

Career Education and Guidance for the Next Millennium

Dusseldorp Skills Forum

and

Career Education Association of Victoria

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Foreword

I am delighted to provide a foreword to this report. The massive structural changes that are taking place in the world of work - in Australia as in the UK and other parts of the world - mean that high-quality career education and guidance is more important than ever before. Innovative thinking is needed if those responsible for such programmes are to respond creatively to the new expectations and demands that will be made of them. The initiative of the Dusseldorp Skills Forum could play a significant role in stimulating such thinking, and converting it into action.

Two features of the report are particularly welcome. One is the attention that is given to the needs of young people who are seeking early entry into the labour market rather than going on immediately to higher education. Conventionally, in the past, it has been thought that effective placement in jobs was sufficient for such young people: it was only, in the main, higher education students that could be encouraged to think in terms of “careers”. This is because careers were defined institutionally, as progression up a hierarchy within an organisation or profession. Now, however, it is critical that all young people be helped to forge careers, in the broader sense of lifelong progression in learning and work. Flexible labour markets make this more difficult but also more necessary, in the interests both of the individual and the national economy.

The second is the recognition of the importance of developing models of career education and guidance that involve not just the school but also the wider community, and are linked to related fields such as enterprise education, community development and education-industry partnerships. The boundaries that have separated learning from work are breaking down. Career education and guidance must not remain detached from broader learning processes, but must seek to activate and utilise all resources that can help young people to learn how to manage their careers.

“Careers for all” is, I am convinced, one of the keys to economic prosperity and social cohesion as we enter the new millennium. The foundations for lifelong career development need to be laid in schools, in partnership with their local communities. This report suggests what some of these building blocks might be.

Tony Watts
National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling
Cambridge, UK

Introduction

This report arises from a national forum held in Melbourne on July 28-29, 1996. Jointly sponsored by the Career Education Association of Victoria and the Dusseldorp Skills Forum, the forum brought together some twenty-six people to talk about career education and guidance for the next millennium. The majority of those who took part were practising careers teachers from schools, but also included were TAFE, community and higher education careers and guidance personnel, employers, school-industry program coordinators, and central school system staff with responsibility for careers.

A number of government reports in recent years have been critical of the state of career education and guidance in Australian schools¹. Typically they have recommended that national policies on career education and guidance and national strategies for the implementation of these policies be developed as a response to perceived deficiencies. The intent of the Melbourne forum was not to develop national policies and strategies, but to draw a picture of exemplary practice, to generate practical ideas for innovation, and to suggest directions for change that could be used to help build more effective working models on the ground. Its goal was to allow those who are in the best position to understand needs at the coalface - practising careers workers and those who work closely with them - to put forward their ideas.

The report that has arisen from the forum draws heavily from the participants' contributions, as well as from other material that helps to amplify these contributions and to set them in context. It begins by pointing out some of the reasons that career education and guidance are important, and then moves to the key themes that the Melbourne forum was organised around: student needs; best practice and innovation; widening the net beyond the school; building pathways; and thinking past the millennium. Rather than recommendations for national policies or national strategies, the report attempts to put forward a set of practical and workable suggestions for improving career education and guidance, suggestions which, taken together, could lead to the delivery of career education and guidance being transformed in many Australian communities as we move into the third millennium.

Some six weeks after the Melbourne forum a draft of the report was discussed by a group of sixteen school careers advisers from a large regional centre in New South Wales. Its purpose was to "road test" the ideas and suggestions contained in the draft report and to seek additional ideas and suggestions. Its intention was to test, with a group of practising careers advisers, whether the type of approach suggested in the report could be used as the basis for beginning to think through practical ways of improving the delivery of

¹ National Board of Employment Education and Training *Strengthening Careers Education in Schools*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1991; Finn, B. (Chair) *Young People's Participation in Post-compulsory Education and Training. Report of the Australian Education Council Review Committee*. Vol. 1, Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1991, ch. 8.

careers services within a region. At the conclusion of the meeting thirteen of the sixteen who attended offered to take part in a working group to take the ideas in the report forward.

The focus of the Melbourne forum, and of the subsequent New South Wales regional meeting to review the draft report, was very much upon ways to improve career education and guidance for those who move from school into employment, vocational education and training. This is not to say that the multitude of useful ideas generated from the forum have no currency for other purposes and in other contexts. Indeed many of the participants have had a strong involvement with career education and guidance for adults who are changing careers and with career education and guidance for those moving from school to higher education. The perspectives that they brought to the occasion are one of the reasons for the ideas that were generated being as rich as they were.

It is also needs to be stressed that a focus upon better information, guidance and decision making at the point of the initial transition to work is important not just for its own sake, but as a way to lay the foundations for lifelong career development. Many of the ideas and suggestions made at the two meetings that were the basis of the report were seen by those who put them forward as important not simply because they might help work bound youth to make a better adjustment to the labour market on leaving school, but because they might give them some of the tools that can make a reality of the concept of careers for all that Tony Watts raises in his foreword.

Why career education and guidance are important

■ **The world outside the school is changing**

A more uncertain labour market means that young people will need to take increasing responsibility for their own career planning and development, and be increasingly flexible about the types of jobs and working arrangements that they enter. Those who study trends in the way that work is organised² point to a shift from workplaces organised around clearly defined jobs with set and predictable tasks to workplaces where work is handled as a set of projects by ad hoc groups of persons having the requisite skills, knowledge and competencies. This will require young people to move beyond choosing the one job or a career for life, and to gain a clear understanding of what their talents and interests are and how these might be applied to the continually changing work that is available throughout their working lives.

Growth in casual and temporary work and in other forms of precarious employment increases the need for young people to have solid job seeking and job retention skills, and to be aware of ways of presenting and building upon a series of employment, community and self development experiences to create bridges to a more secure employment future.

As new occupations are created in areas such as information technology and multi-media, and as existing jobs change (for example through multi-skilling in the trades, through flatter management structures changing the jobs of supervisors, managers and secretaries), previously reliable sources of information need to be re-evaluated. Better and more timely ways need to be found for young people and those who advise them to learn about the realities of work and jobs.

In such a labour market career education and guidance are important in helping young people to understand themselves, in developing the tools that they need to understand available work opportunities, and in developing the skills that they need to link themselves to these opportunities.

Effective career education and guidance not only help individuals to cope better with a changing and uncertain labour market. They can also make the labour market more effective by reducing mismatches, by improving the effectiveness with which information is used, and by improving the decisions

² Bridges, W. *Jobshift: How to Prosper in a Workplace Without Jobs*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1994; Handy, C. *The Empty Raincoat: Making Sense of the Future*. London: Hutchinson, 1994; Watts, A.G. The changing concept of career and its implications for career education. Paper presented at the Biennial Conference of the Career Education Association of Victoria, Bendigo, December 1995.

that people make about employment. As such it serves a clear economic purpose³.

The changes that have created a more complex and uncertain labour market also create options for addressing the complexity and uncertainty. Rapid developments in information technology such as CD-ROM and the World Wide Web have created exciting new possibilities for sharing information and for providing advice and guidance.

■ Our schools are changing

Reflecting the dominant academic purposes of senior schooling, career education and guidance in upper secondary school have often given the greatest emphasis to those heading for higher education. Helping students to select a full-time course of study has often been the predominant concern of many careers and guidance workers in schools. But with rising school retention rates, a new clientele and new types of vocational programs can now be found in Years 11 and 12. Increasing numbers of students are now involved in courses that require them to learn in the workplace in order to develop employment-related skills⁴.

At a national level there is now a bipartisan commitment to improving the ways in which schools prepare young people for work. Both parties entered the March 1996 election promising to increase funds for schools' vocational education programs and with very similar strategies for spending these funds: support for the Australian Student Traineeship Foundation; increased support for workplace learning coordination; and increased support for the Jobs Pathway Guarantee program.

