TRANSITIONS IN THE HAWKES BAY LABOUR MARKET: EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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Acknowledgements

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INTRODUCTION

One of the major problems for policy makers wanting to address a host of labour market issues is the absence of sound empirical knowledge on the functioning of the labour market at the micro-level of households and firms. Most of the relevant research has been confined to macro economic analyses derived from what is often acknowledged as a limited database, principally the Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS). However, the significance of collapsing or ignoring the differences between individuals and households should not be underestimated. Research that treats the households as a unit tends to under-estimate the actions and aspirations of individuals, as well as the significance of power differentials within the household. Conversely, research that treats households as atomistic individuals, divorced from any collective reality, negates the highly complex rules and practices that govern the behaviour and actions of the household. As in any other social organisation, households involve power differentials which are derived from market and work situations originating from both inside and outside the home and from agreements which are forged between individual members of the household. The organisational behaviour of individuals in households is at the centre of this study, because these behaviours vary between sections of the population and they change over the lifecycle of the household.

Although there is evidence to show that the burden of unemployment falls more heavily upon some individuals and groups rather than others (Task Force, 1994; Shirley et al, 1990), there is limited knowledge of the processes that operate within regional labour markets and even less information on the dynamic relationship between individuals, households and paid employment. We do not know the basis on which individuals make decisions about economic participation and we are not able to say how various factors impact on these decisions. It was this set of deficiencies in labour market information which prompted the current study.

The research programme on Labour Market Dynamics and Economic Participation, which has been funded by the New Zealand Foundation for Research, Science and Technology (FRST), has been specifically designed to study labour force dynamics and transitions. This was one of the major deficiencies in labour market statistics identified in the 1993 review conducted by Dennis Rose (1993:39). In focusing on the micro-level of households and individuals, the aim has been to generate new data based on an innovative methodology which examines the labour market 'transitions' experienced by individuals as they move from one labour market status to another. Such transitions include those from unpaid to paid work, from unemployment to work, and from training to employment. The reverse transitions are of equal interest. An emphasis on the interface between households and employment has meant that the research programme can explore how individuals make decisions about access to, and participation in, the labour market. Being set within the context of the 'lifecycle' has allowed a particular emphasis on identifying how household attributes, perceptions and incentive structures impact on individual choices and options. As part of this, the influence of factors such as age, education, ethnicity, gender, income, regional location and work experience can be assessed. From a theoretical perspective, the study is aimed at complementing our existing knowledge as to how labour markets clear and why. In relation to policy, it should provide valuable information that can be used in addressing unemployment and in designing targeted labour market policies.

The approach that was used in this study can be divided into two distinct phases. The first phase involved the administration of a structured questionnaire which was designed to gather basic household data (thereby ensuring compatibility with the HLFS administered by Statistics New Zealand on a quarterly basis). This was followed by interviews with individuals drawn from a smaller random sample of the households involved in the initial survey. A life events and work histories matrix was developed during these interviews and in-depth information was gathered on the attitudes and experiences of individuals in the labour market over the ten-year period, 1985 to 1995.

The research programme was conceived as an exploratory study of three distinctive labour markets. In 1995-96, Hawkes Bay was surveyed and this region was followed in 1997/98 by West Auckland and Tokoroa. Each of these regional labour markets appears to be quite distinctive and it is anticipated that each region in turn should provide valuable insights into the functioning of labour markets at the micro level of individuals and households. This report details the findings of the **qualitative** analysis of interviews conducted in the Hawkes Bay region and a summary of the make up of the sample of household and individuals interviewed and profiled is provided shortly. Hawkes Bay is an area with clearly defined geographical boundaries. The target area has a population of approximately 140,000 which is dominated by two cities and corresponds with the area administered by the Hawkes Bay Regional Council. Households in the region are diverse, thereby reflecting an adequate mix of different household types, and a variety of social, cultural and economic groups. It is a structurally diverse region with a mixture of light industry, agriculture, horticulture, aquaculture, forestry and service industries. Over recent years, the local economy has experienced both contraction and expansion as firms and households in the region have adjusted to economic rationalisation and the restructuring of government services. Hawkes Bay is well serviced by local and central government agencies and it contains a wide range of educational services based in the public and private sectors.

As well as detailing the findings of the qualitative study conducted in the Hawkes Bay region, this working paper also canvasses two important facets of the research programme. Firstly, there is an exploration of the concept of transitions, as employed in this study. Then the methodology used to gather and examine the interview data is outlined and discussed. This involved the use of life and work histories, semi-structured in-depth interviewing, and a range of analytical tools. Both of these are considered in greater detail in a forthcoming working paper.

'TRANSITIONS' – CONCEPT AND METHODOLOGY

Though the term transition is frequently used in labour market analysis and discussion, what is contained in this choice of word is a wealth of contextual detail. By its very nature, a transitional perspective emphasises the dynamic quality of such markets and focuses on "flows and not stocks" and can "reveal and explain patterns … during the lifecycle of individuals or groups" (Schmid et al, 1999:268). Thus, although our use of the term transition incorporates the common meaning of the word – a movement or shift from one state or point to another – we develop the concept more fully to achieve such an emphasis and focus. In doing so we seek to identify the array of starting points and outcomes that can make up a transition and unpack the mix of contexts, influences and processes that are integral to any shift. The result is a detailed analysis of change at the micro-level of the labour market.

Such analysis is important for a range of reasons, one being that the labour market itself is undergoing significant change. Schmid et al (1999:268) conceptualise these changes, in part, as a greater blurring of the borderlines between gainful dependent labour market work and other productive activities. They note that the "'standard labour contract' is fading, but we do not know yet which new standards will develop". A transitional focus serves as one approach to analysing these changes. However, since paid work no longer necessarily forms the outcome of, or even the motivation for, some transitions, for approach to be valuable it also becomes necessary to understand work in its broadest sense.

People's work experiences across any period can be summarised in their work histories that are, in turn, composed of their work profiles – the combination of work activities that they were involved in at any one time. Transitions are changes to those profiles. Whilst thinking of transitions easily brings to mind shifts such as a move from unemployment to paid work, our use of this concept also encompasses more subtle and multi-layered change. Thus, transitions need not only occur when one type of work is substituted with something else or when there is a complete shift from one status to another. Rather, they can be signalled by the changing composition or shifting balance of activities within the mix of people's various work responsibilities. That is, when a person's work profile is altered but not necessarily completely changed nor entirely replaced.

The broad notion of work adopted here means that it would be highly unlikely that a person's profile could be described in terms of just one role. Though many of those interviewed in this study certainly seemed to have a predominant role or responsibility, blurring was evident as each person also took on other secondary roles or activities. Accordingly, when change occurs – at either primary or secondary level – we need to consider how different aspects of a person's profile complement, compete or conflict with one another as a result of any shift. Importantly, we also need to be alert to continuity. The maintenance of stable profiles and periods without change can be of equal interest and significance. In general, work histories were usually quite dynamic, though there was wide variation in the frequency, nature and degree of any changes, and people often demonstrated phases of relative stability or volatility.

Transitions can occur in a range of ways. In some cases they were forced on people while others were made by choice. Though certain transitions were sudden and complete – such as when a person lost a job – the study also revealed transitioning that was prolonged as people worked progressively towards a longer-term goal through intermediate shifts. Such shifts, though transitions in their own right, can also be seen as parts of a larger process. As such, they could be disjointed and unanticipated or show varying degrees of continuity, coherence and predictability. In each case there is undoubted value in focusing on the intermediate steps – which was, itself, a significant part of this study – but by drawing these into a larger or longer-term picture, equally important insights are generated.

The context in which transitions occur also forms an integral part of understanding and describing them. Context can be viewed on a number of levels and in relation to a range of factors and perspectives. These levels take in considerations beyond the household – to the local community, the industry or sector, and to the regional and national situation. Various perspectives – such as social, cultural, economic and political viewpoints – might be considered at any level. Factors that could be addressed include issues such as gender, class, ethnicity, age and so on. The subjective as well as objective dimensions of transitions – that is, the experience of the transition from the perspective of those involved as well as how it appears to an observer – also need to be incorporated. Even if transitions appear by name to be of a similar kind, their objective circumstances can still be very different. Consider, for example, all the variations possible under the heading of 'redundancy'. The subjective dimension provides insights into how individuals and their families understand, experience and respond to the transition.

Whilst each person's transitions, profiles and histories can stand alone and be analysed separately, they also inter-weave to form a larger picture that exposes the intimate relationships between the actions of spouses and partners. It is not hard to see how one person's transition can affect others in the household. However, there can also be a complex inter-relationship between the transitions of spouses and partners. An obvious example would be how couples organise the care of children and other unpaid work, and consequently engage in paid employment. To adequately account for this, the household rather than just each individual must be considered. Doing so generates more complex but complete pictures.

Having given some depth to the notion of transitions, it is now possible to briefly describe how the interview data were collected and analysed. In considering the methodology employed in this part of the research programme it is worth noting at the outset that both retrospective and prospective longitudinal studies have their own sets of advantages and difficulties (Dex, 1991). A retrospective study – the approach adopted here – creates particular problems in ensuring detail and accuracy in people's recall that is compounded by the length of any period under study. Against these difficulties such an approach offers the opportunity to gather quite detailed data from an extended time frame during a relatively short interview. To maximise the quality of information it becomes important to develop and employ an interviewing strategy which aims to both minimise the problems associated with this approach whilst building on its strengths.

Using skilled interviewers is one important part of such a strategy, as is the interview process. To create the most favourable circumstances for recall, the interviews began with people recollecting major life events during the preceding ten years. These life events then served as cues to help the person recall their work history over the same period. This allowed a matrix of their personal and work histories across time to be progressively built up. Over the course of the interview more detail was added to the matrix. Such an approach clearly aided people's recall and allowed them and the interviewer to more accurately identify the timing of events and to build a detailed picture of these. It also helped the ongoing checking and clarifying of information.

Following Miles and Huberman (1994) a more condensed matrix that provided a graphical summary of a person's work history across the ten year study period was developed using the interview materials. Recorded on each were the person's work profile at the start of the decade and any subsequent changes. Each person's work history was organised into two parts. Firstly, there were the activities that they engaged in primarily or on a full time basis. Then there were additional or secondary activities. In adopting this approach, though, particular activities were not automatically privileged over others, but each was situated according to the how the person described and 'rated' it. So, paid work, education and training, and unpaid work could all be considered primary or secondary activities depending on the person and the household, as well as their circumstances and perceptions. When the matrices of adults in the same household were combined they created a work history of the household as well.

From the work history matrix we can identify individual transitions. Whilst such a summary format is useful, the detail of these transitions is not apparent in it. To provide this, each transition was described and analysed. A template was developed to aid and standardise this process and it canvassed many of the aspects alluded to in the preceding discussion of the concept of transitions. Table 1 outlines the factors considered in each transition. As is apparent, information was gathered not solely in terms of the individual but also in respect of the household. The wider context was also considered.

General themes, that had some bearing on the concept of transitions, were also identified from the interviews. Quotes that reflected aspects of a particular transition, a type of transition, or that related to the themes were gathered to support and illustrate the analysis. However they were used, quotes were particularly important given that one of the goals of the study was to create a narrative that, whilst focused on labour market transitions, drew heavily on the actual experiences of people.

When applied to each of the interviews this process yielded three distinct yet inter-related summaries for each person:
❑   the work history matrix for each adult in the household;
❑   a set of templates that detailed each transition for each person;
❑   individual/household synopses of key themes and issues.

These spanned the following decades in each area:
❑   Hawkes Bay – 1985 to 1995,
❑   South Waikato – 1987 to 1997,
❑   West Auckland – 1987 to 1997.

Table 1: Factors considered in analysis of each transition.

- ❏ The characteristics and mechanics of the transition – what sort of change occurred and how – are described.
- ❏ The process by which the transition occurred – how decisions were made, across what timeframe, who was involved and so on – is detailed.
- ❏ Any factors that may be relevant to the process are acknowledged. These include:
  - ▪ Individual and household
    - Attitudes, values & beliefs
    - Milestones (e.g. birth of a child)
    - Individual considerations (e.g. a person's desire to work)
    - Family considerations – not childcare (e.g. elderly relatives needing extra care)
    - Childcare considerations
    - Financial considerations
    - Education & Training
    - Skills & Experience
    - Other Issues such as
      - Age
      - Ethnicity
      - Gender
  - ▪ Welfare considerations (e.g. was the person eligible for a benefit or what were the abatement provisions)
  - ▪ Structural & Contextual Issues
    - Workplace level
    - Industry level
    - Locally and Regionally
- ❏ The impact of the transition – what outcomes it generated for the individual and the household (expected and unexpected) are considered. This includes the significance of the transition – what the change meant for the individual, the household, and possibly the workplace.
- ❏ Quotes from the interviewee or someone else in the household that illustrate aspects of the above points are included.

In these forms the data were now accessible for further analysis. This involved, firstly, the progressive drawing together of transitions of a similar kind. Initially, broad categorisations based on the entry or exit points of a transition were developed. The process then moved onto refining these larger categories into groups and sub-groups. These were subsequently analysed to identify common and contrasting characteristics. The comparison was based on the various features captured on the template. As well, sets were broken down further and analysed on the basis of individual (gender, ethnicity and so on) and household characteristics. What is hopefully evident is that a transition could be categorised and examined according to a number of criteria. The outcomes of applying this methodology, as have been presented in various reports, can be broader, more general findings and those that relate to narrower, more specific issues. Having transitions as a unit of analysis enables not only a strong qualitative emphasis but also allows some quantitative analysis, such as a comparison of the numbers and frequency of particular transitions for various groups. The work history matrices of people and households were also a focus of investigation. Like the transitional templates they too could be collated, based on various criteria, and analysed accordingly. Finally, the themes that had emerged in the interviews were considered for how they could enrich aspects of the transitional analysis and provide areas of separate interest and discussion.

REPORT OUTLINE

Using this methodology, a series of detailed analyses were produced that, for practical reasons, have been organised under various headings which are the key types of transitions that emerged from the research. Naturally this approach tends to artificially fragment the continuous lived experiences of individuals and the households they were part of. This is especially true when an extended period of time is being considered such as in this longitudinal study. Across the ten-year study period, any particular transition, regardless of its nature, duration or significance, generally formed only a proportion of a person's total experiences and history. An episode of unemployment, for example, may only cover a few months, with the remainder of the decade characterised by full-time employment. This fragmentation also has the potential to conceal the inter-relationship of particular transitions with other issues under study. Continuing with the example just given, the time out of paid work may also be associated with a period of education and training. Such connections need to be made. In this case, the training might be highly relevant to understanding the person's successful return to work and their subsequent long term settled employment. Thus, despite using a framework built around types of transitions, we have tried to acknowledge to some degree, at least, the wider and longer context of any single transition within any particular discussion. Of course, the danger in trying too hard to overcome these types of problems can be a tendency to repeatedly produce extensive case histories in each section, albeit with different emphases each time. This, in turn, creates its own difficulties, the most significant being that the principal focus of this study – transitions – could be obscured.

To overcome these problems of structure, but not lose the key focus, we have adopted a style that presents shortened or abbreviated case studies framed so as to emphasise a specific issue. Whilst this keeps the focus on transitions, it is hoped that the other two reports in this series will go some way to overcoming the fragmentation – as noted above – that this might cause. In particular, vignettes and quotes – or parts thereof – are often repeated in different parts of each report as are pieces of many individual and household cases. While these are employed each time to illustrate various aspects of the findings, and are framed accordingly, their repetition also offers the reader opportunities to tie together people's varied and diverse experiences. By doing this, they can then generate a more holistic account for each individual and household case across time.

Readers will quickly see that each report draws heavily on the actual words of people from the interviews. This strong reliance on narrative was a deliberate strategy. Quotes are used, not just to add a little colour, but as a core component of each report. Rather than embedding an occasional remark in the analysis, the analysis is instead built on the content of the interviews. Our intention was to ground the findings in the experiences, feelings, opinions, beliefs and attitudes of those who took part.

The study generated analysis on transitions and themes in the following areas:

- ❑ Welfare and Unemployment
- ❑ Education and Training
- ❑ Unpaid Work
- ❑ Paid Work

❑ Other Transitions

There are three reports: one each on welfare and unemployment, one on education and training, and one on work, both unpaid and paid. The following discussion reviews the content of all three reports.

(i) Welfare and Unemployment

Whilst not always coexistent, these two issues are often closely interrelated. Hence, they are dealt with together. Welfare is examined in relation to people receiving:

♦ the unemployment benefit,
♦ the domestic purposes benefit,
♦ accident compensation[1], and
♦ a mix of sundry benefits (sickness, widow's, caring for an dependant relative, and national superannuation).

Transitions involving people moving into or out of welfare are explored, whether from or to employment, education and training, or unpaid work. Two issues that were of special significance to those receiving the domestic purposes benefit are elaborated. They are the stigma associated with this benefit and the special childcare problems this group faced.

A short discussion on the issue of welfare from the perspective of people who, during the ten-year study period, had no experiences of being on welfare is undertaken. Though not exclusively related to the issues of welfare and unemployment, some specific issues that are quite closely intertwined with them are examined in this section. Firstly, the motives people had for working and the impacts of unemployment and receiving welfare are explored. Then some comment is made on how people perceived the job market during the survey period and consideration is given to how this might have affected their employment prospects. Finally, the importance of social networks in getting work is highlighted. A couple of further issues, this time with more specific relevance for those receiving welfare, are then focused on. These include an assessment of the role and actions of the NZES, and a discussion of the interaction of wage rates, benefit levels, and associated abatement regimes. The effect these had on people engaging in paid work is the predominant theme.

(ii) Education and Training

A wide range of education and training is canvassed. This includes workplace-based training and shorter courses. The main focus, however, is on longer education and training programmes. These are generally full-time and are of an extended duration. They include:

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[1] Whilst there are significant differences between ACC and the other welfare benefits considered here, given the nature of this study, the similarities are sufficient to allow its arbitrary inclusion in this section.

- Tertiary study: polytech and university based
- Skills based training programmes (such as ACCESS)
- Work placement and experience programmes

Transitions into and out of such programmes are explored, as are the outcomes of undertaking them.

The experiences of school leavers are included in this section given their relationship with this topic. However, this part of the discussion is not just limited to looking at their education and training. Whilst their experiences in relation to tertiary courses, skills-based training, and work experience and placements are canvassed, their patterns and experiences of unemployment and employment are also discussed

This report also covers some general discussion on the broad issue of education and training. It ends with a series of themes that emerged in relation to this issue. These are inequity, apprenticeships, costs and technology. The first of these looks at the differences between the DPB and other benefits (particularly the unemployed benefit) in respect of assistance for, and attitudes towards, training. The issue of apprenticeships raised quite a lot of discussion, with many people ruing the demise of this form of training. Next, the broad matter of the increasing costs of education and training is discussed. This is not solely related to school leavers and student loans as older people also commented on the limiting effect that high fees had on their ability to study or train. Finally, the growth and importance of technology in the workplace, how it is changing work, and how people coped with this is canvassed. Also touched on is the importance of adequately preparing children for this.

(iii)   Work

(a)   Unpaid Work

The first part of this report looks at unpaid work in terms of domestic responsibilities – caring for a home, children, families, dependent relatives and so on. Although the division of household work is explored, in the main, the discussion is focused on the care of children. Women were primarily responsible for this unpaid work. As well as exploring their transitions into and out of unpaid work, how women balanced and co-ordinated their unpaid and paid responsibilities, particularly in relation to childcare, is also examined. Women's experiences of transitioning back into the workforce after being away and caring for children are also considered

A second area that is examined under this heading focuses on unpaid work of a voluntary nature in the community (schools, sports clubs, voluntary organisations etc). A great deal of voluntary work is associated with children so, not unexpectedly, women are heavily involved. The role of voluntary work in equipping people with skills and experience and preparing them for paid work is examined. Again, the balancing of these and other responsibilities is considered.

(b)   Paid Work

This aspect of this report looks at a range of different forms of paid work and the transitions that are involved. They are self-employment, and paid work that is part-time, casual and temporary, seasonal, or full-time and permanent. Transitions might be into or out of, as well as between, these forms of work.

The examination of casual and part-time work also touches on the issue of casualisation. In the discussion on seasonal work, a particular pattern of employment – that we call the cyclical profile – is featured. This profile involves a pattern of seasonal work between periods of unemployment that some people repeated over many years. Also given special attention in the section on seasonal paid work is the meat industry.

