Cintia Inés Agosti
Eva Bernat *Editors*

University Pathway Programs: Local Responses within a Growing Global Trend

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Part I
University Pathway Programs: A Response to Global, National and Local Needs in Students' Transition to Higher Education

Chapter 1
University Pathway Programs: Types, Origins, Aims and Defining Traits

Cintia Inés Agosti and Eva Bernat

Abstract This chapter is an introduction to this volume. The chapter traces the factors that caused the emergence of university pathway programs at a national and global scale. It delves in matters of nomenclature, types of programs offered and the links between universities and private providers in program delivery. When discussing the aims and traits of university pathway programs, the chapter includes three models that developers, teachers and students of such programs might find useful to inform their approach to language proficiency, academic literacies and pastoral care issues. These models are: a heuristic of English language proficiency (Humphreys 2015), the academic literacies methodological approach to learning and teaching (Lea and Street 2006) and a consideration of five areas of students' needs that must be met to facilitate their successful transition to higher education (Lizzio 2006). The chapter then presents the goals, structure and content overview of the book. It ends with a consideration of the difficulties faced by those involved in different areas of university pathway programs development and delivery.

1 Introduction

The past two decades have seen a global expansion of the higher education system and a growth of international student mobility with over 4.5 million studying abroad in 2012 (Study Portals and Cambridge English 2015). The combination of these factors has resulted in the proliferation of study programs that offer non-traditional pathways to access university courses.

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Some of the names used to refer to programs which provide an alternative university entry option for many local and international students who are unable to access higher education by traditional channels are: University pathway programs (Percival et al. 2016), enabling programs (Andrewartha and Harvey 2014), bridging programs (Ellis et al. 2001), direct entry programs (Agosti and Hicklin 2001), sub-bachelor programs (Pitman et al. 2016), and foundation programs (Klinger and Murray 2011). The name "university pathway programs" is adopted here since it is considered to be the one that more explicitly indicates the principal aim of these types of programs.

2 A Global Perspective

According to Neghina (2016), the university pathway program sector had a $1.4 billion turnover in 2016. At that time, the Preparation Courses Portal (Study Portals B.V. 2007–2017) listed 2,200 courses for students seeking access to studies within higher education institutions. A year earlier, English-speaking countries offered over 90% of these types of programs with approximately two thirds of them being delivered in the UK, 16% in Oceania and 12% in North America. However, with the number of English medium of instruction degree programs having more than tripled in Continental Europe since 2008, it is expected that the demand for university pathway programs will grow in that region (Study Portals and Cambridge English 2015).

Different countries and different institutions within the same country offer a choice of university pathway programs that vary in duration (generally 1 year long but also a 6 month fast track option for students with a high English language proficiency level), content, structure and in the type of institution that oversees them, namely, a public or private institution or a partnership of both (World education news and reviews 2013). In relation to this last point, the report titled *New routes to higher education: The global rise of foundation programmes. The world's first global mapping of an expanding market*[1] (Study Portals and Cambridge English 2015) points out that the university pathway program providers with the largest market share in 2015 were corporate ones who held 47% of the market. These were followed by universities with 26%, colleges, with 19%, other dedicated providers and colleges with 5% and language schools with 3%. The report lists the five biggest corporate providers worldwide as Cambridge Education Group, INTO University Partnerships, Kaplan International Colleges, Navitas and Study Group. It also notes that, among them, they provide almost half of the university pathway programs available. The rationale for universities seeking partnerships with these private businesses is that they facilitate international student recruitment at a global scale which

[1] This report includes the following information about university preparation programs: subjects that students choose, entry requirements, qualifications gained upon completion, cost, number of programs available worldwide, program providers, global value of the sector, benefits gained by universities that provide them, and future trends in the sector.

is difficult and expensive for universities to engage in independently. However, academic staff members within universities in the U.S.A. have expressed reservations about private providers being left in charge of pathway programs since they question their ability to maintain academic standards (Redden 2010).

When discussing the recent emergence of university pathway programs in the U.S.A., Redden (2010, par.13) refers to them as "an import from Australia and the United Kingdom". This is not surprising since both these countries were among the first to offer such programs, are currently market leaders in their provision and, as Redden points out, have served as a model for programs delivered in other countries. Since Chapter 2 and several case studies included in this book provide insights into the types of programs delivered in Australia and the national and local factors that led to their development, they will not be discussed here. Instead, this chapter will now turn to an overview of the British university pathway programs.

Britain is the country where the number of university pathway programs is the highest per institution when compared with the rest of the countries that offer such programs. Some pathway programs are university-run, others are run by private providers that have agreements in place with specific universities and prepare students for entry at those specific universities. More recently, some universities have been establishing partnerships with private providers that set up international centres on campus or nearby (World education news and reviews 2013).

There are three main types of university preparation programs in Britain. They are known as Access to Higher Education Diplomas, International Foundation Programs, and University Foundation programs (World education news and reviews 2013). The Access to Higher Education Diploma is a university pathway program offered in England and Wales to mature aged British residents returning to education. Approximately 20,000 students enrol annually in the more than 1,100 such programs available. Some of these Access to Higher Education Diplomas cater for international students as well. Those Diplomas include approximately 20 hours a week of English language tuition (World education news and reviews 2013).

International Foundation Programs cater solely for international students. Many of these programs are offered at British universities and guarantee direct entry into those universities upon successful completion. Some are linked to a specific bachelor program whereas others articulate into a range of programs or a number of universities. A pioneering example is that of the Integrated Foundation Programs at the University of Leeds. These programs have been operating since 1989 and articulate into arts, business, design, engineering, joint honours and science. Some university pathway programs are being offered to international students in their countries of origin. For example, Lancaster University offers four foundation programs in China. These programs are run by four partner universities in Beijing, Guangdong, Shanghai and Sichuan. International students who successfully complete foundation programs have the choice of accessing universities in the UK or campus branches in their home countries depending on the inter-institutional agreements in place (World education news and reviews 2013).

University Foundation Programs run for a whole year and aim to cater for the needs of all students whose qualifications do not meet the entry requisites or whose discipline specific knowledge is not the required. The programs are open to all students whether they are British residents or not. Upon successful completion, these University Foundation Programs typically offer entry to specific undergraduate or graduate degree programs in specific fields. Many universities have their foundation programs set up as the first of a four-year program of continuous study (for traditional three-year undergraduate programs), or perhaps 'year zero' of a four- or five-year program in, for example, engineering or medicine (World education news and reviews 2013).

3 Factors that Have Influenced the Development of University Pathway Programs

University pathway programs respond to contextual needs and thus have been developed for a variety of reasons. Some emerged as a response to governmental policies that aim to foster social inclusion by addressing issues of equity and access (Altbach et al. 2009; Bergman 2016; Smit 2012). Others, as was initially the case in Australia, were first developed in response to a scrutiny of the academic language and learning (ALL) preparedness of international students by local authorities (Fenton-Smith and Humphreys 2015; Green and Agosti 2011). Others, still, have been developed to address government-mandated changes to English as a medium of instruction[2] or have stemmed from a perception by course providers of an opportunity for economic growth (Altbach and Knight 2007). A more detailed explanation of these factors can be found in Chapter 2.

4 Aims and Traits of University Pathway Programs

By responding to contextual needs, university pathway programs address two of the key concerns of universities worldwide, namely, student retention and success rates (Goldingay et al. 2016). These pathway programs are of particular importance to

[2] *English Medium Instruction in Higher Education in Asia- Pacific: From Policy to Pedagogy* (2017) Fenton-Smith, B., Humphreys, P. & Walkinshaw, I. (Eds.) includes an insightful collection of papers that focus on challenges at the governmental, institutional, curriculum development and teaching levels that must be faced when considering English as a medium of instruction in both countries where English is students' L1 and where it is an AL for them.

non-traditional students[3] who may find the transition to higher education quite difficult (Devlin et al. 2012 cited in Goldingay et al. 2016).

However, regardless of the factors that give rise to particular iterations of university pathway programs, all of them aim to facilitate students' development of a variety of skills. Among them are proficiency in the language used as a medium of instruction, academic literacies as well as critical thinking, research and study skills that students will need to function effectively in the higher education context. These programs also familiarise students with the socio-cultural norms that are prevalent in the context into which they are transitioning, and most also cater for student welfare needs (Study Portals and Cambridge English 2015, World education news and reviews 2013).

When considering proficiency in the language used as a medium of instruction, university pathway program developers, teachers and students might refer to Humphreys' (2015) heuristic model reproduced below as Figure 1. Drawing on key theoretical second language acquisition (SLA) and English language proficiency (ELP) models, Humphreys' (2015) proposes a three-dimensional model that encompasses competencies, contexts of use and proficiency. Thus, the visual representation of the heuristic model integrates the different sociopragmatic, discourse-related and linguistic competencies that students need to be able to adapt to different contexts of language use in order to develop their proficiency in that language.

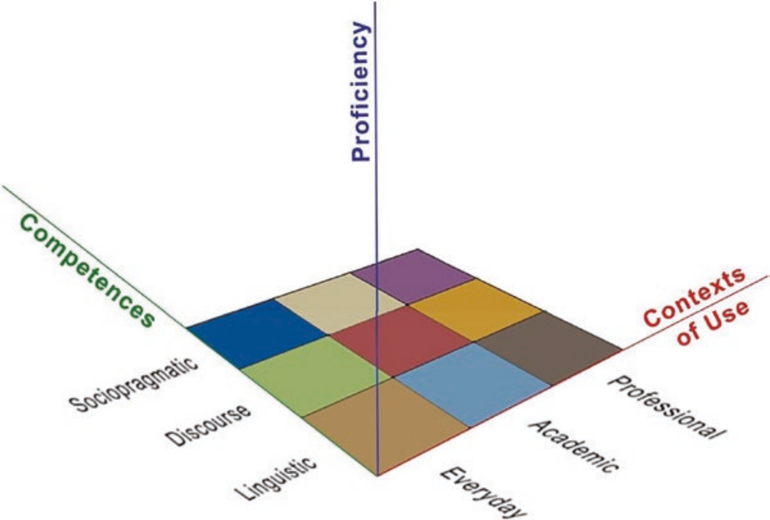

Figure 1 A Heuristic of ELP in Higher Education (Humphreys 2015: p. 298)

[3] Harvey (2004–2017) defines "non-traditional" students as those whose characteristics are not the ones usually associated with those who enter higher education. This might be the case due to the age groups, social classes and/or ethnic groups to which these students belong which have been underrepresented in the past. It can also be related to gender groups that have not been associated with certain disciplines such as males in nursing. Another non-traditional group would be that of students with a disability or first generation student in a family.

Although the graphic created by Humphreys (2015) is intended to mediate a conceptualisation of the elements that constitute academic English language proficiency (AELP), they can be used as a tool to inform course design and development regardless of the language used as a medium of instruction since the dimensions noted in her model can be applied to proficiency levels in other languages.

The two graphics reproduced below as Figures 2 and 3, incorporate the time factor to show examples of how the different elements that constitute language proficiency levels might change diachronically.

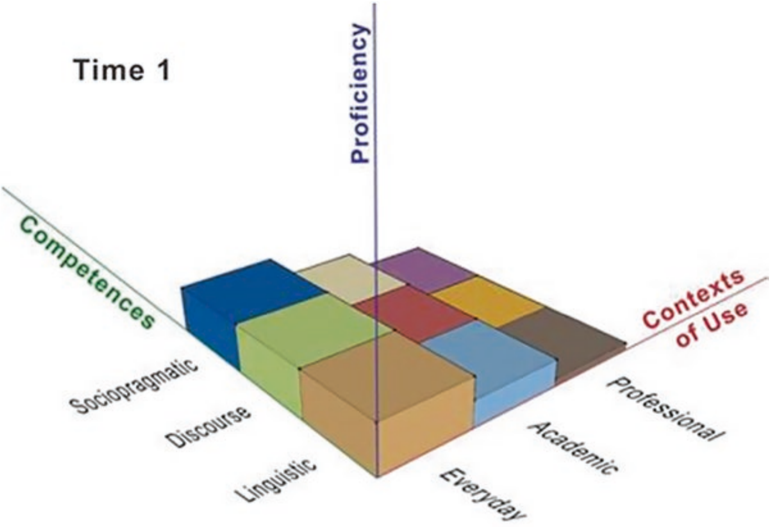

Figure 2 Commencement of Degree Hypothetical 1 (Humphreys 2015: p. 300)

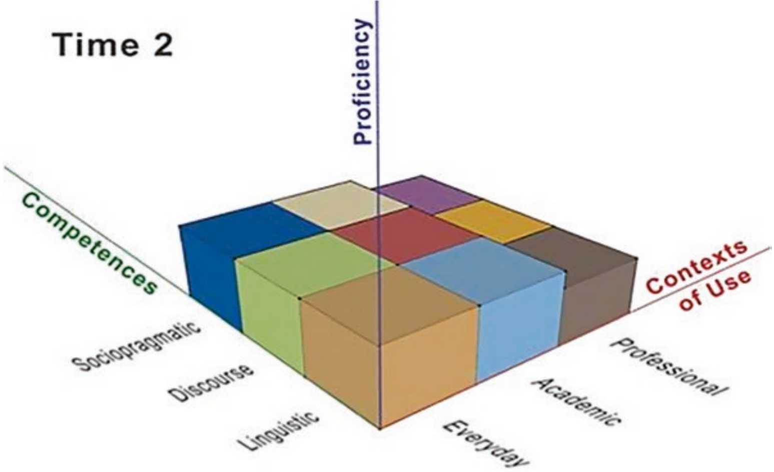

Figure 3 End of Degree Ideal Developmental Trajectory (Humphreys 2015: p. 301)

In regards to academic literacies,[4] it is important to note that, the plural form "literacies" alludes to the fact that, as elements of social practices, they are embedded in a specific context of culture and context of situation and adopt many forms in response to those contexts (Gee 2012; Johns 1997; Lankshear 1997; Street 1984, 1995). This makes it imperative for university pathway program developers to build into the syllabus opportunities for students to become aware of the influence that these contexts bear on academic texts (Green and Agosti 2011) so that they can produce culturally, contextually and socio-pragmatically appropriate texts (Bernat and Agosti 2010). Therefore, university pathway programs should help students develop not only academic language competence but also strategic competence (Bachman 1990) i.e., the need to adapt language use according to the function that texts fulfil in different contexts (Halliday and Hasan 1985).

University pathway programs should also raise students' awareness of the ideological nature of academic texts (Lillis 2003). Thus, for the teaching-learning cycle within university pathway programs to be effective, it must have a four-prong approach. Firstly, it should be based on a thorough analysis of the purposes of the text types that students will encounter and will need to produce (Johns 1997). Secondly, it should explicitly draw students' attention to the different structural patterns that are used in academic texts to achieve different purposes (Feez 1998; Halliday and Hasan 1985). Thirdly, it must make explicit the production conventions that are enacted in different modes of communication of knowledge within a higher education setting and how these modes are shaped by factors related to issues of power and distance (Bastalich et al. 2014). Fourthly, it should make students aware of how issues related to identity are intertwined with the production of texts (Lea 2004). Such a teaching-learning cycle will hopefully empower students to produce texts that achieve their intended purposes and thus enable them to function effectively within the discourse community with which they aim to engage (Green and Agosti 2011; Lea and Street 2006). In relation to this, another focus of university pathway programs should be developing students' awareness of the need to advance academic knowledge through analysis and evaluation as steps of critical thinking and well-developed research skills (Lea 2004).

A further layer of complexity that should be taken into consideration when developing university pathway programs is that of pastoral care. Lizzio (2006) provides a useful conceptualisation of perceived students' needs in this area while also integrating those areas discussed above. He (2006) suggests a five "senses" model which focuses on five areas identified as descriptive of students' needs. He posits that, when these needs are met, students' transition into higher education settings has a better chance of success. Lizzio's (2006) visual representation of students' needs is

[4] Several approaches to teaching academic writing preceded and formed the basis for the academic literacies approach. Those approaches include English for specific purposes, North American New Rhetoric, English as an additional language (EAL) and Australian systemic functional linguistics (SFL). Bastalich, Behrend and Bloomfield (2014) present a succinct description of each approach and their impact on learning and teaching in academic contexts. The following sources provide a clear view of the academic literacies approach to teaching and learning: Lea and Street (1998), Lillis (2001, 2003) and Lillis and Scott (2007).

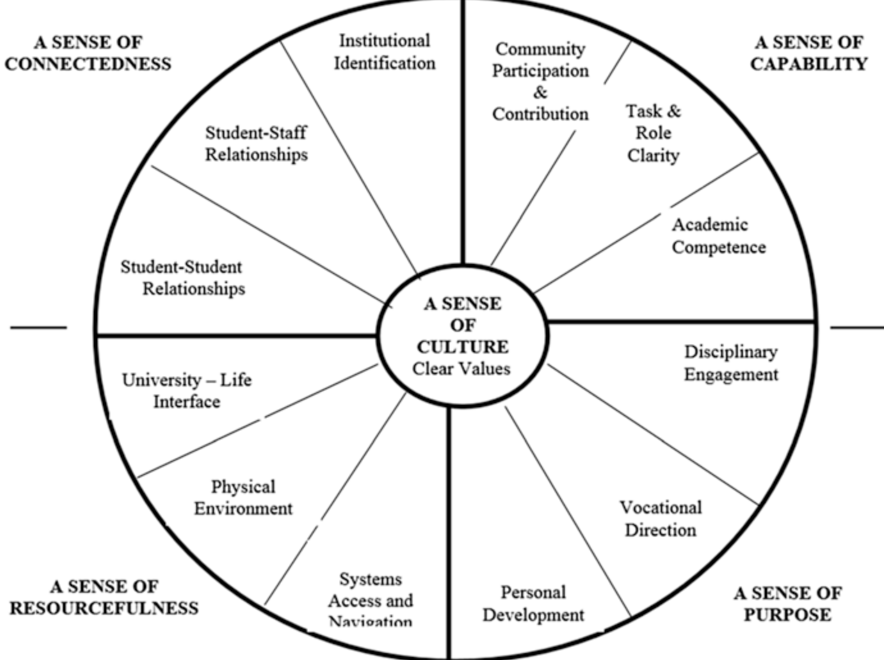

Figure 4 The Five Senses of Successful Transition (Lizzio 2006, p. 3)

reproduced above as Figure 4. Lizzio (2006) also provides a checklist that staff involved in university pathway programs can use as a self-auditing tool to reflect on whether these senses are being supported in these transition programs. This checklist provides clear examples of how each "sense" can be addressed in practice.

As is the case with Lizzio's work, most of the literature that discusses students' needs in relation to their first-year experience at university and suggests how to address those needs would be of help to and should inform university pathway program practice. See for example, Baik et al. (2015); Hitch et al. (2015); James et al. (2010); Kift (2008, 2009); Kift et al. (2010); Krause 2006; Larcombe and Malkin (2008); Lizzio and Wilson (2013); McKenzie and Egea (2014); Nelson (2014); Nelson et al. (2014); Priest (2009); Stirling and Rossetto (2015); and Wilson (2009).

5 Goals and Scope of the Book

The objective of this book is to showcase various university pathway programs that have been primarily developed and implemented as support mechanisms to foster the development of international and non-traditional students' academic literacies and study skills as well as their awareness of socio-cultural norms that are prevalent in the higher education setting.

As a result of globalisation, the internationalisation[5] of curricula and a move towards social inclusion, university pathway programs are offered in various countries in order to cater for the needs of a growing number of both local and international students. Although the university pathway programs for access to the Australian higher education sector figure predominantly in this book, examples pertinent to the Canadian, New Zealand, Qatari, South African and United Kingdom's educational institutions are also included. These examples serve to highlight the common challenges that such types of programs face despite the differences in the social, cultural and political fields characteristic of the various local settings in which they are provided.

The reader will note that, regardless of the contextual factors that gave rise to the development of the university pathway programs presented in this book, all of them constitute examples of successful responses to students' needs in a particular higher education context. Indeed, the different case studies included in this volume highlight the difficulties, the challenges and the advantages attached to the implementation of university pathway programs, thus confirming those considered in the literature. Among the difficulties, those related to staffing include the availability of academic literacies experts, the need to bridge the gap between these specialists and content focussed lecturers, tutor turnover rates and lack of support for academics who are not allocated time within their workloads to focus on academic literacies development (Chanock et al. 2012; Magyar et al. 2011). Some difficulties involving students are linked to students' emotional and welfare needs and the reluctance that some students might show in engaging with the socio-pragmatic, discourse, linguistic, study, critical thinking and research skills that they need to develop rather than with what they perceive as more important, that is, discipline-specific content (Goldingay et al. 2016). In relation to this, Duff (2010), Hyland (2006), Ivanič (1998) and Lea and Street (1998) posit the need for curriculum to include opportunities to develop students' critical evaluation of academic knowledge. Other difficulties include budget and space constraints that lead to the limited availability of additional resources (Kift 2009; Thies et al. 2014). The successful responses to these difficulties put forward in the chapters of this volume attest to the advantages that university pathway programs offer to the students who attend them.

6 Book Structure and Content Overview

This introductory chapter is followed by an overarching chapter that complements it to constitute Part I titled University Pathway Programs: A Response to Global, National and Local Needs in Students' Transition to Higher Education. In their chapter, "Positioning Pathways Provision within Global and National Contexts", Brett and Pitman provide a useful overview of the main characteristics of as well as

[5] For an interesting overview on the internationalisation of Higher Education and the reasons that underpin it see Altbach and Knight (2007).

the main drivers for the development of university pathway programs. They describe these programs as context-bound and values-laden courses that provide alternative means of access to higher education for those students who, due to various circumstances, are unable to gain entry into university directly after finishing high school. The authors explain the need to adopt a 'Glo-na-cal' approach (Marginson 2004), i.e. understanding and accommodating global, national and local perspectives when trying to fully grasp the various and varying roles played by these programs. Brett and Pitman identify three main issues that have been fostering the development of such programs, namely, the international trend for higher education to become more socially inclusive; the move of some universities towards internationalisation linked to student mobility; and different economic, social, political and cultural factors that shape the national contexts of those countries where university pathway program provision is expanding. Their insightful analysis of these issues guides the reader to a better understanding of the factors that underpin the increase in offerings of university pathway programs and beyond what could otherwise be perceived as a series of case studies without any generalisable content.

Following this overarching chapter, the book presents 13 case studies organised in three parts: Part II, comprises six case studies that focus on issues regarding equity, inclusion and participation in higher education and the role played by university pathway programs in addressing those issues. Part III, Transitions from Vocational to Higher Education, includes three case studies that discuss pathway programs that articulate vocational studies into higher education studies. Part IV presents two case studies with a focus on curriculum development and pedagogical approaches in university pathway programs. The volume closes with Part V which includes two case studies that focus on internationalisation and privatisation of university pathway programs. An overview of the content of each part is presented next.

Part II – The Role of University Pathway Programs in Addressing Issues Related to Access, Equity, Inclusion and Participation in Higher Education.

Following Brett and Pitman's introductory chapter, the case study presented in Chapter 3, "The Use of Enabling Programs as a Pathway to Higher Education by Disadvantaged Students in Australia", initiates the focus on the role of university pathway programs as a means to facilitate access of non-traditional students to tertiary studies. It reports on research conducted by McKay, Pitman, Devlin, Trinidad, Harvey and Brett, six academic representatives of four Australian universities, who collaborated to measure the success of enabling programs in aiding students of low socioeconomic standing in accessing and succeeding in university studies. The chapter analyses the contextual nature of social disadvantage, identifies six groups of students who have been underrepresented at Australian universities in the past and discusses preventative and remedial measures that can promote these groups' successful social insertion and academic achievement within higher education institutions. Based on statistical analysis of governmental data, the chapter also reports on the positive impact that university pathway programs have had in terms of academic achievement, student satisfaction and retention rates when compared to students entering universities via different pathways. The chapter also suggests

areas for further research in relation to these points. The focus then turns to a typology of 48 enabling programs delivered at 27 Australian universities followed by a discussion of their shared characteristics as well as of aspects of the programs that need clarification in order for students to be able to make better-informed decisions when considering enrolment in these types of programs. The need for academic support beyond enabling programs is also considered. The chapter goes on to present the results of interviews conducted at a national level with enabling program students. The range of topics covered in the interviews is broad and includes points such as the students' reasons for enrolling in enabling programs, how well these programs prepared them for university studies and issues to do with workload, level of difficulty, the need for the development of academic literacies skills, and the aspects that students found the most useful. The chapter concludes by presenting eight key findings regarding the variety, access and efficacy of enabling programs as a pathway to university for disadvantaged groups as well as some areas where further clarification would be beneficial for prospective students.

Chapter 4 titled "Great Expectations: African Youth from Refugee Backgrounds and the Transition to University" also focuses on the social role of Australian university pathway programs as King and Owens discuss the experiences, needs and challenges faced by African refugees in their transition to higher education studies within an Australian context. The authors report the results of interviews conducted with these students, their educators, African community leaders and social service providers. The chapter opens with an explanation of what constitutes refugee status in Australia and of this country's role as one of the top ten refugee resettlement countries. It then discusses the educational, economic and social capital losses as well as the traumatic experiences that most refugees suffer and their link to difficulties experienced in resettlement in terms of learning new systems and cultural norms. Drawing on the work of social capital researchers, King and Owens highlight the importance of bonding and bridging social capital as facilitators of the transitional process both towards resettlement and towards access to and success in education. Next, the authors discuss the motives underlying African students' aspirations in relation to education and career paths. The economic, cultural and social difficulties that they face while studying are noted next. The chapter then focuses on the process of cultural capital development that students undergo in their transition to university and touches on issues such as English language proficiency levels, academic literacy needs and the culturally based reluctance of African refugees to seek support. King and Owens put forward recommendations on how to bridge this cultural gap in order to foster students' development of a support-seeking approach as a means to facilitate their cultural capital acquisition. The chapter concludes with a discussion of strategies that have successfully helped academics meet the challenges that they will encounter when teaching these students and of the areas of professional development on which they might need to embark to better support these students. Recommendations on how to address the needs of African refugee students for social and academic support and for ongoing cultural mentoring are also provided.

A further example of the role played by university pathway programs in overcoming social equity and inclusion issues related to higher education is provided by Kirby and Dempster in Chapter 5, "Alternative Access to Tertiary Science Study in South Africa: Dealing with 'Disadvantage', Student Diversity, and Discrepancies in Graduate Success". The authors consider the participation of Black African students in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics in South African universities. After discussing the negative effects that the passing of the Black Education Act (Act 47 of 1953) had on Black Africans in South Africa, the authors focus on the current challenges faced by this country to ensure equity of access to tertiary science study and the pivotal role played by programs that provide alternative pathways in responding to that challenge. The bleak condition of the schooling system stemming from the apartheid era, the resulting low levels of literacy and numeracy and the low levels of English proficiency are also analysed as causes for student under-preparedness and, therefore, as barriers to student success at university where English is used as a medium of instruction. Kirby and Dempster then explain how the successful results of foundation programs that provided alternative access to science degrees led to their integration into regular curricula and gave rise to extended curriculum programs. A description of the two existing models of extended programs available to address different degrees of student preparedness follows. The description includes program duration and their synchronous or asynchronous nature in relation to regular university units. The authors also consider the effectiveness of these programs in addressing issues of social transformation through the provision of a more socially inclusive pathway into higher education as well as through a pursuit of the equity of outcomes. The authors analyse the challenges arising not only from a series of high school curricula redevelopments at a national level but also from the two-tiered high school education system linked to the students' racial background. In addition, Kirby and Dempster identify the areas where changes need to be implemented in order to achieve social equality in education. Their focus then shifts to the analysis of two extended curriculum programs that provide access to the study of science at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). This analysis includes differences in entry requirements, curriculum design, resourcing and teaching methodology as well as the counselling and academic literacies components that both pathways have in common. The sustainability of the models and their effectiveness is also discussed. The authors then compare the performance of alternative access and direct-entry students, highlight the link between English language proficiency level and success in tertiary studies, and question the validity of entry requirements as accurate predictors of academic success. The authors state that the linguistic, educational and socioeconomic differences in the student body and the various needs that they entail are not being met in graduate programs and call for the adoption of the successful traits of enabling programs in mainstream undergraduate university courses.

The value of university pathway programs in overcoming social inclusion issues in higher education is further explored by Hall, Ross and Te Huia in Chapter 6, "Huakina mai te tatau o tōu whare: Opening University Doors to Indigenous Students". In this chapter, the authors discuss the Tohu Māoritanga (Tohu), i.e. the

Diploma of Māoritanga offered at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, as a pathway that helps indigenous Māori students transition into university study while creating a cultural sphere that affirms their Māori identity. The authors present an overview of the educational policies and legislation that require tertiary institutions to cater for Māori students' needs and explain that it is common to find staff and resource centers dedicated to meet these students' specific academic, welfare and cultural needs. The authors also outline a series of pre-degree programs that aim to prepare Māori students for university studies and identify the Diploma of Māoritanga as one that is notable not only due to its 30 years' history, academic reputation and Māori cultural focus but also for being the only credit-bearing program of its kind in the country. Hall, Ross and Te Huia then consider research on acculturation theory. They focus on the four possible acculturation strategies (assimilation, separation, marginalisation and integration) to inform how the program helps a diverse group of Māori students transition into higher education. The authors then present a profile of the students that enrol in the program and highlight the identity reaffirming value that it has for Māori students. They also explain different aspects of the program and how these reflect the Māori holistic approach to teaching and learning, which requires meeting the students' physical, emotional, mental and spiritual needs. The links between cultural beliefs on the value of extended family and both the staffing of programs and the peer mentoring system are discussed too. The authors then reflect on the academic, institutional and societal challenges that the program has to overcome and outline the benefits that students reap from participating in it.

Chapter 7 "Qatar University Foundation Program: A Means to Access Higher Education and a Pathway for Transformation" details the evolution of the Foundation Program at Qatar University as it adapted to students' varying needs, to language of instruction policy changes that the University underwent in 2003 and 2012 and to the national goals set in 2008 through the Qatar National Vision 20 in which education had pride of place. In their chapter, Al-Hendawi, Manasreh, Scotland and Rogers explain the important role played by the Education City Project in the establishment of several branches of Universities from Britain, Canada, France and the United States in Qatar. The authors also discuss issues of gender-segregation, selective admission processes and proficiency in English levels of prospective students as major drivers of foundation programs that aimed for equity, accessibility and inclusion in tertiary education. However, they also point out that these programs came to be seen as barriers to tertiary education due to the English proficiency IELTS score needed for successful completion. They further explain that this triggered a return to Arabic as a medium of instruction for most university programs in 2012. This, in turn, resulted in length of delivery and curriculum changes in the Foundation programs as well as in the creation of an Embedded Program to cater for the English language needs of students enrolled in tertiary courses that have Arabic as a medium of instruction. The authors conclude their chapter with a reflection on the evolution of the Foundation Program. This reflection considers the four stages in the borrowing education process suggested by Phillip and Ochs' (2003) namely, cross-national attraction, decision, implementation, and integration.

