The Challenges of Partnership in School-to-Work Transition

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to explore the challenges of partnership through an examination of a high school apprenticeship program in carpentry in Ontario, Canada. I focus on the relationships and points of tension within and between schools, a training delivery agent, and employers. My analysis suggests three areas of tension that have policy implications for how high school apprenticeship programs operate and are evaluated: First, the academic/vocational divide and lack of value given to non-college/university pathways; second, conflicts between employers and organized labour within the construction industry around the value of apprenticeship training and qualifications; and third, low trust methods of control in the workplace. The third area in particular tends to be neglected in policy discussions and warrants further research.

Introduction

Both in countries with and without strong institutionalised connections between employers and initial education and training, there is growing interest in education-industry partnerships as a way of sharing responsibility for young peoples’ transitions. Such partnerships are most relevant—and perhaps most needed—in societies that do not have strong traditions of close collaboration between government, employers, trade unions and community organisations. (OECD, 2000, p. 128)

Instead of the tradition of social partnership characteristic of vocational education and training (VET) in many European countries, a ‘market-based model’ is evident in Canada (Heinz, 2003; Krahn, 1996). Within this type of deregulated, voluntaristic training system, it is arguably more difficult to develop and sustain work-based learning (cf. Keep and Payne, 2002). However, as noted above, in countries like Canada,
partnerships are seen as a possible policy response to concerns about facilitating young people’s transition to work. Partnerships are consistent with new public management approaches, which emphasize building alliances, shared responsibility, increased transparency, and accountability for results (Armstrong and Lenihan, 1999; Pal, 1997). Of particular interest are partnerships at the local or regional level between employers, educational institutions, unions, and community organizations.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the challenges of partnership through an examination of a high school apprenticeship program in carpentry in Ontario, Canada. Several Canadian provinces developed high school apprenticeship programs in the 1990s to address the shortage of skilled trades workers and to facilitate the transitions of young people from school to work. For example, programs in Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario allow high school students to combine their studies with apprenticeship training (Lehmann and Taylor, 2003; Schuetze, 2003). In Ontario, students who have completed grade 10 and are at least 16 years old can register as apprentices (Government of Ontario, 2002; TV Ontario, 2004).

Conceptual influences

A variety of writers in Canada and the UK have suggested that there is a need to cultivate social cooperation and institutionalized linkages between schools, colleges, trainers, unions, and employers (Schuetze, 2003; Keep and Payne, 2002; Fuller and Unwin, 1999). Fuller and Unwin (1999) argue that the institutional supports and quality of inter-institutional relations in different industrial sectors affect the extent to which
apprentices are likely to be integrated within their occupational and local communities and to be active participants in shaping them.

At the same time, certain barriers to partnership are recognized. For example, governments are often unwilling to impose anything that might be construed as a burden on employers but rather seem to believe that employers will voluntarily become involved in training (Keep and Payne 2002). An employer-led approach is problematic for writers who argue that the interests of employers and workers with respect to training are not necessarily consistent (Ashton, 2004; Evans et al., 1997; Spencer, 2001). For example, employers are unlikely to provide opportunities for workers to gain a range of skills (Senker et al., 1999). Involving trade unions, on the other hand, provides a potentially collective voice for employees, encourages attention to training quality, aids the legitimization of apprenticeships, and may result in the inclusion of groups who are normally excluded from training (Keep and Payne, 2002). Partnerships that include organized labour as well as employers are therefore encouraged.

However, the different interests of social partners are likely to produce tensions that must be addressed by policy-makers. For example, the goal of using apprenticeship as a vehicle for social inclusion can come into conflict with the notion of apprenticeship as a high-quality training route (Keep and Payne, 2002). Further, attempts government and unions to establish training requirements for employers is likely to conflict with their desire to maintain flexibility in employment. Changes in work may also create tensions. For example, Clarke (1999, p. 38) notes that the craft-based aspect of apprenticeship in the construction industry in the UK is ‘at odds with a labour process that is more industry-wide, integrated, mechanized, and skilled.’ In addition to recognizing competing
interests, there is therefore also a need to understand how employers’ demands for skills and knowledge are related to changes in work (Keep et al., 2002).

Based on the preceding discussion, two ideas are key to my analysis of a high school apprenticeship program: First, that work-based learning is affected by the work context and by relationships between social partners; and second, that social partnerships present challenges because of the divergent interests of institutional players and relations of power within the labour process.

The Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP)

[The carpentry OYAP] is the Cadillac of all training. No one can match the standards, the expectations, the quality of the instructors, the quality of the management, and the resources they have. And they have the pulse on the industry. (I-6, School district coordinator)

The carpentry apprenticeship program was developed in an urban centre in Ontario for students in their final semester of high school. Key players include four surrounding school districts, a joint management-union training centre, students, and employers. In the two metropolitan school districts where the program began, the usual process for students was as follows:

Interested students applied to the carpentry apprenticeship program in their final year of high school. Candidates were interviewed, and in the two metro school districts, successful students participated in a four-week pre-apprenticeship course. They then travelled to the joint management-union training centre for eight weeks, where they
participated in the first level of apprenticeship training. Students had the opportunity to earn high school credits and to obtain their Basic level (Phase 1) qualification.

Instructors at the training centre placed successful students in their first work placement, where they earned the first year apprentice rate of pay and co-operative education (co-op) credits to fulfill the requirements for their high school diploma. Students were then encouraged to become union members and to complete their in-school training and the hours needed to complete their apprenticeship.

The funding for this program comes from the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities and from the training trust fund. Since it is seen as exemplary by participating school districts and organized labour participants in Ontario, it provides a good site for looking at the opportunities and constraints related to partnership. This paper draws on data from 28 individual interviews/focus groups with high school staff, training centre representatives, supervisors of students, and union employers.

**The work of partnership**

Although partnerships tend to be framed by policy-makers as a way of creating synergy and increased efficiency, participants from schools and the training centre highlighted some of the challenges of working across different institutions. For example, a representative from an urban school board commented:

[I]t’s a heck of a lot of work to design one of these [OYAP] programs and go through the approval process to organize the meetings. You have to bring in the ministry, you have to bring in the training delivery agents. You have to develop
mock timetables that prove that we’re meeting both guidelines, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities. (I-2, OYAP coordinator)

In addition to the administrative challenges associated with setting up programs that involve two government ministries, educators were required to look at the articulation between school curriculum and apprenticeship curriculum in terms of whether the latter met Ministry of Education requirements and whether students were being adequately prepared. A carpentry teacher who oversees the program in his district notes:

I bridge the gap between the Ministry of Education’s requirements for diploma and what they’re trained in while they’re here [at the training centre]. Because they’re taught specifically to be carpenters here, and for the ministry that’s not broad enough, that’s not good enough to get them a credit. ... The ministry is not interested in, does the kid go to work after this? It’s, how much of this meets diploma requirements? (I-4, Carpentry teacher)

In the carpentry program, this teacher took the initiative to develop a four-week pre-apprenticeship course for students in his district to prepare them for the training centre. It focused on conceptual areas where students tend to be weak (e.g., math, geometry) and on acculturating them to the discipline of the training centre and workplace (e.g., conforming to rules around punctuality and attendance, handing in homework on time).

In addition to requirements for in-school training, the ministry also set requirements for the work placement portion of training for which students earned co-op
credits. Teachers were required to visit students in the workplace and to organize ‘integration’ days where they could reflect on what was learned in school and how it related to their placement. However, this tended to be seen as a bureaucratic requirement that had little relevance to the program because the suggested activities were not seen as meaningful, and more importantly, because teachers did not want to burden employers by asking them to complete paperwork or to provide release time for students.

The following quotes reflect these concerns:

[T]here’s a [co-op] … binder that’s about six inches thick with activities, recommended and suggested, and there’s tons of stuff to do.

A: But it sounds like a lot of it is not specifically oriented towards trades work?

Well it has to be very broad because it’s meant for all students in co-op and therefore the thickness of it. And you couldn’t do it all so you go through and you want to select which one seems to apply to the particular job that the person is doing. And again now you’re assuming as a teacher in the classroom you know what they’re doing out there. And yes, you do generally but not specifically, and so it just gets more and more diluted, you’re less and less in touch with it. Someone has prepared this because they thought this is what [students are] going to do out there. …. so who’s evaluating whom and who’s deciding what’s important and how valid the answers are, etcetera? (I-54, Carpentry teacher)

[W]ith the intensity of the program from the carpentry apprenticeship we’re trying to do all of the hours in basically about six and a half or seven weeks at the end, and … we’re supposed to include six integration days legally. The employers
don’t understand that it’s a high school program and that students should be coming back to school once every week or once every other week.

