

Apprenticeship and Skills Training Opportunities in Nanaimo, Duncan & District



Presented by the Nanaimo, Duncan & District Labour Council

Leanne Morrison

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Apprenticeship and Skills Training Opportunities in Nanaimo, Duncan & District

Introduction

In March 2006, the BC Federation of Labour sponsored a meeting in Nanaimo regarding skills and apprenticeship training in British Columbia. The issue of skills and apprenticeship training is an issue central to members of the Nanaimo, Duncan & District Labour Council, and Councils from all parts of British Columbia.

The Nanaimo, Duncan & District Labour Council, with the assistance of the Canadian Labour Council undertook to do research into local apprenticeship training, and how to promote this vital training to local governments, school boards, and other employers.

The Nanaimo, Duncan & District Labour Council hired a researcher in the summer of 2006 to conduct the research and prepare a report for a presentation. The research was conducted from August 2006 until January, 2007. The Apprenticeship Forum date is February 3, 2007, co-sponsored by the NDDLDC and the BC Federation of Labour.

During the course of the research, the NDDLDC learned many of the details of the damage being done to the apprenticeship program and subsequently broadened the scope of the research to include as much of this information as possible. Consequently, the NDDLDC decided to present the research in the form of two research papers. The paper concerning the changes to the apprenticeship program is entitled “Unlearning the Trades”;The B.C. Liberals plan to dumb down trades training in B.C.with Industry Training Organizations and the paper promoting local apprenticeships is entitled Apprenticeship and Skills Training Opportunities in Nanaimo, Duncan & District .

Research

The research for the NDDLDC was conducted from August, 2006 to January, 2007. The most appropriate methodology for this work was determined to be personal interviews, as primary information was deemed to be crucial to the success of the research. Questionnaires were not employed, as they were immediately deemed not useful for the target group. This was shown to be the case in the first series of interviews, as several initial interviewees stated that they would answer questions put to them by the researcher, but would not complete a questionnaire.

The personal interviews conducted totalled 302 completed, with responses from journeypeople, instructors, apprentices, employers, teachers, and working people

from all parts of the province. The interviews were completed and an extensive literature reviewed was conducted.

Skills Shortage Overview

The skills shortage in British Columbia is currently a timely debate, as employers detail difficulties in filling positions for journeypeople and apprentices. The purpose of this research was based on the fact that knowledge of the skills shortage is well established with unions, employers, government and now the general public. The research emphasizes the promotion of apprenticeship opportunities and identifying barriers to apprenticeship opportunities. For an excellent overview of the skills shortage in Canada as a whole, please consult the research of the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, listed in the Bibliography.

Points of entry to apprenticeships

The points of entry to apprenticeships in this area include the following:

1. Entry Level Trades Training
2. Apprenticeships through employers
3. Union trades training programs
4. Secondary School Trades Programs
5. Bladerunner construction apprenticeship program through the Nanaimo Youth Services Association

Different types of Trades training

Entry Level Trades Training

The majority of trades training in this area occurs at Malaspina University-College. Malaspina has campuses in Nanaimo and Duncan. Some programs are offered in both locations, with others available at only one location.

The following numbers are current to November, 2006. The breakdown is divided into Entry Level Trades Training and Apprenticeship Training.

Malaspina University-College

ITA cut time from trades training in 2005 for the following trades:

Automotive Technician
Carpenter Framing Technician
Culinary Arts
Hairdressing
Heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC)
Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanic
Inboard/Outboard Motors

ITA cut time from trades training in 2006 from the following trade:

Welding Level 'B'

Descriptions of trades training at Malaspina:

Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanic/Commercial Transport Mechanics

ELTT: 2 classes of 18 each = 36

Apprentices: 16 in training = 16

The Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanic program is the only mandatory ELLT training program into the trades. The program is 8.5 months in duration. In 10 months, successful students can complete both entry-level and, if eligible, Level 1 Heavy Duty Mechanics Apprenticeship technical training. To achieve journeyman status, students must find employment in one of the two trades and complete a four-year apprenticeship. In order to complete their apprenticeship and become eligible for journeyman status, graduates from the ELTT program would return each year for 6 weeks of apprenticeship training for four years. On successful completion of this training, apprentices would become eligible to write the Interprovincial (Red Seal) Examination for journeyman certification.

