to understand and adapt to these changes.

School Retention and the Labour Market

Qualitative changes in the educational characteristics of school leavers flow from a general increase in school retention rates (Table 2.11). The increased fraction of the teenage population retained within secondary schools is the explanation for the high rate of teenage job elimination in the mid-1960s not being translated into high rates of teenage unemployment at the time. There is nothing new in students remaining longer at school in response to a lack of jobs. They were doing so well before the increase in youth unemployment in the mid-1970s, and at the time their behaviour was typically interpreted as the outcome of a desire for more education rather than as a response to the labour market.

There are several ways of illustrating the close relationship between school retention and the labour market. The first of these is to estimate the effect on teenage unemployment of the supply of teenage labour reflecting school retention rates other than those existing at the time the unemployment rates in question were measured. Table 2.12 shows teenage unemployment for the period August 1966 to August 1979 estimated on the assumption that the number of 14, 15, 16 and 17 year-olds entering the labour market in those years reflected the proportion of students of those ages who left school between August 1964 and August 1965.

Increases in retention rates have had a substantial effect in reducing teenage unemployment in Australia for some years. Had retention rates not risen sharply in the late 1960s, teenage unemployment would have more than doubled well before the onset of the recession of the mid-1970s, and would have been at levels now found unacceptably high. The impact of rising school retention reducing unemployment among teenage girls has been particularly noticeable.

Table 2.11
Age Specific Retention Rates, Australia 1960-61 to 1979-80[a]

	Ages 14-15		Ages 15-16		Ages 16-17	
Years	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent
1960-61	72.4	65.1	57.0	49.9	47.0	35.7
1961-62	74.9	67.9	60.7	52.2	49.9	39.2
1962-63	76.4	69.2	59.4	53.0	50.0	40.6
1963-64	76.5	70.2	61.5	55.3	51.7	41.7
1964-65	78.0	73.3	64.4	58.1	51.6	42.2
1965-66	79.5	73.9	63.9	55.9	47.7	37.1
1966-67	80.5	75.4	65.4	57.2	59.0	50.1
1967-68	82.0	78.8	70.5	60.9	59.5	52.8
1968-69	82.9	79.6	68.5	61.2	58.8	52.0
1969-70	83.8	80.2	68.4	62.2	59.1	51.6
1970-71	84.3	81.3	69.5	63.1	59.4	52.3
1971-72	85.4	82.6	69.7	64.1	59.2	53.7
1972-73	84.1	82.1	67.7	64.5	56.0	54.2
1973-74	84.1	83.5	66.8	64.5	55.4	54.2
1974-75	86.8	85.5	69.8	68.0	56.9	56.6
1975-76	88.1	86.8	68.9	69.1	55.8	56.6
1976-77	87.6	87.9	67.5	69.5	53.7	56.6
1977-78	88.9	88.8	68.2	70.2	53.5	56.3
1978-79	87.5	89.1	66.0	68.2	51.5	54.7
1979-80	88.1	89.6	65.5	68.0	49.1	52.3

[a] Entries in each column show the percent of students of the first age retained as students of the second age between August and August of each pair of calendar years. Thus 72.4 per cent of 14 year old boys enrolled in August 1960 and were enrolled as 15 year olds in August 1961; 57.0 per cent of 15 year old boys in August 1960 were enrolled as 16 year olds in August 1961.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics.[36]

Table 2.12
Teenage Unemployment, Australia 1976-1979 Actual and Estimated from 1964-65 School Retention Rates[a]

	Males				Females			
August	Actual	Est.	Actual	Est.	Actual	Est.	Actual	Est.
	N	N	per cent	per cent	N	N	per cent	per cent
1966	8800	7200	2.5	2.1	12900	9900	4.0	3.0
1967	10500	20000	3.1	5.8	11200	17100	3.6	5.3
1968	9400	22700	2.9	6.7	12200	25500	3.9	7.8
1969	7500	22500	2.3	6.6	10900	25800	3.6	8.2
1970	9600	22500	2.9	7.3	11300	27900	3.6	8.5
1971	10600	28000	3.2	8.0	13100	32300	4.3	9.9
1972	18600	38300	5.6	10.9	18800	42100	5.9	12.3
1973	16200	29000	4.6	8.0	15400	39300	4.9	11.5
1974	17200	27600	5.0	7.8	21600	47200	6.7	13.6
1975	39500	58300	10.8	15.2	51700	86100	15.1	22.8
1976	47500	66600	12.7	17.0	52900	91700	15.8	24.6
1977	62300	76900	15.8	18.8	73100	114900	20.3	28.6
1978	65500	82800	16.5	19.9	62100	106600	17.2	26.4
1979	59200	69500	14.7	16.9	70600	111600	20.4	28.9

[a] Estimates assume retention rates equal to those existing in 1964-65.

Source: Derived from Australian Bureau of Statistics.[39]

If retention rates were the same at the end of the 1970s as they were in the mid-1960s an extra 10,300 teenage boys and an additional 41,000 teenage girls would have been unemployed in August 1979. Among teenage boys the unemployment rate would have risen from 14.7 per cent to 16 per cent and teenage girls would have experienced an unemployment rate of 28.9 per cent instead of 20.4 per cent.

Recent econometric models of Australian teenage labour supply[37] have used labour force participation rates to measure labour supply. The growth of the teenage part-time labour force and its overlap with the education sector have made this measure less useful and have led to logical problems in attempting to relate labour supply as measured by labour force participation rates to variables such as unemployment benefits, full-time wage levels and unemployment levels.

A second way of illustrating the relationship between schools and the labour market is to use school retention[38] as an estimate of teenage labour supply and relate this to employment measures. A preliminary analysis for the period 1964 to 1979 suggests a surprisingly close relationship. Using only the most simple form of regression analysis with two independent variables, 76 per cent of the variance in female (R = .87) and 50 per cent of the variance in male (R = .71) retention among 15 and 16 year-olds between August and August of any two years can be accounted for by levels of teenage unemployment and full-time employment in November of the first year of the two years. (Most 17 year-olds, being in Year 12, would leave school within the year in any case; part-time workers are excluded because they overlap the education and employment sectors; November figures are used as most students who leave school do so in December.)

If more sophisticated regression techniques confirmed the suggestion that school retention rates are predictable with surprising precision from levels of teenage full-time employment and unemployment it would be an important finding. At the least it would establish a link between the education and employment sectors not previously revealed in econometric studies of the Australian teenage market. More fundamentally it would indicate a high degree of sensitivity since the mid-1960s in the reaction of school enrolments to the labour market.

Specific features of trends in the teenage labour market may also be seen reflected in age and grade specific retention rates. For example the very high retention rates for younger students (Table 2.11) accurately reflect the deteriorating employment prospects for early school leavers revealed in unemployment rates by age. Deteriorating employment prospects for girls in the 1970s are reflected in trends in retention rates by sex (Figure 2.3). During the 1960s girls' retention rates generally ran parallel to, although lower than, those for boys. In the late 1960s the gap between the two began to narrow and by the late 1970s retention rates for girls exceeded those for boys.

Retention rates for 16 and 17 year-old boys have declined since 1972–73, and this has been interpreted as a consequence of a coincidental increase in unemployment benefits for the age group.[40] On three grounds the link between unemployment benefits and declining retention rates seems unlikely, and the decline is more logically linked to employment trends. Teenage girls have responded to the supposed incentive of higher unemployment benefits by increasing rather than decreasing their retention rates. Inflation has reduced the real value of unemployment benefits for 16 and 17 year-olds by a third since 1973, and yet 16 and 17 year-old males have not correspondingly increased their retention rates. The decline in 16 and 17 year-old retention rates has not been uniform across school years, appearing to have occurred between years 10 and 11 irrespective of age far more than between years 9 and 10 for 16 year-olds or years 11 and 12 for 17 year-olds. (This analysis is based on New South Wales data only.)

This gives the clue to the most likely cause of the decline in retention rates among males. Completion of Year 10 is the main educational requirement for entry to the skilled trades;[42] males dominate entry to the skilled trades. The skilled trades were virtually the only area of expanding full-time skilled teenage employment between 1971 and 1976, and

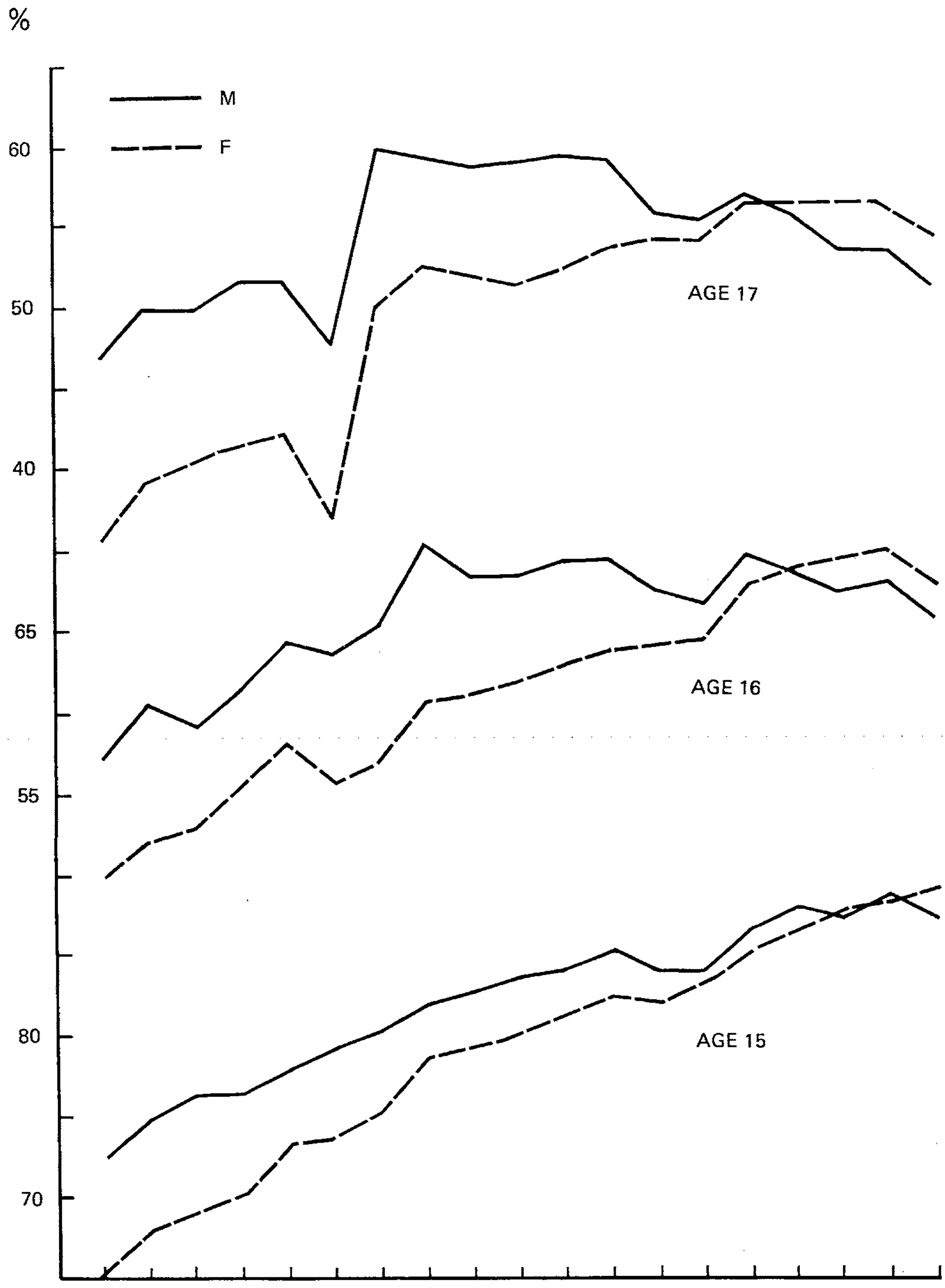

Fig. 2.3 Age specific retention rates, 1961 to 1979
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics[41]

apprenticeships have continued since then to expand at a rate faster than the population from which apprentices are drawn.[43] It is important to stress that the coincidence between the creation of these jobs for teenagers and declining or static comparable adult employment is a singular anomaly in the operation of the teenage labour market; it can be argued that the jobs stem less from economic growth than from tensions in the labour market resulting from labour shortages linked to a downturn in migration and to high adult turnover as a consequence of unsatisfactory wages and working conditions.

Quality of Work Life Issues

The importance of work to Australian teenagers has been demonstrated in a number of studies.[44] A smaller number of more detailed studies show that their concern is not primarily with the material rewards of work but rather with its intrinsic satisfactions.[45]

Jobs requiring the exercise of skill and white collar jobs are generally viewed as more attractive than unskilled jobs and blue collar jobs; there is a direct link between these aspects of work and satisfaction with the quality of working life.[46] However, for teenagers it is those jobs which are most likely to lead to a satisfying quality of working life—white collar jobs and many skilled jobs—which experienced the greatest decline during the 1970s. The increasing availability of marginal jobs, unskilled jobs and blue collar jobs represents growth in the types of work associated with a lower quality of working life.[47] Changes in the patterns of full-time and part-time work available to teenagers point to an increase in the gap between teenagers' aspirations and the realities of work.

Management of the tension arising from this widening gap is likely to be a significant issue in the politics of education in Australia during the 1980s. The gap is likely to be translated into job dissatisfaction, labour turnover and job attitudes and behaviour that reflect dissatisfaction. In turn these are likely to result in pressure upon schools to ensure that students' attitudes are realistic, and in reaction from educationists who are committed to maximising individual potential rather than socialising students to accept an increasingly unsatisfactory work world. The growing gap between teenagers' hopes and the jobs awaiting them will present teachers who are preparing students for the world of work with difficult ethical dilemmas. Within Western societies, identity and self-esteem are closely linked to work roles. If the work available to those entering the workforce directly from school is increasingly marginal and less frequently skilled and satisfying, the impact on the self-esteem and adjustment to adult roles of this group is likely to be profound. There is need for transition from school to work policies to be directed towards the employment sphere in the form of programs aimed at improving the quality of work life, and for the quality as well as the quantity of teenage work to be a concern of transition policies.

The changing structure of skills has additional specific implications. Much of the case for schools paying more attention to basic standards rests on the assumption that an increasingly complex technological society demands higher levels of literacy and numeracy.[48] This assumption is questionable in view of the decline in the skill level of teenage work and in view of the way in which technology appears to be eliminating the most rather than the least skilled teenage jobs.

The value of increasing provision for skills training as a response to youth unemployment is doubtful in view of decline in areas of skilled employment particularly in fields such as office work and retailing. The growing proportion of de-skilled marginal part-time jobs further reduces the stock of real jobs for which training is appropriate and limits the capacity of education to respond to problems of transition by increasing provision for training.

In adjusting the level of income that could be earned without penalty by unemployed 16 and 17 year-olds the 1980–81 budget took steps to change the composition of the teenage part-time workforce in favour of the unemployed and away from school students. Whether this will occur is uncertain, for employer preference for young school students may be deliberate and unemployed teenagers may not be seen as appropriate labour. However, more fundamentally, it is questionable whether marginal part-time jobs would be a genuine solution to the transition problems of teenagers seeking satisfying full-time work.

Girls

The deteriorating positon of girls was one of the most significant trends in the Australian teenage labour market during the 1970s, and it is a trend that transition policies have scarcely taken into account. Faced with a high rate of job elimination girls increasingly have stayed at school, but this has not been sufficient to reduce their disadvantage in the labour market. In August 1981 the unemployment rate among teenage girls was 53 per cent higher than among teenage boys and their average duration of unemployment was 6 per cent higher. Teenage girls' post-secondary qualifications are less helpful in finding them work; in July 1979, 26.2 per cent of teenage girls looking for work had post-secondary qualifications compared with 16.2 per cent of teenage boys.[49] Teenage girls who are employed are more likely than teenage boys to be in unsatisfactory marginal part-time work and more of these female part-time workers are likely to have left school.

Teenage girls are clustered in a narrow range of occupations, many of which are found in single industries. As a result they are more vulnerable than teenage boys to labour-shedding flowing from recession, technology or structural change when these occur in single sectors of the labour market. In addition they are almost totally isolated from the only section of the teenage workforce where skilled full-time jobs continue to be created—the skilled trades. If teenage girls are to avoid being locked out of the skilled workforce, and if they are to compete in the labour market on a basis of equality, the solution must lie in a broadening of both their aspirations and the opportunities made available to them.

Several policy initiatives are called for. These include specific funding for non-sexist education and careers guidance programs in both schools and technical colleges; removal of legal barriers to females undertaking certain trades; positive campaigns to encourage employers to recruit girls to non-traditional occupations; the allocation of places in pre-apprenticeship classes to girls as a form of positive discrimination; removal of bias against females in technical selection tests and the development of transition programs in schools and technical colleges that will allow girls to become familiar with a range of non-traditional occupations and, by practical experience, overcome lack of familiarity with tools and technology.

Schools and Employment

Teenagers' jobs become the victims of many factors, included among which are technological change, changes in consumer preferences, changing skill structures, economic recession, a restructuring of work patterns, a shift towards contract labour and an increasingly specialised division of labour. It is important to appreciate that teenage job loss is the result of moves to increase productivity, of economic growth as much as, if not more than, it is the result of economic recession. This has profound implications for education, and it shifts the debate on transition from school to work away from a knee jerk reaction to a recent economic recession and towards a longer-term perspective on the way in which economic growth interacts with school retention. It is within this longer-term perspective that recent argument about schools as a dumping ground for the unemployed[50] needs to be viewed, and it suggests that policies directed at raising productivity and increasing economic growth will have a more fundamental effect on increasing school retention rates than fiddling with the level of unemployment benefits or taking ad hoc curriculum initiatives within the education sector.

For many years schools have mopped up the consequences of economic growth, and for education the curriculum consequences relate not to selective short-term initiatives directed at specific 'at risk' groups but to a more fundamental questioning of the relevance of the total curriculum to a school population that will continue to contain an increasingly broad mix of abilities at all levels up to Year 12.

The need to cater for a wider mix of students in senior years points to a questioning of the relevance of an academic curriculum which prepares students for tertiary study. It suggests a blurring between vocational education and general education which at the institutional level impels a blurring between schools and Technical and Further Education colleges. The traditional high school increasingly will be unable to offer the range of options required when retention rates to Year 12 approach those now common in North America, Japan and parts of Europe, and the case for institutions which resemble the British tertiary college or sixth form college or the American senior high school will become increasingly persuasive.

In this context the Curriculum Development Centre's recent discussion document on the core curriculum[51] can be regarded as an important statement on transition from school to work, and it is questionable whether there is any point in regarding transition education as a separate entity. If education aims to prepare the student for adult life, then all education is transition education.

Reference Notes

1. The views expressed in this chapter are not necessarily those of the New South Wales Department of Technical and Further Education.
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3. Australian Bureau of Statistics. *The Labour Force*. Cat. 6204.0. Canberra: AGPS (Annual).
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5. Australia. Treasury. *Job Markets: Economic and Statistical Aspects of the Australian Market for Labour*. Treasury Economic Paper No. 4. Canberra: AGPS, 1979; R. Gregory and R. Duncan. High Teenage Unemployment: the Result of Atypical Supply Behaviour. Paper presented at the Eighth Conference of Economists, La Trobe University, 1979. (A revised version of the paper has been published in *The Economic Record*, 1980, 56, 301-15.)
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9. Australian Bureau of Statistics. *The Labour Force*, op. cit.

10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Sweet, op. cit.
13. Australian Bureau of Statistics. *Employment Status of Teenagers August 1978.* Cat. 6234.0. Canberra: AGPS, 1978.
14. Ibid.
15. Future Lobby and New South Wales Association for Mental Health, op. cit.
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20. Australian Bureau of Statistics. *The Labour Force, Australia, March 1980.* Cat. 6203.0. Canberra: AGPS, 1980.
21. P. Scherer. Apprenticeship Training and its Effect on the Labour Market. Paper presented to the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia and Centre for Economic Policy Research, Australian National University, joint conference on Youth Employment, Education and Training, Canberra, February 1981.
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23. A detailed analysis of trends in teenage employment by occupation and industry is contained in R. Sweet, An Analysis of Trends in the Teenage Labour Force in N.S.W. 1971–1976. *Research Report.* Student Counselling Service, New South Wales Department of Technical and Further Education, 1980.
24. B. Thornton and M. Stanley. *Computers in Australia—Usage and Effects.* Foundation for Australian Resources, 1978, 71–6.
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26. Scherer, op. cit.
27. Australia. Department of Employment and Youth Affairs, op. cit. lists shortages of skilled tradesmen in the occupations of motor mechanic, panel beater, metal machinist, fitter, welder, toolmaker, sheet-metal worker and machine tool setter.
28. In 1970–71 immigration accounted for 35 per cent of new tradesmen in Australia. By 1977–78 its contribution had declined to 17 per cent.
29. J.P. Wallace. Skilled Metal Tradesmen—a Case of Shortage? Unpublished B.A. thesis, Macquarie University, 1980; New South Wales Department of Technical and Further Education. *Report of the Fitting and Machining Trade Course Review Committee.* Sydney: Government Printer, 1980.
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38. Annual age specific retention rates are more useful for the purpose than percentage retention to Year 12, the standard measure of retention used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, which is both a delayed measure and ambiguous to the extent that the one retention rate can result from many patterns of pre-Year 12 attrition.
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3 Transition Policy and Research

Peter Kirby

Before discussing the Commonwealth Government's policy for Transition from School to Work, it is useful to consider the background of concerns that gave rise to it.

The Concerns

First and foremost among these is the absolute level of unemployment among young people. There is no need to elaborate on the by now familiar statistics. Unemployment among the young has been high for the past five years, by the standard of both earlier Australian experience and international experience. The Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Survey shows that, of the 332,000 unemployed people seeking full-time work in August 1980, 111,000 (or one-third) were aged 15–19 and 46,000 (or over 40 per cent) of them were looking for their first job. The unemployment rate among 15–19 year olds looking for full-time work was 18 per cent.

Second is the uneven impact of unemployment and difficulties in transition. While most young people make the transition from school to work without serious problems, the adverse consequences for those who do not appear to be intensifying. The average duration of unemployment of those 15–19 year olds unemployed in August this year, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Survey, was 27 weeks and the median duration 19 weeks. For many young people some unemployment and, more certainly, some dissatisfaction and change of mind are common experiences of their early encounters with the labour market. However, by the end of their teenage years a majority of them have made the successful transition to normal adult employment roles. Those who are not so successful tend to have disadvantages which are reinforced when they come to seek entry to the labour market. Their education and labour market experience are cumulative and, unless rectified, may result in their never holding a permanent, satisfying job or improving their economic status.

The third matter of concern is that, although there are many interrelated reasons for the problems of those who do not make a successful transition, those that might be summarised as educational handicaps are a common and important cause. Without basic educational accomplishments success with remedial action by way of further education or training becomes very difficult. Of course, the availability of jobs is fundamental. Nevertheless, young people are in a better position to compete for available jobs and cope with those they obtain if they are prepared for working life. The substitution of poor, uninteresting and dead-end jobs for adequate education and preparation for working life is no solution. Without the basic skills, young people will be unable to take advantage of the further opportunities for education and training to get off the bottom of the ladder.

A fourth matter for concern is the heavy emphasis given to remedies rather than prevention when dealing with the problems in transition of the disadvantaged young.

Considerable attention appears to have been given to finding solutions through subsidised employment and training in largely low level jobs. While this approach has a part to play, it may provide little long-term help and few prospects for stability in the labour market if the education system has given the young people little on which to build. For some time employers have, for economic reasons, been turning to other ways of meeting these kinds of labour demands.

In my view, solutions to the problems of transition have to be sought through both preventative and remedial action; and education and training initiatives, both at school and post-school, have to be better integrated.

The Policy on Transition

The Commonwealth Government's policy on transition from school to work was announced on 22 November 1979. The statement, A Comprehensive Policy for Transition from School to Work,[1] expressed the Government's concern for the problems of young people in transition and outlined the development of a range of appropriate responses.

Earlier, the Australian Education Council, following its meetings in Perth on 26 October 1979, had announced the agreement of the Commonwealth and State Ministers for Education to pursue a unified approach to education policy in relation to transition. From both statements a number of points emerge which are pertinent to consideration of the objectives of the Transition Program and the links between policy and research in this area. These include the formal recognition by States and Commonwealth that:

> a significant minority of young people have unsatisfactory education, training and labour market experiences during the important transition years;
>
> there is a pressing need for further development of educational programs for this significant minority and, in particular, for a diversification of educational and training opportunities for them;
>
> changes to curricula and the provision of alternative courses would be required to help these young people;
>
> the guidance and counselling services available to these young people would need improvement;
>
> the problems of transition were not accounted for solely by the current depressed state of the labour market;
>
> beyond short-term initiatives, the educational system as a whole would have to change some priorities and redistribute some resources to make better provision for the needs of these young people;
>
> improved techniques were required for early identification of the so-called 'at risk' youngsters;
>
> certain financial incentives and disincentives would have to be rationalised to support the policy objectives;
>
> other groups in the community—unions, employers, parents, teachers—would have to be involved and committed to the necessary changes;
>
> the 5-year Transition Program would provide a start for an increased effort to deal with the problems.

It is necessary to emphasise this last point in particular because it does appear that the policy announced in November 1979 and the joint Commonwealth/State 5-year Transition Program, which was referred to in that announcement, are seen as one and the same thing. There has been criticism that the Transition Program does not deal with all the problems of transition but singles out educational reform. However, the November statement makes clear that the policy is intended to go beyond that, although the Program starts at that point. The statement referred to the fact that the Federal Government had decided to 'commence' a program of special action directed to the transition from education to working life and was presenting the Transition Program as an important and substantial contribution to the difficult problem of equipping young people for the world of work. It went on to state that the aim of the policy was ultimately to provide all young people in the 15–19 age group with options in education, training and employment that would make unemployment the least acceptable alternative. Subsequently, the Government made a number of decisions which gave further substance to the policy. It decided to:

increase certain education allowances

ease the income/earnings test for receipt of unemployment benefit

seek the State Premiers' agreement to an urgent review of apprenticeship training.

In more recent statements the Government has undertaken to:

introduce a transition allowance for those unemployed for 4 months who undertake a Transition Program course

provide an equivalent allowance for any young person, up to the age of 24 years, who has been unemployed for 8 months and who participates in a full-time Technical and Further Education course which is likely to improve his or her employment prospects

expand the Special Youth Employment Training Program[2] to provide an increased subsidy ($80 per week for the first 17 weeks) to train in employment 18 to 24 year olds who have been unemployed for 8 months

allow the automatic and immediate eligibility to the Special Youth Employment Training Program of those who complete a transition course.

The Government, when announcing these initiatives, acknowledged that there were some gaps still to be filled, but suggested that with these initiatives and the existing programs and services providing opportunities in education, training and work experience, the gaps were being closed.

The Objectives of Transition Policy and Programs

Given the statements of the Government on the Transition Policy and Transition Program, what can be perceived as the objectives? In a press release on 1 October 1980 the Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs stated that:

> The need for these initiatives resulted from the fact that the education system had failed a significant minority of young people.
>
> This had led Australian youth to leave school and join the labour force at a younger age than in comparable countries.
>
> Australia has a lower proportion of its young in education and training than most other comparable countries and this accounts in large part for the difficulties many young people experience in moving from full-time education to full-time

employment. For example, in 1979 only 56 per cent of Australia's teenagers were in education and training compared to 67 per cent in the UK and 73 per cent in West Germany.[3]

In a subsequent statement[4] on the same theme, the Minister said that many of the Government's policies in areas of technical education, transition and training were directed to redressing this imbalance.

From all this it may be gleaned that the Transition Program itself has six main objectives:

To reduce the teenage labour supply: the provision by 1984 of an additional 50,000 education and training opportunities for 'at risk' early school leavers or potential leavers might be expected to reduce the teenage labour supply by something like an equivalent number.

To develop community support for the Program's objectives and, in particular, to change community attitudes regarding early school leaving and vocational education.

To increase the range of education options in schools and technical and further education for all 15 to 19 year olds.

To promote more effective links between the education and employment sectors.

To improve the capacity and potential of youth labour supply to meet future demands in the 'open' labour market.

To commit the education sector to a re-allocation of some resources and priorities to meet these 'new' demands.

It seems to have been expected that State and Commonwealth education facilities and administrations would absorb some of the overheads associated with the Program—hence the approach to shared funding. However, in seeking to increase the capacity of the education system to absorb and cope appropriately with some 50,000 additional young people, the Program implied a significant and permanent addition to educational resources, both capital and human. No doubt for that reason the November statement mentioned that the Tertiary Education Commission and the Schools Commission would be asked to take account of the new initiatives.

Clearly the Transition Program was intended to lead to some re-allocation of existing education expenditure and priorities. The amount allocated by the Commonwealth—$150 million over 5 years—would otherwise make little sense. It compares, for example, with last year's outlays on education of over $4,000 million on schools and almost $660 million on technical and further education. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that the amount allocated to the Program was largely intended for research, investigation and experimentation in the area of transition to stimulate change. It does not seem to have been intended to be a simple addition to existing allocations to allow systems to undertake a few more transition programs.

Problems Encountered

While the concerns about transition I have mentioned may have been widely felt and the objectives of the policy widely supported, the Program itself met a somewhat hostile response on two grounds. First, it was suggested that it would be easier to provide employment for these young people than to improve their employability. This line of criticism argued that the lack of jobs was the main problem and the proposed Program was merely a sleight of hand. Second, there was a feeling that for all the complexity of the problems of high youth unemployment, the fault was being sheeted home to failures of the education sector.

It is hard to accept that the lack of jobs is the only problem. The characteristics of these 'at risk' young people; the mechanisms they use to move from education to the labour market; the formal and informal networks that support them in transition; the techniques they use in job search, applications for jobs and interviews; their attitudes to education and training and their motivation all demonstrate that there are other significant deficiencies.

As Professor Karmel pointed out in his address, 'Societal Change and its Impact on Education', to the Australian Council of Educational Research Golden Jubilee Conference, if young people could be attracted to undertake more education and training there would be a reduction in unemployment among them and they would be provided with more acceptable and valuable activities. It would also help them to cope better with their situation. Poor preparation, lack of family support and employer discrimination in a difficult labour market add up to a situation where the early experience of those 'at risk' on leaving school confirms their (and our) pessimistic expectations. Having encountered serious difficulties in these formative years, they are a good deal less likely to acquire at any later stage the experience, training, competence or credentials necessary to secure reasonably stable employment. There is no one way to reverse the cumulative disadvantages of these young people, but education, training and guidance ought to play a big part. A strategy that aims to improve their basic education, ability to absorb training, employability, motivation and skills could be expected to go some way to reduce the deficits.

The Transition Program in 1980 was, however, also made more difficult than it otherwise would have been by a number of more rudimentary and practical problems. Some of these came about because of the speed with which the Program was to be implemented. In order to stimulate the appropriate kinds of experiments and changes, proper account needed to be taken of differing local priorities, requirements and experience. Moreover, account had to be taken of the fact that some people were bound to be suspicious of motives lying behind the Program and would have to be convinced that their interests would not be unduly or improperly disturbed or threatened. These difficulties included:

The lack of clarity in the public promotion of the Program's objectives and scope. This was partly due to failure to distinguish adequately between the Transition Policy and the 5-year Transition Program.

The confusion over the priority target groups for the Program. Some early proposals from community groups were designed to assist those who had been in the labour market and unemployed for lengthy periods. There was in some cases little understanding that the additional options, as far as possible, were to be directed to those young people not provided for adequately by existing curricula and courses.

The concern that 'alternative' courses would become the 'dumping ground' for unemployed teenagers.

The lack of progress towards rationalisation of allowances which made it difficult to direct the Program to the target groups which most needed them.

The inadequacies in the guidelines for program approval at both Commonwealth and State levels. In particular, there was little guidance on what was expected or preferred.

The feeling that a substantial expansion of technical and further education opportunities would see a significant drift out of secondary schools by those who would otherwise have stayed there with reasonable success.

The conditional and year-by-year nature of the funding arrangements which in some ways frustrated the sound development of a 5-year program.

As a consequence of these and other factors, there was a piecemeal approach to program development in some States and education systems.

In their *Survey of Career Education in Victorian Secondary Schools*, Biddington, Gentile and Hart[5] make some observations on career education which seem relevant to the problems encountered in the operation of the Transition Program in 1980. They state:

> Without any clear basis of program goals or specificity of learner outcomes, it must be assumed that little attention has been given to alternative methods of implementation. The traditional process of appointing a career teacher one day and expecting him or her to be implementing a program the next leaves little time for questions about methods, strategies and resources...[6]
>
> Only rarely was it suggested that an attempt was being made to integrate or infuse career education into an existing program.[7]
>
> It could be concluded that attention is being directed towards early leavers on the basis that they form a relatively homogeneous group with little recognition being given to the particular circumstances which contribute to the problems of early leavers.[8]

Research Implications

So what then are the research implications of the developments? It is only possible to outline briefly in this chapter what can be seen as some of the important issues for research and evaluation. The Program is intended to be two-pronged: to prevent the problems in transition arising and to develop remedies for when they do. Among the first questions that can be addressed, therefore, is whether it is appropriate to pursue both preventative and remedial measures concurrently and, if so, with what balance or priority between them. An initial reaction to that question may be that prevention is better than cure and therefore should command the higher priority for action and resources. However, a case can be made for restricting action to helping only those who actually encounter difficulties in transition. The justification for that line would be largely based on maximising the use of scarce resources.

A related issue is that of the target population. Who should be helped? Should we give priority to those who can be helped most; or to those most in need of help; or those who most want to be helped? We clearly need better identification of who among the young are most at risk in transition. Even more important, we need to know why they are at risk. In that context research can be exploratory in regard to the policy, extending our view beyond the confines of the current program.

Other issues are whether priority should be given to increasing the employability of the 'at risk' young (their basic competencies, motivation and specific skills) over efforts to improve their techniques (job-search skills, knowledge of labour markets and job opportunities, etc.); and how best to encourage their participation in education and training.

There is scope for research to improve our understanding of the nature of the relationship between education and, on the one hand, initial employment and, on the other, unemployment.

Surprising as it may seem, we still have an incomplete and uncertain understanding of what will help and what works best. This is where sound evaluation studies can play an important part. We need to be able to identify what constitutes successful transition for these young people. Evaluation projects, initially at least, will probably have to rely on an exploration of the relationships between projects and their results, for it may be difficult to set objective measurements of success at this stage. Of course, whatever the methodological difficulties, there will have to be some efforts to monitor and measure program performance in terms of the objectives set for the Program. As a minimum we will probably have to consider changes in education and labour force participation rates; movements in the statistics on teenagers who are unemployed and looking for their first full-time job; and trends in the numbers of unemployed school-leavers registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service. There should be evaluation of the extent to which programs thought or known to have the potential for helping those 'at risk' actually do help them; to see, among other things, whether they merely benefit the not-so-disadvantaged. It may prove possible to classify the target group according to the kind of assistance thought likely to be most effective in meeting their needs, and then see whether it does.

Longitudinal studies of young people in the transition from school to work would do a great deal to improve our understanding of the problems and the effectiveness of initiatives taken.

Conclusion

It must be emphasised that the risk of unemployment is not spread evenly. The cost is far greater for those at the margin of the labour force. The early school leavers who have little or no recognised achievements are prominent among those at the margin. For them unemployment is a matter of lengthy and lengthening idleness outside the workforce and beyond that community which is well established in education and training. After a poor start in the labour market—or no start at all—it will always be harder for them to break out of the 'at risk' category. We are not likely to find a panacea for their difficulties, but there are a number of practical things which can be done to raise their potential and their future prospects and to avoid the worst manifestations of the problems. As we attempt to make improvements of a lasting nature in education and training that will ease the transition of these young people, research into the problems and potential solutions, and evaluation of the efforts at improvement, will increase our understanding of the issues involved and the chances of success. The community already provides considerable support for those who want to go on to post-school education and higher levels of training and for those who go into long-established training systems like apprenticeships. The Transition Program is a start towards providing a similar commitment and level of support for those who do not readily fit into well established models for education and training and who cannot, as a consequence, make the transition from school to work without confronting major difficulties.

Reference Notes

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PART II

VIEWPOINTS

4 Policy and Research: An Educational Policy-maker's Perspective

Ken McKinnon

There is an old advertising adage which has it that people in the advertising world know that half of their efforts are wasted. The trouble is they don't know which half. There are similar unknowns in the relationship between policy and research. Is some educational research wasted? Is the whole of it irrelevant to the concerns of policy-makers? After all, there are many who would argue that research should be undertaken in a calm and scholarly way detached from the hot disputes of the policy formation arena.

In fact, educational research at present has little impact on policy-making and decisions in education in Australia. In my view this is an unsatisfactory situation. Researchers cannot be satisfied with the situation in which the bulk of what they do has little apparent application to the nation's affairs. Policy-makers are frustrated because often they cannot find any research which is of assistance in solving difficult policy questions.

Some believe that inevitably there must be ambiguous connections between research and policy. They would argue that at best research helps to establish the framework for educational discourse at several removes from direct policy issues. This traditional claim of disinterested research, however, has resulted in a situation to which the availability and usefulness of research information seems to vary inversely in proportion to the importance of the problem—a situation which is of concern to many researchers. It is the purpose of this chapter to explore ways in which policy and research can be brought into closer relationship.

There are several discernible reasons for the lack of impact of research on policy. One of these is the way in which questions are defined. For instance, among the research community there seems to be general acceptance of the idea that the most important and useful research is theory based. Unfortunately this general principle often becomes so stretched that the choice of research topics seems to stem from the need to extend and capitalise on previous investment in an esoteric theory other than from the imperatives of real problems and deficiencies of knowledge. Theory based research, like other activities, can as readily be self-indulgent as useful. Given the highly applied nature of many educational questions, the need, if research is to be theory based, is for applied theories.

More generally, perhaps as a consequence of the different cognitive maps used by researchers and policy-makers, there is a problem of defining questions of importance in mutually comprehensible ways. It is both a problem of different interests and a problem of understanding. It is common to see frustration on the part of the researchers and equal frustration on the part of consumers of research because of conceptual or linguistic incomprehensibility. Conceptual incomprehensibility arises when the issues are not fully defined; linguistic incomprehensibility when particular jargon is interpreted slightly differently. Consequently researchers tend to say that commissioning agencies do not define the questions clearly enough. Government agencies tend to claim that researchers try to fit the questions into pre-conceived cognitive structures. It is clear that much more effort to define questions in mutually comprehensible ways would be desirable, as would recognition of this as a research task taking time and effort.

A second related point is that there are strong hidden pressures in the academic system, discouraging those who want to make academic careers from engaging in 'useful' research. In the academic world utilitarian research is not well rewarded. Academic rewards accrue to those who address a theoretical aspect and show technical proficiency. It is very hard for young researchers to brush aside the expectations of those who will make or break their reputations—and determine their academic promotions. Preferment comes to those who produce papers in learned journals, papers which meet the canons of good experimental design and impeccable statistical analysis. The pressures are always towards formal research designs, controlled variables and precisely defined questions. The questions often become quite trivial. Seldom are researchers asked whether the question was worth researching, whether the information to be gained matters to anyone. Journals are cluttered with articles and research reports read only by academic peers, the information in them being of no practical value. A survey of library usage conducted in the United States indicated that a high proportion of academic journals are not read by anyone. The easy path of formally correct but useless research must be resisted.

Part of the problem seems to be the psychological myopia when there is undue reliance on traditional research designs; tests of significance obtained from large samples may have no significance in practice because the differences are so small as to be unimportant. Furthermore they frequently have no practical usefulness because the questions are too restricted. There is a need to stretch the limits of research design and/or use methods which cope with complexity and multiple variables. Almost all policy questions are complex and multi-faceted. In the absence of better information, politicians frequently must arrive at conclusions about major issues on the basis of incomplete information—sometimes little more than comments heard in their travels within the electorate. They have little alternative if there are no research reports or if such reports as there are do not address the questions they must answer. Many issues must be decided on whatever information best reflects the complicated real-life situation. The research techniques, if educational researchers are to make a contribution to solving such issues, must cope adequately with complications and uncertainty.

Moreover, it should be remembered that the timeliness of research information is important to policy-making. In this context timeliness means the shortest possible time period between undertaking the research and reporting the results.

A special problem of educational research is the prevalence of survey and static research. A researcher, using a statistically reliable sample, will find out, say, how many students do not know x and the differences within the population on socio-economic and other criteria—but the study may show nothing more. There are few attempts to manipulate variations in teaching processes to discover ways of overcoming the problems which have been identified, because that type of research involves more investment of time than researchers are able to give, or more funds or more co-operation from the schools than is available. Frequently those faced with a problem know something is wrong. Their real problem—and need—is for help in solving the problem. In short, the research needs to be directed towards the manipulation of variables which define new courses of action.

The non-involved attitude of a majority of researchers is also a handicap to educational research. That attitude may explain the limited willingness of schools to collaborate in research. Teachers struggling with intractable classroom problems cannot be expected to be understanding of researchers, with supposedly superior understanding of the psychology or sociology of students, who appear only long enough to supervise the completion of data collection instruments. The non-involvement stance has several defects. It wrongly equates objectivity with being outside the real world of students and teachers; it pretends the questions are easily defined; it assumes that intimate involvement with the problem is an unnecessary luxury; and it fails to convince pragmatic teachers they will get anything useful out of the research. Even if researchers are not attempting to vary classroom practice, they must commit themselves to the research for long enough to observe the working of the school or system over a period of time which will provide real information about the variables being studied. And they must give feedback.

The fit between research and users is not made any easier by communication problems. Research is reported in low circulation journals and in a format which for quite proper reasons includes all of the relevant technical information—sufficient to allow replication of the study if desired. Few researchers go beyond this to write articles reporting the research in more colloquial terms in higher circulation publications. Virtually no researchers have the skills to communicate via the popular press or through radio and television in jargon-free language. The only efforts made to do this seem to come from those who are more interested in making political points than in reporting research. The need is for wider communication in ways which are meaningful to the non-technical readers, especially those who either make or influence policy.

There is need for an approach to research in education which is founded upon the actual problems of classrooms, of administrators and of those who decide policy. This is not to say that there is not a place for theory—at least of the kind which explains and orders phenomena. Theory is a part of a much broader view of research. In many ways it is a commonsense approach—find out the facts, construct an explanation of them, test that explanation, adjust it, find out the new facts and so on. This accords with what may be regarded as a fundamentally important perspective about the creation of new knowledge through solving problems. It accords also with the views of Kurt Lewin[1]: that research is best conducted on an action basis through a cycle involving definition of a problem, action to solve it, assessment, construction of new hypotheses, action to test it and so on. Theory is used as part of the research effort, following and explaining the facts, not pre-shaping them.

This approach is particularly suited to the policy research field. Here especially the problems are those of defining what might next be done. The need is for progressively accumulating information about approaches which are being tried, assessed, changed and tried in new forms.

It is often said that the trouble with policy-makers is that they want all of the answers yesterday. It is true that when a question is 'hot' the answer is required immediately. But really good policy researchers have the capacity to forecast issues which will become important and undertake relevant research before the need for it becomes generally apparent. Forecasting of this kind is not a particularly rare skill. Most of the questions which become the focus of policy interest are perennial. How well students are making the transition from school to work, for example, is an issue which will be current for many years. It does not take a great deal of perceptiveness to identify areas of particular concern within this field—areas where new decisions will have to be taken in a year or two. If the researchers have identified the right areas of policy, it will not even matter if their research is not completed on schedule—the results will still be needed. Many important policies remain undisturbed although people know they have become inadequate as a result of changed circumstances, principally because there is no better information available on which to base revisions of policy. The body of precedents which has accumulated around each policy makes its continuance less open to risk than a new policy introduced without prior research defining its effects.

Policy research, of course, need not always be large-scale macro-research; research with individual children may be critical (particularly in extending the limits of variability). The research possibilities are as wide as the range of research techniques. It can be survey or interventionist research. It can be non-empirical—for analyses of the issues and variables which need to be taken into account in addressing a policy question nearly always involve uncovering and relating value positions; this, in my view, counts as research. The criterion for judging the value of the research is the contribution it will make to solving issues of real importance in the community.

Furthermore, it is not to be assumed that policy-oriented research is the same thing as policy formulation. It is important to make the distinction. Policy formulation is a task for those in government with that sort of training and experience. Policy formulation involves a greater element of judgment about the benefits (and costs) of moving in particular ways and of the political consequences of so doing. Policy research is one step back from this; it analyses, it marshals facts and evidence, it defines feasible courses of action, it sets out options. This analysis of the potential contribution of research to policy-making can be illustrated by referring to some of the questions which are of concern to the Schools Commission. These indicate ways in which research can start from practical questions and move to empirical studies which assist in both policy decisions and the development of theoretical models.

One such example arises in the migrant and multicultural education program. In this program approximately $40 million per year is being applied to the teaching of English as a second language. English-as-a-second language teaching is currently one of the biggest areas of educational endeavour in the world, particularly in developing countries. Well based research findings would have wide currency. In its reports the Schools Commission has advocated changes in teaching approaches to move from the separate teaching of students, which involves withdrawing them from regular classes, to more integrated forms of language teaching in all classes, with supplementary help as needed. Changes of approach are occurring in varying degrees and under different circumstances. An ideal opportunity exists for monitoring the conditions under which different English teaching techniques are effective. There are opportunities to ascertain information relating to different age groups, to students with different amounts of exposure to Australian conditions and to students coming from a variety of first language circumstances. There are opportunities to test the effectiveness of different degrees of intensiveness of instruction. Research would make it possible to draw conclusions which would isolate at least some of the effects of different types of materials. Given the fact that acquisition of language competence in this way is one of the most easily specified objectives of schooling, one which lends itself to precise measurements, researchers would have much to contribute about the conditions under which money is best spent for this purpose. In so doing they would inevitably be contributing to better understanding of important questions about cognition and learning styles among students of different ages.

Similarly, within another part of the same program emphasis is given to the fostering of multicultural attitudes in schools. A popular interpretation of this policy is that children with ethnic backgrounds should be able to maintain their own language at school. But this is not the prime official purpose, which has a broader aim of encouraging positive attitudes to all groups within the community and particularly towards minorities. Some discussion in journals, such as the discussion by Bullivant,[2] suggesting that the conditions for multiculturalism do not exist in Australia, and the contrary view, advanced by Smolicz,[3] that multiculturalism can contribute to the development of dual identity, are contributions to policy thinking. There is room for many more contributions, however, particularly relating to the degree to which such an amorphous idea can and is being translated into classroom practice. Clearly research on multicultural attitudes constitutes one aspect of the whole area of research related to attitude formation, so that such research is likely to be useful both for policy formulation in Australia and as a contribution to the general literature on attitude change.

A large program of transition education is being mounted by the States and the Commonwealth. Events leading to its inception would make a fascinating policy research study, as would a study of the pressures which led to the concessions to the States, immediately before the Federal election in October 1980, which allowed them to diminish their share of the financing of the five-year program. The educational rationale for the program has never been disentangled from the obvious political reasons for its existence. The absence of a coherent educational rationale has led to implementation by State Departments of Education and Departments of Technical and Further Education in the manner and with the priorities each has thought most appropriate. Whereas Victoria has been operating on a community involvement model of decision-making, some other States have been determining priorities centrally—involving quite different assumptions about what the program was intended to do. Similarly there has been little study of the extent to which assignment of vocational courses solely to TAFE departments in some States is limiting, to an even greater extent than formerly, the range of curriculum offerings in schools (and, in consequence, is reinforcing a restricted concept of the purposes of schooling). As a further consequence of the vague initial policy framework of this program, and the amount of money which had to be spent quickly, schools have been able to get money for an extremely wide array of projects, at least some of which have aimed to fundamentally redevelop secondary curricula. There seems to be no study in any State which even describes the range of projects, let alone analyses the implications for schooling. Imagine the policy implications if research were to establish that schools have had quite different objectives for the program from those of politicians and administrators. Similarly, slippage between intent and actual effectiveness is an important research topic. We do not have even descriptive studies of the manner in which projects have been initiated and the effectiveness with which they have been implemented. Until research energies are turned in these directions there will be neither descriptive nor explanatory material sufficient to shape intelligently and further develop the program. Most of all, this lack represents opportunities lost to researchers, opportunities to contribute to analysis of questions about what matters are important in schooling, to the gathering of accurate information, and to the constructing and testing of hypotheses about schooling.

