

A foot in both camps: school students and workplaces

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It is now uncommon for young people to leave school without having had experience in workplaces. Sometimes such experience is arranged by schools – through work experience, structured work placements or other programs. Increasingly young people are also getting workplace experience as part-time student workers. This experience may be quite extensive. A research project funded by the National Research and Evaluation Committee has been examining the different types of learning experienced by students in the different modes of experiencing the workplace. It has also examined the question of whether certain students find access to such experiences more difficult than others do.

These questions are of vital importance because workplace experience assists young people in their transition from schools to full-time work; and also because the foundations for lifelong learning through work may be set down in early workplace experiences. It is therefore essential to have some understanding of the nature, extent and methods of workplace learning for school students. This paper presents the findings of the project.