A range of issues relating to paid work are discussed. These are:

❑ The growing intensification and casualisation of workplaces through restructuring, new contracts and multi-skilling
❑ The persistently gendered nature of paid work, both horizontally and vertically
❑ The Employment Contracts Act and the role of unions
❑ The attitudes towards, and experiences and impacts of, restructuring and redundancy
❑ Specific issues relating to middle aged and older people as well as youth in the labour market

As noted in the report on Welfare and Unemployment, some of the more general issues dealt with there have some relevance to, and could be read in conjunction with, this report.

(c)   Other Transitions

A number of patterns of transition that are not covered elsewhere are examined under this heading. These include profiles that involve no transitions – where people maintained an unchanged work profile across all, or most of, the ten-year study period. Other profiles that illustrate the complex nature of people's patterns of work are also covered here. As well, this section looks at profiles that involve relocations including time-limited travel (such as the O.E.), relocation within New Zealand, immigration and emigration.

SUMMARY OF SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

Phase one of this research programme saw a random sample of 832 households in the Hawkes Bay region drawn from Household Labour Force Survey panels provided by Statistics New Zealand. These were then surveyed using a specially developed questionnaire that was designed to secure information on the labour market behaviour of individuals and households while at the same time ensuring some compatibility with the quarterly HLFS Survey conducted by Statistics New Zealand. The findings of this phase have been reported in detail in a separate working paper, Shirley et al, 1998 From this original sample, a subset were again randomly selected to participate in the second phase of the research programme that involved semi-structured in-depth interviews. These were conducted in 96 households and provided sufficient information to develop 164 individual profiles. Of these, 152 were produced using information directly supplied by the person. The remaining 12 were the result of information supplied by other informants, most usually the person's spouse or partner.

The ethnicity and gender breakdown for these profiles is provided in Tables 1 and 2. Table 3 provides a picture of the household structures at the time of interview. Children (under the age of 16 years or still at school) were present in just under 60% of households at the time of interview, though the percentage would have obviously fluctuated across the study period. Finally, Table 4 compares the distributions of gender and ethnicity between the ethnographic sample, the survey sample, and Census[2] data for this region.

Table 2: Make Up of Sample by Gender	
Male	Female
43%	57%

Table 3: Make Up of Sample by Ethnicity	
Maori	Non-Maori
24.4%	75.6%

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[2] 1991 Census, Statistics New Zealand. Though this includes information on usual residents in the area and residents elsewhere in New Zealand, the latter were not included in these figures.

Table 4: Structure of Households

Couples			66 (69%)
	Married	*60*	
	Not married	*6*	
Single Parents			16 (17%)
	Male	*1*	
	Female	*15*	
Single People			9 (9%)
	Males	*4*	
	Females	*5*	
Flatting			3 (3%)
	Female + Female	*2*	
	Male + Male	*1*	
Other			2 (2%)
	2 Female Flatmates – one with a child	*1*	
	Female caring for aged parent	*1*	
TOTAL			96 (100%)

NB: Total of 164 cannot be calculated directly from this table as both partners in a relationship not always able to be profiled, whilst in some households extra members profiled (e.g. adult children).

Table 5: Comparative Distributions (by percentage) of Gender and Ethnicity

	Interview Sample	*Survey Sample*	*1991 Hastings Census*
Gender			
Male	43	46	48.7
Female	57	54	51.3
Ethnicity			
Non-Maori	75.6	86.8	83.3
Maori	24.4	13.2	16.7

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Introduction

Depending on the context, notions of education, study and training can incorporate a variety of issues and take on a wide range of meanings. In this report, they are considered in terms of three general areas:

❑ Education and training that usually involved a full-time commitment over an extended period.

> This was one of the following types:

> ▪ Tertiary Study
> This type of course was a tertiary level programme that covered a range of subject/topic areas.
> It could be of varying duration (weeks, months, years).
> It was provided in the public (e.g. polytechs, universities, colleges of education) and private sector by a range of organisations and institutions.

> ▪ Skills Training Schemes
> This type of programme was typically[3] of around 13 weeks duration and was in the style of ACCESS courses.
> A person had to be registered as unemployed to qualify to attend.
> As with the first category, these courses could be run by a range of providers.

> ▪ Work Experience or Placement Schemes
> This type of scheme was used to provide experience and specific skills training through placements in actual workplaces.
> As above, a person needed to be registered as unemployed to be eligible for this type of programme.
> These, too, were run by a range of providers.

❑ Education and training that did not fit in the first category.

▪ A wide range of courses were captured in this category.
▪ These required less than full-time attendance – this might be one-off, occasional, regular or periodic in nature. Often they were described as 'part-time' courses.
▪ The duration of these courses was variable – from hours to an entire year.
▪ Examples include: night classes; a course that lasts only one or two days; attending a course one day a week or for a few hours per week; studying one or

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[3] Though people reported that such courses had differing timeframes (8 weeks to six months) and make-up, this description is designed to give a general flavour of such courses and help differentiate them from other programmes.

two university papers across a semester or a year.

❑ Workplace based education and training

In doing this analysis, it was occasionally unclear precisely what type of course, scheme or placement a person had been on.[4] For example, one woman talked at length about a job she had held and the transition was analysed on this basis. Almost as an afterthought, she noted that this had in fact turned out to be an NZES-funded work placement. Although many of the recounted experiences clearly identified a programme as of one sort or the other, this was not always the case. It was necessary in each instance to make a judgement on the basis of the make-up or structure of the course, its content and setting, as well as considering how the interviewees described it.

Given that the focus of this study is on the idea of transitions, this discussion essentially examines the movement of people into, out of, and occasionally between, these various forms of education and training. This examination also incorporates an analysis of what lies behind the transition into study or training, and what outcomes eventuate – be they immediate or longer term, positive or negative. Such outcomes can be viewed in terms of personal attributes (the additional skills, experience, confidence and the like that a person gains) and any resultant transitions (did the programme enable a move into work or other study for example). The experiences of people whilst engaged in such activities are also explored.

Alongside the transitional focus is the exploration of various themes concerning education and training that emerged in the interviews. These reflected not only people's own experiences but also their observations and interpretations of what was happening elsewhere and with other people and captured their attitudes, values and beliefs. This provided a broad base of contextual data to improve and enrich the analysis of transitions. The themes canvassed are: an evaluation of the quality of certain training schemes; the inequity between various benefit regimes in respect of financial and other support for study and training; the issue of apprenticeships; and the impact of costs on training and education. Though not restricted to the examination of education and training, issues around technology were often strongly associated with and considered highly relevant to it. Thus, a final theme looking at technology from this perspective is explored.

As well as considering all the relevant cases of people who experienced some form of education and training, one particular group stands out as both intimately tied to the issues of education and training, and of special interest. It is made up of those people who left school during the study period. The separate discussion of their cases moves beyond the exact focus of this report. Thus, while there is some discussion of any education and training they were involved in, their broader experiences – in paid and unpaid work or of welfare – are also explored. Where possible, this discussion moves beyond the initial post-school transition and maps subsequent transitions and experiences as well.

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[4] It should be noted that we report how the people interviewed describe the make-up and nature of the course. Their perceptions may be at odds with official interpretations and the like. However, in the context of this research it is the interviewees recollections and perceptions that are of primary interest to us.

Although not dealt with separately, another group for whom the issue of education and training is considered important and can be of practical significance was made up of many of those receiving welfare or who were unemployed. Some education and training opportunities are only available to people who officially fit these categorisations – for example, work skills and work placement schemes. Others, such as polytech courses, are, within limits, open to anyone regardless of their welfare or official employment status. Certainly, those who were receiving welfare and/or were unemployed did not constitute an homogenous group in terms of their relationship to, and experiences of, education and training. Rather, there was a range of involvement – some people had none through to others who had more numerous experiences. Where there was some involvement, the nature and quality of particular types of programmes, the outcomes in general and, specifically, the impacts these had on transitions to paid employment are analysed. On an individual level, it is interesting to note how people in these circumstances used education and training – that is, the types, number, timing, sequence and results of any courses and programmes. The examination of those who were unemployed or receiving welfare and who took some form of education or training is interwoven throughout the following discussion.

This discussion is broken down into a number of sections. Firstly, a general discussion of the role of education and training in relation to employment is undertaken, with the presentation of differing views on the nature and strength of this relationship. Some debate is also included on the relative values of skills and experience versus education and training. The group of school leavers is then considered in terms of their transitions after leaving school and, where possible, over the longer term. The focus then shifts to a more general examination of people's experiences of education and training within the first area, as outlined above. This gives way to a look at shorter educational and training undertakings. Next, there is some discussion of education and training as it occurs within the work place. Finally, the various themes, as described, are presented.

The Role and Place of Education and Training

A strong impression from the interviews in this research was that most people recognised that the labour market had undergone major changes and that education and training had become a significant factor in enhancing the chances of gaining employment. This was especially apparent when older people compared their earlier experiences with those of young people today.

> I remember when I left school I had a choice of three jobs and I had no university, I had just gone through school. It was just so easy to pick up jobs at that time it didn't matter if you didn't have anything significant in the way of training, jobs were just there. Now, especially after being back [working] at the high school and seeing the trauma the kids went through coming to the end of their secondary education, there was just no work out there for them. So it has changed in that your education is beginning when you leave secondary school now, not ending. ...The majority of [the boys] were going to university or polytech.

> Education is very important today and for people to go ahead they really do need the education to do that. When I first started work there was a job waiting for me when I left school, so that's what I did. I didn't really progress in any great schooling.

> I think you have to be more multi-skilled or qualified. It is not like you can leave school and got to the [meat] works, you need qualifications.

Whilst these remarks make it clear that the current situation is markedly different for young people, these changes also had implications for other, older workers. Many, for a range of reasons, had limited educational opportunities or qualifications. This meant that they now faced difficulties and uncertainties. Although this man made the choice to leave school early and with no qualifications, he later recognised the mistake and hoped the dead-end he now finds himself in would serve as a lesson for his children to not make the same mistake.

> The availability of jobs is basically education, you need education to get yourself a proper job … If I stayed at school then I would have been into a different kind of workforce … I try to instil into my children – it is their own decision, but then without education they have nothing to fall back on, they are either going to be like me … or better themselves.

After leaving school, he had found work fairly easily in a meatworks. However, he was a casualty of the restructuring and closures in this industry and, because of his lack of qualifications and the changing labour market, he became caught up in a repetitive cycle of unemployment and seasonal fruit picking. Although people with fewer qualifications like him may have managed to find work more easily many years ago, they now faced having to survive in a very different job market. It was those in less skilled or more vulnerable types of work that felt this lack of qualifications most acutely. However, these issues should not be seen simply as a matter of getting some qualifications at school or immediately after leaving school. Some argued that the process was ongoing, seemingly driven by a competitive and dynamic job market.

> When a guy from university comes out with a degree, that job market was filled up. Had to go back to university to do another course, then another

> course just trying to develop qualifications for the job he wanted. What is
> valid now, next year is out of date.

> I see that for people to stay in their jobs they have to have more training. I
> was always behind [my husband] sort of pushing him to get training. It is
> really important to get the jobs that you want and you have to continually
> look out for this training.

In a similar vein, education and training appeared to many as an increasing feature of every workplace. Coping with these various issues was demanding for many groups, though the burdens appeared to fall unevenly at times.

Given the various changes that people saw and experienced in the nature and availability of work, education and training was considered very important. What is important to note in respect of these observations is that, people also recognised that the relationship of education and training to employment was not always clear-cut or direct. Indeed, from the interviews, three general reservations or provisos on this association can be discerned. Firstly, there seemed to be an ongoing debate about the relative merits of education and training versus skills and experience. Secondly, people saw that education and training may be important, as were skills and experience, but none of them automatically guaranteed employment. The final point, which itself draws on those already made, is that people did not accept that education and training was inevitably the sole answer to the problems that we face in regards of employment and unemployment either as individuals or collectively. Let's examine each of these points in more detail.

The first concerns the relative merits of education and training versus skills and experience. Though skills can obviously be the product of study and training, they can equally grow out of work or life experience. It is in this sense – learnt on-the-job or through accumulated living – that the term skill is used here. Experience describes what people gain through time spent doing a particular job or in a workplace. In these senses, skills and experience can be separated out from education and training. People often made this separation in their remarks. In describing what he meant by skills and experience, this man's quote helps illustrate this separation.

> My biggest asset is what I carry in my head. Skills I've learnt to assess
> stock and in dealing with people and what I know about the people I deal
> with.

Whilst much has, and will be, said about the value of education or training, on some occasions, according to those interviewed, skills and experience were equally or more important and valuable. This is clearly illustrated in the following case.

> I doubt whether the value is placed on experience that perhaps should be,
> although talking to people who employ, I know that [my husband] worked
> for a very large international company who did not, on principle, employ
> tertiary qualified people. They said they wanted people with life skills.

In this couple's experience, education and training was not necessarily always intimately or automatically linked to opportunity and prospects. Despite this man's successes however, there was still some uncertainty, some ambivalence, regarding his lack of formal qualifications.

> ...I think [my husband] worries that he has no education beyond school
> certificate and I don't think I am being presumptuous in saying this, he

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> feels a little concerned about that and he has never actually had to apply for a job since then, he is cautious. He has more skills than he realises. He is streetwise.

What emerged was a view that each was important and they were often inter-twined. The relative value of each – separately or together – was dependent on a range of factors. The importance of one over the other often came down to the preference of an employer. This was the situation in the previous case where that employer preferred particular skills or experience. Alternatively, others wanted people with a certain level of education or formal qualifications. Naturally, some jobs demanded both.

Of course, the preference for experience often meant that even with qualifications, a person might lack the prerequisites to get a particular job. The irony for many people was that they could not get these skills or this experience until they got a job.

> In a lot of jobs now you have to have qualifications and experience, if you haven't got the experience they are not going to take the time out to teach you. What they are needing is people that knows what they are doing and that has done it before.

A woman who was seeking a change of careers after many years nursing was aware of the problems she faced in this regard. But this didn't make the task any easier.

> I was prepared, I'd made my decision that nursing wasn't me any longer and I was just going to hope and try and find someone that was willing to give me a bit of experience at something. Because the jobs I looked at I haven't had the experience and, of course, I get turned down because they all want is experience. …I mean there are the odd people who are willing to give you experience, but you've got to get out there and do the door knocking. But if you're just looking in the papers and jobs advertised they all want experience.

She eventually found a part-time position that she gratefully took on as an opening to this new line of work.

The cases of those school leavers who went to polytech, and whose cases will be examined shortly, clearly illustrate this problem. Although they had trained at polytech, they had a great deal of difficulty getting their first job. It often took the intervention of some work placement programme to overcome this hurdle. This may be an important consideration for this group in linking study and training to employment. It seems, then, that getting a tertiary qualification was only the beginning or part of the process for these people. What this group conceded that they may have lacked,[5] in part, and what the work placement offered, was the chance to gain some skills and experience and translate their learning into practise. This happened elsewhere too. Later we will explore the story of a married man with children who trained as a nurse. Following his training, he had to make substantial and drawn-out efforts to get permanent work as a nurse and, critically, to keep up his skills. Nursing as a whole seems to have responded to this learning/practice gap by instituting programs for new graduates – a kind of placement scheme if you will.

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[5] Obviously a range of other factors – the job market for example – also need to be taken into account.

Of course, occasionally the reverse can apply – people have vast experience but no formal qualifications. They can be equally discriminated against.

> I have run organisations that have been into millions of dollar projects and did it very successfully for years ... I haven't got any certificates to say I can do work and when you turn around into these CVs these days you have to have certificates. In our day you applied for a job and you sat down and were interviewed and you discussed it, and they thought this person has got a few brains and they do know what they are talking about, they don't need a certificate.

Despite her extensive voluntary experience, this woman could not translate it into similar paid employment and instead made do with a benefit supplemented by various part-time and casual cleaning jobs.

The next case illustrates another important influence on how the relative value of education and training versus skills and experience was assessed – the changing labour market. We can see from the quote that this woman's deliberate employment strategy after leaving school was to build up skills and experience through the jobs she did. The employment situation of the time obviously allowed this approach. This worked for a while and she found it a positive experience. However, she later came to realise that to improve her employment prospects she needed to balance this approach by engaging in some education and training.

> [Work experience] was the best way to get skills at the time. You couldn't get a job without experience and skills so that was a good way to do it. …I think [moving in and out of different sorts of jobs] was a learning process and if you do little bits and then find exactly what you want to do. …[Then] there just weren't the jobs there with the qualifications I had so I thought if I got more qualifications it would give me a wider scope of work. …[I went to polytech] to get more qualifications really. I thought it would give me an advantage and it was what I wanted to do.

This leads us nicely into the second point, the state of the job market. The experience of many people who were interviewed demonstrated that although successfully completing a course or programme was helpful and encouraging, it did not automatically lead to work. One reason for this was the availability of jobs .

> These days you have to qualify. ..and then again some of them are qualified and they still don't get a job.

> I think [work training programmes] had to come but where is it getting them. There is nothing much out there on the market for them.

Of course, to balance the discussion of this particular point it is necessary to also acknowledge that people failing to get jobs after undertaking training or being suitably qualified and experienced cannot in itself be solely attributed to there not being enough jobs.

Although some people completed tertiary courses and got work relatively easily, others struggled. So too did many of those interviewed who took on work placements and skills training schemes. It is obviously inappropriate to evaluate people's employment outcomes solely in terms of any training and education that they undertook. However, the observation can be made that many of these people remained

unemployed long after, and despite, any courses and programmes. Certainly, a critical eye needs to be cast over the types and quality of these courses and their compatibility with what the job market is seeking. For many people, despite their enthusiasm and efforts, jobs appeared to simply not be available.[6]

Whilst it must be conceded that their difficulties were probably the result of a number of factors, the cases of those school leavers who did polytech courses but could not easily get employment also demonstrate aspects of this issue. The next case illustrates other, less readily apparent aspects, and a different shape that this issue can take. Although not out of work, this man effectively had no job after the government service he worked for was radically restructured. This was despite accumulating vast experience, numerous skills, and obtaining substantial and advanced qualifications. His wife and then he commented on the position he found himself in.

> You worked for your MBA and then became a problem because he is overeducated and they don't know what to do with him.

> Basically I became a project officer ... they did not know what to do with me. I had a lot of skills and I retrained just before [the re-structuring] in 1991.

Essentially, he was sidelined as a result of the restructuring as he had the experience and qualifications to occupy senior positions that were no longer available. This despite – or perhaps because – his whole working life had been geared towards promotion and obtaining additional qualifications. His family had accepted a number of geographical shifts in order to promote his career and his wife had focused her role on supporting this. The lengthy association he'd had with this particular government service and his desire to have the situation satisfactorily resolved meant he had not considered other options. As well, his wife was very ill and he was caring for the family. What is important to this aspect of our discussion is that his employability and employment in the organisation was no longer contingent on qualifications and experience. In his case, the changing face of the labour market was manifest in the restructuring of the public service.

Finally, the last point to be highlighted in this discussion clearly shows that people recognised the complexity of the whole issue of (un)employment. Consequently, they did not accept without question that education and training was the sole answer to the problems that we face in regards of employment and unemployment, either as individuals or collectively. Consider again, the group of school leavers. Some left school and got work immediately. Others, by comparison, did some form of education and training and found getting paid work harder. In the following case, this woman found that it was not qualifications or experience that mattered but that other factors were considered more important, such as people's perceptions and, interestingly, age. It seems that people can be too qualified, which can be as big a disadvantage as being under-qualified.

> I found that when I was looking for that [job] at the [bank] I was either too old, not old enough, too qualified or not qualified enough. I'd never quite make the perfect. ...[I]t was an office job and he sort of said, "You're a bit overqualified, you are more qualified than I am". And he was the boss, so I

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[6] The level of enthusiasm and effort that many people put into finding work was a clear finding of this study – it is reported in more detail in the report on Welfare and Unemployment (Shirley et al, 2000a).

> never got that job. I had one person say well you'll probably get bored with this job, you are a bit over qualified, you'll get bored and leave. You are qualified enough and you choose: I want to do that job, I'm happy to do that job, but they sort of had this idea that you would get sick of it and move on. And the thing they didn't realise ...[my] CV it was a bit of a wreck and so I wanted somewhere I could get there and stick to it and build time.

Employment and employability is obviously about more than just education and training. Indeed, the preceding discussion has highlighted aspects of this very point and the bulk of this working paper is devoted to exploring these other influences. Consequently, whilst not dismissing the importance of education and training, people were not convinced that it alone was the answer to unemployment. Some went so far as to claim it was more a part of an ideological battle.

> This is what is wrong, the fact that they do have to compete so hard for a few jobs. Educating people better for leisure or to have different expectations because the fraud that is being offered now is that there are jobs there if you work hard enough and that is not the case. There is not the number of jobs there regardless of how well educated people get. There is a finite number of jobs so what is being encouraged that one person should work harder to beat another person at getting that job. All that means is that person A will get the job instead of person B, it doesn't mean that they will both get jobs. It is a fraud to say that if you work hard you will get work.