In Chapter 8 "Come One, Come All: The Question of Open Entry in Enabling Programs", Hodges contributes to the debate of whether the goal of widening participation is better served by open entry or restrictive entry pathway programs into Higher Education, and argues that this debate has – at times – been poorly informed. The author notes that of the 35 university pathway programs available in Australia, almost half are open entry, that is, they place no restrictions on applicants. Hodges explains that while the open entry option is attractive to prospective students, these types of programs place additional financial and resourcing burden on the universities or colleges that offer them. The author further notes that, despite institutional efforts to mitigate some of the risk factors, students admitted to open entry pathway programs experience higher rates of attrition. Hodges discusses in-depth some of the cost, risk and benefit factors of both open and restrictive entry options. He also provides an insightful analysis of the issues surrounding the challenge of ensuring the maintenance of academic standards and calls for appropriate benchmarking procedures to be developed and implemented consistently across the sector. Hodges concludes by calling for a thorough analysis and sector-wide decision-making as to which entry option to adopt.

Part III – Transitions from the Vocational to the Higher Education Sector.

The following three chapters focus on the transition experienced by students articulating from vocational studies into university ones. Chapter 9, "Filling the Skills Gap in Australia – VET Pathways" presents an innovative Australian pathway program developed with governmental funding support by a Technical and Further Education (TAFE) tertiary institution in collaboration with five universities. In this chapter, Beckley, Netherton and Barber explain that this program was developed as an articulation between the vocational education and training (VET) and the university sectors in order to broaden participation, retention and successful completion of university studies by low socioeconomic background students and others who, for various reasons, do not have direct access to university studies. The authors provide an overview of the changing relationship between these sectors and its positive academic, workplace-related and economic outcomes for both students and providers. The authors also point out the challenges regarding completion and academic success level that low socioeconomic background students completing these types of pathway programs encounter when undertaking university studies. Beckley, Netherton and Barber report findings of the evaluation of and research on the VET pathways conducted by all the universities involved in the development of these pathways. These findings include student responses that reveal both the positive results that these programs yield and the need to provide students with ongoing support to help them overcome problems related to personal, pedagogic, relational and cultural factors. The authors also present two case studies, one from the University of Western Sydney and another one from the University of Technology, which illustrate strategies to facilitate a smooth transition to university studies. These strategies relate to the development of an articulation framework between the VET and university sectors and to increasing students' academic preparedness. In addition, the authors report the results of student surveys conducted

to gauge the impact that these programs had on participants. Based on these results, they make recommendations on how to develop and maintain effective pathway programs.

Chapter 10 presents a different aspect of the VET pathway programs. In "The TAFE/VET Pathways Student Experience in Higher Education", Ellis focuses on students who access higher education after completing a qualification at the state-run Technical and Further Education (TAFE) tertiary institutions or a vocational education and training course (VET) offered within the public and private education sectors. After discussing the contextual factors that determined the creation of such pathways, namely the push at a state and federal level for a more inclusive educational system, the author compares the performance of TAFE/VET pathway students to that of students who accessed university studies from other institutions. Ellis presents findings regarding pathway students' distribution across universities, their choice of discipline and their academic achievement. He also looks at the institutional and personal factors that affect both retention and attrition rates and highlights the importance of early intervention to ensure that TAFE/VET pathway students make a successful transition into university studies.

The last chapter in this section is "Seamless Segues from Polytechnic to University: A New Zealand Case Study of a Dual Provider Partnership". In this chapter, Lyon, Richardson and Fraser discuss a university pathway program offering management and computing degrees in a range of specialisations. The program is delivered by the Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology (TOM)- formerly known as The Bay of Plenty Polytechnic- working in conjunction with the University of Waikato in New Zealand. The authors describe the institutions that configure the country's tertiary education sector, the strategies put in place to foster collaboration between them as well as the changing demographics of the student body that accesses them. They also explore the relationship between both the Government's Tertiary Education Strategy 2014–2019 (Ministry of Education 2014) and the manifesto Bay of Plenty Tertiary Intentions Strategy 2014–2019 (Priority One 2015). They then outline the changes introduced in university pathway programs in order to prepare students for effective participation in evolving industries and a global economy. The authors note the cultural, academic and logistic challenges that result from alliances between universities and institutes of technology and polytechnics. They conclude with an explanation of how the TOM's university pathway program has successfully overcome those challenges to deliver multiple benefits for the students that participate in it.

Part IV – Issues of Curriculum and Pedagogy in University Pathway Programs.

This section comprises two chapters that delve into the areas of curriculum development and pedagogical approaches in connection with university preparation programs. "Pathways and Praxis: Designing Curriculum for Aspirational Programs" by McKnight and Charlton is the first chapter in this part. It examines the university pathway programs curriculum design process undertaken at the Institute of Koorie Education, Deakin University. The authors explain that these programs aim to meet the needs of both urban and rural students, including Indigenous students,

undertaking units within the Associate Degrees of Arts and Education. McKnight and Charlton describe the challenges of navigating the contemporary neoliberal Australian tertiary sector landscape within which the curriculum emerges out of 'complex discursive entanglements', particularly around race and class. McKnight and Charlton note that, although approximately half of the universities in Australia offer Associate Degrees, these are not generally framed as university pathway programs, making Deakin's transdisciplinary entry programs unusual in the Australian context. The authors discuss the guiding philosophies for their innovative curriculum design, with the end product not only informed by practical transition pedagogy choices but also by their personal epistemologies. They explain how the units of teaching and learning designed for these programs reflect a highly collaborative endeavour between academic and professional staff, working alongside, for example, career counsellors. McKnight and Charlton emphasise the need to look beyond the instrumental requirements of curriculum design and to consider the myriad of complex social and cultural factors at play in the context where university pathway programs are to be delivered.

The second chapter in this section, "Students on the Threshold: Commencing Student Perspectives and Enabling Pedagogy" is authored by Stokes. She considers the push for social inclusion that has taken place within Australian universities in the last decade as a result of governmental policies and how university pathway programs have been developed to meet the needs of students from equity groups. The author presents the results of a survey of 200 commencing university pathway program students conducted at a South Australian university including both quantitative and qualitative data. After describing the characteristics and expectations of the cohort, she applies critical pedagogy and adopts a constructivist approach to analyse their responses and to put forward pedagogical recommendations that could help improve retention, completion and success rates in future deliveries of university pathway programs. Stokes discusses the most common problems faced by non-traditional students, namely, language and cultural barriers, being "first in family" at university, anxiety about formal education and work commitments. The author then suggests strategies that may help to overcome these problems such as making students aware of the services and assistance available to university students to deal with academic, financial and personal difficulties. She argues that university pathway programs can aid non-traditional students in their transition into university life by implementing a critical, respectful and empathetic dialogic pedagogy. This type of pedagogy explores their needs, engages them through problem-solving and research projects, and fosters their understanding of academic culture and literacies through different scaffolding techniques. Stokes further explains that dialogic pedagogy acknowledges the value of students' diverse knowledge and experience base. The author discusses several other strategies to facilitate students' transition to university.

Part V – Internationalisation and Privatisation of University Pathway Programs.

As in the previous section, this part includes two chapters. The first one, "Quality and Innovation for International Pathway Programs: Good Practice and

Recommendations for the Future in the UK Context and Beyond" is written by Anthony Manning, the Dean for Internationalisation at the University of Kent, Canterbury. Manning is well-positioned to explain the rapid growth that international pathway programs have experienced in the United Kingdom in recent decades as a consequence not only of globalisation but also of the increase in fees for local students and of the capping of local student recruitment imposed on tertiary institutions by the government. The author points out that, in this context, university pathway programs are a means to maintain and grow the number of full-fee paying international students who can articulate to undergraduate studies. Although he mentions that the international pathway programs include International Foundation Programs, Pre-masters Programs and Pre-sessional English for Academic Purposes courses, his focus in this chapter is mainly on markers of quality and innovation in International Foundation Programs that ensure a premium response to international students' needs. In relation to quality, Manning discusses the following five areas: Linkage and connections with the host Higher Education Institution, considerations related to private or university-led provision, program structures, student welfare and experience, and experience of assessment and external/commercial examining. In relation to innovation, he considers cross-curricular collaboration among university colleagues and examines practices beyond the United Kingdom such as those of Universities of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands and Community College pathway programs in the United States of America.

Rahilly and Hudson provide an insight into the initial delivery of university pathway programs in Canada in the second chapter of this section: "Canada's First International Partnership for a Pathway Program". The authors recount the journey on which Simon Fraser University (SFU) in Canada embarked in collaboration with Navitas – a stock market listed company and a major provider of university pathway programs – in order to establish a pathway college for its future students. Fraser International College (FIC) was set up as such a college. Its aim was to give students access to many of the university's facilities and support services including the university's residential accommodation, the library, careers services, medical services, and recreational clubs, among others. The partnership is described as highly successful, generating consistently positive student outcomes with an average of 92% of student matriculation rate into SFU degree programs. One of the key success factors was the recruitment of international students as part of a wider university strategy. Rahilly and Hudson emphasise the importance of social, cultural, and academic integration of international students, describing various peer programs offered by FIC that help these students to achieve success. Another success factor was the close collaboration with SFU Faculties to ensure that the pathway curriculum was not only based on transition pedagogy but also facilitated a smooth progression into the particular field of students' future study. The authors conclude by detailing the success factors in SFU's change management processes, such as providing a strong rationale for the new direction into pathways education, involving its staff in the decision-making process, encouraging strong staff engagement, and ensuring that policies and procedures reflected the new partnership between the university and the college.

7 Concluding Reflections

The variety of existing university pathway programs discussed in this book showcases the multidimensional and complex nature of higher education institutions and demonstrates that, regardless of the contextual differences, university pathway programs must focus on issues identified by a combination of academic literacies and a transition pedagogical approach. Thus, university pathway programs must make students aware of complex and diverse written and oral genres, of the functional stages that can be found in texts and how these relate to cultural norms, and of the purposes of research and its links with critical thinking (Goldingay et al. 2016; Grace et al. 2011; Lea 2004). This entails making explicit "norms, values and conventions" (Jacobs 2005) used to access, analyse, evaluate and contribute to knowledge at a higher education level within various disciplines. Not surprisingly, designing, implementing and delivering relevant and effective university pathway programs for prospective tertiary students presents many challenges irrespective of their focus being generic or discipline-specific (Abasi and Graves 2008; Agosti 2006; Johnson 2008; and Lebcir et al. 2008). The challenges include, but are not limited to, the development of an effective diagnostic tool to identify students' needs; designing a syllabus that addresses those needs while apprenticing students to the specific academic literacy practices and expectations embedded in the academic discourse community of which they will partake once they commence their university studies (Gee 2008; Lea 2004; Lillis and Scott 2007; Wingate 2006); scaffolding the analysis of discipline-specific genres and related text types (Paltridge 2006) and of the assessment tasks that they will encounter; incorporating teachers' expectations about students' academic literacy and study support needs as well as recognising students' own beliefs about those needs (Hallett 2013; Velliaris and Breen 2014); catering for non-traditional students and hiring teaching staff equipped with the skills required to teach on these programs (Agosti and Bernat 2008).

In addition to these challenges, the case studies included in this book point to another difficulty that these programs face and that adds a substantial layer of complexity to the university pathway scene: these programs constitute localised responses to needs related to and shaped by the social, cultural and political fields in which they function. Evidently, the varying degrees of success that they achieve will depend on the power struggles that take place in those fields and on how these programs are positioned within those fields (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). This makes it difficult to make valid generalisations regarding features that will make university pathway programs a successful response in different contexts. An example of this difficulty is the conflicting views presented in Chapter 3 and Chapter 10 regarding the levels of preparedness for university of students using different access pathways. However, the experiences recounted in this volume will undoubtedly provide valuable insights to guide future practice in this field. In reporting the successes and difficulties in the areas of curriculum development and implementation, of cross-sector collaboration and of student needs in university pathway programs, this volume aims to promote reflection and a fruitful conversation on these issues

and, therefore, to better equip those education practitioners embarking on the university pathway program journey.

As such, this book does not purport to have covered all possible areas of research related to these issues. Future research will hopefully fill some of the gaps present in the current volume such as the participation of indigenous Australians in university pathway programs, aspects related to internationalisation and an in depth reflection on an academic literacies approach in university pathway programs. In order for education practitioners to be guided towards best practice, it would be valuable to have access to more case studies that explain factors which have influenced the development of such programs, what their aims and traits are and how they address local and international students' various and varying needs. Let the conversation begin!

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Chapter 2
Positioning Pathways Provision Within Global and National Contexts

Matt Brett and Tim Pitman

Abstract This chapter positions the increase in the provision of pathway programs, including foundation and enabling programs, as a function of global trends shaping higher education and localised responses to social, economic, political and cultural factors. These localised responses play out against a broader global context, in which the increasing mobility of students looms large. Demography, politics, history and economics all contribute to considerable diversity in the structure, financing and market composition of higher education systems. In turn, these factors shape the purpose, design and delivery of pathway programs. This chapter draws upon UNESCO, OECD and World Bank data sets to contextualise relevant examples of African, Australasian, European, Middle East, and North American higher education systems, against each other and other international benchmarks. The trajectory of these education systems across time demonstrates convergence towards higher levels of school participation and massification of higher education participation, but also differential patterns of international student mobility and responsiveness to national contextual factors. The signs are that global forces and national context will continue to shape the evolution of pathway programs internationally.

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1 Introduction

The diversity of alternative pathways to higher education, globally, is evidence of the need to recognise and support a similar diversity in individual choice and opportunity. This dual diversity makes a precise definition of what constitutes an alternative pathway problematic. In materials associated with the development of this book, pathway programs are described as foundation year, tertiary preparation, bridging and enabling, and sub-bachelor programs. Pathway programs emerge in different ways given the context, structure and composition of each higher education system. Pathway programs interact with established higher education norms, with their relative position within higher education informed by distinct cultural understandings of higher education. They are thus context-bound and values-laden. Given the evident imprecision associated with defining such pathways at the national level (cf. Clark and Gzella 2014), it is axiomatic that this imprecision is magnified exponentially at the global level.

At the same time, one can overstate the significance of and complexity of national context. There is evidence of global convergence in higher education practices (Frank and Gabler 2006). This convergence arises from interactions and knowledge exchange between academics, researchers, institutions and higher education systems. It is manifested in striking similarities across the world in the courses on offer and composition of academic staff. It is multi-factorial, and increasingly encompasses the role played by international student mobility as a powerful force shaping higher education on a global level. There is increasing awareness of the monetary value of projected growth of pathway programs associated with international student mobility (Neghina 2015; Smith 2015). Furthermore, there is growing acceptance of the idea of 'global democracy', both in the sense of the pre-eminence of democracy as the ideal political state system (Fukuyama 2006), as well as the idea of a form of democracy that transcends states (Holden 2000). As a means unto an end therefore, pathway programs figure heavily in these and other discourses. To understand the role these pathways play, we must understand and accommodate global, national and local perspectives; that is adopt a 'Glo-na-cal' approach (Marginson 2004). This is the focus of this chapter.

In considering the emergence of pathway programs across a range of higher education systems, this chapter considers a number of key questions.

- What factors are influencing increasing levels of participation in higher education systems around the world?
- How are increasing levels of participation interacting with pathway programs?
- How is the education system positioned in terms of internationalisation, and what impact does this have on pathway program provision?
- What national contextual factors are driving and influencing higher education systems to increase pathway program provision?

This chapter will not provide definitive answers to these questions – other chapters in the book explore pathway programs and their interaction with local, national

and global issues in more depth and sophistication than can be accommodated by this overview. This chapter articulates an overarching narrative that accepts both the importance of localised contextual factors, and global trends influencing the design and character of higher education to help contextualise pathways provision.

2 Pathways Provision in Global and National System Context

2.1 International Trends

There is a long-term, global trend for increasing levels of participation in higher education. Expansion is an important factor in pathway programs because as a larger proportion of the population enrols, levels of preparedness and motivations for study become more complex and varied, necessitating greater variety of programs that can accommodate this diversity. Increasing participation in higher education is evident even within low-income regions facing major social and economic challenges. Marginson (2016) provides an authoritative account of increasing participation, drawing without becoming dependent upon Trow's (1973) widely-referenced model of elite, mass and universal participation systems. Trow's model describes systems with less than 15% participation of the youth cohort progressing to tertiary education as "elite"; between 15% and 50% as "mass"; and above 50% as "universal systems". Despite the elite/mass/universal model gaining broad international recognition, international higher education statistics do not routinely accommodate this taxonomy.

Marginson's analysis draws primarily on United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Gross Tertiary Enrolment Ratio (GTER). The GTER is constructed by dividing the number of persons enrolled in a tertiary education program within a country (the numerator) by the number of persons in the reference population, the five-year age group beyond the school graduation age (denominator). Tertiary education in this context ranges from 'short-cycle' two-year sub-bachelors programs through bachelors, masters and doctoral programs (UNESCO 2011). The construction of this ratio means that GTER will be higher in countries that enrol students outside of this five-year reference group. GTER is therefore affected by enrolments from international students, early entrants, late entrants, and/or mature age graduate students. GTER is also affected by definitional changes to the participation of students at the interface of post-secondary non-tertiary and short-cycle tertiary programs. The varied nature of pathway programs suggests that they may be categorised variously as 'post-secondary but not tertiary', or as 'tertiary education' under the UNESCO International Standard Classification of Education (UNESCO 2011) with categorisation influencing whether pathways provision is, or is not, an input into GTER.

Marginson (2016) offers four key causal factors for the expansion of higher education systems, where we find supporting evidence:

- *State policies favouring expansion.*

  Policies are generally a response to contextual factors rather than spontaneous in origin. State policies that support expansion include responses to national political, social and economic factors yet also are informed by international policy developments, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations 2016). The SDGs see increasing participation both as an end but also a means to an end, by targeting interventions in areas that require higher levels of skills and education such as technological upgrading and innovation practices. Whilst SDGs have greater relevance for lower-income countries, their underlying logic is drawn from and embedded within policies emanating from high-income nation states. In the Australian context, for example, the policy logic of linking increasing participation to technological advancement is entrenched with bipartisan support. Multiple reviews of higher education make explicit reference to this linkage, including the Review of Australian Higher Education (Bradley et al. 2008) (commissioned by a democratic-socialist government) and Driving Innovation, Fairness and Excellence in Australian Higher Education (Australian Government 2016) (commissioned by a centre-right government). Both reviews make reference to the multi-faceted role that pathways play in Australian higher education, encompassing consideration of vocational education pathways, higher education specific pathways and English language and foundation programs for international students.

- *Economic demand and the need for higher-skilled labour.*

  In many nations, the interaction between education and the economy is strong, but as Marginson (2016) notes, higher education expansion through the 1960s and 70s did not correlate with substantive change to economic or occupation structures. Instead, the dominant global discourse remained largely humanistic, as typified by UNESCO's *Learning to be* report (Faure et al. 1972). However, from the 1980s a neoliberal discourse emerged, both driven by and evidenced within OECD activity: one that also had its roots in the 1970s (e.g. Kallen and Bengtsson 1973). In this construct, the role of the individual learner is understood dually as a responsibility to become more productive through further education (e.g. Bansel 2007) and as a right to be emancipated by the same. Again, however, this duality manifests itself with subtle differences across nation states. Thus, for example, Elyas and Picard (2013) argue that the adoption of neoliberal policies in Saudi Arabia has been shaped by Islamic-national agendas. In South Africa, debates on the setting of tuition fees – not only their levels but their overall acceptability - have been intense and strongly informed by the country's apartheid past (Lebeau et al. 2012). Economic demand for labour can build demand for credentialed skills that stimulate additional pathways provision as a greater proportion of the population seek to enter higher education.

- *Social demand for higher education.*

  Social demand for higher education encompasses the role of credentialism as a sorting and screening mechanism in both labour markets and social systems, and familial aspirations for a better life. Trow's categorisation of elite, mass and universal higher education systems (1973) is grounded in positive feedback loops between higher education participation and shifting social norms around expectation of participation. Increasing social expectations can act as powerful drivers of political and policy responses that facilitate further expansion. Once the shift to higher participation has been triggered, there is no evidence that the trend can be reversed, even if the increase in participation is not unanimously accepted as productive. For example, Hirsch's account of positional goods (1977) highlights the reality that in such a system one needs to invest more to maintain one's position, inferring a dead-weight loss for little net gain over the long term. A key component of social demand for higher education is that of a rising concern for equity; manifest in policies favouring affirmative action, equal opportunity, substantive equality, social mobility and widening participation. Widening access targets have informed recent and contemporary higher education policy in many countries, including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, the UK and the US. Pathway programs are a mechanism for contributing to the attainment of widening access targets, and can attract a high proportion of students from designated equity groups (Pitman et al. 2016).

- *World system explanations*

  There are a range of international systems that emerge from collaboration between liberal democracies, including the Organisation for Economic and Cultural Development (OECD) and the United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). These organisations exert influence in how the international community constructs and influences education policy as a mechanism for progressing social and economic development. This invariably means more rather than less education, and increasing levels of participation at all levels. A world systems explanation, largely influenced by liberal democracy, is useful for understanding elements of increasing participation, but cannot accommodate the empirical data. However, increasing participation is also evident in communist and theocratic states, which is suggestive of a plurality of explanations.

In addition to the above, we would also note the effect that the international student market has on higher education systems. Not only do international students affect the GTER core for a country/region by inflating the numerator, they also influence pathway programs. In the past two decades, there has been a massive increase in the number of students enrolled outside of their country of citizenship. Student numbers doubled from 2 to 4 million from 1999 to 2013 (UNESCO 2016) and are projected to double again to 8 million by 2025 (Woodfield 2010). Student numbers are concentrated in high-income developed English speaking countries, with the top three countries comprising the United State of America, the United Kingdom and

Australia, which together in 2014 made up around 35% of all internationally-mobile students (UNESCO 2016). The top ten has a broader representation and includes in rank order France, Russia, Germany, Canada, China, Japan and Italy. However, the source countries and destinations of international students are not cast in stone, nor immune to changes in national education or immigration policy. For example, the United Kingdom referendum decision to leave the European Union has triggered interest on the likely impact on inbound student mobility and higher education system operations (Conlon et al. 2017; Marginson 2017).

International enrolments can also serve as a mechanism for building educational capacity and enhancing quality. In many industrialised nations, school leaver interest in sciences and mathematics is declining, and universities are increasingly turning to international students to populate their graduate science programs (Datson 2016; Jenkins and Pell 2006). Factors driving global excellence include the concentration of talent (Salmi 2009), with globalisation and internationalisation prioritising diversity of staff and students as a key performance measure. Economic demand for high skilled labour, when unmet by domestic supply, has a global reach that many international students are willing to fulfil. Furthermore, the establishment of regional higher education hubs is a strategy adopted by many nations in their pursuit of economic development, global relevance and a pitch for an engagement with students seeking an international education experience (Knight 2011). As direct consequence, the transition between systems and cultures is fertile ground for the emergence of pathway programs, which can include language training and foundation studies.

Marginson (2016) rightly rejects any notion of a single meta-higher education system explanation that synthesises the factors outlined above. Each national system operates as a discrete autonomous system, albeit with differential levels of connectivity and influence across national boundaries. Yet there remains significant convergence in the academic program offerings and composition of faculty in universities across the world. Frank and Gabler's (2006) analysis of university handbooks across time reveals global shifts in the organisation of universities across core academic and knowledge functions. Universities by their very nature are interconnected to global knowledge systems through their teaching and research. National higher education systems may be autonomous, but it is difficult for any system to ignore knowledge related developments in other parts of the world.

2.2 National and Local Influences

As higher education systems mature into mass systems and transition towards universal ones, the demographics of their market become more diverse and, increasingly, a one-size-fits-all approach to admission requirements becomes insufficient. Whilst principles of meritocracy underpin the majority of admission processes in the majority of countries, the concept of merit is itself normative and values-laden (Liu 2011). Equally, the concept of quality in education needs to be interpreted contextually. For example, policymakers and agents frequently take a fitness-for-purpose approach to defining education, in that education is quality when it matches

demand for skilled workers (Kalayci et al. 2012) or achieves goals of widening participation (Bradley et al. 2008). In these instances, pathways to higher education must be designed to ensure that students with academic potential, but not necessarily the requisite credentials, can be transitioned into further studies.

Local politics and path dependencies also play a part. In Australia, for example, there are 40 institutions categorised as "Australian Universities" by the relevant authority. All but one of these universities are legislated through state and territory parliaments, and are accountable to, state and territory parliaments. The one exception, the Australian National University was established by Commonwealth legislation. Whilst the Commonwealth has primary responsibility for higher education financing and regulation, state governments maintain a degree of influence over university affairs by overseeing issues such as appointments to university governing bodies (Commonwealth of Australia 2014). In general, Australian tertiary students do not tend to travel interstate to enrol in a university. In 2013, more than 85% of higher education prospective students applied to institutions in their home state and 93% ultimately accepted a home-state offer of enrolment (Department of Education 2013). Thus, the design of higher education pathways must reflect distinct local demographics, as well as feeding into national goals.

Intergenerational mobility also plays a part in determining national or local action. Some countries, such as Scandinavian ones, have relatively high intergenerational mobility, meaning the educational 'sins' of the parents are visited to a lesser degree on their children. In other countries, such as the US, the reverse is true (e.g. Blanden and Machin 2004). Furthermore, some countries, such as Scotland, have been active in creating alternative pathways to higher education whereas others, such as Germany, maintain more traditional, school-streaming approaches to tertiary preparation. This results in four distinct local contexts: (1) high intergenerational mobility and limited pathways, (2) high intergenerational mobility and extensive pathways, (3) low intergenerational mobility and limited pathways and (4) low intergenerational mobility and extensive pathways. In all cases, the provision of alternative pathways may be either a reaction to or a contributor to the intergenerational mobility reality. This again highlights the importance of situating global influences within local specificities.

2.3 National System Comparative Data

Every region in the world grew tertiary education participation (using UNESCO and World Bank regional categorisations) over the period 2003–2013 (Table 1). National wealth and income are a key determinant of how much can be invested in education, and World Bank groupings by national income quintile highlight a strong relationship between wealth and participation. As national incomes rise, middle-income regions demonstrate greater capacity to fund and sustain investment in education, and demonstrate a higher rate of absolute growth in participation. Once higher levels of participation are reached, there are limits to growth that impede

Table 1 Gross Tertiary Enrolment Ratio (GTER) 2003–2013 by UNESCO and World Bank Regions

UNESCO Regions	GTER 2003	GTER 2013	Change GTER 2003–2013	% Change GTER 2003–2013
World	22.63	32.88	10.26	45%
Africa	9.00	12.08	3.08	34%
Asia	15.81	28.84	13.02	82%
Europe	59.16	68.01	8.85	15%
North America	54.19	61.51	7.33	14%
South America	30.18	51.76	21.58	71%
Oceania	50.40	61.71	11.31	22%
World Bank Regions	GTER 2003	GTER 2013	Change GTER 2003–2013	% Change GTER 2003–2013
Low income countries	4.95	9.08	4.13	84%
Lower middle income countries	13.14	23.23	10.09	77%
Middle income countries	16.79	29.48	12.69	76%
Upper middle income countries	20.81	36.65	15.84	76%
High income countries	64.34	73.49	9.15	14%

UNESCO (2016)

growth rates in participation. A caveat with the data outlined in Table 1 above is that regional, multi-nation groupings represent the average performance of countries across a region. Individual national system variance is crowded out when considering GTER at a regional level, and this variance is important to consider if one is to appreciate the factors driving the emergence of pathway programs at a national level.

This book includes chapters that describe pathway programs across a diverse group of six higher education systems in the following countries: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Qatar, South Africa and the UK. A detailed account of the national and local influences that have shaped these systems is beyond the scope of this chapter. Each of these higher education systems has its own history and path dependence that contributes to its current state and future development. The systems span continents, economic regions, involvement in world systems, cultural traditions and social and economic development. All systems are expanding, and all systems have some form of pathways provision. To highlight the importance of national and local influences, metrics representing system influences and system characteristics are presented in Table 2 below. The comparative framework adopted emulates that used by the European Commission (Orr et al. 2014, p.27), customised for the focus of this chapter. The data that informs the categorisations is drawn primarily from UNESCO Institute of Statistics, but is augmented with other data where is it is unavailable or missing from the UNESCO data collection, and includes reference to the U21 Ranking of National Higher Education Systems (U21 2016).

