

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Just in Time? Aspirations of Young Men in the New Economy

Dr George Morgan and Associate Professor Greg Noble from the Centre for Cultural Research, are exploring whether the participation of young men in creative skills training courses can provide the basis for vocational aspiration. This project is supported by an Australian Research Council Discovery grant.

'In the past, young men from underprivileged backgrounds relied on older men to train and recruit them into the world of work, where they had the opportunity to develop their skills on-the-job in a stable community,' explains Dr Morgan. 'Unfortunately, these communities are no longer as common and young men have to develop such skill sets individually and apply them to their employment with little or no collective support or solidarity. Economic restructuring in recent history has led to the decline of blue-collar jobs and the rise of service employment and creative skills. It is men who find this environment most challenging. The aim of this project is to discover the ways young disadvantaged men are responding to the pressures and strain of the new economy and how they are developing the ability to train and educate themselves in order to respond to industrial and competitive change in the work environment.'

Research will be conducted in three separate locations in Sydney, involving men of different ethnic backgrounds: in Redfern Waterloo working with Aboriginal men; in the Bankstown area working with Middle Eastern men; and in the Campbelltown region working with Anglo-Irish men. Life history interviews will be conducted twice with twelve young men from each site to determine how they develop competencies and vocational inclinations.



This research may tell us more about how young men form vocational and employment identities and suggest how we can enable young men who are alienated from society to reinvent themselves and consider new forms of learning, training and work.

Project Title: The Just-in-Time Self: Young Men, Skill and Narratives of Aspiration in the New Economy.

Funding has been set at: \$148,000

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November 2009