Whilst this was hardly a common view, the point being made here is that many of those interviewed questioned such a simplistic solution to so complex a problem.

By way of drawing this introductory section to a close, we want to offer the remarks of one interviewee. He sums up many of the issues that have been canvassed so far and his comments illustrate the ambivalence that many people felt about education and training within the context of a turbulent and rapidly changing labour market. It is this sense of ambivalence that we have tried to convey in this section. This man had a wide range of experiences. At various times, he was out of work and on a benefit. He also undertook a number of training programmes and was, for periods, in full-time work. Indeed he experienced many aspects of the debate. Because of this, his remarks are all the more pertinent. They again illustrate these contradictions and the sense of ambivalence that inhabits this issue, as well as its complexity.

> You've still got to have qualifications and all that. You can't get very far without them. A lot of people would say you can't get a job without qualifications and you can't get qualifications without getting a job. They give up there. There are those work based training schemes and it might mean you are working for nothing, but you still get a little bit of experience and you can turn around and say you have done this. That is better than sitting around and saying well I'm never going to get a qualification so I will never get a job, why bother sort of thing. ...After a while of doing the work based training scheme gaining the experience and feeling pretty crapped on at the end of 12 weeks when you thought there was a job there, and say no there is not really room for you to be put on there full-time. You sort of feel like a slave. You were working for the dole and that was all you were working for and you thought well why bother.

Summary – The Role of Education and Training

This section has highlighted a number of general issues pertinent to the wider discussion. There was widespread agreement that the labour market was undergoing substantial change. These changes meant higher unemployment; that people found it harder to get work and were more reluctant to give up or change jobs once they had them; and that employers had more choice and that more was demanded of job seekers. As a consequence, there was a general recognition and acceptance, as was acknowledged at the start of this section, that the make-up and level of a person's education and training had a necessary and important part to play in their participation in paid work. So too did their skills and experience though, in a kind of catch-22, it was virtually impossible to get these until one got work. The relative merits of each depended on the particular situation. Importantly, however, these factors were not seen as the sole influences on getting a job, nor as some sort of guarantee of work. The availability of jobs was one particularly vital influence. As has been shown, opinion on the precise strength and nature of the relationship between employment and education and training was complicated and diverse. People often felt ambivalent because of contradictory experiences and information.

Transitions Involving School Leavers

Introduction

School leavers are often of special interest in labour market analysis. The nature of this study lends itself particularly well to examining the experiences of such a group, not just at the moment of leaving school but subsequently, in some cases for many years. Thus, the work experiences and transitions of a group of people who were just entering the paid workforce can be mapped and analysed. Whilst the whole gambit of their experiences – education and training, paid work, and welfare – are explored and compared, the particular focus remains on the former. In this respect, the specific goals include determining whether education and training served as an entree to paid employment; establishing how proximate and relevant any education and training was to subsequent employment; and identifying the motivations for undertaking any particular programme of education and training. As with other groups, we are interested in the experiences of this group in respect of education and training, as well as the transitions that occur around these areas and more generally.

Table 6: Distribution of Gender and Ethnicity of School Leavers			
	Maori	**Non-Maori**	**Total**
Male	13.3	13.3	26.6
Female	26.7	46.7	73.4
Total	40.0	60.0	100.0

In this study, twenty-one people left school at some stage during the ten-year period (see Table 8). This group represents about 13% of all those profiled. Whilst it is unclear for six of these young people at what point they left school (accounting for four females and two males), some information in this regard is available for the others. This will be integrated into the following discussion that breaks up the experiences of school leavers into three categories. Firstly, there are those who went on to some form of tertiary education. Then there is the group who immediately found full-time work. The final category covers those who could not find work, were unemployed and/or participated in skills based training or work placement programmes.[7]

Two other people are appropriately mentioned at this point. Though not strictly part of the school leaver group,[8] their cases are briefly worth considering in this context as

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[7] In this discussion, some inconsistencies can be identified between three people's histories. This arises because of the longitudinal nature of the study and the shifting nature of benefit regulations during any lengthy period of time. In each case, the person left school at fifteen or sixteen. As one of these was earlier in the ten year timeframe, he was able to go directly onto the unemployment benefit. The other two left school later when regulations had been changed and this was not an option. One was thus forced to go to polytech and the other elected to go directly into a skills-based training scheme. The structure and availability of any benefit system can, therefore, have a direct impact on people and the decisions they make.

[8] And so not counted as part of the twenty-one.

they had left school just prior to the study period beginning. Both were women who had gone on to university, with one also attending teacher's training college whilst completing a degree. The other was studying social work. After finishing their courses early in the study period, they both easily found work in their respective professions though one of them did take a year off after completing varsity to travel to the country of her birth. They were able to maintain this employment throughout the study period though the teacher worked at different schools and, whilst the social worker remained with the same government agency, she was promoted to a supervisory level. The particular nature of the qualifications they obtained appeared to assist them greatly in moving easily into paid work.

Tertiary Study

This is in stark contrast to the group of nine school leavers who went on to some form of tertiary study immediately after leaving school. This group was made up of two males and seven females. Apart from one young Samoan woman, all of this group were Pakeha/European/New Zealanders. Although it is unclear at what point two of these people left school, it is known that five of this group had remained at school till the end of seventh form and one to the end of sixth form. One person went on to tertiary study at age sixteen years. For this young woman, such a move was in part due to her not being eligible for the unemployment benefit after leaving school. For the others, this decision seemed to have been much more planned and deliberate. That said, two women acknowledged that taking a polytech course was their 'fallback plan' if they couldn't find work during the summer holidays. Even so, the programmes they undertook were still in areas that they were interested in unlike one of the men who found himself in a second choice programme as his preferred course was already full. This entire group went to polytech, with all but one person opting for full-time courses of one year or six months duration. The exception was a woman who took on a significantly longer course, electing to do a three-year nursing programme. Two people had only just begun their studies at the time of interview whilst all but one of the others had successfully completed their courses. The exception was the woman engaged in the nursing course who withdrew in the second year. Four of the seven women took courses in office and secretarial work, with the remainder doing leisure and recreation, nursing, and horticulture programmes. The men took surveying and computing courses.

Completing some form of tertiary education is often seen as having a positive impact on a person's employability. So what value did such an undertaking have in helping this group of young people get work? Obviously, the two people who were still studying cannot be considered and two others probably need to be excluded in this type of consideration. They are, firstly, the young man who studied surveying but decided this was not what he really wanted to do. He managed to get a couple of unrelated full-time jobs after completing his course and as a result discovered a passion for viticulture. He travelled to Hawkes Bay to study and work in this field. Although he finished this second course, he did not qualify. Despite this, he got regular and lengthy seasonal work at various vineyards for just over a year before getting a full-time position. He was pleased with this and positive about the opportunities it offered, especially with the arrival of a new daughter. The second person was his wife and she was the woman who gave up her nursing training in the

second year. She found she did not really enjoy this type of work. She was unemployed – aside from some seasonal fruit picking – for nine months after giving up her training and before getting full-time work in a rest home. Given the relationship of this work to the field of study she had given up, it was not surprising to learn that she did not enjoy much of this work either. She took it on as it was the only settled work she could get after being unemployed. Following the birth of a child, she elected not to return to this job. Instead she got full-time evening work in a cinema and shared the care of their daughter with her husband.

Of the remaining five people who completed their courses and were looking for work in that field, the results are quite clear-cut. All went from study onto the unemployment benefit as they were not able to find the type of work they sought. Despite searching, one woman who studied horticulture never got work in this field and after a miserable 18 months being unemployed and doing some casual gardening, seasonal fruit picking and other work, she ended up with a full-time job in the dispatch office of a manufacturing business.

> I think it was pretty much a wasted year. I was just doing people's gardening and housework and looking after children and doing odd jobs like stock taking at town for a day ...[I] worked in an orchard for about three weeks at a time. I think November was my first proper job.

Although this job did not seem ideal, after the uncertainty and difficulties of the preceding year and a half she appeared, when interviewed, to be reasonably settled there. She summed up her experience of polytech and its usefulness for finding work thus:

> [The training] was really good. I learnt a lot more than I ever learnt at school. ...It didn't really [help me get work]. I did orchard work ... but I didn't really get into horticulture work. ..There weren't any [jobs like that] around at the time.

The other four women, who had all done office or secretarial courses, also spent some time unemployed. One was fortunate to go directly into a New Zealand Employment Service (NZES) work placement scheme in their office. This lead to a temporary contract after which she was able to obtain permanent full-time employment with a private company and later moved into a varied and challenging role in a marketing firm. During the interview, she mentioned that she was considering doing some additional training to improve her expertise in this new role and expand her future opportunities. She viewed polytech quite positively, though for more than just its educational value, and she remarked on the external considerations young people must include in their planning,

> Didn't think I'd find a job anyway, leaving straight from school. So I went to polytech to ... I decided to find a job in that line, I wanted to be an office worker at that stage so I did a business and office skills course to lead me to a job. ...Tech was a good transition from school to work life. It would be quite hard, I think, to go from school straight into a job. ...[At] school you are treated like an idiot ...[at tech] they teach you to make your own decisions and when you want to do it.

Periods of unemployment of seven and twenty months, and three years, faced the other three women. A young woman who was described by her parents as very shy

experienced the longest period. She benefited from the efforts of NZES who had placed her for brief periods and then for a six month stretch in various office situations. This final placement turned into a full-time position that she remained at. Of the other two women, one also required the assistance of NZES. Possibly reflecting on her own experience, she described the job market for school leavers when she left school as very poor. After four months of unemployment, she got a five-month contract in an office. The end of this saw a lengthy sixteen-month period of unemployment before she found office work for another year. This turned out to be a work placement through NZES. Sadly, she was to become very ill and had to give up work altogether after this.

Given that it was some seven months after polytech before the final person found work, and then only part-time, she and her father had become rather sceptical about the value of education and qualifications. She comments:

> When I left polytech and I went to apply for all these jobs, to me it wasn't really what you knew it was who you knew. That wasn't really good because it would have been a waste of time all these people going to polytech, university, if what they know didn't really count. Like, I have the qualifications … and my cousin doesn't and she has got this really high job because one of the ladies that she knows got her in it, and I thought that wasn't fair. ...The workplace now is who you know not what you know. You can get the training when you start. Those who already have the qualifications need to work harder to get the job. ...It makes things easier and faster, more efficient, if they just hire the person who is qualified.

In raising the issue of networks in getting jobs, this woman identified a key and recurrent theme running throughout this study. It is discussed in more detail in Welfare and Unemployment. Her father felt that rather than having invested all the time and money in polytech, she might have been better off simply getting a job in the local cannery.

> My daughter she went to polytech after school and learned office work, now she come back and tried as hard as she can to get a job, and all that skill and all that money to pay, now she has just picked up a job about three or four weeks ago. From all that time she finished at polytech and now she picked up a job and she only works three days a week…The office job I said what's the use, a waste of money to go there, you want to go and work at Watties or whatever to get your living.

Intriguingly, the woman later acknowledged that her decision to go to polytech had in part been prompted by the attitudes of her parents who wanted her to have sound, steady employment.

> My family just wanted a good job for me, not like picking apples or something.

The first job this young woman got only lasted three months as she cut it short to fulfil church commitments. A little while later, she picked up the part-time job she held when interviewed. Despite her father's reservations, she was quite content with the hours as she found the work quite demanding.

The various sentiments expressed in the preceding section by some of those interviewed, and by this young woman and her father in particular, illustrate the ambivalence that many people felt regarding education and training (as discussed

earlier). As can be appreciated, often this ambivalence is formed and exacerbated by the difficult and frequently conflicting experiences people have and share in.

Paid Employment

Five of the school leavers went straight from school into some form of paid work. This was made up of three people who identified their ethnicity as Maori, one person who identified as Pakeha/New Zealander/European and another whose ethnicity was not clear. None of them seemed to ever consider undertaking training or the like. Three were able to get full-time jobs (in an office, cafe and shop) and two got virtually full-time seasonal work at one of the meat works. These two would later marry. Both had completed sixth form but it is unclear at what stage or age the others left school. All but one of this paid work group were women. The only male worked at his job in the meatworks for a year before travelling overseas. After returning a couple of years later, he managed to maintain almost full-time employment through combining seasonal jobs (in the meat and packaging industries) until getting a permanent full-time position at a packaging company.

Although over time, the women may not have remained in their original jobs, they all displayed an ability to get full-time work, even if they left or lost their jobs. In general, apart from a couple of short periods of unemployment – caused by redundancy – and overseas travel, the principle reason for any of them not being in paid work was the birth and care of a child. Even after this latter event, these women were often keen to return to or engage in some form of paid work. This was generally prompted by financial considerations and was contingent on childcare arrangements. Their success in getting and maintaining paid employment seems to be partly explained by a couple of shared characteristics: a very strong drive to work and a willingness to consider, within certain parameters of experience, any kind of work.

Unemployment, Skills Training and Work Placement Schemes

For the remaining school leavers, leaving school meant becoming unemployed. Seven people, four of whom were women, went from school to unemployment or some form of training scheme associated with being unemployed. Three people gave their ethnicity as Maori, and two as Pakeha/New Zealander/European; the ethnicity of the other two is unclear. This group contains two people who left school at age fifteen, one each at ages sixteen and seventeen. One person left at the end of the seventh form. It is unclear when the other two finished school.

Of these cases, three went onto the unemployment benefit (UEB) alone. After fourteen months without work on the UEB, one of the fifteen year olds was able to get paid work doing seasonal fruit picking which he continued to do each year for six years. Part of the motivation to continue this pattern came from NZES which, he said, would stop his benefit if he refused the seasonal work. However, he did enjoy the work and his co-workers. As well, he also did a range of work and life skills courses each year through the YMCA. Overall, he was not entirely happy with this lifestyle. Similarly, seasonal fruit work for periods was the only option for one of the women. She followed this pattern (of being on the unemployment benefit with periods working

seasonally) for two years before getting on an NZES-funded placement as a receptionist with a private company. Unfortunately, the business folded and the woman subsequently had a child. Although she had been keen to go to polytech after school, financial and family considerations meant this was not possible. Being available for her family and the occasional income from seasonal work were both important.

> I wanted to get into polytech. Something along that line. But sort of the funds that kept us back at that time. ...It was really hard because I wanted to get into that straight after I left school. It was really the money that held me back most of the time. …I was still at home at the time, but it allowed to help my father. Because I came from a large family, there were five children in those days and I was the oldest and there is just him. So it allowed me to help him in lots of ways.

Sadly, she recognised the importance of such missed opportunities.

> You have to have the training. It all comes down to that. I know there are a lot of places that they will take you for nothing and you are sort of lucky to get in there.

Having become a mother, she hoped to capitalise on the opportunities offered by being on the DPB.

> Because I am on the benefit [DPB], they allow you to [train], they give you financial support for it. ... [My daughter] will be going to kindergarten once she turns three and I am hoping to get the baby into the crèche over there [at polytech].

As we shall see later, the entitlements available to recipients of the DPB as opposed to those on other benefits was a contentious issue.

The third person was unemployed for six months before getting two three month work experience and training placements via NZES. These were in office work but did not lead on to full-time or permanent work. This woman subsequently decided to do one year's polytech study as preparation for attending university in the future. However, studying at university would have meant a move to another district and so she decided to delay the decision. She did manage to find full-time work over the next couple of years though this was broken by a nine-month period of unemployment. These jobs were in a motor company and as a physiotherapy aide. At the time of being interviewed, she had recently elected to return to full-time study. Whilst she felt that getting out and getting a job had been the best approach from school, she later came to see that education was a vital ingredient to getting more settled and fulfilling employment. By being able to change to part-time hours, she was able to keep working as a physiotherapy aide, thus providing an income to support her full-time study.

Those who entered into some form of training scheme very soon after school[9] make up the last set of school leavers. The first of these got a work experience placement with a plastering firm through a scheme run by the Salvation Army. Having left school with no idea what he really wanted to do he thought this would be an ideal way to test the water in a particular industry. Unfortunately, the scheme ended after eight months due

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[9] There may have been a period between leaving school and starting any scheme, but in these cases it occurred shortly after. It was not as long as in the three cases just discussed.

to insufficient work. Through family connections he was able to get full-time work in a completely unrelated field which he remained in for the rest of the study period. Another of this group couldn't find work during the holidays after leaving school and so did a twelve-week carpentry skills course. Although he was ambivalent about such courses, noting their failings and the negative effects they can have on people, he did not dismiss them entirely. His and other's comments on the nature and quality of these types of courses are examined as a separate theme in the final section. Being highly motivated helped him find a job in a lawnmower shop after the first course, though he was made redundant a year later and could not get work for a couple of years. During this time he did two work placements, one in a tyre shop (for about six months) and the second in a lawnmower shop (for about three months). Permanent full-time work did not eventuate from either. He had some difficulty getting NZES to listen to his preferences concerning placements. Once in an area he enjoyed, he worked hard. Another two-year period of unemployment was broken by short times in paid employment in wool scouring and a meatworks. He was finally able to get settled work in a tyre company – helped by his work experience. Unfortunately, after a couple of years of doing well and being promoted, he was forced to give up this job to look after his children. His estranged wife had become ill and was unable to care for them. As the time approached when he might be able to return to paid work – something he looked forward to immensely – he worried about his chances after such a difficult early work history and this latest period out of the workforce.

By moving directly into some form of training, another member of this sub-group was able to take some significant steps in settling on a future path. After leaving school, this woman immediately completed a caring in the community course run through the Salvation Army. When combined with her personal experiences of looking after a sick relative and her casual paid work providing home help to a disabled person, this course cemented the idea that she would train as a nurse. She moved towards this goal by then completing a pre-nursing course at the local polytech. Both she and her parents recognised the importance of formal qualifications though each was concerned about the costs, another issue raised separately in the last section of this paper. A year later, she was accepted into the three-year nursing programme and was in her first year when interviewed.

Although she disliked school and left as soon as she turned fifteen, the final member in this sub-group had no real idea of what she would like to do in paid work. Because she could not collect the UEB at this age, she completed a couple of ACCESS courses in retailing and fruit packing. She considered these courses were mainly a way of passing the time though the skills learnt in the latter course proved useful when she spent some time working on an orchard during the subsequent season. She was unemployed for much of the remaining period, but did complete two further twelve week courses and worked for a couple of further seasons fruit picking. These courses were in metal work and woodwork. She found she had a talent for the latter and was offered some part-time work as a result of the course. However, as she was pregnant she could not take this offer up, and late into the survey period she moved onto the DPB. Since the offer of work was ongoing, she still hoped to make use of it in the future if she could organise suitable childcare.

Summary – School Leavers

Although we have only dealt with a small group in this discussion, their experiences have generated some patterns and themes that contribute to the issues faced by school leavers. These will be integrated into a larger summary with the patterns and themes that emerged out of the education and training experiences of others in the study, as explored in the next section. As is readily apparent from this discussion, the school leavers had a range of experiences. For those who undertook some form of study, this did not lead directly into paid work. Rather, they experienced periods of unemployment interspersed with casual, temporary or seasonal employment and often required some bridging programme or placement as an entree to settled, permanent work. On the other hand, those who went directly into paid work and never undertook any study or training were able to maintain fairly settled employment. Even when disrupted for periods by redundancy or childcare responsibilities, these people appeared to be quite resourceful at getting further work. The final group, who were either unemployed directly after leaving school or who undertook some skills training or work placement programme, had a mix of experiences. Unfortunately, their initial experiences often set the tone for what followed and many struggled to find and retain settled and secure employment.

(a)   Full Time Education and Training

Introduction

The focus now turns from a specific group – school leavers – to a broader review of people's education and training experiences. The types of experiences that are examined in this section are those outlined in the introduction, specifically

♦ study that is full-time
♦ skills training schemes that are full-time
♦ work experience or placement schemes

From the preceding discussion, we will recall that of the 21 school leavers, 16 were involved in one form or other of these types of education and training at some point in the ten-year period.[10] Two others were completing study they started as school leavers just prior to the study period. These cases are included in the initial part of this section so that a large-scale picture of the issue of education and training is created. Once the detailed experiences of people become the focus, the school leavers will be omitted, unless specifically mentioned, as their cases have already been examined in detail. They will be reintroduced to the discussion in the next section so that a broad basis is available from which to draw up a detailed summary of patterns and themes.