The current Federal government's pre-election employment and training policy made an explicit link between improved preparation for work and career education and guidance in its commitment to "ensure that school programs effectively prepare students for employment and job search, and encourage an active role by schools in career planning and in placing graduates in employment to ensure effective transition from school to workplace⁵". A significant feature of this commitment is its awareness that

³ Killeen, J. White, M. and Watts, A.G. *The Economic Value of Careers Guidance*. London: Policy Studies Institute, 1992.

⁴ A recent survey (Ainley, J. and Fleming, M. *School-Industry Programs National Survey 1995*. Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research, 1995) showed that nine per cent of Australian Year 11 and 12 students were enrolled in vocational courses that required workplace learning in 1995, with the number of programs having doubled between 1993 and 1994, and doubled again between 1994 and 1995. The recent review of the NSW Higher School Certificate (McGaw, B. *Their Future*. Sydney: Department of Training and Education Coordination, 1996) points out that 25 per cent of NSW Year 11 and 12 students were taking vocational subjects in 1995 as part of their program of study. Strong bipartisan support exists at the Commonwealth level for a greatly strengthened role for schools in preparing students for work.

⁵ *Pathways to Real Jobs, the Federal Coalition's Employment and Training Policy*, February 1996, p. 10.

links should exist between vocational preparation, career planning and job placement.

For careers workers the challenge is to develop career information, education and guidance that are more appropriate to the needs of work bound students. The challenge is to develop links between schools' work and training pathways and career education and guidance that are as strong as the links that currently exist between career education and guidance and the higher education pathway.

Many school careers personnel have become heavily involved in the new vocational options that schools are offering. This increases the possibilities of a more integrated approach to careers and vocational preparation for the work bound. But often this involvement occurs at the expense of many of their traditional careers activities.

Schools' perception of the resource pressures that result from the new types of programs offered for the work bound have combined with a more general climate of increased competition for scarce resources within schools. The goal of comprehensive career education as part of the core secondary school curriculum in all States, appropriately resourced by the school, with an appropriately trained full-time careers coordinator in every large high school⁶ is one that has strong attraction for those who are committed to improved career education and guidance⁷. Certainly there are many within the careers movement in Australia who would regard with envy the seriousness with which career education and guidance are taken in much of continental Europe, of which Exhibit 1 is an illustration.

But at the moment these goals appear even further from realisation in Australia than they did in the early 1990s, short of a public commitment to the notion of a youth entitlement to careers assistance⁸, and short of stronger and more explicit links being drawn between career education and guidance on the one hand and the public agenda for improvements in the ways that schools prepare young people for work on the other.

⁶ National Board of Employment Education and Training *Strengthening Careers Education in Schools*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1991.

⁷ Following trenchant criticism of the quality of career education and guidance provided in the sample of 17 Queensland high schools that they studied, Byrne and Beavers recommended a strategy based upon more careers staff in the school for both personal guidance and program coordination, better trained careers staff, and substantially upgraded school-based career information resource centres. See Byrne, E. and Beavers, S. Career education, career guidance and curricular choice: A research review. *Australian Journal of Career Development* Vol. 2(3), 1993, 23-26.

⁸ On July 1, 1996 the New Zealand Minister of Education announced that in the future schools would be required to provide career information and guidance for all students, with particular emphasis upon those at risk of becoming unemployed. He announced an additional \$3.5 million for career information and guidance in schools, that a document of good practice in career information and guidance would be published early in 1997, and that a national database of career information was being developed.

Exhibit 1

Careers guidance into apprenticeships - the case of Germany

Not only has the educational level of apprenticeships increased, but so has the proportion of young people entering apprenticeships. Why? Of large significance is the strong support for apprenticeships at schools. To guide school-leavers into careers for skilled workers, vocational counselling is a compulsory subject. Vocational counselling is almost exclusively directed towards apprenticeships. School teachers inform pupils in close cooperation with Career Guidance Officers from the State Labour Office in weekly lessons. They provide information with respect to training requirements and employment opportunities, structural features of careers, contents, prospects, trends and opportunities in the labour market. The pupils are taught how to apply for an apprenticeship and use the school's computer to write their applications. The teacher provides computer aided self-discovery programs which help to compare self-assessed interests with the requirements of about 250 occupations. They also visit well-equipped regional career information centres which supply detailed information on all occupations. They can visit the library as often as they like, gather information by using books and folders, films, slide series, videos and audio programs, as well as attend lectures at which practitioners report on their work.

In addition to career guidance, the curriculum in all schools includes, in the pre-final year, two to four weeks of internships at companies where they experience the workplace first hand and can then decide whether their inclination and skills fit the chosen occupation. They are supervised during this period by their teachers who afterwards discuss their experiences at school.

Pupils who are not certain what type of apprenticeship is suitable for them can obtain advice from the labour office in individual vocational counselling. There they can obtain recommendations on the basis of computerised ability screening, psychological tests and an assessment in light of their school achievements.

Source: Wagner, K. Why does the German training system work: The incentives that drive the German apprenticeship system. *Australian Bulletin of Labour* Vol. 21 (3), 1995, 236-255.

For all of these reasons new and more creative ways might need to be found to meet students' career education and guidance needs. A focus upon achieving dedicated careers teachers and dedicated careers lessons in every high school as the predominant response to students' needs is unlikely to be realised in the short term, no matter what the arguments in favour of it might be.

And perhaps it is a model that could merit some re-examination in the mid 1990s, being extended and receiving fresh ideas as we move towards the new millennium from fields such as community development, service learning or community service⁹ and enterprise education, as well as from the educational partnerships movement¹⁰ and the school reform movement¹¹. Not the least

⁹ Kraft, R. and Swadener, M. (1994) *Building Community: Service Learning in the Academic Disciplines*. University of Colorado at Boulder: Colorado Campus Compact.

¹⁰ OECD *Schools and Business: A New Partnership*. Paris: OECD, 1992

reason for seeing merit in rethinking it is that it can impose an immense burden upon the shoulders of school-based careers advisers if they see their role as being the source of all information and guidance, as the “expert” who must know everything and do everything that pertains to careers, rather than as a coordinator and facilitator able to draw upon a range of school and community resources to improve outcomes for students. The burden of being the single “expert” on careers within the school grows exponentially as the volume of job and course information expands and changes, and as the focus of careers work broadens from the needs of the tertiary bound to the needs of all students.

¹¹ Examples of the links that can be drawn between reform to the organisation of schools and reformed school to work arrangements can be found in Kopp, H. and Kazis, R.(1996) *Promising Practices: A Study of Ten School-to-Career Programs*. Boston: Jobs for the Future and in Bodilly, S. (1996) *Lessons From New American Schools Development Corporation’s Demonstration Phase*. Santa Monica: RAND Institute on Education and Training.

Students' needs

■ What are students' needs?

Career education and guidance have traditionally focused upon a set of student needs that owe much in their origin to differential and developmental psychology. Typically these are expressed around students' needs for:

- Self knowledge and self awareness;
- Educational and occupational exploration;
- Skills in decision making and career planning; and
- The skills to implement career plans and decisions¹².

When asked to reflect upon students' career education and guidance needs, participants in the Melbourne forum adopted much of this framework, but took an approach that was at the same time both broader and more specific. With very little disagreement among themselves they indicated that the most important need that young people have is for self awareness combined with attitudes that will help them to cope with a world that is subject to constant change: an honest understanding of their abilities and values, flexibility, confidence, responsibility, initiative and a sense of purpose.

There is a striking similarity between the forum participants' views about these career education and guidance needs of students and the qualities that an enterprise approach to education seeks to develop.

An enterprising individual has a positive, flexible and adaptive disposition toward change, seeing it as normal and as an opportunity rather than a problem. To see change in this way, an enterprising individual has a security borne of self-confidence, and is at ease when dealing with insecurity, risks and the unknown. An enterprising individual has the capacity to initiate creative ideas...and develop them through into action in a determined manner. An enterprising individual is able, even anxious to take responsibility and is an effective communicator, negotiator, influencer, planner and organiser. An enterprising individual is active, confident, purposeful, not passive, uncertain and dependent.