At the level of educational discourse there is much room for input. Whether or not one agrees with Brian Crittenden's analysis[4] of Schools Commission attitudes to equality of opportunity as a concept, there is, in my view, little doubt that it is a useful research contribution. Such studies function as stimuli forcing clarification and more articulate exposition of the value positions espoused by the Schools Commission and thus refine the policy-making process in a helpful way. Many of those trained in formal research techniques would not regard such activity as research; yet rigorous historical and ethnographic type research has great usefulness in the right circumstances.

Another example is the movement fostering community involvement in schools. Here research could usefully explore whether it is involvement or, to use the newly popular term, 'participation'; in short, what are the possible dimensions of school and community interaction? In qualitative terms, we need to know whether we are simply talking about a community presence in the schools or whether we are describing, through use of the word 'participation', a conceptually different education process. Apart from that kind of exploration, there is scope for researching in quantitative terms the nature of the interaction between school and community in different parts of Australia.

In an attempt to improve the educational opportunities for women and girls, the Schools Commission has sponsored what amounts to an affirmative action program. It has done this through a variety of projects, some of which involve influencing those who influence or direct the activities of others. Grants have been given to key organisations and government departments to initiate or extend activities designed to counter sexism. The degree to which the activity within the program has changed or is likely to change the actual behaviour of those working with female students, and the consequent effects on the attitudes and behaviour of the female students themselves, is a fascinating area of research. It would yield tremendously important results about the most useful direction of future activities, not to mention information which would make us more aware of the progress to date.

More tangentially to the interests of the Schools Commission, attention could focus on the implications of the term 'core curriculum', which is a popular talking point among educators. The Curriculum Development Centre earlier this year issued a paper[5] which set out in readable terms its view of the desirability and nature of a core curriculum. Yet there is much misunderstanding of the meaning of the term itself. Characterisation of the different ways in which it is currently used in Australia would be a good beginning point for research. Once that was done, analyses which specified more clearly the way in which there could be a balancing of the importance of the common culture and of the equally important need to make contact with the reality of students, would yield useful results.

Similarly, there is the question of the degree to which there can and should be central prescription versus local autonomy. There is much scope for pragmatic research which would map the curriculum decision-making structure. It would even be possible, with very little effort, to gain regional co-operation which would test changes in teachers' behaviour under a variety of circumstances. Examples of research possibilities could be multiplied indefinitely. There is little point in simply giving additional examples. This kind of information is very important in arriving at new policies and defining future courses of action in schools.

Finally, it is important to reiterate the claim for a conjunction of interests between researchers and policy-makers. There would be much benefit in mutual collaboration. Collaboration to define the questions and ways of researching them would ensure that those who want to do useful research are afforded opportunities to do so (with the bonus of there being a strong likelihood of some financial resources to help them); those who need those results would get them. Provided researchers would communicate their ideas and their findings in an intelligible way a much more fruitful situation would result.

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5 Facts and Faith in the Economic Analysis of Teenage Employment

Gerald Burke

Many leading academic economists and the Australian Treasury take the view that a reduction in real wages is an essential step in reducing unemployment. The importance they attach to wages stems from their commitment to neo-classical economics which assume that the economy does or should function in response to the forces of competition. There are, however, alternative views of how the economy functions and of the causes of unemployment.

This chapter seeks to establish the main causes of youth unemployment by criticising a neo-classical analysis and then providing an alternative explanation. The neo-classical position, outlined in the first part of this paper, is that wage adjustments were a principal cause of teenage unemployment; and a wage reduction will be essential to a substantial reduction in unemployment. The neo-classical argument implies that the unemployed would not be sufficiently productive if employed at the given wage. Activity to enhance the attributes of the unemployed would therefore also be appropriate policy. In contrast, a non-neo-classical position is that relative wage changes cannot be shown to have been an important influence on unemployment. And the low level of unfilled vacancies suggests that poor attitudes or inadequate skills among the unemployed were a minor factor in the size of unemployment. The varying rates of unemployment over time and between States also suggest that the major factor is the shortage of jobs. This view is supported by non-neo-classical theories which see education as a screening device for entry to jobs, with productivity inherent in the job rather than in the individual who might fill it.

If we reject the neo-classical proposition that relative wages and productivity are the main factors in youth unemployment what then are the causes? The factors affecting the supply of and demand for teenagers in the labour force are complex, but a major factor in teenage unemployment is the recession begining late in 1975.

The discussion of neo-classical and alternative explanations is not just of academic interest. The causes of unemployment are relevant in considering policies to reduce unemployment. Some of the principles for policy that can be drawn from the previous discussion will be considered presently. It is stressed that programs will be successful in reducing unemployment mainly to the extent to which they reduce the supply of teenage labour or increase the demand. To reduce the supply of labour through encouraging enrolment in education requires not only attractive courses but appropriate student finance. To increase demand for labour requires expansive macro-policies, specific industry policy, job subsidy or job creation. Policies which stress the individual's basic skills or attitudes seem unlikely to be successful in reducing unemployment unless they are accompanied by policies influencing supply and demand. Rhetoric about basics and attitudes will not sustain the morale of students or their teachers if unemployment persists. The rhetoric may in the short term successfully disguise the inadequacy of government policy. This commitment to inadequate policies is explicable in terms of the government's need to be seen to be taking action, while unwilling or unable to tackle the real problem.

Wages, Productivity and Unemployment

Neo-classical economists tend to oppose the setting of minimum wages as they believe they are a major cause of unemployment. They presume that the demand and supply of labour is fairly responsive to changes in wages, and that wages should adjust to bring supply and demand into equilibrium. Hence they suggest: 'To make a real impact on employment, real wage costs of some categories, notably young people, may need to be brought down by at least 10 per cent.'[1]

The assumption that demand and supply are responsive to changes in wages is contested by non-neo-classical economists. Their position can be explained in part by the employment of 30 per cent of civilian employees in the government sector, the effects of very large corporations in reducing competition in the economy, and discrimination against particular groups in the labour force.

Additionally, the responsiveness of labour supply to wages can be offset by a number of factors. For example, the availability of work near to home for teenagers is probably far more important than small differences in pay relativities. Furthermore, wage fixing tribunals and conventional factors are much more important than market forces in determining relative wages. For many occupations wage 'contours' can be identified that alter only slowly over time.[2] Finally, even if a market clearing adjustment in wages could be brought about it would need to be relatively large and its effects might take some years to work out.

Wage adjustment can therefore be seen as difficult to bring about. If achieved it might not be effective in reducing relative unemployment. For example, reducing the wages of teenage girls in Australia by 20 per cent would probably do little to promote their employment in trade apprenticeships. The attitudes of both employers and of teenage girls would probably offset most of the apparent incentive to employ girls in male occupations. Also, the cost of a wage reduction to those teenagers in employment would be substantial. There is no reason to presume that a market determined wage is an equitable one as is sometimes implied in neo-classical writing.

In choosing between neo-classical and non-neo-classical views on the effects of recent changes in wages on employment, then empirical analysis is of some help. The available evidence does not support the view that wage relativities were important in reducing teenage employment.[3] The most telling evidence is provided by Peter Scherer[4] who has shown that virtually all the increase in relative earnings of junior males compared to adult males, shown in Table 5.1, can be accounted for by an increase in apprenticeship awards. Yet apprentices are the group whose employment held up strongly in the recession (aided by government subsidies though the CRAFT scheme). Relativities for other youth hardly changed during the period in which unemployment increased. If there is no change in wage relativity it cannot be responsible for unemployment.

The neo-classical case also argues that increases in relative wages and absolute real wages have induced extra teenagers into the labour market. It is not clear why this should be so: the 'rational' teenager should discount the higher wage by the probability of being unemployed.[5] The improved level of unemployment benefits in the early 1970s could be seen as a factor offsetting this risk, yet it is difficult to see it as a major influence on teenage labour supply.

These conclusions, however, do not affect the neo-classical position taken by the Treasury.[7] The Treasury implicitly assumes that relative wages are *the* major factor in relative unemployment. Hence, whenever a particular group suffers relatively high unemployment its wages are 'out of kilter' whether they have changed or not. No facts are necessary. Whatever the causes, a wage reduction is the cure.

The other side of the neo-classical case is that the unemployed would not be productive enough if employed at the going wage. So, as well as a wage reduction, action to increase

Table 5.1
Relative Weekly Ordinary Time Earnings, Full-time, Non-managerial Employees, Private Employment, Australia 1966–1980

October	Males Junior/Adult	Females Junior/Adult	Adults Females/Males
	per cent	per cent	per cent
1966	51.7	67.9	64.2
1967	52.2	67.3	64.8
1968	52.9	66.5	64.0
1969	52.8	67.7	65.9
1970	52.6	67.6	66.7
1971	52.4	66.7	68.1
1972	53.0	65.8	70.3
1973	54.9	66.7	74.2
1974	55.9	65.8	78.5
1975	56.1	67.8	82.5
1976	57.0	68.6	84.0
1977	57.1	68.0	83.2
1978	56.7	67.4	82.6
1979	55.7	66.8	81.3
1980	55.7	65.6	82.2

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics.[6]
Note: Juniors are persons aged under 21 who are paid as juniors.

worker productivity is desirable. For the neo-classicals this would be largely through enhancing a worker's *human capital* through education and training which they would be happy to facilitate (through, for example, loans to trainees).

The 'content' of education relevant to employability includes the attitudes it develops as well as cognitive skills:

> Some employers complain about the poor presentation of certain young people in the workforce; of attitudes and abilities which are not conducive to winning employment. These complaints say more about the systems through which young people pass than they do about the young people themselves.
>
> Yet recent surveys show that employers are protesting that there are jobs which cannot be filled; that the capacities of some young people entering the workforce are not adequate to meet the demands placed upon them.[8]

A brief answer to such contentions is that this supposed lack of productivity can at most be responsible for only a small proportion of unemployment. In August 1981 there were 35,000 vacancies.[9] There were over 375,000 persons unemployed, including over 90,000 teenagers looking for full-time work. Only a small proportion of the vacancies would be available to teenagers because of requirements for post-school qualifications and experience. Improved skills and changed attitudes of teenagers could, therefore, reduce unemployment only marginally.

This point can be emphasised by examining unemployment statistics for teenagers: (i) in August 1981 the unemployment rate for persons aged 15 to 19 looking for full-time work in New South Wales was 11.4 per cent, whereas in South Australia it was 24.1 per cent. Is the difference between the rates in the two States a matter of skills and attitudes?[10] (ii) the unemployment rate for females aged 15 to 19 looking for full-time work was 19.1 per cent compared to 12.2 per cent for males. If attitudes are important in this difference, they are probably employer or societal attitudes rather than any fostered in schools. Schools can, of course, redouble their efforts to combat sexism; (iii) prior to 1975 the employment rate of teenagers in the labour force at August each year had never reached 6.0 per cent. It rose to about 13 per cent in 1975 and since then has averaged about 17 per cent. Why were so few teenagers unemployed prior to 1975 if their attitudes and skills were so poor? Or is it contended that schools suddenly failed to teach appropriate skills and attitudes? As Blandy says,[11] this simply defies credibility.

A last line of defence for the neo-classical position is to point to the much higher rate of unemployment among early school leavers compared with older teenagers and adults. Suppose we could devise an educational scheme that sharply improved the skills and changed the attitudes of early leavers. The neo-classical position would be that this should lead to an expansion of total employment. However, in view of the low level of unfilled vacancies, it seems likely that any resulting increase in employment among early leavers would occur through reduction in employment of other groups in the labour force.[12]

This is also the conclusion of some 'screening' theories which hold that education is more important in determining an order in a queue for jobs than in the enhancing productive capacity. Productivity in many occupations could be seen as inherent in the job rather than in the individual occupying it. Thurow has argued[13] that persons with very different levels of education are capable, with on-the-job training, of performing most jobs. Employers tend to choose as employees those with the greater number of years in schooling. An increase in education can help an individual's employability but leave total employment unchanged.

Evidence on the association of unemployment with length of schooling is therefore compatible with screening hypotheses as well as the neo-classical (human capital) theory. Evidence on the effect of cognitive skills, as distinct from length of schooling, on employability might seem to help in choosing between the theories. The study by Williams and others[14] found that, holding years of schooling constant, those teenagers who had achieved mastery of numeracy as measured by the Australian Council for Educational Research were about 10 per cent less likely to experience unemployment; literacy was not associated with unemployment, when years of schooling were held constant. It is possible, as Williams notes, that mastery of numeracy may be of importance to an employer as an indication of general ability rather than being relevant to employment in itself. To the extent that numeracy is directly relevant to employment, then efforts to improve it could be worthwhile as a means of reducing unemployment of those currently innumerate; but the low level of vacancies still suggests it might do so in large part by displacing other workers.[15]

It is often asserted that changes in technology and the structure of industry in the 1970s have eliminated much unskilled work and increased the basic skill requirements necessary for entry into the workforce.[16] This seems to be implied in the Treasury's position, quoted earlier. There is little evidence to support the position. Richard Sweet (Chapter 2) reports his analysis of data from the 1971 and 1976 censuses. Whereas there was an expansion in full-time employment for teenage males in some of the skilled trades, there was a sharp contraction in employment for teenage males and females in a range of clerical occupations which had provided entry into white collar careers. On the other hand, there was a considerable growth in part-time, casual employment in sales and service occupations which have become increasingly deskilled. Similarly, analysis for the USA[17] suggests that the skill levels for jobs traditionally filled by youth are declining.

In summary, this discussion rejects the views that teenage unemployment grew sharply because of changes in relative wages or because individuals lack productive attributes. Those views depend on assumptions about a competitive labour market, assumptions that appear to be at odds with the reality in Australia in the 1970s.

None of this should be taken as denying the need for improved education and knowledge of the world at work. But, as discussed later, policies directed at education will fail unless they are placed within a broader context of policies affecting the demand and supply of labour.

The Level of Employment and the Supply of Labour

Trends in Unemployment

In the mid-1970s the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations suggested there was a 'disturbing long term trend, evident since the 1960s, for unemployment rates among the 15-19 year age group to rise quite independently of the state of the economy'.[18] Such a statement implies that factors other than an overall shortage of jobs are mainly responsible for teenage unemployment; for example, wage rates and teenagers' attitudes to work as already discussed.

Two comments can be made: first, the statement is not true. An inspection of Table 5.2 shows that teenage unemployment rates and adult unemployment rates remained low and virtually stationary in the period 1966 to 1970. Teenage unemployment became more severe from the early 1970s, but so too did adult unemployment. The ratio of the teenage unemployment rate to that of persons 25 years and over did increase in the early 1970s. But there is no reason to expect the ratio to remain constant in a recession. Nor need teenagers recover from a recession at the same speed as adults.

Second, unemployment rates provide only a rough indication of the state of the labour market for teenagers. As mentioned earlier in relation to wages, unemployment of teenagers could be increased or reduced at a given level of employment by variations in the supply of labour.[19] For example, in 1977, as shown in Table 5.2, the participation rate for teenage males increased by nearly 2 per cent and accounted for almost the whole increase in the rate of unemployment. It follows that we need to look closely at the size of the teenage labour force and the level of employment since, by the Bureau of Statistics definition, unemployment is the difference between the two.

Table 5.2
Civilian Population Aged 15 to 19
Total and Percentage in Labour Force, Employed, Unemployed
Australia: 1966–81

August	Population (000)		Labour Force		Employed		Unemployed	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
	'000	'000	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent	per cent
1966	520	518	66.6	63.0	65.0	60.5	1.6	2.5
1967	524	515	64.7	61.1	62.7	58.9	2.0	2.2
1968	531	525	61.5	59.6	59.8	57.3	1.7	2.3
1969	542	534	60.4	56.5	59.0	54.5	1.4	2.0
1970	546	545	61.2	57.0	59.4	54.9	0.8	2.1
1971	560	561	59.4	54.7	57.5	52.4	1.9	2.3
1972	566	569	58.5	56.2	55.2	52.9	3.3	3.3
1973	581	577	60.5	55.0	57.7	52.3	2.8	2.7
1974	589	590	58.3	54.5	55.4	50.8	2.9	3.7
1975	606	598	60.0	57.3	53.5	48.7	6.5	8.6
1976	621	610	60.2	54.7	52.5	46.1	7.7	8.6
1977	635	624	62.1	57.6	52.3	45.9	9.8	11.7
1978	652	626	61.1	57.5	51.1	47.6	10.0	9.9
1979	655	629	61.4	55.0	52.4	43.7	9.0	11.3
1980	654	626	62.8	59.2	53.5	48.0	9.3	11.2
1981	647	620	62.3	57.3	55.1	47.3	7.2	10.0

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics.[20]

Note: ABS has revised its estimates back to 1966. Adjustments have been made, e.g. for teacher trainees who were included in the labour force prior to 1971 in the unrevised estimates. Small changes in definition occurred in 1975. A new questionnaire was introduced in 1978. Sampling error affects estimates at any time.

Employment

Teenage employment declined in the 1960s, without an increase in unemployment occurring, as a growing proportion of older teenagers remained in full-time education. This reduction in employment could have been the result of a reduced demand by employers for teenagers, or of a reduced supply of teenagers, or of a combination of both factors. As discussed below, the financial returns to a longer education in the 1960s seemed relatively attractive. This suggests that the increasing proportion of teenagers at school in the late 1960s should not necessarily be considered as hidden or disguised unemployment.

The importance of changes in employment in the 1970s to the emergence of high unemployment among teenagers after 1974 depends on whether we look at total employment, including part-time employment, or at full-time employment only. Total employment in 1978 was about the same level as in 1974, and much the same as in 1970. It might seem, therefore, that the explanation of unemployment lies not in changes in employment but in the rapid increase in the supply of labour after 1974. *Full-time* employment, however, fell by about 8 per cent in the period 1974 to 1978, while the rate of unemployment of teenagers looking for full-time work rose from 5 per cent to over 17 per cent. The level of total employment was sustained by a sharp increase in part-time employment.[21] This part-time employment was largely taken up by full-time students, leaving the impact of the decline in full-time employment to fall on the full-time labour force. Therefore, while changes in the supply of labour (especially of student labour) are associated with the sharp increase in unemployment after 1974, the importance of the decline in the number of full-time jobs cannot be denied. The growth in full-time jobs since 1979 has been reflected in the decline in unemployment rates of teenagers looking for full-time work.

The decline in full-time employment for females was much more marked than for males. There is an almost continuous decline in full-time employment of teenage females between 1966 and 1979, with the sharpest declines in the period 1974 to 1977 and in 1979. Full-time employment in 1979 was nearly 20 per cent below the level in 1974. For males full-time employment remained roughly constant in the years 1968 to 1974 (with a dip in 1972). It fell about 7 per cent between 1974 and 1978.

Adults as well as teenagers experienced a decline in full-time employment in the period 1974 to 1978. It is not surprising that teenage employment declined at a faster rate. What is perhaps surprising is the rapid expansion of part-time employment of both teenagers and adults. Richard Sweet (Chapter 2) has discussed some of the technological and structural changes that were occurring; for example, fast food chains and supermarkets adopted procedures permitting employment of casual, unskilled, part-time labour in line with peak demand. Such changes were undoubtedly designed to reduce labour costs, including industrial relations costs. In part, they may have been a response to the squeeze on profits caused by the recession and rising overall wage costs, but they were not a response in any obvious way to changes in wage *relativities* shown in Table 5.1. As already mentioned in section 1, many of the changes can be seen to have reduced skill requirements rather than increased them.

Teenage part-time employment expanded in wholesale and retail trade, whereas full-time employment contracted in areas of major clerical employment, such as finance and insurance and community services. Community services, which comprise health, education and welfare, are the major employers of persons with professional and technical qualifications. Higher educational levels required for entry to nursing have meant that would-be entrants spent more of their teenage years at school and fewer at work than in the past. This appears to be a factor in the reduction in teenagers as a proportion of the nursing workforce.

The changes in employment patterns do not indicate that a substitution of married women for teenagers has been occurring. For example, in the clerical occupations, where married women's employment expanded, much of the contraction in teenage employment can be attributed to technological changes, such as computerised accounting systems, photocopiers, tea making machines and word processors. This is not to deny that teenagers may have been employed in other clerical jobs—or a different form of technology employed—if married women had not been available.[22]

The Labour Force

The size of the teenage labour force is determined by the teenage population and its labour force participation rate. Population estimates (see Table 5.2) show that changes in its rate of growth have not been marked. Population aged 15–19 grew on average by 1.5 per cent per annum between 1966 and 1971, 1.9 per cent in 1971 to 1976, and 1.0 per cent thereafter. Only in the period 1971–76 did this match the growth in the adult population. However, prior to 1966, the 15–19 year population had grown very rapidly from approximately 9.2 per cent of the population aged 15 and over in 1954 to 12.7 per cent in 1966. It had fallen to 12.2 in 1971 and since 1976 has fallen to 12.0 per cent. While changes in demographic factors cannot be blamed for unemployment in recent years it is true that the proportion of the population in the age group remains high by past standards. A long-term decline in the proportion has now begun. A small annual decline in absolute numbers is expected until 1984.

Participation rates changed more markedly. Associated with the large proportion of the population aged 15–19 in the mid-1960s was a rapid decline in the proportion of that age group in the labour force. While the population grew by 8 per cent from 1966 to 1971 the participation rate fell by 12 per cent. As a result, the actual number in the labour force fell by more than 4 per cent. In the early 1970s the participation rate stopped declining and has risen unevenly from the mid-1970s. The result has been an increase in the labour force, on average about 2 per cent per annum, or over 20 per cent since 1971, compared with a decline in the late 1960s.

However, as already discussed, most of this reversal in trend in participation rates can be accounted for by participation of students in the labour force on a part-time basis. Table 5.3 shows that the rate of participation in the full-time labour force—employed plus unemployed—continued to fall until 1979. For males it remained roughly constant at around 52 per cent from 1974, but for females it continued to fall, unevenly, to a low of 42 per cent in 1979. Hence, there was virtually no increase in numbers in the full-time teenage female labour force in the 1970s, as the decline in the participation rate offset the rise in population. For males, the full-time labour force grew at roughly the same rate as the population.

Retention in Education

To seek causes of the changes in teenage labour force participation rates, it is necessary to consider full-time education as it is the major alternative to full-time membership of the labour force. Educational participation of teenage males rose rapidly until the early 1970s, but since then, except for 1975 and 1976, has shown a slight tendency to decline. Educational participation of females continued to rise rapidly in the 1970s and now exceeds that of males.

Changes in a wide range of factors can be seen as influencing participation in education; for example, the structure of the education system, attitudes of parents and children, family income, labour force prospects at various levels of education, costs of education and financial assistance.

Table 5.3
Percentage of Civilian Population aged 15 to 19 in Full-time Employment, Unemployed looking for Full-time Work, and in Full-time Education, 1966–1981

	Males						Females					
		Unem-		Education				Unem-		Education		
August	Employed	ployed[a]	School	Higher[b]	TAFE	Total	Employed	ployed[a]	School	Higher[b]	TAFE	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1966	61	2	31	*	*	*	57	2	24	*	*	*
1967	58	2	34	(5)	*	98	56	2	27	(3)	*	88
1968	55	2	36	(5)	*	98	53	2	30	(3)	*	88
1969	54	1	37	(5)	*	98	51	2	31	(3)	*	86
1970	54	2	38	(6)	*	100	51	2	31	(4)	*	84
1971	53	2	38	(6)	*	99	48	2	32	(4)	*	85
1972	50	3	39	(7)	*	100	47	3	33	(4)	*	86
1973	51	2	38	(7)	*	98	45	2	34	(6)	*	87
1974	50	2	38	(8)	*	98	43	3	34	(7)	*	87
1975	46	5	39	(8)	(2)	100	40	7	36	(8)	(3)	94
1976	46	6	39	(8)	(2)	101	37	7	37	(8)	(3)	92
1977	44	8	39	(7)	(2)	100	35	9	38	(8)	(3)	93
1978	42	9	38	(7)	(2)	98	36	8	38	(8)	(3)	94
1979	44	8	37	(6)	(2)	97	33	10	38	(7)	(3)	90
1980	44	8	36[c]	(5)	(2)	95	35	9	37[c]	(6)	(3)	90
1981	45	6	*	*	*	*	35	8	*	*	*	*

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Schools Commission, Tertiary Education Commission.[25]

Notes: [a] The unemployed category includes a small proportion of persons in full-time education seeking full-time employment. In 1980 persons attending secondary school looking for full-time work accounted for 1.2 per cent of males and 0.6 per cent of females. Persons employed part-time but who are actively looking for full-time work are excluded; in 1980 such persons represented 0.8 per cent of males and 1.6 per cent of females.

The unemployed category also excludes discouraged job seekers who total about 0.7 per cent of the age group.

[b] Higher education comprises universities and colleges of advanced education. Enrolment in business colleges are excluded from the table: they may total 1 to 2 per cent of females.

[c] In 1980 the school census was carried out in most States at the beginning of July, rather than the beginning of August as in earlier years. This tends to slightly reduce the estimated number in the 15–19 year age group at school.

* No estimates available. Estimates in parentheses are approximate.

Educational participation in the 1960s could have been stimulated by educational changes such as the abolition of the Intermediate Certificate in Victoria and by the introduction of an extra year of secondary school in New South Wales.[23] Fewer marked changes in structure occurred in the 1970s. Attitudes to education could have been affected during the 1960s by Australia's involvement in the Vietnam war. This involvement and the threat of the conscription ballot for males may have stimulated participation in upper secondary and tertiary education for a variety of reasons. Conscription was abolished by the Labor Government which achieved office in December 1972: 1972 was also the year of the peak in the retention of males to Year 12. For girls, enrolment may have been stimulated throughout the 1960s and 1970s by changing views on the role of women in society.

Various studies have shown a positive relationship between family income and secondary school retention.[24] One indicator of income, real average weekly earnings, was growing at about 4.5 per cent per annum in the late 1960s but a little slower in the early 1970s. It jumped sharply in 1974 but growth then ceased. The real value of average weekly earnings in 1979–80 remained at about the level of 1974–75. Gregory and Duncan[26] found a negative relationship between real average weekly earnings and labour force participation: the obverse is a positive relationship of earnings with educational participation.

The crux of the explanation of changes in school retention rates appears, however, to lie in changes in labour force prospects. But it is not just prospects of employment on leaving school that matter. It is also the prospects of employment after completion of a tertiary qualification since the majority of those undertaking Year 12 have, until recently, proceeded directly to colleges and universities. During the 1970s the number of jobs, and the incomes received by persons with tertiary qualifications, were moving in different directions for males and females. Similarly, for school leavers directly entering the labour force, movement in the job market for males and females were quite in contrast.

Income distribution surveys show a relative decline in the incomes of male graduates in the period since 1968–69.[27] The mean income of male graduates aged 25–34 in full-year, full-time employment, as a ratio of the mean income of males in the same age group who left school at 16, declined from 1.85 in 1968–69 to 1.66 in 1973–74 and to 1.51 in 1978–79. Overall, unemployment among male graduates remained relatively very low, but there are some indications of recent sizeable unemployment among 20–24 year-old graduates[28] and increased periods of looking for work. A rapid increase in the number of new graduates still seeking work at April 30 after graduation is shown in Graduate Careers Council reports for the period since 1973.[29] As early as 1972 there were indications 'that the seller's market for the services of graduates has now disappeared'.[30]

Females, however, may have been encouraged to stay on at school, at least until the late 1970s, by a strong graduate market. Females aged 25–34 with tertiary qualifications, in full-year, full-time employment in 1968–69 had incomes some 42 per cent higher than females of the same age who left school at 16. By 1973–74 their incomes were 67 per cent higher.

The number of jobs in teaching, the dominant professional occupation for females, grew by 27 per cent in the period 1971 to 1976. In the early 1970s the growth in jobs available to new teacher graduates was even faster because of very high resignation rates of teachers at that time.[31] Whereas teaching has recently represented about 5 per cent of the total employed female labour force (and nearly 7 per cent of those in full-time employment), it represented a much bigger share of new jobs during the 1970s. In the vicinity of 15,000 females were commencing pre-service teacher education courses in the mid-1970s, compared with about 110,000 female school leavers.[32]

Since the mid-1970s the growth in total numbers employed in teaching has slowed, though not yet stopped. Of more importance for new jobs, the wastage rate of teachers in government schools fell from about 13 per cent in 1974 to less than 6 per cent in 1980.

The reduced prospects of getting a job in teaching, together with the near elimination of teaching scholarships, has led numbers entering pre-service teacher education to fall (particularly in primary teacher education where over three quarters of students have been females) by 40 per cent between 1975 and 1980.

The conclusion is that, until the late 1970s, the rewards associated with tertiary education provided a strong incentive for females to remain to Year 12 but a weak one for males. On the other hand, employment prospects available to teenage females entering the full-time labour force were extremely poor. As already noted, their rate of unemployment is considerably higher than for males. Of those teenage females who do obtain work on leaving school, over 80 per cent enter clerical, sales or service occupations. Clerical jobs for teenagers have declined sharply in numbers, partly for technological reasons, and many sales and service jobs have been offered on a part-time basis to students. Employment of male school leavers was relatively much stronger, particularly in trade apprenticeships which are typically entered after Year 10. Apprentice award wages were, as noted earlier, sharply increased in the early 1970s.[33] Retention of boys to Year 10 continued to rise to an estimated 89.5 per cent in 1980 compared to 83.5 per cent in 1972. Retention to Year 11 remains at about its 1972 level, whereas retention to Year 12—which has had tertiary entry as its major purpose—declined from 35.7 per cent in 1972 to 31.9 per cent in 1980.

It may be worth considering who has been deterred from continuing to Year 12. It seems likely that some quite able boys who could have pursued tertiary education or sought white collar employment have obtained employment, including apprenticeships, at the expense of less able early leavers.[34] On the other hand, we have no evidence that working class boys have been deterred from continuing their schooling.[35] We may assume that most of the increase in retention to Year 10 that has occurred is due to increases in enrolment of boys from blue collar families: boys from white collar homes would already be attending to Year 10 and beyond.

Governments provide only meagre financial assistance to students to continue in secondary schools. The Commonwealth's Secondary Allowances Scheme had a maximum value in 1981 of only $660 per year, or $12.70 a week for a student in Years 11 or 12 whose parents have an adjusted family income for 1979–80 of $7,440 per annum or about $143 per week. Some 25,000 students or about 10 per cent of students in Years 11 and 12 were expected to receive some assistance under the scheme in 1981. The scheme was introduced in the 1975 school year replacing a competitive scholarship scheme. It may marginally have encouraged school retention of the poor.[36]

Financial assistance for full-time study in universities, CAEs and TAFE institutions was available at a maximum rate in 1981 of $32.20 per week for students living at home or $49.70 away from home or independent of their parents. About 40 per cent of full-time university or CAE students receive some assistance under the scheme. The TEAS scheme replaced a competitive scholarship scheme in 1974 and extended the benefits to full-time TAFE enrolment. Together with the abolition of fees it should have provided some additional stimulus to full-time participation in post-secondary education. From the mid-1970s, however, State governments began to reduce their provision of teaching scholarships:

> thus, of the total full-time (other than higher degree) enrolments in universities and CAEs in 1975, about two-thirds were in receipt of financial assistance and about half of those receiving assistance had the benefits of awards which were not means tested. By 1980 less than one-half were in receipt of assistance and four-fifths of the assistance was means tested.[37]

The net effect of changes in financial assistance on CAE and university enrolments since about 1974 appears to be negative; its effect on TAFE, for which no previous assistance was available, would be positive.

The form of government financial assistance popularly seen as affecting the behaviour of teenagers is the unemployment benefit. The value of the benefit for persons aged 16 and 17 increased sharply in the early 1970s as a proportion of estimated average earnings of employed persons of the same age: from 0.14 in 1971 to 0.22 in 1972 to 0.55 in 1973 and to a peak of 0.58 in 1975. The benefit has since been held constant at $36 and has declined in relation to earnings to 0.35 at the end of 1980.[38]

The unemployment benefit could affect behaviour in a number of ways. It does seem, however, that employment prospects, discussed earlier, are far more important in explaining the markedly different retention of females and males. If unemployment benefits were a major influence we would expect greater similarity in male and female school retention rates.

The increased value of unemployment benefits in the early 1970s does not seem to have encouraged the unemployed to refuse available work; if it had then the level of unfilled vacancies should have been much greater. It may have encouraged persons already unemployed to register for benefits,[39] though the increasing duration of unemployment would also provide a stimulus. The income test on benefits, liberalised late in 1980, may have discouraged full-time members of the labour force from seeking the increasing number of part-time jobs. The resulting availability of part-time jobs to full-time students may have stimulated the increase in their participation in the labour force. Tertiary students may have been encouraged to seek part-time work by the decline in financial assistance considered above. It is also possible that school and tertiary students would be preferred to unemployed of the same age. They may be of higher ability. They may also be considered by employers as more tractable, giving rise to fewer industrial demands than full-time members of the labour force.

Relevance to Policy

This chapter has argued that changes in employment prospects for teenagers have been the dominant factor in the high level of youth unemployment since 1974. The decline in the number of full-time jobs for teenagers during the recession after 1974 accounts for most of the unemployment of teenage females and a substantial part of unemployment of males. An increase in the supply of labour contributed substantially to full-time unemployment of teenage males. This increase in supply was due largely to the change from a rising rate of retention at school to a stable or declining one. This in turn can be attributed in part to the increasing personal cost of declining rewards to tertiary education. The relative strength of employment in trades and the improvement in apprentices' wages from 1973 may have been a factor in making apprenticeship more attractive. Stable if not declining family income, together with an increasing level of unemployment benefit until 1975, would not have stimulated school retention.

Part of the loss of full-time jobs for teenagers can be attributed to the rise in part-time employment. And in sales occupations it appears that many of the part-time jobs have gone to teenagers who are in full-time education.

This analysis of the cause of teenage unemployment differs substantially from what was called the neo-classical position. In neo-classical analysis unemployment arises because wages are too high or productivity is too low: Neo-classical economics is popular with government and corporations, Galbraith[40] argued, because it performs a legitimating function for the origins of inequality by disguising the non-competitve nature of much of the economy and of the labour market in particular.[41] As discussed in Section 1, I do not find the neo-classical position compatible with the evidence. I do not therefore believe that cuts in wages or new education programs in themselves would have much bearing on unemployment. What will affect unemployment is action to increase the number of jobs, to redistribute jobs from adults to teenagers or to reduce the teenage labour force.

Current programs to increase demand for teenagers are reviewed by Kirby.[42] They include the rebates given to employers of apprentices under the Commonwealth Rebate for Apprentice Full-time Training Scheme (CRAFT) and the subsidy for employers who provide training on-the-job to young persons who have been unemployed for four months or more in the last twelve months—the Special Youth Employment Training Program (SYETP). The CRAFT scheme may have been important in sustaining apprenticeship numbers relative to adult employment as it offset much of the relative increase in apprentice's wages that occurred in 1973.[43] SYETP is expected to involve 89,000 persons at some stage in 1981–82. It is funded at $65 million in 1981–82 and therefore should provide for an average of about 20,000 persons aged 15–24 to be in subsidised employment at any time. It is not clear that this 20,000, which accounts for about 1 per cent of the labour force of the age group, represents a net addition to employment as subsidised employment may partly replace employment of other young persons or adults. Concerns such as this, and dissatisfaction with the training component of SYETP, led the government to cut the program drastically in 1979:[44] expenditure fell from $82.6 million in 1978–79 to $25.5 million in 1979–80. Shortly afterwards the Commonwealth announced its funding of a Transition Program, beginning with the expenditure of $25 million in 1980. Overall, there was a sharp reduction in 1979–80 in expenditure on schemes directed to help promote youth employment. Despite increases since then, in real terms, expenditure proposed for 1981–82 was still below that for 1978–79.

The Transition Program aims to increase enrolments in schools and TAFE institutions, increase vocational education options and provide more effective guidance and counselling. As a program to reduce the supply of teenagers on the labour market, it is not likely to have a large impact. No funds are provided under the program for financial allowances to school students. Hence, its effect on retention of students at school will depend on the attractiveness of the courses developed under the program. For teenagers who have left school and been unemployed for more than four months, an allowance is now provided which is equivalent to the unemployment benefit plus $6 while they undertake a transition course in a TAFE institution. An estimated 20,000 persons aged 15 to 24, a much smaller number at any point in time, were to be assisted in 1981–82.

The major existing programs therefore appear to have a small impact on sustaining employment for teenagers and a small impact on restraining supply. Expansive macro-policy or assistance to labour intensive industries could have substantial effects on teenage employment. Specific job creation programs which include full- and part-time employment have been used extensively overseas and ought also to be considered.[45] If policies leading to an increasing level of employment in the economy lead to an expansion of the graduate market there will be a resulting stimulus to students to complete secondary school and undertake tertiary education. The effect will be to reduce the supply of teenagers looking for work.

More direct action on the supply of teenage labour requires expansion of financial assistance. At school level, the Secondary Allowances scheme was worth less than $14 a week in 1982 and was available only to about 10 per cent of students in Years 11 and 12.

Without the prospect of a job at the end of schooling and the incentive of financial assistance, I think it improbable that the Transition Program can have a noticeable effect on secondary retention rates or on the morale and attitudes of early leavers. I have already argued that, due to the low level of vacancies, the effects on unemployment, even of programs which are very successful in educational terms, can be only marginal. However, taken together with policies to expand employment and student assistance, policies to improve the attractiveness and relevance of the curriculum for potential early leavers are highly desirable and could provide a means to more satisfying participation in society.[46]

In conclusion, how can we explain a commitment of the Government to an explanation of teenage unemployment which, I have argued, is not supported by the evidence? The answer is suggested by Galbraith: 'We suppose that on social questions we proceed from diagnosis to action. But if action is imperative, we make the cause fit the action.'[47] The real cause of unemployment is a lack of jobs which the government is not prepared to tackle through, for example, fiscal or other job creation policies. It is therefore convenient to find a cause on which it is prepared to take action.[48] What is particularly suitable about blaming education is that it shifts responsibility for unemployment from government to teachers and students. And since it remains true that an individual student who improves his abilities or attitudes can often find work, the Government has had some success in shifting responsibility. In doing this it is aided by neo-classical economists who maintain that wages and productivity do (or should) determine employment.

Reference Notes

1. W.M. Corden. Wages and Unemployment in Australia. *Economic Record*, 1979, 55, 1-9.
2. 'There is nothing in the data or in common observation to make you believe that moderate excess supply will evoke aggressive wage cutting on either side of the labour market' R.M. Solow. On Theories of Unemployment. *American Economic Review*, 1980, 70, 10. See also J. Freebairn and G. Withers. The performance of manpower forecasting techniques in Australian labour markets. *Australian Bulletin of Labour*, 1977, 3(4), 13-31; and M.J. Piori (Ed.) *Unemployment and Inflation, Institutionalist and Structuralist Views*. New York: M.E. Sharp, 1979.
3. See, for example, G. Burke. Teenage Unemployment and Educational Participation. Paper presented at the 50th ANZAAS Conference, Adelaide, 1980. Contains a discussion of relative earnings of juniors and adults, and of the econometric analysis presented by W. Merrilees. Teenage Unemployment, the Role of Wage Rates and Other Factors. Paper presented at the 49th ANZAAS Conference, Auckland, 1979.
4. P.A. Scherer. Apprenticeship Training and its Effects on the Labour Market, in C.E. Baird, R.G. Gregory and F.H. Gruen (Eds.) *Youth, Unemployment, Education and Training*. Canberra: Centre for Economic Policy Research, Australian National University, 1981.
5. Teenagers are affected at different rates. As discussed in Section 2 the relative pay could be important for able teenagers. Incidentally, that increases in junior wages increased supply was found by R.G. Gregory and R.C. Duncan. High teenage unemployment: the result of atypical labour supply behaviour. *Economic Record*, 1980, 56, 301-15.
6. Australian Bureau of Statistics. *Earnings and Hours of Employees*. Cat. 6304.0. Canberra: AGPS (Annual).
7. 'Because underlying economic forces have been working to produce a relatively larger excess supply of unskilled and junior labour, there is in fact a question whether pre-1974 relativities are relevant to assessments about the economic appropriateness of current relativities. On the evidence of the unemployment figures it is clear that the rates of pay for juniors and the unskilled are significantly out of kilter with market clearing relativities'. Australian Treasury. *Job Markets: Economic and Statistical Aspects of the Australian Market for Labour*. Treasury Economic Paper No. 4. Canberra: AGPS, 1979.
8. J.M. Fraser. Prime Minister speaks on education challenge of the '80s. *Youth Affairs Newsletter*, March 1980, No. 9, p.4.
9. Australian Bureau of Statistics. *The Labour Force, Australia, March 1980*. Cat. 6203.0. Canberra: AGPS, 1980; the estimation is based on the results of this survey, which covers employers of perhaps 80 per cent of civilian employees.
10. In fact, achievement of pupils in South Australia may be a little higher than in New South Wales; see T. Williams, J. Clancy, M. Batten and S. Girling-Butcher. *School, Work and Career*. Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research, 1980.
11. R. Blandy. Youth unemployment. *Australian Bulletin of Labour*, 1979, 5(3), 19-29.
12. See P.H. Karmel, Chapter 1: Social Trends and Developments; Karmel, who advocates considerable changes in education still notes '... that the educational measures alone will not create more jobs, although they may improve the competitiveness of the young...'.
13. L.C. Thurow. *Generating Inequality*. New York: Basic Books, 1975.
14. Williams, *et al.*, op. cit.
15. Among those who hope that changes in education will improve employability very few advocate specific vocational courses in schools. See R.E. Smith. The U.S. Experience, in Baird *et al.*, op. cit., 7.2-7.17. According to Smith, the evidence is that 'Specific skill training for youth who are still in secondary school may not be very productive' (p.7.14).
16. See Karmel, op. cit.
17. See H.M. Levin. Youth Unemployment and its Educational Consequences, in P.H. Karmel (Ed.) *Education, Change and Society*. Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research, 1981, 207-30.
18. Australia. National Training Council. Youth Unemployment, mimeo, NTC, 1976.

19. Changes in labour force participation rates (the percentage of the population of a given age in the labour force) for teenagers are large, as shown in the third and fourth columns of Table 5.2. The *average* annual change in the participation rate for teenage males each year 1966 to 1980 was 1.45 percentage points.
20. Australian Bureau of Statistics. *The Labour Force, Australia.* Cat. 6203.0 and Cat. 6204.0. Canberra: AGPS (Annual).
21. The trend to increasing part-time employment is clear but its size and rate of growth might be considered sceptically. Household surveys probably do not measure accurately part-time involvement in the labour force. Surveys of individual teenagers in the USA indicate a much higher involvement in the labour force than the household survey (see R.B. Freeman. Labour economics. *NBER Reporter*, Winter 1978, 1-3). Data in Connell *et al.* indicate a much higher level of involvement of school students in Sydney in 1969 in the labour force than the ABS survey data, though the question asked is not identical; see W.F. Connell, R. Stroobant, K. Sinclair, R. Connell and K. Rogers. 12 to 20. *Studies of City Youth.* Sydney: Hicks Smith, 1975. Part-time employment rose from about 8 per cent of total employment of teenagers in 1970 to about 22 per cent by 1980 (about 18 per cent for males and 27 per cent for females). About 60 per cent of those in part-time employment are attending secondary school and perhaps another 20 per cent are attending post-secondary education full-time.
22. It is worth noting that teenage employment has held up in the metal trades while employment of adults declined.
23. There is a marked difference between States in upper secondary participation. In Victoria nearly 70 per cent of students remain to Year 11 compared to about 40 per cent in New South Wales.
24. For example, see P.W. Miller. The Determinants of School Participation Rates: a Cross-Sectional Analysis for New South Wales and Victoria. Paper presented at the Tenth Conference of Economists, Canberra, 1981.
25. Australian Bureau of Statistics. *The Labour Force* (Annual), op. cit.; *Schools.* Cat. 4202.0. Canberra: AGPS (Annual); *Colleges of Advanced Education.* Cat. 4206.0. Canberra: AGPS (Annual); *University Statistics.* Cat. 4208.0. Canberra: AGPS (Annual); Schools Commission. *Australian Students and their Schools.* Canberra: AGPS, 1979. Tertiary Education Commission, reports and selected TAFE statistics.
26. Gregory and Duncan, op. cit.
27. Australian Bureau of Statistics. *Income Distribution.* Cat. 6502.0. Canberra: AGPS (Annual).
28. Australian Bureau of Statistics. *The Labour Force, Educational Attainment, Australia.* Cat. 6235.0. Canberra: AGPS (Annual).
29. Graduate Careers Council. *First Destinations of University and College Graduates.* Parkville, Melbourne (Annual).
30. Australian Universities Commission. *Fifth Report.* Canberra: AGPS, 1972.
31. G. Burke. Manpower forecasting for teachers: performance and problems. *Australian Bulletin of Labour*, 1979, 5(2), 16–35.
32. Based on: Commonwealth Department of Education. *School Leavers.* Canberra, 1981; Tertiary Education Commission. Working Paper on the Supply of and Demand for New Teacher Graduates in the 1980s. October 1979, Table 9; and Burke, op. cit. Note that a proportion of the commencers were not direct from school.
33. See Scherer, op. cit.
34. Ibid.; cites evidence from New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania that is compatible with this hypothesis.
35. Alan Rice suggested to me that the changes in retention may differ by social class; see A. Rice. Educational Reform and the Question of Implementation. *British Journal of Educational Studies* (in press).
36. P. Davey. Financing of Education, in R.B. Scotton and H. Ferber (Eds.) *Public Expenditure and Social Policy in Australia.* Melbourne: Longmans Cheshire, 1978.
37. Tertiary Education Commission. *Report for 1982-1984 Triennium.* Canberra: AGPS, 1981, Vol. I, p.54.
38. R.G. Gregory and P.P. Stricker. Teenage Employment and Unemployment in the 1970s, in Baird *et al.*, op. cit., 1.1–1.50.

39. R.G. Gregory and P.R. Paterson. The Impact of Unemployment Benefits Payments on the Level and Composition of Unemployment in Australia. Discussion Paper No. 11. Centre for Applied Economic Research, The Australian National University, Canberra, 1980.
40. J. K. Galbraith. *Economics and Public Purpose.* Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975.
41. See Piori, op. cit.
42. P. Kirby. The Lessons from the Australian Experience: an Overview Paper, in Baird *et al.*, op. cit., 4.1–4.37.
43. See Scherer, op. cit.
44. Kirby, op. cit. has reviewed a number of studies of SYETP. Only a small proportion of positions were created for SYETP trainees. The large majority were existing positions or due to expansion and were redirected to the young unemployed.
45. See Levin, op. cit.
46. In developing relevant curricula, the broad perspective outlined, for example, by the Curriculum Development Centre (*Core Curriculum for Australian Schools,* Canberra: AGPS, 1980) and by W.F. Connell and P.W. Musgrave (Education as a Preparation for Adult Life, in Baird *et al.*, op. cit., 3.1–3.17) should be considered.
47. J.K. Galbraith. *The Nature of Mass Poverty.* Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980.
48. What Rice, op. cit. calls 'a transfer policy'.

6 A Psychological Perspective on Transition[1]

Keith Taylor

An Administrative and Academic No Man's Land

When the author conducted his first piece of 'real life' research in 1959,[2] his subjects were British Youth Employment Officers who were attending a training course sponsored by an unusual body known as the Central Youth Employment Executive (CYEE). Even in those days there was widespread agreement that young people needed expert help to assist them in their transition from school, but there was less agreement about who should be responsible for providing such a service. The central government department with an obvious involvement in youth employment was the Ministry of Labour (later to become the Department of Employment), but at the local government level a majority of authorities had decided that their Youth Employment Bureaux should be under the control of their Education Departments. Teachers and parents were happy with this arrangement, but employers and unionists were not so enthusiastic. As the transition from school to youth employment clearly raised both educational and employment questions, it was decided to create an administrative hybrid: and so, for many years, policies, practices, and training in this area were the responsibility of the CYEE, which drew its staff and resources partly from the Ministry of Education and partly from the Ministry of Labour.