Thirty-six[11] people from our sample were involved in some form of education and training that this section is concerned with. This includes the 18 school leavers. The breakdown of gender and ethnicity of the other half of this group is presented in Table 9. Whilst most people had a single episode of study or training, some had more than one episode within a single area (such as attending two polytech courses). A small group had episodes involving two areas and one person had episodes that spanned all three. We have already examined the distribution of school leavers amongst the various types of courses and programmes, but what patterns of involvement in education and training did other people have?

Table 9: Distribution of Gender and Ethnicity of Non-School Leavers Involved in Education and Training			
	Maori	**Non-Maori**	**Total**
Male	15	35	50
Female	30	20	50
Total	45	55	100%

(i)   Tertiary Study

Eighteen people elected to go to polytech during the study period but only seven of these – three men and four women – were not considered in the above section on

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[10] Either directly after leaving school or some time later.
[11] As we shall see, some people were involved in more than one area making the sum of the totals for each group greater than this number.

school leavers.[12] Of the eighteen, five people did more than one course. Study was ongoing for six people while three had failed to complete their courses. In addition to those who did polytech courses, one man and three women completed university programmes. Two of the women were mentioned in the above section whilst the remaining pair completed their degrees as adults. As well, those who did tertiary study with state-run institutions, two people did training with private providers. One was a woman who completed a computing studies course and gained full-time employment as a result. The other programme was for security officer training and the man who was taking this was still completing it at the time he was interviewed. Of all those who undertook some form of tertiary education or training, just over 70% were women and just under 15% were Maori. The proportions of those participating as adults saw fewer women (54.5%) but more Maori (27%) involved.

Amongst the seven adults who did polytech programmes, nursing was the most popular course. One woman began studying to upgrade her qualifications – although she withdrew after about six months – and another three, including one man, took on the full nursing course. Of this group, one woman had already completed a six-month pre-nursing course at polytech and another went on, a little later, to do her midwifery training as well. The other courses taken related to orchard work and early childhood education. These courses were of 12 weeks and two years duration respectively. One person took on a number of courses. He had been seriously injured in an accident and did the courses as part of his rehabilitation and desire to retrain and get work. The ongoing effects of his injury hampered his ability to study and work. Despite this, he managed to study horticulture and business for a term, computing for two terms and electronics for a year.

In respect of university courses, aside from those already discussed, we have one woman who undertook and completed a four-year information technology degree within the ten-year period. Her case is looked at in more detail later. The other person completed a post-graduate qualification. Having originally trained and worked as a teacher, he had always intended to gain further qualifications. To this end, he had started his additional training prior to the study period and finished it early in that timeframe. He was married to the woman who had trained as a teacher and completed a degree in education. They both studied in Wellington and moved to Hawkes Bay when he obtained work there. Since qualifying, he had worked continuously in this profession and had reached a senior level.

(ii)   Skills Training

In the skills training programmes ten people were involved, with five not falling into the school leaver category. A couple of people did two programmes, and two individuals each did three and four different programmes across the ten-year period. Females and Maori made up 60% of the total group and the adult sub-group. The programmes lasted between eight weeks and six months and covered a range of areas. These included: carpentry, welding, arts and crafts, bar work, care giving in the community, business studies, computing, and a programme for women returning to the workforce. A welding scheme – the details of which were not entirely clear – seems to

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[12] Nine went to polytech straight after school and two others went at later stages.

have been a long running programme which the woman concerned stayed with for about a year and then rejoined for another year or so after the birth of her child.

(iii) *Work Experience and Placement*

Of the thirteen people who undertook some form of work experience or placement, six were not school leavers. Three people had two placements during the ten years. Women made up just over half of the total group but this drops to a third of the adults. Non-Maori account for around 40% of all people who had work placements and about one-third of adults. For those other than the school leavers who went into some form of work placement or experience, there was a range of jobs and work situations lasting between three and nine months. Four of them were, according to the interviews, part of the Task Force Green Programme. The two women in this group got office work. Three men worked at schools, one as a teacher aide, another as a sports co-ordinator and the third doing maintenance. The final person had two placements. He worked briefly with NZES in their office, and in a radiator repair business.

The Education and Training Experiences of Adults

Introduction

Just as was done with the group of school leavers, the adults' experiences of study and training are examined in more detail. The goals of this part of the analysis are the same as those articulated in the section on school leavers, but the organisation and presentation of this analysis is slightly different. In this instance, cases are grouped according to episodes – that is the frequency with which they utilised education and training opportunities regardless of type. The twelve cases where people had only one episode of education or training can be further subdivided according to their employment status at the time, allowing them to be presented as two sets: one of nine people who were unemployed and one of three people in other circumstances. Following these sections, the experiences of the small group of people who had more than one episode are examined.

The division according to employment status is not entirely arbitrary. Unemployment was a significant determinant in education and training though, interestingly, people in these circumstances took a narrow range of courses or programmes. Just over 56% of those who were unemployed at any time engaged in some form of substantive education and training. All but two of these people were involved in work placements or skills training programmes,[13] specifically for the unemployed. If a broader definition of unemployment is adopted, one not based just on receipt of the UEB, then just over two-thirds of all episodes of training and education were associated with, or prompted by, unemployment. Of these, only 11% were not skills training or work placements. Some explanation for this skewed distribution is offered later in the section on the inequity in education and training.

(i)   Single Episodes of Education and Training

Of the nine people who were unemployed when they engaged in some form of education or training, two people – a man and a woman – were not receiving any benefits as their spouses were employed. Both had been made redundant. The woman took on a general studies and computing course for twelve weeks soon after this happened but she did not look for work once this ended as she was soon to have a baby. The man initially did some casual work for his son and considered buying his own business. However, a security company offered him training so that he could eventually work with the Pacific Island community. This training was ongoing at the end of the survey period. It seems fairly likely he will go on to engage in this type of work given his commitments and motivations, particularly since he recognised that his age was now an important factor and he was unlikely to get back into the meat processing industry.

Of the others, all of whom were receiving some form of welfare, one was on ACC as the result of a work related back injury. He took the opportunity as his recovery progressed to complete a twelve-week course at polytech in orchard skills. Whilst his background was in farming and fencing, he hoped that this course would lead to work

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[13] Typically of the ACCESS genre.

that he could manage given his injury. A few months after the course, he got part-time employment in an orchard and was pleased with the work and his progress. He was still receiving ACC payments as a supplement to his wages, but hoped to be able to increase his hours in the near future.

The remaining people were all receiving the unemployment benefit when they engaged in some form of education or training, though the length that each had been unemployed varied. The longest period was nearly ten years in total. It came about after this man was made redundant when the Whakatu meatworks closed. He had trouble finding work and decided to commit himself to looking after his family and doing voluntary work in the community. It was through one aspect of this voluntary work, his teacher aiding, that he got six months paid employment at a school assisting a child who needed additional care.

> During my time off I was sending time with the schools, with the sports teams with the Maori culture groups and the principals were impressed, I suppose, with my skills. This principal at this particular school had heard from another principal that I was working with over here. They had a boy who needed one-on-one attention and so I was referred to that job from principal to principal and that is how I ended up with that job.

Although he had productively filled his time out of paid work, this placement – after more than nine years out of work – seemed to be a watershed and he subsequently decided to actively seek out paid work. His children were also partly behind this decision.

> To be honest, a lot of nagging from the kids – why haven't you got a job dad, why haven't you got a job. ... They see their father as a, not so much a no-hoper, but one who can do something but is not doing anything.

It was also the result of his own personal reflection,

> I have seen a lot of my friends who have been working since they left school and materially are doing very well for themselves, they have got their own houses their own vehicles. I'm 35 years old now and I am still renting a house ... to that extent I suppose I am missing out on a lot of material things by being long term unemployed.

After a few more months of unemployment, he managed to get a full-time voluntary position at a local Kohanga Reo. This was the result of various factors: his diverse voluntary work; his involvement with the local marae and having learnt Te Reo whilst out of work; and his connections to the Kohanga through his youngest son's attendance. This soon turned into full-time paid employment for he and his wife.

For three other people, their periods of unemployment were shorter than the above case. Each had been in some form of paid employment for periods prior to this. The only woman had worked mainly in the hospitality industry, moving from front line to management roles. She stopped to spend more time with her children.[14] As a single parent she had struggled with balancing paid and unpaid responsibilities. After a time at home with her children, she felt ready to get back into some paid work and was able

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[14] This woman was in the unusual position of being a single parent on the unemployment benefit. This came about as her estranged husband was also looking after some of their children. Regulations prevent two parents being on the DPB. As he was already on this benefit, she was put on the unemployment benefit.

to get an office work placement with the Police. She was keen that any work be flexible enough to suit her children's needs, rather than the reverse that had often been the case in the past. This placement proved ideal. Being pregnant, she didn't return to paid work at the end of the scheme but the offer of casual work with the Police remained as a result of her success on the placement.

One of the two men was able to get a work placement as a sports co-ordinator at his children's school. This work was very welcome as he had struggled with being unemployed after being made redundant from the meat industry. The placement was partly the result of his voluntary involvement with the school whilst unemployed. It did not lead on to any related paid employment but he got full-time work immediately after the placement ended as a wool scourer, a job he had held many years ago.

The other man was a carpenter who again had been made redundant twice. After just over a year of being out of work the second time, he was required to undertake a work placement as part of the conditions for receiving the benefit. His wife explains,

> It was part of the unemployment scheme...because he had been on the dole for so long. It was either he did something that they gave him or his money would be cut. …It was community work because he had been on the dole for so long that he had to work to earn it which I think is brilliant. He had to otherwise his dole would stop. I think that should be part and parcel anyway, if you get the unemployed benefit I think you should have to work for it. ...[My husband] did agree with it.

Though he remained unemployed for a further nine months at the end of the three months that he did school maintenance, in the long run this placement did lead onto paid employment. The work he did and the reputation he built up during this time eventually opened up a couple of opportunities in schools, firstly doing maintenance and then later cleaning as well. He worked these two jobs for four years before getting a full-time caretaking position in a school. During this time, his wages were supplemented by an abated benefit and other entitlements. His wife describes the process by which he got and built up work,

> Being a builder he went out to a private school where he was on maintenance, and then through [that] school he got his feelers out and [another] school got to hear that he was [there] and [yet another school] got to hear that he was [there], because being schools everyone gets to talk among themselves. ...The principals going out to schools could see the difference in what [he] had done.

All three of these work placements were, according to those involved, related to the Task Force Green Programme.

Recognising the negative effects that unemployment can have, one man who was just completing a period of seasonal work arranged to go onto a carpentry skills course. This opportunity came up soon after he had finished work and was again unemployed.

> I was getting bored. I'd previously worked in Australia on building sites so the course wasn't nothing new to me, but it sort of got me away. Got me out of the house and doing something.

Unfortunately, this course did not lead to any paid work but, as he noted above, it did have some benefits. He was to do no further education and training despite the efforts

of NZES to get him into training programmes. He had strong views about these efforts:

> Like they called me into the Labour Dept one day and said, 'You've been unemployed for 26 weeks, you've got to take this'. And I said, 'Oh, what is it?' And he says, 'Chainsaw and lawnmowing mechanic'. I said, 'Can you guarantee me a job after the course?'. He says, 'No'. 'Well', I said, 'I don't want it'. If it's something I don't want to do, I'd rather train for something that I like doing than train for something to get a job and then not be happy in that job.

His attitude highlights a frequent complaint about courses. One of the school leavers expressed similar sentiments. This man ended up settling into a cyclical pattern of being on the unemployment benefit combined with periods of seasonal work each year. His wife also did this type of work when it was available. This cyclical pattern of being on the unemployment benefit interspersed with periods of seasonal work was adopted by a number of people in the study.

The final person with only a single exposure to some form of study or training and who was receiving the unemployment benefit was also doing some part-time work. This was while he waited to start a three-year nursing programme at polytech that was part of a very deliberate and long-term plan undertaken by he and his wife. Although he trained in the telecommunications industry after leaving school, this man had only worked in this area for a short time. Once he had shifted from Auckland to a provincial city to be with his future wife, he was never able to get employment in this sector. Instead he took on a temporary position as a nurse aid. However, both he and his wife felt that he could not do this forever and considered that he would need to retrain. Since they also both disliked the region they were in, they decided to relocate. All this was quite a challenge as they had two small children. As a first step in the process of retraining, he had to decide which direction to take. The choice of nursing was one of many but seemed to reflect a long held interest. Sometimes, though, following such interests at certain times is not possible.

> We were talking the other day and two of my, things I really wanted to do when I was 15,16 or 18 was to be a nurse and one was to work on the telephones. And I guess I actually applied to go nursing when I was 18, but there was the social stigma attached to male nurses at that stage, only sort of queers and really odd people or guys went nursing ...That was 22 years ago.

Taking on such a significant programme of study later in life creates special demands, such as being able to cope financially during a period of not working, balancing various responsibilities, and keeping up an involvement with family life. Though this couple initially struggled to get the right information about their entitlements, once these were sorted out they seemed able to manage financially. Initially, the husband also continued with the part-time work he'd had before starting his course. However, combined with study this meant a demanding lifestyle for few extra benefits.

> I was going to polytech, I was coming home and going straight off to McDonald's [to work] and I wasn't spending a lot of time at home and I thought for the amount of money I was getting it was just not worth keeping on doing it ...[it] wasn't worth all the stress and pressure.

Consequently he gave this job up. After three hard years, he completed his course and registered as a comprehensive nurse.

Rather than now being able to reap the rewards of all this effort and sacrifice, this signalled the beginning of the couple's second period of challenge. It also illustrates the often tenuous connections between education and training and getting work. The husband explained the peculiarities of nursing training and employment,

> Nursing kind of does business like this, and at one time there is nurses to burn and another time you simply cannot find a nurse.

Unfortunately, there were "nurses to burn" when he registered and despite all the sacrifice and hardship, he was unable to find a nursing position. This couple seem remarkably resilient, however. For a short time after graduating, he remained unemployed but then got part-time work in the hospital as a phlebotomist. This was part of his plan to stay around the hospital in order to improve his chances of knowing about any jobs that became available and to maintain his profile within the organisation.

> I realised that the only way to get employment was to be in these people's faces the whole time and they said that, that the people who will get the jobs are the ones who crowd us out and will not take no for an answer and I realised that in my position, I was 35 at that stage, probably a bit older and I just had to push hard to get a job.

This paid off, to a degree, because after about three months he was able to get on the casual nursing pool. This team of nurses work where and when required to fill gaps on the wards. It wasn't ideal but it was an important step forward. This is particularly so for new nurses who must get work soon after registering if they are to develop and maintain their skills and gain experience – two vital ingredients for getting and keeping jobs. The work and income was still very uncertain despite getting onto the pool list. It demanded a lot of effort and persistence to maintain steady work. As is often the case with casual work, whilst you may be required to work anywhere at anytime, when a permanent position becomes available somewhere, suddenly you are not qualified or experienced enough to be considered. Such was the situation for this man and throughout the year that he was employed casually, he applied for many jobs but without success.

> I got down to applying for every job that came along and that was the first job I got. ...I think I did put in about 30 job applications in that first year. I think I only got two interviews. ...You know when they are really hard up for staff, like they were short and they were busy they were quite happy for you to work there as a casual, but when it actually came down to making a commitment to employing you they weren't interested.

Finally, about 16 months after graduating, he found a full-time permanent position working as a staff nurse in the special care baby unit of the hospital. There he encountered some adverse reactions from other nurses to having a man working in this particular area. Such gender-related aspects of work are explored in a subsequent part of the report.[15] Despite this resistance to his employment, he was still working in this unit when interviewed.

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[15] See the material in the *Gendered Nature of Paid Work* section of the report on Unpaid Work and Paid Work (Shirley et al, 2001b).

Apart from those who were unemployed, others also had single episodes of education and training. For the only person to move directly from full-time paid employment to one episode of training and education, nursing training was again the focus. Apart from a couple of years overseas, this woman had worked as an enrolled nurse[16] for most of the survey period. She decided near the end of this time to upgrade her training to a full registration. Polytechs offer a two year accelerated programme for enrolled nurses to do this upgrade. She described the ambivalence that surrounded her decision,

> I'd never really wanted to do it but I've always kind of wanted a bit more knowledge behind what I was doing and it just seemed to be a wise thing to do. Enrolled nurses are going to be a thing of the past in a few years and if I wanted to continue in nursing, which I decided I might as well – I was a bit unsure about it – but I thought I might as well do polytech training because I really wanted to get out of shift work in hospital type nursing and if I had my registered comprehensive ticket I'd be able to get a community job which is where I really want to work, but as an enrolled nurse I'm not really qualified to.

As it turned out, she quit the course after about six months. In deciding that she no longer wanted to nurse, she was faced with other problems – what to do and how best to get the necessary skills and qualifications.

> Though I did well I couldn't stand the nursing paper. I thought it was a load of rubbish. Loved the science papers. I actually did really well and did good marks but for me it was too stressful. ...I just wasn't coping with it to think of the whole year ahead of me. ...I really decided well nursing's not really me anymore. There's too many cons against it for me. I don't really enjoy it. I enjoy it on an individual basis but I can't stand the system. ...I might as well look for something else. Problem being, of course, I'm not qualified to do anything else.

As she looked for different work, she remained working casually as a nurse, something she had also done whilst at polytech. She eventually found some clerical-cum-stores work. This, she believed, would give her valuable experience as she hoped to get more office orientated work in the future. It was very quickly apparent, however, that in addition to experience, she would also need to build up her skills and this might require additional training. Having made the decision to change her career, she was committed to getting the skills and training she needed as well.

> If I'm going to do it I may as well have the ticket to prove it, yes. Otherwise ... again you've got nothing to show for it and that seems to be what's important in the job market these days.

The final two people with just one episode of education and training were two women who undertook this whilst caring for their children. Unemployment did have a part in one woman's decision. However, it was her husband's redundancy, not her own, that prompted her actions.

> [The freezing works] closed down so he decided to stay home and I decided to pick up where I left off when I had the boys. ...I always wanted to do something with computers and when I had [the children] I would only

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[16] An enrolled nurse is a level under a registered nurse. They received 18 months to two years training in hospital-based programmes. They are no longer trained. There is encouragement for people with this qualification to upgrade to a full nursing qualification/registration.

> go to work seasonal, picking apples. Then he was willing to stay home and he had always worked so we changed roles and I went off and did that computer course and went on from there.

A private training provider ran this course. It was to prove a crucial factor in relation to getting jobs at various points of her working life. Through it, she was offered work that started immediately on completion of the six-month programme. She stayed at this job for eighteen months until the family relocated to Australia to live for six years. Whilst there, she had much less trouble finding work than her husband and held a single job for virtually the entire time they were away. Similarly, she also readily found employment upon their return to New Zealand and was able to get a series of jobs that suited her other commitments. She hoped to start her own secretarial business at some point. She believed, as her own experience showed, that some form of training is important – an idea she tried to impart to her children,

> I think you have to be more multi-skilled or qualified. It is not like you can leave school and go to the works, you need qualifications.

As this case so neatly illustrates, what happens to one party can have major consequences for others and many women's choices were, it often seemed, shaped by the actions of their partners. This next woman had been employed full-time but gave this work up to relocate with her husband. He had been made redundant but was quickly offered another job. This was in another region of the country, however. In recognising the importance for her husband of taking this opportunity, it also allowed her to consider her own future.

> [My husband] was made redundant and when that happened I made the decision that I had to be in a position that if it ever happened again I was able to pick up the pieces and earn the equivalent of his. It was a terrible time, very, very uncertain and neither of us wanted to be in that situation again.

She was happy to use the break as an excuse to give up paid work and spend time with their young daughter. However, with the above thoughts in the back of her mind and the lure and convenience of a university in the city they settled in, she changed her mind. Having worked in the information technology field prior to relocating, she saw an opportunity to enhance her qualifications and so undertook a four-year degree in this area. Childcare, as with so many women, was an important and difficult issue in this case. Consequently, she tailored her degree around her daughter's needs.

> I had two terms before she started school and my degree was a nine to three degree, all the papers I did had to occur between nine in the morning and three in the afternoon. Anything I did that was outside kindergarten hours I actually tried using the University crèche but she was not happy there. I actually had a lady come into the home on a Monday afternoon and look after her there. As I say, anything outside of kindergarten hours occurred on a Monday and I covered it in one day. ...That certainly had an impact on the papers I did. The problem was compounded for me in that [my husband] was away over night regularly so I wasn't able to count on him being around for childcare.

Her husband travelled a lot, which added to the demands on her. Even when he was home, he chose to work a part-time job in order to ease any monetary pressures on her whilst she studied and looked after their child. As a family, they appeared to cope and the woman completed her degree. With this and her previous experience in the

industry, she quickly found a senior position within the public sector. This was in another region as both she and her husband had planned to resettle there. However, he was unexpectedly transferred elsewhere and they spent a year apart. She gave up full-time work to reunite with her husband and be more available for her daughter. Her degree helped her get part-time work in libraries. Once they had finally both resettled in their hometown, she got full-time work in a school library, which she kept up till the birth of their second child.