Ball, Colin *Toward An 'Enterprising' Culture*. OECD Education Monograph No. 4, Paris: OECD, 1989

Forum participants did not see young people having to meet their needs in isolation, but as doing so with the support both of careers services within the school - advice and information as well as a structured careers program - and of parents, peers and those outside of the school. The importance of case managers or mentors in providing this support to young people was

¹² See for example Maddy-Bernstein, C. and Cunanan, E. *Exemplary Career Guidance Programs: What Should They Look Like?* Berkeley, CA: National Center for Vocational Education Research, 1995; , Conger, D. S. *Policies and Guidelines for Educational and Vocational Guidance*. Paris: UNESCO, 1994.

commonly raised. Quite early in the meeting then, participants clearly expressed a view that career education and guidance extend beyond the school and involve networks or partnerships between the school and those outside of it.

Exhibit 2

A whole-school approach to students' needs

In the early 1990s, Roosevelt High School in Portland, Oregon had alarmingly high absenteeism, dropout, suspension, and expulsion rates. When educators, employers, and other community leaders looked for the causes of these trends, they found that the traditional high school curriculum was serving only about 20 percent of the students—those going directly to four-year, liberal arts college. For the remaining 80 percent, those who entered the work force directly or combined work with post-secondary learning, the lessons offered in high school had little relevance or application to their futures.

In response, Roosevelt High School undertook a whole-school restructuring effort, Roosevelt Renaissance 2000 (RR2000). Developed in partnership with the employer community, this program of studies provides students with the education and skills necessary to succeed in the workplace and community of the 21st century.

A critical aspect of RR2000 is its special attention to the first year of high school as the foundation for a successful high school experience. The “Focus on Freshman” curriculum eases the transition into high school by leading students through a year-long study of themselves, their communities, and their possibilities for the future.

The curriculum offers educators and local partnerships a day-by-day (and in some cases hour-by-hour) plan for creating a unique and positive experience for ninth graders. From Orientation Day through skill-building units through the selection of a “career pathway”, the curriculum outlines the necessary resources, partners, and activities that will ensure the creation of a meaningful and rewarding foundation year for every student.

Source: Jobs For the Future, 1996

The importance of the school working in partnership with employers to meet students' needs emerged very clearly from the strong emphasis that participants placed upon students' need for direct experience of the world outside of the school if they are to make and implement effective work and career decisions. Students, said participants, need real and direct contact with work and careers, and should be able to explore work critically in a variety of ways. These include: work experience; part-time jobs; structured work placements; the chance to mix and blur school and work; and through experience at school being organised in ways that are similar to the way that work itself is organised - for example being set problems to solve and being able to learn in teams. Such experience can help students to understand work, to make more effective decisions about it, and to develop the abilities

and skills needed at work. And they said that experience should be varied, fun, and evaluated and reflected upon.

Young people were seen by participants as having a strong need both for specific job and career information - about career paths, tertiary options, and the labour market - and for a broader knowledge and understanding of a variety of issues that impinge upon career choice. These included understanding of the nature of jobs and work, of how work is changing, of alternatives to schooling, and of how life experiences can relate to work.

But participants were aware of the difficulty of getting some important sorts of information, and of the need for students to be helped to use the information that is available. In particular they saw information on local labour markets as being very hard to obtain, as is “real” or “hidden” information - what employers really look for when recruiting, for example.

Students were seen as needing a wide range of skills in order to make and implement effective job and career decisions. But what was most striking about participants’ perception of these skills is how few of them were narrowly career or employment related. A successful transition to work was seen to be as much about broad, generic personal effectiveness skills - teamwork, communication, adaptability and flexibility, information and research skills - as it was about those specific skills involved in getting a job such as those that relate to applications, resumes and interviews.

And finally, students were seen to need strong performance at school in order to make and implement effective job and career decisions.

When students’ career education and guidance needs are expressed this way, meeting them is clearly a task that extends far beyond dedicated careers staff within the school. It is a responsibility that extends to the whole school and to the way that it is organised, and beyond the school to the community of which it is part. As one participant expressed it:

“There are limitations at present in the senior curriculum which interfere with the capacity of schools to meet the...needs identified...Providing a more flexible structure for Years 11 and 12 [would help] to meet the needs - for example vertical timetabling, access to the community, including other providers and industry.”

■ How well are students’ needs met?

Equally as important as the question of what students’ career education and guidance needs are is the question of how well these needs are met, and the related question of whose needs are met well and whose needs are not. In Australia we do not know a great deal about this, particularly from the point of view of young people themselves, although the tone of recent government reports on career education certainly suggests that in some sections of the education system there is a wide perception that there is considerable room for available services to be improved¹³. Recent research carried out for the

¹³NBEET, 1991 op. cit., Finn op. cit.

Schools Council¹⁴ concludes, on the basis of 19 focus groups conducted with a wide variety of young people, that their perceptions of the careers services available to them are “mixed”, but that the quality of the career information available to them is regarded highly. However the research does not distinguish between the reactions of different groups of young people.

On the basis of extensive case studies conducted over a two year period in a representative sample of 17 Queensland high schools, Byrne and Beavers¹⁵ concluded that career education and guidance lacked a coherent and planned approach, bore a weak relationship to the overall curriculum, and was either under-resourced or not provided at the level of need or demand. They argued that the information available to students was not adequate, with the major gap being the information available about work (as opposed to full-time courses of study).

“We found in most schools that even the most committed staff often did not have access to - or knowledge of the wide range of published materials and resources now available...In so far as any career guidance material was widely known and reasonably widely accessed it generally related to the narrow area of tertiary entrance requirements for degree and diploma level courses in higher education. The most serious gap in knowledge emerged as career education and the world of work.”

Byrne, E. and Beavers, S. Career education, career guidance and curricular choice: A research review. *Australian Journal of Career Development* Vol. 2(3), 1993, 23-26.

Recent research in Victoria by Richard Teese shows that those students who are in the curriculum streams that are the least likely to lead to higher education are the least likely to agree that school helps them with their career planning. On the other hand those who are in the curriculum streams that have the strongest links to university entry are the most likely to agree that school helps them with their career planning. Teese has also shown that those students who are most likely to experience educational failure in senior secondary school are the most likely to believe that school should provide skills that are useful in a job, and at the same time the most likely to have unrealistic expectations about the labour market¹⁶.

A recent survey of ten regional pilot programs of the Jobs Pathway Guarantee, in which community bodies provide job placement, advice, guidance and support services for school leavers, revealed how commonly those school leavers not moving on to full-time study were seen to be ill-prepared for the practicalities of job seeking, and how little they were seen to

¹⁴ Schools Council *The Development of Knowledge and Attitudes about Career Options and Australia's Economic Future: Report of Focus Groups*. Commissioned Report No. 46, March 1996.

¹⁵ Byrne, E. and Beavers, S. Career education, career guidance and curricular choice: A research review. *Australian Journal of Career Development* Vol. 2(3), 1993, 23-26.

¹⁶ Teese, R. Strengthening career pathways through the curriculum. Paper presented to a CEAV state wide forum on Maximising opportunities, Melbourne, 1996; Teese, R. Which students? Educational outcomes in Victoria. Paper presented to a national seminar on Structured Work Placements: Research and Policy, Mount macedon, 1996.

know about the opportunities available in the local labour markets in which they were seeking work¹⁷.

The apparently stronger focus upon the needs of the tertiary bound in Australian career education and guidance appears to have much in common with patterns of career education and guidance in England, where the needs of those proceeding to full-time further and higher education receive a greater emphasis than the needs of those who move to employment or to employment combined with training. On Continental Europe, however, it is more common for the view to be taken that vocational guidance is particularly important for those at risk of leaving school early, and as a result for resources to be heavily concentrated upon them¹⁸. A similar view has been adopted recently in New Zealand, as footnote 8 (see page 5) illustrates.

“The teacher leads pupils through an approved textbook or standard information pack, which forms the basis of a carefully structured and systematic programme designed to inform youngsters of occupations available at various levels of qualification...British teachers observing the texts used [in] Germany and Switzerland felt that substantially more ground could be covered in British vocational guidance classes by the adoption of similar systematic material.