This minor episode from the history of British public administration, leading to a typically British compromise, is told not for its own sake, but to illustrate the extent to which youth transition services have had to contend with an ambiguous official status and an ambivalent official appraisal. The situation is not very different in Australia today. The Commonwealth's announcement of its transition policy on 22 November 1979 involved its Ministers of Education and of Employment and Youth Affairs; and implementation of the policy by the States has usually drawn in another two Ministers and, so it is rumoured, been accompanied by some spirited in-fighting between the representatives of employers and teachers. Moreover, flurries of correspondence in the newspapers, and community conferences on youth unemployment[3] often suggest that education and employment are separate cultures which have different value systems and expectations, and which experience great difficulty in understanding one another. 'Transition from school' is also in an unclear position as a topic of academic concern. Holland, Magoon and Spokane make this point, but more broadly, at the beginning of their chapter in the *Annual Review of Psychology*:

> Only 15 years ago the study of careers was confined largely to the work of counseling and industrial psychologists and a small cadre of sociologists. In 1980, the study of careers is now on the agenda of every social science: economics, education, political science, sociology and psychology. Within psychology, careers are now studied by clinical, aging, developmental, educational, personality psychologists and others. At the same time, counseling and industrial psychologists have become more interested in social psychology, learning theory, sociology, and clinical psychology.

> This great expansion of interest has led to new knowledge, new perspectives, and also some unintegrated and uninformed effort. This diffuse effort has also made reviews like this one more and more an arbitrary task and less and less the review of a well-defined field that enjoys a consensus about its goals and subject matter.[4]

It is good when a topic receives the attention of researchers from a variety of academic disciplines, but unfortunate when their efforts are unrelated, non-cumulative, and, too often, merely duplications of rather pointless surveys. The report by Anderson and Blakers[5] makes it clear that the sheer volume of Australian research on the transition from school is enormous but unco-ordinated, so that a discussion from the perspective of any one discipline is very likely to be partial and parochial. Readers should bear this point in mind when considering this chapter, which concentrates on how more recent *psychological* theorising and research can be brought to bear upon contemporary aspects of the transition from school, and which has an unashamed bias in favour of Australian (and the author's own) research. Briefly, it will discuss four areas where psychologists have made some distinctive contributions: (a) the study of occupational choice; (b) the development of work values; (c) the psychological effects of unemployment; and (d) some implications of psychological research for transition policies and services.

The Study of Occupational Choice

The writer's first course in this area of applied psychology was provided for graduate students at Melbourne University in 1964, and it was entitled 'vocational guidance'. Although some time was used in reviewing the rather thin research literature which was available then, the course was mainly about the procedures which could be used to help school-leavers to choose jobs. Eight years later the title had become 'vocational psychology'. This was more than a cosmetic change, for an improvement in the volume and calibre of research, the publication of an encyclopaedic textbook,[6] and the founding of a quality journal (*Journal of Vocational Behaviour*), were all indicators that what had been little more than a set of useful techniques was now an area of serious and substantial enquiry. A third title emerged in 1978, when the growing threat of unemployment, and a new focus upon vocational adjustments at later stages in life made 'the psychology of employment and career development' seem more appropriate.[7]

Whatever terms are used to describe this area of psychological endeavour, its chief concern has been to investigate and explain how occupational choices are made. When reviewing the literature six years ago, the author[8] located a dozen theories of occupational choice, and there would be a larger number in 1981. There are, of course, similarities and even overlaps between the various theories, but there is an obvious need to reduce them to more manageable proportions. As the theories all purport to describe how individuals actually go about choosing an occupation in the real world, one possibility is to classify them on the basis of the point of view which they attribute to the chooser.

Adopting this stance, Taylor[9] argued that there were three major types of explanation running through the various theories:

> *Actualisation:* usually advanced by psychologists with counselling or even clinical inclinations, theories in this category claim that people move into jobs where they can meet their needs, maximise their potential, implement their self-concepts, and so forth. Such explanations have been criticised by Brayfield[10] for ignoring situational demands and for being pre-occupied with 'tender-ego' psychology. But their major point is a good one, that work presents many people with their best opportunity for achievement and self-expression.

Calculation: from the founding of the vocational guidance movement until the early 1950s, it was assumed that occupational choice was a straightforward matter if people had enough accurate information about themselves and about jobs. They would then decide upon a course of action by using a matching process and by working out the costs and benefits of possible alternatives. Differential psychologists have been particularly inclined to this viewpoint, which has also appealed to the well developed rationality of administrators. The matching approach can be criticised for ignoring choosers' uncertainties, emotions, and confusions, but the mere fact that every year millions of people seek occupational information, vocational guidance and counselling, suggests that such theorising is not totally unrealisitc and has an important point to make.

Destiny: usually preferred by sociologists and labour economists, these theories maintain that a combination of circumstances and accidents accounts for the occupations in which a lot of people find themselves. They just follow their families or neighbours, or peers, and do what they have to do. Such theories place heavy emphasis upon socio-economic determinants and the effects of socialisation, and they imply that factors of this sort grossly restrict whatever choosing and striving does go on. The trouble with such explanations is that they fail to account for so many exceptions: people with a 'rags to riches' story; those with almost unlimited opportunities who fail to settle in any occupation; and those who make changes within the social and economic limitations of their environment until they find some sort of vocational satisfaction. Many accounts of occupational choice, however, have virtually ignored the socio-economic context in which all choices are made, and explanations of this third kind provide a necessary corrective to such negligence.

Each type of explanation has contributed something to our understanding of occupational choice, but all have shared the fault of emphasising a few factors rather than adopting a wider perspective. Respectively, they have stressed emotional-motivational, cognitive-judgmental, and socio-economic influences upon occupational choice. In many theories, of course, there is an element of all three types of explanation. But there is a tendency for one or another to predominate, and therein lies a danger not only for researchers but also for those who are concerned with the making of policies and the provision of services. It is all too easy for them to be attracted to a theory of occupational choice which suits their assumptions or seems to fit their own experiences, and then to use that theory as a justification for their policies and services. Thus, those with a strong emotional investment in their own careers may be attracted to self-actualisation as an explanation of occupational choice, and may favour expansions in the provision of individual counselling. Administrators and planners, who are forced by their responsibilities to be unusually systematic and orderly, may like calculation as an explanation of occupational choice, and may then want to develop computerised vocational guidance systems. Destiny may appeal as an explanation of choice to those who believe that welfare programs aimed at individuals must give way to social engineering and reconstruction, and they may see some kind of youth contract or community youth service as a desirable policy option.

This discussion of theories of occupational choice would be unbalanced if it did not give closer consideration to the work of Donald Super and John Holland, whose theories have dominated vocational psychology in recent years and have stimulated both research and practice in Australia.

The publication, in 1957, of Super's *The Psychology of Careers*[11] marked a turning-point for all those with an interest in this area. His assertion that the choice of an occupation is a developmental process extending over a lengthy period, rather than an event at a fixed point in time, was an enormous challenge to the single 'crisis' interview during the last year at school, which was all that vocational guidance amounted to in most places at that time. Moreover, Super's argument that 'In choosing an occupation one is, in effect, choosing a means of implementing a self-concept'[12] had great appeal to a generation of guidance workers who were weary of administering a routine battery of aptitude and interest tests and then matching scores with profiles of job requirements. So, 'counselling' became the name of the game, 'testing' became a dirty word, and young people who sought information on pay or hours of work were encouraged, instead, to go away and discover more about their self-concepts.

Like other innovators, Super suffered at the hands of people who accepted his ideas with too much uncritical enthusiasm: but in recent years it has become easier to make a fair assessment of his contribution. The idea of vocational development has become firmly established, but it is more complicated than Super envisaged. For example, Kelso[13] has shown, using a large sample of Australian male high school students, that although attitudes to making vocational choices become more mature with age, the realism of vocational choices is more affected by the closeness of having to make a decision. Kelso[14] also demonstrated that transition points in school systems influence the emergence of stages in vocational development. So, some aspects of vocational behaviour appear to develop with age, while others develop under situational pressures. The dimensions of vocational development, and their manifestations, continue to proliferate as Super proposes new research programs,[15] but it is far from clear whether they are conceptually distinct, operationally separable, or practically useful. Describing vocational choice in terms of implementing a self-concept has enabled careers education and vocational guidance to become less mechanical and far more attuned to the values and needs of individul students and clients; but it has become evident that what psychologists regard as normal self-exploration and self-expression does not come at all naturally to many people. (The author remembers being told, by the wife of a student, 'The trouble with you psychologists is that you spend too much time peering up your own bums!'). Finally, Super tended to assume, as do most vocational choice theorists, that everyone attaches great importance to choosing a job, but more recently he has recognised that there are considerable individual differences in 'work salience'.[16] Currently he is co-ordinating a cross-national Work Importance Study, with Lokan and Shears from ACER making an Australian contribution, which should throw considerable light on this question.

Holland is best described as a modern differentialist. While not denying that occupational choices develop over time, and that they often provide people with a major means of self-realisation, he has insisted that we cannot ignore the basic question of what kind of work is suitable for what sort of person. Indeed, he has argued persuasively[17] that, despite recent advances in our understanding of the processes underlying such choices, most seekers of vocational assistance are concerned about what they are going to do, and most improvements in practice have resulted from better differential procedures.

The bare outlines of Holland's theory, which arose from his experiences as a counsellor and in educational research, are disarmingly uncomplicated. Briefly, Holland[18] maintains that people can be categorised as one of six personality types (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising or Conventional); that the dominance of environments by persons of one of these types, and by tasks and problems which they find congenial, means that environments can also be classified to these six categories; that individuals search for environments where they can use their talents, express themselves, and avoid tasks and interactions which they find disagreeable; and that the interaction between personal and environmental characteristics, defined in this way, determines individual behaviour.

Stated in such brief outline, the theory may sound like an over-simplification of life, but it has a number of features which have enabled it to deal successfully with a variety of complex vocational behaviours. First, the types arose not from armchair theorising but from a review and integration of the extensive literature on vocational interests and the characteristics of people in various occupations. Second, a sustained program of studies by Holland himself, and research by many others, have demonstrated that his six categories provide a highly efficient system for organising information on individuals, schools and colleges, occupations, work histories, and even US Census data. Third, Holland has characterised both persons and environments by a three-letter code indicating, in descending order, the three categories which they most resemble. By coding persons and environments in this way it is possible to have 120 combinations of each, thus avoiding the unacceptable assumptions that there are only six kinds of person and six kinds of environment. A fourth feature of Holland's theory arises from the finding by Cole, Whitney and Holland[19] that his six categories, as represented by the six scales of his Vocational Preference Inventory, can be mapped into a single plane in the approximate form of a hexagon. A knowledge of the interrelationships among the categories has made them much more useful than if they were seen merely as six distinct but unconnected filing baskets. Finally, the uncovering of this hexagonal ordering has allowed Holland to develop a number of secondary concepts which deal with the relationships within and between persons and environments.

The Holland theory has stimulated a great deal of activity among researchers and practitioners. It has led to more than 300 articles, reports, and dissertations in America, and it has also proved fruitful in Australian research. In an early study, Taylor and Kelso[20] examined the validity of the typology with a diverse sample of Australian tertiary students; and more recently the same authors used the ratings of a panel of psychologists to demonstrate that professional interpretations of the typology are borne out empirically.[21] Melamed[22] successfully used the theory with occupational groups which differed markedly in status, and Sweet[23] showed that there were meaningful relationships between the Holland type of secondary students and their work values. At Melbourne University a continuing program of research, known as 'The Melbourne Careers Project', draws heavily upon the theory. Nine hundred secondary students participated in the first stage of the project when they were in Year 10, those who continued at school were followed up in Years 11 and 12, and leavers took part in postal surveys after Years 10 and 12. At each stage of the project respondents' personal characteristics, educational preferences, and occupational plans, were assessed in terms of the Holland categories, which have also been applied to their leisure activities.[24]

There can no longer be any doubt that Holland's theory provides a particularly valuable framework for organising data about students and for examining and understanding their transitions from school. For example, data from the Melbourne Careers Project suggest that, contrary to frequent popular speculation, vocational choices are remarkably stable during the last two years at high school. About half of the project's respondents planned to enter occupations in the same category in Years 10 and 12, and another quarter made choices which were in hexagonally adjacent and, therefore, similar categories. Other findings challenge the common assertion that most adolescents need extended assistance in understanding themselves. Differentiation, which is Holland's operational definition of self-knowledge, increased significantly from Year 10 to Year 11,[25] suggesting that normal life experiences may provide enough 'assistance' in this respect for many young people.

This discussion of theories of occupational choice has been long and detailed. But policies and programs for the transition from school are always based on assumptions about the way such choices are made. Often the assumptions are unarticulated, or taken as 'common sense'. Sometimes they are justified in the sense that they enjoy empirical support. Frequently they are partly justified, but they are allowed to sweep too clean and to apply to all sorts and conditions of young people in every circumstance. Psychological research on occupational choice suggests that there will never be a universal principle or grand theory which can be applied to every case. But the various theories have produced an interesting variety of findings and insights which should surely be put to better use by those who are concerned with the transition from school.

The Development of Work Values

Some critics may argue that the preceding section of this chapter is largely a waste of time, because there is a widely-held belief that the old ideals of hard work, self-sufficiency, and repaying one's debt to the community (sometimes called 'the work ethic') have been massively rejected by the present generation of young people. But there are at least two important reasons for regarding this as a rather superficial point of view. First, historical and cross-cultural studies of work values[26] show that the work ethic was dominant for a relatively brief period, and even then it only held strongly for certain groups within the more affluent cultures. Second, complaints that the young are work-shy seem to have increased with the incidence of youth unemployment, whereas one would have expected them to have been more frequent, say, ten or fifteen years ago when labour shortages forced employers to retain even their least satisfactory staff.

Early investigations of young people in transition from school to work, in America,[27] Australia[28] and Britain,[29] generally reported that they were slightly apprehensive about the change, keen to make a good impression, and that they valued work both as a source of income and as an indicator that they were now accepted into adult society. However, data collected in Melbourne in the late 1960s suggested that the work values of young men were, by then, more varied than in previous investigations.

As a part of S.B. Hammond's longitudinal study of the development of a heterogeneous sample of males, Taylor[30] constructed a 33-item Work Quiz (WQ) which was administered when the respondents were aged 20 years. The WQ was not concerned with choice of a specific occupation, nor with job satisfaction, but with the place which work had in the respondents' lives and the values which they attached to it. Three orientations to work were identified:

> *Responsibly Committed:* based on items expressing strong involvement in work, for personal satisfaction and altruistic reasons (e.g. 'If a job is really interesting, I don't mind if it doesn't bring in a lot of money';'It is important that I feel my job is of real value to me and to society').
>
> *Traditionally Comfortable:* items indicating a desire for extrinsic rather than intrinsic sources of job satisfaction and a wish to maintain contacts with friends and family (e.g. 'Pensions, social and medical benefits, and good holidays, are very much the sort of thing that makes a job attractive to me'; 'I like work where I can carry on doing the sort of things I enjoyed when I was a youngster').
>
> *Passively Unconcerned:* items expressing a lack of enthusiasm for work and a rejection of involvement in work (e.g. 'I like a job where you never have to flog yourself'; rejection of 'I want to work where I can have a lot of responsibility').

It is important to make the point that each of the 322 young men who completed the WQ was scored on all three orientations, and most respondents' values included aspects of all of them. However, a cluster analysis of the WQ responses suggested that about half of the respondents were primarily Responsibly Committed in their orientation, rather more than a quarter were Passively Unconcerned, and just under a quarter were mainly Traditionally Comfortable. The three orientations were consistently and meaningfully related to many other characteristics of the young men including, for example, their evaluations of their school experience, their abilities and personality traits, their uses of leisure, and their opinions on social and political issues. Perhaps more importantly, the orientations had clear relationships with measures collected at earlier stages of the study when the respondents were aged 10 and 15. These findings suggest that young men's work values vary considerably more than many commentators realise, that they are influenced by early family and school experiences, and that they are 'of a piece' with other aspects of the men's characteristics and involvements.

Work values, then, may perhaps be best conceptualised as a specific form of more general human values. Feather[31] has suggested this approach, in describing two studies of the match between the values of individuals and of their environments. His use of the Rokeach Value Survey to explore educational values[32] might fruitfully be extended to work values.

The Psychological Effects of Unemployment

It may seem strange that a chapter on transition from school, written in 1981, has taken so long to deal with unemployment. The author can only offer three reasons for what must look like callous disregard of a serious social problem. First, although unemployment is particularly severe among young people, it must be remembered that about four-fifths of all school leavers avoid unemployment and transfer to jobs or to further education. Second, an understanding of how transition to work occurs may prove helpful to those involved in developing policies and programs to tackle youth unemployment. In somewhat similar vein, Marie Jahoda[33] used research on the motivation to work in her brilliant paper on the impact of unemployment. Third, our knowledge of the psychological effects of unemployment is not as substantial as many seem to assume, and on this topic it would be easier to write about what needs to be done than about what is already known.

The popular view of what unemployment does to people is well represented in the introduction to Keith Windschuttle's *Unemployment: a social and political analysis of the economic crisis in Australia*:

> The crisis has fallen most heavily on youth who have become the most disadvantaged, disillusioned and abused generation this century. The incidence of drug-taking, alcoholism, and other forms of escapist behaviour among young people has, as a result, risen abruptly... The slump has been a major contributor to the accelerating breakdown of family life and the falling birth rate. It is a main source of domestic violence. Unemployment is an important cause of crime.[34]

Windschuttle deserves great credit for assembling and integrating material on unemployment from an amazing variety of sources. But he often fails to consider their representativeness or accuracy, and too frequently he infers causation from mere association. It is clear, both from Windschuttle and many other reports, that poor physical health, psychiatric illness, broken homes, crime and violence, and many other human ills, often accompany unemployment. One interpretation is that unemployment is the main source of all these problems: another is that unemployment particularly afflicts those who are already underprivileged and perhaps at a disadvantage in a tight labour market. 'From them that hath not shall be taken away...', and those who are psychologically restricted and socially deprived find themselves economically in the 'under class'.

To be fair to Windschuttle, it should be admitted that many of the criticisms which have just been directed at him could also be aimed at the psychological literature on unemployment. There are fairly widespread assumptions that we already know a lot about the psychological effects of unemployment, that what we know rests upon substantial and technically sophisticated research, and that these studies almost unanimously reveal that unemployment leads to plummeting self-esteem, deepening depression, and accelerating personal and social disorganisation. In two recent papers, Gurney and Taylor[35] have argued that these assumptions are far from justified, and they have suggested some ways in which future research could make better use of psychological theories and methods.

Psychological research on the effects of unemployment is now improving in both volume and quality,[36] and it is likely that a more subtle and sophisticated understanding of this problem will emerge within, say, the next five years. But there has been little in the way of substantial research on the specific issue of *youth* unemployment. Commentators have been far too ready to assume that findings which were obtained with small and unrepresentative samples of unemployed adults (sometimes in a different culture and during the Depression of the 1930s!) must apply equally well to young people who have recently left school. Loss of a job or redundancy is taken to be the same as never having obtained one, and differences between generations in educational background, value systems, and financial support, are conveniently ignored.

Some recent Australian research by Ross Gurney[37] has produced findings which are not in complete accord with the widely-held view that unemployed school-leavers must suffer severe psychological damage as a result of their experiences. He gave questionnaires to 512 secondary students (mean age 16.5 years) shortly before they left school, and again approximately four months later. At the end of the four months, 220 of the leavers were employed, 53 had left school but not gained employment, and the remaining 139 had returned to school or moved into other courses of education or training. Altogether 22 variables were assessed, and Gurney's most general finding was that at the end of the school year there was no significant difference between those who were to become employed, unemployed, or returners: but four months later the returners had changed hardly at all, the unemployed had deteriorated slightly but not significantly, but the employed had made substantial and significant gains. Among Gurney's specific findings, two of the most intriguing are that those who found work showed significant psycho-social development while those who returned to school or were unemployed showed none[38] and that girls (but not boys) who found work gained in self-esteem, while returners and the unemployed (of both sexes) did not decrease in their level of self-esteem.[39]

Gurney has pointed out that his findings should be interpreted cautiously because of the relatively short period of unemployment experienced by his respondents (although four months was close to the average duration of unemployment for 15 to 19 year olds at the time). But the main conclusion which he draws is that 'unemployment has the effect of inhibiting development in school-leavers, rather than of inflicting trauma as is sometimes popularly supposed'.[40] It is interesting to note that Dowling[41] reported a similar finding, with his unemployed subjects (over a longer period than Gurney's) not showing the changes in work values which were observed in the employed.

When one challenges the received opinions about the effects of unemployment there is always the danger that one will be accused of being callous and, more seriously, that one's views will be misrepresented and misused by those who believe that the unemployed are all 'dole bludgers' for whom a dose of unemployment is a good thing. It is not being argued here that unemployment does no harm to young people, but rather that its harmful effects are more elusive and perhaps less irreversible than many commentators have claimed. It does not help the unemployed to have them believe that inevitably they will become drug addicts, develop housemaid's knee, and fall victim to every other misfortune before finally committing suicide. Prophecies of doom can easily become self-fulfilling prophecies, destroying hope and optimism which are so important to the unemployed. Those who are in sympathy with the unemployed, as well as those who are antagonistic towards them, must recognise their responsibilities.

Some Implications for Transition Policies and Services

Psychological research on occupational choice, the development of work values, and the effects of unemployment, all seem to make one major point for those who formulate policies and deliver services to assist young people in the transition from school:

'remember individual differences'. This point is so old and unoriginal that the author feels embarrassed that he has to repeat it. But ministerial pronouncements, discussions in the media and contributions at conferences keep overlooking this point, confidently asserting that one single habit or attitude or practice is *the* cause of all our transition problems. To be more specific, clever people who get to the top of the public service, or gain big research grants, or sit up late writing chapters for books, are dreadfully prone to lose sight of their atypicality and to project their unusual over-involvement in their careers on to the population at large. While not denying that work has an important place in the lives of most people, transition policies and practices which assume that most school leavers are intent upon actualisation, or that they have a predominantly Responsibly Committed orientation to work, are quite likely to miss their targets.

The theories and research discussed in this chapter can, then, help the makers and deliverers of policies to think more critically about what they are doing. This point was made in rather more detail in the Australian Psychological Society's submission to the review of the Commonwealth Employment Service.[42] In addition, the research on occupational choice and on work values could be put to good use in planning for, and evaluating the effectiveness of, particular transition services. For example:

Does a transition program lead to gains in participants' vocational maturity (one of Super's developmental constructs)?

Does a transition program lead to increases in participants' differentiation (Holland's way of assessing self-knowledge and self-confidence)?

Is congruence (hexagonal agreement between the Holland codes of individuals and their chosen jobs) strengthened by a transition programme?

Do work values, or more general life values (Rokeach), shift with participation in transition programs?

Is a transition program more effective if it concentrates on one or two areas of work, or if it 'samples the hexagon'?

Should measures of work salience be used to channel different kinds of students into different kinds of programs?

In more recent years, vocational psychologists have started to give more of their attention to the development and evaluation of new and much more imaginative forms of career assistance. The old-fashioned one-to-one vocational guidance interview, with the standard battery of tests, and the incomprehensible written report two months later, has long since had its day. Readers who are interested in these exciting new programs should read at least the first part of the chapter by Holland, Magoon and Spokane.[43] This interest in new treatments has been accompanied by the development of diagnostic procedures to uncover specific vocational problems and to identify which horses will benefit from which courses. Paul Power, of Melbourne State College, participated in the construction of a particularly promising diagnostic tool.[44]

Finally, the author would like to enter his plea that psychologists should be allowed to play a much larger part in the planning, delivery and evaluation of transition programs in Australia. The British Manpower Services Commission makes imaginative and effective use of its team of psychologists in research, information provision,[45] development, and operations. Australian transition services could benefit from a similar use of psychological skills and experience.

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7 School to Work Transition: Policy, Implementations and Some Outcomes

Patricia Pak-Poy

The Transition Policy

The statement by Senator Carrick in November 1979 on *A Comprehensive Policy for Transition from School to Work* affirms: 'The Commonwealth Government is concerned about the problems of young people in making the transition from school to work or further education'.[1] The Policy goes on to state that it aims to make unemployment 'the least acceptable alternative'.

In 1980 we are meeting the first generation of adults aged 21, and an even greater number aged 18, who have not experienced employment as we know it.[2] For the great majority of the 16.8 per cent of 15–19 year olds who are looking for work, unemployment is not an acceptable alternative. With only 30,000 job vacancies for a total 356,000 unemployed[3] there is very little choice involved.

The Government initiative will provide $150 million over 5 years for a Transition Program but the major cost will be the human and social cost to the Australian people of the experience of protracted unemployment.

Lack of jobs may not be the only factor determining whether an individual is employed or not but it is without question a significant factor. How to create more job opportunities effectively and in an economically responsible way must surely be one of the major challenges to the Government, its researchers and advisers; how to survive in the experience of unemployment is one of the major challenges for that very 'significant minority' of our people.

The Transition Program: Objectives

The School to Work Transition Program gives the policy concrete expression, supplementing other programs such as the Youth Support Scheme, the Special Youth Employment Training Program, Technical and Further Education. It can claim to be preventative in that it is largely directed at the schools and emphasises education and training as major thrusts.

Its objectives, not stated explicitly in the policy statement but cited, for example, in the chapter by Kirby (Chapter 3), are

to reduce the teenage labour market

to develop community support for the scheme and to change attitudes to 'early leaving'

to increase the range of options for the young to develop links between the education and employment sectors

to improve the capacity and potential of youth for the labour market

to encourage some reallocation of existing resources.

While the objectives are admirable and achievable, it is hard to see how they in fact address the question of unemployment and the depressed labour market. It may be that the underlying assumptions are questionable. The Program seems to assume that

unemployment is a temporary, short-term phenomenon, relieved by giving teenagers further training. Quoting from the policy statement:

> Our concern is the 50,000 young people who now leave school each year with poor employment prospects. We wish to provide appropriate education and training courses for them and also tackle the problem of those in the schools who are likely to be in similar difficulties when it comes their turn to leave.[4]

there are jobs waiting for students after the 'transition'

projects and programs are more desirable than structural change in the education system

vocational training is synonymous with technical training

the problem is mainly in the schools and in the students rather than in the societal system.

The Transition Program: Implementation

Funding

Availability of funds has provoked some serious thinking about the question of transition from school to work or to a no-work situation. Yet the amount of funds spread over all students aged 15–19 years is hardly adequate. People in the schools recognise also the great need of those who, having left school, are trying to break into the workforce. Increased funding is required if school leavers are to be touched in this or other programs. The 'no growth' policy is, in effect, a reduction.

Funding under this Program, like that under the other youth support schemes, is annual, while some projects have as short a term as 6 months. Biennial or triennial funding arrangements would allow for more efficient planning and administration. While the grants are relatively small, these arrangements may not seem warranted; yet schools should be encouraged to integrate their program funding into their budgets over a longer period to ensure that projects be 'continued' where this is appropriate and that the schools are able to carry the expense of the continuation through reallocation of existing resources. Most schools do not have much flexibility in their budgets.

Guidelines/Criteria

The guidelines focus on the 15-19 age group, with special applications to girls and students 'at risk'. The original definitions have been clarified and broadened but some questions remain:

Who is really 'at risk'?

Girls are generally more 'at risk' than boys. Twenty per cent of girls and 15 per cent of boys aged 15–19 years are unemployed.[5] Rural students are more 'at risk' than city students. Possibly the most 'at risk' are the hidden minority groups such as the minimally handicapped; the ones with no social influence or connections; the shy, diffident ones; those who no longer fit such as the pregnant schoolgirls; the too old, too expensive eighteen year olds.

What is vocational?

Five per cent of the labour force is in 'entertainment' (1976 census) yet some activities such as the performing arts would not find ready acceptance as 'vocational'.

How flexibly can the 'in addition' requirement be interpreted?

Some schools have already implemented effective work experience and counselling programs. Some offer innovative curricula with inbuilt adaptability to cope with changing needs. These schools are often more in need of funds that some of the less innovative schools just embarking on 'work experience' programs.

How much is the approval of certain equipment discriminatory?

It is sometimes difficult to understand the criteria for the approval of workshop tools and the non-approval of office machines.

In general the guidelines need to be more flexible both in formulation and in the interpretation. It is also important that the criteria be made known as clearly as possible to those interested.

Selection Procedures

The selection of programs for funding is done by a central committee in Canberra. Such selection is more effectively and efficiently done at the State level where local conditions are better known and the time between making a submission and its approval or rejection is reduced. There has been a move to 'localise' the selection procedure. Of course, it must be admitted that local committees may be subject to political vagaries just as much as a central committee can be.

There is also a need to encourage a diversity of approaches—work experience is not the only good transition experience—and to find simple tools of evaluation to be used by those operating the Program.

The Transition Program: Some Outcomes

The Program has been in operation for a year. Some States have taken longer than others to accept the Program and its conditions. The sceptics say, with truth, that it merely serves to distort the size of Australia's employment/unemployment problem. The objectives do not face squarely the fact that there are not enough jobs for the number of people seeking them.

As I see it, and this may or may not hold for all States, the Program has in fact increased the awareness of educators of the effects of the deteriorating economic situation facing us, even though there are some schools for whose students unemployment is 'not a question'. These schools have enlisted the aid of the parent organisations and ex-students' associations to help their students find employment. This is satisfactory for the students concerned, but does not make any difference to the numbers employed. It simply shifts the load, which becomes more concentrated on the more 'at risk' groups who have no access to such networks of influence.

The Program has also served to challenge educators to think more critically about how they are preparing their students for the workforce, and has raised again the debate on the function of schools as predominantly places of pre-employment. Some have responded by increasing time given to techniques of job applications, interviews, counselling and trade skills; others have been confirmed in their view of education as a process of learning for self-reliance and creative living. It is a healthy debate as long as schools and their staffs are open to change when it is needed.

The identification of those students most 'at risk' in particular schools has been a useful exercise. For one school considered 'academic', it is the group of 'just below average IQ'. For another it is the 'poor, Anglo-Australians', those who do not have the support of an ethnic community and its employment network. For yet another it is the 'migrant girls', those whose cultural background has tended to keep them within certain stereotyped occupations. It has been important that these schools have looked more closely at their total populations and the factors affecting them.

This has given rise to genuine attempts to identify the real needs of the students and to design some action even if funding has not been forthcoming from the Transition Program. Most of the action has been short-term, such as 6-week programs in 'transition skills'; some have been longer-term, such as widening the range of curricular offerings to help break the stereotypes of male and female roles and occupations.

Schools have made better use of technical and further education courses and have made contact with more employers and community groups. Better understanding between the different sectors in society is certainly helpful, especially in challenging one another to some effective action such as the better use of financial incentives offered by government and the uncovering of abuses to which financial incentives are prone.

In some schools, the Program has provoked changes in curriculum where no other factors have been successful in doing so, possibly because some limited funding makes the action feasible. Alternative courses have been introduced to give students wider choices; skills training and personal development programs have been enhanced, but as yet there has not been much evidence of change in methodology to develop a more active learning situation which can foster the self-confidence of the student from the beginning of schooling. Assessment procedures still condemn some students to the experience of constant failure. In some instances the very 'alternative' offered by the Transition Program puts the student at a social disadvantage in the school. Some schools have offset this by moving the Transition Program to another campus; others have concentrated on working for 'respectability'. In general, there has been little attempt at structural change in schools as yet, nor has there been any improvement in the employment situation for young Australians.

The Transition Program is a beginning but we have yet to see evidence of any real preventative measures or long-term initiatives. We need to look more honestly and more incisively at the total situation in which the Transition Program occurs. We need what Bronfenbrenner would call 'a transforming experiment'[6] which acknowledges the ecological factors affecting any particular symptom. It is futile and false to lay the blame for 'poor transition' on the schools when the major factors are economic and systemic in nature.

Related Social Priorities

It will be important for the Australian people, and especially the community of educators, researchers and policy-makers, to work towards

a better understanding of the causes of unemployment so that the individual does not carry inappropriate loads of guilt, sense of failure and frustration and so that the points of intervention and change may be more accurately identified;

the creation of more job opportunities in both the private and public sectors;

a better planning for technological change to reduce the human/social cost;

more accurate assessment of the labour needs of the nation and better manpower planning;

identification of the groups most 'at risk' and why they are so;

better knowledge of the ill effects of unemployment on our young (such as psychological and emotional trauma), and measures to prevent and/or manage them;

attitudinal change to work, to remuneration, to profit; to youth as a national resource; in youth towards creative survival and participation in society;

strategies for sharing the nation's wealth more equitably (The Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey showing 184,000 'income units' earning more than $600 per week, with 116,000 households and single income earners earning less than $20 per week, is alarming in its implications);

appropriate change in social structures to improve our way of living.

Each one of these areas has implications for the education system. They demand an examination of the schooling system and changes in the structures including curricular content and design, as well as methodology and administration. Such change is called for if the schools are to prepare students well for the experience of unemployment as well as for entering the labour force and for living creatively in the Australian society.

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8 Learning and Working: An International Perspective

Edmund King

The whole relationship between school (or college) and a working life is now in question everywhere. It is not just a case of a first transition from school to work, though that transition is still central to the learning-and-working relationship for most people. The real context of *all* school-to-work relationships is one of vast and rapid changes now, with accelerating and enlarging transformations ahead. These condition the relevance of any research, any expedient for transition, any preparation in earlier schooling or training, any formulation of policy.

These remarks are of course truisms in any country; but being a truism reinforces a statement, though its cogency and urgency may be overlooked. The risk is that in the particular matter of transition from school to work each state or research organisation may try to re-invent the wheel, or to use rough-hewn wheels when there are far better means of progression. Indeed, attempted progression may be in an irrelevant or impracticable direction. That is particularly likely in whatever pertains to the hazy boundary between learning today and working tomorrow. Willy-nilly, we are all dealing with education for uncertainty.[1]

Why that should be so is fairly obvious. At the learning end, the content of knowledge and its internal relationships (as well as the hierarchies of importance attached to its elements) are shifting from decade to decade. The means of delivery and sharing in knowledge have already been transformed electronically along the frontiers of learning; and with microprocessors and different locations of learning the dispensers of knowledge and the hierarchies of scholastic authority are visibly being re-assessed. Still more in question are the alternatives and alternations between the various parts of the learning-working-feedback interaction.[2]

At the workaday end, the content and utility of applied knowledge and skill are likewise in a state of continuous slippage as occupations cease to be, or alter their relationships with other employment and commerce, or demand new embodiment in alternative technology and different human contacts. It is almost impossible to exaggerate the speed, reach, and occupational or social transformations which by implication challenge even those professions and occupations which still seem stable;[3] and we know to our cost that—independently of technological challenge—inflation and government mis-management and international competition have brought severe unemployment to apparently stable industries and regions. When we consider the unemployment of young adults between the ages of about 16 and 25 (already in 1980 representing 47 per cent of all the growing total of unemployed on OECD countries), we see that the occupational outlook for those in transition combines both dire uncertainty about getting *any* job (in some regions) and the grim certainty of shifting from job to job or into and out of employment at approximately six-month intervals on average.[4] When we also add to the reckoning the hazy but significant sector of unofficial (and therefore unregulated, untaxed) employment, it is clear that the transition from school to work in even the most normal of today's circumstances in any industrialised country is quantitatively and qualitatively hard to research and almost impossible to train or educate for in once-and-for-all terms, or in any single place.

That is why a comparative perspective is so important. The unemployment and other uncertainties overtaking us are often attributable to international causes, such as wars which interrupt petrol supplies or quadruple their cost. Or less tangible events, like a religion-linked revolution in Iran or an ideologically based shift of power in China, may be of incalculable long-term consequence—not only in respect of any new learning-and-working relationship which may evolve there, but more directly in their immediate impact on trade and jobs in our own countries. Yet we often attribute to such international events (outside our control or the scope of our responses) changes and challenges which essentially arise in our very midst. By that I mean transformations of the technological/educational idiom[5] which served our industrialising past but which is no answer to the now foreseeable needs of learning, working, and living in an electronically dominated 'communications society',[6] where roles and responsibilities must be vastly different. So we are faced with a comparative dimension in technological sequence; we are also bound to see laterally that the world is a workshop of varied perceptions and responses to technological challenge in every learning-and-working interaction, which by comparative analysis or experiment may provide clues, if not solutions in our own sphere of enquiry.

I shall return to consider some of these aspects in greater detail, but at this point it is already clear that research itself must ask continuously different questions. Of course, every research project is based upon one or more research questions or hypotheses, each with subsidiary questions of analysis, and those in turn entail procedural hypotheses. But these must alter to suit feasibility or to match changes in the field of enquiry. In the learning-and-working relationship, the field of enquiry is undergoing amoeba-like metamorphosis not only because of occupational restructuring or technological transformation of work but because educational institutions are themselves changing shape, curricula and commitment very quickly indeed.

To meet the vast increase of enrolments—especially in the post-compulsory years—notable changes took place in many countries from the mid-1960s onwards, over and above the more general tendency towards the establishment of comprehenive schooling. I refer particularly to the division of the total secondary span into two phases or cycles, the second being often characterised by a new kind of unity and diversity so as to combine some specialised studies with a more general awareness of common interests in relation to the world outside. I also point (within that tendency) to the growing preference for providing 'young adult' education-and-training in *separate post-compulsory establishments* more concerned to cater for a *level of attainment and/or interest* than for a simply over-16 (or under-15) age-group. Thus the field of research is altering shape at the educational end—structurally,[7] conceptually,[8] or according to the proportions and aspirations of the population enrolled,[9] and not least according to the official acknowledgment (or otherwise) of the schooling/working membrane as a perpetually permeable one in both directions.[10]

Furthermore, our research commitment and methods (as well as the field) will vary according to whether we are dealing with the normal constituency of youth, or whether we are taking more account of minority interests and special cases. Yet at the same time, since we are also thinking of policy, it behoves us to consider whether we are right to classify the unemployed (especially the intermittently unemployed) as 'unusual'—when that state of affairs is now becoming normal for everyone[11] and is affecting middle-class and middle-aged people too. It is also necessary for us to make sure that hitherto specialised and therefore isolated bits and pieces of research are really collated and compared to reveal the *generic* features affecting all. One of the striking results of such comparative research—especially internationally comparative—is in revealing apparently distinctive circumstances and phenomena as really complementary to each other after all. That is a particularly cogent lesson for countries which, like Australia and the United Kingdom, tend to think of themselves as isolated and insulated.

A General Concept of Education and Work

Within the compass of a short chapter some facts or ideas must be presented in stark outline. Documentary support and illustrative example must be sought elsewhere.[12] However, it is worth recalling here that most scholastic institutions everywhere have a relatively short history in their present form, itself usually a by-product of the Industrial Revolution,[13] and that those same institutions constitute a hierarchy of often fixed access to recognisable categories of occupation. They process (or have processed) distinct groups of students along particular curricular channels past specific examination gates leading to foreseeable careers—usually permanent and assuring distinctive social status.[14] What I have elsewhere called the 'second technological/educational idiom' of expanded scholastic provision during the period of heavy industrialisation (now coming to its close) did indeed enlarge opportunities by wider social recruitment, by blessing training as well as learning, and by linking schools or colleges with an apparently wider range of career prospects.[15] But the overall emphasis has been on convergence and control of scholastic output-career input within planned or managed systems.

It is precisely this nexus which has been called into question with increasing emphasis since about 1965 on technological, social, occupational, and educational grounds. Indeed, the technological need alone for divergence, adaptability, and resourcefulness was beginning to be clear to forward thinkers decades before; but the quantitative surge of educational expansion for the masses masked that need. However, the vast and sudden increase in post-compulsory enrolments (doubling or trebling in many industrialised countries between about 1955 and 1975) by itself introduced questions of diversification to meet different educational attainments, aspirations and personality profiles as well as the social backgrounds and scholastic experience of populations hitherto under-represented at this level.

In the early 1980s it is worth while to examine these global proportions and to ask questions about their future. Around 1955, the number completing full-time secondary-level schooling to the age of 18 or 19 in the industrialised countries of Western Europe (like England, France and Germany) represented about 10 per cent or less of the age-group. By the early 1970s that proportion had reached almost 30 per cent in England, over 46 per cent in France and Germany, and much higher figures elsewhere. By the late 1970s they reached over 70 per cent in Norway, well over 80 per cent in the United States, some 85 per cent in Sweden, and 95 per cent in Japan (Britain still musters only about 31 per cent, and Australia some 35 per cent). Apart from the stunning observation that for the first time in history the *average young adult* is now in full-time formal education to the age of full legal majority in these countries—at a time when, for quite different reasons, traditional sources and forms of authority have been called into question by many older adults since about 1965—we are faced with the task of catering educationally and in terms of career orientation for an unprecedented number and range of interests and competences. Clearly, not for the same restricted range of learned professions. Nor in the convenient categories of skilled, semi- and unskilled sub-professions and employments. Even insofar as they remain recognisable, their proportions are shifting before our eyes, and recruitment to them is no longer confined to our own country (whichever that may be). Migration makes the labour market international.

Though educationally under-developed countries like Britain and Australia face the additional task of deciding policy and priorities for their average young adults still outside the scope of education and training to the age of secondary-level completion, all countries face the central question of rigidity in career preparation and expectation. As long ago as 1926, A.N. Whitehead, in *Science and the Modern World*, said: 'The fixed person for fixed duties, who in older societies was such a godsend, in the future will be a public danger'. Even in the educated professions experts now speak of the half-life of professional competence (the time taken before the graduation package is only half-complete, half-useless): five years in engineering, five in medicine, possibly eight in physics but far less in nuclear physics, and so on. On top of the problem of changing competences, we have the uncertainties of employment. Intermittent employment–unemployment periods of six months or so on average[16] for the youngest adults are still superior to the lot of those who in disadvantaged regions or communities go straight from school (often untrained) into long-term unemployment, or of those whose occupations collapse in middle age.

Though perhaps most people still think of any education beyond the basic level as being closely bound up with improved career prospects, there is evidently an increasingly poor fit between schooling and long-term job prospects; and that misfit becomes worse with educational expansion and industrial-commercial sophistication. On a global scale, and in some countries less developed than ours, we learn of 'the diploma disease'[17] and of graduate unemployment; but it is worthwhile to review the phenomenon in somewhat different guise nearer home. For many decades now, industrial–commercial expansion and growing prosperity in some regions of the developed countries coincided with the expansion of schooling (perhaps caused it); correspondingly teachers and others migrated internally from less occupation-rich regions (like Wales, Scotland and the rural parts of Australia) to serve in more prosperous cities and suburbs (which exhibited a mushroom growth simultaneously). OECD figures for the expansion of the service occupations sector during the 1960s and 1970s sometimes show a near-doubling of the immediately post-war proportions in some countries, and a substantial increase elsewhere. It has been said for a long time, for instance, that every top technologist requires five technicians; and similar hierarchies requiring sub-graduate support are found in commerce and other professions. Therefore it seemed that expanding mid-range occupations could take up the slack from the schools or training institutes' growing output—if only the latter had a sufficiently broad and flexible base for adaptability.

There was a time soon after World War II when it seemed that even unskilled labour could be absorbed by industrialisation. Thus northern Italy absorbed a great flow from the south; West Germany reached the point of having about one in six of its blue collar employees as guest-workers—and Sweden even more; Britain took in many thousands from the West Indies and the Indian sub-continent—so that now there are over a million Muslims in the British Isles. Unfortunately, internal changes within industry and external challenges from the newly industrialised countries, like Korea, the Philippines and Mexico, combined with world-wide recession to make less skilled workers' employment even more precarious than that of the previously native population in the host countries. To some extent the brain drain and the importation of already acquired skills by some countries still absorbs the over-production of unwanted qualifications in other parts of the world—while also masking the *under*-production of those same qualifications in the receiving countries; but the real reckoning had to come when, after 1973, the already growing dislocations in employment–unemployment suddenly burst in upon the juvenile employment field, revealing our chaos of unpreparedness for reappraisal of the education-work nexus in a long-term perspective. We need a conspectus *generic* enough to include the young adult population instead of a supposedly small population at risk.

If no more were at stake than the transition from school to work, it would still be necessary to take account of the feedback into school from the manifest uncertainties of the transition and its immediate aftermath. The youngest adults still at school or in training are well aware of uncertainties ahead—often more so than their teachers, from whose views their own ambitions and motivations are frequently and widely discrepant.[18] But in any case the equation of school output with occupational input has long been in question on other grounds than those of possible unemployment. 'Keeping the options open' became characteristic during the 1960s, even in courses and institutions apparently intended to lead head-on towards particular careers such as teaching. Quite apart from that, the need to find and cultivate different selves (an adult status, a sexual self, a social self, and so on) caught the attention of many educators; while within the field of professional/occupational training, more attention was given to the distinct aspects of practice, experience, social roles, co-operation and initiative, as well as to formal competence on the job.

In other words, latterday professional training acknowledges the need for continuous and multiple re-adaptation; a personal career path is to be mapped and successively developed in a structural and ecological setting beyond the ken of any school. That path is no longer measured only or mainly by occupational considerations, especially by the young.[19] Furthermore, this whole complex of rethinking affects the approach to adult life in all countries undergoing the transition from heavy industrialisation and concentric urbanism towards a microprocessor-linked and post-industrial pattern of occupations. As I have said elsewhere, it is symptomatic of a 'third technological/educational idiom'[20] that is fast becoming the language of life for young adults—the frontier population[21] already exploring tomorrow's world of working and learning. Since this change of perspective affects most if not all job prospects now, it will be advantageous to look generically at young adult expectations of education and work.

Young Adults in Transition

Young adults over the age of 15 or 16 (and even younger) are *all* in transition. It was pointed out above that the *average, normal young adult* in developed countries is now in full-time formal education or training to the age of 18. When we add to that enrolled number those who are in part-time or informal work-preparation (including sandwich or co-operative programs, distance education and apprenticeships of a formal or informal kind), it is plain that we must see post-compulsory education as a generic whole affecting our entire population—especially as there is an increasing need and possibility of returning to learn *at that level* if not at that age. Immense upheavals in employment/unemployment prospects affecting all or average young adults have been examined by OECD[22] and others[23] to reveal the precarious connection between the juvenile period of schooling and long-term prospects of employment. 'Young adult education' in the immediately post-compulsory phase is a fresh concept that since the early 1970s has been increasingly recognised as generically helpful in the reconsideration of all education beyond the most basic;[24] and now the contextual uncertainties of the job market make it imperative that we always consider post-compulsory education in intimate connection with its key relationship to work or the lack of it.

We can no longer think of the unemployed as equivalent to the abnormal, much less as somehow reprehensible or ineducable. We need to see the young unemployed in Australia or anywhere else as part of the problem of *growing and persistent* unemployment everywhere, affecting well-schooled youth, middle-class youth, and even middle-aged people. That situation is a consequence of structural changes in all (or most) employment in all countries, accentuated by the redistribution of the world's centres of industry and commerce and by technological transformation of the types of occupation henceforth needed. In addition, socio-political demand for participation in management, profit-sharing, and the paid educational leave now legislated for in many countries necessitates great shifts in the links between education and careers. Certainly there can no longer be any assurance of life-long or full employment for all—especially with the familiar status and rewards of the past. Work-sharing, as well as altered roles between the sexes and different age-levels, is a necessary part of the prospect to be assessed. Alternation of many kinds will affect many careers.

The transition in view from the young adult standpoint, therefore, is by no means a single step or stage. It entails recurrent education of types seldom included within the purview of much writing on that theme during the 1950s and later—not merely to keep pace with the growing maturity of the learner's interests or to satisfy his needs as and when some crisis or enthusiasm arises along his path, but more particularly to keep him prepared for working circumstances which are as yet unforeseeable, but which at the time of their occurrence may affect a very large number of his contemporaries—of all ages and backgrounds.

Hence we must envisage a radical restructuring of education with this end in view. During the period of compulsory school a basic foundation of a different type from the present one is required. Its essentials will be: to know the world and how we 'work'; to know how to find our way around in it; to know that we can and must re-make it continuously; and to know the necessity for, and means of, re-learning—especially in concert or comparative dialogue with others. Much more than school will be engaged in this basic phase of education: family, community contacts of many kinds (including a real awareness of the world of work), and a live network of multi-media reinforcement are needed in support.

For 'young adult' reorientation it may be necessary—according to maturity—to develop a different style even before compulsory education ends. Obviously, some countries introduce work-experience schemes, visits, exchanges, or schooling/training for part of the time in different locations. Here I do not wish to endorse or condemn any such program, but only to sound the cautionary note that most such schemes have been intended in the past for reluctant learners, the less able, or the lower orders. Other programs have had a manpower emphasis, or (insofar as they were generally educative) have had the labour market orientation (as in Sweden) which made many people think they were—so to speak—vestibules to an initial transition to employment. Most such schemes have had limited vision, poor teaching, and low status.