Table 2 Select Social, Economic, Innovation and Higher Education Indicators Influencing Higher Education System and Pathways Provision in Select Countries

System	Social economic and innovation indicators			Tertiary education indicators			Relevance to pathways provision
Australia	Population	23.6 Million	(2014)	Universitas 21 rank[c]	10	(2016)	Economically positioned to invest in higher education, with system quality attractive to international students, pathways a factor in high inbound mobility and widening participation
	Population growth	1.5%	(2014)	% Private enrolments[d]	8.5%	(2014)	Public orientation elevates concern for equity and effective pathways, with Indigenous participation a key focus
	GDP per capita (US$)[a]	$61,996	(2014)	% Public expenditure[e]	3.64%	(2013)	
	GERD as % GDP[b]	2.20%	(2013)	GTER[f]	90.31	(2014)	
				Inbound mobility students[g]	249,868	(2013)	
Canada	Population	35.6 Million	(2014)	Universitas 21 rank	21	(2016)	Economically positioned to invest in higher education, with system quality attractive to international students, pathways a key factor if inbound mobility is to grow and widening participation
	Population growth	1.1%	(2014)	% Private enrolments	n/a		Public investment elevates concern for equity, with first nation participation a key focus
	GDP per capita (US$)	$50,185	(2014)	% Public expenditure	3.24%	(2013)	
	GERD as % GDP	1.61%	(2014)	GTER	n/a		
				Inbound mobility students	151,244	(2013)	

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

System	Social economic and innovation indicators			Tertiary education indicators			Relevance to pathways provision
New Zealand	Population	4.5 Million	(2014)	Universitas 21 rank	14	(2016)	Economically positioned to invest in higher education, with system quality attractive to international students, pathways a factor in high inbound mobility and widening participation
	Population growth	1.5%	(2014)	% Private enrolments	13.7%	(2014)	Public investment elevates concern for equity and effective pathways, with Maori participation a key focus
	GDP per capita (US$)	$44,380	(2014)	% Public expenditure	4.64%	(2013)	
	GERD as % GDP	1.17%	(2013)	GTER	80.88	(2014)	
				Inbound mobility students	41,353	(2013)	
Qatar	Population	2.2 Million	(2014)	Universitas 21 rank	n/r	(2016)	Strong economic position, but immature higher education and research system
	Population growth	3.3%	(2014)	% Private enrolments	26.5%	(2014)	System unranked, but investment targeting inbound mobility Growing level of participation, strong gender imbalance warrants increasing focus on male pathways into higher education
	GDP per capita (US$)	$96,732	(2014)	% Public expenditure	n/a		
	GERD as % GDP	0.47%	(2012)	GTER	15.83	(2014)	
				GTER male/female	7.26/45.85		
				Inbound mobility students	8,509	(2013)	

South Africa	Population	54.5 Million	(2014)	Universitas 21 rank	37	(2016)	Strong investment in higher education and research but in context of weaker economic base
	Population growth	1.6%	(2014)	% Private enrolments	4.8%	(2014)	Public orientation and investment, and historic context elevates concern for equity and increasing pathways provision
	GDP per capita (US$)	$6,472	(2014)	% Public expenditure	2.38%	(2013)	High inbound mobility students necessitates internationally focused pathways provision
	GERD as % GDP	0.73%	(2012)	GTER	19.38	(2014)	
				Inbound mobility students	41,353	(2013)	
United Kingdom	Population	64.3 Million	(2014)	Universitas 21 rank	4	(2016)	Economically positioned to invest in higher education, with system quality attractive to international students, pathways a factor in high inbound mobility and widening participation
	Population growth	0.8%	(2014)	% Private enrolments	100%	(2014)	Independent system but underwritten by public investment elevates concern for equity of participation across social class
	GDP per capita (US$)	$46,278	(2014)	% Public expenditure	3.10%	(2013)	
	GERD as % GDP	1.70%	(2014)	GTER	56.48	(2014)	
				Inbound mobility students	416,693	(2013)	

[a]Gross Domestic Product per Capita (US$) current prices
[b]Gross Expenditure on Research and Development as percentage of Gross Domestic Product (%)
[c]Rank in the Universitas 21 Ranking of National Higher Education Systems (number)
[d]Percentage of enrolments in tertiary education in private institutions (%)
[e]Expenditure on tertiary education as a proportion of all government expenditure (%)
[f]Gross Tertiary Education Ratio, both sexes (%)
[g]Total inbound internationally mobile students, both sexes (number)

2.4 Pathways Provision in an Australian Context

To aid in contextualising the relevance of factors influencing the systems described in Table 2 above, we will focus on the Australian system, to tease out national and local factors relevant to the emergence of pathway programs. Whilst Australia shares many historic and social similarities and cultural and economic ties to the other nations listed, like the other countries listed above Australia has a unique tertiary education system and approach to pathways provision.

Australia is a high income nation with a fast growing population of around 24 million largely driven by migration. This population is small relative to the Australian land mass. Australia's history since European settlement has created long term tensions with displaced Indigenous populations. Australia is an Anglophone country, with close historic connections to the United Kingdom and the United States of America (Fullilove 2015). Australia's engagement within its geographic region has increased over time. China and Japan are currently Australia's largest trading partners. There is increasing policy emphasis given to engagement with Asia, manifest in a high proportion of inbound mobility students, and incentives for Australian students to undertake study in Asia. Inbound international mobility students are a key cohort for pathway programs, including English language programs and foundation studies programs (Department of Education and Training 2016). The high rates of immigration also provide continuing impetus for students to retrain or gain certification for existing credentials. This also stimulates underlying demand for pathway programs.

Australian higher education has federated system origins, with almost every university established by state and territory legislation, and with constitutional responsibility for education situated with states and territories. However, since the early 1970s where state powers for higher education were referred to the Commonwealth, the system is now financed and regulated at a national level. National priorities dominate policy rather than more localised needs and concerns.

The Australian economy has proven resilient, experiencing 25 years of continuous economic growth. This growth phase was preceded by major economic reforms that dismantled protectionist policies and opened the Australian economy to competition. These reforms coincided with expansionist policies that aimed to retrain displaced workers and to engage more school leavers in higher education. The underlying intent of a more highly skilled and more innovative population striving to compete more effectively on a global level has been realised. Whilst Australia's exports remain dominated by natural resources, education now represents Australia's largest services export, with a globally competitive higher education sector attracting students from across the world.

This period when protectionist policies were dismantled is also the era when Australia's higher education equity policy framework was established, prioritising policy focus on six equity groups (women in non-traditional areas, low socioeconomic status, regional and remote, people with disabilities, non-English speaking background and Indigenous). The equity framework and groups continue to exert

influence over participation in Australian higher education and many pathway programs are designed to meet the specific needs of these equity groups (Harvey et al. 2016). Pathway programs focused on the learning needs of Indigenous students are particularly relevant. Expansionist higher education policies were historically motivated by equity safety net concerns and projected future demand for high skilled labour. The transition towards higher levels of participation has been maintained for decades and supported the enduring presence of pathway programs of various types. Sustained economic growth has ensured continued demand for graduates and growth of the sector. Until 2012, bachelor places were capped and allocated to institutions by the government. Since this time, demand driven funding has allowed universities to enrol as many students who were qualified to enrol, leading to an upsurge of enrolments. The combination of weaker economic growth in the aftermath of the global financial crisis of 2008 and surge in graduates has led to challenges for new graduates entering the labour market. The performance of students entering the system with lower levels of academic achievement under the demand driven funding system has also triggered interest in how students can be better prepared for bachelor level study, providing renewed focus on pathway programs.

In the Australian context, pathway programs service diverse cohorts and are triggered by various explanations. State expansionist policy, economic demand, social demand and international student mobility all contribute to the pathways ecosystem evident in the Australian higher education system.

Further information about Australian higher education can be found within Education at a Glance (OECD 2014) and Higher Education Report (Department of Education and Training 2014).

3 Conclusion

Pathway programs are proliferating on a global level and warrant further investigation of the specific nature of programs on offer, their place in the ecology of higher education program offerings, and the underlying factors that are stimulating their growth. This chapter sought to position pathway programs within three broad perspectives: the trend towards higher levels of participation – with analysis of the factors that are influencing this trend; increasing internationalisation of higher education – manifest in increasing global student mobility; and local socio-cultural factors including national approaches to education system design.

Analysis of higher education systems from Europe, Africa, the Middle East, North America and Oceania reveals that all these factors are important in shaping the growth in pathway programs, with the relative emphasis within any single higher education system subject to nation-specific context. Economic pull factors are important in systems like the United Kingdom. Anticipating and supporting economic transition were and are important in systems like Australia and Qatar. Nations with a colonial past such as Canada and New Zealand place increasing importance

on pathway programs for students from First Nation or Indigenous populations. Social demand for higher education can function as a key driver for pathway programs, through specific equity frameworks evident in Australia, and through gender focused initiatives evident in Qatar. Internationalisation of higher education is also a key driver for pathway programs, with rising inbound student mobility evident in many national systems.

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Part II
The Role of University Pathway Programs in Addressing Issues Related to Access, Equity, Inclusion and Participation in Higher Education

Chapter 3
The Use of Enabling Programs as a Pathway to Higher Education by Disadvantaged Students in Australia

Jade McKay, Tim Pitman, Marcia Devlin, Sue Trinidad, Andrew Harvey, and Matt Brett

Abstract This chapter explores the use of enabling programs by Australian universities to improve participation and success for students historically underrepresented in the nation's higher education system. It draws on empirical evidence from a national research project designed to undertake a review of current enabling programs offered by Australian higher education providers and to examine the effectiveness of these programs in increasing access to, participation in, and subsequent success in undergraduate courses for domestic students from disadvantaged groups. This chapter firstly outlines the rationale for providing enabling programs, their history of use in Australia against the wider context of higher education disadvantage, and a review of previous research. Secondly, it provides a typology of enabling programs in Australia detailing: their design and composition; how they are deliv-

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ered; their prevalence throughout the sector; how they articulate to tertiary degrees; the types of students targeted; and numbers of students using them. Specific attention is on the representation of disadvantaged students throughout. Thirdly, the chapter provides a statistical analysis of the efficacy of these programs, as defined by retention and success. The fourth section details the findings of a national survey of 980 students who transitioned to higher education studies via an enabling program. This survey explores student perceptions, their experience of the program and their reflections on the extent to which it did or did not prepare them for tertiary studies. Finally, concluding comments are made and suggestions to improve the ongoing tertiary success of disadvantaged students are proposed.

1 Introduction

The facilitation of equitable access to and participation in higher education has been a common and consistent policy focus internationally since the creation of mass higher education systems in developed nations (Martin 2009; Trow 1973). The nature of socioeconomic disadvantage means that educational achievement in the formative (that is, primary and secondary) years of education is unequal across and within all societies (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development 2012). This in turn leads to inequitable access to higher education for certain groups within these societies. Social disadvantage is contextual. Whilst there are certain broad demographic indicators that transcend national boundaries, such as class, race, gender and economic background, the effect of each variable, and the specific ways in which they play out in conjunction with each other, are particular to certain societies. In Australia, there are six recognised groups of students which are the focus of policies designed to widen access to and participation in higher education. These are persons who are: from a low socioeconomic status (SES) background; Indigenous; from regional and remote areas; disabled; from a non-English speaking background; and female enrolled in a non-traditional (for example, science, engineering, etc.) course of study. Being from one or more of these groups is not, in itself, evidence that the student has experienced social hardship. Nonetheless, the identification of key groups of students historically underrepresented in higher education is seen by policymakers as an important catalyst for coordinated action.

Policy and programmatic initiatives have tended towards two broad spheres of action. The first relate to preventative actions, designed to ‘close the gap’ between higher and lower socioeconomic groups so as to ensure that each individual is provided with a similar level and quality of education, particularly in the formative years. In this way, it is assumed, there will be a greater equivalence of academic outcomes, allowing students to be selected into higher education on meritocratic grounds. Here, the focus of related policies and programs is on developing the academic achievement of disadvantaged students, particularly in the compulsory years of education. In

this regard, relative to other countries, Australia has a school system considered to be both high in quality and high in equity (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development 2012). The second sphere of action is more pragmatic and remedial in nature; it assumes that the factors leading to socioeconomic disadvantage are complex and stochastic and therefore will never be adequately addressed in one field of practice alone, such as education. In order to offset this inevitable disadvantage, programs and activities are designed to increase the awareness of disadvantaged students of higher education opportunities; raise their aspirations towards the same; and develop a range of post-compulsory education alternative pathways and support programs to allow these students to access and succeed in higher education.

In Australia, as in many countries, this includes the use of pre-tertiary academic programs designed to prepare students (both academically and socially) for higher education studies. For the purposes of this chapter we refer to these as *enabling programs*, in the sense that they enable a student to take higher education studies where otherwise they would not be considered eligible or adequately prepared. In Australian higher education parlance, an enabling program is, simply, "a course of instruction provided to a person for the purpose of enabling the person to undertake a course leading to a higher education award" (Commonwealth of Australia 2003, p. 367). An enabling program is not a higher education award in and of itself; rather it prepares the student to enter a course (typically an undergraduate degree) by providing them with requisite academic skills. In terms of design, enabling programs are delineated in terms of *duration*, *mode of delivery* and *target audience.* Many programs are run over a semester, however, others are run more intensively over a period of just a few weeks. Duration can also be measured in terms of the number of units studied rather than a set period of time within which to complete the course. Enabling programs can be delivered through a variety of forms including classroom, flipped-classroom, distance and online modes of delivery. Furthermore, enabling programs do not only provide a distinct pathway to higher education but also function remedially, when undertaken concurrently with university education study so as to cater to students who have qualified for entry but are academically under-prepared (Andrewartha and Harvey 2014).

2 Background to Study

Given that a common aim of enabling programs is to make higher education accessible to those who do not otherwise have the necessary skills and credentials (Muldoon 2011), and that access to these programs is relatively unrestricted, the over-representation of disadvantaged students in the same is presumed, rather than mandated. In 2011, a review of the Australian higher education system observed:

> Enabling courses are not specifically targeted to under-represented groups, but approximately 50% of students enrolled in enabling courses are identified as being from several equity groups such as Indigenous students, regional and remote students and low SES status students, compared with 30% of all domestic undergraduate enrolments. The remainder comprises students who for a range of reasons are underprepared (Lomax-Smith et al. 2011, p.122)

Prior research has tended to support this assumption. The University of South Australia, for example, revealed significantly higher representation of equity group

students in their enabling programs (Klinger and Tranter 2009). La Trobe University found that students in their enabling program were more likely to be mature-age and first in their family to attend university when compared to their undergraduate counterparts. Their program also enrolled a considerably higher proportion of non-English speaking students (NESB), students from refugee backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (Andrewartha and Harvey 2014). Data analysis of student attrition in enabling programs during 2010 and 2013 at three universities (University of Newcastle, University of Southern Queensland and University of South Australia) revealed that more than a quarter of students' parents did not complete secondary education and between 20% and 30% of students only partially completed secondary education. Also over-represented in these enabling programs, in comparison to the wider student population, were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, NESB students and students who were first generation tertiary students in their family (Hodges et al. 2013). However, these studies have largely concentrated on outcomes at individual level or certain groups of universities, rather than considering the sector in its entirety. Nonetheless, the hypothesis is that these results would also hold at an aggregated (i.e. sector-wide) level.

Furthermore, principles of widening higher education access and participation infer subsequent success – measured in terms of progressing through and completing studies – to ensure the benefits of higher education are realised within these student groups (Krause 2005). Yet over the last 15 years, relatively few empirical studies on post-enabling programs academic performance (e.g. subsequent undergraduate studies) have been conducted. Further, findings are often based on small numbers of enabling program students, hence, not generalisable (Ellis et al. 2001). For example, in a study with a population of more than 2,400 students (James et al. 2010), only 3% of students had completed an enabling course and 3% was also the figure reported in an analysis of an entire, national cohort of students (Department of Education 2014). The relatively few studies conducted reported varying findings. The University of Newcastle revealed a marginal disadvantage in academic performance for enabling program students. However, this was offset by the relatively good performance of older students and female students who dominated the enabling programs. The researchers concluded "the significant variable is the nature of students who enter the [enabling] program, rather than the nature of the program itself" (Cantwell et al. 2001, p. 232).

Prior studies have found that enabling program students had a significantly higher undergraduate grade point average (Klinger and Murray 2011; Klinger and Tranter 2009) and showed high levels of student satisfaction and of positive first-year experience and performance (Smith 2010). These important benefits derived from enabling programs suggest it is a meaningful pathway for disadvantaged students to succeed at university (Klinger and Tranter 2009). Qualitative evidence reveals that enabling programs have diverse benefits with flow-on effects after graduation (Johns et al. 2014). An analysis of outcomes for concurrent enabling program students (that is, students simultaneously enrolled in an undergraduate degree and a remedial enabling program) suggested that enabling courses were successful in increasing their retention rates. Across nearly all ATAR ranks and types of pathways, enabling course cohorts had better retention rates.

To date, the most comprehensive quantitative analysis of the role of enabling programs in improving subsequent student performance was published by the Department of Education in 2014. It was presented as a cohort analysis of completion rates of domestic bachelor students who commenced in 2005 and their progression by 2012. Around 3% of the 2005 cohort had completed a previous enabling course. The analysis found that students with a prior enabling course performed better on completion and attrition rates. However, the 2013 updated cohort analysis of completion rates showed a decline. This finding, nevertheless, relates to all students in the enabling programs, not those from defined equity groups.

The main conclusions to be drawn from prior research, therefore, are as follows. First, enabling programs are not exclusive to, but enrol disproportionately from, groups of students under-represented in the Australian higher education sector. Second, it appears the enabling pathway offers access to higher education for many students who would otherwise be denied the opportunity to participate. However, the research to date indicates that their subsequent higher education success is under the national average. It is also necessary to qualify that this finding relates to *all* students using the enabling pathway and is not specific to defined equity group students. Third, there is a paucity of empirical studies specific to defined equity groups. To fill this gap, this research sought to understand equity group student experiences of enabling pathways at the national level. This research is complemented with statistical analysis of attrition and retention rates of university students who accessed university via enabling pathways.

3 Typology of Enabling Programs

As part of the study on which this chapter is based, an analysis of enabling pathways provided by Australian higher education providers was conducted between March and July 2015 to create a typology of enabling programs. This analysis canvassed: their design and composition; their prevalence/reach throughout the sector; how they articulate to tertiary degrees and how they are delivered; the types of students targeted and numbers of students using them. Specific attention was given to the representation of disadvantaged students. For each higher education provider, the institutional website was searched for publicly available information regarding alternative pathways to institutions and from these searches enabling-like programs were identified. The information focused on: institution and program name, age requirements, population targeted, mode of study, associated costs, and which undergraduate courses could be accessed from the program. In total, 48 programs were identified across 27 universities (see Appendix A).

While programs ranged in duration and were diverse, they did share the following broad characteristics:

- the programs were expressly for the purpose of preparing (i.e. enabling) a student to undertake a higher education degree course;

- they offered free tuition for domestic students, however some were provided to other types of students (e.g. international students) at a charge;
- most had no or minimal pre-requisites for entry, in terms of academic capability.

The typology indicates that there is currently a diverse range of enabling programs available throughout the higher education sector in Australia, and this diversity was particularly evident in relation to course length, content, and mode of delivery. In terms of course length, the duration of the programs ranged from as little as 4 weeks full-time up to 18 months full-time. Most programs (20) specified part-time options and a small number made reference to an accelerated option (for example, an intensive summer option). In relation to mode of delivery, classroom teaching was the preferred mode of delivery for 41 programs, with 13 of these offering an online option. Two programs were only offered online. The remainder did not specify the mode of delivery.

As well as a diversity of programs, one of the most significant findings from the development of this typology was the overall lack of transparency, transferability and information about enabling programs that was identified and which is likely to hinder student take-up, mobility and progression.

This points to a need for more detailed and readily accessible information to prospective applicants. Specifically, what needs to be clearer is:

- What are the best options for disadvantaged students who want to be better prepared for university?
- Who is eligible to access an enabling program on a free tuition basis?
- What non-tuition costs are involved in completing the enabling programs?
- What undergraduate courses would be accessible following successful completion of the enabling program?

With the exception of programs designed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, most programs we found to be relatively unrestricted in regards to access; both in terms of what types of domestic students can apply and of their prior academic performance.

4 Retention, Success and Overall Efficacy

To explore enabling program efficacy, detailed statistical data provided by the government for the period 2009–2012 on retention and success rates across equity groups and across national populations were compared. The analysis was drawn from bespoke data provided by the Australian Federal Government Department of Education and Training, comprising approximately 600,000 students, of which about 350,000 were defined as belonging to at least one recognised disadvantaged student group. Data from all universities was analysed and aggregated. This data was approached to answer the following question: Do equity-group students articulating via an enabling program have better/worse retention and success rates in the first year of their subsequent undergraduate degree, compared to all students in the same equity group, regardless of basis of admission? (that is, general population). The findings are provided below (see Figure 1).

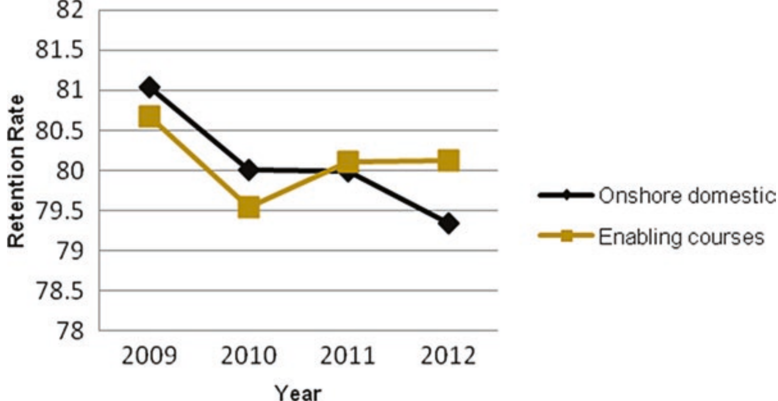

Figure 1 First-Year Retention Rates (Overall)

The data shows that equity-group students who articulate via an enabling program experience better first-year retention rates than the overall, relevant equity-group student population (Figure 1). This suggests that enabling programs are an effective preparation for university studies for equity-group students.

In terms of success, the evidence is that equity-group students articulating from enabling programs are experiencing some academic barriers to success. Taken in conjunction with the retention findings, one inference could be that enabling programs produce students with greater resilience but their academic preparation needs to be improved in the enabling program itself and/or further supported throughout their undergraduate studies. These success rates indicate that disadvantage does not disappear upon completion of an enabling pathway and that many equity-group students still require ongoing academic support in their undergraduate studies (Figure 2).

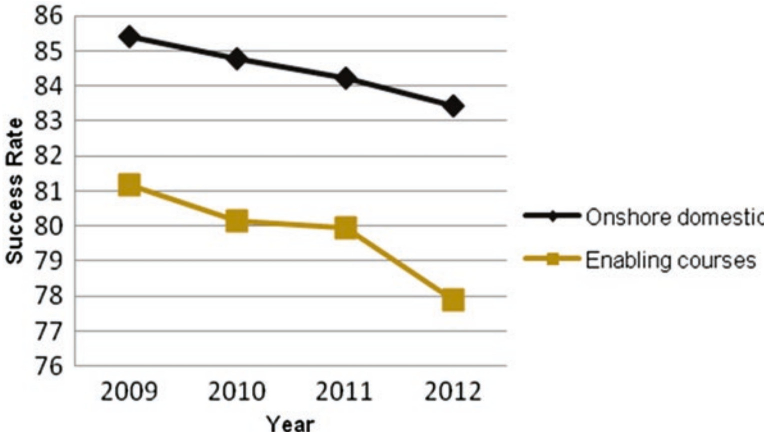

Figure 2 First-Year Success Rates (Overall)

4.1 Retention Rates

For all groups transitioning from enabling programs, retention rates were better than those of students who had pursued other pathways.

The most significant difference of all equity groups was found in the higher retention rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who had completed an enabling program, compared to the overall equity group population (Figure 3). For students with a disability and women enrolled in non-traditional areas of study transitioning via an enabling program, however, retention rates were worse for the overall equity-group population. Further research clearly needs to be conducted to establish why enabling programs are not providing the same levels of first-year retention for students with disabilities and women enrolled in non-traditional areas of study, than for most of the other equity groups of students.

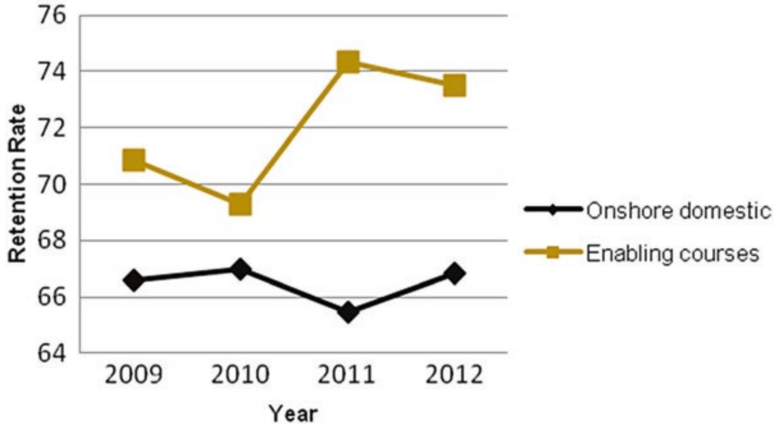

Figure 3 First-Year Retention Rates (ATSI)

4.2 Success Rates

The analysis relating to success rates found that, in relation to students from low SES backgrounds, NESB students and women in non-traditional areas of study (WiNTA) coming from enabling programs had worse success rates than the overall equity-group population (see Figure 4 below).

For regional and remote students, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students with a disability – enabling programs engendered worse success rates, compared to the overall equity-group population. Further research is required to establish how success rates for undergraduate students in all equity groups transitioning via an enabling pathway might be improved.

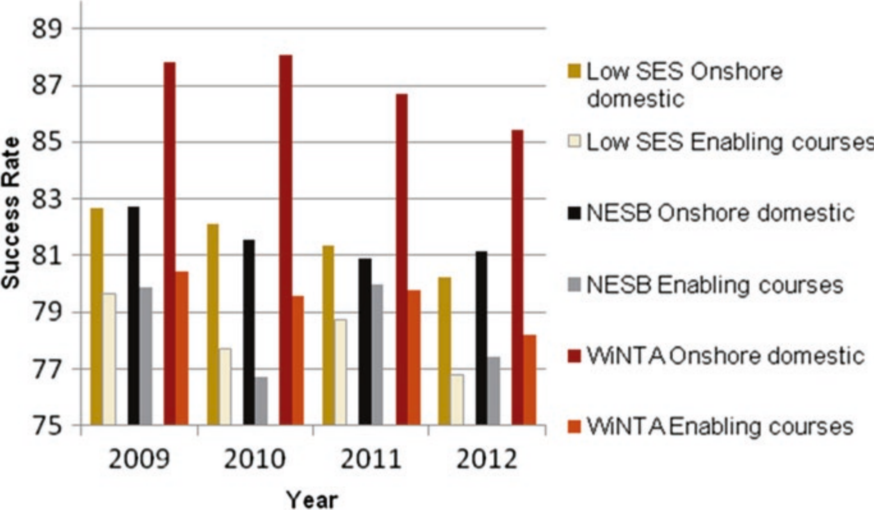

Figure 4 First-Year Success Rate (Low SES, NESB, WiNTA)

5 The Student Voice

To further determine the efficacy of enabling programs, students were surveyed in order to garner their perceptions in relation to their experiences with the enabling pathway. The national survey included more than 2,500 students who had transitioned to higher education via an alternative pathway. In total, 2,593 students responded to the survey. After data cleaning, the final participant numbers were: 981 enabling program students and 1,230 Vocational Education and Training (VET) students. The survey explored the perceptions of students, their experience of the program and their reflections on the extent to which it did or did not prepare them for tertiary studies. The key findings to emerge from the survey relating to those 981 students who had transitioned to university via the enabling pathway are presented below.

5.1 Reasons for Enrolling in the Chosen Pathway

The most frequently cited reason for choosing the enabling pathway related to being better prepared for university, with one student commenting:

> *The "jump" from school straight to university seemed difficult … to go from such a structured learning environment to university where you are … completely responsible for your own learning especially just turning 17. The idea of the enabling program seemed like a good choice as I thought it would "ease" me into university without it being such a large jump.*

The second most cited reason for choosing an enabling program came from mature-age students who pointed to it as a way to refamiliarise themselves with study and similarly "*ease*" themselves into university. One student stated, the enabling program gave them the confidence to believe they "*could achieve university as a mature student*."

Others saw the enabling pathway as a 'litmus test' to gauge if they were equipped to handle university. One student said, "*Since I am originally from South Africa and English is my second language, I thought it will be a good indicator if I would be able to cope in University.*" Another commented it was "*a fantastic way to test the waters and see if I could handle full-time study and being back in the classroom after ten years.*" Many saw the enabling program as a way for them to advance themselves and "*excel*" at university, particularly as they felt "*ill-prepared*" without the enabling program.

Cost was also found to be a strong motivating factor for students choosing an enabling program. One student said:

> *… if this course becomes a paid course (as could well happen under a government that holds the lot of working class people in disregard) it will be a sad day… I hope others have the chance to go to university via the program. I feel as if I had one of the last tastes of free tertiary education is Australia.*

Almost two thirds of the enabling cohort stated the free or low-cost nature of the pathway was a factor that influenced their decision 'quite a bit' or 'very much'.

5.2 How Students Could Be Better Prepared by the Chosen Pathway

Students were asked the ways in which their chosen pathway could have better prepared them for university. Significantly, 38% of enabling program students indicated that the pathway they pursued could not have better prepared them, indicating that a significant proportion of enabling program students were satisfied with their enabling program as a pathway to university. Despite the overall satisfaction of a large proportion of enabling program students, they still provided ideas for ways to improve this pathway. Their recommendations are outlined below.

5.2.1 Relevance to Content in Degree, Specific/Tailored to University Course

A total of 77 enabling program students (12%) suggested the need for greater relevance in relation to their subjects and the overall content of what is studied in their enabling programs compared to that in their degrees. One commented:

> *It could have been more focused on, and relevant to, the general skills required for university rather than touching on a variety of topics. The enabling program focused quite a lot*

> *on giving students a taste of every field of study, which I found to be quite irrelevant to my studies.*

5.2.2 Workload

Enabling program students pointed to the need for the pathway program to have a workload comparative to that experienced at university. Thirty-eight enabling program students pointed to this as an issue with one stating, "..*the workload was not as intense as a university course, so the workload should be increased to better prepare students for university study.*"

5.2.3 Requirements/Standards/Level of Difficulty

Enabling program students believed that the requirements, standards and overall level of difficulty in the pathway program should be comparable to those at university. Thirty-four enabling program students (5.5%) stressed the need for this.

> *A higher difficulty level of the foundation program would have been appreciated as actual university course work was much more rigorous and difficult and came as a surprise in comparison to the foundation program.*

Others stressed the need of "*Being held to the same standards as university assignments*," and stated that the program "*could be more challenging*." One simply stated it "..*was quite easy, maybe too easy?*"

5.2.4 Academic Skills

Enabling program students also foregrounded the need for greater development of academic skills, particularly in relation to academic writing, referencing, research, time management, digital literacy and library skills. Twenty-one per cent indicated that a greater focus on academic writing could have better prepared them for university.

> *The expectations of academic writing were significantly different between what was taught in the enabling program, and what is actually required as an undergrad. I feel that they should be more in line as this created quite a bit of confusion at the start of my undergrad.*

Referencing was also found to be an important academic skill for enabling program students. They also pointed to the need for greater development of time management and organisational skills and indicated that they struggled with digital literacy and online learning skills upon entering university. Their responses suggest that enabling programs need to develop these skills and better build the digital capacity of students.