With the aid of their ‘textbooks’, Continental pupils attempt to match their own interests to the particular characteristics and requirements of various occupations.”

Jarvis, H. Smoothing the transition to skilled employment: School-based vocational guidance in Britain and continental Europe. *National Institute Economic Review*, November 1994, 73-89.

“Is it right for high school counselors to point 75% of their students toward college when only one out of six will be taking jobs that require such an education?”

Post to the VOCNET mailing list by Marc Andenberg from Texas, April 8, 1996

¹⁷ Dusseldorp Skills Forum *The Jobs Pathway Guarantee: Some Observations on the Pilot Programs*. Sydney: The Forum, 1996.

¹⁸ Jarvis, H. Smoothing the transition to skilled employment: School-based vocational guidance in Britain and continental Europe. *National Institute Economic Review*, November 1994, 73-89.

Best practice and innovation in career education and guidance

■ **Some examples**

Australia has many examples of exemplary and innovative career education and guidance programs. The Melbourne forum, for example, was presented with details of the K-12 approach to career education that is used in Queensland's John Paul College. The school ensures that career education and career and work perspectives are widely integrated into the total curriculum. The school's approach to careers has a strong focus upon key competencies, strong connections between school and everyday life, and makes strong use of computer-based resources. Feedback from within the school has been extremely positive from both teachers and students. Both teachers and students see an increased relevance of school to life, students' interest in and awareness of careers are reported to be at a high level and enduring, and increased performance levels in key competencies such as team work are reported.

The forum also heard about the extensive use made of distance education technology in career education in Western Australia. Technologies used for distance education have included telematics, electronic mail, CD-ROM, satellite broadcasting, video conferencing and the Internet. The Career Education Association of Western Australia provides short, interactive professional development activities for teachers using the Internet, e-mail and printed materials, and has a World Wide Web site, which also includes links to other Australian and overseas careers sites. It can be accessed at <http://kite.ois.com.au/~ceawa/>

When asked for examples of exemplary Australian programs, participants nominated a wide range. This included:

- ◆ The integrated approach to career education and vocational education adopted by Corio Community College in Victoria;
- ◆ The vertically timetabled, unitised junior secondary career education program at Sanderson High School in the Northern Territory, which includes a compulsory 40 hours on areas such as self awareness, decision making and job investigation, as well as a 40 hour work experience unit that includes job finding skills training;
- ◆ The use of technologies such as the Internet, video links, CD-ROM and software packages in Melbourne's Presbyterian Ladies College;
- ◆ The Defence Forces' Out-There program, which provides easily accessible and useful curriculum whose application is not reliant upon a careers adviser;

- ◆ Victoria's Northern Industry-Education Coordinated Area Program, in which schools, TAFE, employers and higher education jointly support careers and vocational education in schools;
- ◆ The Teacher Release to Industry Program, that has had a major impact upon teachers' ability to talk realistically to students about work opportunities; and
- ◆ Networking between a range of career education providers in Tasmania that has resulted in a dialogue being opened up between disparate stake holders, economies of scale being achieved, and a climate of support being created. In Geelong several schools have cooperated to create a common register of work experience placements that is maintained by the local group scheme.

Exhibit 3

Job Link

Job Link is a Western Australian program that provides employment and career services within 40 local communities. Programs are managed by local community members to ensure that the services delivered are based on the needs of the local community. Services can include job placement, help in preparing resumés and job application letters, links to career counselling, and help with personal development and presentation.

Part of Job Link is a school leaver monitoring service that follows up Year 10, 11 and 12 students from local high schools in order to identify those in need of job placement and provide them with an early intervention and proactive assistance before they become longer term unemployed. This also provides local schools with a picture of the post-school destinations of their students.

Source: Westnet Employment Services

■ What is best practice?

The forum participants generated a wealth of suggestions when asked how best practice could be identified. Six common themes underpinned these suggestions.

◆ Best practice career education and guidance is client focused

It finds out what the needs of its clients are (both students' career needs and employers' recruitment needs), and consciously monitors outcomes against these needs. It uses student destination and outcome surveys, seeks systematic feedback from employers about whether current recruits are meeting their needs, and gains feedback from parents and institutions of further education. It feeds this information back to

students, teachers and parents so that it can be used to influence decisions. It contains tangible outcomes for students, such as a portfolio.

◆ **Best practice career education and guidance is mainstream and systemic**

It is not an add-on, and it is not reliant for its success upon highly motivated individuals who burn out quickly, uncertain funding or the wealth of the school. It is an entitlement for all students. It has a whole-school involvement, and is not confined only to Years 11 and 12 or to the compulsory years. It respects those who provide it, and gives them the opportunity to increase their knowledge and skills.

◆ **Best practice career education and guidance is multi-faceted**

It includes: information; learning from the workplace and from experience; personal guidance; and a curriculum perspective. It incorporates an enterprising education approach and seeks to develop the key competencies. It is clearly integrated with schools' vocational education courses. It gives as much emphasis to work, TAFE and vocational training as it does to higher education.

◆ **Best practice career education and guidance actively involves students**

It gains students' perspectives on jobs, courses and careers, and uses students to gather and report on this information. It involves students in evaluating and monitoring programs.

◆ **Best practice career education and guidance involves the wider school community**

It involves employers, mentors, parents, and ex-students. It profiles local job needs and opportunities, and reflects these in the service provided to its clients. It does not stop when the young person leaves school, but provides on going access to community agencies and mentors.

◆ **Best practice career education and guidance uses relevant, accessible and user friendly information**

It uses a variety of tools and methods to deliver information to suit different students' needs, including experience, community members and employers, and information technology. It is rich in information about local labour market opportunities and about local employer recruitment standards.

■ **Best practice in work experience**

“If young people’s perceptions and predispositions towards the careers advisory system are mixed, their responses to their direct contact with the world of work as reflected in work experience schemes is universally positive...It is also apparent that this is an area with plenty of scope for improvement.”

Schools Council *The Development of Knowledge and Attitudes about Career Options and Australia’s Economic Future: Report of Focus Groups. Commissioned Report No. 46, March 1996.*

Contact with the world outside of the school is an element in almost all approaches to career education. This can take the form of community service or enterprise education, sometimes used in their own right and sometimes because workplace opportunities are limited. Most commonly however contact with the world outside of the school takes the form of periods of work experience.

The quality of work experience programs appears to vary widely, and participants in the Melbourne forum were asked for their views on how best practice in the use of work experience as part of career education could be identified. Their many responses suggested that best practice in work experience programs can be evaluated against five broad criteria: outcomes; preparation; standards and quality; communication and coordination; and evaluation and feedback.

◆ **Outcomes**

- Best practice work experience programs clearly define in advance the outcomes that are expected to be achieved. These include outcomes for the student and outcomes for the employer. These outcomes are jointly negotiated between teachers and employers and are communicated to all of the parties: parents, students, school staff and employers. Students are given a record of what they have learned and achieved during their work experience.

◆ **Preparation**

- Best practice work experience programs lay the foundations for work experience in the early years of schooling by giving careful attention to the development of key competencies.
- Best practice work experience programs prepare students for the workplace by ensuring that they are aware of the attitudinal and behavioural standards required of them. In best practice work experience programs teachers have realistic and authentic understanding of what these standards are.

◆ **Standards and quality**

- Best practice work experience sets out a clear program of learning for students whilst they are in the workplace. Both employers and teachers are involved in planning this program of learning.
- Best practice work experience requires students to observe the standards expected of employees in the workplace in matters such as dress, punctuality and behaviour.
- Best practice work experience involves employees as mentors to students in the workplace and provides students with varied experience while they are in the workplace.
- Best practice work experience is integrated into the full curriculum, involves input to and involvement with teachers other than careers teachers, and is timetabled as a legitimate student activity. Several periods of learning from experience are made available to all students during their final years of schooling.
- Best practice work experience gives students some responsibility in arranging and organising their placements.