What we have to think of is multi-purpose, long-term opportunities for widespread reorientation at the 'young adult' *level* as well as for those just beyond the age of compulsion. The accent is much more on a fresh start, with new emphases, topics and motivations to suit fresh constellations of interest, together with a wider range of teaching resources and personnel. No school or college system in the world has yet achieved satisfactory provision for the whole range of needs introduced by present occupational/educational developments at this level, because that whole range has not yet been recognised in either its present reality or its manifest consequences. Today, in important ways, all students are 'new'; all learn in new ways with new contacts, and all teach others in some measure as they learn. They are certainly in contact with realms of experience and concern unprecedented in previous periods of learning, and they very often know it.

Yet this central perception of post-compulsory *educational* needs and opportunities in full interaction with changing occupational patterns is hindered in various ways, according to the country concerned. Some countries still distinguish between ministries (or departments) responsible for education and those responsible for training; indeed, there are sometimes different ministries (like Agriculture, Commerce, etc.) for different parts of that training. More frequently, schools for academic education are differently administered, financed, and staffed from those charged more obviously with job-preparation. Recently the traditionally responsible authorities for education have been by-passed or superseded in important work-related programs by public agencies enjoying better resources and more influence: for example, the Manpower Services Commission in Britain. Alternatively, consultative or advisory bodies are set up to modernise preparation for special branches of employment (for example, for technicians or for business) and in doing so distract attention from the fundamental need for an overview. The extreme variety of these arrangements attests both the hasty, *ad hoc* patchwork of administration and the lack of concerted study of problems which centre around the worldwide need to relate education rationally to its changing interface with work.[25]

On the other hand, some responses and expedients seem to 'add up' when an internationally comparative overview is attempted. One of the most promising developments has been the move towards the sixth form college or tertiary college for the over-16s in England and Wales. This means distinct, comprehensive provision for *all* between the ages of about 16 and 18 or 19—and for returners at that level also—no matter whether students are preparing for university-oriented examinations, for other qualifications and professions, or for jobs and satisfactions of a lower order. An adult atmosphere prevails, while the reality of others' experiences and needs contributes a real picture of the world. Students may be full- or part-time; they have the chance to follow courses at different levels (even for one and the same person), and at different paces. There is a much wider spread of optional subjects than at any previous institution, and in different constellations of interest, with emphases to suit the student's expected outcome. Society, the family, business, law, health, children's development, personal relations, and many other interests form the focus of some students' learning, and thus find their way into the common courses or discussions arranged for all.

Though the first two such establishments began only in 1968, well over 120 were working or in the process of organisation ten years later; and in 1981 the Macfarlane Committee recommended that, wherever possible, the separate college for the over-16s should henceforth be the normal provision.[26] An attempt was made to scotch or modify the Macfarlane Report (by a faction including the Prime Minister and other ministers, according to the most serious newspapers); but local education authorities, who have had very successful experience of running the colleges, combined with educational experts on the Committee to rebut the rearguard. In some cases these colleges also act as community centres to welcome a wide range of social, recreational, and aesthetic interests—especially in the evenings, but sometimes in the daytime too. Yet the academic success of the colleges has been notable, and their retention power and follow-up also attest another aspect of educational effectiveness. The colleges have the administrative attractiveness of being cheaper to run than so many small sixth forms comprising the last two or three years of secondary school, and they are generally free of the frustrations and discipline problems of school.

The post-1971 development of the Swedish *Gymnasialskola* (comprehensive upper-secondary school for the over-16s) resembles this trend in some ways; but the previous formality of teacher–student relationships in Sweden and the small extent of corporate life in Swedish schools make that a less distinctively 'young adult' college. Nevertheless, in terms of curricular co-ordination and multi-purpose intent, this is a far more inclusive type of comprehensiveness than previously obtained, and the Swedes have been particularly realistic in relating the perspectives of these schools (and of higher education and adult education too) to the present and foreseeable realities of employment/unemployment. The inclusion of technical and vocational education into the upper-secondary cycle in both Sweden and Norway has broadened the notion of general education for even those students on academic courses, and has also enlarged scope for the former in higher education. Indeed, Swedes speak of a vocational renaissance and also say that students in or returning to post-compulsory education very often prefer to follow courses of social relevance. Norway is in the full flush of transition from a differentiated upper-secondary school; but the new comprehensive colleges will doubtless have a similar effect to the Swedish.

In some German Länder a comprehensive *Kolleg* has been set up, but only here and there; and even the relatively few comprehensive or 'additive' (multilateral) schools lack a complete vocational component because, alongside some 31 per cent of the 16–19 age-group enrolled in either academic or pre-professional studies, there are almost 70 per cent attaining full- or part-time vocational courses in the so-called 'dual system' (young Germans not in full-time schooling beyond the age of 16 are required to attend *Berufsschulen* on a part-time basis while employed—and often training in an apprenticeship—in a firm). Despite frequent recommendations in many countries that all upper-secondary level education and training should be combined or at least co-ordinated, the existence of deeply entrenched older patterns and qualifications has severely restricted implementation except on a local or experimental basis (as is perhaps the case in Australia, with the exception of Tasmania and the ACT). Nevertheless, the overall tendency towards comprehensiveness at the upper-secondary level—very often accompanied by accommodation in separate premises which make provision at that level more like a 'young adult' provision—is either already in process or else recommended or planned for, as is shown by a succession of Country Reports to Council of Europe conferences and also by separately published development programs for education in the perspective of a rapidly changing technological and social context.[27]

A generation or two ago, before the huge expansion and internal readjustments of post-compulsory education, it was perhaps understandable that general and vocational education should be kept distinct—but only by disguising the effectively pre-vocational quality of advanced school studies in science and mathematics (or even Latin—a prime selector in some continental European countries and their inheritors in other parts of the world). It was probably true then that most older students at school had little contact with a working life or, for that matter, with their contemporaries following different studies at the pre-university or higher education level—that is, if we look at the global picture. Yet it has long been the custom in the United States, for example, that high school and college students should obtain paid employment in vacations, at the weekends, or even concurrently with attendance at school. Garages, catering establishments and other enterprises have been run with substantial reliance on this extra-scholastic labour. It has been frequently overlooked, however, that the daily program of continental schools in Europe is usually confined to the mornings, and that a large proportion of less well-to-do students supplement the family income by sharing in the labour of its shop, farm or other enterprise, or by paid employment outside. The expansion of school enrolments, combined with the growth of the tax-avoiding informal sector of enterprises, has increased the work-experience of a larger percentage of them. It has also made other students more aware of the work-horizon. On the other hand, such experience is often mis-educative in the sense that the dreariest jobs and corner-cutting enterprises provide it. However, feedback into school from the world of work does come increasingly from personal experience, from fellow students, and from outside contemporaries far less isolated in today's pop culture than previously. So in this and several other senses the whole transition period of post-compulsory education may be thoroughly permeated by work awareness, often in ways that educators might regret.

We must be realistic too about most vocational and pre-vocational instruction. Not only is it often stigmatised by its decrepit premises, worse-qualified teachers, and otherwise rejected students; its programs are often cluttered with outmoded minutiae of knowledge and repetitious skill-practice obsolete or obsolescent today. Some of these simply serve the restrictive intentions of trade unions long ago, to cut down somehow the number of candidates accepted. They are thus on a par with requiring Latin to undertake studies in physics at Cambridge. Insofar as they might be justified for part of their intrinsic content they are often extremely formal and unnecessarily lengthy; they are also over-specialised, in the main. (These remarks are as true of the USSR and West Germany as they are of Italy.) The growing tendency in some countries to grant equivalence (for university entrance purposes, and similar) to technical/vocational studies has caused many of the latter to be padded out and extended in length.

To remedy this situation at least in part, several expedients have been attempted. First, for the real core of skills required, a much shorter (for example, a one-year) program was successfully recommended for Italy by OECD.[28] It is noteworthy that this was taken up by the Ministry of Labour and not the Ministry of Public Instruction. In Britain, in contrast with this short-term, high specificity, the Department of Education and Science and the Department of Industry combined in a study of Unified Vocational Preparation (UVP from 1976) intended as a multi-purpose basis for later specificity and also for later adaptation of knowledge and skills acquired. The Technician Education Council (TEC since 1973) and the Business Education Council (BEC since 1974) have with checkered success attempted to combine common with disparate elements of preparation for these careers. Similarly, the French have paid much attention (in theory rather than successfully achieved practice) to 'polyvalence'—a common core of central knowledge and skills (combined with a broadly educative content) surrounded by an increasing range of technical/technological options with certificates and diplomas up to and including the *baccalaureate*, which now has some twenty options on the technical/technological side alone.

Despite the intentions of reformers, and in addition to the persistent disdain marring attempts to secure acceptance for work-linked education, employers and parents as well as students are often sceptical of the practicability of innovations. To ensure wider acceptance, more practical attention must be paid to the implementation of proposals for 'qualifications in two or three tiers' and to training by a sequence of 'cashable units', permitting candidates to move up or sideways from lower-level certificates to higher-order diplomas or even degrees of university standard according to a worker's readiness, after varying periods of employment or life-experience (for example, as a mother). Though some progress has been made in this direction in some countries (sometimes aided by distance education, and sandwich or co-operative education, and facilitated in some instances by paid educational leave) there is a long way to go before intermittent transition from a modest school-leaving level to high professional status can become a realistic prospect for more than a tiny minority. Yet if we can see that the problem of achieving this aim is closely akin to the problem of continuous up-dating and job reorientation in a period of headlong technological change, we shall come closer to understanding the problems of transition to (and from) employment/unemployment in a way appropriate to our times.

Practical Prospects

Examples of innovation and experiment already given are not projects or proposals but working models to suit particular contexts and circumstances. Nevertheless, the 'young adult' age-group all over the world needs to be catered for urgently and in global terms. Local adaptation is of course essential for educational success; but the time has long gone when parochial perspectives could suffice for any diagnosis, while *ad hoc* expedients may do harm or distract from reality in the long run. A world-wide perspective is the first essential. That is particularly necessary for planners; but hardly less necessary for *all* teachers. The cultivation of that awareness is a top priority for all the media, and most directly for in-service retraining of all personnel connected with young adults. The latter, in their frontier position, see most clearly the transition in which we are all involved—a transition from an older style of learning and working to a quite different era of employment.

The new provision for transition envisaged here at the post-compulsory level is a take-up zone for all as well as a direct induction into immediate employment, if that can be found. While emphatically recommending a 'young adult' college style for the supposedly superior student as well as for the average young person and the returner, I of course have in mind the reluctant learner and the previous failure too. If the enrolled percentage in a country suddenly rises from, say, 25 per cent to 50 per cent or more, those coming in for a fresh start (even if able) need special presentation and supplementation. Examples given as part of the instruction must be closely related to experience—perhaps with quite altered emphases in importance. It has become clear in practice—for example, in the learning of science or the completion of an elementary school program by people who left school prematurely[29]—that many hitherto unsuccessful learners respond very well to 'young adult' treatment. Indeed, positively antagonistic delinquents and drop-outs have been wooed and won by this means in the Netherlands and Sweden.[30]

In this connection it may also become obvious that subjects and skills usually thought of as beyond the competence of average or below-average learners in school (such as mastery of a foreign language) are learned readily enough in the right conditions. (How else could the millions of migrant workers get by, even in unfavourable conditions?) Beyond the acquisition of knowledge and skill, of course, there is the immense advantage of being socialised, and being welcomed into the great conversation of mankind. Work-and-life experience has too long been considered a thing apart from the educational process. Now, however, the experiential dimension is acknowledged to be integral to it; but that dimension will not be brought into the general vision until those returning from work or domestic experience (for example) are made competent and confident enough to contribute to it. This is a major part of education for a working life, both before and after any initial transition. The growing demand (and provision) for industrial democracy and worker participation in management is significant in the perspective of a developing communications society;[31] but it is also an inevitable consequence of living in an uncertain world where the previous authority of experts and precedents is inadequate as a basis for future policy.

One topic not so far mentioned is the retraining of unemployed youth. While there is no doubt that short, intensive courses of retraining for any kind of unemployed person is better than neglect (if there are jobs available at the end of it), it is unfortunately true that the question—training for what?—often reveals the answer to be dubious or negative, either in the long term, or locally, or in the possible disruption of the trainee's role in his community. Attempts to guarantee either a job or a period of training for young adults between the ages of perhaps 16 and 25 (as in Sweden) are incompletely successful for reasons sometimes obvious; but much comparative information and research on this thorny problem is still needed.

A difficulty sometimes raised related to the availability of cash for programs of re-education. Very often, however, premises and programs used for one kind of education could be modified without much difficulty for this purpose; or the now available resources of finance and personnel could be better used. In some countries (for example, Brazil), government failure to provide industrial or pre-vocational training has prompted the big firms themselves to initiate widespread programs of industrial apprenticeship, though there are manifest limitations to any such system of house training; and of course the Loi Astier of 1919 in France, requiring firms to pay a small tax for training purposes, has in the long run stimulated a wide range of vocational and technical preparation—often with very impressive equipment and premises. In Britain, by contrast, several attempts at legislation for Industrial Training Boards and the like have turned out to be ineffective, despite the development of TEC, BEC, and UVP referred to above. The cost and difficulty of introducing a comprehensive national scheme, supported by a co-ordinated network of all resources (including the broadcasting systems and tele-communications) should be calculated against manifest costs of unemployment. By 1978 unemployment cost Britain more than £4,000 million a year—a little under 7 per cent of all public spending. By the mid-1980s, it is estimated, the cost will be more than £7,000 million. The Secretary of State at the Department of Industry, Mr John Biffen, recently admitted that each unemployed man with a family cost the state nearly £6,000 a year—in lost revenue, benefits, and free school meals and milk.[32] Naturally, the costs beyond cash (in unproductive manpower, in personal and social frustration, and in the negative learning of everyone in contact with such tragedies) are incalculable.

We should not, however, underestimate the difficulty either of providing comprehensive coverage of the education necessary for the many transitions between school or college and work (in both directions), or of introducing new perspectives on the entire relationship between humanity in education and humanity at work. From Robert Owen, through Marx, Kerschensteiner and Mao, a new gospel of learning and working has been preached, with few conversions. A remarkable chapter by Joseph Zajda in *Education in the USSR*[33] displays at the same time the elaborate mechanisms and firm commitment to a 'civilisation of work' which a totalitarian state makes use of, together with the rugged persistence of 'pre-revolutionary, bourgeois' preferences. Yet even in the Soviet Union notices command us to 'learn to live with automation'. If we have not gone so far yet, we are already being compelled to learn to live with the repeated unemployment, job-changes, and apparently inevitable changes of life associated with the recent past of world upheavals and the micro-processor revolution on our doorstep.[34]

Nothing short of an internationally comparative survey can reveal the relevant data of our context and prospects. Nothing less than international co-operation for research, policy formation, and evaluation of implementation can make sense of even local problems and remedies proposed. Within each country and local context too, the full incorporation of evidence and experience from hitherto untapped sources is essential to proper understanding. And—since we must begin somewhere—the most promising area for insights and a reform of provision seems to be in post-compulsory education, where the expanding horizon of today's transition is so clearly seen.

Reference Notes

1. See E.J. King (Ed.). *Education for Uncertainty*. London: Sage, 1979; especially my chapter on Post-Compulsory Education—The Frontier of Uncertainty; also my chapter, Education for a Communications Society, in E.J. King (Ed.). *Reorganizing Education—Management and Participation for Change*. London: Sage, 1977.
2. See E.J. King. Education's steps towards computer-assisted learning. *European Journal of Education*, 1980, 15, 125-38.
3. References for evidence on such challenges are given in the article just referred to, pages 132 and 133. Among the most striking are two articles in *Le Nouvel Observateur* (Paris) on 4 December 1978 entitled 'L'âge d'or du chômage' (Unemployment's golden age) and 'Voulez-vous vivre sans travailler?' (Are you willing to live without working?).
4. See, for example, E.J. King. Youth Unemployment—diagnosis of a stubborn problem. *OECD Observer*, July 1980, 105, and previous OECD publications on this theme.
5. See E.J. King. *Other Schools and Ours*. 5th Ed. Eastbourne and New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979, p.36ff.
6. Ibid., and King. Education for a Communications Society.
7. For example, in the sixth-form colleges and tertiary colleges described below. See also the section on Post-Compulsory Education in *Other Schools and Ours*, p.245ff. Also E.J. King, C.H. Moor and J.A. Mundy. *Post-Compulsory Education II—The Way Ahead*. London: Sage, 1975, Chapter 3 on upper-secondary alternatives.
8. See E.J. King. *Post-compulsory Education in Western Europe—A New Concept*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1979.
9. These are minutely documented and illustrated in histograms in E.J. King, C.H. Moor and J.A. Mundy. *Post-Compulsory Education I—A New Analysis in Western Europe*. London: Sage, 1974.

10. Good examples are to be found in many forms of recurrent and distance education; for example, the Open University in Britain and its predecessors and counterparts in South Africa, and the United States; also in the Open College of Further Education in Adelaide and its parallels elsewhere; in much growing provision for post-experience study and research in universities; and—at a lower level—in sandwich and alternation programs in Britain and the continent of Europe. See also my comments below on the prospect of two-tier qualifications, etc.
11. See note 4.
12. As in notes 5, 7 and 9 above. See also G. Neave (Ed.) *Research Perspectives on the Transition from School to Work*. Amsterdam: Swets and Zeitlinger, 1978.
13. See H.C. Barnard. *A History of English Education*. London: University of London Press, 1961, Chapter 6, especially pp.54 and 57.
14. See, for example, P. Bourdieu and J.C. Passeron. *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*. London: Sage, 1977, and the writings of M. Carnoy and others.
15. See King. *Other Schools and Ours*, p.40ff.; and E.J. King. Analytical frameworks in comparative studies of education. *Comparative Education*, 1975, 11, 93–5.
16. See note 4.
17. R.P. Dore. *The Diploma Disease: Education Qualification and Development*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1976.
18. See the histograms and supporting data in King, Moor and Mundy, *Education I—A New Analysis*.
19. See Australia. Department of Education. *The Educational Response to the Changing Needs of Youth*. Canberra, AGPS, 1980, 3–9.
20. King. *Other Schools and Ours*, p.42ff.
21. See note 1.
22. *OECD Observer*, as in note 4.
23. For example, M. Aumont. *Jeunes dans un Monde Nouveau*. Paris: Centurion, 1973; C.H. Moor. *From School to Work*. London: Sage, 1976; *Between School and Work*. Amsterdam: European Cultural Foundation, 1976.
24. King. *Post-Compulsory Education in Western Europe*, op. cit.
25. G. Neave. The changing balance of power: recent developments in provision for the 16–19 age-group in Europe. *Comparative Education*, 1980, 16, 93–105.
26. King *et al. Post-Compulsory Education II*, op. cit., unequivocally made the same recommendation in 1975 after a 3-year, 5-country, comparative research survey of the educational needs of the 16–19 age-group, and of evolving provision.
27. For example, in the country reports submitted for the 1977 Council of Europe conference in Porto on Education, 16–19, and in the previous reports, published in 1973 as *The Educational Needs of the 16–19 Age Group*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, CME/HF (73) 1. See also *Bildungsgesamtplan—Kurzfassung*. Bonn: Bund-Länder-Kommission für Bildungsplanung, 1973; *Contours of a Future Education System in the Netherlands*. The Hague: Ministry of Education and Science, 1977; *U90-Danish Educational Planning and Policy in a Social Context at the End of the 20th Century*. Copenhagen: Ministry of Education, 1978.
28. *OECD Reviews of National Policies for Education—Italy*. Paris: 1969, p.220.
29. See A. Newport. A comparative study of provision made in recurrent education for workers, with special reference to the 150 hours in Italy. *Comparative Education*, 1979, 15, 269–76.
30. Up-to-date material on these topics (in English) is obtainable from the Ministry of Education in The Hague, and from the National Board of Education in Stockholm.
31. See King. Education for a Communications Society.
32. *The Observer*. London, 28 December 1980.
33. J. Zajda. *Education in the USSR*. Oxford: Pergamon, 1980, Chapter 4, p.193ff.
34. See note 2.

PART III

RESEARCH INTO TRANSITION

9 Transition from School: A Review of Australian Research

Don Anderson

The purpose of this chapter is to summarise the findings from social science research on transition from school to post-school roles and to raise some relevant questions which do not yet appear to have answers. It will also question the relation of theory-based research to policy; in particular, to suggest that the assumption that there is a direct application to practical knowledge from theoretical social science research is probably false.

The initial reaction to the Australian research on transition from school is one of surprise at the amount of it. The bibliography of research (cited in the Introduction to this book) contains 422 entries of research and analysis completed in the last three or four years and 61 reports of work in progress.

Although the topic of transition from school, particularly transition to work, has engaged the interest of researchers, particularly psychologists and sociologists, for many years, a sense of urgency has been given to it because of the very high rates of teenage and youth unemployment which have been apparent in many industrially advanced countries since the early 1970s. In response to this there has not only been an upsurge of research studies but also a remarkably rapid response in schools, with programs like Career Education and Guidance and counselling services. Governments have also responded with a variety of programs for education and training, transitional services and, in some instances, job creation.

A second reaction is that there is a lack of coherence in the vast research effort. First of all, there is no theoretical framework across disciplines which links the studies and which helps organise the varying perspectives and observations; and even within disciplines a variety of theoretical assumptions seems to lead to diverse and sometimes conflicting answers. Furthermore the enquiry is being conducted without the benefit of a common language so that it is not always easy to translate and compare the results of studies which appear to be addressing similar or related questions. An obvious example is the different definitions given to the term unemployment. These two topics—the case for inter-disciplinary studies and the need for an agreed vocabulary—are discussed in later chapters of this book. They are difficult problems. Finally, with respect to coherence, there appears to be no common social goal or agreed policy objectives or indeed agreed strategies to which the researchers who are concerned with policies may refer in framing their questions or in directing their answers.

These aspects of the research into transition from school will be discussed later in this chapter; that is, the role of theory in this kind of research; the need for a common vocabulary so that the discourse may proceed and, most importantly, the need for a statement of social goals for youth and a related set of policies and strategies. As a background to this discussion, it is useful to define the field of transition studies and to review the conclusions which appear to be emerging from the research.

Transition from school means, for most researchers and for most policy-makers, transition from school to work. Changing roles from student to worker, however, is not the only transition which young people in their teenage years make at this stage in their lives. There are other transitions, more or less coincident with school to work, which should at least be acknowledged when developing policies for youth which focus mainly on work. One of these other transitions is, of course, physical and physiological and is associated with puberty. The age of puberty has apparently been decreasing during the nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth century. It is earlier for girls than for boys and it varies with different societies. This particular transition has significance for moving into the labour force in several respects: one is that, following a spurt in physical growth, the older adolescent can almost match adults in cognitive ability and in the performance of hard manual labour; a second is that, following puberty, adolescent self-images change and they come to think of themselves as adults or near adults and experience tensions when there is a mismatch between physiology and culture. An excellent review of physiological and psychological aspects of adolescents is given by Eichorn.[1]

A second transition at this period of life is political and legal; there are variations within and between countries, but by and large 18 is now the age at which adult status in its political and legal sense is awarded. The right to vote, obligations for military service, the right to drive a motor car, legal independence from parents and rights to adult wages generally come between 17 and 21, with the tendency being for a lowering of the political/legal age of maturity.

A third transition is economic: from dependence on parents for sustenance and spending money to independence gained through access to income from wages or grants of one sort or another. At this same time, the teenager comes to be viewed by sections of the economy as an important market and is attributed special status in this respect. The age at which this economic transition occurs varies with individuals and social classes; in some respects it is a process lasting several years. An important point is, or was, the first wage received from a full-time job, an event which used to be invested with some ritual significance in the family—perhaps the voluntary handing-over of the first pay packet to Mum. Nowadays, however, many young people have an income from parents or from part-time work before leaving school and entering the workforce full-time. Others, of course, unable to get employment on leaving school, are denied the material and symbolic rewards of work after relinquishing the role of student.

Fourth, there is a set of social transitions to new adult roles: breadwinner, mate, spouse, parent, citizen are the main ones. Each of these has associated with it culturally defined expectations involving the learning of some new behaviours and adjusting to new limitations on personal autonomy. There is also an important though vaguely defined role as user of leisure time. Apart from sleeping and eating, modern industrial societies provide the individual with more time for leisure than is required for work, even full-time work. At this moment, the 35-hour week campaign is getting under way in Australia, despite strictures from government and from visitors such as Herman Kahn. Two firms have already arranged a deal with unions for a 9-day fortnight. White collar workers, of course, have enjoyed a 35- or 36-hour week for many years.

Finally there is the transition from school to work. This may not always be as abrupt and disorienting as it is sometimes assumed to be. Most students have had experience of part-time jobs and thereby have learnt something of role requirements. Others, on leaving school, enter the role of post-secondary student or of part-time student and full-time or part-time worker. There is, therefore, not an exact age at which this transition takes place. The point of leaving school has or had symbolic significance associated with it; marked, for example, by 'breaking-up' parties, and the celebration of getting the results of examinations or of applications to university. These latter are sometimes seen as *rites de passage* analogous to initiation procedures in more primitive societies, though not entirely satisfactory in this respect since, unlike the tribal tests, public examinations, at least in Australia and probably in European countries too, are designed to ensure that a proportion always fail.

Not only does transition to work occur over a period of time, but the meaning of work itself varies for young people who are at different ages and who are in different social classes. For some school leavers—perhaps a majority but that is not certain—the significance of getting a job is largely in terms of fairly immediate gratification. It is an escape from school and possibly from home; it is a source of status in the peer group and it is a means of obtaining spending money. The commitment to a particular job is not strong and, if the opportunities are there, frequency of job change might be quite high. This movement from job to job, or in and out of work is, according to some psychological theories, a not unexpected stage in career development: roles are tested and modified as the self-concept develops.

For older youths, perhaps 20 to 24, work is related to longer-term social goals and roles. It is the means of obtaining the security necessary for entry to the role of spouse, breadwinner and parent and, of course, the source of cash needed for downpayment on a house (in Australia a majority of young couples have embarked on the purchase of a home rather than renting and this is of some political significance) or of income for rental and other domestic expenditure. At this point, the idea of permanent job or career becomes much more important than it was at the time of leaving school.

For middle-class young, the idea of a vocation or even of a 'calling' still has a little significance. Decisions about particular careers are typically made during the last two or three years of school. These decisions dictate curriculum choices in school and post-school pathways into higher education and ultimately the professions; anticipatory occupational socialisation commences before training starts.[2]

This brief and somewhat anthropological survey of transition from school is useful background to making policies for youth. There is not one transition, there are several which are interrelated; the point of transition is not at the end of school, rather it is a process which starts earlier and continues into the early twenties; the nature of the process is very different for teenagers and youth in different sections of society. A full analysis would, of course, have to take into account not only differences of social class, but also male and female sex roles, ethnic differences and variation between rural and urban dwellers.[3]

How these transitions are managed by a particular culture—whether they come sooner or later during adolescence, whether the transitions are smooth or abrupt, whether they are accompanied by ceremonies and symbols—these things have implications for major institutions of society as well as for the individuals concerned. They will affect how we conduct our schools, the exam system, post-secondary education, social welfare agencies, voluntary associations, the family and the economy.

We are entering at present what may well turn out to be a crisis of culture. In our society work has been the principal adult role; it provides identity, it structures time, it is the means of obtaining financial security; the workplace is an important source of social relations, and, for the fortunate, it is an intrinsically satisfying activity. For the first time for about 40 years young people approaching the end of school cannot be certain of work and thus of obtaining adult status and its attendant benefits. Let us now see what research from the perspective of various disciplines has to say on transition. First, education research.

Education Research on Transition From School

The broad but nevertheless consistent conclusions reached by the education studies are that students are poorly prepared by their schools for the work roles which they will enter. In particular, students need to know more about the careers which are available to them and about opportunities in post-secondary education.[4] Students have been found to lack the skills and attitudes which would make them of immediate use to employers[5] and the ability to read, write, calculate and learn new skills rapidly. Students themselves want a curriculum which is more vocationally relevant and an organisation of school which enables them to participate in part-time work. The proportion who are interested in higher education has declined during the 1970s, and interest in technical college has remained at a low level.[6]

Schools have been found to have little influence on career choice generally[7] and for early leavers in particular. Early leavers have feelings of personal and academic inadequacy and see school as irrelevant to their needs.[8]

Career education and work experience programs are now widespread.[9] Reviews which have been made, however, conclude that the reasons for having career education are not always clearly understood by those who conduct them, and that these are not always related to the local social and employment situation. A similar observation is made about work-experience programs; a national survey of such programs concluded that there was little clarity about objectives.[10] One study, however, which is still in progress, is finding that work experience is making students more realistic about what work is like.[11]

There is an implicit assumption embedded in almost all of the research in this section. It is that school and work should be closely articulated so that students can easily move from one to the other, assuming the work role with a minimum of personal anxiety and performing it satisfactorily. It is further assumed that appropriate programs in school can equip students with the knowledge, skills and disposition which will facilitate such a transition. Given the initial assumptions, the findings of the researchers are scarcely surprising; nor are the recommendations that there should be more effective counselling, guidance and career education programs.

Only a few studies question the articulation model of school and work. Musgrave[12] points out that entering work is not the only transition which students have to make from school, and indeed that there may be alternatives to work. Power (Chapter 10) argues for a comprehensive youth policy with an expanded range of opportunities in education, work, community service and leisure: and Karmel[13] has a similar proposal for a youth policy which provides opportunities in education, training, work or combinations of these.

Questions to which research has not addressed itself are:

To what extent can programs at school, or simply staying on longer at school, increase employability? That is, is there a latent pool of jobs in the workplace, which will be released if young applicants are found who have the right skills or motivations?

What is the effect of the remaining school programs of giving increased weight to work preparation programs? For example, are there other post-school roles (in leisure, marriage, home-making, citizenship) which are being neglected?

To what extent should school be viewed as an end in itself, providing a general and liberal education rather than one which anticipates a vocation?

Psychology

Psychologists have been interested in the study of work and in career development long before the present crisis. The work of Strong and others in the USA led, on the practical side, to the vocational guidance movement which was well established in the 1920s and 1930s. On the theoretical side, psychologists have, at least since Freud, understood the importance which a satisfactory work role has in the maintenance of a healthy personality. It is said that Freud himself, replying after a public lecture to the question, 'What is your recipe for a happy life?' returned a simple three-word answer: 'Love and Work'. Work is also crucial in Erikson's theory of ego development: '... before the child, psychologically already a rudimentary parent, can become a biological parent, he must begin to be a worker and potential provider'. Nevertheless, Erikson adds that both individual and society are threatened if an individual's horizons 'include only his work to which, so the Book says, he has been sentenced after his expulsion from Paradise. If he accepts work as his only obligation, and "what works" as his only criterion of worthwhileness, he may become the conformist and thoughtless slave of his technology and of those who are in a position to exploit it'.[14]

The theoretical study of career decision-making has been continued by scholars such as Ginzberg,[15] Super[16] and Holland[17] in the USA, and in Australia by Taylor[18] and others. A fundamental assumption is that a career decision is related not simply to one's skills and interests, but to deeper layers of personality and that this reflects emotional needs. Deciding on a career is an expression of personality style, an implementation of the perceived self.

It is now well documented that the career aspirations of young adolescents contain a romantic and sometimes fantasy component; that aspirations exceed expectations and expectations exceed reality. As young people approach the point of reality insofar as getting a job is concerned, they come to see that early aspirations for glamorous or for high-status jobs are unlikely to be fulfilled. What is particularly interesting nonetheless, and of special relevance to policies for youth, is the enormously strong vocational or work component in the perspective which secondary school students bring to bear on criticisms of their studies. Students, including those in the top achieving groups, say that they would like a curriculum which is more practical, which contains technical options and which is more strongly linked with future employment (in fact, despite these assertions, not all who have the opportunity choose vocational studies; many stay with more traditional academic curricula). According to students, school should be re-arranged in ways which would enable them to be taught immediately useful knowledge as well as an academic program with its implied longer-term vocational aims. This is not just a matter of curriculum but also of re-organisation so that students could mix school and work either by part-time arrangements or by providing for return to school after six months or a year at work. These views were common to girls and boys. Choosing a job is the major concern of both sexes, especially of boys. It is ahead of doing well at school, ahead of getting on with the opposite sex and ahead of getting on with parents.[19] Between the early and late 1970s, however, the number of Australian teenagers who are uncertain about their career decision has risen sharply.

Even more surprising than the strength of that vocational perpsective are the findings reported in studies which asked young workers to compare school and work. Most said that they preferred work to school and most found work more interesting than school. These results appear to be independent of the quality of work-life although more investigation is needed on this last point. The findings are consistent with those from a study of work satisfaction among older workers where again the majority opinion is positive rather than negative.[20] There is evidence that work is important to individuals because of the company of other workers as much as intrinsic satisfaction of work itself;[21] and for students entering professional careers other extrinsic rewards, such as prestige, are important.[22]

It is common for studies of the career knowledge of teenagers to conclude with recommendations for more or better counselling and guidance. One set of studies has concluded that intervention of this sort should occur earlier than is presently the practice.[23] From a recent review of transitional services in several countries the inference can be drawn that guidance and information is more effective the closer it is to the work side of the transition.[24]

The evidence for the effectiveness of career counselling is mixed. Studies which ask students about the sources of information leading to career decisions generally find that family and friends appear to be far more influential than teachers or guidance officers. N. Taylor, in a review of American, Australian and British studies,[25] points out that, compared with the extensive literature on the effectiveness of psychotherapeutic intervention, there are very few studies which have attempted to evaluate the effectiveness of vocational and educational counselling. Most of the investigations which have been made are superficial.

A rock on which all psychological remedies must falter is the absence of jobs. If there are X jobs but X + Y school leavers then no amount of counselling will help, unless it is to help Y adapt to unemployment.

Several studies into the psychology of unemployment have started in the last few years. When completed, these will illuminate important questions concerning the effect on self-esteem, social relations and social values. There is evidence which relates unemployment among recent school leavers to interrelated psychological development[26] and to learned helplessness and poor self-esteem.[27] Psychologists working in this area are inclined to make the assumption that work is essential to a healthy, well-adjusted personality. It becomes increasingly important to test the validity of this assumption if work does not remain available to all, and if predictions of a post-industrial society with greatly reduced need for human labour prove correct. As it is, historical or even Biblical perspectives must undermine confidence in the idea that a satisfactory work role is fundamental to the healthy personality. Presumably the question is not work versus non-work but work versus the other socially defined and acceptable roles. A related issue is the quality of work—is there a relation between conditions of work, work satisfaction and identity needs? While there have been studies of this question for those who are established in the workforce, there appears to be little understanding of the same issues in relation to those who are on the margins of the workforce or have yet to enter it.

Behind these questions is another set concerning socialisation for work. There is a good deal of sloganising about the so-called Protestant work ethic but it has not received the conceptual clarification or critical study which has been given to the psychology of career decision-making and career development.

Social Welfare and Social Processes

Sociological studies are inclined to view the individual as a unit in the social structure, moved by pressures in his or her particular environment. There is a rich set of studies which establish connections between social background, school and type of work to which a person is recruited. Although there is some dispute concerning the relative contributions of family background and educational achievement to type of career, recent studies demonstrate a contribution from education to career status attainment which is over and above that which can be attributed to background.[28] Children from well educated families are generally found to be better informed about careers, to stay longer at school, to continue into higher education and to enter professional or other more prestigious occupations.

On the other hand, there are certain groupings of young people whose chances of entry to the workforce are marginal, and whose point of entry, if they do enter, is to low-skill temporary jobs. These groups include early school leavers, particularly those with poor records of achievement. Girls are generally more at risk than boys and their aspirations tend to be lower.[29] Country school leavers have a more restricted range of jobs and greater unemployment (about 3 times the rate) than urban leavers; generally their aspirations are lower. Young people belonging to certain ethnic minority groups are also more likely to be marginal to the workforce, but there is evidence that other migrant groups are successful in moving upwards in the social strata.[30] In Australia those with the bleakest prospects of all are young Aborigines.[31]

Early leavers and poor achievers are likely to be children of parents who themselves have poor educational attainment and occupy a low position in the occupational status hierarchy, so there is a correlation between the level of the parents' job and the level likely to be entered by their children, although, as mentioned earlier, the vocational aspirations are usually more ambitious than expectations.[32]

The social effects of unemployment or indeed of different sorts of employment are beginning to receive attention from researchers. There is some evidence that teenage unemployment contributes to family disruption, suicide, crime and welfare problems.[33] A study of Australian and American adolescents found that problem behaviour was greater among a sample of out-of-school youth (largely unemployed) than it was amongst a matched in-school sample. Furthermore, the problem behaviours were greater in the USA, probably because society there provided fewer alternatives to work and fewer safety-nets.[34]

Nor is there much research on the non-work roles which are part of the set of transitions which young people make at about the same time as they leave school. Education for leisure has been surveyed in a large sample of schools and it was concluded that independent schools make a better overall provision.

The meanings given to work and leisure in the literature are not always precise. The term leisure is now used a great deal as in 'educating for leisure' or leisure as an alternative to work in a society where machines will take over from people. Does leisure mean all spare time, that is, when one is not working or eating or sleeping? Is it active behaviour or passive? Is it a substitute for work, providing some of the intrinsic and extrinsic satisfactions which go with having a job; for example, structuring time and contributing to personal identity? Does it mean hobbies? For those who find their jobs intrinsically rewarding, what is the distinction between work and leisure?

The recommendations which arise from sociological studies are that interventionist strategies are needed to compensate for social disadvantages which predispose certain groups to unemployment. These may take the form of money incentives for students to stay on longer at school, special education programs targeted at specific social groups, or job creation programs.

The underlying assumption in this research is that the causes of youth unemployment lie in a social structure which provides equal opportunities to certain groups who are labelled disadvantaged. Social disadvantage leads to poor employment prospects either directly or through its effects on achievement in school. Given a theoretical perspective, it is inevitable that recommendations will focus on compensatory measures.[35]

It is also inevitable that research which seeks to find continuity in social position from one generation to the next, or connections between attainment in schooling and work, will find these continuities and connections. If the focus is shifted, however, to seek the exceptions—the deviant cases—then some clues may be found about conditions where the apparent iron law of social determinism does not hold.

Economic and Labour Force Studies

There have been numerous studies by economists seeking explanations of high rates of youth unemployment and estimating whether it is likely to be a long-term feature of the labour market. One view is that a large component of the problem is cyclical and that the solution lies with the application of Keynesian policies; that is, expansionist policies.

In Australia, for example, Burke[36] and Blandy[37] place most of the blame on the recent recession and this view is supported by the Bureau of Industry Economics.[38] Similarly, Lord John Vaizey disputes Torsten Husén's[39] pessimistic conclusion that youth unemployment may well be a permanent feature of advanced industrial society. Vaizey regards Husén's conclusion as unprovable and improbable.[40] Economists who conclude that the high rate of youth unemployment is endemic to the structure of industrial society point to the fact that the participation of young people in the labour market has been declining at least for the last two decades and that the recent recession and demographic factors have simply exacerbated an existing problem. Since 1974 the increase in youth unemployment has been at a similar rate for that of all workers.[41]

It has been pointed out that school leavers are not the only group seeking to enter a competitive labour market; others are older women often seeking employment after a period of childbearing and newly arrived migrant workers. Older persons nearing retirement from the workforce are also vulnerable. The evidence that school leavers are losing out in this competition is conflicting. For example, some analysts conclude that women re-entering the workforce are taking jobs which would otherwise go to school leavers;[42] others assert that there is no such displacement because women occupy sections of the labour market which have traditionally not been entered by young people leaving school.[43]

The assumption that school leavers are at a disadvantage in entering the labour market because their skills are not those required by employers lies behind a number of proposals for a greater vocational component in the secondary school curriculum, or the proposal that post-school training should be tailored more specifically to economic means. The proposal is supported by some economists and is generally the one made by government policy-makers because it provides a point of entry to the system where changes can be made. (It is easier to operate on education than on the economy.) Other analysts point out that there are few, if any, occupations where there is a shortage of labour and, furthermore, that most of the recent demands have been for unskilled workers. It is also asserted that acquisition of many specialised skills is usually simply a matter of a few weeks training on the job.

Geographical location is the source of another possible mismatch. Some school leavers, particularly those in rural areas and certain regions, are not where the jobs are. Certainly there are quite large variations in unemployment rates between localities, but there appear to be no localities where there is a shortage of labour.

Finally, economists have considered incentives, money rewards. One conclusion is that higher rates for juniors are pricing them out of the competitive market. This conclusion, however, is disputed by others who produce evidence that there is only a weak association between unemployment rates and relative wage shifts for males and none at all for females. Obviously the evidence applies only to the real range of wages; if juniors were completely unprotected by industrial awards there would be a return to full job opportunity for juveniles along with Dickensian conditions. Indeed the rapid increase in part-time jobs (about one-third of the 15–19 year olds are in part-time work, many of them students still at school) may be seen as employer response to the high cost of labour.

There are also incentives to stay out of school, particularly the dole. It is argued by some, the most recent example in Australia being Hermann Kahn, that unemployment benefits cause young people to become 'work shy', preferring idleness to work because the difference between the benefit and the wage is too small. Kahn expressed his astonishment that in Australia young people became eligible for the dole six weeks after leaving school. Others have argued that the dole is an incentive for teenagers to leave school, or that the relative amounts of the dole and tertiary education allowance is a disincentive to enrol in higher education.

The assumption underlying the economic analyses of school leaver unemployment, crudely put, is that mankind is motivated by money, that everything has a price. Within this, recommendations are shaped by assumptions about the economy. Those who assume that there is a latent pool of jobs, which will be released when applicants possess the appropriate disposition and skills, recommend vocational education and post-secondary training; or that the price of unemployment should be increased to the point that it will no longer be chosen.

This view that there are latent jobs to be released lies behind the recommendation which was made by the recent major enquiry into education, training and employment in Australia.[44] The Government was advised to expand programs in technical and further education, provide training for groups of handicapped youths, study young people's attitudes to employment and unemployment, and make special training and placement provisions for various disadvantaged groups. Nevertheless the Committee found it necessary to observe that

> Reforms in the education system cannot solve problems of fluctuations in employment caused by events abroad or by errors in monetary and fiscal and income policies at home.
>
> It is now clear that to maintain very low levels of unemployment is going to be more difficult than it seemed for almost 30 years after the second world war. The problems extend far beyond the sphere of education. The effects of changes in education on unemployment in present conditions will be much too weak to prime a pump that could restore full employment.[45]

Those who assume that the cause is a short-term cyclical effect recommend ameliorative measures; for example, financial incentives for employers to take on more juniors. Economists who take the more pessimistic view that school leaver unemployment is likely to be of long-term duration due to structural effects deeply embedded in the economy, argue either for economic recovery or, if they are not free marketeers, intervention in the form of job creation in either the private or public sectors. In all cases the basic assumption is economic growth. There seem to be no analyses of the implications for education, training and teenage unemployment of the radical non-growth assumptions which are expressed by economists such as Herman Daly.[46]

There are some phenomena which the economic perspective fails to account for. One is the number of school leavers who choose to be neither in the labour force (and hence not to receive wages or dole) or in education. We do not know much about this group; even the statistics are vague. In the USA it is estimated to be around 6 per cent, with considerable age, sex and race variations.[47] There are very few studies of the lifestyle, sources of sustenance and ambitions of this group. Second, the apparent turbulence of teenage participation in the labour force (frequent job shifts and low commitment) is not well understood but seems to be inconsistent with the price assumption. Third, the apparent reluctance of a significant number to maximise their economic life chances by taking up opportunities for further educational training is difficult to account for in economic terms.

The analyses of teenage participation in the labour force over several decades points up some of the difficulties for interventionist strategies. If recent increases in the proportion of young people out of work are of the same order as increases in general unemployment, and this does seem to be the case, then action on the teenage youth group alone may cause resentment by other victims; more seriously, it directs attention to the wrong target. This is already evident in the views about education both as the 'cause' of the problem (standards are declining, etc.) and the point of remedial action. Focusing just on the youth component of unemployment also contributes to the pejorative labels which sections of the public have given to the young out-of-work.

One of the most interesting findings emerging from economic analyses concerns the extent of part-time participation by teenagers in the workforce. About one-fifth of senior students at school and about one-sixth of all teenagers are employed part-time. Part-time employment is also rising in the workforce generally, particularly among women. This points to a number of issues which have as yet received little attention. Does this trend fit in with the objectives of those who have been arguing for recurrent education and continuing education? Is it a form of job sharing? For those not in education is it a matter of choice? How is the remaining time spent? How many have more than one job—full- or part-time? Is it the start of continuing full participation in the labour force, or a continuing life on the margin? For those at school what use is made of the income—for basic sustenance, for consumer goods or savings? What are the conditions of part-time work? Are workers exploited? Which occupations are most involved and what are the levels of skills? Is permanent part-time work a possibility? Information on these and similar questions would help indicate whether part-time work may be a possible strategy for creating satisfactory post-school roles.

Conclusion

Three things are necessary to conclude this review: first, to see if there is a way out of the theory/fact circle; second, to look at strategies for solving the youth unemployment problem; and, third, to explore the role of research in relation to policies for youth.[48]

There does not seem to be any way round the theory/fact dilemma: theory proposals derived from research results are shaped by the theories and assumptions which the researcher had to use in order to view the world. The bind seems to become worse if we follow the advice which we give to our students: start with a good theory, make all your assumptions clear, be rigorous in adhering to this framework. Nor does bringing a number of disciplinary perspectives to bear on the problem seem to help; rather the phenomenon appears to become more complex, not less. Social and policy problems attract the interest of researchers from many disciplines. This leads to calls for inter-disciplinary research; but this is difficult. There are no unifying theories which permit discourse across disciplines. Inter-disciplinary research becomes multi-disciplinary research and the problem, rather than yielding to this multiple attack, just comes to look harder.

No major change in education—any reform or innovation—has occurred as the result of research. Take as examples fashions in the teaching of reading, such as the look-and-say method which was a popular innovation 30 or 40 years ago, the open education movement which was the fad of the 1970s, the insistence on public performance criteria which seems likely to dominate the 1980s, or the current preoccupation with transition from school. In none of these has research led to programs; rather the reverse.

Policies derive from answers which come from elsewhere in the culture, not research. Research may be used subsequently for design monitoring and evaluation. It is not my intention here to follow the question of just where it is that the answers come from, except to observe that position in an organisation, like attachment to a disciplinary perspective, influences how we see things and the way we answer problems. If one is an employer then it is obvious that the cause of youth unemployment is a mismatch of education and employment needs, and that the remedy is to reform education and training. From another perspective it is equally clear that the cause of high rates of young unemployed is that there are not enough jobs, and that the answer is to create more.

The solutions which have been put forward generally fall on one side or the other of the supply-demand equation; the corresponding prescriptions are for role preparation (education and training) or role creation (finding jobs). The latter sub-divides into at least four major strategies, the preferred one again depending on initial assumptions. First, job creation may be in the private sector in which case the strategy used is likely to be one of offering some sort of incentive to employers, enticing them to take on more young people (this is likely to be viewed as a short-term solution); in the long term the strategy following this assumption is that the flagging economy must be revived. Second, job creation schemes may be established in the public sector by expanding existing services or by devising special projects.

Third, developments may be encouraged in what has been called the 'third sector'. This refers to groups of young people forming co-operatives or being helped in other ways to act collectively in creating roles for themselves. Finally, on the demand side, steps might be taken to reduce the size of the workforce, thus releasing jobs for those trying to enter it. Assuming that the size of the workforce is more or less fixed and that jobs are interchangeable then, if it is important to get young people into the workforce, others will have to be removed. This leads to proposals for early retirement, more jobs that are part-time, job sharing, or enticing those in competition with youth to stay out. For example, mothers could be paid to stay at home after child-rearing rather than returning to work. Countries which have used foreign labour have some flexibility in this general respect; guest-workers can be sent home. Young people themselves can be enticed to delay entry to the workforce by raising participation rates in school or full-time post-secondary education.

Action under the education and training assumption includes, for in-school teenagers, career education, work experience and skills training. Staying longer in school appears under this heading, as well as on the labour market side of the equation, because it is seen as a means of increasing skills and improving motivation. (The idea of increasing school retention rates of the under-privileged so as to give them a fairer start in the credentials race has the effect of increasing the intensity of the competition for jobs. Credentials on their own neither increase employability nor create jobs.) For young school leavers, counselling, learning job-search skills and opportunities to return to school are strategies under this heading. For older youth recurrent education becomes appropriate.

