

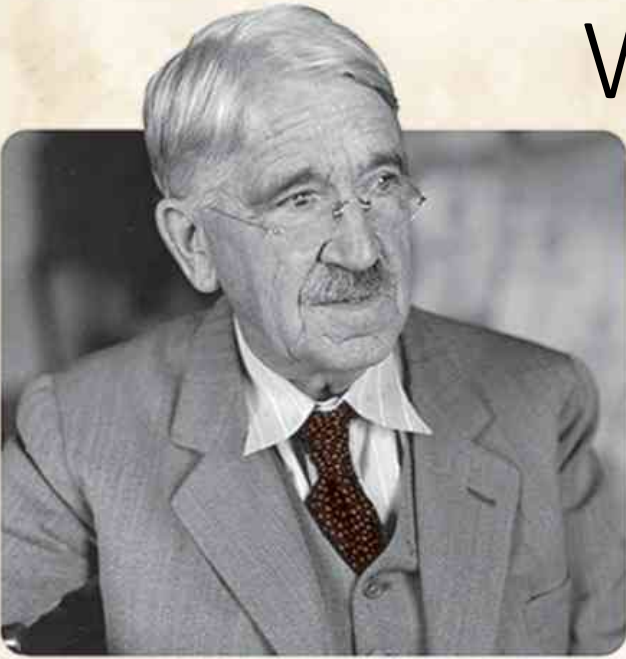
Challenges of life outside the dual system: VET in neo-liberal economies

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What is a vocation?



DEMOCRACY — AND — EDUCATION

JOHN DEWEY

A vocation means nothing but such a direction of life activities as renders them perceptibly significant to a person, because of the consequences they accomplish, and also useful to his associates.

= BERUF

The opposite of a career is neither leisure nor culture, but aimlessness, capriciousness, the absence of cumulative achievement in experience, on the personal side, and idle display, parasitic dependence upon the others, on the social side.

What are the purposes of VET?



My concern here is young people, 16 – 21, for whom we, as a society, have a moral responsibility

- Provide the knowledge and skills needed to pursue competently the multiple vocations of life: work, parent, citizen
- Provide an education that will enable young people to adapt as the economic base of society changes
- Develop the capability to live intelligently and pursue a life worth living, as a citizen participating in a society not just as a worker
- Enable us to become more human

Becoming more human?

“The manifestation of ... thought is not knowledge, but the ability to tell right from wrong, beautiful from ugly. And I hope that **thinking gives people the strengths to prevent catastrophes in these rare moments when the chips are down.**”



Hannah Arendt (1906—1975)

What are the common challenges surrounding VET?

- What should young people be taught?
- How should they learn?
- How are they going to be assessed?
- How should the system be governed: who are the actors involved and what are their responsibilities?
- Who pays?
- How will quality be assured?
- How will the correct volume of provision be provided?

Liberal market economies

Relationship between firms

Competitive and contract based, e.g. subcontracting tends to be based on price competition and be relatively low-trust. Weak employer organisations and trade unions

Role of the state

To ensure 'free and fair' markets, but otherwise to intervene as little as possible.

Employment relationships

Hire and fire' principles lead to low-trust relationships between employers and employees. Reliance on numerical flexibility.

Historically

Coordinating mechanisms that underpin the Dual System have either been dismantled (UK) or never existed (US)

Weak coordination, particularly amongst employers, results in weak collaborative incentives to train and the perceived market failure may, ironically, lead to state intervention in VET

VET in neo-liberal market economies

General education provided by state

Vocational training 'systems' highly variable and unstable, continual policy busyness trying to correct previous policy

Key policy assumption is that the VET system is EMPLOYER led, i.e. attuned primarily to the needs of the market

Large firms may prefer to develop their own systems rather than contribute to sectoral/occupational systems. You may have outstanding apprenticeship arrangements such as Rolls Royce, BAE systems

Chronic under investment in training, especially general knowledge and skills; perceived market failure that may lead to state intervention either through subsidy, e.g. UK apprenticeship, or state funded 'school-based' VET

KEY CHALLENGE: How is it possible to assemble a functioning VET system that will deliver on Dewey's ideal and Beruf when the mechanisms of coordination that underpin the Dual System either never existed, or have been dismantled and/or weakened?