Exhibit 4

Developing enterprising skills through work experience

Students at Woodvale Senior High School in Western Australia identified, through classroom discussion, aspects of work experience that they wanted to find out more about such as:

- Why go on work experience?
- Benefits for students
- Employers' expectations
- Rights of students on work experience
- What can you find out on work experience?

They then took part in lessons on survey design, interview skills, telephone skills and report writing skills. Working in pairs, they chose a topic and presented a plan on how they intended to gather the information. They were given access to the telephone, cameras, computers and photocopiers. Each pair of students presented their findings in class, and prepared a final copy of their work for assessment.

The information gathered by the students was given to an advertising company that had spoken to the class about work experience, graphic design, communication and teamwork. The company used the information to produce a booklet on work experience for Western Australian students.

Source: Approaches to Enterprise Education. Melbourne: Curriculum Corporation, 1995

◆ **Communication and coordination**

- Best practice work experience involves clear communication and common expectations between the key parties: students, employers, the school and parents.
- Best practice work experience involves teacher contact with the workplace during placements, and a strategy to correct any problems that may arise during these placements.

◆ **Evaluation and feedback**

- Best practice work experience involves team-based reflection and feedback after the work experience has finished. This feedback is received from students, employers, and teachers.
- Best practice work experience allows students to provide feedback and information to their peers on what they have learned from their experience so that knowledge is shared widely.
- Best practice work experience allows employers to provide students with feedback on and a debriefing about their performance.

■ **Innovative uses of technology in career education**

Modern technologies allow career education and guidance to progress far beyond the use of print material, audio and video tapes for the provision of job and course information. There are already a number of innovative ways in which CD-ROM, telematics, video conferencing and the Internet are being used to enhance the quality and accessibility of career education and guidance in Australia. These technologies are now being used to provide job and course information, to give teachers access to professional development opportunities, to give students access to curriculum materials, and increasingly, to allow new and more creative forms of advice and counselling to take place.

In recent years increasing numbers of schools have been making use of computer based packages such as OZJAC, JIIG-CAL and SIGI Plus that allow students to explore jobs and courses, to assess their interests and preferences, to relate these interests and preferences to jobs and courses, and to improve their career decision making skills. The DEET Job Guide is now on the World Wide Web (<http://jobguide.deet.gov.au/cgi-bin/nph-jobguide>) in either plain text, graphical or animated format. Its availability on the Web means that job and course information that has national application can now be updated and disseminated far more rapidly and cheaply than would be the case if print or CD-ROM technologies had to be relied upon.

Exhibit 5

Using distance education for career counselling

In collaboration with the Faculty of Education at the Memorial University of Newfoundland, career counselling using distance education methods has been delivered to sites in rural Newfoundland. The project provided career counselling and guidance resources to communities normally not able to access these services. The five counselling services programs focused on: teenage mothers and pregnant teenagers; occupational integration of women; peer counselling; career drifters; and young offenders. These projects employ a mixture of audio conferencing, video cassette, print and computer assisted learning technologies.

The project has used two methods to deliver programs by distance. The first uses communications technology to link clients in different communities to a counsellor in St Johns. This method is supplemented with printed and audio-visual materials. The second is to use a Train the Trainers approach to teach lay counsellors to deliver specific programs to people in their communities.

Source: Centre for the Development of Distance Career Counselling, Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland

Careers OnLine (<http://www.careersonline.com.au>) is a home-grown innovation of international quality. It is a Web site that combines job listings, course information, a careers research centre that allows jobs to be explored by interest area, a resumé generator, and access to on-line experts who can answer job and career related questions that are posted to an on-line bulletin board.

The Hot Seat (<http://www.kaplan.com/career/hotseat/>) is a World Wide Web that allows students to take part in simulated job interviews.

Participants in the Melbourne forum suggested a number of other creative ways in which new technologies might be able to enhance career education and guidance. These included:

- E-mail links with employers and workplace mentors to plan and help monitor work experience;
- E-mail links between schools and educational institutions to improve the flow of information on matters such as open days and course requirement changes;
- The use of telematics to conduct interactive forums for students and careers teachers;
- On-line course guides, class timetables, and local job advertisements that can be quickly updated;
- Local industry profiles on the Web;

Exhibit 6

A career mentoring program for high school students

The Women In Science, Engineering, and Math Mentors Program partners high school girls with women in scientific and technical professions. It is available for students in grades 9-12 and is offered annually. The content area of this workshop involves high school girls electronically connected to a multitude of Science, Math, and Technology professional women for a five month period of electronic interviewing and dialogue. Face to face activities and sessions on the Rochester Area Interactive Telecommunications Network video network system also take place.

Rochester Institute of Technology, New York State Education and Research Network, Rochester Area Interactive Telecommunications Network, Pittsford, Webster, Rush-Henrietta School Districts, and Rochester City Schools developed the pilot telecommunications program in 1993. Informal education groups from area settlement community centers and private schools also joined the program in its second year. In 1994-55 nearly 150 professional women and 10th and 11th grade girls took part.

To facilitate the participation of the girls in the communication components of the project, we bring participants on campus for a "Scavenger Hunt." The high school and college students work in teams to "find" mentors who have a unique background, certain relationship or position, a particular personality characteristic or interest. A working lunch where students interview mentors is followed by a computer training session on the network and use of the Internet.

From December until March they carried on "e-pal" relationships via "structured e-mail" and computer notes conferencing on the data network. The girls posed questions that were answered electronically by the mentors. We found that student participants, as well as their mentors, felt positive about the use of the technology as a tool for communication. As one faculty participant noted, "I've never found a better way to initiate open conversations among students and faculty than the use of these electronic support groups." The unique ability of computer networks to permit on-going interaction among people with conflicting work schedules makes it ideal for the type of cross-community interaction proposed by this program.

Source: Rochester Institute of Technology at <http://wally.rit.edu/edge/mentor.html>

- Software packages that allow competencies acquired in work placements to be linked to TAFE, apprenticeship and traineeship requirements;
- The use of cable TV for broadcasting programs by students, as well as education and training programs;
- An on-line catalogue of electronic and print career- and job-related resources;
- Software to allow students to be provided, upon leaving school, with a full statement of credit transfer entitlements based upon their particular combination of subjects and results.

Participants were aware of the potential of the new technologies, but also of the frequent gaps between potential and reality. The new technologies are often not available, available only occasionally, available to very few students because of limited computer resources within the school, or limited in their availability because of cost. Often their potential remains unrealised because of insufficient teacher skills and training.

Widening the net - who can contribute and how?

“Effective career guidance and counselling programs have substantial community and business support.”

Maddy-Bernstein, C. and Cunanan, E. *Exemplary Career Guidance Programs: What Should They Look Like?* Berkeley, CA: National Center for Vocational Education Research, 1995.

“It is widely considered that careers guidance is the sole responsibility of the schools and should be carried out in the school setting. However this assumption needs to be debated. Perhaps there are better ways of doing things that need to be investigated.”

Bill Siganto, Chair, Queensland Vocational Education, Training and Employment Commission, writing in *Unicorn*, Vol. 22, No. 2, June 1996, p.40.

In a recent review of educational and vocational guidance in the European Community¹⁹, Tony Watts contrasts what he sees as the disadvantages of a traditional “professional” model of guidance - in which services are largely provided by trained vocational guidance and career education specialists - with the advantages of an “open” model in which guidance is more strongly embedded in the curriculum, computers and other media are used extensively, and less formal guidance sources are both used and supported to provide career assistance.

The Melbourne forum participants did not appear to be strongly attached to the view that specialist careers and guidance professionals should be the only ones to help meet students’ career education and guidance needs, but appeared to favour a more open approach in which many parties in addition to specialist careers teachers can play a valued role. When asked who else might contribute and how, they identified an extremely wide range of ways in which employers, students, people in the workplace, parents and others can contribute to schools’ career education and guidance programs.