The design can be further elaborated by focusing on particular targets—geographically disadvantaged regions or social and personal groupings of 'high-risk' young people—and tailoring delivery systems accordingly.[49]

The role of research concerns mainly design, monitoring and evaluation. Systematic scanning for unintended outcomes is crucial; for example, do incentives to employers to hire more youth result in the displacement of other workers? The contribution of research to policy formation lies in the provision of a vocabulary for discourse and access to a variety of insights. Policy-makers claim to use research results and to want more research; however, the principal use which is made of research at the stage where policies are being formed is of some conceptual clarifications and of findings which legitimate positional answers.

For the theory-builder, thinking follows the action. Insights into basic social processes are more likely to follow observation of change, especially of planned change, than from observation of static systems or random movements. This, of course, was Lewin's maxim; namely that in order to understand something one should try changing it.

This action research approach to theory construction does not release us from the theory/fact dilemma since positional and disciplinary assumptions still blinker perceptions. It does, however, ground the theory in a practitioner's version of reality.

There are many obvious gaps in the research methods which have been applied. At a very simple level there is a need for what Lazarsfeld called 'social book-keeping': better statistical accounts of who the employed and unemployed are, of their pathways from school to post-school, of movements in and out of employment and unemployment, of their sources of remuneration and their living conditions. Second, there is a need for longitudinal studies: some broad-based ones using national samples so that the social and educational antecedents of particular destinations in the workforce or out of it can be tracked. There is also a need for more extensive longitudinal studies in order to advance our understanding of human development. Australia is one of the few advanced Western countries which has no completed major longitudinal studies to which policy-makers and researchers may refer. Our understanding of Australian society is so much the worse for that.

Third, there is a need for more case-studies—case-studies, not case-stories which merely illustrate the assumptions of the researcher. Case-studies are research which is conducted according to the rigorous laws of scientific observation and evidence. We need this to sharpen our understanding of the broad generalisations which come from surveys. In particular there should be more deviant case analyses; most survey research reaches conclusions based on some sort of correlational association, an association which is never perfect. There is a lot to be learned from the cases which are in the 'plus/minus' cells of the contingency tables; those who deviated from the mainstream of the theory and findings.

Fourth, there is a need for more action studies—research which studies the effects of changes, particularly deliberately introduced change, as in a pilot program or a new policy initiative.

Finally, there is as yet not a great deal of policy analysis in the Australian research, perhaps because policies are recent and scattered. The greatest need of all, however, is for a clear national set of policy objectives for youth, together with a set of strategies for their attainment.

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10 Research Approaches and Methods

Colin Power

Introduction

This chapter focuses primarily on the methodological issues involved in undertaking research on the transition from school. Its purposes are

to examine some ways in which transition phenomena might profitably be studied

to indicate the difficulties and limitations of research in the area.

The research methods considered include interdisciplinary approaches, survey and case studies. The chapter also reflects the concern experienced at the Seminar on Transition (referred to in the Introduction to this book) that transition phenomena need to be conceptualised and studied longitudinally. Hence somewhat greater emphasis is given to longitudinal designs than to other research approaches.

Transition as an Area of Concern

The transition from school represents one of the periods of major upheaval in the human life cycle. The changes forced on young people have far-reaching consequences for the individuals involved, their families, and ultimately the society as a whole. As a consequence, how well young people are prepared for entry into adult life and the quality and appropriateness of the arrangements made for young people in transition have long been of concern to educators, employers and policy-makers. In periods of high youth unemployment, the problems of transition assume heightened significance. In most advanced western nations, a good deal of uncertainty and confusion exists as to the origins of the current problems facing young people and the nation, and the types of programs most likely to facilitate transition and to ensure that individual and national hopes are actualised.

The economic, political, social and personal reality in which transition policy takes effect is extremely complex. In formulating policy, Commonwealth and State governments must balance economic, legal, social and political considerations. Their analyses of the nature, extent, causes and effects of the current situation must take a broad spectrum of factors into account. Inevitably this analysis takes place within the framework of assumptions and values of a particular political ideology so that the resultant educational and employment policies reflect what the government perceives to be economically and socially feasible and politically desirable. Those responsible for the implementation and administration of such policies also must take into account the complex web of State and Commonwealth departments, agencies, pressure groups and individuals involved. Young people in transition must cope with the entire spectrum of interrelated demands outlined in Chapter 9 (Anderson).

While policy-makers and young people cannot afford to leave aside the influence of important linkages and social realities, researchers can and must. Most research is undertaken by individuals (or small groups) operating independently and within a single disciplinary framework. For the purpose of facilitating understanding and making systematic enquiry possible, the research worker reduces the complex and incomprehensible to simpler, more comprehensible components (constructs, variables) and studies the relationships among these. Further, he is constrained by the techniques and methods of enquiry of a particular discipline. To be acceptable, evidence must be collected, analysed and interpreted according to the rules imposed by a particular discipline. Researchers generally reduce and redefine complex social problems, and accommodate the phenomena of concern within an existing theoretical and methodological framework. Thus one economist may account for changes in youth unemployment in terms of the neo-classical theory of unemployment, while another utilises wage push theories of inflation—but the analyses and methods are those of an economist, not an historian or a political scientist. Similarly, our understanding of the consequences of long-term unemployment has been enhanced, but subtly restricted, by research utilising existing psychological or sociological theories[1]—enhanced in that our attention is drawn to hitherto unsuspected or poorly understood phenomena and processes; restricted in that in focusing on the psychological or social impact on individuals we may leave aside important groups, institutions and linkages, assuming that their influence on the final outcome can be neglected.

As we have seen in Chapter 9, the issues are complex, multi-dimensional, interrelated and value-laden. But researchers are bound by the canons of enquiry of the various disciplines. Their perspectives (like those of policy-makers) are shaped by existing frameworks of ideas about the nature and causes of social problems. Research within a particular disciplinary framework can be expected to increase our knowledge of those aspects of transition which can be studied systematically within that framework. Research can stimulate and contribute to the debate on what needs to be done in the present circumstances to ease the transition from school, but it cannot be expected to yield simple, complete and unequivocal answers to complex policy questions.

Transition as an Interdisciplinary Field

In that the problems are complex and interrelated, it can be argued that research on transition ought to be conducted by interdisciplinary teams. Unfortunately, this ideal is seldom achieved. When teams of individuals with differing expertise and backgrounds are formed to work on a significant social problem, the research is more often than not multidisciplinary. At best, the final product takes the form of a mosaic—the vague outlines of the total picture may be seen at a distance, but careful examination shows segments bearing the distinctive colour and texture of their origins, with pieces only loosely cemented together.

In an interdisciplinary project, a much greater degree of sensitivity, collaboration and willingness to accommodate alternative perspectives is demanded. In effect, concepts, theories and methods from a variety of disciplines must be thrown into the melting pot and fused together. When cooled, the final product should form an evenly textured, unified whole—well balanced, rich and smooth, the components, skilfully blended, reinforcing and elaborating the central theme of the work. However, as Petrie[2] has pointed out, more often than not, grandly conceived interdisciplinary projects never get off the ground. When they do, interdisciplinary studies are difficult to manage, the level of debate 'seldom exceeds that of a glorified bull-session', and the final product can end up as much the product of team politics as the weighing and sifting of evidence. But whatever the dangers and limitations of interdisciplinary approaches, there are clear advantages in engaging in team research: the interplay of meanings and ideas, and the cross-checking and balancing of positions and evidence would seem to be a necessary condition for research in the field—if one is to avoid overly simplistic research answers to what have proved to be longstanding social problems.

One of the central considerations necessary for interdisciplinary success seems to be what Petrie[3] calls 'the dominance of an idea'. That is, there must be a clear and recognisable idea which can serve as a central focus for the work. The orienting focus of the research may be enforced by external necessity, as in a commissioned study in which a team is asked to compare the cost and effects of 'addition' and 'infusion' approaches[4] to transition education. It may derive from a general paradigm for studying social problems[5] for human behaviour,[6] or it may stem from an attempt to develop an idea[7] or model which does not fit neatly into one of the established disciplines.

In addition to having a central focus, conditions for success identified by Petrie[8] included adequate administrative and social support for interdisciplinary groups; and a team in which members are fully competent in their own fields but whose interests are broad; whose capacity for imaginative speculation and whose willingness to learn the observational categories and meanings of each other's discipline are high. The problems of young people in transition would seem to be sufficiently longstanding, and of interest to a broad enough spectrum of research workers in Australia, for governments to risk supporting one or more interdisciplinary institutes or teams.

A Developmental-Interactionist Perspective of Transition

To date, most of the research and transition programs have operated within a framework which has been limited in terms of both the ways in which the problems have been conceptualised and the time frame employed. The crisis of youth unemployment is often seen as a problem of young people at risk. By focusing attention on the inadequacies of school leavers, the research, policy and practice tend to deal only with the surface manifestations of what may well be more deeply seated defects in the structure and functioning of the education system, the workplace and the society.

The inadequacies of the plethora of *ad hoc* transition programs and hastily devised research studies, spawned in response to the youth unemployment crisis, are already beginning to become apparent.[9] Questions are being asked about the long-term effectiveness of work experience, career education, alternative, link, and vocationally oriented programs being mounted by schools and colleges. Questions must be asked too about the capacity of surveys of the immediate problems of school leavers to help us to understand how and why these problems arise, and their long-term consequences for individuals, education and society. Following the traditions of trait theory, much of educational and psychological research has focused on identifying the characteristics of school leavers most at risk. But confirming that certain groups of young people are disadvantaged at school and on entry to the workforce falls far short of providing us with an adequate knowledge base on which to develop more adequate policies and programs. If the research is to play its part in challenging existing structures, policies and practices, it must involve a critical analysis of the educational and the work environments encountered by young people, and detailed investigation of the long-term consequences of the attendant individual–environment interactions.

What is needed in the research and in formulating policies and programs, I would argue, is what Hunt and Sullivan describe as a developmental-interactionist perspective; that is, research which 'simultaneously considers existing individual differences, the development of such differences over time, and the environmental conditions associated with such development'.[10] A somewhat similar position is taken by Bronfenbrenner[11] who argues for the study of relations between learners and their environments, and between environments as they affect development, careers and learning. Such a study constitutes the ecology of education which he views as a major and necessary focus for educational research.

For my own part, I have used this perspective to guide my studies of primary–secondary transition,[12] with the environmental dimension being conceived of as a nested arrangement of structures ranging from the micro (the immediate family and school or work situation) to the macro (the overarching economic, political and social institutions of the society). I believe that the development framework is a useful one for studying transition from school as well. From this perspective, transition is a process which refers to changes in the environment and in persons not just at the point of leaving school, but during the years leading up to and following this point. The changes in individuals, the nature of the educational, family, and work environments encountered by them, the processes of interaction between individuals and environments, and their consequences should be mapped across time. Viewed within this broader developmental and ecological framework, the transition from school and youth unemployment are not viewed simply as problems *of* young people (that is, a product of defective people or defective socialisation) or as problems *for* young people (that is, a product of defects in school and/or work environments), but as a product of mismatches between the developing individual and the demands of the environment.

In essence, I am arguing that we cannot understand transition problems if we fail to undertake a critical, longitudinal analysis of educational, family, and work environments and the attendant individual-environment interactions as individuals move from school to adult life.

Longitudinal Studies of Transitions From School

Unfortunately relatively few comprehensive longitudinal studies of transitions from school have been or are being undertaken. The OECD Secretariat[13] has recently attempted to find out if typical patterns of labour market experience among school leavers exist, and how this experience is related to education, family background, labour market conditions, first employment experience, unemployment, etc. Their analysis is based largely on existing US and UK longitudinal studies of cohorts of young people. These studies include the Youth in Transition Project[14] and the National Children's Bureau Longitudinal Study.[15]

In Australia, somewhat smaller longitudinal studies of aspects of transition from school have been undertaken by Carpenter *et al.*,[16] Gurney[17] and Toomey.[18] Longitudinal studies in progress include those of Western and Carpenter,[19] Schrom,[20] Feather *et al.*,[21] Winefield *et al.*[22] and the ACER School Leavers survey.[23]

The longitudinal data provide support for the proposition that labour market entrance is a period of exploration and selection; the queueing theory seems to hold up well when considering the job prospect of different groups of young people. Young people have been found to exhibit many patterns of being in and out of the labour market. The majority appear to find work reasonably easily, and to move between employment frequently but with relative ease. Individuals in this pattern tend to come from stable family backgrounds, to have reasonable to good educational attainment, and to seek work in local labour markets offering a wide range of occupational openings and exhibiting a low level of unemployment. The pattern for this group is one of upward occupational mobility, personal development, improved interpersonal relationships, increasing self-esteem, decline in aggressive behaviour, increasing willingness to assume responsibilities and to learn new things with age.

The second major pattern identified is of young people who have serious problems in finding their first job and continue to change their employment status, but often from worker to unemployed, to not-in-the-labour-force. Many in this group come from lower socio-economic backgrounds, have poor educational attainments, poor educational histories in terms of behaviour and are disproportionately black or migrant. Crucial to this pattern is the level of economic activity in the local labour market where they live. If they live in a 'tight' local labour market, for some there will be a chance of obtaining a decent job and for upward occupational mobility. For the young person living in a more depressed labour market, the post-school experience is likely to be, at best, one of either taking a poorer first job and waiting longer for upward mobility, or of entrance to unemployment followed by a poor first job and little or no upward occupational mobility with increasing age. The data tend to confirm the 'discouraged workers' hypothesis, particularly for young females. High rates of labour force withdrawal by unemployed teenagers are commonplace, suggesting a massive understatement of the difficulty with which young people find jobs, the effective length of time spent without a job, and the size of the youth unemployment problem. The evidence from the Youth in Transition project points to the adverse long-term consequences of recurrent unemployment. Specifically, it appears that unemployment contributes to aggression, drug use, learned helplessness, mistrust, and tends to produce self-blame and loss of self-esteem. The ACER School Leavers survey is planning to gather data on the ways in which young people adapt to unemployment and on the social and psychological consequence of unemployment.[24] At the moment, however, knowledge about the psychological impact of unemployment is far from satisfactory. As Gurney and Taylor[25] point out, it should not be assumed that all unemployed react with a lowering of self-esteem, alienation and despair.

The evidence with respect to the educational conditions under which transition problems are aggravated or alleviated by various educational programs is meagre. The ACER School Leavers survey and the Youth in Transition project both found that the *amount* of schooling completed is a major determinant of occupational prospects. The School Leavers survey found that, other things being equal, a Catholic school education seems to benefit the educational and occupational attainment of early school leavers. By contrast, an independent school education is good for one's educational status, but less healthy for early occupational attainment compared with government school early leavers. The data do not, however, make it possible to unequivocally attribute these differences to what the three school systems do and provide for their students. Preliminary data from the National Children's Bureau also reveal significant differences in educational and employment outcomes for different ability groups attributable to the type of secondary school (comprehensive, grammar, etc.) attended. However, the Youth in Transition project failed to find any differential school effects on the outcomes measured.

The importance of the family environment as a factor in determining educational and vocational decisions and attainment in the transition period is revealed in most studies. Other things being equal, the higher the socio-economic status of one's family, the higher one's own educational attainments, the greater the range of options in education and employment open, and the smoother the transition from school to work and for further education. Toomey[26] found evidence of differential recruitment into Victorian high and technical schools according to the 'academic climate' of the family which, together with the climate of the school, strongly predicted the form level of leaving. Students' educational choices were found to be influenced by both the selection processes within schools and the family climate, the latter having a major influence at crucial branching points in the transition period.

From a developmental-interactionist perspective, most of the longitudinal surveys undertaken thus far are likely to be seen as defective. With the possible exception of the National Children's Bureau study and the ACER School Leavers survey, they fail to involve systematic contrasts between two or more educational and two or more family and/or work environmental systems. As a consequence, one cannot identify those systems, properties and processes that affect the behaviour and development of individuals. The studies simply do not do justice to those critical features of the process of education which might be expected to make a difference to the capacity of young people to cope with the demands of the situation in which they find themselves. We do need longitudinal studies which aim at discovering the types of educational programs which do have long-term beneficial effects on the capacity of young people to cope with transition from school.

Given that transitions from school are a problem both of and for educational institutions, longitudinal studies of transition in education must analyse carefully the relationships between learners and their educational environments. Depending on the outcome of concern, the properties of the educational environment can be expected to assume greater or lesser significance. If our major concern is with solving the problems of youth unemployment, then, I suspect, the nature of the school environment is of less significance than that of the juvenile job market. If, as the evidence seems to suggest, labour market conditions and entrance are determined largely by factors outside the school, then in attempting to understand and solve the problems of entering the workforce encountered by young people, our analyses must focus on the work and the home environment.

Given the magnitude of the problem, we may need to take seriously Bronfenbrenner's[27] call for the transforming experiment—an experimnt that radically restructures prevailing ecological systems (for example, work, educational and family systems and their interconnections), producing a new configuration that activates previously unrealised behavioural potentialities of the subject. It is one thing to compare the effects on behaviour and employment patterns of system elements already present in schools, families and the labour market; it is quite another to introduce and monitor longitudinal changes that represent a restructuring of established norms, values, policies and programs.

Design Possibilities and Problems

Longitudinal Designs

The roots of longitudinal methodology are found in a variety of disciplines including developmental psychology, demography and the life sciences. The notion evokes associations of a womb-to-tomb research plan, design deficiencies and lack of internal validity, subject attrition, and a long-term commitment of time and money.

The primary methodological criticisms of longitudinal designs relate to the difficulty in assigning causality or the directionality in such studies.[28] Yet, as Goulet *et al.*,[29] Bronfenbrenner[30] and others have argued, invoking the principle that only properly randomised experiments can lead to useful estimates of treatment effects is a potential trap for educational researchers, leading them to reject the primary problem of the field—that is, the estimation of the short- and long-term effects of educational experiences on individuals.

The three basic designs utilised in estimation of the parameters of educational change are:

the cross-sectional design

the longitudinal design

the time-lag design

With the cross-sectional design, samples of different ages are tested at the same point in time. The longitudinal design requires the testing of samples of a given age (or grade level) at different points in time. The time-lag design, the least used yet perhaps the most powerful, requires the testing of samples with different birthdates at the same chronological age or school grade. This, of course, requires testing the separate samples in the order in which they are born.

These designs are represented in Figure 10.1, with the cross-sectional (XS) design conforming to the vertical (cross row) comparisons, the longitudinal (LO) to the horizontal (cross-column) comparisons; and the time-lag (TL) to the diagonal comparisons. A particular sample is described by three components: date of birth (cohort), age (A), and time of testing.

Goulet *et al.*[31] argue that because cross-sectional and longitudinal designs confound school experience and other age-related influences on development, the time-lag method is to be preferred because it does permit both between and within grade contrasts to be made for samples of varying ages. He goes on to argue that the designs used in educational transition research require sampling and testing at least at two points within the year for individuals in the same grade or cohort, a position which, on the basis of the substantial changes occurring in students during transition in my own studies, I would thoroughly endorse. It is only with such a sampling plan that behaviour changes which occur over each year of schooling or in the labour market can be assessed. Between-year measures are not sufficient.

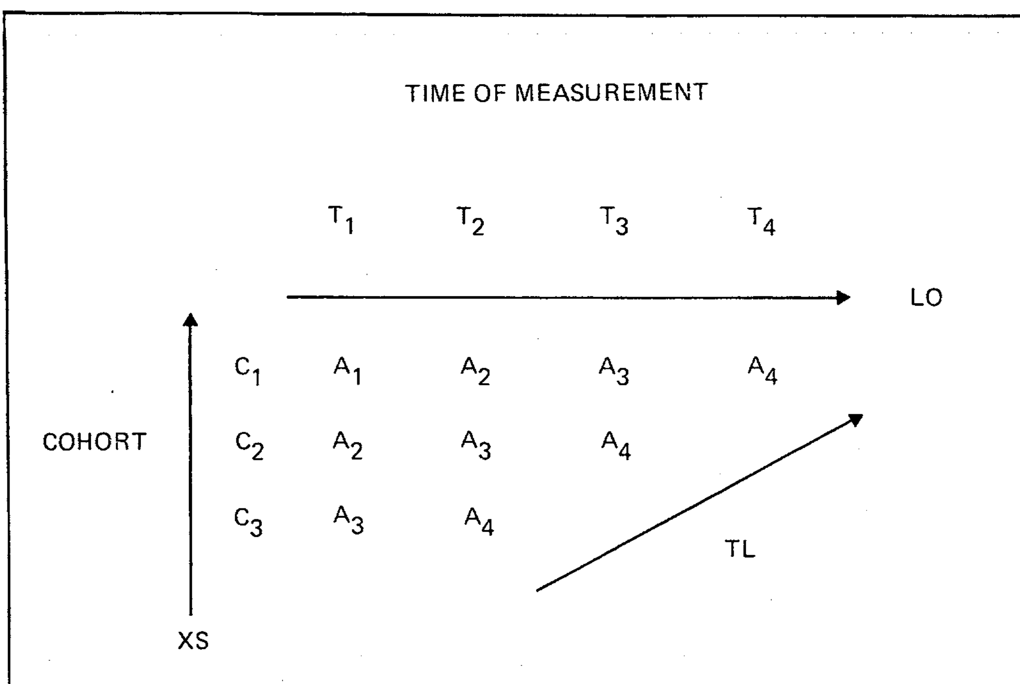

Fig. 10.1 Basic designs used in estimating the parameters of educational change

A fourth design for the conduct of longitudinal research worth mentioning involves the use of sequential research designs which incorporate elements of both cross-sectional and longitudinal methods. Thus, a research design which simultaneously varies age and cohort (labelled a cohort-sequential analysis) provides the opportunity to examine age and cohort related influences on performance at school, in further education, and in the job market. Similarly age and time of measurement (time-sequential analysis) can be orthogonally raised, as can cohort and time of measurement (cross-sequential analyses). The use of these methods can provide valuable information regarding the influences of each of these factors on performance.

The specific methodological problems of longitudinal research include sample attrition, mobility, non-random assignment to school and work situations, test-retest regression, changes in the metric overtime, etc. For discussions of these problems the reader is referred to Campbell and Stanley,[32] Goulet *et al.*[33] and Glass *et al.*[34]

A major concern of any educational research effort is that of selecting the most appropriate data analysis techniques. The analytic tool which seems to be a natural for longitudinal studies is time-series analysis. Time-series analysis may be used in an *exploratory* or *confirmatory* mode, and has recently been extended to cover the *multivariate* as well as *univariate* observations.

The basic time-series design is one in which there are several observations (01, 02, 03, etc.) followed by an intervention (I) (for example, the transition from school to work) followed by additional observations (04, 05, etc.). Thus 01 02 03 I 04 05 06. Glass *et al.*[35] set out the variety of modifications of the basic time-series design shown in Figure 10.2. Given my concern for studying the consequences for multiple groups (different cohorts, early v. late leavers, ethnic groups, etc.) of multiple interventions (transitions from different types of school situations to different job market situations), my preference is for design C.

Glass *et al.* also alert us to the variety of intervention (transition effects in time-series studies, see Figure 10.3). It also needs to be noted that interventions may be constant over time, ephemeral, or of variable intensity. In studying the effects of transition interventions, it is essential to monitor the intervention as well as the outcome variables over time. If transition programs are to be improved, we do need to have precise information about the nature of the intervention (that is, what happens in the transition program) and effects.

For continuous or nearly continuous observations, the data analysis technique usually used is spectral analysis. Spectral analysis views time-series as a complex wave composed of weighted simple waves, and decomposes the time-series into frequency bands which contribute significantly to the total variance of the series. Glass *et al.* suggest the use of the Auto-Regressive Integrated-Moving-Average (ARIMA) model (due to Box and Jenkins[36]) for analysing the data. In my own analyses of time-series data I have tended to use multivariate analysis of repeated measures. This technique begins with the assumption that the multiple measures are a set of intercorrelated responses from the same subject. The data may be analysed using Finn's multivariance program.[37]

Longitudinal approaches to transition, like other approaches to research, have their strengths and limitations. They provide a valuable data base for explanatory purposes and for evaluation of long-standing policies, structures and institutions. They yield the most complete description of participation in education and the workplace (and their consequences) of the particular population sampled. However, large-scale longitudinal studies take time and are costly. The cost and time taken to complete studies can be reduced using the synthetic cohort design, but with some loss in explanatory power.

Nevertheless, few large-scale longitudinal studies have provided the type of information needed in time for policy-makers and administrators to adjust policies and programs to take into account changing manpower needs, rapid shifts in regional labour markets and economic conditions. At the ERDC seminar it was argued, therefore, that more compre-

A

Single-Group—Multiple-I

O O O I_1 O O O I_2 O O O

B

Multiple-Group—Single-I

O O O I_1 O O O

– – – – – – –

O O O I_1 O O O

– – – – – – –

O O O I_1 O O O

C

Multiple-Group—Multiple-I

O O O I_1 O O O

– – – – – – –

O O O I_2 O O O

– – – – – – –

O O O I_3 O O O

D

"Reversal" Design

O O O I_1 O O O I_2 O O O

– – – – – – – – – – – – –

O O O I_2 O O O I_1 O O O

E

"Operant" Design

O O O I_1 O I_1 O_1 O O O O I_1 O I_1 O I_1 O

F

"Interaction" Design

O O O I_1 O O O I_2 O O O I_1 I_2 O O O

G

Sequential Multiple-Group—Multiple-I

O O O I_1 O O O

– – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – –

O O O I_2 O O O

H

"Stratified" Multiple-Group—Single-I

Type A Units: O O O I_1 O O O

– – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – –

Type B Units: O O O I_1 O O O

– – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – –

Type C Units: O O O I_1 O O O

Fig. 10.2 Variations in the basic time-series experimental design

hensive and regular compilation of routine statistics—social bookkeeping—is needed to monitor what is happening to successive cohorts of young people and important subgroups as they move between institutions (from school to work, to further study, in and out of work) and from one region to the next.[38]. To fill in the details of the picture provided by national surveys like the ACER School Leavers study, more detailed cross-sectional descriptive surveys of particular groups of young people in transition, and of the situation in particular regions are needed.[39] Descriptive survey research involves the selection of a sample in order to describe a well defined population in terms of its characteristics (in this case educational and employment status).[40] Sample designs for survey research and procedures for estimating population parameters are described by Ross.[41]

Structural relationships among variables measured in cross-sectional surveys of school leavers have most commonly been explored using regression analysis (and its variants).

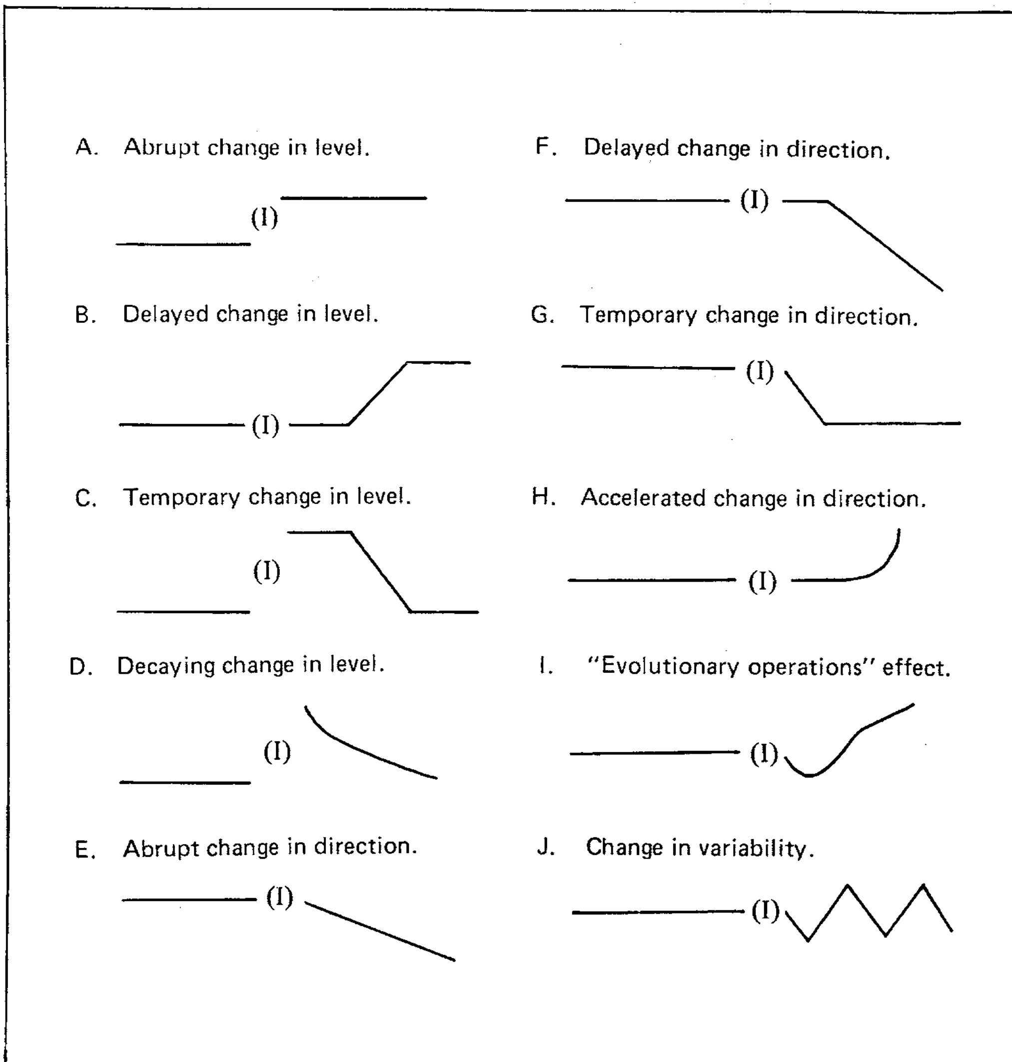

Fig. 10.3 Varieties of intervention effects in the time-series experiment

For example, Rosier[42] used multiple classification analysis to examine relationships between four blocks of independent variables (school environment, family environment, age 14 and age 16 personal factors) and school termination decision. Regression analyses techniques are being used to study the effects of State, type of school and student sex, nationality, social background and migrant status on achievement and age of leaving and of these on post-school education, employment and unemployment. THAID and AID have been used by Lewis[43] in his studies of transition from school to post-secondary education and to work in order to find which combinations of ordinal independent variables, singly or in interaction, best predict likelihood of full-time study or employment. The general strategy for the analysis of co-variance structures developed by Joreskog *et al.*,[44] which has a number of distinct advantages, does not yet seem to have been used in the analyses of cross-sectional survey data.

Evaluative Studies

Whereas the primary purposes of the approaches described above are those of description and explanation, evaluative studies set out to make, or to provide the bases for the making of, value judgments about the worth or merits of a policy or program. A variety of approaches can be used in pursuit of this goal: there are now a large number of evaluation models reflecting different conceptualisations of the task. Details of the classes of models available are included in most books on curriculum evaluation[45] and an analysis of the assumptions underlying these has been provided by House.[46]

One basic distinction between evaluation studies relates to their essential purpose: evaluation studies may be either pro-active (to serve a formative role by facilitating decision-making) or retro-active (to make summative judgments, to serve accountability). The former tend to place greater stress on *processes* (experiences associated with the implementation of policy or conduct of a program, etc.), while the latter tend to emphasise *outcomes* (results achieved, the accountability model).

In MacDonald's[47] terminology, the accountability model is a form of bureaucratic evaluation: its function is to determine how effective, in terms of the implicit or explicit goals of the sponsor of the evaluation (government, institutions, etc.), a policy or program has been. Undoubtedly the Commonwealth Government would welcome evaluations of the various transition programs it has funded as part of its school-to-work transition policy. Given that the Government believes that the education system has failed a significant number of young people, evaluation studies which provide evidence on the extent to which funded programs do equip young people at risk with those skills and attitudes[48] valued by the government and employers will be sought. State government departments, agencies and institutions seeking continuation of funding will seek evaluation evidence which presents their programs in a favourable light. In that a major concern of government is reducing the teenage labour supply without greatly increasing the cost of education, greater attention is likely to be given to evaluative studies which provide evidence of the impact of policy initiations on youth unemployment statistics than evaluations which focus on the social costs of underemployment and hidden unemployment created by such initiatives.

Over the past decade an alternative tradition has emerged in educational evaluation, a tradition within which greater attention is given to capturing and portraying to a wider audience the essence of what is happening in a given context using naturalistic methods of research. 'Case study' is an umbrella term for the family of research methods having in common the decision to focus an enquiry around a single case or instance. The case may be an individual (for example, the case history of an unemployed 17 year old), a particular program (for example, the Taperoo work experience course) or agency (for example, the Mt Gambier Commonwealth Employment Service office). While many studies purport to use a case study approach, in practice few researchers have developed the skills and sensitivities needed, or have in fact spent the substantial periods of time studying the case selected which case study work demands.

Case study falls generally within the newly-prominent 'interpretative' approaches to sociology (symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, phenomenology). The unifying element of such approaches is that the essential characteristic of human action is that it is always intentional and rational once viewed through the interpretative frameworks of the participants in a particular context. If one assumes that young people and those with whom they interact during transition (teachers, parents, potential employers, Commonwealth Employment Service officers, etc.) are active interpreters and constructors of events, then it follows that to understand what is happening in a given context it is necessary to study and to see situations and actions from the point of view of the participants. According to Douglas,[49] any truly scientific understanding of the everyday life of the participants in a situation must take into account the tacit knowledge used by them to interpret and guide behaviour. Accordingly the fundamental methodological commitment of case study workers is to study the context and its phenomena on its own terms, using methods of analysis that retain the integrity of the phenomena and of systematic enquiry within the ethnographic tradition. The fundamental differences in the assumptions and framework of the normative-scientific and the interpretative approaches[50] have meant that the two approaches are generally seen to be mutually exclusive. However, in my own work, the use of longitudinal designs in the psychometric tradition enabled me to paint the broad outlines of what happened to different types of students as they moved from primary to secondary school.[51] But case studies of individuals in selected schools made possible a richer and more detailed picture of the conditions and processes whereby the different groups of pupils recognised by the participants (namely, the 'brains', 'toughs' and 'sheep') emerged and of the patterned ways in which these groups adapted to the situations encountered in transition. Case studies of what is happening to individuals and of the ways in which educational and labour agencies are implementing policies and handling problems of transition are needed if we are to fully understand the magnitude and nature of the problems to be faced. A tentative beginning on this task has been made in a project being orchestrated by Fensham *et al.*[52] in which case studies of alienation from school amongst 15–16 year olds are underway. In these studies, the case study workers are attempting to generate portrayals of the ways in which young people and schools are coping with the problems generated by difficulties in the transition from school to work. Some of the strengths and limitations of case study approaches are described in Power.[53]

Conclusion

This chapter set out to outline some approaches to the study of transition from school. The emphasis given to longitudinal approaches and to case study reflects the experience of the author. Given that the problem is an interdisciplinary and international one, there is scope for approaches not developed here. For instance, the historical analyses of education and employment policies in the 1930s undertaken by Spaull and Blackmore[54] yield fresh insights into the prospects and limitations of present policy; careful analyses of the assumptions and goals of educational and employment policies of other developed nations in cross-cultural comparative studies may alert us to alternatives not envisaged, their strengths and limitations, as well as giving us clearer insight into current government policy. With so many approaches and pieces of information, the need for critical synthesis by savants who can rise above the limitations of the conceptual frameworks of the individual researcher will remain with us: the danger may well be that we devote more time and energy to gathering information than reflecting upon how that information can be used in the development of policy and practice.

Reference Notes

1. For example, Tiggemann and Winefield have made use of Seligman's theory of learned helplessness and Merton's typology of individual adaptation has been adopted by Clancy. See M. Tiggemann and A.H. Winefield. Some psychological effects of unemployment in school leavers. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 1980, 15, 269–79; J. Clancy. A Study of Youth Unemployment. Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research (in progress).
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3. Ibid.
4. 'Addition' approaches are those in which transition education programs (career education, work experience, link courses) form a separate entity in the curriculum; 'infusion' approaches involve preparation for transition to work at all possible levels in the curriculum.
5. These paradigms have been described by R.P. Lowry. *Social Problems: a Critical Analysis of Theories and Public Policy*. Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath & Co., 1974.
6. For example, the unifying idea in the ACER School Leavers survey (T. Williams, J. Clancy, M. Batten and S. Girling-Butcher. *School, Work and Career*. Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research, 1980) is that of status attainment, both educational and occupational. In the next section, the developmental interactionist perspective is used as a framework.
7. Where this has been attempted (see P. Sheehan. *Crisis in Abundance*. Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin Books, 1980; and K. Windschuttle. *Unemployment: a Social and Political Analysis of the Economic Crisis in Australia*. Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin Books, 1979) it has generally been by individual scholars who have written popular versions of their analyses of the current social and economic situations. In most cases, the central idea is that of social justice and the analysis reveals the inadequacies and injustices of government policy, existing structures and institutions.
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22. A.H. Winefield, P.I. Tillett, J. Delin and M. Tiggemann. Psychological Effects of Unemployment and Implications for Schools. University of Adelaide (study in progress).
23. Williams *et al.*, op. cit.
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26. Toomey, op. cit.
27. Bronfenbrenner, op. cit.
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30. Bronfenbrenner, op. cit.
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33. Goulet *et al.*, op. cit.
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35. Ibid.
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38. Some of the limitations of the Australian Bureau of Statistics and Commonwealth Employment Service statistics in Australia are discussed by Windschuttle, op. cit.
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11 Action Research

Stephen Kemmis

There is an increasing clamour in social science research these days for research oriented to the real-life concerns of policy and action. This book demonstrates that this concern is as evident in research on transition from school as it is in other fields of educational and social research. The question of the relationship between research on the one hand and policy or practice on the other is, of course, a hardy perennial. Writ large, it surfaces in philosophy as the question of the relation of knowledge to action. As such, the question drives back to the roots of Western philosophy itself (for example, in Aristotle's notion of *praxis* and *techne*). Throughout our century, it manifests itself in educational and social science as the question of the relationship between theory and practice.

Later in this chapter, I shall attempt to show that the relationships between theory and practice may be construed in different ways. The central purpose of the chapter, however, is to draw attention to one form of research which is peculiarly appropriate to our present dilemma about enquiry into and examination of issues surrounding transition from school: the dilemma which confronts us when we require knowledge to articulate the experience we have gathered through the operation of our policies and practices on the one hand, and knowledge which can guide the further development of policies and practices on the other. The approach with which we are concerned here is the approach of *action research*.

The chapter has eight sections:

Introduction

What is action research?

The revival of interest in action research

Theory and practice in action research

A 'model' for action research

Action research and transition from school

Action research and evaluation of transition policies, programs and practices

Summary.

Introduction

Much of the contemporary breast-beating and anguish about the irrelevance of educational research to educational policy and practice is, I believe, an anguish born of frustration. Policy-makers and practitioners alike (it is claimed) look in vain to educational researchers for theories which can guide or legitimate their actions. This by itself is a recognition that the life of educational research is increasingly and inextricably intertwined with the concerns of policy-makers who are now able to commission research and evaluation relevant to their concerns. Much so-called 'disciplinary' research has failed to yield the results needed for policy and practice. Unfortunately, as Sanford has argued, the life of research has become separated from the life of practice.[1]

Yet it is surely an illusion to believe that the fortunes of research and of social policy exist in separate worlds. As Ralf Dahrendorf put it recently:

> The positivist separation of knowledge and decision, of procedures for answering questions and procedures for solving problems, is itself premodern; it originated in a time when speechmakers could still celebrate the idyllic relationship of mind and power, when the ivory tower of the university could be contrasted with the hard reality of, say, government, when professors could be patronised by men of action. Today, questions and problems are so closely intermeshed that neither the theorist nor the practitioner can avoid reasoning about them in a single context and with equal intensity.[2]

Action research, as a form of social research, was pioneered by the social psychologist Kurt Lewin in the mid-1940s to reunite social theory and social action in a dynamic social process of 'social management' or 'social engineering'.[3] It is clear from these terms that Lewin himself conceded something to the pragmatic and technicist conceptions of American social science prevailing at the time. But there were elements in his view of action research which align it with other developments taking place in the German social scientific community he left in the mid-1930s. From the perspective of the present day, it may be argued that some of the most important work of our time in social science was then taking place in Germany: the establishment of 'critical theory'.[4] There is evidence to suggest that Lewin was aware of these developments.[5] Other links, like personal contacts and co-authorships, can also be demonstrated between the early critical theorists and the founding father of action research and his students and colleagues.[6]

It is possible to show that action research can be reformulated in the language of critical theory. In doing so, it is possible to weed out some of its pragmatic and technicist tendencies, without tampering with its essential dynamic as a collaborative learning process for communities of action-researchers. Indeed, it may be argued that action research represents a legitimate form of praxis for critical theory; that is, a form of strategic action (social practice) which embodies the aspirations of critical theory and in its turn can reshape those aspirations.

If this can indeed be shown (and there will be space here only to do so schematically), then the choice of action research as an approach to social research is justified not only as a response to the frustrations of policy-makers and practitioners who require a form of research which can link doing to useful knowledge about what can and should be done. It can instead be justified as a form of social research in its own right. Action research may then be seen as an expression of modern critical social science (for example, as may be found in the work of Jurgen Habermas).[7,8]

What is Action Research?

Educational or social action research, as the term is used in this chapter, is *a systematic process of collaborative review and improvement of educational or social policies, programs and practices*. According to Kurt Lewin, who coined the term, action research consists of analysis, fact-finding and conceptualisation about problems; planning of action programs, executing them, and then more fact-finding or evaluation; and then a repetition of this whole circle of activities; indeed, a spiral of such circles.[9] Through spirals of these activities, action research creates the conditions under which learning communities may be established; that is, communities of inquirers committed to learning about (and understanding) the problems and effects of the action strategies they implement themselves, and the improvement of these strategies in practice.[10]

Action research was first developed by Lewin and his associates in the context of research on inter-group relations, consultancy to industry, and education. It may be argued that action research grew in significance and popularity through the period 1944 to 1953, and declined in the period 1953 to 1957.[11] It may also be argued that action research was 'retrogressively reinterpreted' towards the dominant conception of social science of the time, namely, positivistic social science. In this retrogressive reinterpretation, less emphasis was placed on the role of participants in action research, on its cyclical or spiralling character, and on its commitment to the development of theory and practice as these were united in strategic action (and what might be called a 'project perspective').[12] Increasingly, action research under the influence of positivism came to be seen as a species of field experimentation, testing hypotheses derived from disciplinary or theoretic perspectives, with the involvement of practitioners being maintained as a technical device for co-opting them and committing them to the research process and findings. Another weakening of the Lewinian notion of action research may be discovered in the view that action research is a means for localised testing of findings from large-scale experimentation; that is, the testing by teachers or others of the local applicability of generalised findings of disciplinary research which uses random samples from whole populations. Lewin himself believed that action research was necessary for fundamental developments in social science, not just an application of principles discovered through 'pure' disciplinary research.

The retrogressive reinterpretation of action research towards the prevailing positivist view of social research stripped it of its social and intellectual dynamic as a collaborative, self-reflective process. By the end of the 1950s, it was being replaced in educational and social enquiry by other practically-oriented modes of social enquiry (for example, curriculum development and evaluation).

Action research in fields outside education, however, did not appear to undergo this decline. In social work, it continues to have a considerable influence, and has developed and flowered through such arrangements as citizen's action campaigns. In industry, action research has also continued unabated as a form of consultancy involving workers and managers in the analysis and improvement of working conditions and production processes.[13]

Before proceeding, it may be useful to describe some of the main features of action research.

Action Research as Participatory

Action research is participatory in three different senses. First, it involves participants in social or educational settings in every stage of the research process, from problem articulation and definition through the implementation and monitoring of action strategies to the evaluation of findings, conceptualisation and the revision of action plans. Second, it is participatory in the sense that its problem sources are those of policy-makers and practitioners, not solely the theoretical problems of disciplinary researchers. Third, it is participatory in the sense that it engages the participatory ways of understanding of actors in social situations[14] rather than the 'external' perspective of the 'objective' or disinterested outside observer whose primary interest in a social situation is in explaining or interpreting it rather than in acting more effectively and with greater understanding.

Action Research as Collaborative

Action research involves participants in social situations in working together on their problems. While in some forms of action research the main form of collaboration is between a researcher and one or more participants in the social situation being studied, more powerful forms of action research involve collaboration between participants themselves for common work on problems of mutual concern and consequence. For example, early action research projects on inter-group relations brought together members of different ethnic groups in the common enterprise of studying their own inter-group relations.[15] Sandford also reports collaborative research between teachers and students in higher education institutions on the problems of teaching and learning they encountered.[16]The research process thus creates a forum for group self-reflection which transforms communities of self-interests into learning communities. Recent examples of action research projects in Britain and Australia entail collaboration between teachers within single schools or between groups of teachers in 'clusters' of schools.[17]

Action Research as Practice-Based and Action-Oriented

Action research begins with problems or issues arising from practice rather than theory, and is directed towards the improvement of practice. It involves strategic action as an essential part of its process; research 'findings' are not generated in an 'artificial' research context and then applied in the real world of practice. The commitment of the action researcher is not merely to understanding, with a general aspiration to affect practice some time in the future (*techne*); rather, the immediate intention to improve practice is incorporated within the research process and setting, which is the immediate social setting of practitioners (*praxis*). Here understanding is valued not for its own sake but for its capacity to guide and reform strategic action in the immediate future.

Action Research as Concretely Critical

As is implied by the foregoing, action research is not guided by primarily theoretic concerns, its interests are not in the development of abstract theoretical languages, and its truths are not to be construed as universals. By contrast, its interests are concrete, practical and strategic, and historically bound. It is sensitive to events and situations as the products of their own history and circumstances. It sees the actors in social and educational settings as historical agents who are subject to these historical processes and active in them. The kind of critique of educational policies, programs and practices offered by action research can therefore be distinguished from the negativistic critique produced by the sceptic. While the sceptic complains only that things are not as they should be, or that any limited, finite, historical truth is not absolute, the action researcher is obliged to act on the basis of the knowledge and information available even though, as truth, it is limited. Action research may therefore be distinguished on the one hand from programs of research which aim to establish positive theories first, and only then draw implications for action; and on the other from negativistic, sceptical responses which exhaust themselves in demonstrating that nothing is certain, that things are as they are, and that the best we can hope for in guiding our actions is a pragmatic set of rules of thumb (rather than a developed theoretical position grounded in the real life of social practice on the one hand and a critical theory of society and a thorough-going epistemology on the other).[18] In short, action research works on the material of real problems of strategic action, reflexively constructing and reconstructing our understandings of these problems and our practical action.

Action Research as a Spiral of Self-Reflection

It has already been suggested that action research consists of a cycle of activities of analysis, fact-finding, conceptualisation, planning, execution, more fact-finding or evaluation, and a repetition of this cycle into a spiral of such cycles. It is not a sequence of steps which, once completed, will have led to a correct understanding or a correct practice.[19] Action research recognises that understandings and practices evolve; at any one time understanding and action contain shortcomings and contradictions which may be overcome in the process of self-reflection and improvement. Even so, new contradictions and shortcomings will be identified in those improved understandings or practices, and these too must be tentatively overcome in a ceaseless process of self-reflection. In practice, this means that action research does not follow a straight line from problem to solution or from dissatisfaction with present understandings and actions to satisfaction. On the contrary, one problem gives way to another and one partial set of understandings to another more inclusive but still limited set. It is not realistic in action research to look for answers or solutions which will put a stop to enquiry. What may reasonably be hoped for is more inclusive and better integrated understandings, and more consistent and justifiable practices. In this sense, action research works in an 'open' rather than a 'closed' field.[20]

Action Research as Emancipatory

The learning communities formed in collaborative action research demonstrate a commitment to learning through continual self-criticism. They attempt to liberate themselves from the dictates of habit, precedent, custom and coercion through the exercise of critique. This is no charming faith in the efficacy of reason. On the contrary, it represents an affirmation of political will. In action research, as in critical theory, three functions must be distinguished:[21]

> the formation and extension of critical theorems which can stand up to scientific discourse; here the criterion is that the statements must be true;
>
> the organisation of processes of enlightenment in which such theorems are applied and can be tested in a unique manner by the initiation of processes of reflection carried on within certain groups towards which these processes have been directed; here the criterion is that the insights must be authentic; and
>
> the selection of appropriate strategies, the solution of tactical questions and the conduct of the political struggle; here the criterion is that the decisions must be prudent.