To complete this section, it should be noted that three other people fall into this category. Each had begun their university studies prior to the start of the research period and completed them early in this timeframe. They are the two women who had gone directly from school to university – one to do social work and the other who completed a conjoint degree and teaching diploma. The third person was this second woman's husband who had taught for a time and then completed a post-graduate qualification at university. As each has been discussed in a little more detail in the section on tertiary study, no further discussion of their cases will be undertaken here.

(ii) *Multiple Experiences of Education and Training*

A small number of people had more than one episode of education and training during the ten-year period. There is the case of the woman who was on a welding training programme, who had time away to give birth to a baby, and then returned to the course. The exact nature of this course is not clear. It seemed to last for many years and involved her husband as well as others. His attendance also seemed periodic. Another woman who had been an enrolled nurse for a number of years decided to go to polytech and gain her full nursing qualification. Whilst the Crown Health Enterprise (CHE) she worked for was encouraging enrolled nurses to do this training, this woman also had more personal motivations. In particular, she wanted to be able to work with her people in community health and so needed additional qualifications.

> I had a burning desire to particularly work with Maori because we have so few Maori health professionals and would like to work out in the community. ...I thought if I wanted to do something out in the community I needed to perhaps get some more qualifications.

This desire was based on some fundamental beliefs about Maori in contemporary society in this country. They are reported here to illustrate the diversity of reasons and motivations that lie behind studying or training.

> I feel people have different cultures and I believe we express things differently and we have different values and beliefs and things like that. So I feel we have had a pretty dominant culture really in regards to who has the power, who makes the rules. ...and for me as a Maori, there is no Maori input into a lot of things. ...and when you start suggesting these things you are almost regarded as being racist. Because it has never been introduced into the system. We have always had one system and it hasn't always catered for everyone.

It was after she and her husband separated that she started the course. Initially, her three children lived with their father. Whilst this may have eliminated issues related to childcare, she struggled with finances during that first year.

> I had a little bit of money saved up and I actually got some support from friends of mine and then student allowance, so I lived on $36 a week and the support of some very good friends whom took me in ... [my husband] had the children for that first year.

At the end of this year her children wanted to come and live with her and, after a legal battle, she was able to return to the family home and take custody of the children. This also allowed her to receive the DPB, a much more generous and supportive benefit in respect of training, an issue that will be discussed shortly.

Having the children brought its own set of challenges when combined with the demands of studying. She acknowledged that she seldom spent a lot of time with them and recognised the necessary contribution they made to the running of the household. Similarly, she was grateful that despite this situation her children coped well. Part of her motivation lay, not only in her wider social goals, but also in achieving a better lifestyle for her and her family.

> The kids really had to bring themselves up I suppose. I didn't really participate in many of their activities because I was too busy studying. So as far as quality time with the kids, that was a really difficult time for them, but I think they coped really well. They tried to keep out of trouble as much as they could. And it was a struggle because we didn't have any extra money coming in ... you sort of lived from pay day to pay. ...They were good because they had responsibilities and they took on those like preparing vegetables and that sort of thing. Of course they had their own activities to go to and they had to find their own way there basically because I needed to study, because I thought I've got to get through this for your sakes, because in time I will be able to achieve your goals as well.

After completing her training, she quickly found work in a general practice. There were no jobs in her area of interest, public health, at that time but this position was set up with a cultural component. Although initially only part-time, it soon expanded into full-time. After about three years, she became the co-ordinator of a cervical screening programme for Maori. She kept this post for nearly three and a half years before feeling the need to move on. Again this was driven by her desire to be doing something more or different with her people. A likely new direction arose unexpectedly when her daughter gave birth.

> During my own births, GPs were the only choices ... [but] when my daughter had her baby I wanted to know about the choices women had and I came across the Independent Midwives Practice ... I liked the way they practice and I thought it was time for a change as well and as I watched I thought perhaps midwifery was what I would like to do.

It was indeed what she decided to do. Being in a new relationship, with a very supportive partner, and with her children now adults and away from home, she felt much more comfortable taking on this one year programme. As no course was available in her district, she originally planned to go to the Waikato to train. However, the local CHE organised a course that was based in the Hawkes Bay with short academic blocks in Wellington. After completing the programme, the CHE then offered her employment. She took up this offer and was working as a hospital midwife when interviewed, building up her experience and considering how best to use her skills to fulfil her goals for Maori. Given her strong commitment to her people and her substantial involvement in tertiary education, it was not surprising to learn that she

was also involved in trying to improve access for Maori so they can be represented in larger numbers in the health professions.

Work skills style training was utilised by a number of people. One woman, who was single, took three such courses after becoming unemployed through the closure of the business she had worked for. This was about half way through the ten year period and came after a fairly stable work history as a machinist. As she had received some redundancy pay, she was required to stand down before she could claim the unemployment benefit though she could still register as unemployed and take up the opportunity to do training courses. Having experienced the uncertainty of machining in a rapidly changing industry – she had been made redundant once before – and feeling as though she had been betrayed by her previous employer she was keen to move out of this work and retrain. She was, however, unsure what she wanted to do. A range of ACCESS courses offered her an opportunity to try some areas of interest. They also offered some tangible way to try and cope with the trauma she experienced at being unemployed.

> It kicked me, it knocked me over for a six, eh? ... I'd never been fired before ... that was a real kick ... It took a lot of effort [to go to the course] – for the first couple of weeks I was late every day. I'd be plodding, and all it was straight down and across the field and down the road, only about a fifteen/twenty minute walk, I still used to be late. ...I actually went through depression and I thought I'd better hurry up and do something about it so that's why I went straight on the course. It was more for self esteem. I had no idea what I wanted to do I just knew I didn't want to go back into a sewing factory ... I thought "Oh no, I can't pass anything, I never was any good at school" ... It was just really good. I ended up top of the class. I started at the bottom of the class and ended up at the top.

She immediately took two eight-week courses in bar tending and business skills. Although they helped her overcome the crippling effects that the redundancy had had on her, and helped rebuild her self-esteem and occupy her time, neither was really what she was seeking. The Employment Service (NZES), on the other hand, felt she should simply return to machinist work and actually referred her back to the employer that had made her redundant! They were less inclined to see her retrain as they felt, despite her feelings and misgivings, that she had a viable trade to return to.

> The only jobs the Employment Service were offering me was the same job that I got laid off from and they tried to force me to go for an interview there ... they offered me that job about three times.

It was only luck, then, that saw her get on the third training course after about a year of being unemployed.

> I actually just arrived one day at the Employment Service and they were just about to start a new course on that [Caring and the Community] and I saw it on the board. And that's how I found out about that course ... [NZES] never told me about that course.

Part of this Caring in the Community Course involved childcare. Through her work experience as part of this programme, she was able to get some casual work in a childcare facility. She had always been very keen on working with children and after a further eighteen months of not being able to get work, aside from the casual employment just mentioned, she decided to go to polytech and undertake a two year course in childcare. Whilst they hadn't lead to full-time work, the training courses she

had done had not only given her skills but had also opened up a previously unforeseen possibility – that she could consider more intensive study in order to retrain.

> Oh I never really thought I could go back and re-educate myself and do what I'm good at, which I know I always known I'd be good at doing, but I never thought that there was an opportunity for me to re-educate myself 'cause I left school as soon as I proved to dad that I couldn't pass School C.

She was at the beginning of the second year at the time of interview. Despite her beliefs that this would lead to settled and secure long-term employment, NZES were unconvinced. They continuously tried to place her in work and she reported on-going battles with NZES in order to finish her course. Given that it is the fulfilment of a long held dream, one she hadn't really taken seriously for so many years, it seems unlikely that she will give in.

Two other people were frequently involved in education and training. One man displayed an enviable desire to get paid employment despite a severe head injury he sustained prior to the survey period and for which he was receiving ACC. Indeed at the start of the ten-year period, he was in full-time paid employment, but in mid-1986 he was made redundant when the business closed. For the next four years, whilst unable to get paid employment, he took a host of courses. At polytech he studied horticulture (1 term), computing (2 terms), business studies (1 term), and electronics (1 year). Through other agencies, he did self-employment and small business courses. Unfortunately his studies were punctuated by periods of hospitalisation and incapacity as a result of his earlier injuries. Each course, he hoped, would provide him with skills and training to get work that he could cope with given the long-term effects he still suffered. They also gave him a focus and some structure to his days. As well, they provided some much needed time out of the house for both he and his wife.

> If we spent too much time together we got on each other's nerves but we gave some breathing space to each other for a time.

Later in the study period, she would also be coping with two young children.

After doing all these courses, this man did manage to get a short six-week work placement at NZES working on the "job board". Although no permanent paid work resulted, he persisted with his efforts and willingly took on voluntary work in the local library and community centre. He got another work placement through ACC, this time for three months in a radiator repair business. Like many of the other people who had such placements, no permanent work resulted from this. However, at the insistence of his wife, he approached the manager and was able to negotiate to work there without pay on a regular basis. Whilst this may sound exploitative, the value for this man – and his wife – was immeasurable.

> I was turning into a vegetable basically. I couldn't do anything and this guy said come down and do what you can. ...I wanted to be alive. I didn't want to be an object anymore.

His wife added:

> It might not be financial payment but he is paid socially – it has done heaps for him, the fact that he is doing some thing useful, it is worth more than money.

The business he worked for were proud of what they were able to do for him and appeared to care a great deal about his welfare.

> They love it … they are very concerned about me, it is a very family sort of place. If I get frustrated with a job they say – go have a coffee, do something else and they take over. I am not being paid and because of that there is no pressure to perform.

Thus, the unusual outcome of this work training placement was critical to the well being of this individual and his family.

The other case we will examine also featured numerous educational and training opportunities. At the start of the survey period, this single woman was unemployed and doing a six month arts and crafts skills training programme. She reported that her motivation to do this course was simply that attending it was required.

> If you were on the unemployment benefit at the time and its still the same now, if you didn't go on that course, you were told you couldn't get that benefit.

After some complaints about the facilities on this course, it closed prematurely. The failures and shortcomings of such courses is an issue addressed elsewhere. Given that she was pregnant and not intending to work after the programme her attitude is not surprising. She went onto the sickness benefit[17] and then the DPB after the birth of her child. Apart from a period when the child's father lived with them and supported the family, this woman remained on the DPB for the remainder of the survey period. Once her daughter went to school, however, she began to consider returning to the workforce and what her options might be. An advertisement in the paper for a programme to help women in her circumstances seemed ideal.

> The purpose of it was ... to get women who had been out of the workforce and had children ... [plus] women looking at looking past the normal jobs women associate themselves with.

She was lucky to get accepted for this course given the regulations that governed them.

> I went down to see them [NZES] and asked them if I could enrol for this. They said well you can register. I went in March and they said if you go now, he said, you have to register with them for 6 months, so they can get more points and they can get more funding, for people that have been unemployed for 6 months or 6 months onwards. But for ones that hadn't been registered with them, that meant they wouldn't get as much funding for people like me, than for others. But they said I could still enrol and the woman would get back in touch with me. So I went up to see her and had a talk, and she did explain to me that I hadn't been registered for a long time but she would take me on.

Although she did not get work directly from this course, she found it a useful place to start.

> They taught us self awareness, self esteem, building confidence, looking into employment properly ... From that we did things like auto mechanics ...Another tutor she took us to the funeral parlour, and we had a look in

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[17] Regulations structure the benefit system so that the final stages of a pregnancy are covered by a sickness benefit which becomes the DPB once the child is born.

> there. And he was telling us the facts about it and that there were not many women who did it.

The people who ran this course did take the time after it ended to check with participants every three months to see how their search for work was going. After this, the woman immediately took on another skills training programme, this time in office work. Again she found this programme to be poor in terms of facilities, staff and content. It seems too, that she wasn't sure that office work was really where her interests lay. For the next couple of years. she did not do any training, opting to pick fruit each season. However, she was still keen to equip herself to get more meaningful work and another newspaper advertisement caught her eye. This time it was for a six-month pre-nursing course at the local polytech which she was accepted for and completed. As a result, she declared,

> I finally found something I wanted to do. And now in '96 I am a student nurse.

It wasn't all easy going however,

> It was really hard. They supported us well our tutors. ...It was hard because no-one really knew what real study was and when we started on the foundations but started really slow so we were sort of cruising but it was after the first holidays and they said we had to write two essays ... and everybody was sort of, what is happening.

The pre-nursing course had been set up as many people were taking on nursing with little idea what it was about and what the training would demand of them. Interestingly, it also provided valuable support for mature students undertaking the programme. This group often struggled with the return to study after a long absence.

> Out of the 19 there [on the foundation course] there were four young ones just out of school but the rest were adult students. The longest one had been out of school for 30 years. ...[another] student, she was a nurse in 1966 but she decided to give it up because she wanted a family and so she has just started to come back now in 1995.

As was noted in the case of the man who did nursing training, undertaking study at this stage in people's lives can be extremely difficult, demanding and daunting. Systems and programmes, such as this, go some way to support more mature people to consider and succeed at some form of training.

Once again, the type of benefit this woman was on was critical. She was able to undertake this programme, in part, because of the favourable approach to such training that is associated with the DPB. Despite these benefits, she still faced the considerable challenge of being a single parent on top of her study.

> [My daughter] goes to school and our timetable is sorted, the only day I have to leave before her is Monday and other than that we work it out.

Working it out means relying on a network of friends to care for her daughter at times when she is not able to. With clinical placements during the day (starting quite early in the mornings) and evenings, the challenges for working it out could only increase. Despite these obstacles and having had five episodes of education and training in a ten-year period, it seemed she had finally found something she was both extremely interested in and committed to. This was undoubtedly an exciting outcome, especially

since she related many of her problems back to the attitude of her school guidance counsellor who considered she would only ever be able to do low-skill manual work.

Summarising the Experiences of School Leavers and Adults

Drawing on these people's experiences with education and training and combining them with those of the school leavers, what collective outcomes can we discern? A general impression, in respect of all forms of training and education, is that adults' engagement with some form of this seemed most often associated with unemployment or plans to return to the workforce. At a specific level, we begin with those who took polytech, university or privately run courses. All four university graduates completed their studies and each found work quite easily. Their courses were quite specific and applied degrees. Of those who completed polytech or similar courses, the school leavers found it difficult to get employment soon after. The smaller group of adults appeared to fare a little better. One woman was able to immediately get work at the end of each of her two substantial courses. The others often struggled a little or took a less direct route to get work in, or related to, their field of study but all managed it, except for one. The exception was the man with a head injury who was involved in a variety of study and training. Certainly none of the adults needed time on a work placement scheme, as some of the school leavers did, in order to transition to paid work. The former seemed to take on tertiary study as a deliberate and planned step in changing careers or preparing themselves for future employment. Even if this came after periods of welfare, unsettled employment or unemployment, this type of undertaking had a proactive sense to it. This was in contrast to the reactive nature that engaging in skills programmes and work placement schemes often seemed to have.

For those people who undertook skills training courses, the outcomes were uniformly poor whether the person was a school leaver or an adult. These courses did not lead directly on to settled, secure and related paid work. One school leaver was able to immediately get a job after the premature end of the course he was involved in, but this was entirely unrelated to the course and was though family contacts. Three women had babies around the end of their courses. For the majority, paid work after taking these courses was a matter of occasional or regular seasonal work. Some went on eventually to take up work placements or undertake study. Some complaints were made regarding the quality of people and content associated with these programmes; similar though less serious problems and reservations were also expressed about the quality of some work placements and experience programmes. These issues are addressed in more detail shortly. All the participants appeared to complete the courses despite these issues.

The third substantive form of education and training was work experience placements. As already mentioned, for three school leavers who went to polytech first, these were valuable bridges to paid work. Two women had babies around the end of their placements. A couple of adults went on to study after completing such schemes. For the others, both school leavers and adults, these placements seem to have been a little more positively associated with helping people into paid work than the training schemes. However, for some there were delays in the availability of any subsequent work and the links to that work were often tenuous with only two finding work that was in any way related to the placements they had done. Of course it must be

recognised that any such placements and programmes may have benefits over and above providing immediate and identical employment.

Finally, it is necessary to reflect on those people who had a combination of education and training experiences. As has been shown, some people took more than one course, sometimes moving between training schemes and placements over time. More courses did not necessarily equate to employment but it seemed to offer these people opportunities to gain skills and test their compatibility with certain types of work. It also helped some to see the need for further training and to identify specific programmes of interest. In this way, four people were to eventually move into polytech courses. Given that paid work seemed to eventually be a more common outcome for people who at some point undertook tertiary study, this can be seen as a positive outcome of an often long and drawn out process for some of those in this category.

(b)   Part Time Education and Training

This section looks at other education and training that was undertaken by people but did not occupy them full-time. It generally ran concurrently with but secondary to a person's primary responsibilities in the unpaid or paid spheres. Integrating the two could still be challenging and each could impact on the other. The courses discussed here were often of a short duration or, if they covered a long period of time – such as a year, for example – the actual attendance or commitment was more limited. They were sometimes components of a larger qualification. Occasionally it was study undertaken for interest rather than a specific purpose. Given that it was a feature of nineteen people's profiles at some point, this type of education and training is still important to consider in the context of this wider discussion as, amongst other outcomes, it played a role in equipping people with particular knowledge and skills. These, in turn, could be influential in transitions related to employment.

Fourteen women and five men undertook training that fitted into this category. They took courses at polytech and night school, studied university papers extramurally, or did courses through a range of other providers. People could be occupied for just a day at these courses, or across weeks, months, terms and semesters. If individual courses formed part of a larger programme, the study could be protracted across years and ongoing. Attendance encompassed anything from a few hours on one day or evening, through to whole days at a time or, as in the case of extramural students, a regular commitment of time regardless of venue.

Four people took a range of courses purely for interest. One single parent studied human development and small business skills[18] through a local organisation, while a retired woman studied spirituality. Two men learnt Maori as a result of personal interest. However, as is often the case, this extra skill helped one of these men get voluntary and then paid employment at a Kohanga Reo. The background to this transition was discussed in more detail earlier.

> I went to polytech to learn the Maori language. I didn't basically learn it to
> get a job, I learned it because it was another skill I could add to my self. It
> became quite beneficial obviously [later].

Two men did night school courses to get formal school qualifications that they had missed out on years before. Although it would be many years before he would eventually get to polytech in order to retrain, one of them completed 6th Form Certificate and then, a couple of years later, UE English with just this goal in mind. The other man had no specific reason for this study, but he too was considering the future. A high level of training within his workplace, which he had enjoyed and succeeded at, had stimulated this decision. He eventually decided to do no further formal study or training.

The link between their education and training endeavours and paid work was particularly strong for the remainder of these people. As we shall see in the cases that follow, they undertook courses as either a requirement of their present work or to

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[18] Though this programme was obviously intended as more than a personal interest style course, this woman approached it in this way as she was not ready to commit to paid work in any form. She felt her daughter was still too young.

enhance their skills for their current job. Alternatively, others completed courses in preparation for future employment. Such motives for studying or training will be apparent as the discussion progresses. Whilst examples of the latter circumstances will be presented shortly, some brief examples of the former can be readily identified. One woman was studying extramurally as a necessary component of her part-time work as a university tutor. In another instance, a woman was required to undertake a university degree in order to get a formal social work qualification. Her employer funded this. She was doing three papers extramurally per year on top of a busy work schedule and many voluntary commitments. Also in the public service, one man completed both a business diploma and MBA as part of his promotion efforts. He and his family accepted a great deal of disruption to their lives through a number of relocations in order to augment these efforts. Again, his employer was financially supportive and provided time off as necessary. The less than satisfactory outcome of his endeavours have been detailed earlier.

Changes in technology prompted a number of people to take up some form of training and computer courses were particularly popular. Having purchased a computer system and started her own secretarial services business, one woman felt the need to take on some training to update her skills. A computer course was also taken by another woman in order to help her with the job she had in an accountant's office. The results of doing such courses could be significant, as her comments illustrate.

> There is no doubt about it that both of them have made a difference in that I am a little bit more confident. If I get into the other computers and into the Windows programme now I just buzz around and look for what I want, whereas before I was too frightened to, it just gives you a little more confidence. When this new system comes it will be Windows driven so I have already got those skills.

Another woman also talked about the confidence that doing some computer training gave her in the technologically dominated workplace. As well, she recognised that a lack of skills might have been hampering her getting particular jobs and that her decision to stay home and rear children may have had a part to play in being out of touch with advances in office equipment.

