Fixing problematic apprenticeship systems:

There is never a clean slate

Dr Don Zoellner

AVETRA Research Conference 2016
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* A preoccupation with the future of youth
* Dates back to Greek city-state ‘magistrates’
* Apprenticeships known in all human societies
* National apprenticeship system continually under scrutiny as part of the angst over youth
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Apprenticeship system shortcomings in both Britain and Australia (part one):

* Mismatch between funded outputs and labour market needs
* Dominated by major vested interests
* Public payments go directly to providers
* Easy and cheap rather than trade courses
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(Part Two):
* Decreased apprenticeship starts
* General increase in the age of apprentices
* Misconceived vocational education policies
* Giving rise to scandals and revelations of poor training outcomes (Wolf 2015 and NCVER 2015)
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* Different responses in each country
* Explained by a Foucauldian discourse analysis of how
* Thelen’s adaptation of *Path Dependency*:
  * **Conversion** from original purpose to new ends
  * **Institutional Layering** is grafting of new elements onto an existing stable institutional framework
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Britain and Australia are path dependent upon their different social welfare - full employment linkages giving rise to distinct apprenticeship systems.
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In Britain:

* Originally voluntary
* Characterised by battles between union/employer
* Industrial Training Boards and levies
* Collapse of the system in the 1970s
* System taken over by Government and expanded
* New industry training levy
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In Australia:

* Strong unions, conciliation and arbitration courts
* State-based apprenticeship authorities
* State-based technical colleges
* Added traineeships to increase numbers
* Failed attempt to introduce a training levy
* Expansion of students loans
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New Public Management:

* Funder - industry, government minister, client
* Purchaser – government agency, industry, person
* Provider – public, private, community
* Client – government (public), industry, individual
* Path dependency determines who sits where depending upon policy/program decisions/power.
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Conversion actually brought the two systems closer:

* Introduced training markets and provider choice
* Introduced hundreds of new apprenticeships
* Continual tinkering with who pays
* Produces unintended consequences
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Institutional layering produced different systems
* Britain retains link to age as a ‘production unit’ and the use of employer levies
* Australia has ageless ‘education units’ linked to individual loans for apprentices
* Different means of shifting costs from the government based upon unique views of youth.
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Thank you for your attendance.

Questions and discussion.

Email: don.zoellner@cdu.edu.au