As Habermas argues,[22] the first of these functions requires freedom of discourse; the second requires that those involved commit themselves wholly to proper precautions and assure scope for unconstrained communication; and the third requires that all decisions of consequence depend on the practical discourse of the participants in the critical community of actor-researchers. In some ways, then, action research is a form of conscientisation.[23]

The Revival of Interest in Action Research

If action research went into a period of decline from the late 1950s, why then has there been a revival of interest?

It is perhaps sufficient for our purposes here to discuss just three reasons. First, the promises of 'conventional' educational research (especially education–psychological) that underlying principles of human behaviour could be found and that these principles could then be applied in a technology of education have proved unfounded. (Some would argue, of course, that there has not been sufficient time for the application of the scientific approach to education research to produce its results.) Second, the engagements of educational enquiry with practice in curriculum research, development and evaluation have led to a reconstruction of the problems of curriculum and the organisation of education. These reconceptualisations of the field have, in turn, led in the direction of participatory research and evaluation. For these newer approaches, action research offers a promising alternative method. Third, 'methodological' interests in social science generally suggest that new approaches are appropriate in social science, and that new epistemological foundations are required in educational science as elsewhere.

The Limits of 'Conventional' Educational Research

The limits of 'conventional' education research include, first, a failure to generate theoretical principles which are, in and of themselves, satisfactory as explanations of educational phenomena. Second, these principles have been neither compelling nor generative in providing bases for the reformation of educational practice, even where it is evident that the achievement of educational systems does not match their aspirations (for example, in relation to equality of opportunity or the improvement of educational achievement in the whole school-age population).

It is sometimes argued that the science of education is still in its infancy, and that it is too early to expect results. It is also sometimes argued (since J.S. Mill) that educational science is in any case an inexact science, and that the isolation of causes and their interactions is still proceeding. In time, it is argued, educational scientists will be able to explain a great deal more of the 'error variance' (the unexplained variation in educational outcomes left after the effects of experimentally identified variables have been explained) and control educational outcomes more precisely than is now the case.

This conclusion is not universally shared, even among educational scientists whose aim is to contribute to the development of more precise methodologies. For example, Cronbach argues[24] that these methods are limited in principle, not only in practice. Once general findings have been achieved, it remains necessary for practitioners to be open, sensitive and historically aware if they are to use the findings in their own situations. In short, he argues that there is a limit in principle to what control and understanding can be achieved using experimental (or correlational-experimental) methods.

More generally, it has been argued that the language of disciplinary research (for example, educational psychology, educational sociology) is congenitally unsuited to the task of changing educational practice. Put simply, its problems are not the problems of practitioners and its theoretical language is not the language in which practitioners describe their work (it is theoretical rather than practical discourse).[25] The same has been argued in relation to the unsuitability of conventional educational research to the problems of policy-makers (Anderson, Chapter 9).[26]

In the hope that some more 'relevant' new approach might overcome these difficulties—especially if it is one which gets researchers out in the field working with practitioners—some educational researchers have turned to action research, or at least some form of action research. History suggests, however, that these researchers may pay only lip-service to the action research approach. This appears to have been the case in America in the middle 1950s, when problems of practitioners were 'refined', or 'made more precise' by academic consultants. In fact, the problems of practitioners, which were incomprehensible under the aspect of researchers' theories, were simply converted into problems which could be comprehended by these academic 'consultants'.[27] Along the way, researchers may persuade practitioners that a problem they (the practitioners) identified has become more amenable to study when 'converted' into the researcher's language, and researchers may even co-opt practitioners into the research activity (which is, of course, highly legitimate from the perspective of some busy practitioners who see problems they genuinely do not understand and want help with them). But 'results' achieved this way are likely to be chimerical. They have no foundation in authentic understanding, being answers to 'refined' problems, not the problems of practice, and they transform practice in the direction of technologies which are appropriate only within limited theoretical frameworks[28] rather than the ideologically loaded though flexible frameworks of commonsense which practitioners use in coping with the manifold reality of practice.

It would appear that there are researchers and practitioners, however, who turn directly to action research as an alternative from 'conventional' educational research. In general, these individuals either recall or rediscover the fundamental tenets of the early action research movement or they are persuaded by contemporary models of educational action research.[29] More often, however, practising educational researchers come to action research through curriculum research and evaluation or (occasionally) through interests in social science methodology.

Curriculum Research, Development and Evaluation

The curriculum development movement of the 1960s drew many researchers from tertiary institutions into the world of curriculum practice and into evaluation of new curriculum materials. While 'field experimentation' lived on in a range of evaluation efforts,[30] especially in the United States, the limits of the experimental approach with its disciplinary foundations were recognised early.[31] But the most challenging criticism of the role of theoretic research in curriculum came in 1969, with the publication of Schwab's 'The practical: a language for curriculum'.[32] Schwab (a neo-Aristotelian) argued that curriculum deliberation was necessarily practical, not theoretic. It was an art which had to be developed by practitioners if they were to be able to make practical curriculum decisions relevant to their own situation. Schwab's argument clearly pointed to practical discourse (as opposed to theoretic and technical discourse upon which conventional disciplinary research was premised) as an alternative 'language' for curriculum.[33]

Schwab's emphasis on the practical clearly required the involvement of practitioners in curriculum work; as such, it paved the way for a form of curriculum research which was, essentially, teacher research.

In 1975, Lawrence Stenhouse's book *Introduction to Curriculum Research and Development*[34] was published, explicitly proposing that teachers must be researchers (and citing the success of Elliott and Adelman's action research project, the Ford Teaching Project,[35] as an example). It is a theme he has pursued consistently since that time.[36] Unlike Schwab, Stenhouse argues directly for action research as the only appropriate method by which teachers can test their own hypotheses about the problems and effects of different teaching methods.

While influential leaders of the curriculum development movement were directing the field towards participatory research and action research, so too were curriculum evaluators beginning to take steps towards recognising the fundamental role of the practitioner perspective. Dissatisfaction with 'conventional' research methodology in evaluation led evaluators towards 'illuminative'[37] and 'responsive'[38] approaches which were especially sensitive to the concerns of participants.[39] This, in turn, led to a closer involvement of participants in the evaluation process, even if only as respondents whose views were being taken seriously.

Elsewhere,[40] I have argued that the shift to 'illuminative', 'responsive' and 'democratic'[41] approaches to evaluation was a *double* shift. First, it was a shift in level from a focus on learning outcomes to a focus on the learning milieu, and, second, it was a shift in *approach*; the natural-science (agricultural-botany, nomothetic) approach in social science to an interpretive (or hermeneutic) approach. But these methods, while taking participants' perspectives more seriously, do not yet hand over evaluative responsibility to participants themselves (even though they may leave them with the responsibility to judge a program or materials).[42] More recently,[43] I have sought to show that the shift in approach leads ultimately to a critical theory perspective in evaluation and to action research.[44]

The upsurgence of interest in school-level evaluation (as distinct from curriculum evaluation) has also created interest in action research as a means of school self-evaluation, both in Australia and the United Kingdom.[45]

Changing Methodological Interests in Social Science

In social science generally as well as in educational research there has been a strong recent trend away from positivistic research (based on the natural science model of research and explanation). The drift away from positivism leads, almost inevitably, to interpretive approaches of one kind or another. Among the approaches which have received attention in educational research are methods based on distinctively anthropological or sociological perspectives (for example, ethnomethodology, symbolic interactionism and phenomenology); non-positivist approaches in psychology (like Piagetian developmental psychology or phenomenological psychology), and the perspectives of history and political economy. The rise of interest in case study approaches can also be understood in the context of this drift towards interpretive approaches. They have in common a rejection of positivism, but differ among themselves. Most of these approaches are essentially interpretive, based on the tradition of hermeneutic/verstehen approaches.[46] The 'new' sociology of education, however, is escaping its interpretive roots and becoming explicitly critical.[47]

The trend towards critical theory in social research follows these general trends. Where the battles of a decade ago were between positivist and interpretive approaches (including phenomenology and ethnomethodology), it is by now apparent that positivist approaches are in methodological disarray. Positivist approaches to educational and social research live on as a tradition in social science research, it is true, but some of the most interesting methodological battles of the next decade promise to be in the contested ground between interpretive (or hermeneutic) approaches and critical theory.[48]

Whereas the battles of the last decade focused on issues like the fact/value distinction, the possibility of a value-free educational science, the theory-ladenness of facts, objectivity v. subjectivity, behaviour v. action, quantitative v. qualitative methods, and the problem of reflexivity (at least in English-speaking countries), the battles of the next decade are likely to include issues raised in long-standing methodological disputes in European social science (especially in the relation of Marxist to non-Marxist social theory). These issues include debates over the transformation of consciousness (through interpretive or hermeneutic research) v. the transformation of the conditions of social life (through critique); debates over cultural v. political-economic perspectives, over the priority of theory in the relationship of theory to practice, over the nature and range of practical discourse, over the nature of communicative acts (as medium v. product of social interactions), over the means of testing validity claims in communication, and over science (or critique) as a form of legitimation of cultural and economic hegemonies v. a means by which those hegemonies may be exposed and transformed.[49]

The rise of interest in interpretive and critical approaches suggests that the character of social science will change through the next decade. But it does not follow that even the critical theorists will take up action research as a form of praxis for critical theory, though there is some suggestion that it may happen.[50] The potential link between the aspirations of modern critical theorists and the work of Lewin has, however, already been noted by Gouldner.[51]

Nevertheless, there are indications that the 'new, new wave' of critical researchers will remain aloof from practice, preferring to focus their energies on developing a spirit and a language for critique and on broader critical research (for example on the effects of mass culture, the operation of legitimation mechanisms which maintain cultural and economic hegemonies, and the like.)[52] In this, such critical researchers preserve the spirit established in the Institute of Social Research which defended its economic and intellectual independence fiercely.[53] Indeed, Horkheimer and Adorno (along with Herbert Marcuse, another of the 'founding fathers' of critical theory) took the view that theory should lead practice (in the sense that it provided a form for practical discourses), and that the Institute had a responsibility to keep alive the language in which critique was made possible.[54]

These three kinds of developments (increasing recognition of the limits of 'conventional' research; changes in curriculum research, development and evaluation; and the rise of critical methods in social science), have led to the creation of a climate hospitable to action research. And it is enjoying something of a renaissance. It is practical; it is participatory and feasible for practitioners, and it relates well to epistemological and methodological developments in recent social science.

Theory and Practice

To many busy policy-makers and practitioners, the irrelevance of research seems almost inexplicable: how could disciplinary researchers stand by, apparently unmoved, when so many pressing problems of social and educational policy and practice demand solutions? Moreover, it is clear that the solutions are of fundamental, not merely practical significance.[55] They want the services of specialist expertise and disinterested advice that researchers can provide. Some researchers argue that policy-makers and practitioners fail to express their problems clearly enough to be accessible to analysis; that the decision processes (and even the decisions) into which research findings might be fed are irrational, political, ambitious or chaotic; and that the kind of contract research policy-makers propose threatens to undermine the distinterest or objectivity necessary for sound research.

This response of researchers is based on a rationalistic conception of the role of social science (and, it might be added, of social policy), according to which 'objective' knowledge can provide a basis for improved technologies for social management. It is essentially, a positivist view,[56] though it continues to survive in more sophisticated empirical-analytic formulations of the role of social science.[57]

It is a problem of politics. Or, to put it another way, it is a problem requiring a political theory and an epistemological foundation which can embrace the politics of research. Any psychological, sociological, anthropological, economic or educational theory which purports to have implications for social life asserts a definite relation with practice. 'Conventional' (empirical-analytic or positivist) disciplinary research asserts that its principles can be applied in the control or transformation of practice. This represents what Habermas describes as a *technical* 'knowledge-constitutive interest' (that is, an interest which guides the search for and use of knowledge).[58] The assertion that an application of scientific principles can be made and practice transformed in this way presupposes a measure of social control—control over the circumstances under which applications of principles are possible. And this is a political problem, to be comprehended within a social or political theory. Disciplinary research which lacks a political theory is congenitally unable to comprehend the circumstances of its own use, and thus cannot decide whether successes or failures of its applications are consequences of the rightness of a theory or consequences of the political circumstances surrounding their application (for example, domination or coercion by institutional authorities or limits imposed by the historical circumstances of the social actors involved).

Applications of theories are political acts in another sense, too. They may differentially affect the self-interests of different groups (for example, in equalising opportunity by advantaging the disadvantaged, or in specialising provision, as in gifted education or progressive education, settings which often have the effect of advantaging the already advantaged).

For disciplinary research to relate to policy or practice, it must therefore include a political theory (or risk the alternative of not comprehending its own consequences). For this reason, Habermas developed his theory of knowledge constitutive interests. With the aid of this theory it is possible to develop a critique of the roles of different kinds of social theories.

Fitzpatrick and McTaggart[59] summarise the technical interest of empirical-analytic social science thus:

> [Empirical-analytic social science] addresses an object world of the type of moving objects: of things, events and conditions which are in principle capable of being manipulated. The objectifications of reality possible are conditioned by a prior interest in *technical control.* Because empirical-analytic knowledge can only assume the form of causal explanations or conditional predictions it cannot justify educational practice which must take account of the *intentions* of participants and their ultimate right to autonomy.

One alternative to empirical-analytic science is interpretive (hermeneutic) science. This kind of science is evident in some historical work, in sociology (for example, phenomenological sociology, ethnomethodology) and in some kinds of evaluation (for example, 'illuminative' or 'responsive'). It has a different kind of knowledge constitutive interest: a *practical* interest.[60] Of interpretive social science, Fitzpatrick and McTaggart have this to say:

> . . . hermeneutic sciences address an object world of the type of speaking and acting subjects: of persons, utterances, and conditions which are in principle structured and to be understood symbolically. The hermeneutic sciences are limited to objectifications of reality guided by a prior *practical* interest, an interest which requires a partial acceptance of norms of a group to permit the intersubjective communication necessary to interpret traditional complexes of meaning. Thus hermeneutic knowledge is normative in character and restricted to explications of cultural assumptions, values and world views from within the frame of reference of participants, and is necessarily relativist in nature.

The practical interest of hermeneutic or interpretive social science suits it well to the purposes of policy-makers and practitioners, at least in its less arcane manifestations. Its frame of reference necessarily concedes something to the value frameworks of policy-makers and practitioners, even if this is done against a background of the theoretical and methodological concerns which are the researcher's. Nevertheless, policy analysis (as distinct from policy research) often usefully fulfils a practical purpose through its interpretation of policies or practices.

The problem for empirical-analytic research with a technical interest is that it cannot escape the framework of the theory on which it is based and an undeclared politics for which it is an instrument. It may thus be thought of as active in either maintaining the *status quo* or in challenging it (when the researcher demands transformations of practice to suit his or her own undeclared politics). The problem for interpretive research is to escape the value-framework of practitioners (and for the researcher to avoid putting a gloss on them from his or her own perspective)—in this sense, interpretive research may be quietistic, producing change only in frameworks for thinking about the world, not in the conditions of social life (a transformation of consciousness rather than a transformation of practice).

Critical theory goes beyond the interests of empirical-analytic and interpretive social science. It does so in part by continuing relationship between theory and practice differently, both at the level of 'tactical questions' (for example, the conduct of political struggle, or the organisation of teaching and learning in a school) and at the level of 'the organisation of enlightenment' (the way self-reflection is organised in society or in a school community). Critical theory has an *emancipatory* knowledge constitutive interest. It organises its work around the three functions discussed earlier: the formation and extension of critical theorems; the organisation of enlightenment, and the selection of appropriate strategies. Its self-reflective character is its most crucial aspect: in self-reflection, policy-makers and practitioners may develop critiques of their policies, programs and practices which are authentic (grounded in the circumstances of their own lives), and which develop a 'project perspective' towards their own work (seeing it as malleable and open to reconstruction in the light of experience).

To put it crudely, empirical-analytic science puts a premium on theory as the guide to action, while interpretive science puts a premium on the symbolic structures and normative frameworks exhibited in the discourse and action of practitioners. Neither has an explicit politics—a means of expressing its work as political, as a means of social change. Critical theory, by contrast, is self-consciously political; that is, it comprehends its own political agency within its theoretical framework (through the notion of knowledge constitutive interests). Both theory and practice are explicitly regarded as historical products subject to change by the action of participants as historical agents. In this sense, it is emancipatory.

Action research, viewed as a form of praxis for critical theory, has this emancipatory interest.[61] This distinguishes it from empirical-analytic and interpretive social science. It may thus be especially appropriate for practitioners and policy-makers interested in developing their policies, programs and practices self-reflectively.

It follows, however, that action research cannot be employed as a service to policy-makers and practitioners. It requires that they include the self-reflective process as part of their responsibilities. To the extent that researchers from outside the programs are used at all, they can only operate as facilitators of the whole self-reflective process—they cannot *do* the self-reflection for participants. In the case of school level evaluation, for example, the researcher from outside can help set up processes for self-reflection but cannot take over the process. This conclusion is now a commonplace among researchers who have helped schools in school self-evaluation.[62,63]

The different relationships between theory and practice implied in the three different forms of social research discussed here have clear implications for who does the research, what problems are addressed, what research techniques can be employed, what may be learned through the research and with what effect. Only in critical social science are these processes completely within the control of practitioners and policy-makers. Action research, as a form of criticial-social-science-in-action, may thus be a means for the organisation of self-reflection which can be relevant to the concerns of policy-makers and practitioners, but it requires of them that they become 'researchers' themselves, not just sponsors of research.[64]

A 'Model' for Action Research[65]

Action research begins with a general idea about what might be done to improve a program or practice. This may be carried out against the background of an already-existing critical perspective. A 'reconnaissance' of the program setting follows (including an analysis of the issues it raises; here again, tentative critical theorems may be developed or called into play). Now a 'field of action' is identified (the particular aspect or aspects of the program to be improved and developed through strategic action and reflection on it). A general plan of strategic action is then developed and appropriate techniques for monitoring action in progress decided. Then the first step of the plan is implemented, along with the monitoring procedures. Throughout implementation, participants rethink, reflect, discuss, learn, understand and replan. After a period of implementation and reflection, the effects (and side effects) of the first step are evaluated in the light of experience, and the plan is revised. At this stage, revisions occur in critical theorems (tested in critical discourse), in selection of strategies, and in the procedures for the organisation of enlightenment (monitoring, discussion, group self-reflection). The next step in the revised plan is then implemented, and the process begins again. This process (depicted in Figure 11.1) continues through revisions and modifications, with issues and concerns evolving progressively and being incorporated into the body of 'critical theorems' which inform the program and into program strategies. Both program 'theory' and 'practice' develop together as one whole: ideas-in-action (praxis).

In carrying out action research projects, especially with groups, it is useful to keep in mind the following maxims:[66]

The idea-in-action is the participants' intellectual property; it is essential to respect their integrity and to recognise the range of their opportunities for action and the constraints within which they must work.

Responsibility for the action rests with participants. They must create conditions in which this responsibility is recognised and maintained.

Participants must negotiate action proposals with those affected by the proposed action.

Participation in the process is voluntary; participants are free to discontinue on their own decision.

Participants must establish a 'project perspective' in which the plan can be regarded as tentative and subject to change in the light of experience. As part of the project perspective, the group should determine roughly the limits of its work and the duration of its commitment (though these things will be subject to review).

Participants should discuss action plans to develop a common language in which problems and prospects can be registered.

The group should understand and feel in control of any monitoring techniques used—only then will insights they develop be authentic (that is, accepted on the basis of their meaning for participants, not their legitimacy as technical measures).

Procedures should be instituted which help to establish and maintain group identity and create the conditions under which group decision and group commitment to self-reflection can be fostered.

The group should establish norms of propriety and confidentiality in the use of information generated.

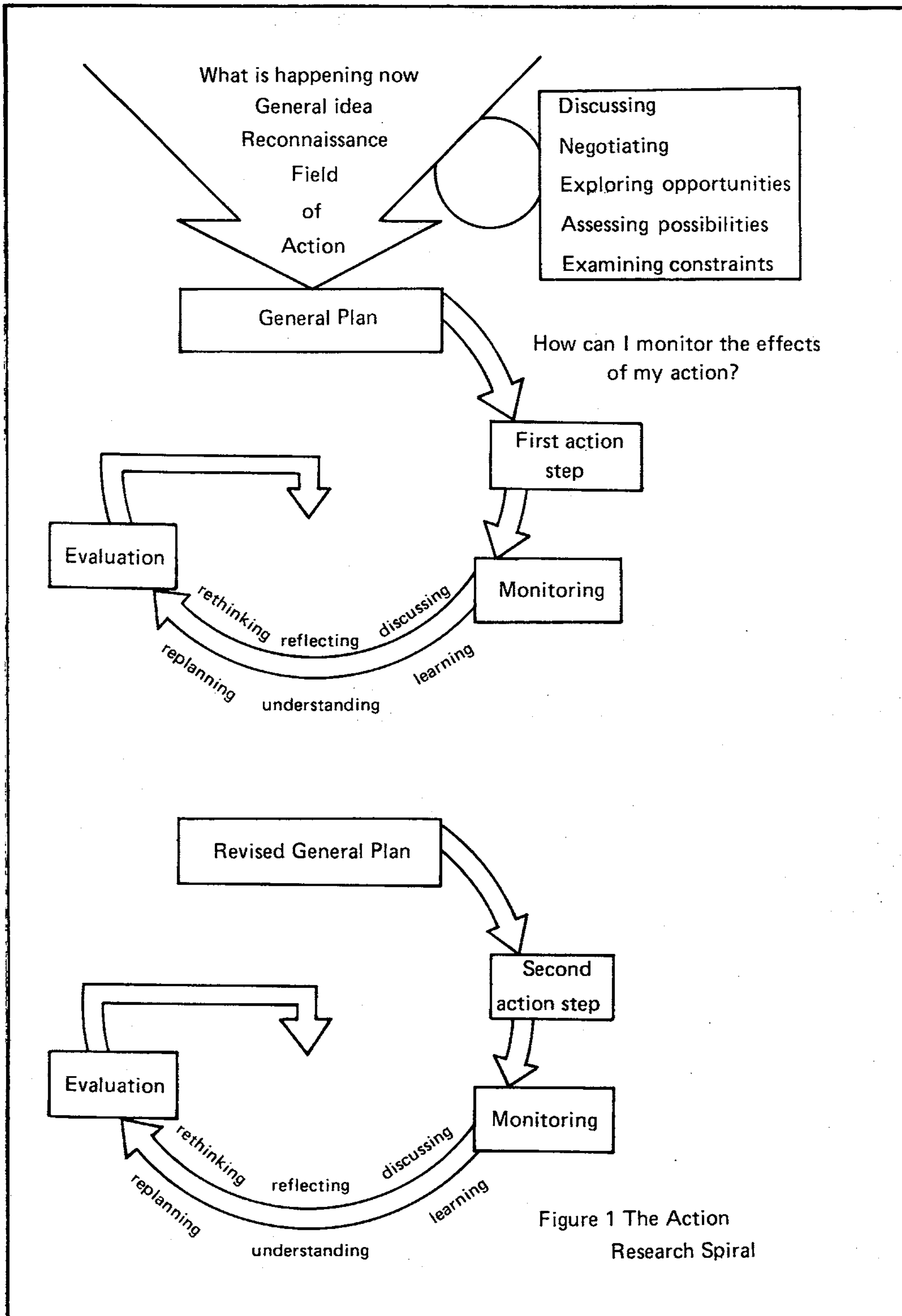

Fig. 11.1 The action research spiral

The group should be prepared for resistance from others to the charges proposed and recognise that its actions are 'political'.

Group members should tolerate and respect diversity of perspectives even within the common enterprise. The group should establish symmetrical communication[67] as its model for non-hierarchical, free, open and rational discourse.

Participants should be sensitive to problems of hierarchy creeping into the proceedings either through domination by or submission to valued leaders; they should do their best to avoid domination by or dependence on particular members.

The group should summarise and review progress systematically to determine what new directions are appropriate.

This 'model' for action research has been tried successfully in a variety of action research projects. In relation to the concerns raised in the list of maxims, problems arise when the suggested procedure is violated. (The consequences of violating them are fairly obvious, and so will not be listed here.) Even in successful collaborative action research groups, however, there is a high 'drop-out' rate as the focus of the group is defined (and becomes less interesting to some) or as other tasks demand priority. Another general problem is that groups do not easily formalise their work either in critical theories or formal accounts of progress. In these matters, a sensitive responsive observer can help the group to articulate its progress.

Action Research and Transition from School

One might say that programs concerned with transition from school are often in the nature of action research projects for the students involved. They are learning to be self-reflective about their potential future roles in the workforce or as students. They are encouraged to address these questions strategically, and to revise their strategies (of learning, of self-presentation, of skill-development) in the light of their experience. Work experience programs expose students to the demands of the workplace and help them to treat their responses to it as problematic.[68] Alternatives to traditional Year 12 (Higher School Certificate) programs in Victoria sometimes have this character also.[69] Visits to the city for rural students may likewise help students to put their own experience in a wider context.

Transition projects at the school and community level are also often in the nature of action research projects, involving a systematic process of collaborative review and improvement of school practices. Projects sponsored through the national transition program are encouraged to be self-reflectively evaluated.

Similarly, the national transition program might be considered as an action research program, with policy being modified in the light of experience.

At each level, participants posit programs of action and attempt to organise processes of learning which help to extend initial analyses of the problems of transition, self-consciously accumulate experience, and provide a basis for guiding future action.

These efforts at self-reflection are not always systematic, however. Nor are they always sufficiently critical or analytic. Participants may develop a greater appreciation of problems of transition but they need not develop any more effective strategies for action.

Part of the difficulty is that the problems of transition themselves have a structural aspect, not easily subject to control by participants in schools or even whole programs. Sheer individual or group commitment cannot change the structure of unemployment without a complementary political and economic will on the part of government and industry and structures for work, distribution of wealth and genuinely satisfying lifestyles which can support community self-interests. There are limits imposed by the objective realities of our present historical situation.[70] These problems cannot be dismissed or thought away.

Any action research project must recognise these realities, though it must treat them as problematic rather than fixed; that is, by adopting a critical rather than quietistic or individually self-interested perspective.

Critical work is clearly needed at the general political-economic level as well as at the local level. Action research can provide a method for concretely critical work (as the examples at the beginning of this section show).

The main difficulty for self-reflection among participants in transition programs and projects is that, in the face of the magnitude of the general problem, specific policy program and practical initiatives are insufficiently systematic. The political-economic structures which maintain the problems of transition are not easily modified. It is possible, however, to recognise where general impediments to the success of specific initiatives manifest themselves[71] (Kirby, Chapter 3).

Efforts at gathering intelligence about programs and projects and their contexts are not sufficiently concrete in their critique—by generalising the problems, it becomes possible for participants to adopt a negativistic or fatalistic attitude. Moreover, evolving knowledge about particular programs or projects and the general field of transition problems in which they are undertaken is not always systematised into more inclusive and better differentiated accounts of transition, though efforts are being made in this direction.[72]

At the moment, the 'learning processes' of the transition program are pragmatic in their intent. As such, they appear as a species of problem-solving. Given the perspective offered by critical theory, however, this pragmatic, problem-solving approach can be incorporated into a broader critical framework which creates the possibility of gaining new 'fundamental' insights simultaneously with the improvement of practice. This is the particular achievement of critical theory: the incorporation of the relation between theory and practice as part of an epistemology, rather than the separation of the theory and practice of research which occurs in empirical-analytic or purely interpretive research.

On this basis, the problem of what research is appropriate on issues of transition can be transformed. Rather than asking for new *methods* of research or new *processes for communication* of the results of research, we may ask *who should carry out research with what implications for the development of a general critical perspective and what implications for the improvement of what programs, projects and practices.*

At the moment, spontaneous and truncated processes of self-reflection co-ordinate the self-reflective efforts of individuals and groups concerned about transition. These efforts are limited by formal and informal communication networks which create some isolated communities rich in knowledge and information, and constrain access to knowledge and information for others. Equally, since these networks are fostered where groups are carrying out funded research or action projects, the communication processes are ideologically dominated; that is, they foster exchanges in relation to 'official' concerns and questions. Specialised funded research becomes, as it should, the 'eyes and ears' of the action agencies involved (to use Lewin's phrase); but, at worst, it may concentrate the learning process within those agencies and limit the development of broader perspectives elsewhere. This is 'natural' enough, of course, since it seems to contribute to the wise use of scarce resources and to the accumulation of information for accountability within government. But it may also unintentionally provide a basis for legitimation of policy and politically preferred programs and practices. As such, it contributes to the 'hyperrationalisation' of policy[73] and the positive central control of systems which require flexibility and localised interpretation if they are to respond to local circumstances.

Action research is devolutionary rather than centralist; it fosters the development of learning communities across administrative levels as well as locally. As an expression of critical theory, it may help to transform the pragmatic goal of establishing transition programs, projects and practices that 'work' into the critical goal of establishing networks of learning communities capable of incorporating knowledge about policies, programs, projects and practices within a broader critical framework, while simultaneously generating policies, programs, projects and practices which embody and inform theoretical and political commitments on the one hand, and practical opportunities, constraints and material conditions on the other.

Of course, to assert that the action research approach can singlehandedly achieve this critical goal is utopian. It requires that a kind of learning process—a process for the organisation of enlightenment—be created which permits freedom of discourse, a common commitment to assuring scope for unconstrained dialogue and to maintaining proper precautions against self-interested domination and control of the process, and to freedom of decision for those involved.[74] If such processes could be established in Australian society, it might reasonably be argued, then transition programs and projects (let alone research on them) would hardly be necessary.

Utopian though this aspiration may appear, there is no justifiable alternative.[75] If the development of a critical theory, authentic insights, and wise and prudent decision-making can only be achieved under such circumstances, then there is no alternative but to implement them to the greatest possible extent and to articulate the impediments to their wider implementation wherever possible. These limits will be ideological as well as material.

What can be achieved is the establishment of communities of critical action researchers committed to working this way and to working this way with other individuals and groups outside the immediate learning communities. In practice, this means that transition project teams of teachers in schools (for example) must become critical communities of action researchers, and that they must incorporate students and school communities into their collaborative enterprise or self-reflection. At the policy level, it means that transition program organisers must devolve the responsibility for learning about the program and its projects to people in the field, and commit resources to support this learning process within project groups.

Finally, a program of training in action research methods is needed. This can be achieved through the use of workshops to train 'facilitators' who can then organise groups in the field committed to self-reflection. These facilitators must learn to treat their training projects as action research projects and play a participatory role in the transition projects with which they work (that is, they must be genuine members of the communities of interests formed by the transition projects).[76]

Action Research and Evaluation of Transition Policies, Programs and Practices

A distinction is sometimes drawn between research as 'conclusion oriented' and evaluation as 'decision oriented'.[77] The critical theoretic perspective adopted here admits no such distinction. Habermas' theory of knowledge-constitutive interests shows how 'conclusions' and 'decisions' are always interlinked.[78] Action research incorporates an evaluation procedure. Moreover, any other 'external' evaluation procedure superimposed on the program that is not itself action research jeopardises the conditions for the organisation of critical work within it. It will do so by constraining the three functions necessary for critical social science: free critical discourse (valuing some truths at the expense of others); unconstrained dialogue (imposing legitimation processes), and freedom to decide (restricting the range of decisions open to participants to those which are acceptable from the value-frameworks of the 'outside' evaluators).

The evaluation of the transition program as a whole must therefore be a general organisation of the disparate self-reflective enterprises of all its projects. It should establish communication processes which, to the greatest extent possible, share the experience of the program among all participants (maintaining proper precautions about the use of information outside the settings within which it was generated). This can be achieved by newsletters, workshops and conferences for participants.

The same general structure is appropriate at the level of the local project. Here, of course, strategies are more concrete (practices rather than policies or general strategies) and more readily observed. But the context of their application is correspondingly more constrained by factors beyond participant control, and often more ambiguous in their effects. At the local level, project participants need to be able to develop and modify general critical insights which emerge more readily at the program level. They therefore require information gathered at the program level. In short, communication processes in the evaluation must be two-way, with the two levels being mutually responsive.

It follows as a consequence that the evaluation of the program as a whole will require skilled communicators who can promote the exchange of experience between participants and between program and project levels. These people should, wherever possible, be available on a face-to-face basis (since the exchange of experience and not just information is required). In addition, they should help to prepare video-taped and other portrayals of projects (and issues) which give participants greater access to one another's experience.

As a final note, it should be recognised that many problems of transition are 'long-loop' problems—where the action research cycle may be of some months' or even years' duration. These are not easy problems to work with (unlike 'short-loop' problems like classroom questioning techniques, for example, for which feedback can quickly be generated and changes to classroom strategies readily made). Some transition problems appear to begin early in school life and their effects may only be observed some time after the transition from school has occurred. It is important that follow-up procedures be an essential part of transition projects, and that knowledge be sought about long-term effects even where the data itself is subject to errors of memory, interpretation and 'subjective' bias (or impression management). Much of the data for action research on transition will not be quantitative or easily accessible to direct observation. It will require the techniques of the historian, the case study worker, and the ethnographer. Action research 'loops' in the study of transition will thus be less discrete than in other areas, with changes being made before all the data are in, on the basis of the best judgment of the critical community of participants. The experience they expect (on the basis of evidence becoming available through others' work as well as their own), as well as the experience they have, will play a part in steering the action research process.

Especially here, it is crucial to adopt a critical perspective and to allow time for critical dialogue. When judgment is the tool most readily to hand, it should be tested carefully in theoretical and analytical discourse and unconstrained dialogue. Only then can commitments to strategies be made. For this reason, a climate of critical discussion or debate about transition policies, programs and practices must be established and maintained.

Summary

Action research, as an expression of critical social science, may be justified as a form of social or educational research in its own right. It is not merely a 'relevant' form of empirical-analytic or interpretive research. As discussed here, action research is a systematic process of collaborative review and improvement of educational or social policies, programs and practices. It is participatory, collaborative, practice-based and action-oriented, concretely critical, self-reflective and emancipatory.

Action research has experienced a revival in recent years. Increasing recognition of the limits of 'conventional' disciplinary research, a recasting of the problems and methods of curriculum research, development and evaluation, and changing methodological interests in social science have together created a climate hospitable to its re-emergence in educational and social research.

Different forms of social science construe the relationship between theory and practice differently. Habermas' theory of knowledge constitutive interests allows us to differentiate the technical interest of empirical-analytic research, the practical interest of interpretive research, and the emancipatory interest of critical research. This last interest guides action research. On the one hand, this makes it more suitable for policy- and practice-oriented research, but, on the other, it requires that policy-makers and practitioners become, in part, researchers. In fact, this is only to require that they become systematically self-reflective.

A 'model' for action research was outlined, based on the Lewinian cycle of activities, involving reconnaissance, planning action, implementing and monitoring the first action step, evaluating, and amending the general plan before implementing and monitoring the next step, and so on. A number of maxims for successful action research were presented.

It was argued that a crude form of action research already goes on in transition projects and the national transition program. But it is not sufficiently systematic or critical. This is partly because of the magnitude of the problems, partly because of their political-economic character, and partly because the problems do not lend themselves to clean, sharp 'loops' of planning, implementing and observing, evaluation and replanning. Implications were then drawn for the sharing of experience between participants in the transition program and its projects and for evaluation. It was argued that evaluation of transition efforts should pay special attention to widening the scope and involvement of interested people in the critical debate about transition policies, programs and practices.

Reference Notes

1. Nevitt Sanford. Whatever happened to action research? *Journal of Social Issues*, 1970, 26, 3–23.
2. Rolf Dahrendorf. *Essays in the Theory of Society*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968.
3. Kurt Lewin. Action research and minority problems. *Journal of Social Issues*, 1946, 2, 34–46; Feedback problems of social diagnosis and action. *Human Relations*, 1947, 1, 147–53.
4. See Martin Jay. *The Dialectical Imagination: a History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research 1923–1950*. London: Heinemann, 1973. The foremost figures in the development of critical theory were undoubtedly Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer. Jurgen Habermas is its foremost spokesman today.
5. Lewin wrote a book review for the first issue of the new journal of the Institute of Social Research, *Zeitschrift fur Sozialforschung*, in 1932 (see Jay, ibid., p.27).
6. For example, Nevitt Sanford, a staunch advocate of action research, was one of the co-authors with Theodor Adorno of *The Authoritarian Personality*. (Theodor Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswick, D.J. Levinson and Nevitt Sanford. *The Authoritarian Personality*. New York: Harper and Row, 1950.)
7. Such a project is already underway in continental Europe. See, for example, Birgit Brock-Utne. What is educational action research? *Classroom Action Research Network*, Bulletin No. 4, Summer 1980, 10–15.

8. For representative examples of his work, see Jurgen Habermas. *Knowledge and Human Interests*, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro. London: Heinemann, 1972; and *Theory and Practice*, trans. John Viertal. London: Heinemann, 1974.
9. See Lewin, op. cit.
10. This 'spiral' quality is one of the features that marks Aristotle's distinction between *praxis* and *techne*. *Techne* is a knowledge of means (to ends), like the skill of a craftsman which is used in a rule-following and goal-directed way. *Praxis* is self-reflective knowledge which modifies action and is in turn modified by it.
11. See Stephen Kemmis. Action Research in Retrospect and Prospect. Paper delivered to the Annual General Meeting of the Australian Association for Research in Education, Sydney, 1980.
12. Jean-Paul Sartre's notion of a 'project' corresponds roughly to the Marxist notion of *praxis*. See Jean-Paul Sartre. *The Problem of Method.* London: Methuen, 1963.
13. See, for example, Peter A. Clark. *Action Research and Organizational Change.* London: Harper and Row, 1972.
14. It thus involves not only propositional knowledge about educational settings but also tacit knowing; the distinction is Michael Polanyi's. See Marjorie Grene (Ed.). *Knowing and Being: Essays by Michael Polanyi.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969. The distinction has been developed by Stake into the field of generalisation in social science, where he distinguishes 'formalistic' and 'naturalistic' generalisation (Robert E. Stake. The case study method in social inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, 1978, 7, 5–8). David Hamilton similarly distinguishes 'logical' and 'cognitive' uses of the term 'generalisation' in educational science (David Hamilton. On Generalisation in the Educational Sciences, mimeo, University of Glasgow, October 1978). Generalisation of the findings of action research tends to be 'naturalistic' or 'cognitive': action researchers learn from one another through exchanging accounts of their experiences, not through formally stated principles of teaching and learning or direct application of findings from other researchers. See Stephen Kemmis. Research on Action Research: an Interim Report to the Education Research and Development Committee, mimeo, Deakin University, June 1980.
15. Lewin, op. cit. See also R. Lippitt and M. Radke. New trends in the investigation of prejudice. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 1946, 244, 167–76.
16. Sanford, op. cit.
17. See, for example, John Elliott and Clem Adelman. Reflecting where the action is: the design of the Ford Teaching Project. *Education for Teaching*, 1973, 92, 8–20; Stephen Kemmis, Barriers to Change in Teaching: Some Implications for In-service Education, mimeo, Deakin University, February 1980.
18. In this context, Habermas distinguishes the work of critique (critical theory) from philosopy on the one hand and conventional science on the other (op. cit., p.2).
19. Action research has, however, been formulated as just such a sequence. See Hilda Taba and Elizabeth Noel. *Action Research: A Case Study*, Washington DC: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, National Education Association, 1957.
20. In the same way, critical theory can never provide a 'final' or 'complete' foundation from which applications may be generated. (To expect it to do so is to demand that it be the foundation for a technology, that is that its basis be *techne* rather than *praxis*). For a discussion of the necessary incompleteness of critical theory and its development through critique of other (more positive) theoretical programs, see Jay, op. cit., Chapter 2.
21. Adapted from Habermas, op. cit., p.32. It is in the second of these functions, the organisation of enlightenment, that action research as a distinctive activity is most apparent: an organisation of a community so that it becomes a *learning* community.
22. ibid., p.34.
23. Berger, Berger and Kellner explain conscientisation thus: 'originally the term as used by Freire, simply meant that adults could be taught anything more readily if the teaching was related to the primary concerns of their everyday life. [Freire was originally concerned with teaching literacy.] The term, however, has come to mean much more than that, both in Freire's own work and in its wide diffusion among radical intellectuals throughout Latin America. Conscientisation now means the entire transformation of the consciousness of people that would make them understand the political parameters of their existence and

the possibilities of changing their situation by political actions. Conscientisation is a precondition of liberation. People will be able to liberate themselves from social and political oppression only if they first liberate themselves from the patterns of thought imposed by the oppressors'. (P. Berger, B. Berger and H. Kellner. *The Homeless Mind: Modernization and Consciousness.* New York: Random House, 1973, pp.175–6.)
24. Lee J. Cronbach. Beyond the two disciplines of scientific psychology. *American Psychologist*, 1975, 30, 116–27.
25. See Wilf Carr. The gap between theory and practice. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 1980, 4, 60–9.
26. See also Martin Rein. *Social Science and Public Policy.* Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1976; Joseph Schwab. The practical: a language for curriculum. *School Review*, 1969, 78, 1–24 (a trenchant critique of theoretic research).
27. Taba and Noel, op. cit., clearly (and unwittingly) demonstrate this process.
28. Schwab, op. cit., argues that the available disciplinary-theoretic frameworks (for example, of sociology or psychology) are necessarily limited, not just incomplete.
29. John Elliott and Clem Adelman, who directed the Ford Teaching Project (see note 18), have been especially influential. The Classroom Action Research Network which Elliott established (based at the Cambridge Institute of Education, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge, England) had 233 members, mostly in Britain, continental Europe, the United States of America and Australia, in 1980 (*Classroom Action Research Network Bulletin No. 4*, Summer 1980, 118–29).
30. One of the clearest examples is Richard C. Anderson's evaluation of the Biological Sciences Curriculum Study, reported in his paper, The Comparative Field Experiment: an Illustration from High School Biology. *Proceedings of the 1968 Invitational Conference on Testing Problems.* Princeton: Educational Testing Service, 1968, 3–30.
31. For example, J. Myron Atkin. Some evaluation problems in a course content improvement project. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 1963, 1, 129–32.
32. Schwab, op. cit.
33. The argument has been taken further along explicitly Aristotelian lines by Ian Westbury who was a student of Schwab's (see Ian Westbury. The Character of a Curriculum for a 'Practical' Curriculum. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York, February 1971). Interestingly, Westbury focuses on *techne* (rather than *praxis*) in his discussion, emphasising the craft element of curriculum-making. Perhaps unwittingly, Westbury's emphasis on *techne* seems to refocus Schwab's practical concerns back towards the theoretic and technical, though still acknowledging the craft or 'making' element in Schwab's argument. That is, his view presupposes a notion of a craft to be exercised and may thus presuppose the character of curriculum as a thing to be made with the materials to hand for the situation at hand. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1975) discusses *techne* (p.281 ff) in the context of the development of interpretive (hermeneutic) methods and, like Westbury, sees *techne* as improving itself through practice, not as static (goal-directed, rule-following). On this matter, Gadamer and Habermas appear to disagree, though the disagreement only becomes explicit in relation to the role of language in hermeneutics and the capacity of interpretive work to free itself from determination at any historical moment. (See Habermas, op. cit., p.38; and A Review of Gadamer's *Truth and Method* in F. Dallmayr and T. McCarthy (Eds.). *Understanding and Social Inquiry.* Notre Dame, 1977, 335–63; see also Gadamer, ibid., pp.495–8 for a response.)
34. Lawrence Stenhouse. *Introduction to Curriculum Research and Development.* London: Heinemann Education, 1975.
35. Elliott and Adelman, op. cit. (see note 17). Elliott (personal communication) points out, however, that Stenhouse influenced him to embark on action research work during their earlier work together on the Humanities Curriculum Project (1967–1973).
36. See, for examples, his Curriculum research and the art of the teacher (*Study of Society*, April 1980, 14–15); Using research means doing research (for *Festschrift to Johannas Sandven*, in mimeo from the Centre for Applied Research in Education, University of East Anglia. Research as a Basis for Teaching, 20 February 1979).
37. Malcolm Parlett and David Hamilton. Evaluation as Illumination: A New Approach to the Evaluation of Innovative Programs, in David A. Tawney (Ed.). *Curriculum Evaluation*

Today: Trends and Implications. London: Macmillan Education, 1976.

38. Robert E. Stake (Ed.). *Evaluating the Arts in Education: A Responsive Approach.* Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1976.
39. See D. Hamilton, D. Jenkins, C. King, B. MacDonald and M. Parlett. *Beyond the Numbers Game: A Reader in Educational Evaluation.* London: Macmillan Education, 1977, for a compilation of the 'new wave' view and examples of the approach in action. Especially interesting is the 'Manifesto' from an evaluation conference (at Churchill College, Cambridge in 1972) which sets out objections to the 'agricultural-botany' paradigm, as Parlett and Hamilton called it.
40. Stephen Kemmis. Nomothetic and idiographic approaches to the evaluation of learning. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 1978, 10(1), 45–59.
41. Barry MacDonald coined the term 'democratic evaluation', distinguishing it from 'autocratic' and 'bureaucratic' forms of evaluation in his paper Evaluation and the Control of Education, in Tawney, op. cit.
42. Robert E. Stake emphasised the necessity for audiences of an evaluation to make their own judgments in developing the notion of 'portrayal' in evaluation. See Stake, op. cit., and Stephen Kemmis. Telling It Like It Is; the Problem of Making a Portrayal of an Educational Program, in Louis J. Rubin (Ed.). *Handbook of Curriculum*, Vol. 2. Boston, Mass.: Allyn and Bacon, 1976.
43. Stephen Kemmis. Program Evaluation in Distance Education: Against the Technologisation of Reason, in John D. Armstrong and Ron E. Store (Eds.). *Evaluation in Distance Learning.* Townsville, Queensland: Townsville College of Education, 1980. The paper traces the movements from the 'agricultural-botany' approach to the interpretive, and from the objectivist perspective to the participatory, arguing that critical theory can supply principles for curriculum evaluation and action research as a method.
44. The role of critical theory in evaluation is also discussed in Ted Aoki (Ed.). *Curriculum Evaluation in a New Key.* Vancouver: Center for the Study of Curriculum and Instruction, University of British Columbia, 1978 (especially Aoki's Chapter I, and Walter Werner's Chapter II); and Cal Zinkel. Critical Cognitive Social Inquiry: an Alternative Approach to Educational Evaluation, mimeo, Canberra College of Advanced Education, Canberra, Australia, February 1980.
45. Projects at Deakin University, Victoria, in the Schools Authority of the Australian Capital Territory, and in the Education Departments of South Australia and Tasmania furnish Australian examples. John Elliott's work at the Cambridge Institute of Education furnishes British examples.
46. See Gadamer, op. cit. for a thorough account of the development of hermeneutic approaches. William Outhwaite. *Understanding Social Life: The Method called Verstehen.* London: George Allen and Unwin, 1975, gives a good introduction.
47. See M.F.D. Young (Ed.). *Knowledge and Control: New Directions for the Sociology of Education.* London: Collier-Macmillan, 1971. Michael Apple. *Cultural and Economic Reproduction in Education.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980.
48. See, for introductory discussions, Brian Fay. *Social Theory and Political Practice.* London: George Allen and Unwin, 1975; and Outhwaite, op. cit.
49. The disagreements between Habermas and Gadamer (see note 33) may foreshadow some of the debates to be contested in English-speaking social-scientific communities.
50. Professor Brock-Utne's paper (op. cit., note 7) suggests that some directly related work is being carried out in Germany; for example, by Wolfgang Klafki (unfortunately this is apparently not available in English translation). Another interesting approach which seems to align itself with the aspirations of the early action researchers has been proposed by Ted Smith and George Zollschan. Strategies for the Explanation of Action. Paper delivered at the 50th Annual Congress of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science, Adelaide, 1980.
51. In the context of a critique of Habermas, Gouldner discusses the complaint that Habermas' theory lacks a politics. He focuses on the ideal speech situation and its relation to the group dynamics movement: '... it may not be that Habermas' theory lacks a practice; it may be quite consistent with a *new* practice, but one the left does not regard as a *politics*. Seen from the standpoint of the kind of practice it implies, it may be that the "praxis" consistent with Habermas' ideal speech situation is that found in the early

"group dynamics" movement launched by Kurt Lewin, by the Bethel Laboratory with its training or "T" groups, by Moreno's psychodrama and sociodrama, and by their more recent derivatives... All this suggests that there *is* an organizational infrastructure, and, indeed, a social movement to which Habermas' linguistic theory of communicative competence corresponds, and for which it may supply a certain philosophical foundation'. (Alvin Gouldner. *The Dialectic of Ideology and Technology.* London: Macmillan, 1976.) Lewin's notion of participatory action research is part of his approach to the study and transformation of group dynamics.