5.2.5 Replicating University Systems, Structures and Processes

Large proportions of students indicated the need for the enabling pathway to mirror the overall 'set-up', operations and academic processes of university. This related to assignments and assignment processes, independent study, the flexibility like that offered at university, and greater variety of options in terms of classes and subjects to choose from. Students also indicated that having tutorials and lectures—mirroring the delivery mode used at university—in the pathway program would have made their transition easier.

A total of 22 enabling program students desired assignment processes to be like those at university in terms of having more assignments, the difficulty level, and grading systems (that is, not just pass or fail). One student stated graded assessments should be "*harder*" in order to "*avoid over confidence and to keep the difficulty of high grades consistent with that of grading in degree courses*."

The variation in expectations surrounding independent study were also noted by students. Their responses in the survey point at a clear disparity between levels of autonomous learning expected at the sub-bachelor pathway level compared to the bachelor level.

> *We were quite spoon fed – real uni is not like that!*

Flexibility was also seen as a key factor to improving pathway programs. Students called for "*Flexible hours like University offers students*," and programs that are "*more time friendly with the schedule of classes to allow more opportunity to work*." This was particularly key for those students from low socioeconomic backgrounds who were balancing work with study.

5.2.6 Greater Information

Enabling program students were insistent about the need for greater clarity and information about higher education, and particularly degree/university pathways that were available to them. Students suggested that instructors might clarify how the enabling program differed to university. Others said the pathways and options available to them were not made explicit which made it difficult to make informed choices:

> *The actual structure of education pathways through under to grad to hons etc. was not explained and would be very useful to have it clearly explained from the get go.*
> *I wasn't aware at the time that there was an education assistant prep course. I would have done that instead of the general one I completed.*

Students referred to the lack of information they had in relation to the enabling program:

> *I should have had access to information regarding the university preparation program. This information was not made available to me until I was an accepted undergraduate student.*

> *Furthermore, TAFE pushed a Diploma as necessary to become enrolled with university. This too, is totally untrue. I am still amazed at the lack of truth and information I was provided to follow my chosen pathway – until I was actually enrolled in university itself.*

Other factors that students raised in relation to improving pathway programs included more supportive teaching staff, expectations and support services made explicit, and the development of critical thinking skills.

5.3 Most Useful/Helpful Aspects of the Program

The majority of enabling program students pointed to academic writing as the single most useful/helpful aspect of the enabling program. As one mature age student stated:

> *It had been almost 10 years since I had last written an essay and the enabling program helped me relearn the basics … to enable me to write excellent essays for my current course.*

Referencing skills which prepared them for academic study at university level were also seen as a key skill by 126 students. Many students simply appreciated that the enabling program "*prepared*" them in a holistic way for university. One student said the program, "*prepared us for the rigours of academia in university*." Students also appreciated having expectations made explicit to them about how university life and culture "worked". Students valued being provided "*the ability to understand what was required at university and how to navigate the system*." The enabling program was found to help them get "*used to the way a university operates"* and ease them into "*university culture and expectations*".

Many students stated that the enabling program helped them develop confidence; with one student noting "*..the most helpful aspect was that it helped build my confidence in my own ability to be able to complete a university degree*". Twenty-nine students found the enabling program made them feel "inspired" and "empowered" to attend university and succeed.

> *The most helpful aspect of the program was that it uncovered and developed belief in my ability. Having never had a positive educational experience I was so grateful to have the opportunity to access higher education.*

Others found that the overall transition to university was made more seamless. One student commented that the enabling program "*..allowed me to start the undergraduate program confidently & smoothly*." Students insisted that the enabling program gave them a "head start":

> *I later discovered that the information I learnt within the [enabling program] had given me an advantage over others that had gone straight into a degree course.*
> *I consider myself to have a great advantage over new students.*

5.4 The Best Pathway Option

The survey sought lastly to determine whether students believed that their chosen pathway was the best option for preparing them for university. The findings reveal that only 19% of enabling program students suggested a TAFE course would have been a better option, while 16% of students felt they should have gone straight to university and bypassed the enabling pathway. Finances were a factor which played into this:

> *I should of started my degree straight away and not wasted my money on an enabling course.*
> *I should have at least tried applying with high school results and used the money to pay for my degree.*

Despite these seemingly negative findings, it should be noted that, overall, students articulating via an enabling program expressed notable satisfaction with their experience in their chosen pathway. This sentiment was more strongly expressed when participants were asked to consider how well the pathway had prepared them for university studies and whether or not it gave them the confidence to pursue, and a feeling of belonging in, these studies.

The national survey findings reveal that in relation to their reasons for choosing the pathway they did, enabling program students were primarily seeking a way to access and prepare for university. When asked how their chosen pathway could have been improved, students were generally satisfied with the enabling program and how it prepared them for university, though some did point to some areas for improvement as outlined above.

6 Conclusion

Based on the typology of enabling programs, the statistical analysis of governmental data, and the national student survey, the study reported in this chapter found eight key findings emerged in relation to the efficacy of enabling programs as a pathway to university for disadvantaged groups. The findings are as follows:

1. There is currently a diverse range of enabling programs available throughout the higher education sector in Australia, and this diversity was particularly evident in relation to course length, content, and mode of delivery.
2. There is a lack of transparency, transferability and information about enabling programs that is likely to hinder student take-up, mobility and progression.
3. With the exception of programs designed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, most programs are relatively unrestricted in regards to access; both in terms of what types of domestic students can apply and of their prior academic performance.

4. Information on what an enabling program is and does, and on what qualifies for Commonwealth enabling funding needs to be made clearer.
5. Students from recognised equity groups who articulate via an enabling program experience better first-year retention rates than the overall, relevant disadvantaged student population. The positive difference was most marked for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The exceptions to this were students with a disability and women enrolled in non-traditional areas of study. Further research clearly needs to be conducted to establish why enabling programs are not providing the same levels of first-year retention for students with disabilities and women enrolled in non-traditional areas of study than for most of the other equity groups of students.
6. In terms of success (i.e. the ratio of units passed to units studied), the evidence appears to be that the equity group of students articulating from enabling pathways are experiencing academic barriers to success. Again, further research is required to establish how success rates for undergraduate students in all equity groups, transitioning via an enabling pathway, might be improved.
7. Overall, students articulating via an enabling program expressed notable satisfaction with their chosen pathway. This sentiment was most strongly expressed when participants were asked to consider how well their chosen pathway had prepared them for university studies and whether or not it gave them the confidence to pursue and a feeling of belonging in these studies.
8. Regarding finances, the absence of fees to enrol in an enabling program encourages many students who might otherwise have enrolled in a VET or other university pathway to join an enabling program instead. Almost two thirds of the enabling cohort stated the free or low-cost nature of the pathway was a factor that influenced their decision "quite a bit" or "very much".

Our study shows that enabling programs are successful supporting aspirational disadvantaged students, acculturating them and developing resilience or 'stickability' for tertiary studies. The key messages from this study are that: enabling programs produce more resilient and persistent learners, although their success rates remain an area for focused improvement; enabling pathways are primarily functioning as a pathway for equity groups; and, finally, those engaged in enabling programs are focused on a higher education pathway – and these programs give them the confidence they need to progress and succeed.

Appendix A: Typology of Enabling Programs

Institution	Program	Age requirements[a]	Citizenship requirements[b]	Eligible students[c]	Minimum academic level[d]	Associated costs[e]	Courses accessed[f]	Provider[g]	Attendance mode(s)[h]	Minimum time to complete full-time
Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education	Preparation for Tertiary Success Program	18+	AUS	ATSI	Yr. 10	US	NS	UNI	CLASS	6 months
Central Queensland University	Skills for Tertiary Education Preparatory Studies (STEPS)	18+	AUS NZ PR HUM	All	NS	US	SEL	UNI	CLASS ONL	4 months
Charles Darwin University	Tertiary Enabling Program (TEP)	18+	AUS NZ PR HUM	All	None	US	NS	UNI	CLASS ONL	8 months
	Preparation for Tertiary Success PTS	18+	AUS	ATSI	Yr. 10	NS	SEL	UNI	CLASS	18 months
Curtin University	UniReady Enabling Program	20+	AUS NZ PR	All	NS	US	SEL	UNI	CLASS ONL	5 weeks
	Enabling course (Science, Engineering & Health)	NS	AUS NZ PR	All	TEST	US	SEL	COMB	CLASS	12 months
	Indigenous Tertiary enabling program (Centre for Aboriginal Studies)	17+	AUS	ATSI	Yr. 11	NS	SEL	UNI	CLASS ONL	6 months

Edith Cowan University	(UniPrep) University Preparation Course	SL	NS	All	None	NS	NS	UNI	CLASS ONL	9 weeks
	Indigenous University Orientation Course	18+	AUS	ATSI	Yr. 12	NS	NS	UNI	CLASS ONL	12 months
Federation University Australia	Foundation access studies program (FAST)	18+	AUS	All	Yr. 10	US	SEL	UNI	CLASS	12 weeks
Flinders University	Newstep	NS	AUS NZ PR	All	None	NS	SEL	COMB	CLASS	7 months
Griffith University	GUPP – Griffith University Preparation Program	16+	AUS NZ PR	All	Yr. 10	US	SEL	UNI	CLASS	26 weeks
James Cook University	Tertiary Access Course	18+	NS	All	TEST	SC	NS	UNI	CLASS	6 months
La Trobe University	Tertiary Enabling Program (TEP)	18+	AUS NZ PR	All	NS	SC	SEL	UNI	CLASS	17 weeks
Monash University	Monash Access program	21+	AUS NZ PR HUM	All	NS	US	SEL	UNI	CLASS	6 months
	Indigenous Non-Award Pathway (INAP)	All	AUS	ATSI	Yr. 12	NS	SEL	UNI	CLASS	12 months
	Indigenous Enabling Program (IEP)	All	AUS	ATSI	Yr. 12	NS	SEL	UNI	CLASS	6 months

(continued)

Institution	Program	Age requirements[a]	Citizenship requirements[b]	Eligible students[c]	Minimum academic level[d]	Associated costs[e]	Courses accessed[f]	Provider[g]	Attendance mode(s)[h]	Minimum time to complete full-time
Murdoch University	OnTrack Program	NS	NS	All	None	INC	ALL	UNI	CLASS	14 weeks
	OnTrack Sprint Program	NS	AUS NZ PR HUM	All	Yr. 12	NS	SEL	UNI	CLASS	4 weeks
	K-Track Course	NS	AUS	ATSI	NS	NS	SEL	UNI	CLASS ONL	14 weeks
Southern Cross University	Preparing for Success at SCU Program (PSP)	NS	DOM	All	TEST	US	SEL	ENT	CLASS ONL	12 weeks
University of Adelaide	University Preparatory Program UPP	17+	AUS NZ PR HU M	All	None	US	SEL	UNI	CLASS	12 months
	Wirltu Yarlu University Preparatory program	17+	AUS	ATSI	TEST	NS	NS	UNI	CLASS	12 months
University of Queensland	UQ College Tertiary Preparation Program (TPP) – 28 weeks;	19+	AUS	All	None	NS	SEL	ENT	CLASS	28 weeks
The University of Western Australia	UWA Smart Start	18+	AUS NZ PR	All	TEST	US	NS	UNI	CLASS	12 months
	Aboriginal Orientation Course	NS	AUS	ATSI	NS	NS	NS	UNI	CLASS	12 months

University of Canberra	UC PREP	21+	AUS NZ PR	All	None	SC	SEL	COMB	CLASS	12 weeks
	UC-CONNECT	SL	NS	All	Yr. 12	SC	SEL	UNI	CLASS	14 weeks
	ATSI Foundation Program	NS	AUS	ATSI	NS	NS	NS	UNI	CLASS	6 months
University of New England	UNE Pathways Enabling Course PEC	NS	NS	All	None	NS	SEL	UNI	ONL	6 months
	TRACKS	NS	AUS	ATSI	None	US	NS	UNI	CLASS ONL	6 months
University of New South Wales	University Preparation Program (UPP)	20+	AUS NZ PR	All	None	NS	SEL	UNI	CLASS	6 months
	UNSW Prep	17–19	AUS NZ PR	DIS	Yr. 12	SC	SEL	UNI	NS	12 months
	Indigenous Pre Program	All	AUS	ATSI	None	NS	SEL	UNI	CLASS	4 weeks
University of Newcastle	Newstep	18–20	NS	All	None	US	SEL	UNI	CLASS	12 months
	Open Foundation	20+	AUS PR	All	Yr. 10	SC	SEL	UNI	CLASS ONL	12 months
	Yapug pathway program (Wollotuka Institute)	18+	AUS	ATSI	None	US	ALL	UNI	CLASS	12 months
University of South Australia	Foundation studies	18+	AUS NZ PR HUM	All	None	US	SEL	UNI	CLASS ONL	12 months

(continued)

Institution	Program	Age requirements[a]	Citizenship requirements[b]	Eligible students[c]	Minimum academic level[d]	Associated costs[e]	Courses accessed[f]	Provider[g]	Attendance mode(s)[h]	Minimum time to complete full-time
University of Southern Queensland	Tertiary Preparation Program TPP (Non Award)	18+	AUS NZ PR HUM	All	TEST	NS	SEL	UNI	CLASS ONL	6 months
	Tertiary Preparation Program Intensive	Yr. 12	NS	All	Yr. 12	NS	SEL	UNI	CLASS	12 weeks
	Indigenous Higher Education Pathways Program (IHEP)	NS	AUS	ATSI	NS	NS	NS	UNI	ONL	6 months
University of Tasmania	University Preparation Program (UPP)	NS	NS	All	Yr. 10	US	NS	UNI	CLASS ONL	12 months
	Murina Pathway Program	18+	AUS	ATSI	NS	NS	NS	UNI	NS	12 months
University of the Sunshine Coast	Tertiary Preparation Pathway (TPP)	17+	AUS NZ PR HUM	All	TEST	NS	NS	UNI	CLASS	6 months
University of Western Sydney	Domestic University Foundation Studies	NS	AUS	All	NS	NS	SEL	ENT	NS	4 months
University of Wollongong	STEP (Special Tertiary Entrance Program) to UOW	17+	AUS NZ PR HUM	All	Yr 12[i]	NS	SEL	ENT	CLASS	28 weeks

Notre Dame	Foundation Year (Education, Nursing & Health Science)	PC	NS	All	None	NS	NS	UNI	NS	12 months
	Tertiary Enabling Program	NS	NS	All	None	NS	SEL	UNI	NS	6 months

[a] *NS* Not specified, *PC* Post-compulsory school-leaving age, *SL* school leaver
[b] *AUS* Australian citizen, *NZ* New Zealand citizen, *PR* Holder of a permanent (Australian) visa, *HUM* Humanitarian visa, *NS* not specified
[c] *All* all students, *ATSI* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, *DIS* disadvantaged students
[d] *TEST* Test required, *NS* Not specified
[e] *NS* not specified, *US* unspecified costs indicated, *SC* costs indicated and specified
[f] *SEL* Selected courses, *NS* Not specified, *ALL* All courses can be accessed
[g] *UNI* University, *ENT* university-owned entity, *COMB* combination of university and third-party provider
[h] *CLASS* face-to-face (classroom) mode, *ONL* online mode, *NS* Not specified
[i] Excepting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, for whom there is no minimum academic requirement

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Chapter 4
Great Expectations: African Youth from Refugee Backgrounds and the Transition to University

Check for updates

Svetlana M. King and Laurence Owens

Abstract Engagement in post-compulsory education is a means by which resettled refugees can gain social and economic mobility. Given the importance of education in shaping the futures of both individuals and societies, understanding the challenges facing students from refugee backgrounds and those involved in their education constitutes an important area of research. While such issues have received attention in primary and secondary school contexts, very little research has addressed these issues in higher education. This chapter examines the educational experiences and challenges associated with the transition to university for African youth from refugee backgrounds. It presents the perspectives of educators, social service providers, African students and African community leaders who participated in a qualitative investigation of the education and career pathways of African youth from refugee backgrounds. The chapter invites academics to reflect upon their experiences and challenges in teaching these students and to consider their own professional development needs with a view to better supporting these students. Recommendations are offered in an effort to identify key areas of support for academics and students in higher education.

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1 Introduction

The educational experiences of children and young people from refugee backgrounds is a relatively well-established research area in the fields of education and refugee studies (e.g., Miller et al. 2005; Rah et al. 2009; Roxas and Roy 2012). There is limited research, however, which examines such experiences in higher education. While key educational challenges facing students from refugee backgrounds have been identified, little is known about their experiences of transition from secondary school to university. This chapter seeks to address this gap in the literature by presenting findings from a recent qualitative investigation of the education and career pathways of African youth from refugee backgrounds in South Australia (King 2017). It presents the experiences of six African students who transitioned to university, and the educational challenges facing both students and educators. The recommendations provided invite academics to consider these challenges and to reflect upon the support provided to African students.

2 Refugees and Education in Australia

In order to qualify as a refugee, individuals must meet the criteria outlined in the definition that was developed during the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (Refugee Council of Australia 2006b):

> … any person who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his/her nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself/herself of the protection of that country.

A small proportion of the population of displaced people (i.e., less than 1%) is afforded a 'second chance' through resettlement. Between 2003 and 2009, Australia – one of the top 10 resettlement countries (Refugee Council of Australia 2006a) – received 95,841 humanitarian visa entrants through its humanitarian program (Australian Government Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2013). Nearly half (n = 43,236) originated from Africa, with 66.5% aged 24 years or younger upon arrival.

During periods of civil conflict, educational provisions are often haphazard and non-compulsory. Refugee camps typically lack the resources to provide more than a basic education due to infrastructure problems such as poorly qualified teachers and limited access to learning resources (Bethke and Braunschweig 2004). Consequently, refugee youth often have a history of disrupted schooling (Bonfiglio 2010) which impacts upon their educational participation in resettlement countries. Conceptual gaps in students' understanding (Brodie-Tyrrell 2009) can affect their ability to access mainstream curricula, ultimately restricting academic achievement. Furthermore, not all newly arrived young people have had opportunities to develop

English language and literacy skills prior to migration. This is because education in emergency situations (e.g., refugee camps) is often provided by international organisations where the language of instruction varies according to the source countries of this aid. Language challenges associated with educational participation are then further compounded by difficulties in developing subject-specific jargon (Brown et al. 2006; Grant and Francis 2011; Miller and Windle 2010; Windle and Miller 2012). Consequently, disrupted schooling and language difficulties can limit students' post-school education and career options (Banks and MacDonald 2003; Harris and Marlowe 2011; Joyce et al. 2010).

In addition, young people from refugee backgrounds often have traumatic personal histories involving, for example, the deaths of family members, the destruction of personal property, and physical violence. Some young people are forced to participate in civil conflicts as child soldiers, which sometimes leads them to commit atrocities themselves (Betancourt et al. 2011). Traumatic experiences can have lasting effects (Figley 1986) which manifest in the classroom (Stevenson and Willott 2007), affecting concentration, social adjustment and academic achievement (Grant and Francis 2011).

When individuals become refugees, the social fabric of their lives is often disrupted. Limited social networks in resettlement countries can make it difficult to learn new systems and cultural norms, including what is required in educational institutions such as universities (Banerjee and Verma 2012; Banks and MacDonald 2003; Zufferey and Wache 2012).

Given these wide-ranging experiences, it is unsurprising that refugees suffer profound losses of personal, social, cultural, material and financial resources (Kinzie 2007; Ryan et al. 2008). As demonstrated, these losses can impact upon various aspects of resettlement including education. In their study of African Australian women in higher education, for example, Harris et al. (2015) identified a tension experienced by these students between the personal gains from higher education participation, and the losses of traditional cultural roles and identities.

The notion that individuals occupy multiple social contexts is the central tenet of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory of the ecology of human development which recognises that people live as members of families, communities, and other social groups. This theory is applicable to refugee students given that, as Cooper (2011) explained, immigrant youth are engaged in an ongoing interplay between the multiple cultural worlds they occupy.

Successfully navigating educational systems within those worlds requires context-specific cultural capital (Valtonen 2004) (i.e., knowledge of cultural assumptions that operate in institutions). Social capital is a means by which people can acquire cultural capital and involves the use of social networks to facilitate access to practical and emotional resources (Duberley and Cohen 2010; Ramsden and Taket 2013). Accessing social capital can facilitate key developmental transitions (Billett et al. 2010; Pettit et al. 2011), enhancing educational aspirations, academic performance, and retention (Semo 2011). This research draws upon the work of social capital researchers (Putnam 2011; Woolcock and Narayan 2000) who iden-

tified two types of social capital: (i) bonding social capital (formed through interactions with people who share similar characteristics, such as family); and (ii) bridging social capital (formed when individuals establish networks with those who are more distant, such as colleagues). This recognises that the existing social networks of those who are marginalised constitute a protective factor, where "outside agents … need to find ways to complement these resources, rather than substitute for them" (Woolcock and Narayan 2000, p. 242).

Given the importance of acquiring social and cultural capital for new migrants, it is clear that social capital theory has applicability in refugee studies. Indeed, this theory has been applied in a number of refugee studies (e.g., Boateng 2010; Deuchar 2011; Ramsden and Taket 2013).

As discussed, little is known about the experiences of refugee background youth as they transition to university. This chapter presents findings from a study examining the education and career pathways of African youth.

3 Study Design

This chapter presents data collected from interviews with African students from refugee backgrounds, educators, social service providers, and African community leaders. These findings form part of a larger qualitative study examining the post-school transitions of African youth from refugee backgrounds. The research sought to better understand the experiences, needs and challenges of newly arrived African youth as they transition from secondary school to education and employment.

Multiple, semi-structured interviews were conducted over a 12 month period during 2012–2013 with African students (n = 14), secondary school teachers (n = 7), Technical and Further Education (TAFE) staff (n = 4), university academics (n = 5), social service providers (n = 3), and leaders from South Australia's new and emerging African communities (n = 5). Student participants were asked to share their experiences of education in Africa, refugee and resettlement experiences, education and career aspirations, and university transition experiences. Stakeholder participants were asked to reflect upon their experiences and challenges in working with African youth from refugee backgrounds.

Data analysis was a recursive process involving the continuous interpretation and reinterpretation of data, utilising Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis guidelines and case study approaches to analysis (Stake 2005). Data analysis resulted in the identification of key issues affecting educational participation amongst African students from refugee backgrounds.

Analysis was guided by a theoretical framework consisting of a series of assumptions that were developed from a range of existing theories (see King 2017; King and Owens 2015). The data presented in this chapter aligns most closely with the assumption that education and career pathways are shaped by access to educational, economic, cultural and social resources including social support and relationships.

Embedded in this assumption is the notion that acquiring such resources facilitates the development of social and cultural capital, which is framed by the contexts of people's lives. This assumption is, therefore, informed by Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecology of human development, bonding and bridging social capital (Putnam 2011; Woolcock and Narayan 2000), and Cooper's (2011) bridging multiple worlds theory.

4 Results and Discussion

Of the 14 student participants, six made the transition from secondary school to university. Four students identified as Somali, three of whom were born and raised in Kenya. The other two participants originated from South Sudan and Liberia. All students experienced some degree of trauma and upheaval prior to migration including the deaths of family members, destruction of property, inadequate access to food and water, and threats of physical violence. Most participants lived in a refugee camp for a period of time, ranging from a few months to many years.

All six students had a strong history of formal schooling in which they learnt English. Despite this, students reported challenges in making the transition to the Australian education system. They were, however, able to overcome these challenges to successfully transition to university. All students had lived in Australia for at least 4 years prior to attending university and were enrolled in courses including health science (2), laboratory medicine (1), tourism and event management (1), criminology (1) and business (1).

Students reported strong family support for pursuing further education. Indeed, for many, education was a primary motivator in the decision to apply for resettlement. Luol (South Sudanese elder) described his own motivation for resettlement: "I wanted [my kids] to have a better education … That's my top priority."

In connection with motivation for resettlement, the study reported here examined participants' migration and resettlement histories. It explored the impact of these experiences on students' education and career pathways in terms of their aspirations and goals, and the challenges encountered as they transitioned to university. Educators, African community leaders and social service providers were invited to reflect upon their own experiences and challenges in working with African youth from refugee backgrounds.

Data analysis revealed a range of influences affecting the education and career pathways of African youth including difficulties in achieving aspirations, meeting family and community expectations and obligations, and successfully navigating educational systems. This chapter outlines two key overarching themes that emerged from data analysis: (i) African students' education and career aspirations; and (ii) the development of cultural capital in the transition to university.

4.1 *Aspirations to Attend University: Status, Respect, and Family and Community Expectations and Obligations*

As noted in previous research (Walker et al. 2005), status and respect were considered key measures of success amongst African youth and their families, with educational opportunities and career pathways as the means by which to attain this. Of particular importance was the status of the university. Laura (TAFE educator) suggested that for African students, "university is seen as glamorous … It's like the glittering goal." According to Mark (university academic), the status of the university is evident and visible amongst African students: "You definitely sense the pride that they're *at*[1] uni … You can see it in the clothing … they'll have formal jackets on."

Consistent with other research (Anjum et al. 2012; Cassity and Gow 2005; Oliver et al. 2009), many African youth aspired to become doctors, lawyers and engineers. Family and community played a significant role in formulating these aspirations. For example, Habsa reported: "If my mum chose something for me and I chose the other thing, maybe she would be disappointed … I would leave what I wanted to do for my mum, I think." Darren (youth worker) also cited an example of conflicting aspirations between African youth and their parents:

> One of my former clients got the marks to study psychology but her mother refused to let her because she'd seen ads … there were lots of jobs in *nursing* and that the pay was good. So, she had to become a nurse and she had no say in it. Even though that's something that she had *no* interest in doing.

These examples illustrate the difficulties that African youth can experience in negotiating multiple cultural worlds that correspond to different contexts of their lives (Bronfenbrenner 1979; Cooper 2011; Cooper et al. 2002).

Another dimension of African students' aspirations is a desire to contribute to community development, both in Africa and the diaspora – findings which are reflected in Swedish research which examined West African refugee resettlement (Anjum et al. 2012). All six participants described an aspiration to contribute to community development. For example, Angel planned to complete her nursing degree and return to Africa to open a family clinic. Similarly, Fatuma reported a desire to return to Africa as a gynaecologist. These findings were reflected in stakeholder interview data. For example, in Lillian's (career counsellor) experience: "When they're talking about what job they want, it's *always* got a purpose … They're value driven … They want to go back and help." Rachel (youth worker) suggested that this desire to 'give back' may be derived from family and community expectations:

> I have lots of clients that want to go to university … They want to have the skills to help in the community or go back to their country in the future and help there … It is their own personal goal, but I think it's also an expectation from the family and the community …

[1] Italics denote words emphasised by participants during interviews.

The desire to give back to the community may derive from the core elements of African culture (i.e., kinship, spirituality, and collective practices and beliefs) (Theron et al. 2013). It may also be a means by which to maintain ties to the country of origin (Gifford et al. 2009; Udo-Ekpo 1999).

The desire to maintain a geographical cultural connection may act to strengthen African students' bonding social capital, not only for themselves, but also for their families and communities, in both Africa and the diaspora. Similarly, the utilisation of knowledge and skills acquired in Australia for community development efforts in Africa can aid in strengthening students' own bridging social capital. In this sense, African youth are located at the intersection of African and Australian cultures.

4.1.1 Bridging Multiple Worlds

African students were seen to engage in an ongoing process of bridging multiple worlds (Cooper 2011; Cooper et al. 2002), continually crossing boundaries between family, community, and broader societal contexts including education and employment. In this study, Sean (university academic) observed the difficulties of bridging these worlds in relation to multiple topic failures amongst African students from refugee backgrounds:

> They are persistent and I know some people who have been in the same, in the first year of legal studies, for the last six years. They keep on repeating … That's a cultural issue. They would be alienated from their social group if they fail.

Traditional gendered roles were also found to shape educational success and opportunity amongst African youth, as Will (Congolese bilingual support officer) explained:

> For some parents … they think that housework, it's a girl's job … I can see, sometimes, a boy and a girl, same household, but the boy's excelling at his schoolwork, whereas the girl, she's just regressing … In my mind, I just think, 'Oh, maybe she got home and she had to look after the baby, she had to wash, she had to cook. And by the time she finished all this, it was 10:30 … she is knackered, just go to bed. So, no time to read or to do her homework.' … I think most of the girls, they're very disadvantaged because of their cultural background …

These findings, also reflected by other participants, demonstrate the notion that female African students can struggle to integrate their identities as university students and as family and community members. This is consistent with Harris et al. (2015) who found that African Australian women are entangled in a binary between academic achievement for themselves, and self-sacrifice of their cultural and gendered identities.

4.1.2 Financial Resources: The Challenge of Meeting Family Obligations

Many newly arrived African families are responsible for financially supporting kin who are overseas (Akuei 2005; Hammond 2010; Johnson and Stoll 2008; Lim 2009). Will (Congolese bilingual support officer) explained the importance of supporting family and kin:

> You have a lot of people who rely on you … I'm not just my mother's kid. I'm not just only my father's kid … My aunty has a right on me, my uncle has a right on me. So, if me studying will make them starve, I'm not doing the right thing. I should stop studying and work in order to support them.

The need to make regular financial contributions to family and kin overseas carries significant weight for some African students, as Amanda (university counsellor) explained:

> A student said, 'They've said to me that they'll put … a hex on me if I don't … continue to contribute.' … They're not the only student that's said that to me. So, that level of obligation is really enforced.

Financial remittances can place pressure on families who are struggling to meet their own needs in Australia. For some, financial hardship can limit post-school opportunities to seeking paid employment, effectively prolonging or eliminating the possibility of attending university. As Darren (youth worker) explained:

> If you're the eldest sibling, and … your mum is a single parent and you've got five or six younger brothers and sisters … a spread of ages … education's not seen as something that's going to be a pathway to making money in the short term. A pathway to making money is to find a job doing whatever to contribute, to try and support.

Limited finances can also shape the university experience by, for example, making it difficult to purchase learning resources (e.g., stationery, textbooks and Internet access) and accessing transport. As Tracey (university academic) explained:

> If you don't have internet at home, if you're living at Paralowie and … getting to [university on the other side of town] on public transport … and they don't have a computer at home … you're probably *not* going to be accessing your emails every day. You're not going to be Facebooking with other students … those things are obstacles which make it up against them.

As with the desire to maintain a connection to their homelands, financial remittances can be viewed as a practical means by which to maintain and strengthen students' transnational bonding and bridging social capital. The act of making remittances maintains a cultural identity (bonding social capital) while the acquisition of financial resources facilitates integration into the Australian culture through paid employment (bridging social capital).

