Why do trainees ‘drop out’ and what can we do about it?

No Frills
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Why this research?

- 2014 five-year completion rates:
  - 42% of trainees
  - 51% of apprentices

- Literature lacks the non-completing trainee voice – they are more talked ‘about’ than talked ‘to’

- To find out from non-completers’ themselves why they did not complete their qualifications
Research Approach

- What factors/reasons contribute to the non-completion of level 3 and 4 qualifications
- How are these factors enacted in practice?
  - Literature Scan (39)
  - Screening Survey (488)
  - ITO non-completion data (11,989)
  - Qualitative phone interviews (114)
  - Inductive analysis
Finding Trainees

- 273 of 488 who completed screening tool agreed to be interviewed
- Systematic sampling used with 3 ITOs who had high responses rates
- Over sampling of Māori and Pasifika
- Target of 154; achieved 114
- Overall sample aligns with 2014 non-completion data from 7 of the ITOs
The trainees

Age

- 15-19 years: 0%
- 20-24 years: 20%
- 25-29 years: 10%
- 30-34 years: 5%
- 35-39 years: 5%
- 40-49 years: 10%
- 50+ years: 20%

Ethnicity

- NZ European/Pakeha: 80%
- Maori: 20%
- Pasifika: 5%
- Asian: 5%
- Other: 5%
Starting out

• 80% were motivated
• 70% did not require qual for job
  ◦ Reasons: get ahead; prepare for future; skill recognition
• 60% with employers who thought quals and training important
• Literature - varied views on whether it is whole quals or skills that employers want
Employment

- 90% reasonable relationships with employers and work colleagues
- 80% thought employers positive about training and qualifications
- 64% felt valued at work
- 43% would get a pay increases on completion
Learning at work

- Learnt on the job – lacked structure
- Around 40% actively shown what to do or given opportunity to practise
- 31% had separate time for training
- Very few given feedback

- Work is like work, there is nothing training about it. Showed how to use the machine - did a good job showing us and we just got on with it. Filled in folders as we went. (M, 35-39, Pasifika)
Training = bookwork

- Around 50% saw training as the bookwork
- As such learning was self-directed and in their own time

Learning from your workmates - it is part of the job so not really separate at all. We were just given the book, told to read it and do it, but never shown how to go about doing it and I’m a person who needs to be shown so that’s why I didn’t do it.

(F, 40-49, Pākehā)
Support during training

- Only 20% with optimal support
  - Another girl quite a bit ahead of me – she would talk to me. The boss was really good. Showed me what he does if there is a health and safety incident – and what he had to do afterwards. Then I started doing the filing of the health and safety stuff, so it was easy to understand when I went to the course. (F, 20-24, Māori)

- Less than optimal
  - I could have found more time I guess. The paper was a bit more intense. ... I suppose like everything else, more time, some study time or time off would have helped. The ITO was supportive but I've got a huge workload. I'm quite happy I stopped; it was a relief. (M, 50+, Māori)
Reasons for non-completion

- Cumulative impact - more than one reason, often with a tipping point
  - Personal and family circumstances (31%)
    *I lost my Mum in the same year and my brother the year before and then my sister was unwell. At the start I focused on my assignments but in the end my family came first. (F, 40-49, Pasifika)*
  - Individual decisions (29%)
  - Lack of support (20%)
    *More support at work and from a one day a month session; more time in work hours; a chance to meet with other trainees. (F, 40-49, Pākehā)*
What would have helped?

- 56% commented on employment related factors
- 40% commented on the training system
- 18% commented on personal factors
Value of completion

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<th></th>
<th>Regret</th>
<th>Relief</th>
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<tr>
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<td>39%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cared</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>going</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Got on top of me</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not for me</td>
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Drive Diminishes

Burden Increases
Preventing non-completion

- Role of ITOs
  - Administrative arrangements
  - Assessment practices

- Role of employers
  - Capability and capacity to train
  - Time, support, structure, opportunity

- Role of trainee
  - Motivation, persistence, commitment, resilience
I still want to do it. The family is sorted now - could do it now. Still have the books and look at them. I need a bit more support from the team - a bit more than two hours a week. (F, 40-49, Pākehā)

Not sure what I will do in the future. Wouldn't mind driving trucks and if I change my mind I could do an adult apprenticeship. I told the guys why I stopped and they were gutted but I had made up my mind. (M, 20-24, Māori)

Half way through I realised I didn’t want to do it forever. Loved it, but not lifelong. Another job presented itself and I decided to do it. A better career move. (F, 20-24, Māori)
What we can do

For the trainee:

- Study skills – esp planning
- Reduce bookwork if possible
- Streamline assessment practices
- Set clear expectations as to the personal commitment required
- Provide support networks – online, study groups, mentors etc
- Follow-up calls to re-engage trainees
What we can do

- For the employer
  - Communicate expectations clearly in terms of support for trainee/time required
  - Assess their capacity and capability to provide training & assessment – sometimes a sign-up won’t result
  - Encourage more integrated learning and assessment on job
  - Identify triggers for withdrawal & follow-up