Automotive Technician

ELTT: 16

Apprentices: Up to 16

The Automotive Technician Program is 8.5 months in duration. It includes a work-experience sessions in a local repair facility or dealership. An optional Level 2 program is available and students can complete both Level 1 and if eligible, Level 2 Automotive Service Technician Apprenticeship technical training. This is a Red Seal trade.

Welding

Levels C, B, A

Welding is a self-paced program. Welders start a log book in which they record their hours, employer, location and work experience

Level C day/afternoon classes 2x18 for a total of 36 students

Level C is the entry-level for welding. Level C is taught in modules as a 7 month program. There is an optional 3 month welder/fabricator program. This fabricator program is in high demand with employers.

Level B and Level A 16 students maximum in total

Welders are eligible to write the Interprovincial (Red Seal) program after the completion of Level B and workplace hours. Many students delay the Red Seal exam until after Level A training. The Welding Apprenticeship Program (Welder Level 'A') consists of 3 levels or years of on-the-job experience and 4 levels of in-school technical training.

Welding is highly mobile work, and apprentices are not required to be employed during all phases of their training. The log book is the record of their work hours and training. Welders are required to meet work based hour requirements in order to be eligible to write the Red Seal examination.

Baker

The Baker Red Seal program is a three year apprenticeship program.

The Entry Level Trades Training program at Malaspina University-College is a 10 month program. Graduates from the program are able to finish 2 separate 4 week training programs and are then eligible to write their Red Seal exam.

If they choose not to take the ELTT program, students can take three separate

four week training programs, then combined with their employment hours, they are eligible to write their Red Seal.

Class sizes vary

Culinary Arts (Professional Cook Training)

12-month Entry Level Trades Training Apprenticeship Program

Graduates of this program may receive credit towards the technical portion of the first year of the Cook Apprenticeship program. In order to complete the apprenticeship and become a journeyman, graduates would return to Malaspina for 4 weeks per year in each of the next 2 years.

The Cook Apprenticeship program consists of 3 years of on-the-job experience combined with in-school technical training in order to become eligible to write the Interprovincial (Red Seal) Examination for journeyman certification.

Carpentry Framer Technician

7-month Entry Level Trades Training Apprenticeship Program

This program follows the BC Provincial Apprenticeship Level 1 program competencies. Students who successfully complete the program will be awarded two certificates: the Canadian Home Builders' Association of British Columbia (CHBA) Framer Technician, and a Malaspina University-College Carpentry Entry-Level (Level 1 Carpentry Apprenticeship). The Certificate in Carpentry Framer Technician demonstrates that students have met the theory requirements for CHBA certifications in (1) Residential Construction – Core Competencies; (2) Residential Construction – Basic Framing Competencies; and (3) Residential Construction – Advanced Framing Competencies upon completion of the work experience component as determined by CHBA. On successful completion of Malaspina's ELTT program, students will also receive an ELTT Certificate (Level 1 Carpentry Apprenticeship).

Apprenticeship Information

Graduates of this program may receive credit towards the technical portion of the first year of the Carpenter Apprenticeship program. In order to complete the apprenticeship and become a journeyman, graduates would find an employer in the

industry to provide the on-the-job training and return to Malaspina for 6 weeks per year in each of the next three years.

The Carpenter Apprenticeship program consists of 4 years of on-the job experience combined with in-school technical training in order to become eligible to write the Interprovincial (Red Seal) examination for journey person certification.

Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC)

This program is taught at Malaspina in part at both Nanaimo and Duncan. This particular trade is three separate trades, with a five-year apprenticeship. The course that is taught in Duncan is Heating and Ventilation, 16 seats per course. The program is a 10 month certificate program.

The course that is taught in Nanaimo is a Refrigeration Entry Course, a sixteen day course taught on the Joint Apprentice Refrigeration Training School curriculum, for students to have an introduction to the trade.

This group of trades is unique in British Columbia for a five-year apprenticeship. This is a Red Seal trade.

Apprenticeships through Employers:

Another point of entry into the apprenticeship system is to sign on as an apprentice directly through an employer. Employers can take any candidate to be an apprentice, or the employer can preferentially hire candidates who having completed trades training.

The employer and the potential apprentice would then complete the forms for the Industry Training Authority, entering into a contract for both parties.