> I was behind the modern technology, it took me ages, that is why I took the house cleaning because there were heaps of applicants [for office jobs] and I found I was being beaten and I think it was because of the computer so I actually did a course on the computer. ...I had actually started working in an office a couple of hours a week and it helped me to get confidence in the computer and in my job I had to use that.

In some cases, it was a combination of factors that motivated people's involvement. Take the example of another women who did some computer training. She felt it would benefit not only her paid work, but also would help her in her unpaid role doing the books for her husband's business. Then there was the teacher who, in taking an extramural paper each year, acknowledged that this was beneficial for her work but who also felt obliged to be doing some form of education and training. Whilst another woman was personally motivated to complete a course in supervisory management and to do a couple of extramural university papers she saw a dual purpose for them. They would certainly help her in her extensive and senior voluntary role within a local

organisation and, she hoped, they would be of benefit in getting paid employment at some later stage.

> I suppose I had really enjoyed being in business, I really like that sort of job, I loved it and I thought I had to get some skills to get back into the workforce because everything has changed so much these days... It was basically out of just pure wanting to update my business skills and my management skills. ...I think it has contributed to my getting the area rep's job[19] here, because you have to have certain skills. Last week I had to go down to assist [another] office applying for funds for their mayor and meetings with the counsellors an things and you have to have certain skills to handle those sort of people because it can be quite ruthless. I suppose it has helped.

Whilst the courses undoubtedly fulfilled her former goal, she had yet to test the latter. Similarly, one woman periodically took coaching courses to help her in her paid and voluntary work. She taught physical education and coached out of school hours and these courses increased her knowledge and expertise. They were also aimed at possibly leading her into a new career.

> I think with coaching it is getting that extra knowledge so you know exactly where you are going. ...[Coaching] is what I will get into if I ever get out of teaching.

For a couple of people, this future focus for their education and training was particularly clear. After eight years as a social worker, another woman was doing counselling training in her own time. Like many others in the study, she had also been engaged in a large amount of work-related and workplace-based training, much of it self-directed and self-motivated. Aspects of this latter type of education and training are examined shortly. Her counselling training definitely had a great deal of relevance to her work but she saw it as more directly linked to where she might be headed in the future.

> I think having done eight years of crisis work I would like to move more into follow up work and support work, like healing work. I still enjoy the job. ...It's a very stressful job and I don't envisage that I want to be here forever so I really started thinking about, well what are you going to do. In order to go where I want to go, I need more training, more experience. I am not in a great hurry. ...Well I guess that is why I have been doing some training. This is my second year in doing a certificate in counselling. My aim would be to move into a job where I would get much more experience. ...it is a two year certificate... Then if you want you can go on and then it is like the whole thing takes about four to five years for a diploma.

On a smaller and more short-term scale, a woman who had held numerous senior and demanding positions in the public service was independently honing her computing skills at night school. It was not that these skills were needed for the job she was presently doing, but rather she saw them as being a valuable set of skills in any future job search.

> I'm doing a computer course at night school to brush up on my PC skills. ...The sort of jobs I'm looking for, they're wanting people with good PC skills. We get some through [this department] but not as much as what they're wanting. So I'm looking to improve that so, say, by the end of the year I'll be able to move out.

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[19] This is a voluntary position.

Similarly, one of the other women who had done computer courses was also doing an introductory real estate salesperson course in the hope of eventually getting employment in this field. After committing a number of years to bringing up the children, she saw this as her entree back to more substantial paid work. She spoke of the process she followed in returning to paid work, and the ultimate goal she envisioned.

> I needed work, and as I said I had difficulty getting work and so house cleaning was my alternative at the time ... and the [house] owner offered me [office] work. ...[Now] I am very keen to run my own business, to be independent.

The ratio of women to men in this group is interesting. What emerges from many of the quotes made by women in this section are three key issues or themes that were also apparent elsewhere in this study. They are the impacts that women's high level of responsibility for childrearing had on their ongoing involvement with, and return to, paid work; the growth of technology in the workplace; and the interplay of these two issues. This interplay often had some bearing on women's participation in education and training. Firstly, any courses or programmes they did often had to be managed alongside their unpaid responsibilities and/or paid work. Even if these courses were not full-time, this could still be demanding. One woman who was studying extramurally as a necessary component of her part-time work as a university tutor found, as others did, that coping with this on top of caring for children created huge demands.

> I completed two papers plus working and found I just didn't have enough time, quality time [with the family].

Secondly, these were often done in order to ease the return to paid employment, to enhance their skills, and to bridge skill or knowledge gaps that had arisen whilst they were out of the paid workforce. This latter point might help explain the high number of computing courses undertaken by many of the women. Men, on the other hand, were not faced with this time out of the workforce. Whilst some chose to retrain and a few to enhance their qualifications later in life, many were able to study or train at the start of their working lives and keep up their skills and knowledge through workplace based training and having an unbroken association with their particular work.

Summary – Part Time Education and Training

A wide range of education and training courses and programmes are covered in this section. These were undertaken through a number of providers (public and private) and settings (e.g. polytech and nightschool) and in a variety of formats (e.g. attending classes during the day and evenings or by correspondence). Computing courses were the most popular undertaking. Regardless of topic or content, people did such courses either voluntarily or as a requirement of their work. They were interested in increasing their skills and knowledge for their present work and in relation to future opportunities. Whilst their duration and requirements may have been different from full-time programmes, they still placed high demands on some participants, particularly if they had to be balanced with other responsibilities. The heavy involvement of women in these types of education or training opportunities appeared

to be a reflection of two factors, both tied into their primary responsibilities for childcare. Firstly, after being out of the workforce caring for children, women took such courses to update and enhance their skills and, thus, their employability. Secondly, these types of courses had to be integrated with other responsibilities. Though different to those covered in the preceding section, these various programmes and courses were still important in relation to people's work as is evidenced by the relatively small number of people who did such courses only out of personal interest.

Workplace Education and Training

Workplaces have always been sites for the training and education of workers, albeit in various forms and to varying degrees. However, according to those interviewed, there seemed to have been a growing proliferation of, along with a greater emphasis on, this type of training. One woman charted the change in provision of, and attitude towards, this type of training.

> There wasn't really any training for my job, firstly because they decided I didn't need it and secondly because after a few years I was the only one that knew what it was about anyway, and thirdly there just wasn't anything offered. ...Then in the latter years we got into the real sort of training courses that were offered to all staff of which we had to go to actual training area in the office.

A large proportion of the people in paid employment during this study reported similar stories and noted comparable trends. Given this increase and the differences between it and other forms of education and training, workplace-based initiatives are discussed separately in this section. This type of training and education took two general forms:

- in-house programmes run by the employer
  - directly through a company trainer or training department or
  - provided by an external provider either on-site or external to the workplace.

- external programmes or courses promoted by the employer
  - provided by outside providers and
  - attended by individual or groups of employees.

As part of this growing presence in the workplace, some noted that aspects of learning on the job or being orientated to a position were now much more formalised. As this man noted, people used to be familiarised and trained by being paired with an experienced worker. Now the company employed a dedicated training team.

> And if you don't know how you do a job and they will keep you there until you do. They have trainers in there to do it, whereas it used to be the buddy system.

Alongside this growing proliferation of workplace-based training, the woman quoted above also noted a shift in attitudes.

> We had to attend it all, [it] was compulsory.

Similarly, in some organisations, such as banks, people reported that there had always been some form of training available but now it had become mandatory. Even if this was not openly expressed, a number of people reported that they felt under considerable pressure to take on extra training. Consider, for example, the teacher in the previous section who felt obliged to undertake extramural study.

As noted at the beginning of this section, there was a wide range of possible approaches to providing this type of training. Some employers were willing to pay their staff to undertake education or training courses run outside the businesses.

Though less common, other employers tried to encourage staff to fund their own training and do it in their own time.

> They did ask me to go to more courses, over computers, but I had to do that
> in my own time and I wasn't having that. By the time I worked a full-time
> job and come home to three children.

While some people, such as this woman, balked at such a suggestion given their other responsibilities and commitments, others were willing to sponsor their own efforts or mix them with those of their employer. For this woman, it was a necessary part of her ongoing professional development. She was also single.

> During the eight years I would have done I don't know how many courses
> on all sorts of things. They have all been job related. ...Not all of them
> [internal]. I seek my own training on weekends, outside workshops, but
> usually to do with this kind of work or to do with people.

The in-house approach certainly seemed to be most popular and appeared to offer an efficient and cost effective way to reach large numbers of staff. A couple of employees of a state social service were positive in their remarks regarding the organisation's training department. It provided a comprehensive and competent service. However, one noted a downside. Having invested in this department, money for other initiatives was often much harder to come by, especially for training outside the organisation.

> [If] it costs money, training is discouraged basically. It is encouraged if it
> is free. ...If it means training away like if there are conferences overseas,
> that is a real struggle to get to those because of money.

'On-the-job' training can cover a multitude of scenarios. Though there was undoubtedly variances in the foci, nature, amount and quality of such training, people described it occurring in all manner of workplaces, and in differing areas and at all levels of the organisation. For those interviewed, such training covered anything from learning the actual job they were employed to do, to courses in more general areas like workplace safety and related activities such as first aid training. Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) training seemed to be the most common form undertaken by people, particularly in industry. The reactions of this woman were not uncommon.

> This new OSH, the Occupational, Health and Safety, they are quite strict on
> that now. ...I do [think it is a good thing for workers] but they have gone a
> little bit too far. I mean a lot of it is common sense. ...and we have to read
> a booklet and it is so thick and most of it is common sense. ...I think there
> is enough to worry about in your own job without having to, because now
> we have to sit exams for it and have a test. ...It really has got nothing to do
> with meatpacking has it.

A particularly revealing aspect of some people's experiences was the link that some workplaces made between training and performance appraisals. This was true of the public service as well as the private sector. In this case, the woman felt that the blanket application of competency based programmes of training and assessment was inappropriate. She held a senior position in a team of social service staff.

> This department brought in the whole competency program because there
> were so many complaints saying that [staff] are not qualified, how come

there is such a high percentage of people not qualified. So it has swung from one extreme to the other so that everyone has to go through this competency program which I find for people like myself who have got a degree and who have been here for eight years, I find it almost insulting, because it is really basic ... I think for people that first come in as a six month introduction it is probably a good idea.

Sometimes wages were part of this tie in as well, as was the case for this man.

Our human resources man told me when he had an interview with me, he said, "we will give you a wage rise next year, and you have got these courses to do at polytech, but if you don't pass the courses, you've got 12 months to do them, if you don't pass them we are taking your wage rise off you".

Not unexpectedly, this man was very unhappy at this approach and refused to participate in what he saw as blackmail.

As his response suggests, workplace-based training could provoke intense reactions. While the interviews indicated that many people were fairly neutral on this issue, accepting the training as part of the changing face of employment, others had strong views. Some people enjoyed and valued it; many of these had benefited from it as well. These two men had survived restructuring in their respective companies and had achieved either promotion or job change and enhancement through enthusiastically embracing the training on offer. Importantly, in their own eyes, they had become multi-skilled workers.

There are courses all the time, first aid courses, computer courses, rescue courses. They really are good. ...[The managers] have this idea of happy workers and up-skilling workers. ...The training schemes, they give you incentives to up-skill yourself, anything, there is courses all the time out there.

Everyone that has [been] left has all been trained, heaps of training, an endless money pit. I am just one of a few people who are being trained in lots of different areas. ...staff working in different areas are all being trained and retrained.

More often, though, the reactions tended to be negative. This might, for example, be because of the perceived faults in the way training was organised and provided.

If there has been training whether I have asked for or not they have always sent other people on the courses which is totally pathetic. ...certain sections, yes they are missed. ...For example, they brought in a new Word 6 on the computer and logic would have it that those people that used the computer would get trained but it wasn't. It was one case manager and a team leader or supervisor that got the training ... we were thrown into the system ... They knew the system was coming in but we were not told when it was starting ... we came back and asked about training. ...When they came around to doing the training they said we didn't need it.

Alternatively, it might be related to a worker's age, experience, length of service, attitudes, and future prospects or aspirations. These appeared to impact on how worthwhile they saw any workplace training for them..

But a lot of the courses they are offering are not relevant to the work that I am doing. I'm in a hands-on job and with my years of knowledge, this is

more invaluable than what can be learned in a classroom. A lot of people that are up and coming that are going to come up into the system, they will benefit from those courses. At my age I don't think I could benefit a lot from them.

The company I work for is very aware of [training] and we have been offered an out through various courses regularly. ...I think they have increased it over the years, particularly in the last few years. I have probably been on one a year, but I know some of the younger agents are going on two or three possibly a year. The availability to access them is there. ...Some are day courses, some are week courses. ...I think they are [relevant and useful] for the younger people. ...but I have got tunnel vision. ... I probably shouldn't say but I suppose we should be self motivated. You can only work 365 days a year and you do what you are capable of doing. I am a servicing agent to clients and I think they are well serviced.

It is interesting to note that these older workers were not entirely dismissive of these trends, seeing some value for new or younger employees, even if they were not interested themselves. That said, the resistance to this increased emphasis on workplace-based training often came from longstanding staff.

They want us to become more professional, more structured in our approach but the thing is that you've got people who have been in this industry for thirty odd years who are very set in their ways and its been a long time since they've been to school.

Sometimes, workers were suspicious of the motives behind training. As we have seen, it is sometimes tied to staff appraisals or to wages. Despite many hours on OSH courses, some workers felt that the realities were far different from the training manual. It offered little more than window dressing.

The engineering manager came in questioning us all about [safety] ... and I just said to him, well I think the majority of people here think you guys [management] are going on about safety, but when it comes to production, safety goes out the window.

Summary – Workplace Education and Training

From the interviews, it was apparent that workplace-based training was a prominent and growing feature of employment across all sectors. Attendance at such programmes was now more likely to be mandatory and was often linked to performance appraisals. This type of training took on a variety of forms from in-house programmes to attendance at external courses. The former most often focused on Occupational Safety and Health training. Employees reported a range of attitudes and support from their employers for external training. Some paid costs and gave time off; others expected the employee to cover one or both. Naturally, there were a range of reactions to and opinions about the increase in training in the workplace. Whilst some were positive, most were cautious or more negative in their views; a few were rather cynical. Regardless of their feelings on this issue, people were having to accept or adapt to its presence in their working lives. Obviously, the issue of workplace education and training could be influential in people's work transitions within a workplace. It is not hard to see that it could also have an impact on transitions between jobs.

Education and Training – Themes

A number of themes in respect of education and training emerged from the interviews, and in the concluding section of this topic, the more significant of these are discussed. We have already been alerted in preceding sections to some of these. They concern:

- the quality of training schemes and work placement programmes
- the variations between different benefit schemes and the inequity that arises
- apprenticeships
- cost
- technology

Evaluating Skills Programmes and Work Placement Schemes

People occasionally raised concerns or made complaints about some skills training courses and, to a lesser degree, work placements. These complaints concerned the quality of people and content associated with these programmes. Some apparently closed prematurely. It was reported that a couple of these placements also folded unexpectedly. School leavers and adults alike made such remarks. One man who was a participant in a skills training scheme, and did a couple of work placements, made some pertinent observations that summed up the general issues and feelings. The scheme did not prove to be of much use in getting work subsequently. Having spent a lot of time on this carpentry course "chopping wood", he was a little negative about some of the staffing, content and outcomes for these programmes. However, he also recognised that they could have some benefits. Whilst some people were more clearly negative in their assessment of these courses, the ambivalence he showed was mirrored by other people. He began with an evaluation of the carpentry course and then went on to describe how it felt to work hard on these courses but still not end up with a job.

> All it really taught us was basic work ethic, going to work on time. Appreciating you've got to be there when someone is expecting you. And after a while you got a bit pissed off with the guys that were taking it, because it felt like they were taking the mickey out of you. ... After a while of doing the work based training scheme gaining the experience and feeling pretty crapped on at the end of 12 weeks when you thought there was a job there, and [NZES] say 'No, there is not really room for you to be put on there full-time'. You sort of feel like a slave. You were working for the dole and that was all you were working for and you thought well why bother.

Elsewhere in the interview, however, he recognised that such schemes might offer some way for unemployed people to get some skills and training. He also touched on issues of motivation and attitudes.

> You've still got to have qualifications and all that. You can't get very far without them. A lot of people would say you can't get a job without qualifications and you can't get qualifications without getting a job. They give up there. There are those work based training schemes and it might mean you are working for nothing, but you still get a little bit of experience and you can turn around and say you have done this. That is better than sitting around and saying well I'm never going to get a qualification so I will never get a job, why bother sort of thing.

A woman who was on the DPB when interviewed but who, as a teenager, did a training course also offered some comments. After some complaints about the facilities on this course, it closed prematurely. She spoke of poor content and management of programmes and how, ultimately she didn't feel it would help her get a job.

> It was more like a hobby sort of thing ... I don't know what the others thought about it, I thought that there was no motivation and get out there and get a job in that sort of area. So no I just sort of stuck at it because it was something to do.

Some evaluation of the outcomes of these courses and placements has already been reported in an earlier section. This is now complimented by the preceding criticisms of their quality. Together these raise some concerns as to the value and success of such courses and placements in fulfilling their intended purpose – helping people transition to paid work. The poor quality and outcomes that people experienced, particularly with skills training courses, perhaps signal a need for more evaluation of these both individually and as a strategy.

Inequity in Training and Education

As well as issues of quality and outcomes, people were also concerned about access to study and training opportunities. There were different facets to this. Cost was one factor raised in this regard and it is dealt with shortly. For those receiving welfare, one of the more pressing and frequently cited concerns was the inequality between training and education entitlement for those receiving the DPB in comparison to those on other benefits. Alongside the funding provisions were considerations of attitude and support.

We have seen examples of single parents making use of the positive training benefits offered through the DPB. One very clear instance of this was discussed earlier. This involved a woman whose marriage broke up. Her children initially went to live with their father. Soon after separating she began a three-year nursing course and had an immense financial struggle the first year. However, when her children came to live with her, she was able to go onto the DPB. This made a considerable difference. Whilst not denying that it was still tough for her and her family, she made it clear that her financial circumstances were much more favourable because of being on the DPB.

> So once I got the children back and it was all worked out, it was the DPB that supported me for the next two years. ...Actually they [DSW] were very good. They had incentives that I could apply for ...[when] you had to pay your own way and accommodation... At the beginning of the year you could get about $300 over and above your benefit cause they saw that as an incentive: You wouldn't be on the DPB. That was their thing to see you out working and I guess if it was going to help you and [so] they gave.

The final remark seems to capture the intention of this more generous and flexible approach. Further examples of people intending to or already making use of these positive entitlements can be found throughout this working paper.

Only a very few of those not on the DPB managed to achieve such favourable support for their training and study. There was, for example, the case of the married man who undertook a nursing course. He was receiving the unemployment benefit and, although he had difficulty initially getting adequate benefit advice, he was eventually able to get appropriate financial support through the welfare system to complete this programme. However, the more frequent experiences and attitudes of people were captured by this next woman's remark.

> I think if I had been on the DPB I could have had more training, more prospects for training.

In general, those on other benefits felt that they had less access to such financial assistance and were given very little encouragement or support to consider any options outside of skills training courses or placement schemes.

It is the case of the unemployed woman doing the child care training, outlined earlier, that illustrates most fully and starkly these contrasts. Having been made redundant twice from the apparel industry, she acutely felt the need to retrain despite the NZES's efforts to re-engage her in this industry. She had done a couple of short courses and one of these ignited her interest in professional childcare. She decided to do more training in this area and enrolled in a polytech course. She spoke of how the NZES had responded to her doing the course whilst on the unemployment benefit.

> Since I started the polytech course they've been trying to get me into employment that would get me chucked off that course ... But since I've been on this course they've just about had me chucked off a couple of times ... Because they've been trying to find me employment that's going to interfere with this course.

The differences in how training was viewed and supported for people on the unemployment benefit and DPB were apparent not only in these attitudes and actions but were sometimes openly expressed. In her case, she reported that two government agencies made a rather outrageous suggestion.

> Unemployment [NZES] and Social Welfare have both said to me that I should get pregnant and then they would pay for my courses.

Although the NZES provided for her to do some shorter courses (such as 13 and 6 week courses in bar tending and business skills), they seemed to balk at her doing a longer polytech based course. This despite the fact that she had been unemployed for eighteen months and that the short courses had not opened up any opportunities. Though she believed that the childcare training offered her good prospects for stable and secure employment in the future, she felt that NZES were not interested in this. Had she not been aggressively defending her attendance on this course, she would have undoubtedly been forced off it.