52. As, for example, in the work of the Australian Association for Independent Educational Policy Research, convened by Michael Pusey of the School of Sociology, University of New South Wales, and Bob Young, Department of Education, University of Sydney.
53. The Institute of Social Research was financially independent, having been privately endowed. Just before the Second World War, it was able to move its resources and its base to Switzerland and then to New York, where it remained until 1950.
54. Jay, op. cit., pp.79–84.
55. '... it [research in the social sciences] is not aimed at solving the problems on which legitimate survival depends, usually because it is said to be doing 'fundamental' or 'basic' research. But most of this has steadily failed to pay off in its own terms: i.e. with valuable new theories. This is partly because it is based on an erroneous conception of the social sciences... More unfortunately, and independently, it has been based on the egocentrism of the researcher who fiddles with his instruments while Rome burns.' Michael Scriven. Education for Survival, in G. Kinney (Ed.). *The Ideal School.* Wilmete, Illinois: The Kagg Press, 1969, pp.45–6.
56. For a history of positivism, see Lescek Kolakowski. *Positivist Philosophy from Hume to the Vienna Circle.* Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Pelican, 1972.

    Critiques of positivism abound; an introductory critique in relation to social and political theory may be found in Fay, op. cit.

    A critique (with a thorough introduction to 'the received view') in natural science may be found in Frederick Suppe (Ed.). *The Structure of Scientific Theories.* Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1974; and an extended critique from the viewpoint of critical theory may be found in Habermas' *Knowledge and Human Interests*, op. cit.
57. For example, in the work of Sir Karl Popper. *The Poverty of Historicism.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961; *Conjectures and Regulations: the Growth of Scientific Knowledge*, 5th edition. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974.

    The term 'empirical-analytic' comes from Habermas' usage; it conveniently encompasses the territory just beyond the limits of the term 'positivism', a label which Popper (among others) energetically rejects as a description of his own point of view. It is interesting to note that the logical positivists of the Vienna Circle also rejected the label, preferring the description 'logical empiricists'; positivism had already become disreputable by the end of the nineteenth century.
58. Habermas, 1972, 1974, op. cit. (The Appendix to *Knowledge and Human Interests*, gives a clear and straightforward account of the three different kinds of knowledge-constitutive interests: technical, practical and emancipatory.)
59. Marita Fitzpatrick and Robin McTaggart. The Requirements of a Successful Action Program. Paper delivered at the Annual General Meeting of the Australian Association for Research in Education, Sydney, 1980. Their argument is based on Habermas (especially *Theory and Practice*, op. cit.).
60. It is practical in the same sense as Schwab, op. cit. uses the term.
61. And it is in this sense of conscientisation (see note 23). Conscientisation as developed by Freire is likewise a form of *praxis* for critical theory.
62. Much of the work of consultants in action research is in creating the conditions under which participants can form learning communities. See Fitzpatrick and McTaggart, op. cit., and Kemmis. Research on action research: Interim Report to the Education Research and Development Committee, op. cit., for discussion of these issues.
63. For a more general account of the facilitator's role in establishing the conditions for self-reflection, especially the symmetric communications required for unconstrained critical dialogue, see Bruno Werner and Irene Drexter. Structures of Communication and Interaction in Courses for Junior Staff Members of Faculties of Engineering, in Dietrich

Brandt (Ed.). *HDZ Aachen: Activities and Context*, a collection of papers prepared for the Fourth International Conference, Improving University Teaching, Aachen, West Germany, July 1978.

64. The differences between empirical-analytic, interpretive and critical research, their different approaches to theory and practice, and the relationship to action research are examined in Wilf Carr and Stephen Kemmis. *Becoming Critical: Knowing through Action Research.* Geelong, Victoria: Deakin University Press (in press).
65. The approach outlined here is presented as a simple guide for teachers and school administrators in Stephen Kemmis *et al. The Action Research Planner*. Geelong, Victoria: Deakin University Press, 1981. It is adapted from the Lewinian model of action research (see Lewin, op. cit.).
66. These maxims are adapted from Fitzpatrick and McTaggart. Requirements of a successful action program, op. cit. and Kemmis, Research on action research, op. cit.
67. See Kemmis, Research on action research, op. cit.
68. See Peter Watkins. Work Experience, Correspondence and Hegemony. Paper delivered at the Annual General Meeting of the Australian Association for Research in Education, Sydney, 1980. The discussion takes a critical perspective, and Watkins recommends that work experience programs should develop this critical perspective in students.
69. For an especially good example, see the Schools Sixth-Form Tertiary Entrance Certificate (STC) Year 12 program, recently accredited as an approved study structure by the Victorian Institute of Secondary Education. It involves both work experience and tertiary visits for students intending to go from school to college or university. It also embodies procedures for negotiations of the curriculum between students and teachers, taking into account students' aspirations, teachers' areas of expertise and the community context.
70. This is not to say that we should accept the situation; rather, it is to say that we should recognise the nature of the problem and be prepared to work on whatever fronts are necessary to create the political and economic conditions which permit solutions to be found either by changing the economic conditions or by changing our responses to them (for example, by creating new lifestyles which are genuinely rewarding).
71. This is the project of conscientisation or 'consciousness-raising'. It is, of course, part of the aim of the national transition policy and programs.
72. The present volume being an example.
73. See Art Wise. Why educational policies often fail: the hyperrationalization hypothesis. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 1979, 9, 43–57.
74. See section above, Action research as emancipatory.
75. Similarly, J. Habermas uses an analysis of the ideal speech situation to develop criteria for political theory and practice. See his *Communication and the Evolution of Society*. Trans. Thomas McCarthy. Boston, Mass.: Beacon, 1979.
76. Such an organisation is now being established in a Queensland project for school principals on the management of change, directed by Beryl Evans of Kelvin Grove College of Education, Queensland.
77. Lee J. Cronbach and Patrick Suppes (Eds.). *Research for Tomorrow's Schools: Disciplined Inquiry for Education.* Toronto: Macmillan, 1969.
78. As does the quotation from Ralf Dahrendorf in the introduction to this chapter.

12 Youth, Research Models and Social Policy

Bruce J. Biddle

> As the labor of children has become unnecessary to society, school has been extended for them. With every decade, the length of schooling has increased, until a thoughtful person must ask whether society can conceive of no other way for youth to come into adulthood.[1]

Problems of youth unemployment and transition from school to adulthood are pandemic in Western societies. Nevertheless, the details of these problems are unique in each country, and Australia is clearly not the United States. As an American, then, I was somewhat diffident about acceding to the editor's request that I contribute to the present volume. Nevertheless, I have been fortunate to be involved in research that compared Australian and American adolescents, and comparative research can sometimes provide insights that are not generated when one examines problems in one country only. Besides which, relationships among youth problems, social research, and social policy are complex and are often apparently misunderstood in both America and Australia. So, herewith a few, comparative observations on youth problems, models for social research, and youth policy—together with one or two homilies about the unique problems and opportunities that Australia appears to offer.

Youth Problems

The concept of youth as a discriminable stage of life is of recent origin. Historians such as Tuchman[2] portray medieval societies as lacking a separate role for adolescents. Within such societies one passed from childhood to adult status as soon as one reached physical maturity. Full recognition of 'adolescence' as a separate stage in the life cycle seems not to have appeared until its advocacy by G. Stanley Hall,[3] although two evolutionary changes had already begun during the nineteenth century that set the stage for our modern concept of youth.

The first of these has been a gradual decline in the need for manual labour. Each of us lives in a country in which human effort is being replaced by the efforts of mechanical servants. The result has been both a higher standard of living and a reduction in the average number of hours required per person to produce that standard. Various strategies have appeared for accommodating the increased leisure time that is available to our populations. Some of these have had little effect on youth: reduction in the average work week, increasing the number of weeks spent in vacations each year, adoption of programs for long-service leave, encouragement of early retirement. These strategies have not proven sufficient to 'solve' the problem, however, and most Western countries have also taken steps to force youth out of the labour market. To illustrate, Musgrove[4] argues that, within England, laws prohibiting child labour came into existence only when there was no longer need for employing children in the mills. It is also useful to note that such laws were pioneered in England, which led in industrialisation, and were only gradually adopted elsewhere, such as in the United States.

The second evolutionary change has been a sharp increase in our demands for public education. Until the nineteenth century, education was largely a luxury and was reserved for the sons and daughters of elite persons. During that century, however, vigorous spokesmen (such as Horace Mann), appeared in the United States who advocated state support of schools for the masses. Such advocacies reflected several beliefs: that one could not be an adequate citizen if one were illiterate, that advanced education was required for professional careers, and that 'getting ahead' was more likely when one was educated. So strong have been these beliefs that in the United States more than 80 per cent of each age cohort now receive a high school diploma and more than 50 per cent enter some form of post-secondary education. Within other Western countries, too, state support is now widely provided for primary, secondary, and post-secondary education, and universal access to education is generally now thought to be a 'right'.

These two changes have tended to coincide in the West, so that each decade has brought about both a decrease in the proportion of young persons who are in the labour force and an increase among those who are enrolled in school. As a result, by the middle of the twentieth century most Western countries had large groups of post-pubertal citizens—*youths*—who were segregated from adult society in academies, and who were denied access to full-time employment and other privileges of adult status.

Such an arrangement generated a host of secondary effects, many of which came to be viewed as 'problems' by the adult community. Curricula changed and traditional standards for achievement 'fell' as schools adjusted to the task of purveying mass education. Youths tended to develop their own elements of subculture, ranging from clothing fads to tastes in music, foods, reading matter, and the use of illegal drugs. Substantial consumer industries sprang up to cater for adolescents, and youth standards now dominate segments of the mass media. Youth interests and peer influence have to some extent replaced parental interests and influence, and the 'excesses' of youth behaviour are often decried. Hosts of law enforcement officers and social service professionals are now employed to monitor and 'aid' young people as they pass from the conventionality of their parental families into the youth culture, and then (presumably) from the latter into the adult world. These effects have been widespread in the West, and it is reasonable to believe they would persist whether or not we were afflicted with the additional problems generated by youth unemployment.

Youth problems have intensified, however, as unemployment has increased in the West. Unemployment rates have tended to rise during the past two decades, and youth unemployment rates are considerably higher than those for adults in Europe, North America, and Australasia (see King, Chapter 1). The reasons for greater rates of youth unemployment are complex and presumably vary somewhat among countries. Among others, they include adult hostility towards young people and employer reluctance to fire persons from jobs they are already performing to employ others who are untrained. Employment is also sometimes reserved for persons who are older and presumably have greater financial responsibilities. Youth unemployment may also reflect demographic factors, such as an earlier 'baby boom' that has increased the proportion of youths in today's world. Above all, however, it appears that traditional education has nearly reached its capacity for absorbing 'surplus' young persons. Those youths not now enrolled in high schools, colleges, or universities appear to have little interest in additional, higher education (see Karmel, Chapter 1). Thus, our traditional method for 'solving' the problem of youth unemployment does not help us at present.

Western nations have responded to youth unemployment in two basic ways. The first is to do nothing in the hope that our present rates of unemployment are only transitory or in the belief that youth unemployment is not really a problem that requires remediation. Some critics argue, for example, that youth unemployment is largely a transitory matter, and it cannot be denied that most young people eventually enter the labour market. Others suggest that it may actually be advantageous if young people are able to 'enjoy' a period of leisure before they take on adult responsibilities. These arguments fly in the face of evidence. Youth unemployment is widespread among Western nations, and in most countries it has persisted for twenty years or longer. The unemployed state is also unpleasant and disruptive to youths, a fact that has been confirmed in dozens of studies. Youths who are unemployed are poorer than those who earn. They are also denied access to the identity that goes along with a job, and they have difficulty planning their futures or taking the responsibilities that adulthood brings such as marriage or hire purchase. In short, they remain (and tend to conceive themselves) as dependants, and their resentment of this dependent state is reflected in a host of secondary problems such as higher rates of crime.

The second form of response has been to institute tax-supported social programs that provide jobs or job training for youths. To illustrate such programs, the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) provided both youth employment and job training in the United States, whereas the latter was addressed in Australia through the Comprehensive Policy for Transition from School to Work (see Kirby, Chapter 3). Such programs have been politically controversial and have had only moderate success in the main. Those that offered employment for youths have been attacked for providing only 'make-work', or—alternatively—for taking jobs away from other, unemployed persons if they were too successful. Those that instituted job training have generally succeeded in making participating youths more employable,[5] but it may be doubted whether they created more jobs within the labour market. In short, programs that focused solely on the problem of youth unemployment have not, as a rule, succeeded in 'solving' that problem. Indeed, it is doubtful whether the problem of youth unemployment *can* be solved without also addressing the general problem of unemployment in the West—a topic to which I return at the end of the chapter.

So much for the broad picture. But Australia is a unique country, and it may be instructive if we pause for a minute to consider some of the ways in which youth problems are somewhat different in Australia. Some differences in Australia 'favour' youth. Australia has traditionally had a lower rate of unemployment than most Western countries and has not had a population of alien guest-workers who were willing to take on poorly paid jobs. Australia has retained an apprenticeship system, and Australian colleges have expanded rapidly and now provide a wide variety of curricular offering designed to help youths toward employment. In addition, some of Australia's other institutions make life easier than in the USA for the youth who is unemployed. Australia provides a 'dole' for most unemployed persons, including youths (a fact that is *not* true in my country), and relatively little friction appears between the generations in Australian homes. Australia also offers more avocational and recreational opportunities for unemployed youths than in some countries. (This means that school leavers in Australia are more likely to be surfing, playing tennis, or participating in club activities, where drop-outs in America are more often engaged in illegal behaviour or 'hanging out'.)[6]

On the negative side, Australia retains vestiges of sexism in her hiring practices (as does the United States), and unemployment rates are higher for young women than for young men (see Karmel, Chapter 1). Unique problems attend the employment of Aborigines and those from migrant families. Moreover, additional difficulties are presumably generated by traditionalism within Australian secondary schools, by social class barriers, by the tendency of Australian academics to look overseas for 'solutions' to her social problems, and by the presumption that social innovation in Australia must come from State or Federal initiative rather than from experimenting at the local level. In addition, the Australian labour market has its own, unique strengths and weaknesses, and attempts to deal with youth problems in Australia are, as elsewhere, laid within a political tradition that has its own history and assumptions.

This last point brings me to the second of my major concerns in this paper. Australians, in common with others in the West, are concerned about youth problems and are determined to do something about them. In part, this concern is reflected in a series of public initiatives and symposia (of which this volume is an outgrowth). Australians also expect (again, with persons elsewhere) that social research may help them to solve the problems of youth, and that by supporting it they will be more likely to conceive and initiate programs that will benefit youths and the society in which they live. How realistic are these expectations? What kinds of social research are applicable to youth problems, and how does each type make a contribution? To say the least, controversy has arisen concerning answers to these questions. Let us turn, then, to a brief survey of the various forms of social research and their likely contribution to understanding, and solving, problems of youth transition.

Models for Research

For convenience, I shall sort models for social research into three categories, each representing a somewhat different vision of the research act and its relevance to social policy.

Positivist Views

The first vision of social research I discuss is based on a set of assumptions that are generally assigned, at least by critics, to the philosophical school of Logical Positivism. (As is often the case, the assumptions I outline do not represent the actual views of Logical Positivists but are, rather, a debasement of those views.) This vision assumes that the social sciences are largely similar to the physical and biological sciences. The activities of all sciences are seen to be those of fact acquisition and the testing of hypotheses concerned with causal relationships. Within this vision, a great deal of stress is given to research design, to statistical manipulation of data, to careful measurement, and to the conduct of research that provides unimpeachable evidence for the facts and causal relationships claimed. Extensive use is made of inferential statistics to establish the validity of claims. Although measurement techniques may be complex, a straightforward relationship is presumed between terms, the concepts of the scientist, and those techniques. A good deal of research within this vision is carried on without benefit of theory, and much of this atheoretical effort is designed to provide information needed by social planners. (Such studies are termed *applied research.*) Other studies (*basic research*) are used to test explicit theory, in which case the theory tested should be formalised with mathematical symbols.

As can be appreciated, the positivist vision represents the bulk of social science research that has been conducted to date. Standards for conducting and reporting studies from this tradition are well established, and funding agencies that support social research usually have this vision in mind when they award grants. Moreover, the vision presumes a simple relationship between the activities of researchers and policy impact. Applied research, in particular, is funded with the assumption that it will have simple and direct relevance for planning and evaluating social policy.

Two models have dominated the positivist tradition in social research. The first is the *cross-sectional survey* in which data are gathered, on one occasion, from a sample of respondents presumed to represent some universe of human beings in whom we are interested. How do we establish the proportion of youths who are unemployed this year? We ask a representative sample of youths (or of those who deal with youths) to report their employment status as of a given date. Information of this sort is regularly collected in Western democracies and is used as a base for planning and interpreting the effects of public policy. Cross-sectional surveys are thought to be 'practical', and much of what we think we know about social problems is based on their evidence. They also form the data base for numerous studies conducted to test theories in economics and sociology.

Several forms of cross-sectional survey may be discriminated. *Structured interviews* are surveys in which the researcher makes personal contact with the respondent and asks a series of pre-planned questions. Interviewing has a number of advantages: response rates tend to be high, respondent confusion can be detected and questions can be reworded so as to elicit meaningful answers, the interview can take on issues that would normally cause embarrassment or evasion among respondents, and respondents can be induced to answer large numbers of questions. Interviewing is expensive, however, and interviews are only rarely conducted with large samples of respondents. Many studies use interviews with small samples of respondents, however; often samples are constructed to quota designs so as to provide specific information. A good example of Australian interviewing with adolescents may be found in Turney, Sinclair, and Cairns,[7] which examined problems of youth transition in rural New South Wales.

Given the expensiveness of interviewing, most cross-sectional surveys make use of *questionnaires* which are instruments that are designed for respondents to fill out themselves. Some questionnaires are administered to groups of respondents. (To illustrate, Anderson *et al.*[8] report administering a standardised questionnaire to all new students enrolling in first degree or diploma courses in an Australian university or CAE in 1976.) Other questionnaires are mailed to potential respondents (such as those of Williams *et al.*[9]), although the latter method characteristically results in loss of respondents from the sample. Questionnaires demand literacy on the part of respondents, of course, which means that they cannot be used with very young children or respondents who are not fluent in the language in which the questionnaire is written. Their use is widespread in Western nations, however, and questionnaires are probably the cheapest way of acquiring data concerning the beliefs, attitudes, or concerns of a population of persons—provided the issue is restricted to topics those persons have thought over and are willing to write about.

A third form of cross-sectional survey makes use of *existing data sources*. Such sources range from newspaper accounts to governmental statistics, corporate records, archives of polling organisations, and even private documents such as diaries and files of correspondence. A good deal of social research is based on such sources, particularly in history, economics, and macro-sociology. In most cases, the use of existing data is justified because of its uniqueness or the fact that it is inexpensive. However, the researcher who uses existing data has no control over the conditions under which those data were collected, and this may prove a serious problem. To illustrate, literally dozens of studies have now appeared concerned with the distribution of income in Western countries. Most of these were based on official tax records, but not all income is taxable; the poorest people usually do not report their income at all and the rich may not report all of it. This means that studies of income distribution are more valid when they are based on interviews or questionnaires that are obtained from random samples than if they are based on official tax records. Nevertheless, existing data files are extensive, and good examples of their use for examining youth problems appear in Karmel (Chapter 1) and Sweet (Chapter 2).

Cross-sectional surveys have obvious advantages for exploring the distribution of events that are thought about within a population. They are also used for other purposes, however. To illustrate, investigators are often interested in the relationships among different kinds of answers that appear in cross-sectional surveys, and the results of these interests are often expressed in causative terms; thus, the fact that A is positively correlated with B is often interpreted as 'A causes B'. In its most impressive form, this type of interest leads to complex systems of interpretation based on regression analysis or related statistical techniques. To say the least, such interpretations extend beyond the evidence. Cross-sectional surveys provide little evidence of causation, and it is quite possible that B will have 'caused' A or that the observed relationship between A and B was 'caused' by some third factor.

A second research model is advocated by positivists to 'solve' the problem of causation. *Experiments* are studies in which the investigator manipulates an independent variable ('A') for subjects and then sees in what way a dependent variable ('B') is affected. In the classic, four-celled, experimental design, two groups of subjects are used. One, the *experimental group*, is manipulated, whereas the other, the *control group*, is left alone. Subjects are assigned randomly to the two groups. The dependent variable is measured twice for both groups: once at the beginning of the study, and again after the independent variable has been manipulated for the experimental group. Classic, four-celled experiments are hard to conduct, however, and many experimental studies use weaker designs which provide less adequate evidence for causation.[10] Experiments are more valid when they are conducted in field conditions and use subjects that are drawn from the population of persons for whom the investigator wants to draw conclusions. Field experiments are expensive, however, and most experiments are presently conducted in the laboratory with university undergraduates as subjects. Needless to say, the validity of conclusions from such studies is often questioned. Nevertheless, laboratory experiments are very popular among social psychologists, and demonstration programs for youth are often designed as field experiments. An example of experimental design in an Australian youth demonstration program may be found in Hubbert.[11]

To some extent, cross-sectional surveys and experiments supplement one another. The former provide evidence concerning the distribution of events in a population, the latter provide evidence for causative relationships. Each suffers from weaknesses, however. It is impossible to do cross-sectional surveys on events that respondents do not think about or are unwilling to discuss, and many experiments are impossible to conduct because of the impossibility or illegality of manipulating certain kinds of experiences for human subjects. In addition, some of the assumptions of the positivist position may surely be questioned. Among others, some critics have objected to the assumption that investigators will necessarily know the thought processes of human respondents. To confine attention to the investigator's concerns alone, such critics say, means that we may never discover the real concerns of those whom we are studying. Other critics note that the traditional methods of positivism lead us away from studying human *behaviour* in situ—which most social scientists argue is the ultimate subject matter of our disciplines. Still others are bothered by sloppy and *ad hoc* relationships among terms, concepts, and operations in the social sciences and claim that one can literally generate 'any finding' by wording one's question appropriately or choosing the proper manipulation in an experiment. Still others object to the fact that positivist research is always used to 'test' hypotheses and wonder how those hypotheses are generated. And still others are concerned with the implicit assumption in positivist research that one can generalise from the evidence of a single study. These last critics point out that generalisation may be more valid in the physical and biological sciences than in the social sciences where we rarely have enough information to know whether a result from a survey or an experiment will or will not generalise to another age, social class, racial group, or nationality of subjects.

Critical Views

These latter concerns have surfaced in a series of theoretical positions that have arisen more or less independently, but which share antipathy to the dominant, positivist view of social science research. This antipathy appears in the work of Symbolic Interactionists, Ethnomethodologists, Humanistic Psychologists, those advocating Hermeneutics and Marxist and Dialectical Criticism, the Frankfurt School, Ethogenics, and (interestingly) a host of critical authors who have written from within the mainstream of the social sciences. Common to these criticisms has been a set of assumptions that are presumed 'foreign' to the positivist view of social science: that concepts and explanations are socially constructed by both respondents and by social scientists, that 'social facts' are historically relative, that social knowledge use is based on values (thus, that relationships between social science research and policy are complex and fraught with political commitment), and that 'facts' are uninterpretable outside of a theoretical (hence, historical) context. Taken to its extreme, such a critical stance decries the usefulness of *all* social research and claims that each event in the human world is unique and unlikely to be replicated by any other event, ever. Another variant of the position views social research as the hand-maiden of privilege, and researchers as the dupes of those who pay for their efforts. Implicit in this last argument is the idea that most social science data are fraudulent, and conclusions based on them are merely a restatement of the ideological commitments of the researchers or their employers. Apart from such extreme positions, however, those who criticise positivist social research have also urged a number of alternative research models. It is appropriate that we review these latter too.

One model for research advocated by critical theorists is based on the use of *ethnographic methods*, particularly *participant observation* and the use of *exploratory interviewing*. These techniques were originally pioneered by anthropologists in their field studies of preliterate societies but are now being advocated by critical theorists as means for discovering social theory that is grounded in observations of lives of real human subjects.[12] Participant observation is a technique in which the investigator enters the social world of those whom he or she is studying and tries to observe and find out what it is like to be a member of that world. Detailed notes are taken concerning the events witnessed, and eventually these are organised and codified so that the investigator discovers the patterns of events that have appeared in that world. Exploratory interviewing involves the use of 'informants' who can be questioned in great detail concerning events and their interpretation. Characteristically, such interviews begin in an unstructured fashion, although eventually the investigator ends by asking a series of structured questions based on his or her growing understanding of events and the informants' construction of reality.

Participant observation and exploratory interviewing are designed to supplement one another, and in the hands of the competent investigator offer a means for theory *generation*. By the same token, of course, these techniques are poor ones for *testing* theory, since the observations and interviews obtained by the investigator were not gathered systematically and may not represent the population. For this reason, reports of ethnographic research may or may not contain descriptive statistics, but they rarely use inferential statistics to 'test' hypotheses—hence, the misnomer with which they are sometimes designated today, 'qualitative research'. (Positivist research is presumed to be 'quantitative'.) A good Australian study of youths that uses ethnographic methods is now underway under the general direction of Colin Power.[13]

Other techniques advocated by critical theorists focus upon the details of social behaviour, particularly verbal behaviour. Ethnomethodologists, such as Cicourel *et al.*,[14] urge the usefulness of careful *semantic analysis* so that investigators are led to an understanding of the norms of social conduct and the processes through which participants evolve a shared definition of the situation. Similar concerns for the formal analysis of behaviour sequences appear in the work of symbolic interactionists, such as Couch and Hintz.[15] Interest in the formal analysis of interaction is not new in the social sciences, of course. Bales[16] published his original coding scheme for analysing group behaviour three decades ago, and literally hundreds of studies have now been published concerned with behaviours observed in classrooms.[17] However, most of these have used coding schemes that represented theoretical commitments of the investigators. Critical theorists have generally stressed the need for concepts that reflected the actual dialogue of interacting persons. Such concepts should enable us to appreciate the way the world is viewed by our subjects, or so it is urged. Although this form of study would appear promising for untangling some youth phenomena (such as peer influence among adolescents), I am not aware of youth studies that are presently being conducted using this model in Australia.

A third method advocated by critical theorists is the use of *case studies*. Rich case-study evidence is available from various sources, particularly clinical records, diaries, and the official records of long-standing committees, organisations, or legislatures. Such records have been mined for years for theoretical insights by psychoanalysts and those who study organisations. As a rule, case studies are useful for generating *idiographic* theory (i.e. theory focused upon the forces that interact to produce responses in the person or social system being investigated), whereas positivist methods are presumed focused upon *nomothetic* theory (i.e. theory concerned with events that generalise across cases).

Yet another model for research that represents the interests of critical theorists is *action research*. As noted by Kemmis (Chapter 11), the concept of action research was originally proposed by Kurt Lewin as a method for harnessing the expert knowledge and desires of social scientists to contribute to social betterment. As it has evolved, action research features active participation by social scientists in the processes of planning, evaluating, and adjusting social policy. Such participation is frequently found in countries whose economies are controlled by the state, such as the Soviet Union. It occurs, also, in Scandinavia where social scientists are employed through semi-permanent institutions to conduct research and develop recommendations for social policy. It appears less often in countries where social policy is allowed to drift or is planned largely through political means, as in the United States, although examples of it appear in industrial contexts, Social Work and Community Development. Kemmis also notes that action research can be viewed as a logical extension of the critical position of Habermas and the Frankfurt School and urges expanded use of this model for youth research. (I shall return to the issue of researcher participation in social planning shortly.)

Research models advocated by critical theorists share a number of common features: interest in the discovery of theoretical insights, desire to learn the details of human subjects' thoughts and actions, expression of the need to better the human condition. Moreover, they are presumably more efficient techniques for reaching these goals than the traditional methods of positivist social research. At the same time, they are a less efficient means for achieving the traditional goals of positivism: fact acquisition and the testing of hypotheses concerned with causal relationships. Although critical theorists often write angrily about the 'disadvantages' of positivist methods, one must be prepared to take these complaints with a grain of salt. It would appear that positivist and critical models for social research have differing, but complementary goals. We need them both.

Integrated Views

It is possible to assemble the visions of both the positivists and the critical theorists into a single, expanded view of the social sciences, and several models for research may be said to grow out of this enlarged view. Within it the activities of a science are assumed to be merely an extension and formalisation of the way we think and act in everyday life. How do we solve problems in our homes or at work? First, we look at what is going on about us and develop ideas to represent those events. Next, we ponder those ideas and decide what we will do. Last, we take action and observe to see whether that action was or was not successful.

So it is with science. Any form of science is based on a symbol system (i.e. a *theory*) that is presumed to represent aspects of external events that may be observed objectively. The symbol system is initially discovered when an investigator looks at examples of events and tries to conceptualise what he or she observes happening—hence, the need for ethnographic methods and behavioural observation in the social sciences. It is thereafter organised into a logically arranged set of symbols for event classes (*concepts*) and statements that tie those symbols together (*propositions*). From time to time it is also used to generate *hypotheses* that predict arrangements of related events in the external world that we have not yet examined—hence, the relevance of positivist research. The theory we thus generate and test is not presumed to represent ultimate 'truth', indeed it will certainly be superseded by other theories presently. Instead, it represents the best explanation we have, at present, for those events with which we are concerned, and it is tied to those events by means of agreed-upon measurements (*operations*) through which at least some of the concepts and propositions are measured.

Apart from the fact that scientific activities are formalised, perhaps the most important difference between them and everyday decision-making appears in the goal that they pursue. The goal of decision-making is to solve problems, and when those problems are alleviated, the person turns to other tasks. The goal of science is to understand, and scientific research is carried on in the hope that it will contribute to our understanding of events. To use that understanding for the solution of problems is a separate act, one of *engineering*, not science. Engineering is, of course, an utter necessity in our complex, technological society, and good engineering often involves research that is focused on the solving of specific problems. As we shall see below, it also involves political judgments.

Within this general view, the social sciences are presumed to differ from the physical and biological sciences in significant ways. For one thing, evidence is harder to come by in the social sciences, for many of the manipulations available to physical scientists would not be tolerated if applied to people. For another, the social sciences are younger, fewer formalised theories have yet appeared in them, and social scientists still disagree radically over the basic terms, concepts, and operations of their fields. For a third, social scientists are often committed to bettering the Human Condition, and this commitment may affect their activities as scientists in various ways. (It may influence their choice of topic for research, the way they conceptualise that topic, their choice of methods, the persons whom they choose to study, and the ways in which they interpret their results.) For a fourth, human behaviour is more affected by context than are physical or biological events, and as yet we do not understand well the nature of those effects. Traditional methods in the physical sciences presume that an effect obtained in a laboratory in Melbourne should also be obtainable in a laboratory in Tashkent or a production plant in Philadelphia. In contrast, a social effect observed among middle-class, native-born, American youth may or may not be observed among working-class, migrant, Australian youth; and until we know a lot more about the ways in which context affects human behaviour, generalisations of the sort made in the physical sciences are questionable in the social realm.

These differences imply that the evidential base for the social sciences is weak.This does not mean that social research is useless for policy-making. On the contrary, any evidence is better than no evidence, some social research has direct implications for policy without concern for generalisation, and social science evidence is just as useful as physical science evidence for challenging theoretically generated hypotheses. But it does mean that social scientists are often tempted to make generalisations that go beyond the scope of their evidence, particularly when discussing the 'social implications' of their finding. At their best, such generalisations reflect insight and explicit (though untested) theory. At their worst, they reflect illogic, assumptions that have already been contradicted in prior research, or unexpressed fears or prejudices. Moreover, as yet the social sciences have not developed adequate canons for judging the adequacy, insight, or social responsibility represented by such discussions of 'social implications'—witness the noisy debates that have attended recent pronouncements of Arthur Jenson, James Coleman and Daniel Moynihan.

In the final analysis, of course, it is only additional evidence that will dispel error, and several models for research have recently been advanced by researchers who represent an integrated view of the social science enterprise. One such method is *comparative research* in which studies are designed so that they are conducted with two or more contrasting samples that represent subject variation in age, sex, race, nationality, or other factors presumed to reflect context variation. Several forms of comparative studies can be recognised.[18] Some are largely *descriptive* and are concerned with displaying rates of occurrence for a given type of social phenomenon across contexts. Some concern the assessment of social events against known *contextual features* and may be conducted with large samples drawn from ethnographic records. Others *test hypotheses* that are drawn from explicit theory in two or more contents with which the investigator is familiar. I have argued that this latter form of comparative research is particularly valuable for generating insights, because the failure of simple theories to generate universal findings 'demands' that we rewrite them so as to accommodate contextual variation. An example of descriptive, comparative research that involved both American and Australian youths may be found in Biddle *et al.*[19]

Comparative research is expensive, however, and for some time social scientists have sought to gain knowledge of contextual effects by comparing the results of 'similar' studies that were conducted in various locales. In earlier decades this effort was conducted through *review articles*. Recently, however, the model of *meta-analysis* has appeared in which statistical techniques are used to assemble and appose the findings of studies deemed to deal with the same topic by similar means.[20] At its best, meta-analysis is capable of generating hitherto unsuspected information about contextual effects. Unfortunately, most meta-analyses do not accomplish this result. For one thing, many people who conduct meta-analyses are not interested in contextual effects, but are only looking for 'universal effects' and are prepared to accept weak evidence for the latter. As well, many meta-analyses are based on studies whose concepts and methods were not standardised, so the reader is left in doubt as to the meaning of results claimed. Indeed, meta-analysis is probably only valid when the studies reviewed are truly similar, and, as we know, this condition is often violated in contemporary social science. Thus, results from meta-analysis are generally weaker than those from comparative research. Good review articles are invaluable, however, and can provide guidance for both the scientist and program planner. An example of a review of Australian youth studies appears in Sturman,[21] whereas Anderson and Blakers[22] provide a bibliography of recent Australian youth studies. I do not believe an Australian meta-analysis has yet been conducted on youth issues.

Another model now being advocated is *longitudinal research* in which equivalent data are collected from a subject population on several occasions. Again, several forms of longitudinal research may be distinguished, among which the strongest is probably the *panel study* in which repeated measures are obtained from the same respondent sample. Longitudinal designs provide opportunity to assess social trends over time. They can also be constructed to provide evidence for cause-and-effect relationships, although their evidence is weaker than that provided by experiments. To illustrate such an application, suppose we were interested in establishing whether youths' negative attitudes towards school 'caused' poor school performance or whether the latter 'caused' the former. It would certainly be difficult to conduct an experiment to answer this question, so we turn to a panel study in which respondents' attitudes and school performance are measured on several occasions. If negative attitudes are found to precede poor school performance, we conclude that the latter are *un*likely to cause the former. In contrast, if poor school performance appears before attitudes decline, we judge the latter *un*likely to cause the former. Although longitudinal studies provide weaker evidence for judging causation than do experiments, such studies are more powerful than cross-sectional surveys and have most of the other advantages of the latter. They are also useful for examining a number of competing explanations for events, and we should be doing a lot more of them. Unfortunately, longitudinal studies are also expensive, and funding agencies do not always understand their advantages. A number of longitudinal studies of youth have recently been completed in Australia or are presently under way.[23]

The last model I shall discuss is *evaluation research* in which the investigator is asked to assess the impact of a new social policy or innovation. Enthusiasm for evaluation research has blossomed during the past decade in America, much of it generated by Congressional acts that have mandated evaluation of the effectiveness of federal laws.[24] The evaluation of new social programs may be considered opportunities for conducting field experiments, and in theory such opportunities should lead to real advances in knowledge. Unfortunately, many circumstances militate against the effectiveness of evaluation research. Researchers are seldom given an opportunity to conduct base-line research prior to program innovation and may not even be present when the program is planned. Program innovators may have only vague ideas as to what might constitute program 'effectiveness', or researchers may be prevented from adopting research designs or measuring certain potential effects because of political considerations. Worse, many program evaluators form part of the staff responsible for innovating the program, and their jobs (and those of their superiors) may depend on the appearance of a 'favourable' evaluation report. Moreover, questions answerable through evaluation research may have greater social relevance than scientific interest. These problems are sufficient that those who have examined evaluation research to date have given only 'mixed reviews' to the model.[25] Nevertheless, evaluation research has potential for bridging the gap between social theory and innovation, and we should be doing more of it if only to tell us about the unanticipated effects of our innovations. Evaluation research is presently being performed in several State Education Departments in Australia, and Power (Chapter 10) advocates extending the effort for youth.

As can be appreciated, none of the research models representing the integrated view of social science is simple. Each is designed to meet specific problems with social science evidence, each involves collecting (or reviewing) complex data, and each is expensive to conduct. Moreover, none of the models is presumed sufficient to answer all questions by itself—each is designed to complement the others. Complexity, expense, and complementarity are not unique to the social sciences, of course. The physical and biological sciences require complex and expensive equipment to conduct their research, and we have long since accepted the thesis that cancer will only be 'cured' by a program of research that proceeds on many fronts. Unfortunately, the need for complex, expensive, and integrated programs of social research is not well understood by the public and by many of our elected officials. Thoughtful persons recognise the need to solve long-standing social problems. Too often we view the solving of those problems as a political matter or as something that requires only simple data. Rarely are we willing to institute the complex, expensive, and integrated programs of research that would lead to the fundamental knowledge upon which a secure solution to those problems can be planned.

Research and Youth Policy

What, then, is the relationship between social research and youth policy? I will suggest three forms for this relationship. First, some social research is carried out for its explicit application to policy issues. Cross-sectional surveys may be conducted before a youth program is begun to ascertain the number of persons who feel a need for that program. Researchers may also be asked to conduct field experiments in which a proposed program for youth is pilot tested. Evaluation research may also be undertaken to establish the impact of a program on youth who participate or on others. As can be appreciated, studies on these types are more akin to engineering research than to research which reflects scientific questions. As such, the researcher who conducts application studies may make no assumptions about the generalisability of his or her results, nor will those results necessarily be published in scientific journals. In short, it is difficult to build questions of scientific interest into research that is narrowly focused on policy questions.

Second, some research has implications for youth policy because it provides persuasive evidence of the causes or effects of youth behaviour. Sometimes a finding from research will suggest a youth policy that has not been tried to date. More often, research results have implications because they overturn cherished beliefs upon which youth programs have been erected. To illustrate the latter, Americans have been told for years that youths who 'drop out' of high school are less likely to succeed in life than those who remain enrolled. Moreover, dozens of cross-sectional surveys have found positive correlations between years of high school completed and indices of life success, such as employment histories, subsequent salaries, and freedom from delinquency. So strong has been the belief that leaving school 'caused' evil consequences that scores of programs have sprung up in the United States to persuade young men and women to remain in high school, regardless of whether or not they enjoy the experience. Recently, however, Bachman *et al.*[26] published the results of longitudinal research in which they show that staying in high school has little effect, *per se*, on subsequent chances of life success. Youths from low-SES backgrounds are both more likely to 'drop out' and more likely to fail in subsequent life—and inducing them to remain in high school has little discernible effect on subsequent life success. If Bachman *et al.* are correct, the primary rationale used for urging low-SES youths to remain within high school is spurious.

The first two forms of relationship between social research and youth policy are direct; in both forms the results of empirical investigation are presumed to have relevance for social planning. However, social research can also have indirect effects on policy. Thus, *third*, social research can develop concepts and explanatory propositions—in short, theoretical insights—that help us to understand problems of youth and those with whom youth interact. At the ground level, our policies concerning youth have been profoundly shaped by the research of seminal theorists such as Freud or Piaget. But less ground-breaking research is also capable of generating insights. To illustrate, Kandel and Lesser[29] conducted comparative research in which the problems of Danish and American adolescents were juxtaposed. Although their evidence was not sufficient to test the hypothesis, these authors concluded that teenage rebellion in the United States is probably an outgrowth of supportive and 'normless' child-rearing practices, whereas in Denmark young children are subjected to more discipline and are trusted more when they become youths. The idea that supportive child-rearing leads to teenage rebellion has profound implications for youth policy—although I, for one, would want to see better evidence before using it to plan programs.

In suggesting these three forms of policy impact, I take a somewhat more optimistic view of the relevance of youth research than does Anderson (Chapter 9). In my view, he correctly asserts that most innovations in social practice do not reflect research directly. (He exaggerates a bit when he asserts that 'no major change in education' has resulted from research. A counter example would be the adoption of standardised tests for measuring intelligence and achievement.) However, youth policy *does* reflect theories we hold about social processes, and some of these theories have been generated through research. In fact, given today's low level of funding, social research is more likely to influence youth policy through generation of theory than any other way. Good engineering studies concerned with youth are also conducted today, but many decisions concerning youth policy are made without their guidance. Studies that develop persuasive evidence concerning the causes and effects of behaviour generally require sustained and programmatic support, and little of this has yet appeared for research on youth.

Apart from these three forms of impact, it is worthwhile noting that conducting social research and making social policy are two different forms of activity and are rarely done by the same person. The former requires a knowledge of theory and methods and a willingness to let the data speak with honesty, 'come what may'. The latter requires not only a knowledge of the results of research, but also vision, political sensitivity, value commitment, and a willingness to assume responsibility for the outcomes of policy innovation. Moreover, it is rare indeed that one can anticipate 'all' of the outcomes of social innovation. As we know, current social research provides only 'weak' evidence bearing on most issues of social policy. (Even physical or biological evidence may be inadequate for making a desired decision. Do we prohibit distribution of a new drug when we discover that it causes tumours in mice? We do not know whether or not those tumours are likely in persons, and the drug may offer unique benefits that are well established by research. So what do we decide?) This means that the person who makes a policy decision always copes with a certain amount of ignorance when that decision is made. If he or she is wise, that decision will involve consideration of the best empirical evidence and most insightful theories available. But the decision itself is a political matter. In a democracy, the person who makes it will have to answer to an electorate (or to someone else who faces an electorate) for the outcomes of that action. The researcher does not bear this responsibility and should not be surprised if he or she only 'gives advice'. The model of action research suggests a more involved role for the researcher, but citizens in a political democracy are rarely willing to turn responsibility for social planning over to non-elected elite persons, such as social scientists. Indeed, as social scientists have recently been discovering, even the 'innocent' acts of social investigation may prove an anathema to some citizens or politicians.

Patterns of Support

Given what has been said, what is the best way to support and encourage youth research? It is clearly in the public interest to support a wide range of social research activities. Some forms of social research have, in fact, already been institutionalised in the West. It would be difficult to imagine how we would operate our fiscal system without regular economic surveys; and our political systems are now dependent on the information provided by public opinion polls. Nevertheless, social research is *not* now being conducted on major areas of public concern. Moreover, the efforts of social scientists are often fragmented, and support for those efforts is insecure and may reflect unrealistic expectations for the immediate 'solution' of social problems. How might additional research on youth best be facilitated?

Several patterns of support for social research have appeared in Western countries. For convenience, I shall group these into four types that differ in terms of their characteristic goals and the time spans for their support. One pattern is represented by the *private research corporation* that survives by selling services to clients or to governmental agencies. Such corporations range from polling agencies, to profit-making research institutes that are spawned by major universities, to satellite research businesses that cluster in and around Washington, DC. Most of the research conducted by such organisations is of a 'practical' or 'engineering' nature, most of it is financed through contracts, most of it is reported to clients by means of technical reports, and little of it enters the professional domain through scientific publication. In short, this type of support is used to generate data that are useful for making policy. Such a support pattern leads to simple research designs, however. In addition, it is not very useful for generating or testing theory, nor does it add much to the integrated knowledge that we will need to make related policy decisions in the future. Nevertheless, this type of support has become increasingly popular in America during the past decade, possibly because Americans believe that social research is (or ought to be) useful for 'solving' social problems. Relatively few independent research corporations have yet appeared in Australia. This may reflect the more recent development of the social sciences Downunder, or a greater enthusiasm for private enterprise in my country.

A second pattern of support appears in the *subordinate research groups* that operate as components of larger agencies that are responsible for social policy. Many such groups appear within federal and state bureaus in the United States, and others are operated by our larger school districts. Similarly, corporate research groups appear within major industries, particularly those with a tradition of industrial psychology or human relations research. Subordinate research groups are often asked to generate social records. They may also assess specific problems, make recommendations for policy, conduct pilot research, or pursue evaluation studies. Given long-term support, such research groups can manage quite sophisticated research designs. Their work is also likely to be focused on 'practical' problems, however, and little of it is conceived as contributions to larger issues in science. In addition, such groups normally operate within existing structural assumptions. This means that they are likely to reflect (rather than to challenge) institutional policies in the research they undertake. In addition, some social problems (such as those of youth) are unlikely to be addressed by subordinate groups because they are not clearly the responsibility of any single agency of government. Subordinate research groups appear at both the state and federal levels in Australia. They also represent the major way in which social research is supported within socialist countries such as the Soviet Union.

Within the West much social research is conducted by *university faculty* and has (at least until recently) been supported by *grants* that are awarded by governmental agencies. Such a pattern of support has several advantages. University faculties are largely freed from the political constraints that apply to other civil servants; hence, university-based social scientists often conduct research that challenges existing social policy. Academics are also encouraged to be scholarly, to review related research carefully, to publish contributions in professional journals—thus, their research is usually planned for its 'scientific' contribution. On the other hand, research that is planned for its 'scientific' contribution alone may have little usefulness for our immediate social problems—and most grant agencies have sold themselves for presumptive ability to contribute to the solution of problems. Grant support is also usually provided on a competitive basis and for only short terms of support. This means that few faculty are able to plan longitudinal studies, and programmatic research is hard to organise and fund. In addition, the efforts of researchers are debilitated by the constant need to write grant proposals that will compete with those of other investigators for shrinking resources. Faculty research efforts may also be weakened by the needs of teaching, administration, and community service that are normally expected of those who hold academic appointments.

Moreover, if these problems were not sufficient, recent political decisions in Australia and the United States have made it clear that this form of support is politically controversial. As I write, the Fraser Government has just announced the abolition of the Education Research and Development Committee and curtailment of research sponsored by the Schools Commission. Within the United States, Mr Reagan's Administration proposes to suspend most social science research funded by the National Science Foundation, the National Institute of Education and the research agencies of the Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration. One cannot avoid speculating that these actions were inspired, in part, by persistent claims that these agencies supported research that would 'solve' long-standing social problems. By accepting support in response to such claims, social scientists have played a dangerous, no-win game. Either their research failed to 'solve' the problem—in which case it was ineffective, or the research generated clear imperatives for social policy—in which case it became politically vulnerable. Fewer claims for immediate, practical results have generally been made for grant support in the physical and biological sciences, and funds for the latter have been less subject to political harassment.

The problems inherent in short-term, grant support have prompted a fourth pattern of support that appears in *sponsored research centres*. Various forms of such centres have appeared, ranging from small units whose mission is to review and disseminate research for a given field, to large, multi-purpose institutions that are funded with many millions of dollars. This form of support is common in Scandinavia where 'permanent' research centres have been set up to conduct long-term research on problem fields for which national legislation is anticipated. Other examples appear in the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, the many agencies that collect and analyse economic data, the Research and Development Centres that have been set up in the United States by the National Institute of Education, and the occasional centre for long-term social research that has been funded by philanthropic foundations. Australian examples would include the Australian Council for Educational Research and units of the Research School of Social Sciences in The Australian National University.

In theory, such centres represent an ideal environment in which to conduct social science research. Since their funding is long-range, they are able to carry out programmatic research and complex studies. Moreover, most such centres are affiliated with universities, and their professional staffs are usually thought to be 'faculty' and are encouraged to plan their research as contributions to scientific fields. Moreover, striking and original contributions have come from some such centres—witness the work of Paul Lazarsfeld, Roger Barker, or Herbert Simon. Unfortunately, however, many such centres have failed to produce the innovative knowledge for which they were conceived. In some cases, centres have been sabotaged by political pressures, in others their resources have been siphoned away by parental institutions, in others the staff have been unable to find an appropriate blend of basic and applied contributions, whereas in others effort has been vitiated through lack of leadership or excessive administrivia. In short, to set up a sponsored research centre does not guarantee that sophisticated, innovative research will occur, although such centres probably represent the strongest pattern of support for social research today. Clearly we need a lot more such units in the social sciences. To illustrate, few sponsored centres concerned with youth have yet appeared, and two that were to have been funded by the Boys Town Foundation at Stanford and Catholic University have just been suspended due to loss of foundation support. To the best of my knowledge, no sponsored centre concerned with youth research has yet appeared in Australia.

