

**APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING AND COOPERATIVE EDUCATION
IN BRITISH COLUMBIA**

by

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on the role of and the relationship between the traditional apprenticeship system and cooperative education in British Columbia (BC) as experiential strategies to facilitate the transition from school to work. A literature review traced the conceptual foundations, origins and evolution of apprenticeship training and cooperative education and their interaction in the training of apprentices. Thereafter, the provision of the school-to-work strategies in Canada on federal and provincial levels with special reference to British Columbia was described.

The literature indicated that apprenticeship has remained the principal route for the training of skilled blue-collar workers. However, the relevance of apprenticeship has been questioned. Although the apprenticeship system has not essentially changed in BC, the system has become increasingly regulated. Industry, advocates of more flexible training delivery methods and the BC Provincial Government through Bill 34 have challenged apprenticeship training.

Cooperative education originated as a result of individual thinking, a changing society and system of post-secondary education linked to industry's training needs. It has grown in number, application, fields of study and constituency and its mode of operation has been modified to meet institutional needs. There are strong indications that the cooperative model has been an effective educational model, particularly in training apprentices within the traditional apprenticeship system.

Thus, a need arose to explore the level of satisfaction of employers with cooperative education as a valid methodology to train apprentices within the context of the new apprenticeship training model in British Columbia. An empirical investigation combining quantitative and qualitative approaches conducted in two phases was conducted. A survey with a random sample of employees and semi-structured interviews with a small sample of employees selected by purposeful sampling were undertaken to explore perceptions and experiences of employers who have been involved with both training methods during the last four years.

The research design is described including the selection of participants, data gathering and analysis. The main findings emerging from the data are presented and integrated with the findings of the literature. The study concludes with a set of recommendations for practice and with recommendations for future research.

KEY TERMS

Apprenticeship

Cooperative education

Canada

British Columbia

Experiential learning

Workplace learning

Apprenticeable trades

British Columbia Institute of Technology

Bill 34

Survey

Semi-structure interviews

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