Importantly, this inequity seems to offer some explanation for the skewed distribution of education and training experiences amongst the unemployed. As was noted earlier, unemployment was associated with significant proportions of training and education but this was confined, in the main, to skills training programmes and work placements. Alternatively, those receiving the DPB had access to generous training entitlements that could be used in a wide range of settings. In addition, they were encouraged to make use of these. Those receiving the UEB, on the other hand, were seldom able to access such support, either financially or otherwise. Instead, they were ushered into

skills courses or placements. Given the criticisms and unfavourable evaluations of these that have already been presented, restricting any group to only these opportunities is, effectively, placing limits on the benefits they might gain from education and training.

Thus we have the situation where the criteria for entitlements is unfavourable to one group but advantages another. Consequently, people wanted more equity between entitlements in respect of education and training. Most appeared to feel that what was available to those on the DPB was what others should reasonably have available to them. Whilst they agreed that criteria were needed to determine eligibility, most felt that a person's benefit was the wrong basis for this. There was an irony, many felt, that governments often talked about the need for people to upskill and reduce welfare dependence but then put obstacles in the way of some, simply because of the benefit they received.

Apprenticeships

The broad issue of apprenticeships was raised in about 10% of households. What made this issue so prominent was that people in these households, in some cases both partners, made lengthy and detailed comments and observations. Four households had a tradesperson in them (all male), three of whom were self-employed. In these latter cases, the wife was active in some way in the business (e.g. as financial partner, doing the accounts). Three other households had people with service in the public sector whilst the remaining households were made up of other occupational groups. In specific terms, this issue obviously concerns the way that people – particularly young people – are trained, especially in respect of trades. However, a more generic use was also made of the term "apprentice" to capture a similar approach to training but in other forms of work. The most recurrent examples of this were notions such as government cadetships and office juniors. This might be accounted for by the backgrounds of people other than those in the trades who raised this matter.

All of those who commented on this issue lamented the loss or downgrading of the apprenticeship system and noted how widespread this was.

> In the last ten years they cut back on their apprentices.

> Most panelshops or mechanics, they are not taking on apprentices now, they are not getting that back up there. ...I don't know whether it is the money or what it is. ...From what I hear around... Asking around different workplaces like mechanics, plumbers – none of them are taking them on. Builders, builders more or less go for labourers. ...You are pretty lucky if you can get an apprenticeship on any sort of job right now.

Within the broader usage of the term, some people recalled the prominent role that the pre-reform state sector had as a trainer of all sorts of trades and occupations. These people were usually fulsome in their praise of this system and rued its demise.

> [The lack of training] is because of lack of apprenticeships. ...We used to leave school and go and take an office junior and the company would take on office juniors and then you would train your way up and be something. ... Also a lot of the departments that used to do the basic training, apprenticeships for just about the whole of New Zealand have been sold

off, or been downsized to such an extent that there are no longer that training background or training ground for the young. I am looking at the Post Office, the Railways, those types of things that almost absorbed all the unemployed, and trained them for a useful future. Now they are not there our unemployment is to such a high level because there is none of these positions to train in.

For some people, apprenticeships had been the way they had trained. The wife of one tradesman, drawing on her husband's earlier experiences, noted the importance of such openings.

I think the opportunity came when you got offered the apprenticeship, which in those days, that was the way it went.

There was some speculation on why this trend away from apprenticeships may have developed. One person suggested an oversupply may be to blame.

Because there are too many people for jobs they employ experienced people for jobs and they didn't need apprentices. And I think of the jobs are lacking in apprentices, and they are only beginning to come back now.

Others wondered whether the difficult economic times that had been a feature of the ten years under study might have played a part.

There was no work. Because of that there were no apprentices. One young apprentice tried to get into our firm for three years and he only got in because he knew one of the supervisors. Everybody else would go out of school into the community college.

I think the whole six years around that period of apprenticeships, the work tapered off, it wasn't there to take on eight or twelve apprentices every year.

This period was also one when the deregulated environment and free market approach became prominent. These too were issues that were felt to have had an impact on this issue.

The old days are really gone, there is no margins to be able to pay somebody even if you felt a social obligation to train, there is no margins for such a thing any more. ...they have all been encouraged to hold professional people up on a pedestal and the trades are being neglected and therefore there is no-one out there, no apprentices. ...The old dinosaurs, the businesses that had a plumber and a couple of apprentices tagging along has gone by the board because they have priced them out of existence, because the actual market forces have said we can't have you guys because you are too dear, with your overheads we have to get this one man band guy because he's cheaper. ...We travel too fast now to have an apprentice and stop and tell them how to do it.

We are going to get cheap labour like in the tradesman area. You are going to have one tradesman experienced and then give him someone else like a labourer and you don't have to pay high wages to him or her.

The highly price-competitive market that grew out of these changes meant that tradespeople had to find ways to reduce costs to remain in business. Some of the effects on apprenticeships are noted in the above quotes. As well as the inter-

relationship of wage costs and other expenses, there were the demands on a business that arose out of having to commit time and resources to training.

> There is no apprentices out there now. ...The employers won't employ apprentices. ...I think that for years [this is due to] cost cutting.

> Basically I think the biggest problem in this day and age, apprentices are required to be paid too much because if you have got a man who starts on 50% of a tradesman's wage and he is not doing 50% of a tradesman's work as well as you have got to give up what you are doing to teach him, there is not really much incentive for the employer to teach anybody at that rate as well as the fact that they have got time off for block courses. ...When you teach people you not only lose time by teaching them, you also lose time by doing their things again that they have done wrong and paying to replace gear they have broken. ...It was far to costly to have an apprentice, they broke more gear. You had to pay them 50% of a tradesman wage. When [my husband] started bricklaying it was 12% of a tradesman wage. It was prohibitive for a firm our size, to be training somebody up. ... All the trades were affected by this problem of having to pay apprentices too much.

> I can't go to a job now and have an apprentice tagging along and expect the owner to pay for his training, when he is just standing there. People just wont have it. ...I could probably get government assistance I think to train, but it is all the hassle, I don't have time to deal with the responsibility.

Despite these reservations, those running their own businesses felt that they should be taking on an apprentice.

Not only did people regret the demise of this particular form of training but they detailed the very tangible negative outcomes. Prominent among these was the lack of skilled tradespeople in this country.

> Now they are screaming out for good tradesmen and they are not there because they have not trained any up and the good ones have gone overseas.

> Engineers and coach builders and all those types of specialised people, labour intensive jobs, have disappeared because there is no training ground now.

Consequently, tradespeople had to BE recruited from outside the country.

> Now they are having to import from overseas a lot of those trades and skills that they trained in New Zealand.

But this created other problems.

> We will have to import trades people and the bad news is that they won't know about New Zealand conditions ... it is much better to have our own tradesmen trained here than to import somebody else's.

The alternative strategy – people undertaking a whole range of courses through the polytechs whilst not necessarily 'attached' to an employer – was the subject of much debate and criticism. It was seen as too theoretical and removed from the practical side of any trade.

> I mean a lot of these firms rely on theory and the young people need to say this is what we want to do and if they have the theory...I mean years ago they used to have the practical.

> You can go to a community college and do a 12 week course and they give you a diploma that shows your expertise in this field, whatever they teach you. ...if they showed you how to build a Lockwood house then you could build Lockwood houses but it doesn't really show you all facets of the trade ...[Building] is not a registered trade.... I never passed my exams in carpentry so I am basically only a journeyman. When I did my apprenticeship I worked with a tradesman for 2½ years and then I got put on a big commercial job. [Others] were with one man right through their apprenticeship, 4½ years and they learned everything. People still get apprenticeships, there are a lot of builders around that will take on one guy and flog him, but at least you have done a good time and you know all about it.

> We used to leave school and go and take an office junior and the company would take on office juniors and then you would train your way up and be something. Now the parents have to pay, or you have got to have the money to go to polytech to learn those skills that most companies used to teach on the job . ...I see it even painting, I mean basically you take any job where they used to be trained on the job, they would leave school at 15 or 16 and be trained on the job, now a few select are going to polytech or university and the rest are staying at home.

The issue of cost that such a shift brings was touched on by some. In more general terms, this is discussed shortly. Whilst in the polytech system the burden of costs might sit with the trainee, with an apprenticeship, as has been noted in earlier remarks, costs fall largely on employers.

The broader use of the term apprentice in this discussion allows some consideration of the experiences of the school leavers in this study. In the earlier section that discussed this group's experiences, the difficulties that those who had completed a polytech course had in getting work was highlighted. They found work placements a useful strategy for bridging the gap between the study/training and employment. Their experiences provide some grounded examples of one set of difficulties that people alluded to in this section.

Overall, most who commented on the issue of apprenticeships seemed to be keen to see them reinvigorated as a primary means of training workers. Mindful of the current economic thinking – and the cost issues just noted – one man offered an interesting observation on how the structure of an apprenticeship might allow people to earn while they learn. It also allowed them to contribute to the costs of their training through benefits that accrue to employers. It seems a fitting way to close this topic.

> You go to polytech, for example, or to university and you pay to go there. You go to a trade and I think not that you should pay ... when I did my apprenticeship I got 12½% for the first year and I got 20% the second year. I did not get 50% until the fourth year. The boss was making money out of me but there is nothing wrong with that because that is what he is in business for. He was teaching me a trade and I was paying for it in my own way.

Costs

Almost without exception, those who were contemplating some form of education and training thought very carefully about what it was they wanted to do.

> I've wanted to [train] and I can't decide what I want to do and rather than
> throw good money after bad I will think about it.

In a variety of ways and often in combination with other issues, one of the key matters to consider was costs. This issue in regards to education and training has already been raised in other areas of this report, including the preceding section. Parents, students and others commented on how it impacted on decisions to train and study – or not to study or train, as the case may be. Though focused on a narrow set of issues, the earlier debate over distinctions between study and training entitlements for those receiving different benefits can be seen as related in some ways to the matter of cost.

It was felt by some that the opportunities to train or study have become limited to those who can pay or afford it.

> Now the parents have to pay, or you have got to have the money to go to
> polytech to learn ... now a few select are going to polytech or university
> and the rest are staying at home.

Consequently, for some parents, there was the thought that one must plan and prepare for their children's education.

> Because we want so much more for [the children] now too, if you want
> them to go outside that normal circle you have to provide for them.

In the interviews undertaken in this study, a few parents were paying for courses, or sharing the costs with the young person. A small but vocal group spoke out against the effect of student loans. Though a significant issue today, the limited numbers who made reference to the student loan scheme may be explained by the study timeframe comprising a significant period before it began and the interviews taking place prior to the full negative implications of this being widely realised and debated.

It was not only young people for whom cost was a factor. Many adults in a range of circumstances who were thinking about education and training were also considering the implications of this issue. Aspects of this in relation to those on welfare have already been raised. Low income earners found the problem of costs particularly difficult. One possible solution posed an equally unpalatable alternative for some. Consider the comments of this single parent.

> [There are training incentives and allowances] if you are on a benefit. That
> would mean I would have to stop work and go back on the benefit. And I
> don't want that.

She had already experienced the intense stigma surrounding receipt of the DPB. Though she might be able to get considerable help with education and training if she were receiving this benefit – and this would markedly improve her employability – the negative aspects of such a move far outweighed the advantages to her mind. Thus, for many people in a range of circumstances, the prospect of fees in the thousands of dollars was daunting for some, and quite simply out of the reach of others.

> It is too dear. Well one of the things I wanted to do you had to pay $3000 and I thought, "Oh man" [It was] something to do with old people. I love looking after old people, but I thought, "Oh, I'm not paying $3000". ... I don't know how long it was but $3000.

Of course, financial considerations were usually but one of many factors that had to be considered when education or training was being contemplated.

> There is also the cost factor and also there are children commitments that you do allow for.

> I am looking at possibly in the next twelve months ... I could go into training full-time for three years. It would be great and a possible job at the end of it. ...It is just that we need extra cash for me to be able to go out and do what I want to do … I think now with my daughter being the age she is ... she doesn't really need mum at home so much now. …It is basically something which I want to do for myself now instead of putting family first ... it is time I did something for me. [Cost] is one thing I will have to look into, either through Social Welfare assistance and perhaps student loans. ...Comprehensive nursing training is a three year course and it is pretty expensive.

Competing demands sometimes meant that education and training became a secondary priority. This was the case for the last woman quoted who had earlier put off any thoughts of training whilst her daughter was young.

The question of costs affected people in all age groups and all manner of circumstances. Though a prominent issue, it was often just one of many that people had to consider when they were contemplating education and training opportunities. Whilst in some cases. plans or circumstances could be modified to meet various demands, in other instances, high fees and expenses severely limited the types of programmes that could be considered, or acted as insurmountable obstacles at the outset.

Technology

Technology, in its broadest sense, was a major issue of interest in the interviews. Often it was raised without any prompting. People spoke about their own experiences – in work and in life. They offered their views and opinions and discussed how they saw this issue affecting coming generations. Reactions to the burgeoning impacts of technology were mixed, some positive, some negative, others uncertain or neutral. Regardless of their feelings, everyone who commented on this issue was in no doubt about the importance of it to paid work and society in general. In respect of the latter, this woman describes what she thinks will be one outcome of the current huge growth in technology. She also neatly shows how each era has had their own technological "wonders".

> I think every house within the next ten years is going to have a PC anyway. Its like in my generation we thought calculators were amazing and everybody got a calculator.

Even those who cope without technology in their own lives find they sometimes can't escape its influence in other ways.

> I am finding myself at a disadvantage because I am computer illiterate. Not at a disadvantage relating to our business because our business probably can manage quite well without one, but just in conversation with people, just to be up with the play.

As regards the place of technology in relation to paid work, one man put it rather succinctly.

> Apart from manual labour, everything has got a bar code on it these days.

Interestingly, as we shall see, some would even challenge his excepting of manual labour.

Technology, in terms of this study, can be seen as the use and spread of increasingly sophisticated automated and computerised equipment and processes (Penn et al, 1991). The relationship of technology to paid work and its role in the workplace is the primary focus here, with its impact on movements into, between, and out of paid work a central concern. The place of education and training in relation to technology, from both a workplace and transitions perspective, is also of interest. The numerous short courses in computing that people undertook, and which were looked at in a previous section, illustrate such an analysis from this latter perspective.

It is perhaps useful to begin by looking at how technology impacted on specific areas of paid work. This is done through the experiences of people in a range of fields. Within some of these quotes are other issues which will be revisited. Undoubtedly, technological change can bring about vast changes to how we work. This man was a surveyor and how he carried out his job changed radically over time as a result of technological developments.

> Once upon a time you used to pull out a chain which was a metal measuring device ... now we can push a button.

Whilst the spread of technology in the workplace is very apparent in many areas, it is also having an impact in places that might not readily come to mind, and in ways that are less obvious. Some examples from a small range of service-related industries will help to illustrate this. For a woman working in the hospitality industry it became critical to have computer skills though these could be learned on the job.

> Working in the hotel I've gained use of computer skills ... we had to be literate with a computer ... Keyboard skills more than anything.

Then there was the lawyer who quit his job in a large firm to start his own more personal practise. The growing intrusion of technology into his working life was one of the factors behind this.

> [There was] a lot more computer-generated information, management information system – which I tell you is one of the reasons I left the large firm I initially went to ... It became like a factory.

Other types of people-centred work, for example nursing, have not escaped either.

> Computers have become much more a part of nursing now ...[Nurses] are expected to [be computer literate] but they are not. ...12 to 18 months ago

> we didn't have computers there. ...[Now] we have got a couple of different systems that we work through.

The implications weren't always as expected however, as this social worker explained.

> I think we are very much moving more toward technology. ...I am sure that in some way that is advancement and in other ways with people working there is going to be disadvantages. ... when we got computers I thought this is the way things are going, the way of the future, but what I didn't realise was that we are going to have to put all our notes on, and so we've really become part secretaries, or inputers, and spending a lot more time doing that rather than working with clients. ...There is less work for [typists] and much more work for us which is not social work.

The comments about secretarial and clerical staff highlights them as one group who have been affected by the introduction of new technology. People employed in this area made some passing acknowledgements of this. In a specific case, one woman who had maintained her place in the paid workforce whilst caring for her children was, like so many others, forced to cope with change as it occurred. At one point she worked for an accountant processing tax returns. The current and future initiatives she identified illustrate that some changes can be quite significant. Whilst she didn't detail how these had or would affect her work, or that of others, it doesn't take much effort to imagine the implications.

> We don't send paper returns to the IRD any more, everything is electronically filed. ...Our next step up from the system that we have now is electronically filing correspondence, so there is a new computer system coming.

Then there were the circumstances of an older woman who had worked for many years as a telephonist in the public sector. With new telephone technology her role was, literally, redundant.

> That job of mine went, anyone who did the phone was going to be called a clerk ... most of the typists ... were going to be able to do the phones as well. ...They actually changed the whole concept of the thing, the role of the telephonist went. ...they told me they were going to have direct dialling into whichever area, the big modern businesses are going that way, but then they decided they didn't and they actually put some of the girls on answering the calls, but I believe it is coming in the next few years. So it was technology in that respect.

Although she was offered retraining, she elected to take redundancy and care for her ailing mother.

Other areas in the public sector have also changed dramatically through the introduction of new technology. One man who had worked for the Post Office and then New Zealand Post for many years had witnessed a technological revolution in the handling of mail. Similarly, an employee of the Department of Social Welfare saw some vast changes with the introduction of technology and the effects this had on employment.

> Before we were computerised ... It used to take 10 days to process an unemployment benefit, you could now do it in one day while the person is sitting there. ... The number of staff that we had related to the time before

> we were computerised ... that sped up the time for processing ...So that sort
> of cut down the number of people that you needed.

The once public utilities have also undergone massive change in both ownership, structures, organisation and operation. An employee of a gas company summarised the technological shifts he had experienced as part of these other changes.

> With the restructuring of the company we are now more efficient but we
> have got different tools now, computers and things. ...In all facets of work,
> predominantly in our company anyway, everything is computerised now.

Certainly, there have been areas of work where we are used to the growing importance of technology. Given that most of us would have had some contact with the technological innovations that now characterise the banking industry, it will be of little surprise that some people who were employed in this sector drew attention to these and how they affected their work and employment. Broadcasting was another sector where a similar level of change was identified. So too was the printing industry, which is an area where there has had a very visible albeit not always smooth transition to a highly technology-based working environment. After some time away rearing children this woman returned to this industry just as much of this change was gaining momentum. She appeared to survive successive and significant reorganisations and restructuring by being receptive to the changes, adapting to them and showing a willingness to retrain and re-skill.

> I am basically doing the same thing but there are differences, different
> computers etc. ...There are not as many typesetters now, or there won't be
> because of the restructuring, but the reporters and subs are working on
> computers with keyboards. ...The technology has affected all departments.
> ...In the production side of it, it has made dramatic changes and it is still
> going on ...and that department wont exist in a few months.

She also did not seem daunted by the nature or degree of the technological changes.

In many other sectors and industries, the presence and use of computers has become commonplace. As this woman observed, much of her husband's work in a factory was centred on the use of technology, no matter how simple, and thus required some specific skills. Her comments also show that all levels of staff were required to have or gain the necessary skills.

> [My husband] worked for [an ice cream company] in Perth and it was using
> computers, weighing all the ingredients, even the forklifts you have to use
> some sort of keyboard.

The freezing works, too, has become a site of much more technology as this man found out when he returned to this type of work after many years away.

> When I was working at the [meat] works when I got here to NZ they were
> using manpower, muscle and all that, pull out the skin and all that boning
> out the things and today it is all done by machinery.

Even seasonal work such as harvesting, sorting and packing of produce is affected.

> These machines are just getting too good. … sometimes I would go out and
> pick tomatoes … now they have machines doing all these jobs... You don't
> see people tomato picking now, you see these big harvesting machines.

> Back then in the orchards we were working in they had everything down on paper, now it is on computer. Everywhere you look in the orchard there is a computer, everything is on computer instead of in a filing cabinet. ...There is a few who don't know how to punch into the computer. I have been lucky with myself, I have had a bit of experience on how to fire up the computer and what have you, so I can get in and get the information I need.

Whilst there is still a lot of manual work that remains just that, the earlier remarks that this type of labour had escaped the advance of technology cannot always be sustained.

Advancing technology can not only have a role in changing how we work but also where we work. This self-employed man extolled the virtues and potentials of the latest technology in allowing him to run a business from home. As this expanded nationally and overseas he was able to run a large and complex enterprise from a room in his house. He was extremely positive about these developments.

