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UNSKILLED YOUTH, UNEMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING
A Case Study

A thesis presented in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Social Policy
at
Massey University

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1999

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores a training course as a way of helping unskilled school leavers become more employable. They were found to be at a disadvantage in the labour market because they lack skills and are at a greater risk of suffering from long-term unemployment. The effects of unemployment on youth are explored in the literature review and identified as having a detrimental effect on health and well being, with the long-term risk of creating a pattern of permanent unemployment.

TOPS, a fully Government funded vocational training programme targeted to the disadvantaged in the labour market, responds to this need. This research followed the progress of eight unskilled school-leavers who were involved in a TOPS course. They were interviewed before, immediately after and again six weeks following their course. To augment this investigation interviews were also conducted with the training providers. Following the literature in this area, the relative merits of training courses and their delivery are investigated.

Findings of this select group of young people involved on a TOPS course suggest that for most of them this scheme enabled them to increase their skill levels and greatly enhance their chances of employment in the future. The majority were successful in moving on immediately to further vocational training. The nature of educational delivery played a significant role in establishing this transition with a focus on creating an encouraging, nurturing learning environment and providing high quality teaching. Work experience complemented coursework by reinforcing practical skills and encouraging self-reliance. As a method of policy intervention, with reference to this TOPS course, I recommend that it justified the investment of funds involved.

Dedicated to the Memory of my Father

AUBREY COULTER

and
my Brother

HAMISH AUBREY COULTER

who always loved and encouraged me
and whose deaths
during the writing of this thesis
has given me great sorrow.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the Education and Training Support Agency (ETSA) for supporting my research. I would also like to thank the Training Providers and the trainees for making me welcome at their course and participating in the interviews. Their openness and honesty was much appreciated.

The wise advice and patient, consistent encouragement of Dr. Mike O'Brien and Dr. Will Low of the Department of Social Policy and Social Work at Massey University Albany have been very helpful.

I am also grateful for the support of family and friends throughout this project.

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