A: They don’t make allowances for them?

I don’t ask them to because I think if I was to go to the employers and say, ‘Look you may have the student today but I would like them the next day.’ I think a lot of the employers would say it’s just not worth the hassle because they want apprentices. (I-44, Carpentry teacher)

I don’t like to take time away [when I visit students] because [the employers] might be very polite but I don’t know how much I’m affecting their work at the time, and then therefore later they might say, ‘you know, I don’t want to take on these students because somebody wants to talk to them for half an hour and to me for half an hour.’ Because that’s one of the things we’re supposed to do is also talk to the employees at length and they’re also supposed to fill out all these evaluation forms. (I-54, Carpentry teacher)

Therefore, although from an educational perspective, attempts to help students to integrate their formal and informal learning is a laudable goal, their concerns about burdening employers reflect power relations in the school-workplace interface.

In addition to the work of schools, the training centre has also had to work at the partnership. For example, because credits are involved, high school teachers are required to participate in the training and roles had to be negotiated. An instructor at the centre reflects on this process:
When [the high school teachers] first came, we didn’t know what to make of this. This was new. We just kind of sat there looking at each other saying, ‘Are we going to get into this, I'm better than you, you’re better than me?’ That’s a professional [tension] and we kind of threw that out in the first couple of weeks … But we shared some war stories and … we said, well what can you do for us so that we don’t feel threatened, but also you can teach? And it was an evolution. So now when the respective instructors come, I will say ‘I want you to do this because you can bring a level of understanding that is a bridge.’ I won’t pretend we know it all. There are definite things, you know, training, that’s a bridge. Let’s take advantage, maybe we can learn from you. (I-1, Instructor, training centre)

Training centre staff also had the task of finding co-op work placements for all students in the program and educating employers. Since OYAP apprentices were approximately ten years younger than the average first year apprentice, staff members were conscious of the need to educate employers and supervisors to provide encouragement and to be more understanding.

Selling trades pathways to the schools

The OYAP program has encouraged partnership between players that previously had little exposure to each other. It has required them to learn about one another and to negotiate roles and responsibilities. The program is relatively successful in that approximately 70 percent of students successfully completed the Basic level of their carpentry apprenticeship while earning a high school diploma over three years. However, discussion with participants about the place of the program within the broader context of
the formal education system indicates tensions around program goals and the value given to school-to-work transition programs.

The question of whether apprenticeship is viewed as a vehicle for social inclusion or a high quality training route (Keep and Payne, 2002) arises in conversation with school staff and instructors from the training centre. School staff are more likely to emphasize the former view while instructors promote the latter.¹ For example, although he notes that the quality of applicants to the program has increased since its inception, an instructor comments on a difference in approach between the school system and training centre:

[I]n some instances I think a high school environment, it cocoons them. ‘It’s ok. You don’t have to do that. You can go here.’ It’s like they fall back into mediocrity. And here, we go the other way around. I say, ‘I only want the best.’

(I-1, Training centre instructor)

Another instructor adds that teachers need to be educated about the requirements of the trade:

That’s the biggest thing that I get, ‘oh I didn’t know they were going to do that.’ … They don’t know what a carpenter does. The first thing that half of them are telling me is construction, to me is a labourer, and they have no idea what we do. They don’t understand, they think that the drawings for a house say exactly how to build the house. (I-33, Training centre instructor)

While carpentry teachers agree that there is a lack of awareness about the skills needed to complete the program, they are concerned that it may become elitist:

¹ Although school staff emphasize inclusion based on ‘ability’ there has been little effort at the school or training centre to address issues of inclusion for equity-seeking groups such as women, visible minorities, people with disabilities or Aboriginal students.
The other thing is, there are students in our system who have taken this program … that could be in the trade and possibly will end up in the trade, but in my opinion should absolutely be in the trade, and they didn’t make it through because they couldn’t do the academic end of it. (I-54, Carpentry teacher)

Instructors’ concerns about the quality of applicants and teachers’ concerns about students who fail are arguably linked to the strong divide that has developed between academic and vocational curricula in schools and to the lack of value and resources given to non-college/university pathways (Taylor, 2005). Tech courses tend to be conceived as ‘hands on,’ practical, and a-theoretical, and are suggested to students who are having difficulty with academic courses. For example, a carpentry teacher observes:

[T]here are only a few schools who really promote this. Now I think that OYAP and apprenticeship will grow as success comes along. But there is a reluctance in some schools to feel that their students should transfer to another school and be part of an OYAP program. Because quite often it’s not the student they’d like to see go. Quite often, it’s the ones they consider some of the brighter students. They think it’s a shame that they are throwing their life away. (I-4, Carpentry teacher)

This is particularly true of schools with a strong academic reputation, while schools that are more ‘tech-oriented’ are concerned that if they transfer students, their programs will decline further. Cuts to education funding and lack of valuing of ‘vocational’ courses have meant that technical courses and facilities are threatened. As a result, most students are not exposed to the kind of learning in schools that would allow them to choose a career in the trades. The lack of resources in schools for coordination of
OYAP programs, developing school-to-work partnerships, and articulating curriculum is therefore a key issue.

**Selling apprenticeship to employers**

[W]e have technical committee meetings with the contractor associations to talk about their specific needs within that sector of the industry and how to deal with it with respect to recruitment and the future needs of that industry and anything new that takes place within that sector of the industry.

_A:_ So do you get feedback at those meetings about programs like OYAP?

Well the feedback you get is typical from contractors. The apprentice is never good enough or productive enough, right? That’s a typical, to be expected. You don’t always get that positive. … [S]ome other companies don’t particularly like to hire apprentices and they only want to hire journey persons. So we have to deal with that because we have in our collective agreement a one to four ratio [of apprentices to journey persons]. (I-29, Training centre representative)

Despite the formal commitment to training represented by the joint management-union trust fund and training centre, tensions around whether the apprenticeship system was meeting employers’ needs, and the value of in-class training and apprenticeship qualifications were evident in discussions with employers and training centre staff. Apprenticeship curriculum is set by government with input from training delivery agents and employers. At the time of interviews, the provincial curriculum was due for revision and the training centre had successfully bid on the job of developing curriculum guidelines (I-15, Training centre instructor).
Staff members were pleased with the prospect of having more influence on the content of apprenticeship curriculum but had concerns about the volume of material and sequencing. For example:

I think there’s been so many changes and so much new technical changes that some of the people responsible for the decision-making at the different provincial levels fail to recognise the additional work load that is required of apprentices and have failed on several requests to increase the number of days or weeks required to complete the in-school training portion, which in turn results in a lot of failures at the exam. (I-29, Training centre representative)

We have eight weeks to cover the curriculum and realistically we need twelve weeks to do it. … So I personally find it difficult to cram everything in there. I can’t do as good a job as I want to do in certain areas.

A: And why isn’t it twelve weeks? Do you just not get funding for that?
Yeah I think it’s funding from the Ministry. I think in the Provincial Apprenticeship Committee which comprises of all community colleges and the union, they’ve been pushing to get a fourth in-school phase. But it just comes down to dollars and cents. (I-15, Training centre instructor)

In the apprenticeship program here in Ontario they learn residential construction in their Intermediate phase. They learn formwork in their Advanced phase … whereas in Phase one they’re learning hand tools, power tools, joinery, which doesn’t necessarily prepare them for the market place. … some of the stuff that
they learn in their phase one is very important to becoming a carpenter but maybe not so important for your first job, right?

(I-19, Training centre instructor)

Since the majority of OYAP apprentices worked for scaffolding or formwork companies in this first year, the sequencing of curriculum is important to their employability. However, it was also apparent that employers’ training needs varied significantly. Some wanted specialized skills while others demanded more general skills. The technical skills that they desired also varied (e.g., between ‘fine’ work like finishing and ‘rough’ work like scaffolding). However, what they tended to share was concern about the return on their investment in training. For example:

Actually the carpentry program that’s there for these guys is outdated … I find that the union is using the system to collect money and they’re not really giving them what they should be, they’re leaving it to us.

A: Would you like to see more teaching that’s relevant to the kind of work you’re doing?

Absolutely … I picked up the phone, called [training centre director] who’s supposed to be in charge of the apprenticeship program, whatever, I said, ‘I’ve got a good one for you. I’m going to bring one of the third year kids to the hall and his material and myself and with your boys, we’ll build this article or whatever it is. It’s not a big deal right? ‘Oh no, we can’t do that, you know, it’s not in the curriculum, blah, blah, blah.’ (I-65, Employer)
A: And has [your industry association] seen what they’d like to see as far as training goes?