Learning on the job: informal apprenticeship



- Job specific skills – trade or craft training – may be highly effective
- Learning is for the occupation now – lack of future proofing
- Learning by observation, trial and error with feedback
- Strong workplace socialisation
- Employer controls and pays
- Quality may be good but often very poor
- Unknown quantity of training being provided that may not match perceived national skill needs

Internally regulated apprenticeship

Rolls Royce Apprenticeship

- This is high quality VET
- Learning specific and general skills
- Day release to college
- Organisation wide learning not just learning a job
- Developmental activities to make us more human
- Developing the skills and knowledge to be active citizens
- Expensive and very rare



Vocational schooling: The American experience



The decline of the US vocational track

Vocational tracks in US high schools were primarily an inclusion mechanism: to enable a broader range of young people to stay in school and secure employment. Led to huge problems of inequality and racism

By the 1970s vocational tracking on the way out – vocational courses plus general education: college preparation is the role of High Schools. VET fails to keep up with technological changes

Now increasing pressure for better quality Career and Technical Education as a result of perceived skills shortages at the technician level

A multiplicity of localised responses:

New York – IBM: Pathways in Technology Early College High School

HighTech High Learning's network of Charter schools

Project Lead the Way

New generation of career and technical schools

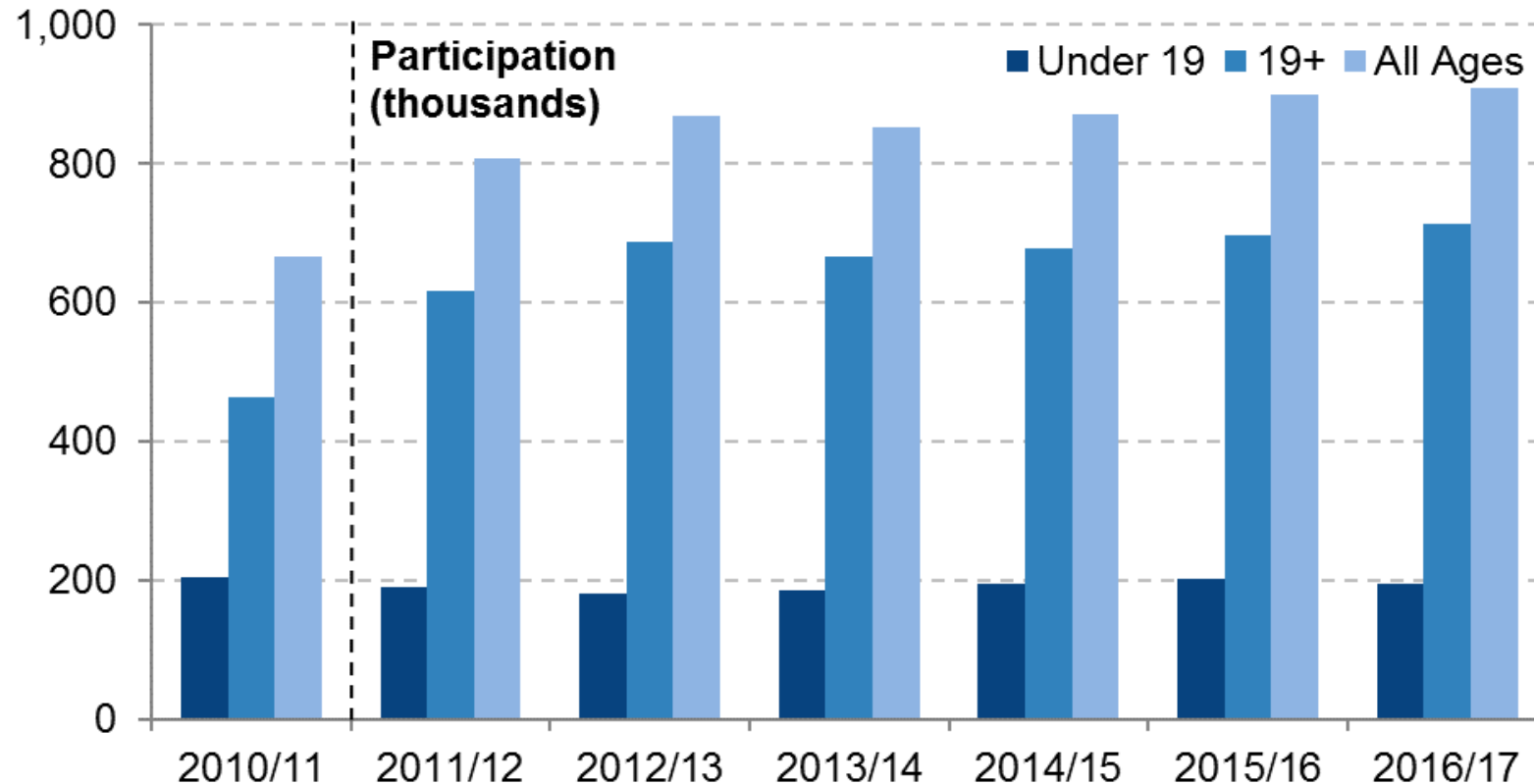
Local and uncoordinated activity: New York has 20,000 firms with 20+ employers but a 2015 New York City partnership survey found only 733 employers working with local schools

1.5 million students graduate High School each year, nationally the supply of apprenticeship places stands at 200,000

The English VET laboratory?

