Although apprenticeship used to be viewed as academically questionable, today many educators consider it an ideal vehicle for the work-based learning necessary for the school-to-work transition. In particular, youth apprenticeships are seen as having potential to minimize youth floundering in the labor market, ensure educative work experiences, increase earnings and educational attainment, and make school more meaningful. Unions may perceive youth apprenticeship as a threat to their influence, or they may view it as a help in maintaining unions and wages. Many states focus their efforts on employer participation in youth apprenticeships, but concerns about costs, lost trainer productivity, and liability often affect employer participation in youth apprenticeship. Employers involved in apprenticeship would prefer increased training and support for workplace mentors and trainers and improved coordination with schools. Women tend to be underrepresented in apprenticeship and to enjoy less favorable earnings outcomes, while African Americans are often over-represented but have less favorable completion rates and employment and earnings outcomes. Students may not be aware of apprenticeship opportunities, or they and their parents may have unfavorable perceptions of this option. (This document contains an annotated bibliography listing 28 references.)
Apprenticeship

In the past, apprenticeship was often viewed as pedagogically questionable and biased toward employers' interests (Smith 1995). Today, however, many consider it an ideal vehicle for the work-based learning necessary for the school-to-work transition (Hamilton and Hamilton 1997b). In particular, youth apprenticeships are seen as having potential to minimize youth floundering in the labor market, ensure educative work experiences, enhance earning potential, and make school more meaningful (Greig 1995). Likewise, newer learning theories see apprenticeship as providing desirable opportunities for constructivist learning with its scaffolding, mentoring, and communities of practice (Gutiérrez and Young 1998).

Apprenticeship has become increasingly attractive to many as a means of preparing workers for today's high-tech, high-performance workplace and with its demands for a blend of technological, information, interpersonal, and lifelong learning skills (Evanciew and Rojewski 1995; Galbraith 1996; Robertson 1998). Apprenticeships, according to Robertson, offer a direct route to employment that makes it a natural element of the market-driven, customer-focused job training system envisioned by the Workforce Investment Act (The Workforce Investment Act 2000).

Unions may perceive youth apprenticeship as a threat to their influence, or they may view it as a help in maintaining union and wage standards. Moreover, employer participation in youth apprenticeships is a factor of many state efforts (Bremer and Madzar 1995; New Hampshire Department of Education 1998). Of concern, however, are cost, lost training productivity, and liability for affecting employer participation in youth apprenticeship (Vos 1989). Employees also call for increased training and support for workplace mentors and trainers and improved coordination with schools (Rolphs and Jin 1997).

Race and gender are long-standing issues in both registered apprenticeship and youth apprenticeship (Arizona Department of Education 1997; Goetz 1996; Scribner and Wakelyn 1997). Women continue to be underrepresented and to enjoy fewer favorable earnings outcomes (University of Central Florida 1998; Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board 1998), whereas African Americans are often overrepresented but have less favorable completion rates and employment and earnings outcomes (ibid.).

There is concern about low student awareness of apprenticeship as an option as well as general career and labor market awareness (Schinberg 2000; Smith 1997; Washington State 1998). In addition, participation in apprenticeship may be limited by the perception among both students and parents that apprenticeship is a low-prestige alternative to college or university (Gitter and Scheuer 1997; Scribner and Wakelyn 1997).

The following resources provide additional information about the current state of apprenticeship.

Resources


Scholarly treatment of the history of apprenticeship, apprenticeship from a disciplinary perspective, apprenticeship as a model of learning, and contemporary policy debates on apprenticeship.


Step-by-step guidelines and ideas for program creation, implementation, and improvement; legal information; and issues.


Visits of apprentices as a value-added investment in people that enhances the skill level of the work force; the plan aims to remove barriers and increase flexibility, access to further training, and industry ownership and recognition.


Explains benefits of involvement; analyzes barriers to and incentives for involvement; proposes strategies for enhancing employer involvement.


Explains the process of designing, developing, and implementing cooperative apprenticeship—structured workplace training to provide formal instruction with structured work-based experience, including preapprenticeship, youth apprenticeship, and registered apprenticeship.


Analyzes apprenticeship as a means of integrating school- and work-based learning and preparing technologically knowledgeable workers with the social skills needed for the modern workplace.


Details benefits to students, schools, and contractors of an apprenticeship program using a nationally standardized curriculum and training standards.


Contrasts the German social consensus valuing apprenticeship as preparation for the workplace with the U.S. valuing of traditional academic workplace preparation, discusses transnationalism of students in German model to the U.S. one.


Analyzes Kentucky's experience in relative decline of apprenticeship over time, low participation of women and minorities, future potential; discusses implications for youth apprenticeship.

Sets school-to-work and apprenticeship in historical context; describes both the shortcomings and potential of apprenticeship.


Reconceptualizes apprenticeship as the basis for "reflexive learning," addressing lifelong learning, collaborative/transformational learning, and knowledge production.


Derives principles of effective work-based learning from a youth apprenticeship program to promote high-quality work-based learning.


Advocates apprenticeship as the most elaborate and intensive type of work-based learning that must be embedded in a system of industry standards.


Describes the crucial role of organized labor in designing work-based learning programs; suggests ways to address labor concerns and overcome barriers to labor involvement.


Comprehensive information and guidelines for program design and implementation issues for a variety of work-based learning strategies, including youth apprenticeship.


Discusses the advantages and challenges of apprenticeship as preparation for the high-tech, high-performance workplace.


Employers supported allowing summer work hours, condensing the program, and reducing core competencies; requested increased training support, and coordination from schools.


Cites cases to demonstrate how apprenticeship provides the elements of school-to-work; identifies awareness of program goals, student motivation, problem solving, flexible thinking, and stakeholder commitment as keys for success.


Explains how the elements of apprenticeship (industry-based standards, organized system, integration into further training and advanced education, laddered learning) promote and enable lifelong learning.


Found very low awareness of apprenticeship and associated career opportunities, little time and research in career decision making; suggests higher prestige of academic programs as a barrier.


Analyzes benefits and shortcomings of youth apprenticeships, including issues of minority and female participation, integration of school- and work-based experiences, and incentives or obstacles affecting stakeholder recruitment and participation.


Identifies the lack of career guidance and exploration as a barrier to enrollment and effective participation in youth apprenticeship; outlines needed information and student characteristics for success.


Reviews the history of apprenticeship, attitudes, and administration and implementation issues in light of changing social values.


Analyzes individual, societal, and work-related issues relating to women's participation in apprenticeship—benefits, access, barriers, and strategies for improvement.


ATELS consolidates the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training (BAT) and responsibility for employer and labor liaison; the site provides information on the National Apprenticeship System.


Analyzes employer-perceived barriers to participation in youth apprenticeship and other work-based learning programs; presents strategies to reduce or eliminate barriers.


Analyzes nine state work force training systems (participation, persistence, competency gains, employment, earnings, participant and employer satisfaction); identifies barriers and areas for improvement.


Outlines the role of apprenticeship programs and state and federal apprenticeship agencies in meeting the goals of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.