

Learning

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HANDS-ON SKILLS WORK BEST

Studying VET subjects at school can boost job chances and uni entry, writes Lauren Ahwan

SCHOOL-based vocational education can benefit all students, even those destined for university-trained careers. Young people increasingly are opting to undertake vocational education and training (VET), including school-based apprenticeships, as part of their senior studies, gaining valuable employability skills they can draw upon in later life.

Newman Senior Technical College principal Mark Nunan says the experience gained through vocational education helps school leavers transition to full-time employment and provides an important opportunity to road test future careers.

He says even those planning to work in a university-trained profession can benefit. "In some cases, (undertaking vocational subjects at school is) even more relevant than the average HSC subject," Nunan says.

"For example, if you wanted to pursue a career in nursing, our Certificate III in Individual Support provides the entry theory and skills for this pathway. Universities realise that a student that has attended 700-plus hours of work experience in this field, throughout their HSC course, is well equipped to succeed in the degree.

"This is because they have made a distinct career choice based on experience in the industry and not just going to uni for the sake of a degree."

Nunan says all school-based VET is helpful, regardless of the field of study or level of qualification.

"Whether or not you decide to use all the skills learned, there are basic employability skills that transfer to all work situations, such as communication with employers, organisation and experience in the workplace," he says. "Most significantly, if you are continuing an apprenticeship or pur-



I AM LEARNING ... TO ADVOCATE FOR PATIENTS, HOW TO PROVIDE SUPPORT AND COMFORT TO OTHERS

Newman Senior Technical College student Taylah Swan, 17, practises her health skills with classmate Tyler Nugent. Both students are studying Human Services - Certificate III Individual Support at school.

suising a higher-level education, the nationally accredited qualifications are recognised by TAFE, universities and RTOs (registered training organisations) and can directly place the student in a position of advanced standing ... when moving to the next stage of their career."

Queensland Curriculum and As-

essment Authority chief executive Chris Rider says VET is an important part of senior schooling, with about 60 per cent of Year 12s now studying a vocational qualification.

"In recent years, the most popular VET qualifications have been in ICT, hospitality, construction, fitness and sport," he says.

Taylah Swan, 17, is completing a Certificate III in Individual Support, which includes work at a nursing home, as part of her Year 12 studies. She hopes the vocational qualification will boost her application to enrol in nursing at university next year.

"What I am learning ... are the all-important roles for my later career,

from bedside manners (and) communication to being able to advocate for patients (and) how to provide support and comfort to others," she says.

"I feel that, when I start working in this role, I will be able to communicate and support patients with more confidence than someone who hasn't (had) the hands-on experience."



Performance coach Andrew May says burnout reduces productivity.

HOW TO AVOID BURNOUT AT WORK AND FUNCTION BETTER

THERE are five key factors that people must build into their life if they want to avoid burnout.

That is the message from performance coach and chief executive of StriveStronger Andrew May.

"In the workplace, burnout reduces productivity and indicates cultural deterioration, so it is critical to focus on proactive strategies to eradicate it," he says.

May - who created the 30 Day Boost, a digital program supporting employees to stay productive, boost physical wellbeing, enhance psychological resilience and improve team

cohesion - shares the five factors and why they are important.

PURPOSE ALIGNMENT

This is about finding value and meaning in your work. "Understanding 'why' goes deeper to what motivates and inspires us, especially when times are tough," May says. "Aligning your purpose and values with work will not only light the fire in your belly but enable resilience when the going gets tough."

ACTIVE RECOVERY

May recommends establishing a

wind-down routine each day to ensure mental recovery. "Doing gentle activities to switch off from work, instead of doing nothing, is key to sustaining energy levels, reducing fatigue, nurturing creativity, and enhancing emotional intelligence."

RESTORATIVE SLEEP

People tend to sacrifice sleep to get more work done, yet it is so crucial that even slight sleep deprivation impacts memory, judgment and mood.

"Consistent quality sleep creates a buffer against ongoing daily life stressors and burnout risk," he says.

PHYSIOLOGICAL CAPACITY

This is about increasing your ability to function so you have reserves to adapt. "After assessing thousands of corporate workers in our lab, we know higher cardiorespiratory fitness is associated with lower symptoms of stress-related exhaustion, creating a buffer against burnout," he says.

SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

May advises to maintain contact with the people who matter. Social connections re-energise people and give the support and stability to navigate tricky patches.