- Neoliberalism rules out real social partnership; an industrial policy; significant regulation of the product market for example by influencing competitive strategy, product or service specification, work quality or job design; labour markets must remain deregulated.
- So VET policy is highly circumscribed: it can try to influence skill supply but not skill demand through three key mechanisms
 - Create new coordinating bodies: Training and Enterprise Councils, Learning and Skills Council, Local Learning and Skills Councils, Sector Skills Councils
 - Provide subsidies for training to counter perceived market failure
 - Develop new qualifications

Apprenticeship participation by age in England 2010/11 to 2016/17

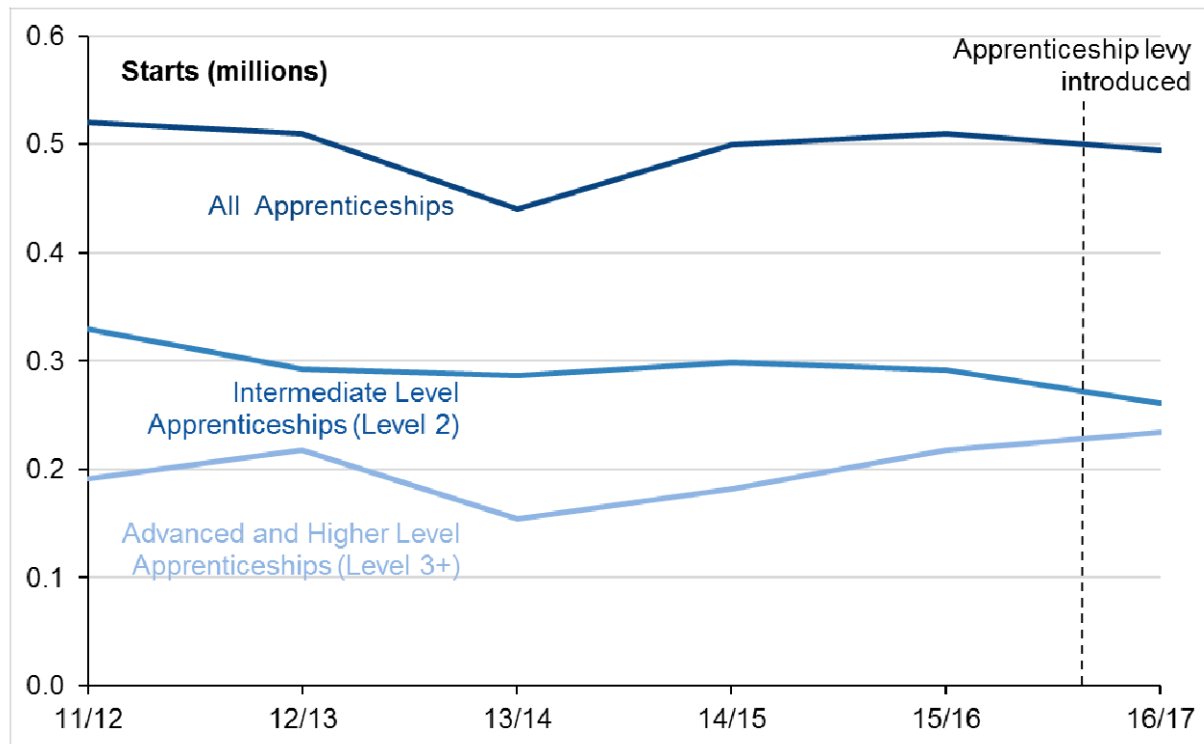


Source: Individualised Learner Record

- Less than 5% of 16-19 year olds are in apprenticeships
- Most are participating in full time education in schools and colleges
- England has moved from a mixed, post compulsory education and training system in the early 1970s to one where school based post-16 education dominates
- Directly controlled by the Government

Apprenticeship starts by Level

England, 2011/12 to 2016/17



Source: Individualised Learner Record

- Most starts are still at Level 2 which probably would not qualify as an apprenticeship in Germany
- From April 2017 **employers with a payroll over £3M pay a new tax**, the Apprenticeship Levy, 0.5% of their payroll costs
- Employers will be able to use the funds raised to pay for Apprenticeship training
- The aim is for an extra 3 million apprenticeships to start by 2020, and the Levy is intended to provide £3bn to fund this growth
- Apprenticeship starts have fallen

The school/college based system



- The majority of VET in England is provided by FE Colleges
- These are funded directly and controlled by the Government
- Ironically, we have a supposedly employer led system that is the most statist in Europe
- VET has been centralised and nationalised
- Collaborative structures have been abolished or weakened
- The ability of the social partners to exert influence on VET policy has been sharply diminished

The alphabet soup of VET qualifications

- BEC & TEC → BTEC
- City and Guilds
- NVQs
- GNVQs
- Diplomas
- T levels
- National Qualification Framework
- Ofqual



The same policy endlessly repeated?



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