One of the original goals for this research was to identify more specifically the numbers of apprentices actively working in the region. This goal is achievable, however unexpected obstacles to collection of this information were encountered.

Barriers to information collection:

1. Employers contacted cited the Privacy Act, refusing to release information in general terms.
2. Employers contacted cited the Privacy Act, stating concerns that information would be given to third parties.
3. Employers expressed concerns that information would be given to business competitors.
4. Employer interviews took 2-3 longer than originally planned

Because of these concerns, employer numbers did not constitute a statistically reliable sample. Upon reaching this conclusion, a different research application was tried, which was to enter into exploratory discussions with the local school board in order to promote apprenticeship training for employees.

This different approach with the local school board and CUPE 606 was far more effective. Exploratory discussions were held to gauge interest. The following pilot project is proposed:

Pilot Project: School District #68 – CUPE 606 – NDDLDC

School District #68 and CUPE 606 could engage in discussion to promote apprenticeship training for School District #86 employees, utilizing the

recently negotiated contract as a basis for discussion. The NDDLDC would assist by providing information on the Service Canada, Supplement to Employment Insurance, (Sickness, Illness and Training) program to 'top up' wages for apprentices engaged in training programs.

This was the most successful part of this section of the research, and is recommended to promote apprenticeship training and co-operation between local employers, unions, and the NDDLDC.

Union Trades Training Programs and Summaries

Please note all figures in this section are Island-wide numbers:

IUOE Operating Engineers Local 115 (International Union of Operating Engineers)

Apprentices and trainees: 57
on the Island

CUPE 606 (Canadian Union of Public Employees)

Reports 0 current apprentices for their members with School District 68

CUPE 401 (Canadian Union of Public Employees)

Contacted, apprentice numbers not yet available

IBEW Local 230 (International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers)

Apprentices on the Island: 200

Sheet Metal Workers International Association – Local 276

Apprentices on the Island: 100

International Association of Machinist and Aerospace Workers
Northwest District 250

Estimated Apprentices on the Island: 50

Steelworkers Local 1-80
South Vancouver Island

Contacted, Apprentice numbers not yet available

Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers of Canada

Contacted, Apprentice numbers not yet available

United Brotherhood of Carpenters & Joiners

Journeypersons:	74
Apprentices:	10

Ironworkers Local 97

Local Apprentices:	30
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Union groups for further contact:

- Plumbers and Pipefitters
- Painters and Allied Trades
- Glaziers
- Boilermakers

Secondary School Based Programs

Secondary School Based Programs are BC programs, but are administered through each school district in the province. The funding is designated through each school board individually, leading to a great variation in potential budget in each school district.

During the course of the research, it became apparent that each school district sets its own priorities for programs in terms of budget, staffing, and resources. This is potentially a positive aspect, as each local area can have input on how programs are promoted and administered. In this way, local communities, parents, and PACs can influence the outcome of programs. This topic has been well documented elsewhere and is mentioned only to establish an overview.

This system of each school board having to set priorities for budgets and resources does not lend to decisions that ensure complete parity of programs throughout the province. This is reflected on Vancouver Island on a smaller scale.

The observation from the review of available materials is that these programs thrive in school districts that have “boosters”, namely school trustees, school boards, and

principals and teachers that build and promote these programs. This is the case in School District 68, Nanaimo-Ladysmith.

School District 68, Nanaimo-Ladysmith
Secondary School Apprenticeship (SSA)

2006/2007 school year

Secondary School Apprenticeship (SSA)

A general description of the Secondary School Apprenticeship Program was provided by Kathy Smith, School District #68, Coordinator of Graduation and Career Programs.

Secondary School Apprenticeship (SSA)

Secondary School Apprenticeship (SSA) is an educational program jointly sponsored by the Ministry of Education and the Industry Training Authority (ITA). This program allows students to earn school credits for workplace-based training in an approved trade. SSA students who complete 480 hr. of paid trades training will receive credits for the following 4 credit courses: SSA 11A, SSA 11B, SSA 12A, and SSA 12B. These 16 credits toward graduation may allow some apprentices to graduate early. There is also a \$1000 Scholarship available to SSA graduates who complete 480 hr. of workplace-based training, graduate with a C+ average in their Gr. 12 courses and are training full time 6 months after graduation. Employers need to agree to sign the student up as an apprentice through ITA. This program allows students to fast track their apprenticeship. Lets' work together to promote trades.