◆ Employers

As background to their discussions participants heard from a restaurant owner who showed how a firm’s extensive involvement in work experience can at the one time benefit students and schools, benefit a business by improving its recruitment and selection processes and its community profile, and meet equity objectives through targeted places for the disabled. They heard of the wide range of activities in support of schools being undertaken by one large chemicals manufacturer: work experience; enterprise education projects; teacher release to industry; careers expos; employer visits to schools; school site visits by science classes; curriculum resource development; and community sponsorship. Some of these had been initiated by the company, and some by schools. But wherever the impetus had come from, the message

¹⁹ Watts, A.G. *Educational and Vocational Guidance in the European Community*. Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, 1994.

was clear: there is a limit to these types of activities, and increasingly firms will be looking to set priorities on their involvement with schools and to seek a more coordinated approach.

Why do employers support schools' activities, including their career education and guidance programs? In part, as these two employers illustrated, it is out of a desire to give something back to the community. But it can also be from enlightened self interest, which results in both parties benefiting. This was clearly the case with the restaurant owner who took part in the forum, who saw his future recruitment needs being met by his participation in work experience programs. But this was just as true in the case of the chemical company, whose corporate affairs manager indicated that, whilst future recruitment was not a major concern, one of her firm's major business drivers was social and corporate responsibility, along with competitiveness, a commitment to people as the best resource, and the need for strategic alliances with customers and suppliers. Exhibit 7 shows how an intelligent use of school industry partnerships can result in real bottom line benefits for firms, in addition to the benefits that are gained by schools and students.

Exhibit 7

Employee development through partnerships

ScotRail, a division of the British Railways Board, deliberately uses partnerships with schools as part of its staff development strategy.

- Involvement with schools is used to increase employees' recruitment, selection and interviewing skills by taking part in mock interviews and resumé writing exercises with students.
- It is used to help develop time, people and work management skills - for example by employees acting as advisers to groups undertaking business exercises as part of an education-industry awareness conference.
- Taking responsibility for work experience and work placement students is used to develop employees' staff induction skills.
- Giving talks to school groups is one of the ways that ScotRail develops its employees' public speaking and presentation skills.

ScotRail sees this type of staff development strategy as having a clear bottom line advantage. As an example, a development program for a new information technology manager delivered using education-industry partnerships costs £1,175, but £2,600 if delivered through formal off-the-job training courses.

Source: ScotRail, 1996

The most basic way in which employers can contribute to career education and guidance is by making themselves and their workplaces available to schools: for work experience placements, as guest speakers, and for work

shadowing for example. They can help teachers to understand what the workplace is really like through teacher release to industry programs. They can offer sponsorship in the form of equipment or money and by making their staff available. They can become involved in interviewing, selecting and debriefing students. While young people are in the workplace they can help them to develop the skills needed at work. They can provide information on local labour market needs, opportunities, and requirements, perhaps in association with other similar local employers. Through their head offices or their industry associations they can provide information on a State-wide or national basis about jobs and careers. All of these were suggested by forum participants as things that employers can do to assist.

But participants' thinking went beyond this to a wider and less one-sided view. Participants recognised the possibilities for real partnerships to develop between schools and employers. Employers can, said participants, join with schools in developing, planning, managing and monitoring careers programs, and their business skills can be invaluable in helping to get things done. They can help to encourage quality programs by setting out and communicating the criteria that they will use to determine which schools and programs they will become involved in. If employers and schools work in partnership, said participants, the chances of common and agreed goals developing will increase, thus increasing the chances of high quality programs emerging. These common goals are more likely to emerge where the two parties have an ongoing dialogue through means such as regular breakfast meeting.

Exhibit 8

Mitsubishi Motors and schools in partnership

Mitsubishi Motors is in partnership with six Adelaide high schools to strengthen links between schools and the workplace. The company provides work placement opportunities that allow students to gain national vocational modules in office skills, metals and engineering, occupational health and safety, and communication that are recognised as part of the South Australian Certificate of Education.

It provides guest speakers for schools, organises student visits to specific areas of the firm, and provides teachers with the opportunity to visit the company. The objectives of the partnership span increased teacher understanding, information sharing, increased student skills, career choice testing, and improved learning opportunities for students.

Source: Mitsubishi Motors Australia Ltd

And, said participants, schools should contribute to effective partnerships by thanking and celebrating their industry partners. As the chemicals manufacturing manager who participated in the forum said, firms like to get some recognition. In this they are not unlike students.

◆ Students

Exhibit 9

Transition Teams

Transition Teams are self managing teams of young people that:

- Investigate their own choices of post-compulsory education and employment;
- Explore the issues and changes students will need to manage in their transition from school; and
- Present information from their investigations to other students.

Transition Teams enable young people to be both learners and teachers in an active career education program. Transition Teams allow young people to gain knowledge and understanding, to develop key work competencies, and to influence education and training providers to respond better to their needs as empowered customers. It generates information and contacts that enhance: schools' careers libraries; schools' knowledge of local employers; and the participation of external resource people in the school curriculum. It enhances students' enterprising skills by actively involving them in learning and project management.

Examples of Transition Team projects include:

- Researching what local Further Education colleges offer and what they expect of young people, then presenting the results to fellow students.
- Researching jobs available in the local labour market and writing articles for the local paper and giving local radio interviews on the results.
- Organising the team to work shadow trainees in the workplace, developing a joint presentation on the themes and problems that emerge, and presenting the findings to the 'shadowed' trainees as well as to fellow students.

Source: Introducing Transition Teams: A School-Based Strategy for Developing Young People as Empowered Customers of Post-Compulsory Education and Training. CCDU Training and Consultancy, University of Leeds and Department for Education and Employment, 1995.

Students are a neglected resource in career education and guidance, too often regarded simply as passive recipients. The Melbourne forum, however, believed that there is wide range of ways in which students can become active participants in and contributors to career education and guidance. Why not, for example, have them share their experiences with one another when work experience is being debriefed? This would not only spread the knowledge more widely, but also develop students' communication skills. Why not involve them in the evaluation of programs? Why not use them to give employers feedback on what young people think of their workplaces, so that work experience can be a better experience for future students? Young people can also contribute to the quality of workplaces by stretching supervisors' normal training and supervision methods.

Young peoples' perspectives should be incorporated in the design of programs - for example through job and course information containing the sort of information that young people really want to know. But they can also make a valuable contribution through becoming aware of their own influence on their peers' career choices. And they can make a contribution by sharing their out of school experiences in part-time work or community service.

◆ **People in the workplace**

While it is common to speak of the role that employers can play in career education and guidance, employees receive less attention. Yet the Melbourne forum participants were aware that they can make a valuable contribution which often differs from that made by employers. For example the perspective that employees can give about their jobs is often different from that contained in material put out by employer associations or from the picture given by individual employers.

Employees play a valuable role as mentors for students when they are on work experience or structured work placements. They are a key source of potent work attitudes, and they are central in developing important workplace skills and knowledge. It is their behaviour which demonstrates to students the everyday operation of key competencies such as teamwork, problem solving and interpersonal skills. As such they need to be supported and trained in their role, and not just taken for granted.

◆ **Parents**

Parents have long been recognised as one of the most significant sources of career advice and information for young people. Yet often their potential contribution to careers programs remains untapped. Better use could be made of parents in careers programs, said the Melbourne forum participants, if they were more frequently asked to speak about their jobs and the organisations that they work for at careers functions. They can also be used as a referral network for students who want to talk to someone in detail about particular jobs and careers. Many parents are also employers, and as a result are able to provide access to workplaces for work experience students.

And parents' ability to advise their children sensibly will be increased if the school organises frequent parent information nights.

◆ Others

Many people in addition to employers, employees and parents are able to contribute to career education and guidance. One of the more obvious groups is teachers, with the importance of cross-curriculum links being frequently emphasised in the Melbourne forum. All teachers, it was commonly stated, should be involved in drawing out the relevance of their subjects for work and careers. For this to be done effectively, the contact between teachers and the workplace needs to increase so that they can gain a clear understanding of realities of the workplace.