4.2 Developing Cultural Capital: Understanding the University Culture

Cultural capital was considered critical to successful transitions from secondary school to other education and employment contexts. Cultural capital is the means by which people develop an understanding of the Australian tertiary education sector and the university learning culture, and thus aids in "[defining] positions and possibilities for individuals engaged in education" (Naidoo 2009, p. 264).

4.2.1 Success and Failure: An Ethical Dilemma

Participants described ethical dilemmas associated with notions of success and failure. Educators were concerned that some African students are inadequately prepared for university, having attended university bridging courses which, following successful completion, guarantee university admission. This was considered problematic and particularly detrimental for students with significant educational challenges. Luol (South Sudanese elder) suggested that such courses require review:

> They have to look into this thing called bridging course that is taking everyone to the university … There has to be something that will make it a little bit hard to go, you have to sweat for it to go rather than just getting in because you've just got… [TAFE Certificates] one, two and three.

Ethical issues associated with limited preparedness were also concerns for academics working with enrolled university students, findings which are consistent with previous research (Harris and Marlowe 2011). As Rebecca (university academic) explained:

> I do feel sad because … somehow they've got in, and their hopes are raised … For some people, I just think, 'You're not going to make it through first year.' And I think it's really cruel to raise their hopes and to put them through that anguish and to dash their hopes.

Educators reported dilemmas associated with assignment marking and providing feedback to African students with academic difficulties. As Rebecca (university academic) explained, these dilemmas are common amongst academics: "… a lot of staff are feeling really frustrated … 'We really want to help them, but we can't ethically, we can't pass this assignment.' … [It] is an issue for a lot of people."

Amanda (university counsellor) reported cases in which tutors award 'encouragement' marks for African students who are struggling, which can have negative implications for the student/teacher relationship:

> I've had instances where a lecturer may say, 'It's not really a pass,' but they'll give them an encouragement mark … like 47 or something. But then they're like, 'Well, what do I do for my three marks …?' So, they'll be trying to get the three [marks]. But really, it was like, 30 … It's a bit of a dilemma … Sometimes in fostering hope, you give people an unrealistic expectation …

Such marking approaches not only affect the student, but can also create difficulties for other educators who *do* adhere to academic standards and assessment criteria. Furthermore, individual teaching philosophies can critically affect students' ability to achieve academic success. Laura (TAFE educator) explained that students who are not deemed to be adequately prepared for university bridging courses require counselling into other educational pathways. She acknowledged the difficulties associated with this, but also cited the importance of the individual teacher's perspective in these circumstances:

> [For those with] significant learning, literacy issues … we try and counsel them into considering other vocational training perhaps, instead of university, or language classes, but it doesn't go down well … Not all teachers are great at it, most are good at it, but there's some teachers who don't bother … It comes back to the professionalism of the teacher …

The notion of adequate preparation was considered a key issue associated with the acquisition of cultural capital needed to achieve academic success. Notions of success and failure relate to conflicting expectations between academics and African students who lack knowledge of relevant cultural assumptions. Limited opportunities to develop cultural capital can, therefore, affect university participation.

4.2.2 English Language and Academic Writing Conventions

Educational experience and English language proficiency were considered key resources that contribute to cultural capital development. African students with a strong educational history and English language proficiency were considered better able to adapt to the university learning culture. Yet, as this study found, students can still struggle with Western academic culture through, for example, the difficulties associated with developing two types of language – conversational English, and the discourse of academic disciplines. As Tracey (law lecturer) explained:

> I just don't know whether they've had a really strong foundation in critical reading … All of our texts essentially are difficult and long … The language is often quite archaic … If you're reading something and English is your third or fourth language, this is a different sort of English altogether.

Educators noted the difficulties of marking some African students' work in terms of language comprehension. Integral to these issues is the need for educators to provide constructive feedback. As Mark (university academic) explained:

> Quite often, tutors would say, 'Your … English isn't university standard,' or something like that, which is useless! [laughs] … Telling someone that isn't going to make them magically improve. It's just going to discourage them … The other complication when *marking* the work is that it would take *literally* twice as long … and there's a tendency to correct *everything* … and even sometimes just trying to understand what's being said, that's quite time consuming, too …"

He also recognised that students must feel disenchanted by such feedback:

> They must have felt quite frustrated … at some of the feedback about their language and … there'd be an awareness that their English isn't as … advanced as the other students', so that

> *must* make them doubt their own abilities … it *would* be very hard … putting things in your own words … and some of them, you can see they really try to express something, but … quite often, it just doesn't … make sense … they must lose confidence …

Academic writing conventions were also a key concern for educators. As Daphne (TAFE educator) explained, African students can struggle with "the structures and rigours of writing academic essays and they become agitated about what they see as petty, that what I'm trying to explain is required." In particular, referencing and plagiarism – which were considered to have both cultural and language dimensions – are key challenges for many African students, as Denise (TAFE educator) explained:

> Plagiarism is a huge issue … but you do have the cultural issue where some people say, 'In my culture, if you agree with something, you can use the source because it's your idea, too. It's not just their idea.' And so, we have to say, 'Well, in Australia, it's slightly different.' And explain how serious it is to plagiarise … Because their English is so poor, they can't not copy and paste. They don't know how to paraphrase. They don't have the English skills …

4.2.3 Help-Seeking Behaviours

Associated with the academic difficulties encountered by African students from refugee backgrounds were help-seeking behaviours. Cultural capital was found to facilitate the development and utilisation of adaptive help-seeking in the Australian university context. Participants noted reluctance amongst African students from refugee backgrounds to seek help from educators across educational contexts. Lillian (career counsellor) suggested that "they don't want to appear like they need help. They always want to appear they're coping and they're successful no matter what." This was considered an African cultural norm of needing to 'save face', demonstrating that help-seeking behaviours are strongly influenced by students' cultural patterns of interaction. For African students, there is a "learning style preference which is person to person … They respond to contacts" (Rebecca, university academic).

Central to facilitating adaptive help-seeking behaviours is "building a relationship" (Linda, school teacher) based upon trust: "You need to … *gain* their trust before they are … able to open up and tell you exactly what they need and what they don't need" (Sean, university academic). Participants noted, however, that once relationships are established, some African students can become very persistent.

4.2.4 Social Support: Facilitating Access to Cultural Capital

Recall that social support is an important means by which to develop social capital (Feighery 2013; Holland 2009; Kuusisto 2010). Access to such support can aid in developing the cultural capital (Portes 1998) needed to understand educational systems, structures and processes.

Study participants identified various sources of social support, emphasising the importance of a strong family network to ease the transition to higher education

through the provision of emotional and practical support. For example, Fathia was able to seek information and advice from family members who had previously enrolled at university: “My sisters and my brother came before me, so it was easy … I could just go ahead and ask them any questions.”

Peers were another identified source of support. Daphne (TAFE educator) explained that students are better able to settle into the educational environment “when they work together … They seem to be very good at supporting each other.” Participants did note, however, that students’ peer support networks are often limited to fellow African students; but this was considered typical of any ethnic minority group, as Daphne (TAFE educator) explained: “If you’re a minority group in a dominant culture, you are drawn to other minority groups.” Denise (TAFE educator) also noted this, suggesting that it reflects that students are “not integrating … In a sense, they’re a support, but I think it’s, in a way, negative support …”. Tracey (university academic) acknowledged that cross-cultural interaction requires the participation of both parties:

> I think other students don’t include them as well as they could … And I think this is not just the case for African students but other international students as well, where students have difficulty understanding each other, they’re less likely to really engage with them in groups.

Support networks were seen as a key means by which to understand the cultural assumptions that operate in the university environment. As Mark (university academic) suggested, support networks can aid in “getting through the red tape. That’s a big part of success at uni … knowing how [and] knowing when to actually put in a request for an extension and knowing how to … word the request.” Similarly, Amanda (university counsellor) recognised that African students require support to develop knowledge of the cultural assumptions that operate in a university:

> That stuff about giving them information about the bureaucracy and … everything’s got a process, it’s not personal … You need to know in advance what you need to do … General stuff … Seeking help and how important it is, having a plan … because it’s all assumptions. And I think they are disadvantaged by not knowing it.

She went on to suggest that universities could provide additional assistance to African students to better support them to navigate higher education contexts so that they “don’t become a reason that they don’t succeed.”

5 Recommendations

Because of the infancy of this research area, there is limited literature offering strategies to address the needs of students from refugee backgrounds in higher education. This was evident from an Australian symposium, led by the Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education at the University of Newcastle in 2015, which sought to address the lack of specialised support for Australian higher education students from refugee backgrounds (University of Newcastle 2015).

Nevertheless, responding to the discussion above, several recommendations are offered with a view to better supporting African students from refugee backgrounds. These include: cultural awareness training for academic staff; inclusive social support; ongoing cultural mentoring for African students; and academic support to address African students' learning needs. Where possible, examples are provided from universities and other organisations which have implemented strategies that are consistent with these ideas.

5.1 Cultural Awareness Training

Australia has an official multiculturalism policy (Commonwealth of Australia 2011), emphasising the centrality of cultural and linguistic diversity amongst the Australian people. Cross-cultural communication is an important element of social interaction where cultural awareness and sensitivity are important pre-requisites to effective cross-cultural interaction (Quappe and Cantatore 2005). When educators are culturally aware, they are better placed to understand students' knowledge, skills and capabilities in order to support their learning. Cultural awareness can also promote positive student/teacher relationships, in turn fostering adaptive help-seeking behaviours that contribute to effective teaching and learning.

The University of Western Sydney (now Western Sydney University) together with Western Sydney high schools and the Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation established a homework program with a view to supporting African high school students from refugee backgrounds (Vickers 2007). This program involved Masters of Teaching students who adopted tutoring roles. School students benefitted from practical homework support while university students were able to develop valuable and critical cultural awareness, thus honing their teaching skills. In developing this and other programs, Western Sydney University has collaborated with African community leaders and other external organisations to consider ways to best support African students from refugee backgrounds. The challenge for universities is to reflect on effective ways in which to involve knowledgeable people who work with individuals from refugee backgrounds through the various support services that are available (e.g., Australian Migrant Resource Centre, Australian Refugee Association, Government Multicultural Departments, New Arrivals Programs, and Departments of Education).

5.2 Inclusive Social Support

Integral to cultural awareness is the need to ensure that educational institutions create a culture of inclusivity. This is evident at Flinders University, wherein researchers supported African students to develop their own student club, the African

Students Association of Flinders University. This was based on an idea developed during a project funded by a 2007/2008 Diversity Initiative Grant to explore the perceived educational challenges of African students from refugee backgrounds in higher education (Harris and Marlowe 2011). This student association was designed to create a mechanism for social support, and continues to operate.

The African cultures represented amongst participants emphasise collectivism, in which group associations and connectedness are critical (Triandis 1995), and family and community are pivotal in the lives of African youth. Universities are, therefore, invited to consider the opportunities available for African families to develop a greater understanding of the university system and the culture of higher education. For example, universities could establish ‘experience days’ in which African youth and their families are invited to participate in campus activities to facilitate understanding about what it means to sit in a lecture theatre or participate in a tutorial. This type of activity could assist families to better understand and appreciate the university environment, enabling them to provide greater support for their children.

5.3 Cultural Mentoring

Newly arrived African youth from refugee backgrounds may lack the social and cultural capital needed to facilitate engagement in higher education because they often have limited social networks that may not include individuals from different cultural backgrounds (Walker et al. 2005). Every university has its own unique culture that is embedded within a broader academic culture. When students lack knowledge and understanding of university expectations and requirements, they are disadvantaged. The current study found that effective cultural mentoring is vital in supporting African students in the post-school transition. Mentoring was considered essential in equipping students with cultural capital that facilitates integration into educational systems and Australian society more broadly.

Participants suggested that universities could establish mentoring programs to support African students to develop the social and cultural capital that is needed to better understand these cultural assumptions. Macquarie University (2015) established a mentoring program for high school students from refugee backgrounds called ‘LEAP’ – Learning, Education, Aspiration, Participation. This program, in partnership with 10 high schools in West and South West Sydney, involves university students as volunteer mentors to support high school students to build their knowledge of higher education (Macquarie University 2015). Peer and academic-led mentoring could also be provided to students who have enrolled at university, to assist them to develop knowledge of university policies and procedures.

5.4 Academic Support

Academic support provisions for students from refugee backgrounds in higher education are intricately linked to the development of social and cultural capital. The earlier discussion revealed that understanding academic writing conventions, including the importance of referencing and citations, was a key challenge. Educators also noted that 'show and tell' approaches to teaching these conventions is largely ineffective. The challenge for universities, then, is to consider innovative approaches to teaching academic writing skills to students who struggle with these concepts.

6 Conclusions

It is evident from recent global events that the world's extensive history of forcible displacement will continue into the future. As countries like Australia continue to provide refugees with a 'second chance', it is imperative that we learn more about how we can support these people to gain social and economic mobility through participation in education and employment.

This chapter presented key factors that were found to shape the post-school transition to higher education amongst African youth from refugee backgrounds in South Australia. In doing so, it invited universities and academics to consider provisions to better support African university students from refugee backgrounds.

Understanding the challenges facing students and academics alike will aid in ensuring that universities and other educational institutions develop strategies to address these needs. These strategies need to identify ways to support students to develop the social and cultural capital they need to achieve academic success. Increasing our knowledge and understanding of the issues facing students from refugee backgrounds will enable us to fulfil our social and moral obligations to support these individuals to become active and productive citizens in their new country.

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Chapter 5
Alternative Access to Tertiary Science Study in South Africa: Dealing with 'Disadvantage', Student Diversity, and Discrepancies in Graduate Success

Nicola F. Kirby and Edith R. Dempster

Abstract The legacy of the inequities of South Africa's apartheid past and the shortcomings of the post-apartheid schooling systems have resulted in a particular underrepresentation of Black African graduates in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Extended curriculum programs have been an important mechanism for redress and massification in South African higher education, offering students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds an alternative route to tertiary study. Although equity of access has improved considerably, severe challenges to realizing equity of output remain. Amid increasing student diversity within higher education, a national call has been made to interrogate the performance of extended curriculum programs at a local level in search of clues as to how the country's educational goals of effective transformation, inclusion and improved science graduate output can be achieved. One such program is reviewed to give context to an examination of alternative access student performance in a mainstream module. The evident success of foundation students in particular relative to the majority of direct entrants suggests that students who exceeded the stipulated mainstream admission criteria by a narrow margin and who experienced further challenges related to their proficiency in the medium of instruction (English) were disadvantaged by not having completed an access year. These findings are considered in light of the growing sentiment in South Africa that the full value of curriculum extension will only be realized when it is taken to scale, becomes an integral element of mainstream provision, and is thus available to the full range of students who will benefit from it.

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1 Introduction

The ramifications of the passing of the Black Education Act (Act 47 of 1953) have been utterly devastating for generations of South African learners, with far reaching consequences for the development of the country as a whole (see Kalloway 2002). The man considered to be the architect of apartheid and the South African prime minister during the 1950s and 60s, Dr. Henrik Verwoerd, is infamous for his part in the legislation of this Act. The effects of this Act have manifested in an enduring underrepresentation of Black African[1] graduates in South Africa particularly in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM): "There is no place for [the 'Bantu'] in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour...What is the use of teaching the Bantu child mathematics when it cannot use it in practice?" (Morris and Linnegar 2004, p. 165). Indeed, the challenges to mitigate this legacy, and meet the national developmental, educational and social imperatives to increase the graduate output[2] and address the inequities in racial representativity within these fields have been significant (see Ministry of Education 2001).

2 Towards Equity of Access to Tertiary Science Study

Programs providing alternative pathways to tertiary science study have played a key role in the efforts to meet the national goals related to equity and redress (e.g. Case et al. 2013; Council on Higher Education [CHE] 2013).

As forerunners in the area of alternative access to higher education in South Africa, science-based programs have a particularly long and complex history. The earliest of these programs were initiated well before the advent of democracy in 1994 (in the early 1980s) by historically advantaged (white) universities (HAU) that took advantage of loopholes in the law in order to grant admission to a small number of talented Black African, Indian and Coloured students. Soon into the new dispensation (as early as 2001), however, nearly every university (including those institutions formerly considered technikons and historically black universities) offered some post-school intervention in the sciences for students previously excluded from HAUs by apartheid legislation (Rollnick 2010). As is well known, this pertains to the majority of the population[1], a peculiarity that is borne of South Africa's political past and which has shaped the country's alternative science access arena.

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[1] The term 'Black African' used in this paper describes the 'population group' that excludes people of mixed race (Coloureds) and people of Indian origin (Indians) (Statistics South Africa 2014). In South Africa, Black African is the majority population group by a considerable margin (80%).

[2] The term 'output' used here refers to the numbers of students graduating in a given year as the proportion of a particular student intake or cohort (i.e. the 'completion rate'). This is in contrast to the qualitative term 'outcome' which refers to the nature and quality of graduate learning and attributes (as applied in CHE (2013)).

Certainly, the alternative access discourse in this country is a product of the most 'powerful tool' of apartheid – the ideological inequality of educational systems (Morris and Linnegar 2004, p. 165). While this discourse may have changed as higher education has evolved, terms such as 'historical/ previous disadvantage', 'underpreparedness', and 'articulation gap', that have characterised the academics of the field, have all related to the impoverished schooling experienced by most learners in the country. Nowhere else in the world has the word 'non-traditional' been used to describe a student from a country's major population group.

2.1 Inferior Schooling, Underpreparedness, and Opportunity

Indeed, alternative access students represent a very small proportion of the large majority of South African learners who have received an inferior basic education at an under-resourced and dysfunctional school. In fact, despite the vast national expenditure[3] since political transition, at least 80% of the schools in the country continue to be highly inefficient, and the quality of the education experienced by their attendant learners severely problematic (Grayson 2010; van der Berg 2008). Almost without exception, these schools are ex-homeland schools or former non-homeland 'black' schools that were administered by the pre-democracy Department of Education and Training. This state of affairs highlights the systemic challenges to overcoming the legacy of apartheid education and the shortcomings of the post-apartheid schooling system(s).

These 'previously disadvantaged' schools are still disadvantaged, characterised by overcrowded and under-resourced classrooms, laboratories and libraries. Even electricity, running water, toilets and desks in many such schools remain limited if not non-existent (Grayson 2010). The crises of ineffective teaching (often left in the hands of under-qualified teachers) and of poor management in the majority of the country's schools are well documented (e.g., Morrow 2005/2007), as are the challenges related to learning in a second language (usually English or Afrikaans) which are complex and severe (see for example Howie et al. (2012) and Pretorius (2002) for insight into the educational implications of the persistent hegemony of the English language over indigenous languages in the majority of rural and township schools).

These ills are reflected in the extremely low levels of literacy and numeracy exhibited by the majority of South African school learners (Fleisch 2008), which

[3] The National Government uses a quintile system of classification based on a 'poverty index' for resource targeting purposes. The amount of state subsidy schools receive depends on under which quintile the school is considered to fall: the lower the quintile, the higher the amount the state contributes per learner. Schools that fall into the lower three quintiles are considered the most under-resourced and serve the poorest of communities. They are 'no-fee' schools (DoE 2011). Schools in quintiles 4 and 5 are expected to supplement their state allocation through the charging of school fees and fund-raising. Quintile 5 schools are invariably historically 'white' schools and are located in affluent areas.

translate to levels of proficiency that reach crisis proportions at high school[4] and set the scene for achievement scores in the Grade 12 exit-examinations that fall way below the standards required in the 'gateway' mathematics and science subjects for mainstream entry into tertiary science programs (Reddy 2006, p. 127; see also Grayson (2010) for comprehensive analyses of this issue).

Although the regular admission criteria[5] for entry to STEM programs tend to be more stringent than those for most other university faculties, it is widely accepted that the students who are granted the opportunity of alternative science access have been unable to meet these demanding entry scores because of their inferior secondary schooling, and not because of a fundamental inability to succeed in higher education.

This inferior schooling has however left students severely underprepared for the challenges of tertiary study. The nature of student 'underpreparedness' in the South African context has been written about extensively (e.g., Scott et al. 2007), but this notion is increasingly applied to university staff and the institutional body as it is recognised that higher education institutions must assume greater responsibility for realising educational reform (CHE 2010; Dhunpath and Vithal 2013). In accepting that the solutions to the weaknesses in the secondary schooling system cannot be expected in the short term (Case et al. 2013), the focus on the discontinuity in the interface between school and higher education (referred to as an 'articulation gap' (Department of Education [DoE] 1997)) has intensified. Recognising 'underpreparedness' as a relative concept, that is that 'students who are underprepared for a particular education level may be adequately prepared for another' (CHE 2013, p. 17) has challenged higher education to continually extend its agenda towards providing wide and equitable access.

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[4] By way of example, the latest available report on national assessments reveals that the averages achieved by Grade 6 and 9 learners in mathematics were 43% and 11% respectively (Department of Basic Education 2014).

[5] University admission criteria depend heavily on standardised school-leaving examination results. The minimum statutory requirements for direct entry to a Bachelor's degree are universal for all South African institutions of higher learning (known as a 'bachelor's pass' from secondary school). However, additional admission criteria (that are based on ratings achieved in school exit-examinations and measured as 'admission point scores' (APS)) vary considerably across institutions as well as between faculties within each institution. These criteria always include a composite score (referred to in this text as 'Grade 12 score'), which is the sum of APS for all Grade 12 subjects; additional subject APS requirements relate to the tertiary program to which the student is seeking admission. (For example students are required to have achieved minimum levels of proficiency in school mathematics and generally in one science subject for entry to a STEM program).

2.2 Alternative Science Access Programs in South Africa: A Brief Introduction

Original alternative science access initiatives took the form of 'foundation programs' which comprised coherent sets of foundation modules and other supportive provisions such as academic literacy and 'life skills' courses. Many of these early programs were funded by the private sector or by tertiary institutions themselves (Rollnick 2010), and assumed a marginalized[6] position in terms of institutional location, staffing, and program operation. As their successes were recognised, these programs began attracting government funding. This resulted in a closer integration of the foundation programs and regular curricula leading to the concept of 'extended curriculum' programs (DoE 2006).

In terms of policy documentation (Department of Higher Education and Training 2012), 'foundational provision' is defined as the core principle and mechanism of 'extended programs', 'to facilitate the academic development of students whose prior learning has been adversely affected by ... educational or social inequalities'; by key means of addressing the 'articulation gap' between secondary and tertiary levels of education, students are assisted to achieve the 'academic and social foundations for success in higher education' (see also CHE, 2013, pp. 70–90; and Scott et al. 2007, p. 43). Foundational provision in the context of South Africa, thus has the explicit, and central purpose, of 'facilitating equity of access and outcomes'.[2]

Contemporary extended programs in South Africa are whole degree or diploma programs into which substantial foundational provision is formally incorporated thus necessitating the completion of a minimum of one additional year towards an undergraduate qualification (Standard undergraduate programs for general, academic bachelor degrees (e.g. in Life, Physical and Mathematical Sciences) and professional first degrees (such as Engineering) are three- and four-year programs respectively).

There are two basic extended curriculum frameworks which aim to accommodate different degrees of underpreparedness of alternative access students by providing them with the additional 'curriculum space' appropriate to their entry-level (CHE 2013, p 37). In one model, the students only do foundation courses in their first year of study, and, if successful, continue into regular, mainstream programs. This model specifically accommodates a certain sector of the student body entering higher education that, on account of particularly inadequate schooling, is seen to need a considerable amount of focussed support to lay the foundation for mainstream science study (e.g., Kloot et al. 2008). In the second model, students complete foundation and regular courses simultaneously beyond the first year of their studies, the proportion of the former declining sharply in their second year. Across institutions the mixes and proportions of foundation to regular courses vary considerably, depending on the maturity and resourcing of their programs (CHE

[6] While academic development staff working in early foundation programs may have enjoyed academic autonomy, the problems related to the marginalization of such programs have been numerous (see for example Kloot et al. 2008).

2013). Generally, students following this model miss meeting the regular admission criteria by a smaller margin, and require less foundational provision than those who complete a comprehensive ‘foundation year’.

Irrespective of the curriculum framework adopted by different alternative access programs across South Africa, the emphasis is placed firmly on enabling students to successfully complete the whole tertiary program, ‘rather than on just coaching them through to the next level’ (Scott et al. 2007, p. 45). The curricula of alternative access programs are definitively ‘forward-looking’, focussed on the development of key academic literacies and not on addressing deficiencies in content knowledge.

Many of the South African initiatives extending access to tertiary science have been comprehensively researched and described; their successes in supporting equity of access scrutinized, and extensively documented. Published articles on the subject abound; dedicated books have been written (e.g. Dhunpath and Vithal 2013; Rollnick 2010; Zaaiman 1998); and colloquiums been held (e.g. Case et al. 2013; Grayson 2010; Young 2015). Although a comprehensive review of these endeavours is beyond the scope of this chapter, a brief foray into this existing literature should illustrate that these efforts have been monumental.

3 Frustrated Equity Within Tertiary Science

These substantial efforts have not been in vain: extended programs have successfully afforded access to higher education to a particular sector of the school leaving population who would never otherwise have had the opportunity to pursue qualifications in STEM (Garraway 2009; Rollnick 2010). The role they have played in improving the academic performance and career prospects of those who proceed through them is also widely acknowledged to be considerable (e.g. Downs 2010; Mabila et al. 2006).

However, the reach of extended programs in their present form is severely limited. Indeed, only about 15% of the entire first-time-entry student body, across all disciplines, is afforded the opportunity to follow these pathways to university study (CHE 2013), the balance of the ever-increasing higher education population entering directly into regular, mainstream programs.

And to be sure, the tertiary sector in South Africa has continued to expand steadily (by over 80%) since 1994. As would be expected, given the principles of massification that have governed national plans for higher education (DoE 1997), most of this growth can be accounted for by the increase in the enrolments of Black African students who currently constitute 70% of all students in public higher education (CHE 2015).

Despite these advances in redressing racial inequalities in admissions, equity enrolment targets remain unmet as evident in the participation rates (the enrolments as a percentage of the country’s total population between the ages of 20 and 24 years) which, 20 years into democracy, remain acutely low for Black Africans (16% in comparison to 55% and 49% for Whites and Indians respectively) (CHE 2015).

3.1 Massification and Inequity of Output[2]

Gains made towards achieving equity within higher education, realised through massification, and to which extended programs have contributed, have been further neutralised by inequities in output. While completion rates[2] across the sector are low and time-to-graduation is slow (only a quarter of students graduate in regulation time, and less than half graduate at all) (see CHE 2013, 2015), graduation patterns are also racially skewed (on average, the completion rates and the proportion of students graduating 'on-time' for the White student population are 50% higher than for African Black students). The net result of these disparities in access and success is untenable: under 5% of the county's youth in the majority population group[1] are succeeding in any form of higher education (CHE 2013).

The situation is of particular concern in STEM as only a 'fraction' of this aforementioned 5% of Black Africans succeed in programs in these fields (Marshall 2010, p. 68). The largest of racial discrepancies in completion rates are also experienced in STEM (CHE 2013); attrition rates from first-year science programs for this sector of the student population are even higher than they are in general (see Case et al. 2013), and as a seminal cohort study by Scott et al. (2007) reveals, completion times for Black African students are longer than those for the general student body: only 11% and 13% of the Black African student intake of 2000 graduated from their respective life and physical science, and mathematical science programs in the minimum regulation time of 3 years.

3.2 Challenges to Equity of Output

While massification of higher education in South Africa may well have resulted in a considerably better representation of Black Africans in the sector as a whole, issues of equity are far from being resolved. Inequity within the regular mainstream student intake at individual institutions persists, and when one considers the vast disparities between institutions (see below), the vision of equal opportunity for the county's youth seeking tertiary qualifications seems even more remote.

3.2.1 Degrees of Underpreparedness Within the Mainstream Study Body

A major contributing factor to the disjuncture between access to and success in higher education is widely recognised to be the continued failure of national schooling to prepare the vast majority of learners for academic study (e.g. Grayson 2010; Scott et al. 2007). Undivided on racial grounds for decades now, the quality of schooling has only improved for those Black African learners who can afford it[3]. Fee-paying schools are only as well-financed, resourced and equipped to deliver a better quality of schooling as the communities in which they are situated can afford. The former 'white'

schools[3] continue to serve only the relatively privileged communities (notwithstanding the change in the racial profile of this sector of society) and consistently outperform all the public schools categorized in the lower 4 quintiles. This trend is proving very difficult to shift, as reflected in the results in international benchmark studies over the last decade (e.g., the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Studies (TIMMS), 1999, 2003 and 2011) (Reddy et al. 2015; Scott et al. 2007). Such studies highlight, not only a systemic crisis of significant magnitude in the quality of maths and science education – as the country on the whole continues to achieve the lowest position out of all 42 (2011) participating countries – but also the inherent challenges to higher education institutions in accommodating huge discrepancies in the levels of achievement in these subjects in the student body entering mainstream science programs from a diversity of educational (and by implication, socioeconomic) backgrounds (see van der Berg 2008).

Compounding the persistent challenges to the delivery of quality education across all the socioeconomic sectors of secondary education, is the instability brought about by a series of recurriculations at national level. The most significant of these changes was the replacement of the pre-democracy National Assembly Training & Education Department (NATED) 550 curriculum with the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). This ten-year phased transition reached its completion in 2008 when all grade 12 learners wrote common national exams for the first time with the National Senior Certificate (NSC) exam replacing the Senior Certificate (SC). The NCS is recognized to differ significantly from the former school curriculum in many aspects, not least of which is the departure from traditional, content-heavy curriculum and teacher-centred, transmission style of teaching and learning to an outcomes-based, learner-centered education approach (Grussendorff et al. 2010). From the outset, there have been serious concerns about the lack of capacity to effectively deliver such a 'learner-centred and activity-based' curriculum in an educational environment such as that which prevails in South Africa (Morrow 2005/2007). In fact, its failure has now been recognised and has resulted in further reformulation of the NCS. Nevertheless, the conversion from the NATED 550 curriculum to the NCS has certainly been the most disruptive of curriculum (and associated exit-examination) changes in recent South African education history and has added to the crisis in schooling. It has also contributed significantly to the diversity of educational backgrounds and shifting nature of preparedness within the student body that higher institutions must accommodate.

3.2.2 Inequity across Institutes of Higher Learning

Disparity is also experienced at an inter-institutional level as universities in the country vary highly in characteristics related to their histories, localities, resourcing, and the communities that they serve (CHE 2010).