Recommendations

What recommendations would I make for research on youth? Let us begin by recognising the need. Youth represent from one-tenth to one-fifth of the population. All things being equal, one would expect that one-tenth or more of social research would focus upon youth, but this is not the case. Most social research concerns itself with children and adults, although recently the elderly have received increased attention.

Somehow, research on youth has fallen into the cracks. This is tragic, given the problems of youth. Not only are youth unemployed, they also have substantial rates of suicide, drug use, assaults, unwanted pregnancies, and the highest rate of traffic accidents for any segment of the population. And if these problems were not sufficient to motivate research, youth are also still in their formative years. At least some of the problems and habits of youth will presumably be reflected in problems and habits those youths will later exhibit as adults. Thus, refusal to face the problems of youth today may be to lay up a legacy of disaster for years to come.

Given the need, then, my first recommendation is simply that we increase the pace of research on youth. Since research models tend to supplement one another's weaknesses, increased research on youth should proceed on a broad front. We need more ethnographic studies of adolescents, more surveys of youth phenomena, more experiments to test hypotheses concerned with youth reactions, more innovative programs for dealing with youth, and more longitudinal and comparative research for generating and testing theories of youth development. Some of this increased effort should appear in universities, but some may more fruitfully be vested in high schools and colleges, in governmental research offices, or in research that is conducted within the private sector. Some support for this increased pace of youth research may come from foundations or from local sources. However, substantial breakthroughs in youth research will require a commitment to that effort on the part of the government, and this will probably occur only when the problems of youth are recognised as such by the public. In part, then, our task as scholars concerned with youth is to educate the public (and our governments) to recognise the seriousness of youth's problems and the likely contribution social research can make to their ultimate solution.

My second recommendation is that we encourage the forming of sponsored research centres concerned with youth. Such centres would conduct programmatic research on youth, of course. Depending on funding, they might also take on additional tasks that are now being accomplished poorly, if at all. A small centre might serve as a clearinghouse for reviewing youth research. Others might sponsor journals of youth studies or seminars and lectures on youth problem research. Larger centres would conduct longitudinal and comparative research and would focus on the production of innovative theories that bear upon youth. Still others might collaborate with government in the development of youth policies or in the evaluation of programs innovated for youth. As noted above, sponsored youth research centres have appeared only rarely, and to the best of my knowledge none has yet surfaced in Australia. Australia has led the world in social welfare legisation in the past, and has created successful sponsored research centres for the physical and biological sciences through CSIRO. It has also strong concerns for youth and a welter of talented social scientists. It has the potential for leading the world in youth research too, but accomplishment of that potential will require the sponsoring of centres for that purpose.

In making these recommendations, I would be remiss were I not to issue cautions concerning what we can, and cannot, reasonably expect from social research on youth. As we know, the social sciences are younger, less consensual, and characterised by weaker evidence than is true for the physical and biological sciences. This means that social science research should not be expected to provide immediate, 'hard' evidence for policy decisions. It does not mean that such evidence is impossible to assemble, but the effort and time span necessary for producing evidence relevant to decisions is different from those of the physical sciences today. (To illustrate, observational research on teaching is now about 20 years old. Several sponsored research centres for this field have appeared in America, and programs for improving classrooms have now begun to appear from this research effort *that work*. Sponsored research on youth might produce an evidential base for innovating youth policy within the decade, but my guess is that twice that time would be a more realistic estimate.) In the meantime, of course, social engineering research can inform us of the scope and seriousness of youth problems or can be used to assess the effects of policies we innovate in our attempts to solve them. Moreover, research that we conduct in the interim may also lead us to new insights concerning youth and the society of which we are members, and these are not insignificant contributions.

It is also worthwhile noting the limits of the contribution that research can make to social planning. Educators, statesmen, philosophers, pastors, counsellors, parents and others have been concerned about youth for many years, and in the absence of evidence their insights are at least as likely to be useful for planning policy as those of social scientists. In addition, as was noted earlier, the act of making social policy is a political one. The person who initiates (or prevents) a policy for youth reflects values, political constraints, and assumptions about the efficacy of that policy when making his or her decision. Only the latter lies in the domain of the researcher, and it is the policy-maker (not the researcher) who is ultimately responsible for the effects of that decision.

If these reflections were not sufficiently humbling, consider also that many youth problems are simply not 'solvable' given the normal constraints under which Western societies are operated. A case in point is youth unemployment. As I have noted, this problem cannot be solved unless we are willing to reduce unemployment for all age groups within the population. As a humanitarian, I would prefer that we adopt policies making employment available for all, but Western societies seem reluctant to adopt such policies. If they are *not* adopted, we are going to have to contend with the secondary effects of youth unemployment. Perhaps it is time that we began to think of alternative ways in which young men and women might profitably occupy their time before they enter the job market—ways that provide legitimate access to money, adult status, identity, and eventual career entry. Endless education of a traditional sort will not suffice, and we cannot afford to 'lose' a generation of young people to idleness, crime, and drug addiction. Australia already provides a gentler climate for unemployed youth than does my country. Perhaps it is time that Australians exercised their capacity for leadership in youth affairs through sharp increases in social research and the innovation of programs for young people. Such leadership would benefit Australia directly and would place the rest of us greatly in its debt.

In making these recommendations, I must confess to feeling a bit like Elijah, given that the Ahabs of this world have recently smitten our research budgets. Cheer up, my colleagues. Elijah's drought lasted only three years, and the problems of youth will not go away!

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27. D.B. Kandel and G.S. Lesser. *Youth in Two Worlds.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1972.

13 Towards a Policy for Youth

Don Anderson and Cath Blakers

In this final chapter we shall discuss the components of a youth policy and the contribution which research can make to the development and implementation of that policy. In doing so we refer to research evidence where this is appropriate and note where there are gaps in knowledge because of the absence of enquiry. This approach to research and policy reverses the one, common in research reports, of deducing policy statements from research findings. The nature of research is such that it cannot provide a comprehensive set of objective facts from which policy is constructed. Its role is to inform policy development and aid its implementation.

Explanations of Youth Unemployment

In the previous chapters we have seen that youth unemployment has multiple and uncertain causes; and that its effects, while still to be fully documented, are regarded as crippling for the individual and dangerous for society. The origins of youth unemployment—a phenomenon which has occurred at almost the same time in Australia, North America and Europe—are regarded as being due to one or a combination of several causes: poor performance by schools in preparing the young for the workforce; the baby boom generation flooding the labour market; excessive wages for youth pricing them out of the market; poor economic conditions giving rise to general unemployment, with youths seeking to enter the labour market at a particular disadvantage because of their inexperience.

There is not unanimity among the analysts as to the relative contribution of various conditions to youth unemployment and, although a diagnosis of the cause does not necessarily automatically define a remedy, beliefs about causes have a profound influence on policy. The most striking example is a policy emphasis on education, based on the belief that unemployment is caused by poor skills and attitudes.

Most analysts attribute the greater part of the explanation of youth unemployment to the slack economy. As Burke (Chapter 5) points out, the minimum wages explanation is not consistent with the data: nor does the demographic explanation square with the facts, since the trend of youth unemployment does not match youth population movements.

The argument that poor education and training is behind high rates of youth unemployment has three distinct components. First, it is claimed that the levels of basic skills in numeracy and literacy have either fallen or are no longer equal to job demands. Second, there are reports that the motivation of school-leavers does not make them aggressive seekers after work, or highly involved in the job when they are employed. Third, school-leavers are said to lack the specific training skills which are required in the labour force. Not unnaturally these conclusions are voiced mainly by employers and sometimes by government. There is no research evidence which supports them; however the number of Australian studies is not great. Behind these assertions are assumptions that either 'standards have fallen'—this is the most common—or schools and colleges have not kept pace with the changing demands of the workplace. These are difficult assertions to deal with empirically because they embody ill-defined concepts in a complex context. The ACER enquiry into literacy and numeracy could not find evidence for a decline in standards of scholastic attainment, but this conclusion might be countered with the assertion that the wrong questions were tested at the wrong time. The charge that schooling is lagging behind changes in the workplace implies an articulation of curriculum and work skills that is scarcely tenable. There is not one work skill but many which vary with industries and over time. Training in specialised skills could lock young people into dead-end careers, or worse, make them redundant as technology changes. The primary obligation of schools is to produce educated young people with developed abilities for a variety of adult roles.

Another assumption is that, when appropriate education and training produce young people who are more employable, there are latent jobs in the economy which will become available. The assumption gains little support from manpower analyses such as the Williams Enquiry into Education and Training. Indeed, as Sweet (Chapter 2) points out, a de-skilling of the workforce is indicated by evidence of greater demand for unskilled than skilled labour. From time to time there may be particular areas where there are shortages of skilled labour, but when the total number of jobs is substantially exceeded by the number of job seekers, then increased education and training tends simply to shuffle the places in the queue for employment.

Demography, wages and training may make minor contributions to youth unemployment in particular times and places. The major cause is to be found in a slack economy but, even should it pick up, structural factors will continue to make it difficult for all school-leavers to move into full-time employment. As mechanisation and automation of jobs continue, a limited amount of labour will be able to perform the productive work of society. Most youth will experience some difficulty in getting satisfactory jobs but the worst hit will be the poor achievers who leave school early. As far as the labour market is concerned they are surplus human beings. This is the background against which a policy for youth has to be developed.

Strategies for Youth Employment

As a starting point for a youth policy we will take the Ministerial statement, made in November 1979, announcing the Federal Government's Transition Policy and Program. The broad objective was:

> That ultimately all young people in the 15 to 19 age group would be provided with options in education, training and employment, or any combination of these either part-time or full-time.

Such a statement is not particularly meaningful unless 'ultimately' is replaced by some more concrete target; first, however, we will explore the options which exist in education, training and employment.

The strategies which have been suggested for the education/work component of a youth policy are listed in Table 13.1. The main courses of action are arranged under headings of supply and demand. Action on the supply side involves education and training, demography not being readily amenable to policy-initiated change, at least in the short term. Supply side strategies assume that education and training can increase individuals' employability and that there are jobs for suitably trained people. On the demand side are

Table 13.1
Strategies for Reducing Unemployment of School-Leavers by Actions on Labour Supply and Demand

SUPPLY		DEMAND
Education and Training	Workforce Manipulation	Workforce Expansion
Education	*Reduction*	*Public Sector*
Incentive to stay on at school to improve standards	Earlier retirement	Job creation in the public service
Work experience	Incentives to stay out of the workforce, e.g. mother's allowance	Special schemes such as RED, youth corps
Counselling and guidance	Reduced migration	*Private Sector*
Career education	Increase participation in upper secondary and post-secondary so as to reduce the workforce	Incentives (reduced wages, susbidies) for employers to take on more employees
Link courses	Paid education leave for employees	Stimulate the economy via monetary and fiscal devices
Part-time school/work	Part-time work	*Third Sector*
Training	*Improving Mobility and Placement*	Co-operatives
Apprenticeship	Placement services	
Skills training	Incentives to change locations	
Recurrent education	Contracts between schools and employers	

listed those measures which would increase the number of jobs—in the public or private sectors, or in the so-called third sector. In addition to increasing employability or creating more jobs there is a third set of strategies, listed in the centre column of the table, which involve manipulating the workforce either by reducing its size or by matching applicants with vacancies.

In what follows an attempt will first be made to review the possibilities associated with each set of strategies. While the main thrust must be the creation of jobs—or alternatives to work if full employment becomes an historical anachronism as machines take over—a complete youth policy requires a package of interrelated strategies directed to a common purpose and involving education, work, the family, and social service agencies. The targets and mechanisms for implementation of the strategies will also be discussed.

Education

Although the quality or type of education is not a cause of youth unemployment it is held that schools can nevertheless contribute to the solution in a number of ways, particularly through concentrating on the bottom third, that is the students with lowest achievement, who leave earliest and whose risk of unemployment is greatest. These are the ones who need most from education and who gain least. In the past, secondary schools have been designed for the intellectually average and above average. The curriculum becomes increasingly academic over the final three years and the less able are expected to drop out before reaching the final year of school. In public schools fewer than 1 in every 3 stay to Year 12. In the private system average retention rates are higher, but this is because many non-government schools recruit only students of above average intellectual performance.

Only recently have education planners given thought to the sorts of curriculum which would be appropriate if all young people stayed on at school beyond the legal minimum age. The Schools Commission, for example, in its excellent report on 15–16 year olds, discusses adolescent needs, curriculum reform and new structures of schooling. The force of its argument is diminished because it does not face squarely and precisely the fact that the needs of the bottom third are different from those who traditionally stay on.

The Curriculum Development Centre produced a discussion paper on 'core curriculum' which specifies broad curriculum objectives for all Australian schools. Once again, while the paper implicitly embraces all students, the particular problem of the bottom third is not dealt with. Is the core curriculum for them too? The answer is of course that it is, but they will have to be enticed to stay on at school, otherwise curriculum reform is pointless.

The education component of a youth policy would encourage greater participation so that all young people, not just the academically above average, are attracted to the equivalent of 12 years full-time school. The major argument for this policy concerns education rather than employment—on any yardstick Australia is a grossly under-educated society. Australia compares unfavourably with North America and with most north European countries in the proportion of each generation which completes school. Quite apart from where Australia comes on the league ladder of education participation, there are clear internal reasons why we should be concerned with the low levels of education attained by a substantial proportion of the population. There is abundant evidence that many young people leave school insufficiently equipped in basic skills for a full life in a complex society. People who cannot manipulate figures, read and write well or think clearly are open to exploitation, are less able to contribute to the common good, and are limited in the range of satisfaction which they may pursue. Standards have not fallen; but, as Kirby and Karmel assert in their chapters, the education of many school leavers is no longer adequate for life in post-industrial society.

While the prime purpose of increased retention is educational, a policy of 12 years' equivalent full-time education, not necessarily in a single block of time, has implications for the workforce. Should the present retention rate be doubled, some 100,000 would delay their entry to work, thereby relieving the competition for jobs, and the school-leavers could be better equipped for a more purposeful entry to work if suitable programs were developed for them.

Discussions we have had with senior education administrators convince us that the school systems would be capable of doubling the present equivalent retention rates within 5 to 7 years. There is a large number of complex issues to be researched if this policy is to be implemented with some precision. We shall mention a few by way of illustration.

1. The resource implications of the policy require careful study. There is a large reservoir of qualified teachers available for employment; nevertheless careful account would have to be taken of their qualification and experience in view of the education needs of the students who would be staying on. It is likely that the existing concept of a school-teacher would be inadequate. Rather than recruiting young people direct from school, giving them a 3 or 4 year course, and returning them to school as teachers, there is a need to recruit older persons with maturity, skills and experience from other areas of life.

2. The effects of the policy in the workforce need to be calculated. Presumably it would not be a simple subtraction since some of the places vacated by youth in favour of school would attract others from the margin of the potential workforce.
3. The cost of doubling the retention rate (capital, teachers' salaries, education allowance) should be balanced against costs of the present system. A rough calculation is that the present cost of keeping a young person in full-time education is approximately the same as maintaining him or her in unemployment.
4. The role of 'student' needs upgrading in status and prestige if a majority of the population is to accept it for a greater number of years. This will mean, among other things, providing allowances which are commensurate with the social needs of young adults (and older adults too, if they are to be attracted back to education).
5. The present school structures and curriculum would require a fundamental review. The institutions necessary for the task are likely to be so different from present-day schools that a new name is needed to symbolise the change. The academic curriculum, which is probably a major cause for early leaving by the bottom third, would have to be revised so as to take into account the needs of those inclined to more practical learning. Entirely new structures for secondary school would have to be designed, probably involving separate institutions along the lines of the ACT and Tasmanian colleges for the older teenagers. The present rigid boundaries between secondary school and TAFE and between school and work will have to be dissolved so that a far greater range of resources becomes available and there is flexibility for students to combine vocational and general education. The new structures must promote self-regard among students (another cause for early leaving is the feeling which many students have of being on the receiving end of a dominance-submission authority relationship in schools). There must be arrangements where part-time work and part-time school is possible; or where return to school after a period of work is regarded as normal. Some 'schools' would become productive institutions—bridging the gap to work by engaging in producing goods and services of significance to the community. Students would learn to plan, manage and evaluate as well as to master the particular skills needed in the production operation.
6. The role of the school and of teachers will extend to a concern for young people who have opted for work, temporarily or permanently. Under the present system, responsibility ceases at the school gate and there is no provision for following the fortunes of leavers with a view to giving information and guidance. One of the surprising findings reported in the Schools Commission's 15–16 year old study is that, despite all the rhetoric about linking school and community, very few schools had any idea what their last year's leavers were doing.
7. There is a need to know more about why young people leave school. Generally it is the poor achievers in the public education system who are from the poorest section of society—the bottom third who need most help from school and get least. The particular pressures and expectations from teachers, parents and peers which determine who leaves school are, however, largely unstudied.

An integral part of the education component of youth policy is the post-secondary and tertiary education system. At present over a half of school-leavers enter tertiary education, part- or full-time, within a year or two of leaving school. Once again there is an inverse correlation with need—those who stay on at school longest are the ones most likely to take advantage of further study.

A reasonable policy objective in respect of post-secondary education would be to provide the equivalent of 3 years full-time study for everyone wanting it. This would mean increasing present participation by 30–40 per cent, not necessarily immediately following school or in the one block of time. The purpose of this policy would be to advance general education, to provide vocational studies in areas where there are demonstrable needs, and to reduce the size of the workforce. Whereas the emphasis in secondary school would be on general education, in the tertiary sector it would be directed equally to general and vocational studies where proven needs existed. Apprenticeship training, which is now taking as many students as higher education, is an essential component of post-secondary study and may prove to be the sector which extends most.

Australia has a sound structural base for moving to universal opportunity for post-secondary study. The TAFE, CAE and university sectors provide a diverse system capable of being expanded to provide for greater participation. The TAFE system, more than the others, would have to extend to meet most of the new demands. Some of these would be for more trade training, much of which, as an alternative to the present apprenticeship system, would be college-based. TAFE would also be expected to contribute to the continuing general education of students, especially those who were not suited by the climate of traditional secondary school.

Universities and CAEs have recently experienced a fall-off in demand from school-leavers, compensated to some extent by greater participation from older age groups. Presumably there is a section of bright school-leavers who, a few years back, would have proceeded on to higher education but now opt for the available jobs. The effect of this is to shift less able young people to lower positions in the job queues. Some careful enquiry is needed to establish precisely what processes are operating and what conditions are necessary to increase participation in higher education.

The major reason for advocating universal secondary education and majority participation in post-secondary studies is to raise levels of competence in an under-educated society. Some small contributions might be expected from these measures towards reducing the crises of youth unemployment; the main thrust, however, has to be the obvious and direct one of creating jobs.

Workforce Expansion

On the demand side there is no consensus concerning whether action should be in the private or public sectors. Economists who assert that the problem of youth unemployment is part of a more general problem of a lethargic economy (exacerbated by demographic trends) prescribe economic growth. In the meantime incentives may be given to private employers in order to encourage them to employ particular classes of labour; the Commonwealth Rebate for Apprentice Full-time Training (CRAFT) and Special Youth Employment Training Program (SYETP) schemes being examples.

Other economists and many welfare organisations argue for job creation schemes, particularly in the public sector. This may be through expansion of the public service or the introduction of special schemes, such as the former Regional Employment Development scheme, although any move to re-establish RED would need to pay particular attention to the establishment of projects which were productive for the community and meaningful for the participants.

The third column of Table 13.1 includes 'third sector' activities, a term used by the OECD, and embraces co-operatives and various local or regional self-help schemes which may receive some public funding. There is now a national association of co-operatives, and links have been established with international agencies. Youth producer co-operatives, supported by experienced workers, are potentially a source of major job creation which would not necessarily displace other workers. The areas of activity which have been identified by co-operatives as not competing with other sections of the workforce are domestic and social service industries, small-scale manufacture (particularly quality crafts), and a variety of environmental and waste re-cycling programs.

Co-operatives are particularly suitable as a bridge activity between school and work. Some schools can teach the principles of practice of co-operatives by involving students in active projects; co-operatives involving school-leavers require access to legal, accounting, managerial and technical skills from tertiary institutions.

The theory and practice of job creation have received only meagre attention in Australia, largely because governments regard this strategy as conflicting with their philosophic preference for macro-policies of economic stimulation. Even with economic recovery, however, the gap is likely to remain, with inexperienced youth continuing to have trouble entering the labour force unless work is made available.

Workforce Manipulation

There are practical as well as philosophical limits to job creation. Until there is more experience with different approaches it is not possible to estimate how much of the present slack can be taken up by new jobs which are not merely 'work on the roads' but which have some meaning for the individual and constructive purpose for society.

An alternative to enlarging the labour force so as to make jobs for the young would be to reduce the size of the existing workforce, thereby making room for new entrants. The various possibilities are listed in the middle column of Table 13.2. Delaying entry to the workforce by enticing students to stay on at school has already been discussed; the other major possibility is to hasten departure from it, the obvious step being to reduce the age at which people formally retire. The present retiring age of 60 or 65 is an historical artefact, suitable for the biological and industrial conditions of man in the nineteenth century, but increasingly inappropriate for individuals, most of whom now have the physical and mental capacity for an active life for at least a decade beyond retirement, and for the community which no longer needs adults to spend 45 years in the workforce.

There is no compelling reason why public service and industry should not retire workers 10 or 15 years earlier than at present, except perhaps the desire of those with good jobs to hold them. Mandatory 'retirement' at 50, however, could be made attractive if, for example, there was the possibility of a second career for those who wished it, but not in occupations which competed with new entrants to the workforce. For others it could be a return to education (a trend already evident in university and CAE enrolments) or a period of self-directed leisure.

Table 13.2
Implementation Decisions

1. Target	All young people or categories most at risk: regional and local socio-economic educational age gender
2. Time-perspective	short-term/long-term
3. Monitoring	Policy Programs Individuals
4. Delivery systems	Federal/State/regional/local

In other words, the present division of life after childhood into the three stages of study, career and retirement should become study, career 1, career 2. The first career would provide employment for all who wished it, made possible by reducing the age at which career 1 ended. Career 2 would not guarantee work but it might, like the idea of a youth guarantee (Karmel, Chapter 1), provide options in education or non-competitive employment as alternatives to a pension for persons over 50.

In the long term, provision of alternatives for older persons and opening up the workforce to the young, may be preferable to artificial job creation as a means of meeting the human, social and economic problems resulting from technological change. In the meantime, some slightly easier ways of manipulating the workforce are also listed in Table 13.2.

Implementation

Devising a policy is one matter; ensuring that appropriate action occurs is another. More often than not there is slippage between policy objectives and what finally happens in the field. The strategic operations which are required to translate broad policy goals into effective working programs are: (1) setting targets—whether the programs are for youth generally or are to be directed at particular social groups or regions; (2) determining time perspectives—when the programs are expected to 'bite', in particular which strategies are directed to short-term effects and which are intended for long-term or enduring outcomes; (3) monitoring of progress; and (4) deciding on appropriate delivery systems—for example the balance between Federal, State and local operations (see Table 13.2).

Targets

The overall policy target for the Australian Government is that 'ultimately *all* young people should have options in education, employment...'. The risk of unemployment among young people in different social groups and localities varies a great deal and, for programs to be effective, resources need to be directed to the categories where the problem exists. The small amount of evaluation research which has been completed indicates that among current programs it is not always those with the greatest needs who are helped. The groups most prone to unemployment are the poor performers and early leavers from school, students whose parents are poor or poorly educated, Aborigines and certain classes of handicapped people. Girls tend to be more at risk than boys and employment is harder to find in non-urban localities, although there are large regional variations.

Age has to be taken into account when targets are being set. The social needs of teenagers are significantly different from those of older youth. School leavers usually, but not always, have the support of their families, whereas older youth are more likely to be independent and live away from home. Youth in their early 20s are at a stage where additional income is needed as they begin to take on family responsibilities of their own. Beyond these rather general observations we enter the realm of speculation because of the absence of research which reveals with any precision the needs and behaviour of young people at the successive stages from young school leaver through to mature adult. To take just one example, the apparently turbulent behaviour in the labour market of certain classes of teenagers is a phenomenon which has never been studied, yet it has obvious implications for policy.

Time Perspective

Present policy is quite vague on the question of when measures are expected to be effective, it merely being asserted that '*ultimately* all young people should have options...', which of course can be interpreted to mean almost anything. The strategies which were listed in the previous section vary considerably in the time which would be needed for them to become effective.

Generally curriculum changes would require several years before any results would start to become apparent—at least two years in professional curriculum development, recruitment and training of teachers; and another year or two before students are ready for the labour market. Unfortunately prediction more than a few years ahead of skills needed in the labour market is an imprecise activity; and almost always there is a lag between the production of trained labour and market needs. In some instances where demand for skills tends to be cyclical (for example, in parts of the mining industry), the production of students and labour market requirements can become almost precisely out of phase as skilled workers emerge from programs stimulated by conditions which existed several years earlier.

Other education strategies also tend not to be appropriate for short-term solutions. Education in the basics of socialisation for a particular work culture is not amenable to speedy policy implementation, particularly when it is recalled that the target group is likely to be the educationally most depressed.

On the other hand the creation of additional places, in schools or in the workforce, can be achieved relatively quickly. The decline in birth rates of the last decade means that there is not undue pressure on accommodation in secondary or post-secondary education; and there are teachers who could quickly re-enter the workforce.

Job creation as a result of a more energetic economy is obviously a long-term prospect, and even then it is uncertain because of the displacement of human labour by machines. However, job creation as a result of deliberate intervention could begin to be effective within a matter of months. Given the increasing prominence of part-time employment (Sweet, Chapter 2), appropriate strategies, at least for the younger age group, would involve combinations of education, training and work. Schools would of course need to become much more flexible in their arrangements if suitable programs are to be developed.

Monitoring

If policies are to be translated into effective action it is necessary to check whether objectives are being achieved and whether any mid-stream adjustments are necessary. In Chapter 11 Kemmis describes this sort of evaluation as action research, comprised of successive cycles of action, observation, rejection and evaluation, leading to changes in strategy.

A second type of monitoring focuses on individuals rather than programs. Ideally the destiny of every school leaver should be known so that individuals needing assistance can be offered help and aggregated statistics used to pinpoint problem areas. As it is now, most information is available about those least in need of assistance—the one-third who stay on to Year 12 are the ones who will fare best in the competition for jobs; and they are also the ones who are known as individuals to teachers and for whom there is a record of academic and personal development during the mid-teenage years. The early leavers, on the other hand, disappear below the horizon; information about the group is hazy and many individuals do not come into association with potential helpers.

A relatively simple innovation would be to ensure that the progress of every school-leaver—in further education, work or unemployment—was monitored for a period of, say, two to three years beyond school. Those who obtained places in work or further education could be dropped from the active list; those with problems could be offered help in obtaining satisfactory places. The obvious agency for this responsibility would be the school itself since it is the only institution, apart from the family, to which all young people belong. The school, acting together with those agencies which will implement the post-school components of a youth policy—further education, employment and welfare services, employers, local government, voluntary groups, and regional offices of State and Federal departments—can ensure that every school-leaver is provided with the opportunity for a constructive post-school role. The view which schools have of their own role would have to undergo a quantum shift if they were to assume responsibilty for young people who had stepped outside the schoolyard gate. The schools would also have to develop relationships with young people which were devoid of the custodial or authoritarian overtones which students, particularly the early leavers, are inclined to associate with teachers.

Such a comprehensive follow-up of leavers may seem excessive, even a denial of the psychological independence of young people; on balance, however, it is justified because it is the only means of making sure that every individual is provided with constructive post-school options and the only way of monitoring a policy of providing these options to all within a specified time.

Delivery Systems

The means by which programs are delivered vary with the nature of the program and the origin of the funding. As a general rule implementation is achieved best by agencies which are close to the action; local government or voluntary groups will be more sensitive to the relevant context of operations than State government and State government more than Federal. Unfortunately under the Australian federal system there is an inverse association between funding power and effectiveness of delivery systems. Furthermore, a multiplicity of departments at both State and Federal levels with responsibilities for parts of a youth policy would make it difficult to implement policies with precision, even if there were a common purpose with respect to youth policy.

The current enquiry into education in South Australia has recommended that a youth council be set up as a means of implementing a coherent policy in a situation of divided responsibilities. If such State councils promoted regional action groups of the sort we have suggested there would be the beginnings of a structure for getting resources into the field and for monitoring the progress of a common policy. The problem of co-ordination, delivery and monitoring is a complex one to which researchers have given very little attention.

Research

There is a long list of topics in the preceding chapters for which there is little information available from research. Compared with the amount of investigation of education there is practically nothing on the family and work, yet these institutions probably have far greater influence on an individual's life-chances. We know a good deal about performance and motivation at school but little about young Australians at work, and the way employers use young labour. The gap is filled by data-free opinions which frequently allege poor work motivation, inadequate skills, frequent job-changing and so on.

Authors of several chapters have referred to the need for longitudinal studies as an aid to policy formation. Biddle (Chapter 12) has pointed out that longitudinal studies using samples which are representative of target populations provide information for policy development which is unavailable from any other method. Unfortunately Australia has no longitudinal research comparable to the UK 1951 cohort study, the USA 'Youth in Transition' project or the Swedish Malmo study—all of which were started well before the onset of the present problems, and which have helped those societies understand the behaviour and needs of their young people. The only national longitudinal study in Australia of young people as they move from school to work is being conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research. It was not started until 1979, and the first results have only recently become available. It is not yet possible, for example, to explore the links between the varieties of school curriculum and performance in the labour market—data which would have been invaluable when the present transition program was being devised.

At a more fundamental level, there is a need for careful thought on the future of work as a major role for adults, given that recent technological advances are, for the first time in history, enabling the productive requirements of the entire community to be met without a majority spending their adult years at work.

Despite the important function of research in illuminating problem areas, the 'facts' from research cannot tell policy-makers what *ought* to be done; that is a matter of values. Equally, the determination of priorities between competing sectors is a matter of values or interests—for example, deciding between expenditure on defence or social welfare; or, within the welfare sector, between youth and the aged. The role of research is to inform the decision-making process, not to determine it, and this occurs in several ways.

Research literature provides a vocabulary of terms which enables discourse about policy matters to embrace phenomena which otherwise might be neglected, or dealt with less clearly. For example, the report of a recent education department enquiry into the desirability of a separate school system for older teenagers used terms such as 'adolescence', 'identity', 'social mobility', 'motivation', 'individual differences', 'reference group', 'peer groups', and 'family environment'. They were introduced to the language of the committee through a research study it had commissioned. Another example is in economic policy where concepts developed in the academic research arena provide the vocabulary which is used by decision-makers.

Research also provides a reservoir of facts about particular situations; e.g. analysis of employment statistics showing relative trends for various categories of persons, studies of the social effects of unemployment, correlations between educational attainment and work success. The 'facts' from research studies may influence policy decisions; they are, however, also used by pressure groups to support their case, or by decision-makers to legitimise decisions reached on other grounds. This is not necessarily a misuse of research. 'Pressure group' and 'legitimation' are sometimes regarded as derogatory terms; in fact they are part of decision-making processes in democratic societies.

Finally, research methods are used to monitor the progress of a particular policy as it is implemented. The purpose may be either to assess the end product by comparing results with some criterion or to monitor progress with a view to making mid-stream adjustments.

None of these uses of research is value-free—all depend on and are influenced by initial assumptions and preferences of the researchers. The vocabulary which is used inevitably implies a particular way of looking at the world, just as the vocabularies of different cultures reflect the world-view of its people. Similarly, as was pointed out in Chapter 9, the 'facts' established by a research study are shaped by the theoretical assumptions with which the research started and by the decision to focus on a particular facet of a problem which in the 'real world' is always many-faceted. Evaluation and monitoring research are also subject to the researchers' preferences and assumptions since choices are involved in determining which part of a process to study and what criteria to use.

These limitations of research do not mean that it is useless in the processes of making and implementing policy. On the contrary, research thinking brings vague problems into sharp focus and provides contrasting perspectives to those of interested parties. Following implementation it provides essential feedback on the course of the action.

Conclusion

Our discussion of youth policy has centred around the institutions of school and work. Any policy which did not also take into account welfare programs, community leisure facilities and the family would be unbalanced. The family in particular is, for the great majority of youth, the dominant influence affecting decisions about the future and providing physical and psychological support. Comparison of samples of early leavers in USA and Australia, a majority of them unemployed in both countries, revealed that the US group were much more likely to be engaged in problem behaviours. The explanation appeared to be the availability of many more support systems in Australia: community and sporting groups were important, but the family was most important of all.

The main effects resulting from concern about youth unemployment will be seen in the secondary education system for the simple reason that it is more amenable to policy intervention than the labour force. This is not a bad thing—we have pointed out that, on average, Australians are highly under-educated for the personal, social and work (including no work) roles which they have to fill. Secondary schools are, however, institutions designed for children but inhabited by young adults. The transition program of the Federal Government will not have failed if it assists in reforming schools so that a majority are attracted to remain on and complete their education.

The provision of satisfactory post-school roles for all school leavers is another matter, one that is becoming a crisis of the culture. There is, in the foreseeable future, no alternative to work as a means of meeting the five fundamental personal needs which we listed in the introduction; that is, in defining personal identity, providing sustenance, structuring time, providing social relations and offering the satisfaction of achievement. Ultimately we may develop a culture where there are satisfactory alternatives to work, as there have been for privileged classes in earlier societies. That time, however, is not in the foreseeable future and the immediate task is to develop a policy for youth which guarantees both education and work.

Appendix I

Towards a Dictionary of Concepts and Terms

Greg Hancock

Two striking characteristics of work in the *transition* area, vagueness and urgency, make research into and policy formulation about it rather unmanageable. Transition is, by definition, a phase and not a point in time. It marks the progression from one state to another and so corresponds only loosely with particular chronological or other indicators of individual development.

Transition from school to working life is only one type of transition. In relation to the transition from school to various post-school options, there is an increasing vagueness about where schooling ends and something else—(un)skilled employment, unemployment, vocational training, further or tertiary education—begins. The exit from school and subsequent entry to a job or form of further study has typically become more convoluted and lengthy over the last decade. Individuals are exercising options in which school and post-school activities are being arranged in non-sequential patterns. People are both at work and undertaking some sort of course. Fifteen and sixteen year olds are leaving school with plans to return later on. Others are taking time out (either compulsorily or voluntarily) between leaving school and entering the world of work or further study.

At the same time as new combinations of formal educational options are being devised, stability in jobs/careers is lessening because of individual mobility and technological/structural change. This increasing instability makes it difficult to determine when young people have settled on a particular activity and thus when the transition has been successfully completed. Hence at both ends of the transition phase there has been a blurring.

High rates of youth unemployment have made the transition issue most urgent and evoked political responses. Governments (and educational institutions) have had to respond to the problem by implementing programs without the benefit of a significant and reliable data base or successful past experience. Indeed, it is in such responses that the complexity of the transition issue can be recognised, involving as they do economic, educational, social, and labour market considerations. It is interesting to look at the range of programs through which the Commonwealth Government has responded; for example, the Special Youth Employment and Training Program (SYETP), the Education Program for Unemployed Youth (EPUY), Community Youth Support Scheme (CYSS) and the Transition Program. The Transition Program clearly demonstrates the intersectoral nature and the interdisciplinary considerations of the issue: it is jointly administered by the Departments of Education and of Employment and Youth Affairs; and it is designed to provide education and training opportunities for those young people who are more likely than others not to gain employment on leaving school.

Schools have also responded in a multi-faceted manner: they have provided work experience opportunities, offered alternative courses for students not wishing to pursue academic study, and developed 'link' programs with technical colleges. Thus they are seeking to provide both employment and educational opportunities.

The importance of obtaining agreement on *definitions* increases as research and policy take on an inter-sectoral (labour market, education) and an inter-disciplinary (economics, psychology, sociology, demography) flavour. There needs to be some code whereby different world views can be brought together if there is to be hope of obtaining valid and useful indicators of problems and solutions in a policy area which is not ephemeral. As its long-term nature has been recognised, so has the need for reliable detailed broad-based research. Longitudinal studies are needed as are short-term specific studies which are built on a clearly defined and generally understood base through the use of standardised concepts and terms to allow for analysis and comparisons over time.

As a beginning to serious thinking about a *dictionary* (or thesaurus), some current usages are listed below and suggestions for common definitions are offered. No attempt has been made to list all prevailing terms or to provide a comprehensive coverage of the way in which they are presently used. The suggestions for the way in which concepts and terms might be defined and used are intended to be a helpful first step. The wise counsel of Margaret Groube (Commonwealth Schools Commission) and Carolyn Tweedie and Vince Black (ACT Schools Authority) in the preparation of this material is gratefully acknowledged.

Nine core concepts have been identified: Employability, Employment, Risk, Skills, Transition, Transition Arrangements, Unemployment, Work, Youth. These words recur in writings on the transition issue. There is clearly some overlapping, and there are other notions—such as School, Education, Family, Youth Policy, Qualification—which warrant attention.

The traditionally agreed-upon distinctions between many of these core concepts are, for the reasons mentioned above, breaking down. 'Education' no longer corresponds nicely with 'schooling' (even if we ignore the claim that any experience is in some sense educational). The concept of 'work' is being refined to distinguish it from notions of 'employment', just as time-honoured conceptual boundaries are being turned about through public policy: for example, more young people receiving 'privately' financed schooling and yet going on to 'publicly' financed jobs or training. Nevertheless, we still think and act as if there were two worlds: perhaps more aptly labelled 'schooling and employment' and 'education and work'.

Within the sample of concepts, key *terms* have been identified: for example, within the concept of 'risk', the terms 'early school leavers', 'drop-outs', and 'youth at risk' appear. The terms are sometimes the basis for inducing the concept: for example, the concept 'transition arrangements' comprises any and all of the terms listed.

The *present uses* have been drawn from a variety of research publications and are not exhaustive. Often the use of the term has had to be inferred, and the heterogeneity seems to reflect the personal predilections of researchers and policy-makers as much as administrative convenience (e.g. the entry or cut-off point for participation in some programs) or disciplinary backgrounds of the writers.

The *commentary* on each concept is meant to assist in moving towards definitions which are meaningful within the 'transition from school' framework.

To give point to this exercise, imagine the variety of interpretations that could come from a laissez-faire approach to definitions in the development of a view about, say:

> the proportion of *school leavers* seeking *work* say they would accept a *job* requiring less education than they possess ... disaggregated by length of *unemployment*, *rural/urban areas*, *ethnic* grouping, *qualification* levels.

If it were thought useful for there to be an Australian dictionary of concepts, terms and indicators in the 'transition' area, how might we proceed—both intellectually and administratively?

Concept: Employability

Terms	Present Uses
Employability	social survival
	related to literacy, numeracy, attitudes towards work, self-confidence, job seeking and other negotiable skills
	achieved by improving self-confidence; work education (job seeking skills, job knowledge, job holding skills, etc.); literary; numeracy; life coping skills (everyday life, personal problems, etc.); human relationship skills
	perceived by employers to be possession of certain basic competences—closely allied to some notion of essential/negotiable skills
	perceived by employers as 'an adequate command of the basic skills of reading, writing and calculating, and realistic job expectations'
	skilled and motivated
	basic skills and self-discipline

Comment

Employability as a concept tends to be defined operationally (in terms of how it might be achieved). Employability is also largely a function of job demand/supply.

Elements of a Definition

The possession in a potential employee of skills and attitudes deemed necessary by a (prospective) employer for the successful performance of a particular job available in a certain place at a certain time. The necessary skills and attitudes seem to include the ability to read, write, calculate and communicate, and the possession of (self-) discipline and motivation.

Concept: Risk

Terms	Present Uses
Children at risk	children at school who are likely to experience difficulty in making a successful transition from school to work
Students at risk	students likely to leave school early and/or become unemployed
Youth at risk	individuals who have already left school and who are the least schooled
School-leavers	people who leave school to proceed to a job, further study or unemployment
Early school-leavers	16 years and under leave high school before graduating (receiving a credential) leave at or before Year 10
Earliest leavers	14, 15, 16 year olds
Young people most in need	those requiring most assistance to make them employable
Drop-outs	individuals who leave school without completing the full high school course

Comment

The concept of risk is implied in almost all considerations of the transition issue. Persons 'at risk' are variously, and often vaguely, defined.

If referring to youth leaving school at or before Year 10, the most useful and least stigmatising term seems to be 'early school leaver'.

The distinction between 'students at risk' and 'youth at risk' seems too fine for most purposes.

'School-leavers' is too general a term to be used within the concept of risk.

Drop-outs is outmoded, pejorative and vague.

Concept: Employment

Terms	Present Uses
Employed persons	Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) definition (for Labour Force Statistics): employed persons comprise all those aged 15 years and over who, during the survey week: (a) worked for one hour or more for pay, profit, commission or payment in kind in a job or business, or on a farm (including employees, employers and self-employed persons); or (b) worked for 15 hours or more without pay in a family business or on a farm (i.e. unpaid family helper); or (c) were employees who had a job but were not at work, and were on paid leave; or leave without pay for less than four weeks up to the end of the survey week; stood down without pay because of bad weather or plant breakdown at their place of employment for less than four weeks up to the end of the survey week; on strike or locked out; on workers' compensation and expected to be returning to their job; or receiving wages or salary while undertaking full time study; or (d) were employers or self-employed persons who had a job, business or farm, but were not at work.
	individuals who participate in the labour force
Labour force	ABS: Labour force comprises all persons who, during the survey week, were employed or unemployed
	the population aged 15 years or more, net of those who do not 'work' because of, e.g. education, domestic duties or retirement.

Comment

Employed persons are those aged 15 years or more who receive payment of some kind for work or study.

Concept: Skills

Terms	Present Uses
Basic competencies Basic skills Basic employment skills Essential skills Life coping skills Negotiable skills Saleable skills Skills necessary for the market place Skills required for further learning Survival skills	literacy, numeracy, oracy, reading, writing, calculating, speak clearly, write legibly and coherently, carry out essential mathematical functions, cope with everyday life and personal problems, human relationship skills, politeness, good general knowledge, citizenship, interpersonal relationships, money management, personal autonomy, punctuality, decision-making ability, time utilisation, self-awareness

Comment

Skills are closely associated with the concept of employability and the possession of certain workplace determined desirable attributes.

Basic employment skills seem generally to cover the demonstrated ability to speak coherently, write legibly and logically, read, calculate at some determined level, and to have some competence in interpersonal relations. The interpretation of basic skills, essential skills, and so on seems rather too much associated with prior school achievement to be very useful in the context of 'transition to . . .' (i.e. backward rather than forward looking).

Transition education programs are increasingly emphasising 'life-coping' skills in addition to 'transition skills' which may be job-oriented. The former skills cover domestic budget preparation, accommodation-finding, consumerism, use of community resources, and so on.

Concept: Transition

Terms	Present Uses
Entry into working life	begins in final years of schooling and ends with satisfactory adjustment to work movement from school to employment
School to work transition	movement of young people out of a school situation to a situation of being in reasonably stable employment; often prefaced by a period of unemployment, especially in the case of 'at risk' (early) school-leavers

Comment

Transition, being the movement from one stage to another (in this case from school to work or further study and a productive life), is difficult to define in terms of beginning or end points. Some studies suggest that young people should begin to be prepared for this transition in primary school, others that it should commence around Year 8.

Elements of a Definition

Transition is the movement from a full-time school situation to one of employment and/or further study. Ideally this commences in the last two years of schooling and ends with continuous full-time employment or study of six months' duration or longer. Of course, the school attendance of 'at risk' students and early school-leavers may have been erratic. While some move into stable employment, others may spend some months being unemployed and then return to formal education as a temporary measure while continuing to look for paid work. Still others may adapt to full-time unemployment and survive on social security benefits.

Concept: Transition Education

Terms	Present Uses
Career education Pre-apprenticeship courses Pre-employment courses Pre-vocational courses Vocational education	preparation for working life presents individuals with learning experiences which encourage them to make personal decisions on future career and to act on these decisions so that they can gain an increasing measure of control over their own lives
Preparation for work Pre-employment Vocational training Vocational guidance Vocational preparation	assists adolescents in making sound vocational choices in order that students leaving post-primary schools are in a better position to enter occupations
'Link' programs	introduces the student (while at school) to studies and training which may be pursued after leaving school closely tied with TAFE
Transition education	preparation for post-school life includes pre-employment, pre-vocational, pre-apprenticeship courses
Work experience	an opportunity for students to gain short-term exposure to a work situation as an aid to their decision-making and social/vocational development occupational experience work exploration students' part-time work after school
Work orientation	linked with employability (i.e. awareness of job-seeking skills, job knowledge, job holding skills)
Exercise	a single arrangement undertaken by an individual student
Program	aggregate of the exercises conducted by a school
Scheme	totality of programs co-ordinated and organised within an overall framework

Comment

Any of the terms noted are part of transition arrangements. It is an evolving, embracing concept. The terms used are dependent on one's view not only of the nature of work (and hence its educational implications: e.g. *career* preparation, *vocational* training) but also of post-school life generally.

Elements of a Definition

Transition education constitutes the preparation of persons through formally developed programs for movement from school to further study, paid employment, or other activities regarded by society as productive.

Concept: Unemployment

Terms	Present Uses
First jobseekers	unemployed persons looking for first job are those who had never worked for two weeks or more in a full-time job (prior to November 1977 they comprise persons who had never had a job)
Long-term unemployment	unemployed for longer than one year
Teenage unemployment	non-participant 16 to 19 year olds
Young unemployed Youth unemployment	15 to 19 year olds out of employment or full-time education for 4 of the previous 12 months
Unemployed persons	ABS: unemployed persons are those aged 15 years and over who were not employed during the survey week, and (a) had actively looked for full-time or part-time work at any time in the four weeks up to the end of the survey week and: (i) were available for work in the survey week, or would have been available except for temporary illness (i.e. lasting for less than four weeks to the end of the survey week); and (ii) were waiting to start a new job within four weeks from the end of the survey week and would have started in the survey week if the job had been available then; or (b) were waiting to be called back to a full-time or part-time job from which they had been stood down without pay for less than four weeks up to the end of the survey week (including the whole of the survey week) for reasons other than bad weather or plant breakdown registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service

Comment

Elements of a Definition

In relation to transition, youth unemployment and 'risk', the most useful focus would seem to be on persons 15 to 19 years old, out of employment or full-time education for 4 of the previous 12 months.

Concept: Work

Term	Present Uses
Labour market	the supply of and demand for labour
World of work	other than world of work world of occupations activities are directed towards 'external' (economic) ends—profits, growth, production, efficiency
Work	non-leisure material production rewarded by money and status an activity which produces something of value an activity carried out in order to obtain monetary returns ('to earn a living') have a feeling of being tied or 'belonging' to a larger group exercise one's capabilities and hence obtain a feeling of satisfaction have a purpose in life
	essential elements activity—sustained duration, taking up a significant portion of individual's time obligation—for the individual identification—of individual with the activity recognition—of the work by others
	a job paid employment occupation productive activity
Work place	where one goes to work

Comment

The concept of work is often defined subjectively and is clearly influenced by the value positions of researchers/policy-makers about the place/importance of material productivity in the life of society and the individual.

Elements of a Definition

Activity to produce something of value (recognised by oneself and others) and to earn a living.

Concept: Youth

Term	Present Uses
Adolescents	16 to 19 years
Juveniles Juniors	the age group between the last year of compulsory education and entry into the labour force as adult wage earners (*c.* 14–18 years)
Teenagers	13 to 19 years
Young people	12 to 20 years
Youth	15 to 24 years

Comments

The terms listed above are often used interchangeably within the age limits (12–24 years) noted above. There are some noticeable differences in usage between countries (e.g. Australia, USA, UK).

'Adolescent' tends to be used in a psychological context. 'Junior' tends to be used in the context of the labour force and remuneration. The Education Program for Unemployed Youth is directed at persons under 25 years (until November 1977 participation in the program was limited to people under 21 years). It may be desirable to designate specific terms for clearly defined circumstances—e.g. the use of juniors in relation to pay rates.

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