Older brothers and sisters and ex-students of the school are another valuable source of advice and information for young people, and schools can have a powerful impact upon young people's career decisions by regularly drawing upon their experiences - for example by having a regular spot in school assemblies in which ex-students can describe their career and employment experiences since leaving school and relate this to school achievements. Often their experience is more up to date than the material found in career publications, and they can communicate more easily and directly with young people than can many adults.

“Graduates and other leavers almost always continue to have close links with students in schools and colleges long after they have physically left. The information they pass back and the intelligence they make available about the post-secondary school real world carries immense weight and carries very quickly.”

Schools Council The Development of Knowledge and Attitudes about Career Options and Australia's Economic Future: Report of Focus Groups. Commissioned Report No. 46, March 1996.

And finally a wide range of community members - voluntary organisations, community groups, Rotary and other service clubs - can contribute by offering themselves as speakers to class groups, by making themselves available for students to talk to about particular jobs, and by offering places and helping to coordinate work experience, community service and enterprise education programs.

Building pathways

In European countries that have strong vocational programs within post-compulsory education, it is common, as illustrated on page 6 in Exhibit 1 above, for career education and guidance to play a prominent role during the compulsory years of schooling²⁰. This is to ensure that students make effective work and vocational education choices based upon an understanding both of themselves and of the demands that are made by available work and training options. The careers and guidance activities undertaken during the compulsory years, as well as the human and physical resources available for career education and guidance, place a heavy emphasis upon the employment and training pathway that the majority of students will take.

Within Australia, upper secondary schooling is beginning to develop more effective pathways to work and vocational training through options such as dual accredited school-industry courses that require periods of structured workplace learning, as well as through classroom based vocational courses offered by schools or in conjunction with TAFE. The growing number of senior school students who are now enrolled in courses whose focus is work and vocational training, rather than higher education, emphasises the importance of schools ensuring that their career education and guidance programs support these courses. The steady increase, since the mid 1980s, in the proportion of students who continue to Year 12 but not to higher education, simply reinforces for schools the need for career education and guidance to focus solidly upon the needs of the majority of their students: those whose destination after school is the labour market, TAFE or vocational training.

Participants in the Melbourne forum were asked to consider how career education and guidance might strengthen schools' vocational courses. Their responses indicated that some saw the traditional model of a K-12 careers curriculum staffed by trained careers practitioners to be central. However the group as a whole suggested a wide range of options beyond this model.

Some of these options were curriculum-centred, but emphasised the need for the work and career implications of school subjects to be drawn out by all teachers. They stressed the need for a pulling together of separate subject teachers so that they could take a holistic perspective on students' career goals, and so that students in turn might see many of their school subjects as relevant to their plans. Clearly this implies a much closer integration between careers and the organisation of the whole school than is the case with some traditional approaches to careers, which in effect separate it from other school subjects. It also has significant implications

Exhibit 10

²⁰Jarvis, op. cit.; Watts, 1994, op. cit.

Linking community service and school-to-work

The John P. Turner Middle School serves primarily low-income, sixth through eighth grade students in southwest Philadelphia. Eleven years ago, West Philadelphia teachers, administrators, parents, and community and institutional partners began a school-based school and community revitalization project. Turner Middle School, the main site, operates a multifaceted, community-oriented school-to-work and service-learning initiative whose activities take place both during and after the school day.

At Turner, service-learning is viewed as a key component in a school-to-work system designed to improve learning outcomes and strengthen communities. One example of this is Turner's health and nutrition program, which involves two classrooms in each grade. In sixth grade, Turner students study basic health and nutrition with undergraduates from "Anthropology 210", a University of Pennsylvania community service seminar that has worked with Turner students and teachers for six years. As part of an ongoing partnership with area schools, Anthropology 210 anchors nutrition education in real world activities, such as cooking and other independent living skills, as well as in core academic subjects (ie., language arts, math, science, and English).

In seventh grade, Turner students become peer educators. In one program, participants travel each week to nearby Anderson and Longstreth Elementary Schools to teach nutrition, violence prevention, and other health-related skills to younger students. In another program, students operate "Fruits are Us and Vegetables, Too", a healthy foods school store. The store is designed to help students translate their education in nutrition into a change in behaviour for both themselves and others, and has made impressive sales of healthy food to Turner children as well as to their parents and teachers.

In eighth grade, students may move into a school-to-work program in which they observe adult supervisors for three hours each week at one of several West Philadelphia health institutions. This experience is designed to expose participants to career options in the rapidly expanding health care industry, and allows them to witness first-hand how basic academic skills - such as maths, science, and English - apply to their future work. During the three grades, each learning experience is enhanced through reflection discussions and by writing journals and articles for the school-community newspaper.

Including service-learning as a part of school-to-work has produced extraordinary results in terms of teaching and learning at Turner Middle School. Community-based activities are the foundation for integrating the school's curriculum, helping students to develop both academic and life skills. This not only increases student motivation, but also improves the community. In addition, the partnerships created among the schools, higher education institutions, and health facilities have strengthened the fabric of the entire community.

Source: National School-To-Work Learning and Information Center, Washington, DC

for the ways that schools are organised. A suggestion made at the forum for a whole-school careers committee in which parents would be involved also seemed to recognise these wider implications for the whole school.

Participants recognised that one of the most important ways in which career education can strengthen schools' vocational pathways is to market the

courses upon which they are built more effectively to students in the compulsory years. Requiring students to have researched these courses before they enter them, as well as the jobs and post-school training that they are linked to was another suggestion. This was extended to a suggestion that selection for such courses should be integrated with careers advice, with students taking part in a discussion on their career plans before enrolling. Careers advisers were also seen to have an important part to play in advising teachers who teach vocational education courses about the standards that industry expects, as well as in informing both students and teachers about TAFE's entry and credit transfer requirements.

Improved links between the school and employers was one of the most frequent suggestions for ways that careers and guidance could promote and improve the status of the vocational pathway within the school. Partnerships between the school and local groups of employers in similar occupational or industry fields were seen as one way to create such improved links, with careers teachers spending time in industry each year to increase their understanding of industry needs.

Good vocational education courses, said participants, reflect the nature and needs of the local labour market. This being the case, they said, schools need to be informed of the opportunities available in the local labour market, and should develop a profile of it. They should also conduct destination studies to track school leavers, so that the information gained can be fed back to students to help them plan their courses.

Exhibit 10

The Jobs Pathway Guarantee

The Jobs Pathway Guarantee provides senior students with a link between school based vocational education programs and employment in the local labour market. The program was established in 1995-96 on a limited basis and will now be extended broadly across Australia.

Jobs Pathway Guarantee Brokers are funded to:

- ◆ Provide industry and career advice to individuals and groups of students;
- ◆ Promote career education activities and publicity material on vocational education programs for schools, students and employers;
- ◆ Help school leavers find jobs and training places in their local area.

Typically brokers will be local community or business associations, Group Training Companies, or similar locally based groups. Brokers will need to demonstrate sound linkages with both schools and industry.

Source: DEETYA Questions and Answers - Budget 1996.

Exhibit 11

Sweden's municipal follow-up responsibility

Since 1980 Sweden's schools have been obliged to take responsibility for all young people up to the age of 18. They must offer those young people who are not in full-time work or full-time education a combination of study, guidance and work experience. There is a reciprocal obligation upon young people to be actively engaged in some form of work or learning until the age of 18. A personal plan is required to be drawn up for each individual which must include elements of counselling, education and work, and which must extend for the full period up to the young person's eighteenth birthday. During this period the possibilities of transition into regular education or a permanent job must be examined, and the personal plan must be considered jointly with the young person every ten weeks.

The personal plan can include study in areas such as Swedish or mathematics, personal interest or hobby courses, or modules from the school curriculum that allow credit to be accumulated towards a high school diploma. "Youth opportunities", or employment for up to six months under an industrially negotiated wage that is below normal market rates, forms the centre piece of the municipal follow up responsibility. Young people are required to take part in education for a minimum of one lesson per week during this time, with the time in study being treated as paid work. A subsidy from the State equivalent to roughly fifty per cent of the agreed wage is paid to employers taking young people under youth opportunities arrangements. Schools and school systems are provided with grants to cover administration costs, as well as the costs of any teaching that they provide under personal plans.