A dichotomy continues to exist between the historically white (HAUs) and the institutions that exclusively served 'non-white' racial groups prior to 1994 (the his-

torically disadvantaged (HDUs)). The latter, for the most part, have inherited restrictions in terms of capacity and educational programs offered, tend to be rurally located and draw from poorer communities, served by schools that experience the most severe of the challenges that plague the post-apartheid schooling sector. Generally, little has changed in the profile of the HDU student body – neither along racial lines nor in terms of students' educational background which is ubiquitously inadequate for tertiary success, and largely rooted in continuing socioeconomic inequalities (Scott et al. 2007).

By contrast, the student profile of the HAUs has changed considerably in terms of race, language, schooling and academic preparedness and in terms of social, cultural and financial capital (Walton et al. 2015). From early on in the transformation of the tertiary sector, these institutions became favoured by middle class Black African students and, as South Africa's democracy has matured, the HAUs have continued to attract wealthier students from all sectors of society as well as the top achievers from the school system (CHE 2010). Simultaneously, the mergers between HAUs and HDUs that dominated the higher education agenda in the mid-2000s and which have reorganised the tertiary sector entirely (see Jansen 2003) have seen students from rural and working-class backgrounds entering HAUs, further adding to the diversity of the student body.

Despite these changes in the composition of the tertiary student body, there has been a significant lack of concomitant change in educational processes in higher education – and in particular in HAUs where the effective change is arguably most needed. To a large extent, traditional educational structures and teaching approaches have retained their dominance reflecting unchanged, largely non-inclusive institutional cultures (see Scott et al. 2007). This has raised serious concerns about the preparedness of higher education institutions to adequately support the diverse needs of an increasingly heterogeneous student body (see Dhunpath and Vithal 2013).

As the crisis in schooling persists, equity in higher education remains elusive, and the pressure to accommodate diversity within the student intake intensifies. As a consequence, a national call has been made to interrogate the performance of extended programs at a local level in search of clues as to how national educational goals of effective transformation, inclusion and improved science graduate output can be achieved (CHE 2013; see MoE 2001).

With students entering first year from two different schooling systems, and from two streams of an extended program, the unprecedented diversity of the 2009 cohort at our HAU university presented a good opportunity to take up this challenge. A review of the extended programs providing an alternative access route to science study at University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) follows to give context to the question many higher institutions in the country are asking: How well are the existing pathways to mainstream science study serving a student population that continues to diversify; and how can this insight inform the way forward?

4 The Alternative Pathways to Mainstream Science Study at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN)

In recognition of the diversity of academic preparedness within the school-leaving body that does not meet all the mainstream entrance criteria, UKZN offers two alternative pathways to tertiary science study. Both of these extended programs (an 'augmented stream' and a 'foundation stream') lead to the completion of an undergraduate Bachelor of Science degree in not less than 4 years. The colloquial terms used for these alternative access streams are the 'Augmented Program' and the 'Foundation Program' respectively. A key condition for acceptance into one of the science access streams at UKZN is that students must have attended a 'disadvantaged school'. While there has never been a racial criterion for entry to either program, most students have been Black African.

4.1 Admission to the Alternative Pathways to Mainstream Science Study at UKZN

Although students entering the Augmented Program are required to meet the minimum statutory requirements for entry into university degree programs, they fail to meet the Science Faculty's additional Grade 12[5] admission criteria (if only by a narrow margin). By comparison, prospective Foundation students are judged to be less prepared for tertiary study since they are not required to have achieved a 'bachelor's pass' (although some do), and their entry scores are substantially lower than the regular admission criteria (For a detailed outline of the specific admission requirements see Kirby and Dempster 2014).

Having not met any formal criteria for admission to the Science Faculty, prospective foundation students prior to 2011 (thus including the cohorts illustrated here) were required to write alternative entry mathematics and science tests which tested for aptitude, not content knowledge. The results of these alternative entry tests were used to generate an 'alternative entry selection score' to assist in the selection process. Given the cost of running these selection tests, a decision was taken to terminate their use as alternative measures of academic potential. Subsequent to 2011, students have been selected on the basis of their school performance only (in compliance with formal admission criteria which refer to Grade 12 scores and minimum levels of performance in school mathematics and at least one science subject).

4.2 Curriculum, Pedagogies and Resourcing of the Alternative Access Programs

4.2.1 The Foundation Program

Established in 1991, the Foundation Program at the University of Natal (now UKZN) was one of the forerunners of the alternative access initiatives in South Africa (see Grayson 1997). Through the delivery of a stand-alone curriculum comprised of year-long mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology modules, the program aims to provide a sound foundation for students' undergraduate science studies. The original resource-intensive model of small group teaching (by staff dedicated only to the foundation modules) within a comprehensive support infrastructure has been retained throughout the time the program has operated, despite significant fluctuations in funding and radical institutional change (in the form of a merger between the parent university (an HAU) and a HDU located in a nearby city). Similarly, the intended 'holistic' approach to preparing disadvantaged students that has characterised the program from the start (see Kloot et al. 2008) has been maintained as much as possible over the years through the collaborative efforts of an inter-disciplinary team to deliver a curriculum that effectively integrates learning across (and within) the modules.

Curricular content in each foundation module serves as a vehicle for learning opportunities that engage students with scientific practices and leads to the development of scientific literacy since students are encouraged to think, read, write and behave like scientists in the laboratory and tutorials, and on fieldtrips. In the tradition of Morrow (Morrow 1994/2009; p. 40), a key figure informing the conversation around 'educational disadvantage' in South African higher education, in learning 'how to become a participant in academic practice', foundation students are thus able to achieve epistemological access to the disciplines of science. For an in-depth account of the program's constructivist philosophy which informs pedagogical practice, and the reflexive principles of curriculum development, see Kirby and Dempster (2011).

State funding policies have not adequately provided for the Foundation Program as it has been traditionally structured at UKZN (see DoE 2006), the university thus incurring considerable cost given the resource intensive framework of the program. This investment stems from considerable institutional commitment to improving equity of access, particularly considering that unless foundation students pass *all* of the foundational modules of the composite curriculum, they are excluded from proceeding into the mainstream.

4.2.2 The Augmented Program

When compared to the Foundation Program, the 'Augmented Program' is generally considered to be much more cost-effective for two main reasons. Firstly, because the augmented curriculum is entirely integrated into the first year of the formal degree

program, standard proceed rules apply. This allows students to remain in the university system for prescribed lengths of time even if they fail, thus attracting government subsidy for a longer period. Furthermore, for half of their first-year curriculum, the augmented program students attend regular, predominantly unsupported, mainstream contact sessions in large classes taught by tenured staff (Parkinson 2000).

Foundational provision, delivered in small tutorial and practical classes similar to those described for the Foundation Program but at a more advanced level, is supplemental to and articulates closely with the coursework of the standard mainstream modules. Augmented program students therefore experience a double-load in half the number of modules than that a regular, direct-entry student would in their first year of a degree program.

4.2.3 Features Common to the Foundation and Augmented Programs

The curricula of both extended programs include a mandatory counselling component that provides students with a customised life skills education, assistance in managing the financial, psychosocial and academic demands of university life, and a comprehensive academic monitoring system that facilitates timely remedial intervention. In addition, a voluntary comprehensive wellness program offers individual counselling services and academic career counselling.

Foundation and augmented program students are also required to complete academic literacy modules designed for students from disadvantaged schools, and specific to the discourse of scientific disciplines. Recognising that the majority of students entering the extended programs have been unable to sufficiently develop their cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) in either their home language or in the language of instruction, the modules' express aims are to prepare students for the academic literacies demands of their undergraduate studies (see Parkinson et al. 2008 for detail).

The augmented stream of the extended program is served by an advanced module that assumes higher levels of preparedness to cope with the academic reading, writing, thinking and reasoning demands required of students in their first year in tertiary science study (namely, the academic language demands of English as the medium of instruction at UKZN which, invariably, is not the alternative access students' home language). Foundation students are required to sit a generic academic language proficiency test, the results of which are used for placement into either this advanced stream or into an alternative which aims to develop students' academic discourse competence at a more fundamental level, and with greater support.

4.3 Considering the Need for Dual Access Programs

The Foundation Program has been counted among the most reputable and successful of its genre operating in South Africa (Kloot et al. 2008; Garraway 2009; Rollnick 2010), and has been recognised to make an important contribution to increasing Black African female participation particularly in the sciences (Downs 2010). Despite this, evidence suggesting lower completion rates for the Foundation Program in recent years (Kioko 2012 cited in CHE 2013) has contributed to a local view that dual alternative access routes are not an expedient way forward. The debate appreciates that this discrepancy in success may well be a function of foundation students' very low school-leaving results and/or the challenges related to accommodating the academic development needs of these students while still ensuring effective articulation with mainstream demands in their second year.

However, *affordability* concerns make a strong argument for offering only one alternative pathway to mainstream science curricula and in favour of the Augmented Program. Given the resource intensive model of the Foundation Program, the differential in government funding attracted by each program, and the high dropout rate of every foundation cohort at the end of their access year (for example, proceed rates between 2006 and 2010 ranged between 36% and 52%), in terms of institutional financial expenditure, it would not be unreasonable to consider the Foundation Program somewhat extravagant.

4.4 Examining the Relative Success of the Alternative Access Programs

4.4.1 Method of Analysis

Decision trees can provide clear graphical, hierarchical representations of a student population to study context-dependent influences on student performance. As they reveal significant *sets* of interacting explanatory variables that correspond to student subgroups, they are a useful diagnostic tool in context of the prevailing student diversity in undergraduate programs. Using a binary partitioning algorithm, and starting at the root node at the top of the tree (the entire dataset), data are recursively separated into progressively smaller 'child' nodes which include cases (students) that are increasingly more similar in terms of the outcome variable (academic achievement) (see Kirby and Dempster 2015a).

Decision tree analysis was employed to particularise student performance in one of the first year core modules[7] of the Life and Earth Sciences stream of the Bachelor of

[7] The module illustrated here, BIOL 101, is an introductory cell biology course. Performance in this module is indicated by students' final mark in it.

Science program at UKZN. Given the heightened student diversity in the 2009 cohort discussed above, a comparison of an expanded range of student subgroups was made possible. This comparison provided an indication of the consistency of performance indicators and therefore reliability of findings across changing contexts[8].

In order to conduct this analysis, the student body was categorised according to the access route taken to the core module: either via the Foundation Program, the Augmented Program, or by direct access. On account of the recognised challenges related to the medium of instruction alluded to earlier, direct-access students were identified as being English Home or Second Language learners (direct access-EHL and direct access-ESL[9] respectively). Basic biographical and school-history data[9] relating to students' admission scores[5] were included in the analysis but excluded science APS as students had not studied the same science subject at school. A variable marking the number of times the core module had been completed was also included since 19% of the student body had repeated the module.

4.4.2 Relative Performance of Alternative Access and Direct-Entry Students

Drawing from the illustration of performance across the UKZN subgroups (Figure 1, see Appendix), it is reasonable to suggest that a considerable number of direct-access students were 'disadvantaged' by not having had the opportunity to enter mainstream via an extended program, the achievement of the foundation students in particular suggesting this to be the most effective model of foundational provision in this context.

Although foundation students (nodes 13 and 16) outperformed most direct-access-ESL and augmented program students who had achieved weaker SC Grade 12 scores (nodes 14 and 15) (faring well even in comparison to those who were repeating the module, node 22), of greater significance going forward, is the evident success of foundation students relative to the majority (more than 70%) of all NSC students (node 5).

Most likely to have benefitted from the Foundation Program, are those entry level students who exceeded the stipulated minima for admission to mainstream (NSC Grade 12 score of 28) by a narrow margin, and who experienced further challenges related to their proficiency in English as a medium of instruction implemented at UKZN.

[8] The student body was first separated into two main branches by the variable 'Grade 12 exam system' in a forced split at the root node.

[9] English as a school subject is studied by learners as either a 'Home Language' or 'Second Language'. Some learners whose home language is not English (ESL) elect to study the subject at the more challenging level of 'Home Language' which assumes greater proficiency in the language (see Department of Basic Education 2014).

Indeed, the effect of language proficiency in the medium of instruction at UKZN is reiterated throughout the NSC branch of the decision tree (nodes 11, 19 and 23), and certainly provides a better indication of student performance than the formal admission requirement relating to school mathematics achievement which is counter indicative of performance for some students (node 25) but, otherwise, non-existent. Similarly, whether students had studied Biology at school or not had no bearing on their performance in the mainstream Life Science module[5].

In addition to confirming the value of the extended programs, and of the Foundation Program in particular, in enabling student success, these findings can contribute to the national review of extended programs on two accounts. Firstly, it is apparent that the challenges of second language learning extend well beyond the science access student body; and secondly, the reliability of the formal admission criteria as indicators of potential to succeed in mainstream programs should be called into question.

4.5 Understanding Student Performance: The Role of Performance Indicators

4.5.1 Academic Language Proficiency

The performance patterns in Figure 1 (see Appendix) do indeed suggest that the extent to which direct-access learners experience the challenges related to second language learning are underestimated in this mainstream module. Notably, the profile of the student subgroup that performed particularly badly relative to the ex-Foundation students (node 23) is similar to the Foundation students themselves (bottom end of the Grade 12 score and ESL).

While the relative contribution of improved academic language proficiency to other possible advantages of having passed the Foundation Program prior to entering mainstream cannot be considered in great detail here, the findings of related research (Kirby and Dempster 2015b) are of relevance to understanding foundation students' performance in this module. Out of a compendium of some 23 variables including biographical data, indices of prior academic performance and information pertaining to socioeconomic conditions during their access year, Foundation Program students' academic language proficiency scores (used for placement into the academic literacy modules) were the best discriminators of performance in the foundation biology module specifically.

4.5.2 Formal Admission Criteria

Similarly, Kirby and Dempster (2014) found that the alternative entry selection score was a far more reliable indicator of students' ability to succeed in the Foundation Program as a whole than all other school performance indices tested (including school quintile). The Grade 12 score and the achievement of a 'bachelor's pass' were found to have almost no effect on performance at all. Moreover, socioeconomic support (primarily the provision of places in university residence, but also financial aid) was substantially more effective in predicting overall performance in the foundation year than any of the formal criteria used to select students into the program.

With this in mind, it is not unlikely that, if the alternative entry selection and academic language proficiency scores had been available for the analysis illustrated in Figure 1 (see Appendix), they would have been revealed as valuable indicators of 'disadvantage' in the mainstream student body too, upon which targeted intervention could be planned. Conversely, since the extended program no longer employs an alternative entry selection process, there is now little information upon which to gauge students' potential to succeed in the Foundation Program.

These suggestions are made in light of repeated reports of inconsistencies in the South African school-leaving examination results as predictors of academic performance in higher education, particularly for low-scoring students described as 'educationally disadvantaged' (e.g., Marshall 2010; van der Flier et al. 2003). Indeed, it is because of these concerns that many universities in the country have intensified their focus on developing alternative measures to inform access and placement (see Griesel 2006).

5 Different Universities, Same Agenda

With the capacity of formal admission criteria to serve as reliable indicators of academic potential likely to differ greatly across the diverse student body accessing mainstream science study at UKZN, in addition to the possibility that socioeconomic circumstances may well be more influential than any academic indicator for a sector of the population, a nuanced, and creative approach to identifying, placing and supporting students with potential to succeed is necessary. As articulated in the leading discussion on this matter (CHE 2013, p. 19), the challenge that is 'central to South African higher education, and that cuts across the main structural shortcomings of current curricula, is the need to deal constructively with diversity in students' educational, linguistic and socioeconomic background'.

Moreover, the performance patterns illustrated here (Figure 1, see Appendix) reflect the national view that the current system is not meeting the 'needs of the majority' (Scott 2009, p. 34). This necessitates a broadening of the academic development agenda into the mainstream curriculum at UKZN to facilitate epistemologi-

cal access for a larger proportion of the student body than that which is currently being accommodated in the extended programs. Indeed, a considerable number of academics in the field are advancing a similar call for rethinking entire undergraduate programs to include pedagogical practices and curricular innovations traditionally found only in extended curriculum programs[10] (e.g. Case et al. 2013; Kloot et al. 2008; Scott 2009).

Nationally, there is also a great deal of evidence similar to the research findings reported here that adds support to the suggestion that wider systemic responses to the articulation gap need to be put in place. A broad-scale study involving aggregated data from all South African institutions where extended programs operate has found the 'course success' rates of extended program students in mainstream modules (across all broad subject cluster, viz. Commerce, Humanities and STEM) to be similar to those of the regular first-time-entry student body, demonstrating the efficacy of extended programs (and particularly where foundational provision efforts are concentrated), to counteract the effects of student underpreparedness (CHE 2013). Similarly, Garraway (2009) and Scott et al. (2007) cite examples of cases where the completion rates of extended program cohorts outperform their mainstream peers.

6 Conclusion

The full value of curriculum extension will only be realised when it is taken to scale, becomes an integral element of mainstream provision, and is thus available to the full range of students who will benefit from it. There will be cost implications. But to respond to the contested affordability of programs that provide intensive foundational support (such as that at UKZN), having considered the performance of the extended programs locally, and in light of similar national findings and growing supportive sentiment, the reply surely must be: "Can we afford not to?"

Acknowledgment The first author would like to gratefully acknowledge the National Research Foundation for financial support.

[10] The notion of integrating the educational principles of the Foundation Program into the mainstream at UKZN was alluded to at the time of the program's inception by Grayson (1997, p. 122) who stated: 'As a pilot program we believe that the SFP has been successful. However, if we are to address the needs of large numbers of underprepared students in future without diminishing the value of our degrees, foundation level courses will need to cater for many more students, and many of the educational principles that form the basis of the SFP will need to become integrated into mainstream teaching in the Science Faculty'. For a broader discussion referring to the delays in progressive change proposed decades earlier in the area of academic development in South Africa, refer to Kirby (2013).

Appendix

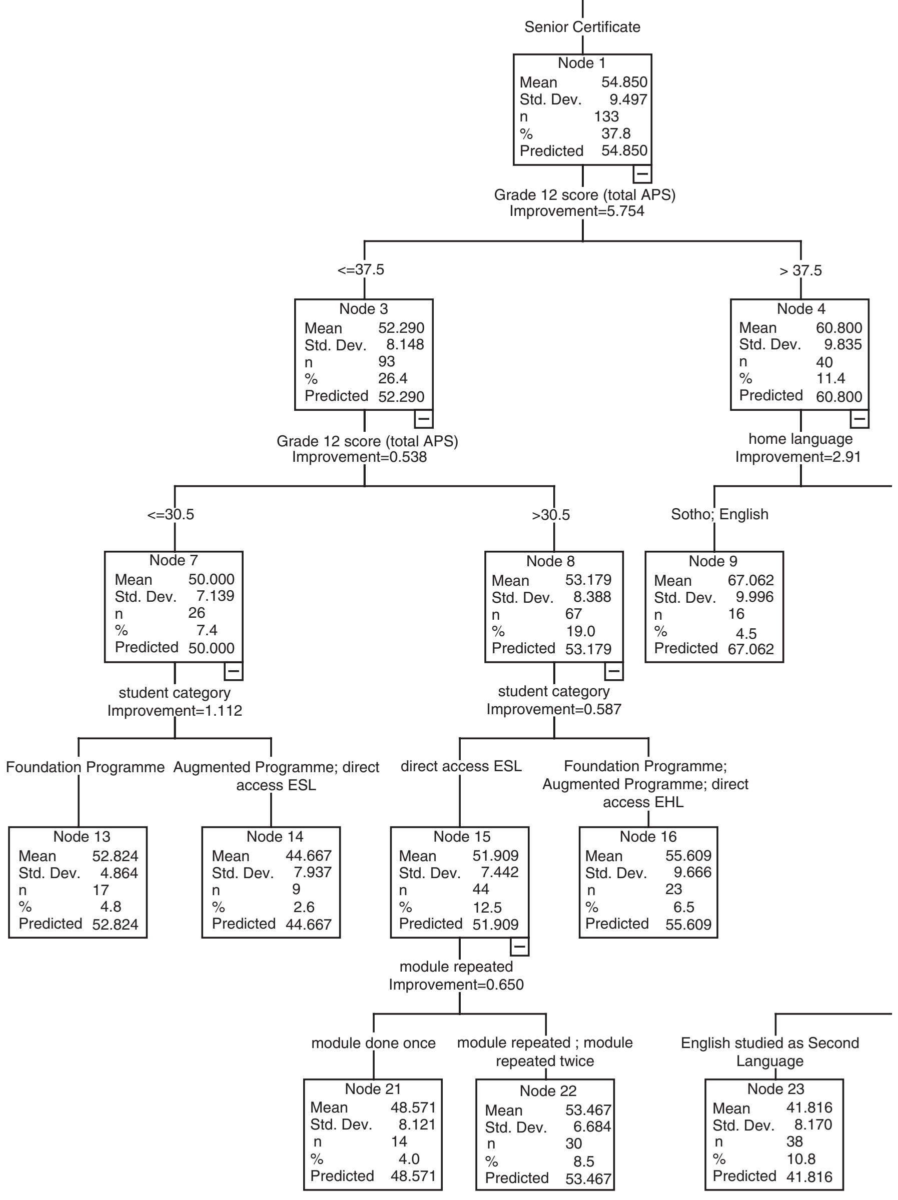
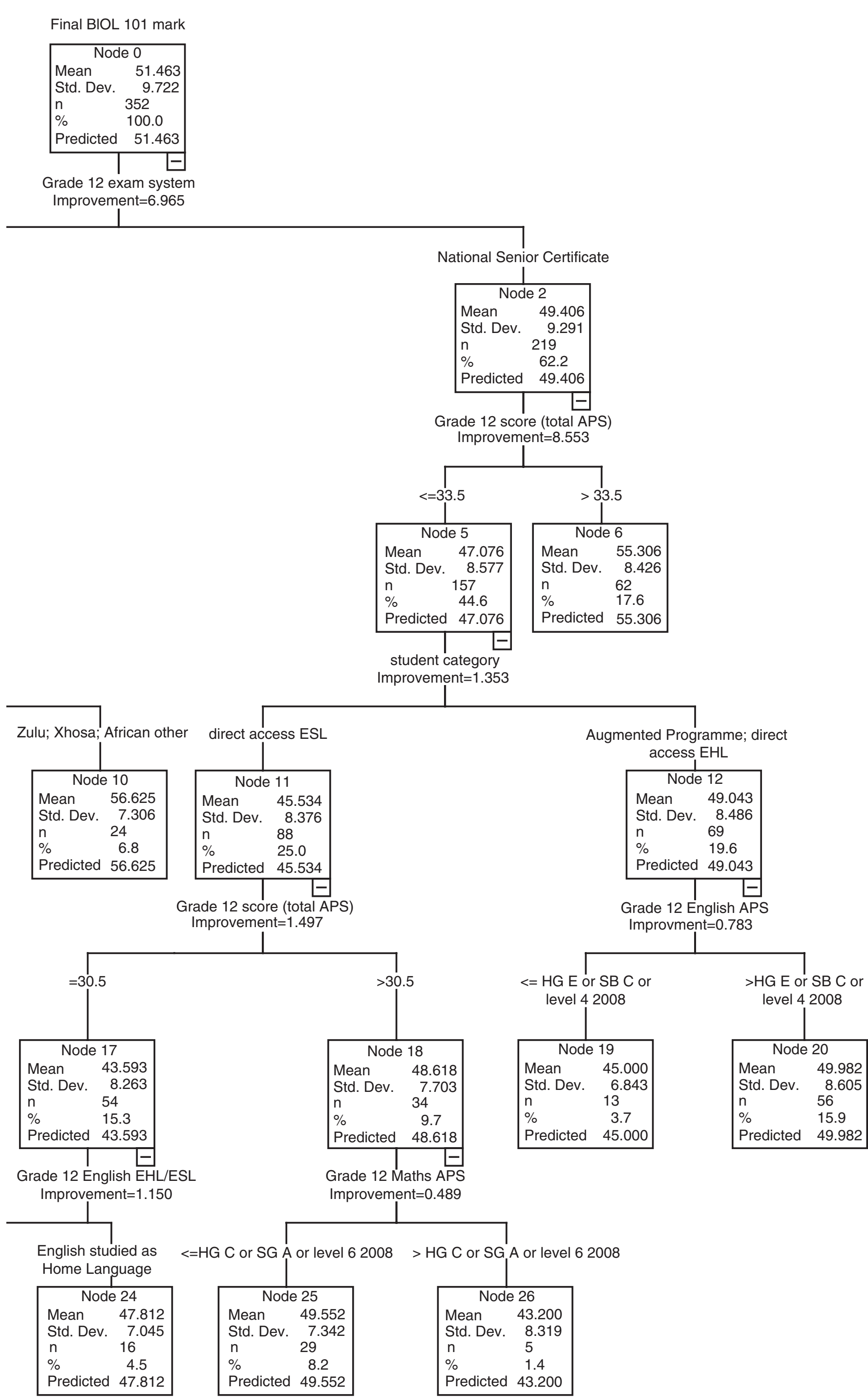


Figure 1 Regression Tree for Final Marks for Mainstream Module BIOL 101 ($N = 352$)


Final BIOL 101 mark
Node 0
Mean 51.463
Std. Dev. 9.722
n 352
% 100.0
Predicted 51.463
Grade 12 exam system
Improvement=6.965
National Senior Certificate
Node 2
Mean 49.406
Std. Dev. 9.291
n 219
% 62.2
Predicted 49.406
Grade 12 score (total APS)
Improvement=8.553
<=33.5
> 33.5
Node 5
Mean 47.076
Std. Dev. 8.577
n 157
% 44.6
Predicted 47.076
Node 6
Mean 55.306
Std. Dev. 8.426
n 62
% 17.6
Predicted 55.306
student category
Improvement=1.353
Zulu; Xhosa; African other
direct access ESL
Augmented Programme; direct access EHL
Node 10
Mean 56.625
Std. Dev. 7.306
n 24
% 6.8
Predicted 56.625
Node 11
Mean 45.534
Std. Dev. 8.376
n 88
% 25.0
Predicted 45.534
Node 12
Mean 49.043
Std. Dev. 8.486
n 69
% 19.6
Predicted 49.043
Grade 12 score (total APS)
Improvement=1.497
Grade 12 English APS
Improvment=0.783
=30.5
>30.5
<= HG E or SB C or level 4 2008
>HG E or SB C or level 4 2008
Node 17
Mean 43.593
Std. Dev. 8.263
n 54
% 15.3
Predicted 43.593
Node 18
Mean 48.618
Std. Dev. 7.703
n 34
% 9.7
Predicted 48.618
Node 19
Mean 45.000
Std. Dev. 6.843
n 13
% 3.7
Predicted 45.000
Node 20
Mean 49.982
Std. Dev. 8.605
n 56
% 15.9
Predicted 49.982
Grade 12 English EHL/ESL
Improvement=1.150
Grade 12 Maths APS
Improvement=0.489
English studied as Home Language
<=HG C or SG A or level 6 2008
> HG C or SG A or level 6 2008
Node 24
Mean 47.812
Std. Dev. 7.045
n 16
% 4.5
Predicted 47.812
Node 25
Mean 49.552
Std. Dev. 7.342
n 29
% 8.2
Predicted 49.552
Node 26
Mean 43.200
Std. Dev. 8.319
n 5
% 1.4
Predicted 43.200

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Chapter 6
Huakina mai te tatau o tōu whare: Opening University Doors to Indigenous Students

Meegan Hall, Kelly Keane-Tuala, Mike Ross, and Awanui Te Huia

Abstract The massification of higher education continues to transform student cohorts worldwide and to challenge what it means to teach students effectively (Altbach et al. 2009). As part of this global trend, indigenous students are participating in university study at higher rates than ever before, often with mixed results (Frawley et al. 2015; Jones Brayboy et al. 2015; Theodore et al. 2015). Some universities offer programs that help indigenous students transition into higher learning. One such program is the Tohu Māoritanga (Tohu), the Diploma in Māoritanga, at Victoria University of Wellington. The Tohu prepares Māori students for the academic rigours of university study but also eases the acculturation process (Berry 1997; Ward 2006), creates Māori cultural enclaves and affirms their Māori identity (Hall et al. 2013). This chapter discusses research on acculturation theory, integration and cultural identity in the transition of Māori and other indigenous students into higher education. It outlines the student-centred Tohu program, and reflects on its academic, institutional and societal challenges. Ultimately, this chapter presents a way of 'opening the doors' to university study, and learning from as well as teaching indigenous students, in keeping with the Māori proverb, '*Huakina mai te tatau o tōu whare kia kite atu ai i tōu maunga mātauranga*' (Open the doors of your house and see the mountain of knowledge that is within).

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1 Introduction

Historically, the doors to university study have not always been open to indigenous students. Indigenous Australians were excluded from universities until the 1950s (Rigney 2011) and they had to wait until 1966 for their first graduate.[1] The first Māori (indigenous New Zealander) graduate was capped much earlier in 1893,[2] but the overall number of Māori university students remained low through to the 1970s (Hill 2009). By 1981 in Canada, only 2% of Aboriginal people had a university bachelor's degree or above (AUCC 2011, p. 19). However, the massification of higher education that began in the 1970s has transformed student cohorts worldwide (Altbach et al. 2009). As part of this global trend, indigenous students are participating in university study at higher rates than ever before. The total number of Aboriginal students in universities in Australia increased by 20.8% between 2001 and 2011 (Creative Spirits 2015). In New Zealand, 17.6% of the Māori population participated in tertiary education in 2014 (Education Counts 2015a, b), and Native American/Alaska Native enrolment figures in the United States have doubled since the 1980s, with 31% of the population aged between 18 and 24 years now enrolled with a degree-granting institution (National Center for Education Statistics n.d.).

While the enrolments may be increasing, the academic outcomes for indigenous university students have often been mixed (Frawley et al. 2015; Jones Brayboy et al. 2015; Theodore et al. 2015). Universities, it seems, have been challenged by what it means to teach this diverse student body effectively. Indigenous students have also been frustrated by their experiences of enrolling with universities and felt acute discomfort and a sense of not fitting in on university campuses (Madjar et al. 2010). This has led to the development of a range of programs for indigenous students transitioning into university study.

2 Distinctive Māori and Indigenous Pathways

Many of the existing pathway programs are premised on an assumption that, for indigenous students, integrating into university culture is a necessary but difficult process. Universities in New Zealand have developed a range of support mechanisms to recruit and retain Māori students in tertiary study. These varying pathways for Māori students are seen to embody the Treaty of Waitangi obligations to which all tertiary education providers in New Zealand are held accountable.