Ms. Smith reports that in the fall of 2006, she had 120 students currently working in trades, with an estimate of 150 students registered by December, 2006. All students must be age 15 or over, and this is not a work-placement program. The students age 15 and over have secured employment on their own, and then register for the SSA program. The program is run out of John Barsby Secondary School, but students register from all secondary schools in the district.

An important note regarding the SSA program is that all students are signed up as apprentices through the ITA. They would each be assigned an apprentice number, to be included in the overall totals of apprentices as registered by the ITA. This topic is explored more completely in the companion paper "Unlearning the Trades"; The B.C. Liberals plan to dumb down trades training in B.C. with Industry Training Organizations .

To repeat one of the conditions regarding the \$1,000 Scholarship available to SSA graduates who complete all the requirements, they must be still training full time 6 months after their Grade 12 graduation. After this point they are no longer tracked through the school district or the Ministry of Education. Reports for completion rates in the trades are not available, as they are not tracked.

Ms. Smith reports that the SSA program is very popular with parents, with many parents attending information sessions. She also reports that with School District #68 having the highest incidence of poverty in the province, the students are often motivated to earn money to be self-supporting and/or contribute to family finances. This is identified by the students and their families as a preferred alternative to dropping out of the school system.

Career Training Centre
School District 68, Nanaimo-Ladysmith

2006/2007 school year

The Career Training Centre is a program that has been built and promoted in School District 68. This program reports 130 spaces available in 13 programs for high school students. In each year, over 500 students apply for the 130 spaces that are funded. The program is run out of Nanaimo District Secondary School, but students register from all secondary schools in the district. Mr. Dave Street is the Principal of the Career Technical Centre.

In addition, some students from from School District #69, and School District #23 wish to register in the program and apply for the spaces available. This is facilitated by the availability of the CTC website, at www.virctc.com .

Some of the programs available for CTC students include:

- Automotive Service Technician
- Baking
- Carpenter/Framer Technician
- Culinary Arts
- Hairdressing
- Heavy Duty Mechanic
- Horticulture Technician
- Pulp & Paper Operations
- Welding

All of these programs require Grade 11 pre-requisites, so typically a student would register for their Grade 12 year. The student would be enrolled in School District #68, and registered at Malaspina-University College at the same time. The student would

complete their Grade 12 requirements (English 12 and Math 12) on-line through the the district [Learn@Home](#) program. This would require them to meet both their Grade 12 requirements and attend classes at Malaspina University-College. They would be responsible for completing all requirements for program graduation at Malaspina University-College. This entails full-time attendance at Malaspina and completion of course work, as well as any homework from the Grade 12 requirements. This typically attracts motivated students who wish to jump-start their entry into trades, but does create demands on their time which require good time management skills.

At graduation they would receive their Dogwood Diploma and a Certificate from Malaspina University-College in the designated trade. The school district pays a dollar amount per student registered at Malaspina. The CTC and Malaspina University-College work closely, as evidenced by such collaboration as developing a trades math curriculum, for which CTC helped contribute from a limited budget.

Students in this program are also eligible to register in the SSA program, provided they have secured employment in the trades, so there are students registered in both programs.

Some results from a preliminary survey from the CTC on former students report that over a four year time frame, 2002/2003 school year through to 2005/2006 school year, 534 students registered in Entry Level Trades Training courses. Of the 534 registered, 362 students completed their programs.

In a follow-up to these 362 students, 213 of them were currently working in the trade they have received ELTT. Of 213 workers, 172 of them had completed their trades training and had obtained trade certification. Of this number of 213, with 172 completing trades training, over a four year time frame, a 81.5% completion rate.

This program is in great demand and students wish to register from as far away as Powell River.

Bladerunner

Bladerunner Construction Apprenticeship Program Nanaimo

6 month program duration

Two intakes per year of up to 12 students 24 potential apprentices in total per year

Total employers who have participated in the program: 300

“I'm just looking for a break”

One of the potential apprentices for the Bladerunner Construction Apprenticeship Program described himself this way when checking out the orientation session. This program provides pre-employment skills, paid job placement, skills training and safety gear to self-referred youth in the Nanaimo area. This program is unusual in that it focuses on youth that are not immediately identifiable as employment ready.