No, but we’re pretty concerned about it. Because there’s a lot of money that we pay our scaffold companies to the training fund at the [union]. And most of us don’t feel we’re getting our money’s worth. Like it’s millions of dollars over a period of a couple of years. And you know, these guys are coming out with three or four days training [related to our work], it’s not good for us. (I-74, employer)

A: The training trust fund, you’re an employer so you would pay into that. How does that work?

You know the definition of a boat--it’s a hole in water in which you pour money, you know. So I don’t know if there’s any direct analogy between a sailing boat and the course you steer by at a union trust fund but I suspect there may be some and I'll leave it there. …

A: So you’re not convinced that you’re getting a good return on the training investment?

You would get good return on the investment if you can keep [apprentices], if they stay. That’s where the return is. Because it is an investment. … As I say, there’s a love, hate relationship [with the union]. (I-69, Employer)

Most employers agreed with the sentiment that ‘we’re signatory to the union and we’d better get what we want’ in terms of training (I-66, Employer). However, there were arguably conflicting trends in the industry which made it difficult to respond to employers’ demands. A training centre instructor noted the trend toward companies
specializing in particular parts of the trade and therefore requiring a narrower skill set. At the same time, there was a trend toward multi-skilling across trades. For example, several participants mentioned a labour union that was training workers in small parts of a number of construction trades and therefore offered employers ‘one-stop shopping’ (I-19 Training centre instructor). With the introduction of new technologies, there was also competition between unions to represent workers and to control training.

The training offered by the general labour union was not certified. However, it posed a threat because while all of these employers had hired OYAP apprentices, they placed little importance on the apprenticeship credentials developed through the carpenters’ union. Because carpentry is a voluntary trade in Ontario, the Certificate of Qualification and Red Seal are not required to work in the trade, and none of the eight employers that were interviewed used them as key criteria in their hiring. Some suggested that credentials do not adequately measure required skills, while others (usually in scaffolding or formwork companies) felt that a general qualification was not necessary.

For example, a scaffolding employer remarked:

What we see happening here is when we get a young apprentice and we start training him and we keep him, after about two or three years they kind of realize that this sort of a trade inside a trade. They don’t need to have all that apprenticeship training to be a scaffolder because there’s no accreditation for it. So they tend to yeah drop out of the big course because they can focus on just scaffolding. And there’s no real need for training. They’re not real carpenters but they’re still on the list as a scaffolder, so they can make the same amount of money and everything else as a carpenter.
A: Is that sufficient for you as an employer?

Well it doesn’t really make a difference to us because we’re not getting sufficient training in the first place. (I-74, Employer)

A second scaffolding employer pointed out that the certification did not matter to his company because ‘we don’t treat people as what they are, we treat them as what they do’ and pay them accordingly (I-63, Employer). A third employer felt that because the in-class training did not deal with the new materials involved in his business, the credential had little value. These comments are consistent with the finding that the high drop out rate in apprenticeship is partly due to the lack of importance given to completion in certain trades and a lack of congruence between the structure and content of apprenticeship programs and the training needs of the labour market (Sharpe, 2003). For most employers, previous work experience was what counted.

Although the question of whether craft-based apprenticeship is at odds with the changing labour process is important, hiring and training practices in the workplace also shape the learning that can occur. For example, training centre instructors mentioned the unsafe practices that apprentices adopt on worksites as they try to work faster. While instructors acknowledged the importance of learning from others, they also cautioned against ‘monkey see, monkey do’ training as follows:

Where did you learn that? Well I just watched the other guy do that. Where did he learn that? By watching somebody else do that. At some point when the decision was made to change, you know they forgot that the people behind them have no idea of the original knowledge that went into it. And yeah, that’s carpentry. That’s a lot of other trades as well. (I-1, Training centre instructor)
The imperative to learn quickly and to cut corners comes partly from the lack of job security in the construction industry. As an instructor comments, “our business says it doesn’t matter if you've been with the company for 30 years, one hour’s notice is all you need for layoff” (I-19). It also comes from a competitive context in which ‘a lot of companies will say, ‘send me ten [apprentices] so I can find one’ (I-1, Training centre instructor). In addition, there appears to be little support for apprentices. For example, the supervisor of an OYAP student discusses his company’s approach, as follows:

The construction business is kind of a bit different from your regular corporate kind of office work and stuff. [In office work] they might sit down and talk about your problems and your career, things that we wouldn’t normally do.