Management of the employment, work experience, counselling, education and training included in personal plans can be organised by a separate unit in the school or linked to an organisation outside the school. Programs can involve personnel from within or outside the school system, and must be carried out in close cooperation with other municipal authorities and the Employment Service. Considerable variation exists between municipalities in the actual organisation of follow-up measures.

Hellström, H. *The municipal follow-up responsibility in Sweden. NBE Information I 89:13, Stockholm: Swedish National Board of Education, 1989.*

Those who took part in the New South Wales meeting that considered the draft of this report raised the importance of school careers advisers seeing their responsibilities as encompassing ex-students as well as current students. Many said that as a matter of routine they made themselves available to offer advice and guidance to ex-students if asked to. Some said that they made a point of letting students know, before they left school, that the careers services that they could call upon from the school did not cease simply because they had left school.

The notion of the school having an ongoing responsibility for its students after they have left is one way in which pathways can be strengthened, and some Scandinavian countries have well developed and formalised systems for routinely following up school leavers and providing them with assistance. In Denmark municipalities have to provide outreach educational and vocational

guidance for all young people during the two years after they leave school, or until the age of 19²¹. In Sweden, as Exhibit 11 illustrates, the municipality has a similar but broader responsibility that extends beyond guidance and counselling to also include employment, education and training.

²¹ Watts, 1994, op. cit.

Thinking past the millennium

At the conclusion of the Melbourne forum participants were presented with the following scenario:

“Your regional economic development board has decided that it wants to strengthen partnerships between education and employment, and to provide greatly improved pathways to work for the region’s young people. Part of this will involve career information, education and guidance that reflect world’s best practice being completely integrated into the region’s development strategy. Your group has been asked to plan and present a strategy to achieve this goal. What would you do? What opportunities exist to create it? What might the barriers be?”

While career education and guidance owe much of their origin to differential and developmental psychology, to education and more recently to the counselling movement²², when tackling the question of what a world class career education and guidance system linked to a regional development strategy might look like, participants moved significantly beyond these traditional underpinnings of their work to draw ideas and inspiration from a far wider range of sources.

Common to all of the forum’s discussion groups’ responses was the view that a first step had to be the formation of a common forum where schools and the community could work together, a forum in which all key regional stakeholders participated. Education would be involved in regional economic planning processes just as industry and the community would be involved in education. Reinforcing the view that schools should not try to work in isolation from the community was the commonly expressed view that individual schools should not act in isolation, but should work with the community as part of a regional network or cluster of schools, and should share resources and programs among one another.

A regional careers strategy, participants believed, would be based upon a clear picture of the nature of the regional labour market and of opportunities within it for young people. The regional profile should include not only employment and training opportunities, but also a coordinated picture of which enterprises were willing and able to take part in careers and other work related programs. An essential tool for gaining this picture and for keeping it current should, participants believed, be a school leaver tracking process to produce a detailed, on-going profile of students’ destinations. The full nature of schools’ curriculum and programs should be matched against such a regional profile, and the nature of upper secondary vocational programs structured to reflect the nature of regional employment patterns for young people as well as young peoples’ interests.

A world class regional career education and guidance strategy would, participants agreed, be one in which schools’ career education and guidance

²² Ginzberg, E. *Carer Guidance: Who Needs It, Who Provides It, Who Can Improve It*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971.

programs were closely, but not exclusively, linked to their vocational education courses. It would be one in which all students would take part in personal awareness and development activities, and in which students would play a real and active role in the process. Students' parents would be aware of and involved in the program.

The program would have a heavy involvement by regional employers, and this involvement would be a major underpinning of students' awareness of the realities of work, of their knowledge of the pre-requisites of jobs, and of their job seeking and job retention skills. Exposure to regional companies would be a major way for the region's teachers to understand the realities and demands of the jobs that their students obtained.

At the point of leaving school, a world class regional career education and guidance strategy would provide case managed support for students' decision making, including a clear picture of what their school and personal achievements meant for entry to employment or further education and training. It would provide a regional training and job placement service that worked in close association with the school and made use of a detailed regional directory of employment, education, training and labour market services.

Putting the building blocks together

Drawing from all of the input to the Melbourne forum, as well as the other material that has been used in putting this report together, here are some ideas for a regional career education and guidance project.

- Create a regional coalition of primary schools, high schools, large firms and small firms to share resources effectively and to manage the project:
 - With a regional management group including all key stake holders.
 - With reference groups in each participating school, chaired by the Principal or a Deputy Principal.
- Ensure a clear focus on work and post-school vocational education and training rather than only upon those bound for higher education.
- Draw out the career and work implications of all areas of the curriculum, and thus involve a far wider range of teachers than careers staff.
- Provide opportunities for a wide range of teachers, not just careers staff, to develop contacts with employers and to find out about jobs and careers that are available in the region.
- Develop a clear link between career information and guidance and upper secondary vocational education programs.
- Incorporate an enterprise education focus, particularly by giving students a major role in collecting and reporting job and course information, and in allowing students to learn from one another.
- Include an on-going student-developed library or data base of job and course information, perhaps using a World Wide Web page that students themselves could update.
- Build in clear links to lessons that can be learned from students' part-time work.
- Give a strong emphasis to the use of experience (through enterprise education, community service, work experience and the like) to promote personal growth and development (rather than to the use of classroom-based activities).
- Make sure that there is an emphasis upon clearly stated best practice criteria in the use of work experience, including the use of trained in-firm mentors.

- Make sure that there is a strong involvement by employers, employees, community organisations parents and ex-students in the provision of information, in mentoring and in developing job seeking skills.
 - For example using a regional network of career mentors drawn from employers, parents and ex-students that students could call upon for advice about particular jobs, firms and training opportunities.
- Develop and use carefully structured on-line or print-based resource material (adopting Continental European practice) to assist decision making and to provide information on job and career pathways.
- Develop and use a school leaver monitoring and tracking system that provides feedback to schools on local labour market opportunities and on school leaver destinations.
- Build in monitoring and evaluation against key objectives eg:
 - To improve preparation for employment among those school leavers who do not enter full-time study.
 - To promote stronger employer and community involvement in career education.
 - To promote an enterprise approach to career education.
 - To enhance links to school vocational programs.
 - To promote the collection and use of local labour market information.
 - To increase teachers' contact with and knowledge of the workplace

Conclusion

Those who took part in the Melbourne forum expressed a strong view that career education and guidance needs a stronger voice and a stronger presence in policy debates. This will not come simply from better lobbying, but from a capacity of career education and guidance to:

- Build stronger alliances with sources outside of the school; and
- Build stronger connections to the emerging national agenda for improvement in the ways in which schools prepare young people for work.

This report has suggested some practical things that might be done that could help to achieve these objectives. It has hinted at a more integrated approach to the development of employability which sees each of career education, vocational education, internal reform to the organisation of the school, community development and enterprise education as parts of schools' and communities' efforts to create better futures for their youth.

“We must recognise...that we too need to find new organisational forms through which to deliver our services and bring them closer to our clients. In many countries career guidance has been a service provided from within the forbidding buildings of a government bureaucracy. While the professional rhetoric has been client-centred, the organisational body-language has frequently been one of bureaucratic procedure. We need now to make the medium mirror the message. I see some role for the market here, but I see the main role as continuing to belong to government. I also, however, see government increasingly carrying out this role in a more devolved way - perhaps through the voluntary non-profit sector and through community-based organisations.

If such devolution is to occur, we need much clearer and more explicit quality standards than we have had hitherto, to assure the quality of what is delivered to the client.”

Watts, A.G. The changing concept of a career and its implications for career guidance. Paper presented at the Biennial Conference of the Career Education Association of Victoria, Bendigo, December 4, 1995.