The youth in this program would qualify as 'at-risk' youth under most social services guidelines. However, they do not identify themselves in these terms, their own self-description is they are “looking for a break”. Their own description of their lives include poverty, homelessness, substance abuse, and a history of violence in their living circumstances.

They identify their own awareness of their barriers to employment. When asked, the youth I interviewed said they would accept a description of themselves as “youth with multiple barriers” to employment, and described themselves as lacking in resources, both money, secure housing, and access to transportation. They very directly identified themselves as persons who may require assistance with substance abuse, poverty issues, and acquiring secure housing and marketable job skills. They very clearly stated that they are not interested in accessing charity and were prepared to “earn their way”. Several of the youth immediately began interviewing me to see if

I could provide information regarding training or resources.

Their greatest strengths as potential apprentices is their resourcefulness and willingness to learn. The Bladerunner program provides paid employment at \$10.50 per hour and safety gear those who qualify. The youth expressed their excitement with this prospect and several signed up immediately for follow-up.

The program is very successful with this target group, and shows the potential of this underemployed and undervalued group of youth. The end results are impressive and I

would not hesitate to recommend this model as a template for similar youth apprenticeship programs.

The youth in this target group are an underutilized labour pool that could contribute to meeting labour pool requirements provided they receive sufficient support and encouragement. The youth in this group are particularly aware of their vulnerability in the labour market and correctly identify themselves as requiring information, support, and resources from experienced, knowledgeable people in the trades.

Changes to BC apprenticeship training

The changes currently being made to the BC apprenticeship training are massive. To cover the topic more completely, a companion paper to this paper is "Unlearning the Trades"; The B.C. Liberals plan to dumb down trades training in B.C. with Industry Training Organizations . This contains a more complete summary of the changes ongoing to the apprenticeship system in BC.

For the purposes of this paper, the next two sections will discuss how these changes may impact local apprenticeship training.

Block Release training

The system of Block Release training is well established in British Columbia. Block Release training is a system of funding colleges in 'blocks' of training for apprentices. From the apprentices' point of view, they are working for their employer and when the stage of their apprenticeship requires further training, they are 'released' for a period of time to attend trades training courses. They retain their employment, and typically file for Employment Insurance benefits for the time period that they are engaged in training.

The time periods for apprenticeship training vary, but a typical example would be a Heavy Duty/Commercial Transport Mechanic. In order to complete their apprenticeship and become eligible for journeyman status, graduates from the ELTT program would return each year for 6 weeks of apprenticeship training for four years. On successful completion of this training, apprentices would become eligible to write the Interprovincial (Red Seal) Examination for journeyman certification.

Changes to Block Release training

Recent changes to the BC apprenticeship system have included a shift in government policy regarding Block Release training. The government has given in to industry pressure to change the Block Release training system. The following quote is from the Industry Training Authority website, www.itabc.ca . The section is the Industry Training Authority, Employers & Industry FAQs:

“Are there alternatives to “block release” of apprentices for technical training?”

Apprentices are responsible for registering themselves in technical training in consultation with their sponsors and/or employers, and are encouraged to do so as early as possible in order to secure a space. However, we do recognize that it is sometimes difficult for businesses to schedule release of apprentices for technical training in times of labour shortages. there may be alternate training delivery methods (such as evening or weekend courses; on-line distance learning; etc.) in which your apprentice can enroll. (They are not available for every trade, level, or geographic location.) Discuss this possibility with your apprentice if such an alternate delivery method would be mutually beneficial. Apprentices should be aware that only designated training providers can deliver industry training program courses accepted for credit by the ITA.”

Conclusion

The changes that the BC Liberals are making to the Apprenticeship Program are massive and have far-reaching consequences for the journeypeople, apprentices, employers, and people of the province. The changes to Block Release Training are of particular concern, as the policy has been changed to expect apprentices to add hours to their schedule, with on-line or weekend courses. This may satisfy the employers who demand flexibility, however no discussion of how apprentices would be compensated for their time is even mentioned in this policy. Also, no provision for appealing an rigid timeline or unreasonable demand by the employer is mentioned.

The only conclusion that can be drawn from these facts is that the ITA has not taken into account the well-being of apprentices, the ITA has only conformed to industry pressure to increase the work week of apprentices without thought to fair compensation for their work.

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