A: So there isn’t a lot of mentorship?

No, I would say not. And maybe somebody should start some construction company that takes on that. But I can’t see any company who’s out there trying to make money that would spend time behind some apprentices unless they know that those apprentices are going to be with them and that they have the interest and the motivation and the dedication and the commitment. …

A: Is there more employers could do or do you think they’re doing enough?

I think employers could do a lot more actually you know. It’s hard to get employers to do a lot more because they’re busy and their time is valuable. And I think it really is really left up to the employee to make it good for themselves … to fit in, to show that they want to learn, to show that they want to work, to be readily available, you know, for whatever. So I’m saying the onus is a hell of a lot more on the employee than the employer. Basically the employer wants you to
work and make him money. That’s the nature of the business and if you’re not doing that, you’re no good to them. (I-57, Supervisor)

Concluding comments

[W]e cannot fully understand the process of workplace learning unless we locate it in the context of the underlying structural relationships that underpin the process. These underlying relationships determine the range of opportunities for learning, the knowledge that is made available to be learnt, the support available for learning and finally, the rewards that are available for successful learning. (Ashton, 2002, pp. 150-151)

Although Ashton is referring only to structural relationships within the workplace, this paper has focused on relationships and tensions involved in a partnership between schools, a union training delivery agent, and employers. For example, I note tensions within schools around the organization and content of secondary school curriculum and the lack of value given to non-college/university pathways. Clearly these factors affect the way program goals are conceived, the quality of OYAP applicants, the degree of articulation of curriculum across sites, preparation given to students, and the level of support given to them by the school system. While I agree that the carpentry OYAP is, in many ways, a ‘Cadillac’ of OYAP training, attention to tensions may lead to ways of enhancing opportunities and support for student learning.

One area where more attention needs to be given concerns the role of educators in monitoring students in the workplace. Currently, educators are very concerned about the implications of burdening employers. However, if integration of formal and informal
learning is seen to be an important goal for this work-based learning program, then employers must be educated about its importance. Given their concerns about the quality of apprentices and apprentices’ lack of knowledge of different aspects of the occupation and industry, it may be very helpful to involve employers in integration activities. Another area where more attention could be given is in monitoring access to programs and promoting inclusion by underrepresented groups (e.g., women, people with disabilities). In 2004, only one of seventy carpentry OYAP students in this program was female.

In addition to tensions related to the organization of schooling, there are tensions in the workplace, which are not given enough attention by educational policy-makers because of their supply-side focus. In the carpentry OYAP, for example, despite the commitment to apprenticeship training reflected in the joint union-management trust fund, it was clear that even those union employers who have hired OYAP apprentices had concerns about the value of in-school training and apprenticeship qualifications. Concerns about in-school training were related to whether curriculum is keeping up with changes in materials and technology, and whether apprentices receive adequate training to ready them for their job site. However, the competing trends toward specialization and multi-skilling make it very difficult to meet the training demands of diverse employers. The failure of government to make carpentry a mandatory trade and therefore to require employers to use apprenticeship qualifications as a key criterion in hiring impacts relations between labour and craft unions, between the carpenters’ union and employers, and between union and non-union employers in ways that shape the opportunities for apprenticeship training.
In conclusion, it is noteworthy that the focus of OYAP partners tends to be on the practices of schools and training delivery agents, while the management of learning in the workplace is given less attention. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to explore this area in the depth required to accurately depict the relationships, norms, and practices that are typical in different types of carpentry work, it is a topic for further investigation and discussion. For example, to what extent are construction workplaces characterized by practices that broaden workers’ skills and involve them in work design (Ashton, 2002)? To what extent are there mechanisms (e.g., mentoring, formal appraisal.) to provide employees with feedback on their skills development and work performance? To what extent do employers and supervisors share knowledge of the business with apprentices? And finally, to what extent is performance rewarded both at the individual and group level? My sense is that although answers to these questions will vary across different types of companies within the industry, the organization of training and work (e.g., apprentices are indentured to the union, not the company; there is a high rate of labour mobility; and employees often see themselves as future entrepreneurs) encourages low trust, command and control methods of governance which also have critical implications for learning in the workplace.

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