> A lot of people I deal with are working out of homes, apart from the scouring works, a lot of advertising people, photography, a lot of it's home based now. I think it's just an extension of the farming thing, the office was in the home I guess it's probably an extension of that side of it ... We're dealing with advertising fax to fax and that's all we need, a bit more efficient than trying to describe something over the phone, it's as good as running something round. But the costs of having offices is a limiting factor too. The whole structure of this business is extremely low overheads to be competitive... The environment's better and technology's such now that you've got computer systems and faxing systems you've got access to the whole world virtually just from a room within your home, and all these services coming through Telecom and of course, and the new cabling systems coming into homes now.

Although a number of other people worked from home no-one else mentioned the benefits or potential of new technology in simplifying and empowering home-based businesses. Undoubtedly, however, they would not have been able to run their enterprises so easily from home without these advances.

What is intimated in many of the above quotes is that not only has technology changed the way we do things, it has also meant a reduction in some jobs. People observed that its introduction and dispersion in areas such as surveying, government departments, broadcasting, printing, the meat industry, and even some seasonal work often meant the loss of jobs. Even if these losses did not directly impact on the actual jobs of people interviewed, they could still feel some of the effects. Take the social worker's case. Although computers may never replace a social worker, their widespread introduction meant that they were expected to type their own notes. Thus, they changed the way they did some of their work and resulted in other support staff, particularly typists, no longer being necessary. In terms of direct impacts we have the case of the woman who was a telephonist in a government department. Banking appears to be another area where technology is a key part of an overall restructuring strategy which, as this woman testified, saw large reductions in staff numbers.

> I found it was harder to get a job when we came back from Australia, there wasn't as much offering. Jobs had dried up quite a bit and where I'm working they're moving towards reducing staff numbers as technology improves and everything becomes computerised. They're actually working towards keeping customers out of the Branch with most of their banking needs so that there won't be as many staff required. We've had one major

> restructuring in the last couple of years and I can see them doing it again in maybe a year or so and more staff being dropped.

Customers, too, noticed these changes.

> [T]he computer age has certainly taken over. You go to the bank now there's not many staff working in the bank because its just all telephone operations.

Aside from these specific observations often related to their own experiences or work environments, people also spoke in general terms about the growth in technology. Most held a negative view of it, seeing it primarily leading to fewer jobs, as these quotes illustrate.

> When they say they are heading to the computer age where they are going to be using computers instead of human resources, no I don't think there is going to be more jobs available.

> Man is getting too pruned, machines have taken over heaps of jobs.

> There is not many jobs around because there is a lot of things [computers] do ... computer machining and all that.

Some were more ambivalent about what was occurring.

> I think we are very much moving more toward technology. ...I am sure that in some way that is advancement and in other ways with people working there is going to be disadvantages.

> I think [technology] has probably more reduced [jobs], but they are doing a lot more with people going around and learning different jobs.

As well as recognising that certain groups were going to be most affected, this man also saw that for many it would mean changes in the types and nature of work.

> The labour intensive jobs are slowly disappearing, they are becoming more service and technology based. I don't think the numbers have actually been very much affected at all, the number of jobs available. ....If anything it has probably increased them, because there are a lot of new jobs that are appearing for supporting the technology.

Another person offered the view that certain manual or labour intensive kinds of work would still exist even with increasing technological advances.

> There is still a need a need for somebody to crag the sheep over the board and shear them, you still need people to go out and cut asparagus, fruit picking is still manual work.

Given the earlier comments of some people about how even such employment as seasonal work is changing under the influences of technology, this man may be a little optimistic.

People adapted to the growth and influence of technology in different ways. A few embraced it, though not always to the degree of this man.

> Talking about technology and everything, I have specialised in technology and computers and information systems and I have just started another

> Diploma in Computer studies so that is the sort of a future orientated one now, because I see the need to become skilled in that area and I am going to put it on paper.

Some were more circumspect. This man had worked for a public sector organisation that was now privatised. He had seen many changes, some as a result of technology. In general terms he recognised the predominance and value of technology. On a personal level, however, he adopted a pragmatic approach to its presence.

> I have only minor knowledge of the up and coming computer age. I can follow it but it is not part of my job. There are parts of my job where I need it but I use others who are more competent than me to produce what I want.

Most people accepted that technology would play a role in their work and that at the at the very least they would need to increase their skills in relation to this.

> You've got to learn them. Otherwise you are going to be left out in the cold. ... everything goes through the computer.

> Generally I think everywhere you go you have to have computer skills.

> If you are not computer literate you are going to have a job finding a job soon.

For those not in the workplace, the growing importance of and rapid changes in technology could be particularly daunting. This was especially true for many women returning to the paid workforce. For them technology was a particularly important issue.

> The new technology scares me a lot.

> I haven't worked for so long, things have changed, technology and everything ... I could see it being a barrier.

> So I was behind the modern technology, it took me ages, that is why I did housecleaning because there were heaps of applicants and I found I was being beaten and I think it was because of the computer so I actually did a course on computer.

> I had actually started working in this office a couple of hours a week and it helped me to get confidence with the computer and in my job I had to use that.

Having been out of the workforce for a time, they were often nervous about their ability to resume careers they had left or find new work opportunities. As this woman's comments illustrate in talking about her personal situation, women were concerned about their ability to catch up with any technological advances.

> Dental nursing has undergone a metamorphosis in the entire time that I [have been away] ..The nature of the job, in talking to them that are still involved, has changed radically. It has gone so quickly that I don't think I could have at any time stepped back into that work environment. ...We had trained and committed a lot of years of training, but never be able to actually catch up into that same employment situation again was quite daunting. ...Your changes with the computing system at work, for a woman

> to perhaps even take maternity leave and then step back into that, the whole
> thing has changed before your eyes. When you are in it, it is just a process
> that you are involved in.

As she notes, those who are working whilst changes are taking place have more chance to adapt and to develop the necessary skills. The change process is often insidious and thus less overwhelming than the situation confronted by people returning after some time away. Whilst this next woman's experiences somewhat counter the idea that working in changing environments necessarily means an easier path to keeping up with the nature and pace of technological innovation, the point is not entirely disputed.

> When they changed over from manual which is everything done by hand,
> to computer, like tray fillers and everything was computerised, I found that
> very hard to get used to because being so used to doing everything on your
> own it was very different.

Despite the problems she encountered, she did gradually become accustomed to and skilled in the new approaches.

Certainly, in not having to take breaks to bear and care for children, men were more a part of the ongoing process of change and thus could utilise ongoing training within the workplace that paralleled changes as they occurred. Women, however, were often forced to take deliberate action to keep up with the changes that were occurring whilst they were out of the paid workforce. They often talked about the need to take computing courses, for example, to better equip themselves for returning to paid work. In the earlier section on shorter education and training we saw a number of women who had done such courses for precisely these reasons. Take this further example of a woman who used to work in an office before giving up paid work to care for children. She talked about the changes that she had noticed and recognised that she would have to be proactive in responding to these.

> I'd like to do a computer course 'cause I'd like to get into computers. When
> I was younger I worked in an office but that was the old shorthand typing
> Dictaphone. No computers in there then. But I'd like to sort of get back into
> that line. But I need to do a, you know, get to know computers.

Whilst hers was an open attitude to the world of computers, as we saw earlier, it was not always commonly held.

Although they may have had diverse experiences and views about technology, men and women still shared some common feelings as regards the importance of preparing children for the technological world they would work in.

> Everything, I was thinking of nursing and secretarial work, teaching, its all
> computer because the children are starting to learn computers at five and a
> half. There's a computer in each classroom and they just go from one stage
> to the next.

> I think that kids should become computer literate. ... It certainly is a terrible
> disadvantage not to [be computer literate].

> My children are growing up knowing computers back to front.

> *Husband:* All [our] children are computer literate even the seven year old. Probably it would embarrass some older people.

> *Wife:* Our local school, I am on the board and we are actually pushing technology, we are going to specialise, in fact we will probably put a lot of colleges to shame on our computer suites that we have got, because it is really going to be one of the top schools for technology and that's a primary school.

Given the degree and pace of technological change, and its resultant impacts, those who miss out on these skills will likely be at an extreme disadvantage. These woman felt that those who missed put would gradually become isolated from much that was happening in society, be that in the workplace or at home, in employment or at play.

> You see it in the schools now ... we are getting children that are coming through that are computer literate and those that are not, even at five or six years old, and so when they come out at the other end you are getting two levels of society.

> I think that society is splitting, you have got those who are scared of technology and those who are ready to go with it, so we are getting two levels.

Whether in the present or the future, technology was a major issue of concern for people. Amongst its many impacts were current and anticipated changes in people's jobs and at their workplaces. Whilst people felt comfortable to varying degrees with this level of change, most managed to cope with these transformations as they were occurring. However, the impacts of technological change were also important considerations for people changing jobs and returning to work after a time away. It could prove particularly daunting for those in the latter category. Education and training in various forms and for all age groups was clearly seen as a strong mediating factor in coping with technological demands and advances. Ensuring children were adequately prepared for these was especially important for many parents.

SUMMARY – EDUCATION AND TRAINING

This report has focused on people's experiences of education and training and the discussion has, in the main, been structured around different forms that this can take. However, one group, school leavers, were looked at more generally and not solely as related to education and training. A set of more general but related themes were also canvassed. Education and training were clearly significant features of the lives of many of those interviewed. Almost a quarter of all those profiled were involved in some substantial form of education or training, another 11 percent undertook other forms of study or training, and numerous people in paid work commented on the workplace based training that was a feature of their job.

Overall, people recognised that education and training had become increasingly important in the labour market. However, some provisos were placed on this acknowledgement. For instance, it was recognised that education and training alone was not the answer to employment problems since jobs still had to be available. Similarly, people held differing views about the relative worth of skills and experience in relation to education and training. Though the experiences of school leavers were complex, they bear out these views to a degree. Many of those who did tertiary study had great difficulty getting employment and work placements proved useful bridges for this group. On the other hand, not having such qualifications didn't automatically consign school leavers to unemployment, though some had significant experience of this. A surprisingly high proportion of this group – all but two, in fact – were unemployed at some time during the study period.

A more general look at education and training revealed a small number of adults involved in full-time tertiary study. In comparison with the school leavers, this group seemed to find the transition to paid work at the end of these courses much easier. More people undertook tertiary study than each of the other categories in this section. Similar numbers of people were involved in skills training programmes and/or work placements for the unemployed. These were most often of limited value in leading to work, though the placements appeared to have more utility than the skills programmes. Similar poor outcomes were apparent with school leavers in regard of both these. Most people had only one episode of education and training across the ten-year period, though a small number had at least two or more. Although occasionally drawn out and fragmented, these latter cases of more numerous episodes still produced or promised positive outcomes in many cases.

The section on shorter courses covered a range of programmes, formats and settings. Computing courses were the most popular undertaking. A strong link between these types of courses and employment was evident. People did these voluntarily or as a requirement of their work and were interested in increasing their skills and knowledge for their present work and in relation to future opportunities. The significant involvement of women in these types of education or training opportunities appeared to be a reflection of two factors, both tied in with their primary responsibilities for childcare. Firstly, after being out of the workforce caring for children women took such courses to update and enhance their skills and, thus, their employability. Secondly, these types of courses were more readily integrated with their unpaid responsibilities, though this combination of activities could still place heavy demands

on them. This latter point also applied to those doing such courses on top of paid work.

Training and education emerged as a growing feature of many workplaces and it was increasingly likely to be mandatory and linked to staff appraisals. Naturally there were a range of reactions to this. Whilst some people were positive, most were cautious or more negative in their views; a few were rather cynical. Regardless of their feelings on this issue, people found themselves having to accept and adapt to its presence in their working lives.

Finally, a series of issues with broad relevance to the arena of education and training were canvassed. Of considerable interest was evidence of the imbalances or inequity between various welfare regimes in respect of the training and education allowances and support that was provided. Those receiving the DPB received more favourable support and provisions compared to those on, for example, the UEB. This caused some discontent amongst those disadvantaged, though it was of obvious benefit to people receiving the DPB. As a consequence, many of the unemployed were channelled into skills training schemes and work placement programmes. As noted, the former appeared to be of little real use in helping people get work. Whilst placement programmes seemed to be a little more effective in this regard, their results were still quite poor. Thus, policy regarding training entitlements had both a constraining and enabling impact on people's transitions to employment, with this depending on a person's benefit entitlement.

Other issues canvassed include an evaluation of the training schemes and work programmes over and above the assessment of their poor outcomes. Some of those who participated in these courses were quite critical of the quality of personnel and curriculum content. Also considered were the negative effects on participation in education of the redistribution of costs and increases in fees. Tied in with this was a debate about the shift from workplace to tertiary based training for many trades and other occupations. The term 'apprentice', though used in a very loose and general sense, served as a focus for this discussion. The conclusion was that this shift had had a detrimental effect. Finally, the spread of technology in the workplace was considered. This proved to be a growing aspect of almost every workplace and occupation, a fact which prompted people to reflect on the importance of education and training to equip people with necessary skills and knowledge now and in the future.

CONCLUSION

In contrast to those theoretical and empirical studies that are based on micro-economic constructs and national trends, this research programme focuses on the way in which labour markets function at the micro-level of individuals and households. The development and utilisation of a broader concept of transitions as the unit of analysis in this study was central to achieving this focus. As has been shown it is a complex and versatile idea that proved ideally suited to the various aims of this research. Specifically, it has allowed an emphasis on relations within the household and between individuals, households, and the labour market, allowing us to explore the decisions or choices which are made with respect to economic participation and, as a consequence, making it possible to identify a range of factors which either promote or impede labour market participation. To achieve this also required the development of a methodology that established a strong framework within which to firstly capture and then analyse the interview data so as to address the key questions which this study set out to answer. Whilst much of what has been presented here will likely only reinforce what is already well established in the existing literature, statistics and research, the strength and value of this report lies with the detailed accounts of people's actual experiences which have been tracked across a considerable period of time. As the various parts and sections of this and the other reports have been summarised already, it is not intended at this point to revisit that material. Rather, by way of conclusion, a series of themes which emerged from people's experiences and which had a recurring presence in all the Hawkes Bay reports are presented as a final response to the research questions.

Given that this study examined many dimensions of work, it provides an intriguing insight into the multi-faceted nature of people's work profiles and histories. Even when this was of a fairly 'standard' or usual pattern, it could still mean that people maintained a range of activities and responsibilities, and the interaction of these was often complex, with various components complimenting or competing with one another. Despite this diversity, the importance of paid work was still very evident. Whilst demonstrated in many ways, it was especially apparent when people lost jobs. The impacts of this, both on individuals and their family, as well as the efforts they made to get new work, all emphasise the value placed on paid employment. The attitudes and actions of most of those receiving welfare and/or who were unemployed were in stark contrast to the popular and usually negative perceptions of people in these circumstances. Consequently, they often felt frustrated by what they perceived as obstacles to their getting a job. These included welfare abatements that acted as disincentives, difficulties and inequalities accessing quality training and education, and the ineffectiveness of the state employment agency. Against this last issue, a major positive influence on any transition into paid employment, regardless of the circumstances, was a person's social network.

The ten year period over which data was retrospectively collected was characterised by change and uncertainty both at the local level, as well as nationally and internationally. This was borne out in a number of ways and at various points of the analysis. Hawkes Bay as a region experienced both localised and more general effects of these turbulent times. The former was most apparent as a result of a major downturn and restructuring in the rural sector, which was particularly evident in this study through the closure of two large meatworks. Restructuring was felt in many

other areas as well. As a consequence, the shape of the labour market changed considerably and people were forced to adapt accordingly. These adjustments were often hard to make, though some people appeared little affected by what was occurring and they maintained very stable work histories, whilst others flourished in new work environments and sizeable numbers risked self employment. When there were negative impacts, these were often unevenly distributed. Redundancy was all too common an experience and some people had frequent and/or lengthy experiences of welfare. Most of those interviewed felt negative or at best unsure of the prognosis for this region. Many had difficulty getting a true feel for the state of the labour market and local economy, though some positive signs at the time of the interviews were noted. Changes such as the introduction of the Employment Contracts Act, which prompted greater restructuring of workplaces, alterations in conditions and wages, as well as greater casualisation and intensification of work, only added to the unsettled nature of this period.

The uneven distribution of negative impacts was most apparent in relation to Maori. Reflecting findings elsewhere, those interviewed in this study were over-represented in the group of longer term or more frequently unemployed. In response to this many opted or were forced into seasonal work, often repeating this cycle – of unemployment to periodic employment and back to unemployment – across a number of years. Though their higher representation amongst those taking some form of education and training appeared to provide a positive note, this is somewhat diffused by their prominence in training schemes for the unemployed. The quality and value of such programmes was questioned by many of the participants, a position supported by their poor outcomes.

The reference to education and training, made in relation to Maori, signals a prominent feature of this study. However, whilst people viewed this as a critical and growing component in relation to someone's employability, they still recognised the influence of others factors in contributing to this. Though some form of education or training was often undertaken as a response to the changing labour market, skills and experience were still seen as important. Even more fundamental was the availability of jobs. As noted earlier, despite its importance in relation to unemployment, the limited nature of programmes and courses for those out of work, together with their poor quality and outcomes was of concern to many who took them. Access to training and education seemed unevenly distributed across the welfare system creating what some saw as disadvantage amongst groups. More generally, questions regarding access and cost were raised and the loss of a sound apprenticeship programme was bemoaned by many people. Alongside full-time and part-time programmes, there was a growing emphasis on workplace based education and training. One clear reason for the general growth of education and training came out of the recognition and first hand experience of the spread of technology.

Another major theme in this study was gender. This had several facets. The gendered nature of work was still very evident, both in the workplace and the home. In respect of the latter, women were still responsible for the much of the housework and remained the primary caregivers in relation to children. Their responsibilities regarding children had significant effects on their participation in paid work. For example, they often disengaged from paid work for periods and then had to manage a return to employment. This might have to be done several times. When working they

had to balance paid and unpaid responsibilities, and managing these proved highly demanding in many cases. Because any paid work was often conditioned on their unpaid responsibilities, part-time and casual employment were prominent amongst women. If education and training was used as a means to aid a return to or to enhance opportunities in paid work, part-time courses were the norm, with women again strongly represented in the group doing these. Whilst producing benefits, this was another activity to balance with their unpaid responsibilities and sometimes with paid work as well. So too was their prominent role in voluntary work. This was the result once again of their primary role in relation to child care, as much of this work was associated with children. It should be added that this voluntary involvement sometimes generated opportunities in paid employment. In contrast, men usually accorded their paid role the highest priority and any unpaid work was secondary to this. Paid work was seldom predicated on their other responsibilities, though men often responded to becoming a father by increasing their involvement in this. Considering these various issues from another angle, childcare can be seen as a highly influential factor in relation to the distribution of work within and outside households, and between men and women.

As to gender and paid work, two contradicting trends emerged. On the one hand, changes were clearly occurring in relation to gender-based work role segregation. This was practically evidenced by people's work experiences. Of course there were varying degrees and types of change. However, against this, people's attitudes still revealed clear and persistent prejudices in relation to what was considered appropriate work for men and women to do. The physical aspects of any job seemed to be a major means of delineating work by gender.

Though the issues were consolidated at either end of the spectrum, age proved to be an important theme. Older people described feeling quite insecure in today's labour market. This usually arose from a combination of their vulnerability to being laid off, often during restructuring and sometimes in favour of younger workers, and their subsequent difficulties getting further employment. Despite more emphasis on workplace training and the benefits it might have for their employability, older workers seemed less inclined than others towards this growing trend. Low rates of pay and difficulties getting work were issues confronting younger people. The latter was often compounded for some by having few qualifications, and more generally by a lack of experience and difficult job market. This is borne out by the experiences of the group of school leavers, almost all of whom were unemployed at least once during their early working lives. Even those who did tertiary study struggled to get jobs.

Finally, the focussing of this study on the Hawkes Bay area, creates another central influence on people's experiences that is worth considering. The vulnerability of this region to the impacts of the downturn and restructuring of the rural sector have already been noted. It also had to adjust, like the rest of this country, to the broader application of economic rationalism including the restructuring of government services. These various factors had detrimental affects on the local economy and employment, and consequently, on people's experiences. However, this region is also structurally diverse with a particular strong mix of agricultural, horticultural, aquaculture, and forestry industries. Though vulnerable in many respects, these industries provided ongoing and developing opportunities within the changing local economy. A

prominent feature of these industries and this region is a heavy reliance on seasonal employment, which created both benefits and disadvantages for people.

Given this focus on Hawkes Bay, one of the interesting tasks that lie ahead is a comparison of the qualitative findings from all three regions. This will not only illustrate common areas but will also throw up contrasts between areas. While many findings will likely be applicable across all the regions and beyond – like those relating to gender, as outlined above – others will no doubt more specifically reflect the region under study. Such a comparison will follow the production of reports for the South Waikato and Waitakere City areas.

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