

★ Secondary Numbers

Jane Kramer takes us for a tour around the numbers she uses in schools careers education.



Mentioning “Labour market knowledge” in a New Zealand secondary school is often met with a puzzled look of bewilderment from students and even some colleagues. They don’t usually know what is meant by this term until I explain “it’s about the state of job vacancies, employer needs and local trends in industry requirements”. Then there are usually a few nods of understanding.

Students are often of the misconception that they can get a job easily until we quote local unemployment youth figures (19% of Nelson youth unemployed in 2012). Or they think a job will just be available for them when they want it. Students often tell me they are going to get a job when they leave school and I endeavour to gently probe their thinking a bit further to give a dose of reality.

My reply includes something along the lines of “the local labour market lately has been tight and the jobs that are around will not necessarily be saved for young, inexperienced people with little or no qualifications”. I don’t want to burst their bubble but the reality is there are not many jobs available.

At my school and most secondary schools in New Zealand, junior social studies classes and senior transition classes study the topic of the world of work which gives students the opportunity to gain information about local employment opportunities. In my region, Nelson, the Economic Development Agency (EDA) examines careers under six main headings:

- Growers
- Forestry
- Seafood
- Agriculture
- Tourism
- Service sectors (Aviation, Business Services, Construction, Engineering, Information and Communication Technology, Research and Development, Natural Products)

Senior students are given the opportunity to explore the occupation outlook of their chosen career pathway through carer education lessons via the Careers New Zealand website www.careers.govt.nz. Dials for almost every conceivable career pathway show students the predicted income, the tertiary fees, and the job prospects of each work role.

Students who are investigating attending University are encouraged to compare study options and be aware of what jobs are available from their degree of choice. The Careers NZ website assists students with an interactive tool to compare various tertiary qualifications and links to job information. The University of Canterbury offer a publication that details what jobs are available by degree. Labour market information is accessed from Careers NZ website that identifies which industries are experiencing a skills shortage, this information compiled from Immigration New Zealand’s long-term and immediate skill shortage lists.

Seminars are held for senior students on funding their tertiary study options. StudyLink is a government agency to assist tertiary students 18 and over to finance their study.

Scholarship information is available and discussed with senior students to assist them explore ways of funding their study after secondary school. The Funding Information Service have a database available for schools to subscribe to called “BreakOut” which holds details of over 2200

funding schemes. BreakOut is a searchable database; it will give you the best matches of scholarships, awards and grants you are eligible for in terms of criteria, level of study and discipline along with closing dates, application requirements and contact details.

Students in our school have lessons on using BreakOut and practical “how to” workshops for applying to tertiary providers and universities including Curriculum Vitae preparation and application techniques.

Labour market information is available to students who are considering a vocational pathway in preference to university and academic study. Schools are being encouraged to reverse the 70% of school resources and schools systems being set up for the 30% of students who choose university study. Instead schools are being encouraged with recent Ministry of Education initiatives to use 70% of the funding and school resources on the 70% of students who are choosing vocational pathways and tertiary study which includes industry involvement. Youth Guarantees is a system that offers all people under the age 18 fees-free places at polytechnics in approved vocational pathway programmes. In addition vocational pathways are being formalised in secondary schools from July 2013 to encourage students to plan their pathway from “learning to earning”.

Students are offered a variety of experiences while still attending school where they can try tertiary programmes, attend a Trades academy one day per week, enter an industry through workplace learning experiences or simply visit industry and further education options they are interested in.

By the time my students have finished their Career Pathways classes, they are familiar with applying labour market information to their choices, and ready to take their next career steps.

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References:

- Into the Future (Ki Te Paerangi) – A Career guide for the Nelson Tasman Region, published by Nelson Regional Economic Development Agency (EDA). <http://www.eda.co.nz/sites/default/files/uploads/pdfs/Into%20The%20Future%202012.pdf>
- Careers New Zealand jobs database – <http://www.careers.govt.nz/jobs/>
Compare Study options - <http://www.careers.govt.nz/tools/compare-study-options/>
Jobs in skill shortage – <http://www.careers.govt.nz/tools/skill-shortage-jobs/>
- Occupation Outlook published and compiled by Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) <http://www.dol.govt.nz/publications/lmr/occupational-outlook/index.asp>
- University of Canterbury publication UC Careers Brochures – What can I do with a Degree in...? <http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/careers/subjects/download.shtml>
- Financial support to students – www.studylink.govt.nz
- Youth Guarantee and Vocational Pathways in secondary schools - www.youthguarantees.net.nz
- BreakOut: scholarships, awards and grants for individuals looking for funding for study and professional development – <http://www.fis.org.nz/index.php?page=BreakOut>