The Treaty of Waitangi is considered a founding document of the modern nation of New Zealand, which created a partnership between Māori and the British Crown.

[1] The first Indigenous Australian university graduate was Charles Kumajati Perkins from the University of Sydney (Perkins 1975).

[2] The first Māori university graduate was Sir Apirana Ngata, who completed a Bachelor of Arts in Politics from the University of Canterbury in 1893 (Te Ara 2013).

There is a subsequent expectation in New Zealand's Education Act 1989 that all education providers in New Zealand acknowledge the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. A set of Treaty principles drawn from the Treaty has since been integrated into New Zealand educational policy and legislation (Department of Justice 1989). This has manifested in a requirement for tertiary institutions to meet a distinct set of Māori-related obligations and goals.

On a national scale, the New Zealand Tertiary Education Strategy 2014–2019 calls for tertiary providers to improve the "pattern of participation and achievement for Māori, to ensure Māori benefit from the higher wages that come with higher qualifications" (Tertiary Education Commission 2014, p. 13). The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) identified Māori students as a priority group for their 5-year plan, and institutions are required to report regularly on Māori achievement in tertiary study in New Zealand. Thus, Māori student achievement in tertiary education is a shared goal across the entire New Zealand tertiary education sector, and universities share many common approaches to achieving this goal. For example, it is usual for New Zealand universities to have dedicated Māori staff in liaison roles that promote their programs to prospective Māori students in high schools, support Māori students through the enrolment process, and initiate contact with Māori students to share advice about support mechanisms while studying. It is also common for New Zealand universities to have resource centres specifically designed to help Māori students get good course advice, help with assignments, and culturally appropriate pastoral care.

A number of New Zealand universities offer generic, pre-degree programs that are designed to assess potential students and give them the necessary skills for academic study. For example, three New Zealand universities offer a Certificate in University Preparation qualification (Massey University n.d.; University of Canterbury n.d.; University of Waikato n.d.). There are also more specialised pre-degree options, such as the *Headstart* program offered by the University of Canterbury, which includes a focus on mathematics, statistics and physics as preparation for a science or engineering degree (University of Canterbury n.d.). While these programs are designed to prepare students for university study (either generally or within disciplines), and they attract Māori enrolments, none of them overtly take into account the cultural needs or expectations of Māori students.

In some cases, Māori students are grouped with other under-represented groups for university interventions. For example the *University Targeted Admission Scheme* (UTAS) at the University of Auckland targets Māori and Pacific students, students with a disability, students from low socio-economic backgrounds and recent refugees. In other cases, programs have been developed to help Māori students get into and succeed in otherwise difficult or challenging programs. For example, in 2011 *Te Whakapuāwai* was established at the University of Otago to support Māori students in the Health Science First Year program. It provides scholarly and cultural support for Māori students to achieve in a highly competitive academic environment, with impressive results (Bristowe et al. n.d.).

Against this backdrop, however, one program stands out for its longevity, academic standing and Māori cultural focus. Only one of New Zealand's eight

universities has developed a credit-bearing qualification that specifically targets the transition of Māori students into higher learning – the Tohu Māoritanga (Tohu), Diploma in Māoritanga program offered at Victoria University of Wellington. This chapter looks closely at this unique pathway program, but first it considers the research literature around the integration of Māori students into university study.

3 Acculturation Theory and the Role of Cultural Identity

The importance of higher education in Māori communities is well recognised. Irwin (1992) states that "The journey that is education takes people ever higher and higher towards te ao mārama, the world of enlightenment, true understanding, the pinnacle of Māori education in our traditional teaching about education" (p. 88). Those who achieve 'success' in higher education also gain very practical rewards, including greater access to employment opportunities and lower rates of redundancies (Williams 2011). While the benefits to Māori who are successful in attaining degree level qualifications are plentiful, the transition into tertiary education can be troublesome for some of them. Previous research found that students who are members of cultural minorities are reluctant to forgo their cultural beliefs to conform to mainstream university cultural settings (Egge and Kutieleh 2004). Acculturation theory may help to explain how the Tohu Māoritanga program supports Māori students to enter into a new cultural environment.

Acculturation broadly refers to "the changes resulting from continuous first hand inter-cultural contact" (Ward 2006, p. 243). While Māori are *tangata whenua* (indigenous people, literally 'people of the land') of New Zealand, the cultural norms, values and behaviours of Pākehā (New Zealand Europeans) dominate most public domains, including those of universities nationally. Borrowing from the principles of acculturation theory, the processes that Māori who are transitioning into mainstream tertiary education experience may be likened to the transition that individuals go through when they enter into a new cultural environment.

Māori who enter into tertiary education come from a range of previous educational experiences and occupy varying identity profiles (McIntosh 2005; Rata 2015). They are not a homogenous cultural group, and the diverse levels of cultural connectedness are a reflection of New Zealand's colonial history. As such, Māori studies departments within tertiary education providers play a contributing role in facilitating relationships that some Māori have with their culture (Hall et al. 2013; Reilly 2011). This is partly achieved through the engagement that students have with the Māori language and the provision of cultural spaces that are supportive of Māori culture, customs, values and beliefs (Mead 2003; Reilly 2011; Te Huia 2014).

The educational background of Māori tertiary students can be quite varied. Some will have completed their secondary education in *Whare Kura* (Māori language immersion high schools), while the majority will have come through a mainstream, English-medium schooling system. Victoria University of Wellington is consistent with all other New Zealand universities, whereby the vast majority of teaching staff

and students who are enrolled within the university are from the dominant Pākehā cultural group. As a result, some Māori students who are less familiar with the university system and the Pākehā cultural norms that dominate large proportions of universities (Zepke and Leach 2007) may experience some acculturation stress. Such stress may partially account for the disproportionately high Māori student attrition rates within the system. In 2012, the qualification attrition rate for full-time Pākehā (New Zealand European) students after four years studying towards a bachelor's degree was 19% whereas, for Māori students studying at the same level, the attrition rate was 40% (Education Counts 2014).

When considering the ways in which Māori students can be supported to attain the benefits associated with degree completion, Berry's (1997) acculturation taxonomy may help to contextualise student higher education transitioning experiences. This model offers four strategies that individuals may apply when acculturating into a new host culture and result from the answers to two central questions, which include: how much an individual is invested in maintaining relationships, values and beliefs of their own ethnic culture, and secondly, how much they are invested in maintaining relationships, values and beliefs of the host culture. The combination of answers to both questions results in the four possible acculturation strategies that include assimilation, separation, marginalisation, and integration. Assimilation refers to a preference for maintaining relationships with the host culture and not the ethnic culture, whereas the separation profile articulates the reverse set of preferences. Those within the marginalised profile may not feel a sense of belonging to either their host culture or their ethnic culture, whereas the integration profile describes those who maintain relationships with both their ethnic culture and the host culture. Of all four profiles, Berry (2005) proposes that those who occupy the integration profile experience better adaptive outcomes. In the case of Māori students, those who feel both connected to their new environment (the university) as well as maintaining relationships with their family [as indicated in Williams (2011)] are likely to gain the most positive educational outcomes.

One of the issues that exist for individuals who wish to 'integrate' into a new host culture is the level of permeability, or the extent to which the host culture is accepting (or rejecting) of individuals who are attempting to acculturate into the host culture (Searle and Ward 1990; Vedder and Virta 2005). Research outcomes from a study that investigated how New Zealand tertiary education organisations and their teachers "adapt their current processes and practices to improve retention, persistence and completion of diverse students in their first year", demonstrated that Māori may meet resistance from tertiary educators (Zepke and Leach 2007, p. 658). Responses indicated that while some educators were supportive of adapting their practices to support diverse students (including Māori), there was also considerable resistance to changing practices that maintain the status quo. Common reasons provided from educators for not wanting to adapt their practices to support diverse students were based on the neo-liberal assumption of egalitarianism, or the assumption that both Māori and Pākehā are all born with equal opportunities, despite substantial evidence to negate such a perspective. As one participant noted, "I believe

from any ethical perspective, this cannot be justified… What's more I resent the attitude that I somehow should" (Zepke and Leach 2007, p. 661). This prevalent belief that teaching inclusively of Māori is somehow 'special treatment' has deep-seated roots in New Zealand's educational ideologies (Bell 2006). Misperceptions that present Māori as 'privileged' (as seen in Sibley and Liu 2004) persist despite the fact that Māori hold high-levels of negative social value in New Zealand (Pratto et al. 2006), which include lower access to housing (Houkamau and Sibley 2015), a gross over-representation in all stages of the criminal justice system (Department of Corrections 2007), as well as poorer health (Harris et al. 2012) and educational outcomes (Education Counts 2011).

4 Tohu Māoritanga

If Māori are to succeed both academically and culturally in a system that demonstrates resistance by some educators to adapt their practices to meet Māori student needs, there needs to be a counter-approach that supports integration from within the university. One such approach is the Tohu Māoritanga (the Tohu) Diploma in Māoritanga studies program, delivered as a one-year diploma at Victoria University of Wellington. Developed over the last 30 years, the Tohu seeks to not only prepare Māori students for the academic rigours of university study but to counter the cultural challenges they may face.

The curriculum of the Tohu has been derived from a Māori cultural perspective. Graduates acquire a foundation in the Māori language, culture and customs that equips them to engage actively in Māori society. The program is made up of a number of compulsory courses in the Māori language, marae (traditional Māori cultural institution) practice, waiata (song) performance, Māori society and culture, and academic study skills. Woven into the fabric of these core components are aspects of bi-culturalism; academic study and life skills intertwined with Māori cultural belief systems to support the students' adaptation to the academic rigours of university study.

The Tohu was created as a stepping stone to university education. Prospective students do not need any university entry qualifications to enrol, they must simply be over 16 years of age at the time of application. The Tohu is often referred to as a bridging program, however, it is actually a hybrid qualification as students are required to complete both pre-degree and degree level courses. The marae practice and waiata performance courses have a more practical focus and the assessments in these courses are designed to ease students into university study. The Māori language and Māori society and culture courses within the Tohu program are open, first year courses and a bachelor's degree workload and attainment level is expected.

Due to its open entry requirements, students who enrol in the Tohu include those with a range of experiences with cultural connectedness and previous academic achievement. However, the coordinators take the position that Tohu students have all the intellectual capacity of their first year counterparts, but have made a deliberate decision to participate within a Māori learning environment at the university. Part of

the diploma design includes courses that encourage and test students' abilities to participate collectively in a way that is culturally inclusive of their learning. Furthermore, the program allows and encourages students to actively explore their Māori cultural heritage, while participating in the university context. Overall, the Tohu provides opportunities for Māori students to graduate from a university in which the opportunities for local *whānau* (family), *hapū* (sub tribe), *iwi* (tribe), national and global engagement is a dominant feature of the student experience (Victoria University of Wellington, Graduate Profile).

The Tohu is for all students from all backgrounds, it is not exclusively for Māori; however, the vast majority of enrollees are Māori. Most of the students who enter into the Tohu are recent school leavers, although some are mature age students (over 25 years). Many of the Māori students come from a background of speaking Māori and have been brought up around Māori cultural practices. A smaller number come with little to no knowledge of things Māori. Whether their existing Māori cultural knowledge is strong or weak, students often enter the Tohu on a personal journey to reaffirm their cultural identity.

The venue that hosts and nurtures the students of the Tohu is a distinctive feature of the program. The teaching of the program is based around the university marae. The marae "is a complex cultural institution. It involves not only a set of physical structures, but also a community of people and a set of Māori cultural values and ways of expressing them" (Māori Studies Department n.d.). Marae are seen as a living entity and the role of the *tangata whenua* is to 'keep the Marae warm' (Māori Studies Department n.d.). The warmth of the marae comes from *manaakitanga* (hospitality) of the marae staff. The marae is at the heart of the Tohu and its cultural processess influence many of the teaching pedagogies within the program.

Traditionally, Māori take a holistic approach to teaching and learning, which encompasses the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual needs of each student. Each of these domains are nurtured within the marae and underpin the Māori learning environment created for the Tohu. For example, the *marae ātea* (forecourt in front of the *wharenui*) welcomes the students, the *wharekai* (dining hall) feeds the students physically, and the *wharenui* (meeting house) feeds the students intellectually and spiritually and is the foundation of a family environment where students come to sit, study and get to know one another.

Many of the Tohu classes are held in the *wharenui,* named *Te Tumu Herenga Waka,* which means 'the hitching or mooring post of the canoe'. The metaphor behind the name embraces the vision of the marae that all *waka* (canoes) can hitch to the posts regardless of where they come from. In particular, the two papers within the Tohu that teach practical marae and waiata skills are entirely conducted within the *wharenui*, which provides a safe learning environment for students to feel free to attempt cultural practices without feeling judged.

Another distinctive feature of the Tohu is the deliberate appointment of a Māori male and female lecturer to co-teach the practical courses. This culturally responsive approach recognises that there are distinct roles for males and females on the marae. The use of both female and male tutors reflects the social norms of Māori learning through mentoring relationships and role-modelling cultural gender roles.

Their responsibilities differ and therefore both lecturers work together to support, encourage and teach the students those varying roles. The dynamic of male and female complementarity is also associated to *te ao Māori* (the Māori world), which recognises the different *wairua* (spirits) and energies that each gender brings, and draws on Māori cosmogonic beliefs about *Papatūānuku* (mother earth) and *Ranginui* (sky father).

A further aspect of the Tohu is its incorporation of *whanaungatanga* (family-like relationships) as a vital teaching pedagogy. The root word of *whanaungatanga* is *whānau* (family), which is central to Māori culture. In brief, *whānau* are made up of the nuclear family and the extended family unit of grandparents, aunties, uncles and cousins. The Tohu has been developed to recognise right from the beginning the importance, of developing a learning environment that is based on *whanaungatanga*. This includes getting to know the students and helping them to get to know each other. Drawing on the Māori practices of *mihimihi* (introductions) and *pepeha* (culturally identifying oneself), the staff and students take time to find out where they all come from, who their family and ancestors are, and what their tribal links are, in order to make connections with each other. Once Māori know one another they can work more comfortably together, and their roles within the learning environment are better understood. This key element of the Māori culture is explained in the *whakataukī* (proverbial saying), *'Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini* (My achievements are not those of my own strength, but a result also of the many supporting me) (Paterangi n.d., as cited in Huata 1921).

Traditionally, Māori have operated within a collective identity, which focuses on the well-being of the group before individual needs. Two examples of these collective or family-like roles within the learning environment are the use of *tuakana/teina* (older sibling/ younger sibling) mentoring relationships, which are created both inside and outside of class. One example of *tuakana/teina* in action within the Tohu is in the language support given to and by the students. Two language streams are offered within the Tohu: the absolute beginners take MAOR101 while students with intermediate level language skills take MAOR111. The role of MAOR111 students is to act as *tuakana* (mentors) to those in the MAOR101 paper who are therefore the *teina* (mentees). However, the *tuakana* can become the *teina* in other aspects of the courses. For example, although the students in the more advanced stream are better speakers of Māori, sometimes those in the beginner course acquire a better understanding of the grammar and therefore the learning becomes a two way path. This idea is entrenched in the Māori word *ako*, which means to teach *and* to learn.

5 Academic, Institutional and Societal Challenges

In previous research about the Tohu, students reported that *whanaungatanga* was an important aspect of the program (Chinlund and Hall 2010). However, the *whānau* relationships developed by students have both positive and negative outcomes on student success rates. Many Tohu students live with their *whānau* while they

undertake their study and receive the support they need to succeed. However, in some cases, the students' progress within the Tohu can be hindered by *whānau*. For example, one cultural obligation to the *whānau* is that of *tangihanga* (Māori death customs and ceremony). Due to the connectedness of Māori to their extended family unit, there are far more occasions when Māori need to attend and participate in *tangihanga.* Māori students often feel an obligation to travel and take extended leave to attend *tangihanga* and provide support to their *whānau* during this cultural ceremony. Students can sometimes be absent for up to two weeks attending to their cultural responsibilities. After such an extended period of time, some find it too difficult to catch up on the missed work. Attempts are made to work with the students to ensure this does not affect the outcome of their study, but it is not always possible to get the students back on track (Keane-Tuala et al. 2016).

Another challenge relates to the diverse realities of Māori cultural connectedness that are represented within the student population who enrol in the Tohu Māoritanga diploma. Due to the impacts of colonisation, the extent to which some Māori people have access to Māori cultural spaces varies considerably (see McIntosh 2005; Rata 2015). At a national level, one way of exploring Māori cultural connectedness is through measuring the extent to which individuals participate in their marae activities. Research from Te Kupenga, a large-scale survey of Māori wellbeing, indicated that age was a differentiating factor that impacted on whether Māori had visited their marae and how frequently they did so. Within the 15–24 year old age bracket, merely half (52%) of Te Kupenga respondents reported having ever been to their ancestral marae compared with 77% of those aged 55 and over (Statistics New Zealand 2013). As the majority of students who participate in the Tohu are in the 15–24 age group, it is increasingly becoming the case that students enrolled in the program have had restricted access to their ancestral marae, and the cultural roles that accompany such spaces. The Tohu then becomes a platform for supporting students to re-engage with such spaces and the roles and responsibilities that are attached to marae membership.

One of the unique characteristics of the Tohu Māoritanga diploma is the inclusion of courses that allow Māori students to practice participating in their culture in ways that permit them to make culturally relevant mistakes in a safe environment. The need for including practical papers comes from a desire to ensure that graduates of the program are able to fully participate as members within their respective Māori communities. Mead (1983) notes that for academics within Māori Studies departments, the role of the academic is somewhat different from the roles of non-Māori staff. Māori Studies departments are charged with the task of supporting Māori cultural and linguistic maintenance, which is a weighty task to undertake. When designing Māori cultural based courses Mead (1983) further notes that:

> We need to discover what the new, educated and bicultural person needs to know, so as to be able to make a contribution to marae-based activities. This person is likely to replace knowledgeable elders who have died out either by natural causes or being assimilated and thereby suffering a cultural death (p. 341).

The weight and responsibility that falls on both the students and staff within Māori Studies departments is somewhat removed from the cultural maintenance responsibilities expected by Pākehā New Zealanders. In order to enable students to participate as full citizens in their Māori communities, they must feel comfortable in their identity as Māori, which is partly what the Tohu aims to ensure.

Its longevity in an otherwise non-indigenous university environment may suggest that the Tohu enjoys a comfortable position within the academic offerings of Victoria University of Wellington; however, challenges to its standing arise with some regularity, be it from internal or external forces. On a national level, in 2011 New Zealand's government decided that it was inappropriate for universities to offer pre-degree courses to bridge students into their own programs and threatened to remove funding for any pre-degree qualifications offered at any New Zealand universities. This resulted in a hurried cull of courses offered by universities that were designed to transition students into first year study. The Tohu managed to survive this period relatively unscathed but only because of its hybrid structure, with its mixture of both pre-degree and degree-level courses. It did, however, have to go through a process of aligning all of its courses with degree-level points and fee structures, thereby placing additional financial pressure on enrolling students.

Other challenges emanate from internal factors. For example, the yearly timetabling process for all courses at the university fails to take into account the cohort nature and *whānau* learning environment of the Tohu. Instead, courses are scheduled randomly across the week, often producing an unbalanced and unnecessarily difficult workload for the students. In turn, this has contributed to the Tohu attrition rate. On days when students have a very light course load (say, one 50-minute lecture) they may be inclined to save their travel money and stay home, but run the risk of falling behind. Similarly, on days with very early or late lectures, students often develop a pattern of arriving late or leaving early, also causing them to fall behind in their class work.

Another internal challenge is the threat from other programs with an interest in attracting more Māori students, primarily because of their 'priority group' status in the current Tertiary Education Strategy 2014–2019. Victoria University of Wellington's recruitment strategies focus on attracting Māori students into its wide range of courses, sometimes with little thought about whether the students are adequately prepared for, suited or supported in those programs. As a result, Māori students have been known to end up enrolled in programs that they are unprepared for, without any awareness of the existence of the Tohu program.

One final challenge is to do with the personnel involved with the program. The workload of teaching staff on the Tohu often goes well beyond their contact and teaching preparation time. Innumerable hours are spent providing pastoral care, additional support, and generally building and maintaining a positive relationship with the students. While none of the staff involved in the program begrudge that extra effort, they are also not acknowledged within the promotion application process or workload allocation models for the additional time and energy that this entails. In addition, in years where timetabling has caused the practical courses to be concentrated into one trimester, the students have struggled when the lecturers

that they have grown close to and built up a high level of trust, suddenly 'disappear' and are replaced with a different set of people. This can interfere with the learning environment that has been created and it can take a while for the students to adjust.

6 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted how important acculturation or, more precisely, integration (Berry 1997) is in the process of transitioning indigenous students into university study. In the case of Māori students, creating a connection to the university environment *and* maintaining Māori cultural relationships are crucial for the achievement of positive educational outcomes. While a great number of universities have developed bridging courses and other programs to help transition students into university study, few take into account the cultural needs and expectations of indigenous students. Although the Tohu is not exclusively for Māori, most of its students are Māori and it provides a Māori learning forum where Māori language and social practices are the norm.

The Tohu program creates a physical, social and metaphorical Māori space within the university environment, and becomes a platform that Māori students can move out from into other university programs and return to during their studies. It is unique amongst qualifications being offered in New Zealand universities, not only for its open entry and focus on Māori language and cultural skills, but also because of the communal learning environment that it provides for Tohu students in their first year at university. The Tohu program is perhaps a model for universities in the way that it supports the integration of Māori students into a new cultural environment. However, a challenge for the students and educators within the program is how these same students are received outside of the parameters of the Tohu.

As a bridge into university study, the Tohu helps Māori students with both their academic and cultural skills development. As a link into degree studies, it gives the Māori students a boost as they finish the Tohu with 60 points that they can put towards any bachelor's degree. As a recruitment tool, it provides an opportunity for Māori students to try university life for a year, and if they do not want to continue they can exit with a diploma. As a learning experience, it gives Māori students a chance to explore the university environment with the full support and safety of a Māori cultural community and teaching team, providing them with role models, guidance and empathy.

A key measure of success of the Tohu program lies in the fact that it has provided a university introduction for Māori people who have subsequently taken up leadership roles in their communities, industry and government. Since its creation in 1986, over 800 Māori men and women have participated in the Tohu. Many of them have gone on to finish other tertiary qualifications (Hughes and Ahern 1993), including at least two who have completed PhDs. The doors of the Tohu program have been entered by alumni such as Professor Rawinia Higgins, now Head of the School of Māori Studies and Deputy Vice Chancellor Māori Research at Victoria University of

Wellington. Professor Higgins followed in the footsteps of her mother, Te Ripowai Higgins, who had previously graduated with the Tohu too and is now the Taurima (manager) of *Te Herenga Waka Marae*, and in 2015 Professor Higgins's daughter, Kuratapirirangi Higgins, became the third generation in the Higgins family to graduate with the Tohu.

The ultimate outcome of a program like the Tohu is to meet the demand for more indigenous university graduates to support and lead their communities into the future. What is less well understood is that these indigenous programs, and the graduates that they produce, also have a positive impact on the university environment. By that token, indigenous pathway programs offer a way of 'opening the doors' to universities both ways, *learning from* as well as *teaching to* indigenous students, as a modern day representation of the Māori proverb, '*Huakina mai te tatau o tōu whare kia kite atu ai i tōu maunga mātauranga*' (Open the doors of your house and see the mountain of knowledge that is within).

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Chapter 7
Qatar University Foundation Program: A Means to Access Higher Education and a Pathway for Transformation

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Abstract Qatar has long sought to promote education among its citizens. One of the challenges that has emerged is maintaining academic standards at a tertiary level while still providing access and equity to learners. Recently, the search for this balance has been played out through the language and admissions policy of this Gulf state's first and only national university, Qatar University. Historically, Qatar University has strived to find a balance between upholding Arabic academic traditions and meeting the language needs for its economic activities as well as finding a balance between maintaining academic standards while providing an education that is equitable and accessible to its citizens. In 2003, Qatar University began a process of structural reform. Learners whose English language competency was not at the required level were enrolled into a newly expanded Foundation Program. This Program was initially designed as a pathway program to provide students with a preparatory route for entry into their desired colleges. Further changes to educational policy in 2012 necessitated restructuring Qatar University as Arabic became the language of instruction. This, in turn, redefined the role of the Foundation Program. This chapter is an exploration into how the Foundation Program adapted and evolved in order to better serve the constantly changing needs of Qatari students.

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1 Introduction

Qatar has constantly sought to promote education among its citizens while at the same time preserving the traditional Arabic language of Qatar and the Islamic world. Recently, the search for a balance between educational standards, local traditions and customs, and equity and access to education has been played out through the educational policy of this Gulf state's first and only national university, Qatar University. Although, Arabic is Qatar University's official language of instruction, historically it has sought to find a balance between upholding Arabic academic traditions and enhancing literacy skills in English. In 2003, Qatar University underwent a process of deep structural reform. This reform required that most majors at the university switch to an English language medium of instruction and led to an expansion of the existing Foundation Program. Nine years later this language policy was reversed by Qatar's Supreme Education Council (SEC). Consequently, departments which had previously taught exclusively in English had to switch back to teaching in Arabic. This change in language policy also initiated a restructuring of Qatar University's Foundation Program. This chapter describes how the Foundation Program adapted and evolved to better serve the constantly changing needs of its students.

The chapter is organized as follows. First, a brief description of Qatar and its post-secondary educational offerings are provided. This is followed by a brief history of the origins and evolution of the Foundation Program. Next, the relationship between the language policy of Qatar University and the Foundation Program's role in providing students access to their desired colleges at the national university is explored. This is followed by a description of two major educational reforms that have attempted to address the issues of equity, accessibility, and inclusion in Qatar's higher education as well as the role of the Foundation Program in these reforms.

2 The State of Qatar

Qatar is one of the smallest Gulf States in the Middle East. It is a nation of 11,427 km^2 and has an approximate population of 2.5 million (Ministry of Development and Planning 2016) consisting of around 278,000 nationals (Snoj 2013). The remainder of the population comprises an expatriate workforce. Largely as a result of the number of foreign workers residing in Qatar, English is widely spoken as a second language, since it is the most commonly shared language among the foreign workers residing in Qatar. In addition, English is taught at kindergarten and elementary school level. However, Arabic remains the first language of the local population and holds the status of being the official national language.

It is also important to acknowledge that Qatar is a prosperous country, largely as a result of possessing one of the world's largest natural gas reserves (Moini et al. 2009). However, Qatar has also proven itself to be ambitious in its plans to develop the country and its human capital, following a sustainable model that should outlast

its finite hydrocarbon reserves. Thus, one of Qatar's historic long-term aims has been to develop a diversified, knowledge-based economy. In order to achieve economic diversification, in 2008 Qatar launched the Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV2030) as a blueprint which defines Qatar's long-term outcomes and provides a framework within which national strategies and implementations can be developed (Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics 2013). Within the QNV2030, education has a central role in the establishment of a robust and self-sustainable private sector.

It has long been recognized that Qatar's education system is crucial to the success of its national vision (Brewer et al. 2007). Qatar seeks a national labor force which can effectively participate in both the public and private sectors of its economy. Due to its relatively small population, if Qatar's full potential is to be realized, then each citizen must strive towards their full potential. Qatar's National Development Strategy explains that "efforts that equip Qataris with the skills required to attain their maximum potential in both the public and private sectors warrant close attention, and their success will be vital to creating a vibrant non-hydrocarbon economy and broader societal capabilities" (General Secretariat for Development Planning 2011, p. 62).

In summary, upgrading and deepening the knowledge, education, and skills of Qataris is now a national priority, and Qatar's national university currently has a central role in equipping Qataris with the skills that they need to participate in Qatar's increasingly diversified, knowledge-based economy. As an illustration of this recognition, Qatar's education system has undergone a series of educational reforms in recent years at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. These reforms have been aimed at raising Qatar's "human resources to a level of competency that meets the technological, business, and industrial needs of the country while at the same time responds to the social and cultural challenges that are bound to accompany accelerated development" (Al Misnad 2009, p. xiii). As this chapter is focused on issues of equity and the pathway program at Qatar University, a full description of these reforms is beyond the scope of this chapter. For a full description of the reform efforts undertaken within the State of Qatar, please refer to Brewer et al. (2007), Brewer and Goldman (2010), Moini et al. (2009), and Zellman et al. (2011a, b).

2.1 Education City

At present, there are a number of options in Qatar for students who wish to pursue post-secondary education. Arguably the most well-known of these options is Education City, a development within Qatar that hosts a number of branches of foreign universities (Brewer et al. 2007). Education City is the principle project of the Qatar Foundation, a not-for-profit organization devoted to the development of education, science, and community in Qatar (Moini et al. 2009). Education City, which has been described as the Ivy league of the Middle East (Lewin 2008), currently includes branches of six American universities (Virginia Commonwealth University, Texas A&M University, Carnegie Mellon University, Weill Cornell

Medical College, Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, and Northwestern University in Qatar), one French university (HEC Paris in Qatar), one British Institution (University College London Qatar), and, most recently, a Qatari institution (Qatar Faculty of Islamic Studies) that offer studies in several areas including Islamic law, finance, and public policy (Brewer and Goldman 2010; for a full description of these universities and the degrees and programs that they offer, refer to the Qatar Foundation Website: www.qf.org.qa).

2.2 Qatar University

In addition to the universities affiliated with Education City, there are a number of other post-secondary options available in Qatar. These include branches of other foreign institutions, such as the College of the North Atlantic-Qatar, Stenden University Qatar, and the University of Calgary in Qatar, as well as Qatar University, the national university of Qatar. Qatar University, which was formally founded in 1977, comprises nine colleges: Arts and Sciences, Business and Economics, Education, Engineering, Law, Pharmacy, Sharia and Islamic Studies, the College of Medicine, and the College of Health Sciences, as well as the Foundation Program. Qatar University is the main provider of tertiary education in this Gulf State. Its colleges offer over 70 specializations at the undergraduate level. These are aligned with the growing needs of the labor market and the aspirations of the society it serves. At present, over 15,000 Qatari and non-Qatari students are enrolled at the university (Qatar University 2015).

3 Equity in Higher Education in Qatar

It is important to highlight that issues of equity, inclusion, and participation in higher education have long been a key concern in the implementation of the many education reforms that have taken place in recent years in Qatar (e.g., Brewer and Goldman 2010; Moini et al. 2009). As noted above, there are a number of post-secondary options available for students in Qatar. However, a number of these options are not realistic for many of the students who wish to pursue higher education. As an example, the universities in Education City are all co-educational. This is a delicate issue, in that gender-segregated classrooms are the norm as per Qatari customs and traditions, in particular for female students (Moini et al. 2009). Because women typically remain close to their families according to Qatari tradition, it is clear that the options are limited for females because they also may not be able to pursue tertiary education abroad while remaining consistent with the Qatari culture. In addition to the limited access that females have to the universities within Education City, it is also important to consider the fact that Education City is often referred to as the “Ivy League” of the Middle East (Lewin 2008). As expected, such

a comparison indicates a level of prestige associated with studying in these institutions. However, this prestige also comes at a price in that these schools admit relatively small cohorts of students and are thus very selective in their admission processes. In sum, although there are a wide range of options available for post-secondary education in Qatar, many of these universities are not accessible to the majority of the population due to the particularities of local tradition as well as the selectivity of these universities in their admissions.

In light of the limitations outlined in the paragraph above, one of the roles of Qatar University has been to be the main post-secondary educational option for Qatari citizens. However, it is important to stress that the emphasis on inclusion and equity in Qatar University comes with a simultaneous emphasis on offering a rigorous and quality education to its students. The education which the university provides is strongly aligned with Qatar's 2030 National Vision. It is expected that Qatar University produce qualified graduates to enter the country's constantly expanding and diversifying labor market. This expectation is acknowledged within Qatar University's 2015–2016 Undergraduate Student Catalog, which states that the university seeks to "provide post-secondary education opportunities for Qatari citizens with the goal to building a workforce of competent and skilled graduates in line with the labor market needs and adhering to the principles of Qatar National Vision 2030" (Qatar University 2015, p. 24).

In the sections that follow, this chapter will outline two major reforms undergone by Qatar University in recent years, and discuss the impact that these reforms have had on equity, participation, and inclusion at Qatar University. As discussed above, these reforms were carried out with the aims of providing high quality education and of improving the access and inclusion in the educational opportunities offered at this university.

3.1 The 2003 Education Reform

When it opened in 1977, Qatar University taught its courses solely in Arabic. However, in the early 2000s both English and Arabic were languages of instruction. Three colleges (Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, Sharia, Law, and Islamic Studies) taught courses in Arabic (Moini et al. 2009, p. 11). The remaining colleges (Engineering, Science, and Business and Economics) taught courses in English.

In 2003, Qatar University underwent a process of deep structural reform. At this time, potential employers in Qatar (both public and private) reported that often the university's graduates did not meet the standards required for employment (Moini et al. 2009, p. xxi). Thus, this reform project was intended to enhance the quality of education that the university offered and better align the university with the technological, business, and industrial needs of Qatar's increasingly knowledge-based economy.

The reforms were internally led and implemented. They were based on the principles of autonomy, decentralization, and accountability. The university was given

the power to allocate its budget as it saw fit; responsibility for academic decisions was returned to colleges and academic departments; and new systems of accountability were introduced (Moini et al. 2009). Furthermore, the reform project considered the English language to be a means to a world-class education. Therefore, one of the more controversial parts of the reform project was the switch to an English language medium of instruction for most majors at the university (Ellili-Cherif and Alkhateeb 2015, p. 207). Initially, only the College of Sharia and Islamic Studies was allowed to continue to teach through the medium of Arabic. The admissions requirements for the other colleges were then raised. A minimum International English Language Testing System (IELTS) 5.5 overall score was required for students who wished to enroll in a course which was conducted in English. Students who were unable to meet these requirements were enrolled into the Foundation Program.

3.1.1 The Evolution of the Foundation Program

As noted above, the reform of 2003 was carried out with the intention of raising the educational standards of Qatar University. It was believed that, by improving the quality of education offered, the graduates would be better equipped for their future careers and / or post-graduate studies. However, it was also recognized that the raising of these standards posed some risks to the degree of accessibility of university education. In particular, with the adoption of English as the primary medium of instruction and the newly introduced admission requirement of a minimum IELTS score, it was not possible for citizens who lacked proficiency in English to study at tertiary level in Qatar. The key point here is that a lack of proficiency in a foreign language (i.e. English) could potentially deny citizens access to their national university. To address this issue, the reform project recommended that the existing language program be strengthened and be made available to students entering all programs at the University (Moini et al. 2009, p. 31).

Although Qatar University had offered supplementary English and Mathematics courses prior to the reform of 2003, it was as part of this reform that the Foundation Program was formalized as a pathway program to provide equity and access to higher education for students who lacked the necessary competencies for admission. In its initial form, the Foundation Program provided training in English, Maths, and Information and communications technology (ICT) and was envisioned as a necessary and positive means of raising the standards within the university while providing access to post-secondary education for the citizens of Qatar.

3.1.2 Unintended Consequences of the Foundation Program

Many viewed the Foundation Program positively; from 2004 to 2012, it helped thousands of students, in particular female students, to access higher education and gain entry to their respective colleges. However, despite the positive benefits brought by the change to studying through the medium of English, some stakeholders in the local community were not satisfied. This dissatisfaction was largely due to the

admission requirements of the university as well as with the structure and regulations of the Foundation Program. For example, students who entered the Foundation Program were expected to complete successfully all the courses in the program in four semesters (i.e. two years), or in order to exit the program, a student needed to achieve the proficiency requirements (e.g., IELTS 5.5 overall score or equivalent) needed to matriculate to their chosen undergraduate program within the university. In other words, once a student achieved their departmental entry requirements, they were still required to pass the prescribed Foundation English courses. Students who did not attain a satisfactory IELTS score within two years were required to withdraw from the university. As can be inferred, the IELTS requirement as well as the Foundation Program came to be viewed over time as a barrier to departmental enrollment.

In the fall of 2006, the Foundation Program designed and administered a questionnaire to 244 students (Foundation Program English Department 2009). This questionnaire was part of an ongoing needs analysis. The purpose of the questionnaire was to elicit feedback about the program from one of its key stakeholders, the students. The most significant finding which arose from this questionnaire was that many students were extrinsically motivated. They were attending foundation courses not because they wanted to improve their proficiency in English but because it was a university requirement. This problem persisted over the next two years. Once again, an internal report by the Foundation Program (Foundation Program English Department 2011) found that some students expressed low morale, poor motivation, and dissatisfaction at being forced to enroll in a non-credit-bearing course for a significant length of time. Many students chose not to enroll in the courses offered by the Foundation Program or dropped out after enrollment. The same internal report indicated that approximately 50% of the students who registered with Qatar University and were expected to enroll in the Foundation Program either did not register for Foundation courses or dropped out of the courses once they had registered (Foundation Program English Department 2011). Furthermore, even after participating in the Foundation Program for two years, some students were not able to attain the required level of English to matriculate in their department of choice (see Table 1).

Contrary to its original role and purpose, the Foundation Program was perceived by many students as an obstacle which prevented them from entering their departments.

Additionally, the Foundation Program was a controversial topic in the wider Qatari community. Within the wider society the Foundation Program was viewed as having failed the members of society who, after completing the two-year program,

Table 1 Number of Students Who Did Not Attain the Required Level of English to Matriculate in their Department of Choice

Academic year	Number of students admitted to the Foundation Program	Number of students who did not attain the required level of English
2010–2010	3992	213
2010–2011	3577	196

were unable to attain the required IELTS score. There were widespread complaints that the English language instruction policy "discriminated against nationals" (Gengler 2012). The reality was that, although the Foundation Program was created with the intention of providing equitable higher education access to all members of the Qatari society, it functioned as a filter for the university. The key point here is that after studying for two years with the Foundation Program, some students were unable to obtain the required language skills; thus, a lack of proficiency in a foreign language (i.e. English) was denying these citizens access to their national university. Once again, a change in educational policy at the governmental level triggered a restructuring of Qatar University as well as of the Foundation Program.

3.2 The 2012 Education Reform

In 2012, the appropriateness of English as the official medium of instruction at Qatar University was being questioned by the wider community. The Qatari public expressed widespread concern that: younger Qataris were neglecting their heritage and Arabic language skills (Powell 2012, p. 109); teaching in the medium of English was not compatible with traditional Qatari values and therefore inappropriate (Zellman et al. 2011a, p. 59); and learning through the medium of English, rather than Arabic, was a major cause of low student achievement (Ellili-Cherif and Alkhateeb 2015, p. 207). These concerns were carefully taken into consideration at the governmental level.

In 2012, the Supreme Education Council (SEC) issued a decree which mandated that Arabic should become the official medium of instruction at Qatar University (Ellili-Cherif and Alkhateeb 2015). In line with the 2003 reform, the medium of instruction for nearly all undergraduate degree programs taught at Qatar University at the time was English. As a consequence of the 2012 decree, most disciplines immediately switched language of instruction to Arabic. In addition to the programs that were already offered in Arabic, Business and Economics, Law, Mass Communications, and International Affairs were also offered in Arabic. The remaining colleges of Science, Engineering, and Pharmacy continued to use English as the medium of instruction. Consequently, these colleges became the clients for the Foundation Program. This change in language policy necessitated restructuring the existing Foundation Program.

The impact of this restructuring was immediately apparent in the number of students admitted to the university. The introduction of Arabic as a medium of instruction led to a sharp increase in the total number of students who were admitted, and subsequently enrolled, at Qatar University in 2012 (see Figure 1 below).

Subsequent years have seen further shifts in enrollment, with Qatari students now comprising the majority of all students. Additionally, students who are enrolled in the disciplines whose medium of instruction was affected by the 2012 decree have largely welcomed the change. Ellili-Cherif and Alkhateeb (2015) collected feedback from 295 students from the College of Law, College of Business, Department of Mass Communication, and Department of International Affairs.

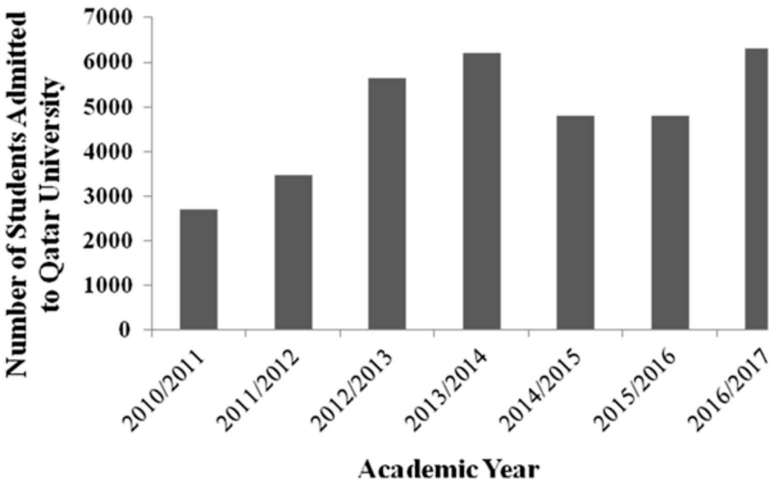

Figure 1 Admission Statistics for Qatar University (Excludes Admission Statistics for the Foundation Program)

They found that, although most respondents highly valued English, they supported the use of Arabic as a medium of instruction (Ellili-Cherif and Alkhateeb 2015, p. 212). These data can further support previous claims that English was a barrier to higher education for the local population in Qatar.

This section has provided an overview of the history of the Foundation Program, its context, and the factors that have necessitated changes to the curriculum and purpose of this program. The following section will shift perspective and provide details of how the Foundation Program has adapted to these factors, in particular with details of changes to the curriculum of the existing Foundation Program and the development of the embedded sub-program in undergraduate courses that are part of the university general education courses.

4 The Current Foundation Program

As noted above, the 2012 reform necessitated the restructuring of the courses offered by the Foundation Program. The most fundamental change stemmed from the university re-introduction of Arabic as the medium of instruction for some streams of study. Importantly, the Foundation Program was called upon to provide English language instruction for students enrolled in majors with Arabic as the medium of instruction (e.g., Arabic, College of Law, College of Business, Department of Mass Communication, and Department of International Affairs). This required the creation of a new sub-program, called the Embedded Program. The Embedded Program is discussed in more detail in the sections that follow. However, as was the case in the past, the Foundation Program also was to continue to provide English courses for students who wished to enroll in majors with English

as the medium of instruction (e.g., the colleges of Science, Engineering, and Pharmacy), yet did not possess the necessary competency in English to do so. These courses are henceforth referred to as Foundation English courses.

The most fundamental change to the Foundation English courses as part of the 2012 reform was that the program was reduced from a 2-year program to a 1-year program. Furthermore, the IELTS exam was removed as a pre-requisite for students to matriculate into their English-stream undergraduate majors. In other words, requirements that had previously acted as barriers to entry were removed to provide greater ease of access for students to the university.

It was also recognized that multiple avenues were needed for students to gain entry to their undergraduate studies at Qatar University. At present, students can gain entry to undergraduate programs offered in English through two different pathways: an English proficiency exam or the completion of the Foundation Program. Upon enrollment in an English-stream major, students are required to present proof of their level of proficiency in English. Those who meet the requirements of their chosen college (i.e. an IELTS score of 5.5 or above) are able to matriculate directly into their chosen majors. Those who fall short of the requisite level or who are unable to present proof of their proficiency in English are asked to take a standardized placement test upon enrollment. The results of this exam are then used to place students at the appropriate level of the Foundation Program or to exempt students completely from Foundation courses if they attain scores which are high enough. Alternatively, students may begin their undergraduate studies by completing all components of the Foundation Program.

4.1 Embedded Sub-program

As noted previously, Qatar University experienced a dramatic increase in enrollment following the 2012 reform that re-introduced Arabic as a medium of instruction. However, the university recognized the importance of English for these students' future academic and professional careers. Therefore, to accommodate students enrolled in Arabic-stream majors, a new sub-program was developed within the Foundation Program. This sub-program, named the Embedded Program, consists of a series of four language courses that are designed to provide students with the English skills needed for their future academic and/or professional careers. Unlike the Foundation Program courses, these four English courses are undergraduate level courses, are part of the core curriculum of Qatar University and are credit-bearing.

4.2 A Framework for Understanding These Changes

Phillip and Ochs' (2003) framework of principles of borrowing in education is particularly useful to understand the efforts toward education reform that took place in recent years at Qatar University. According to this framework, there are four main

stages in the borrowing process: cross-national attraction, decision, implementation, and integration. The first stage, cross-national attraction, involves seeking out and borrowing practices and policies from external sources. This stage can be motivated by a variety of impetuses including internal dissatisfaction with the current practices of the educational system. The second stage, decision, concerns the "who" and "how" of the decision process; the decision stage can be characterized as a "top-down" or "bottom-up" process. The third stage, implementation, is self-explanatory in that it involves the many steps undertaken to put the "borrowed" policy into practice. The final stage, internalization, is concerned with the realities and aftermath of the implementation process. It is at this stage that the impact of the borrowed policies and/or practices on the internal system is examined and the effectiveness of the changes is evaluated. Furthermore, it is at this stage that modifications in the borrowed policy can be made in light of the local context.

Phillip and Ochs' (2003) principles of borrowing in education appear to be a useful framework for examining the timeline of the various reform projects in Qatar University. For instance, if we take the 2003 reform project as an example, the initial stage of the model, cross-national attraction, involved identifying English as a means of improving the educational standards at Qatar University. This need for change resulted from a number of factors, the most notable being reports from many employers that graduates of the university did not meet the minimum standards for employment (Moini et al. 2009). The second and third stages, decision and implementation, discussed above can be characterized as having followed a "top-down" process.

The final internalization stage took place between the reforms of 2003 and 2012, during which time the effectiveness of the policy was evaluated in light of the impact that it had on a number of different areas, such as quality of education at Qatar University and the unintended consequence of hindering access to higher education for a majority of the local population. The reform project of 2012, then, can be seen as a reiteration of this cycle in order to better adapt the borrowed policy and/or practice to the local context in which it was implemented. This second round of reform at the university illustrates that reform is not a one-off event but is instead part of an ongoing cycle of identifying needs, implementing the necessary change to address them, and then evaluating the impact of this change on the educational system.

5 Conclusion

Looking forward, there are a number of initiatives and changes at Qatar University that will undoubtedly create new opportunities and challenges for the Foundation Program. As this chapter has illustrated, the reforms carried out by Qatar University to better serve the local community have resulted in positive changes in the educational system, as well as unintended consequences. It is important to stress that these reforms should not be seen as one-off events, but are instead part of an ongoing narrative in which Qatar University continues to adapt and adjust its policies and curriculum in an effort to continue to serve its student population. In other words, reforms within the

university can be seen as part of an ongoing cyclical process designed to provide a quality post-secondary education that is equitable and accessible to the citizens of Qatar. As part of this goal, the Foundation Program has fulfilled, and will continue to play, a key role at Qatar University in that it provides a pathway for its students to build their competencies in order to be successful at the undergraduate level.

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Chapter 8
"Come One, Come All": The Question of Open Entry in Enabling Programs

Barry Hodges

Abstract A major pathway for non-traditional students to access higher education in Australia is via "enabling programs", tertiary preparation programs which allow students lacking the usual entry qualifications to gain them while preparing for success within higher education. There is an important division within such programs between "open entry" programs which allow enrolment regardless of prior academic qualifications and those which restrict entry on the basis of a range of academic criteria.

Open entry is a widening participation strategy, aiming to attract students who might not otherwise attempt higher education. This strategy has a long and successful history in Australia. However, recent research suggests that the putative benefits of attracting a wider range of non-traditional students via open entry may have a complementary cost in terms of lower student retention with the associated costs for students, institutions and the public purse. Whether open or restrictive entry to enabling programs is the more effective strategy for pursuing widening participation in Australia is an increasingly urgent question that needs to be answered.

This chapter offers a view of the open entry 'landscape' at issue in this debate, considering such aspects as the function of program entry requirements, the oft-quoted tension between student achievement and academic standards, the challenges of supporting non-traditional students in what are to them unfamiliar academic environments and the emergence of the need for 'multiple discourses' in response to the standard 'deficit discourse'.

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1 Introduction: Australian Enabling Programs and Open Entry

In Australia, one of the primary strategies for widening participation in higher education by non-traditional students, such as those from lower socioeconomic groups, is investment in what are called variously *enabling programs*, *enabling courses* and *bridging courses*.[1] These are tertiary preparation programs, usually offered by a higher education institution (HEI), which provide an alternative pathway into higher education for non-traditional students who do not possess the standard qualifications required for entry into a HEI, while at the same time providing preparation in the skills necessary for success in undergraduate programs (DEETYA 2011).[2]

There are over 35 university-based enabling programs in Australia (Hodges et al. 2013, p. 21), forming a complex, diverse and growing field. These programs are offered predominantly in metropolitan areas. They cover a wide range of approaches to the challenge of attracting non-traditional students and preparing them for higher education, differing in such aspects as mode of delivery (internal/external, part-time/full-time) length of program, and the mix of compulsory skills courses with discipline-based courses.[3]

One of the most significant contrasts is whether or not entry to the program is restricted by achievement of a particular academic level prior to program entry. Programs which restrict entry often do so on the basis of a range of criteria such as 'near-miss' ATAR[4] entry scores, evidence of literacy or numeracy proficiency or evidence of a significant level of commitment to further study. Approximately half of Australia's enabling programs are open entry, including the longest-running program, the Open Foundation Program (OFP) of the University of Newcastle (UON). Since 1974 the OFP has successfully provided access to higher education (HE) for over 20,000 students, many of them from non-traditional backgrounds and most lacking the qualifications for university entry.

The open entry model is employed as a widening participation strategy, to enhance the attractiveness of the program for non-traditional students and thus not only service existing demand for access by non-traditional students into HE but also to convert "latent demand" into existing (Murphy et al. 2002, p. 112). The strategy of "open admission" to HE goes back at least to the City University of New York (CUNY) in 1974. The success of the open entry strategy in attracting non-traditional students is demonstrated by the figure of between a quarter and a third of the students enrolled in a sample of Australian open entry programs not having previously completed secondary studies (Hodges et al. 2013, pp. 56–60).

[1] The terminology is not standard across Australian HEIs, often being established by the student management software the institution uses; in this chapter, "course" means a single subject of study while "program" is reserved for a series of courses leading to a qualification or equivalent.

[2] For more background information on such programs, see Hodges et al. (2013), chapter 1.

[3] See, for example, Baker and Irwin (2015).

[4] Australian Tertiary Admissions Ranking (ATAR), a nation-wide ranking score derived from secondary study results which forms the basis for university admission.

Recent research (Hodges et al. 2013; NCSEHE 2016; Shah and Whannell 2016) and a growing concern with student attrition suggest that the putative benefits of attracting a wider range of non-traditional students via open entry is likely to have a complementary cost, especially in terms of lower student retention with the associated costs for students, institutions and the public purse. The question is whether the increased attraction of a range of non-traditional students to higher education is worth the accompanying costs, especially that of the resulting student attrition and to what extent, and how, this can be mitigated. It is the purpose of this chapter to clearly identify the issues behind this question.

2 Open Entry: The Issues

2.1 Background

The criticisms of open entry programs are as old as the approach itself and consistently argue that the costs of open entry – high drop-out/failure rates and/or lowering of academic standards – outweigh the widening participation benefits or, indeed, that the widening participation benefits are illusory, although hard evidence supporting this contention can be hard to find.

The standard challenge to moves toward open entry is that the students entering under an open entry scheme will be inadequately prepared in various ways for the demands of university life and so will fail – either through failing to complete the course or by completing the course but failing to achieve the required standard of work – in such numbers that the purpose of their entry is lost. To avoid this poor result, the charge goes, the institution will be 'dumbed down' via an unacceptable reduction in overall academic standards. This will make it possible for more students to achieve the required, lower, academic standard[5] and, therefore, to complete the course. Lavin and Hyllegard (1996), quoting an early US critic, provide a colourful, early version of this charge, saying of those who advocate open entry that we should

> … dismiss them [i.e. the students] with the curse that they should cross the river on a bridge designed by an engineer from an engineering school where students are admitted by lottery; and that their injuries should then be treated by a doctor from a medical school where students are admitted by lottery … [and so on], (Lavin and Hyllegard 1996, p. 17 quoting Mayer 1973, p. 47)

[5] This is the standard form of the challenge; however, there is a less canvassed but significant pedagogical challenge arising from the heterogeneous nature of the resulting entry cohort: students on entry will exhibit a sufficiently greater range of degrees of academic preparedness and this will create significant – perhaps insuperable – pedagogical challenges in addressing the diversity of student needs in the one cohort. This challenge will be neglected in this current discussion but must play a significant role in an eventual cost/benefit analysis of open entry as a widening participation strategy.

The traditional response from advocates of open entry models has been twofold, firstly in terms of the social justice that open entry delivers for those students that benefit from this model and secondly, in terms of the need to develop effective student support measures to improve the chances of success for the students entering via this pathway. However, a more radical view of the question leads to a rejection of this critique in itself, claiming that the concentration on student deficits rather than on failures of the educational experience delivered by the HEI places the responsibility entirely on the individual student. By so doing, it privileges the current nature of the higher education sector. Such privileging absolves HEIs of any need for significant change, since they dismiss the call for change as nothing more than the "dumbing down" of programs of study.

We might summarise these issues as follows:

1. The challenge of *achievement* (the effect of student deficits)
2. The challenge of academic *standards* ("dumbing down" as a response to student deficits)
3. The challenge of student learning *support* (remediating student deficits)
4. The challenge of *multiple discourses* (rejecting the deficit model)

The relationships between these challenges are indicated in Table 1 below. The table offers a sketch of associated costs and benefits of open entry models.[6]

In order to answer the question of whether open entry is a cost-effective strategy for widening participation, a thoroughgoing and detailed cost/risk/benefit analysis needs to be conducted. Such an analysis is far outside the scope of this chapter but a necessary preliminary step to this type of study is to identify the central factors

Table 1 Challenges to Heterogeneous Entry Cohorts

Model	Result	Response	Costs/effects	
			Individual student	Institution
Low level of preparedness (= "student deficits")	Attrition or failure			
	→	Increased student support	Increased student workload	Financial
	→	Longer to complete	Financial; Opportunity costs	Minor change
⇩ Different levels of preparedness (= multiple discourses)	Heterogeneous cohort	Pedagogical challenge	Minor increase in workload	Medium change; Prof. development; Financial
	Success (in multiple discourses)	Pedagogies of difference	Minor increase in workload learning new "languages"	Major change; Financial; Cultural

[6]This table does not consider wider effects which would be represented by a further right-hand column: the successful students are fed into a further system of socially defined graduate outcomes with associated costs and benefits.

involved and to locate them within the overall debate. That is the purpose of this chapter.

2.2 The Challenge of Achievement

The challenge can be simply stated: Lower levels of educational achievement prior to entry have a significantly negative effect on the probability of student success; how, then, can we expect the students entering an open entry enabling program without adequate academic preparation to succeed?

From the early 1960s US critics have noted this problem (e.g. Richardson et al. 1983, p. x) and the characteristic link between low socio-economic status (SES) and poor educational performance with Tinto and Engstrom, for example, claiming that "For too many low-income students, the open door of American higher education and the opportunity it provides has become a revolving door" (Tinto and Engstrom 2008, p. 47).

There is wide agreement that a lower level of educational achievement prior to enabling program study has a significantly negative effect on student success.[7] If we make the reasonable assumption that most of those allowed entry on the basis of open entry will be students who were unable to otherwise gain access because of their low educational qualifications, then open entry programs will tend to have far higher proportions of students with lower levels of education than will restrictive entry programs, an expectation confirmed in at least some cases (Hodges et al. 2013, p. 63). The implication is obvious: the move to open entry would inevitably seem to lead to a substantially lower degree of success among these students, the very students that the open entry model is intended to help. The problem is compounded by all the associated costs both psychological and financial costs to students and financial costs to educational institutions and financial bodies.

The problem arises from the learning curve that students face when they participate in any educational program with a fixed set of outcome standards which demands an improvement in the relevant competencies of those it licences to move on to the next level. In their very nature, enabling programs fall under this description.

For any such program, there will be a (relatively small) band of achievement of the required standards for successful completion of the course and hence licensing of access to the next educational level; in the case of enabling programs, this is access to the first year of an undergraduate program. Clearly, those students who enter the enabling program already in possession of a relatively high level of the required competencies will have less work to do to achieve the required exit standard in those competencies than those who are less academically well prepared on entry to the program. This can be represented as the steepness of the 'learning curve' for

[7] See, for example, Hoare and Johnston (2011), p. 26, Lomax-Smith et al. (2011), p. 76, Rose-Adams (2012), p. 4, Shah et al. (2011) and references there; Simpson (2003), pp. 203–4.

each student. The common-sense expectation is that those students who experience a steeper learning curve will have more work to do to achieve the desired level of competence in the same space of time than their counterparts. This can not only reinforce feelings of inadequacy but it can also mean that the student commitment to the program is likely to be more easily disrupted by external life events, such as illness, relationship problems and employment issues. These feelings and disruptions may lead to a greater likelihood of non-completion and a lower likelihood of success even if they persist to the end of the program.

That the effect applies to enabling programs is strongly supported by a recent extensive study of student retention and attrition in Australian enabling programs which showed a significant difference in student attrition rate between the open entry programs (at around 40–55%) and the one program in the study with substantial entry requirements (at around 15%) (Hodges et al. 2013, p. 25; face-to-face programs only). This program, the University Preparation Program (UPC) at Edith Cowan University requires either a 'near-miss' ATAR or a portfolio of written work for entry. These requirements demand that potential students demonstrate a mix of relatively high academic preparedness or of some substantial level of commitment to the program before enrolment, an element which is conspicuously lacking in the open entry programs. While based on only a very small sample (one enabling program out of nine), this result is suggestive of student success being highly dependent on past educational success. The study did, indeed, find that there is a significant relationship between student lower levels of prior educational achievement and decreased likelihood of student retention in the enabling programs of the University of Newcastle[8] (Hodges et al. 2013, p. 63). What is rather startling, however, is that this result was found in only one other enabling program (the Pathways Enabling Course (PEC) of the University of New England) out of the five institutions that were researched in this study. Since it is based on one year's student intakes, albeit across nine different programs in five universities, and it includes a range of rather different programs (e.g. both for on campus and external students), this study is limited and so further investigation is required to draw generalisable results. The view held by those working in Australian enabling programs is that this finding is an indication of the far greater importance of student motivation at the enabling level. Motivation would, according to them, outweigh other variables such as demographic factors, including prior educational achievement. No empirical study has yet been undertaken to verify this although the results of a far smaller 2009 study of the largest cohort of the OFP did suggest that a low level of motivation to achieve was a strong predictor of non-persistence and, in combination with high levels of perceived personal control, it was a very strong predictor of attrition (Hodges et al. 2011).

It should be noted, however, that entering with a lower level of prior education is not in any way a *guarantee* of failure: while more students entering with no formal educational qualifications did not complete the program, some of them did. It seems

[8] Including both OFP (20+ years old) and Newstep (17–20). No study has yet been undertaken of relative performance in the programs of effects of prior educational achievement on student performance among those completing the program.

to be the case, nevertheless, that students entering some enabling programs with a low level of prior educational achievement are likely to achieve lower levels of success, at least as measured by completion of the program. Whether this is true of all enabling programs, even of all open entry programs, is a question demanding further research. It is, nonetheless, true that substantial proportions of these students *do* complete the programs and do go on to the next stage of their studies: these are students who, in the absence of an open entry policy at their institution, would not have been able to undertake the program at all and would have had no option to access higher education. This lack of access would probably have negative implications for their life chances and their capacity to achieve – and, indeed, to widen – their goals. Similarly, the pool of productive talent that these students represent would have been lost to the economy and to society. The aim of open entry is to entice these students to attempt completion of a higher education qualification and, for many of them, that aim is achieved. So there are benefits associated with the open entry strategy.

However, knowing that there is an easily identifiable group of students who are likely to fail the enabling program entails an ethical responsibility: having been enticed to make an attempt, these students have to be supported. The educational institutions have an obligation not only to help them to succeed as far as possible (see below) but also to counsel and support them if they do not. Institutions should make students' attempt at higher education a positive experience even if it results in non-completion (Hodges et al. 2013, p. 103).

There is a further question that needs to be researched regarding those students who overcome the lack of preparedness with which they enter: are they doing so because of particularly high levels of personal ability or motivation, or because they are being very well supported? Or is it that the academic standards for graduation from the program have been lowered so that their lack of preparedness will not disadvantage them so much? It would seem that institutions that implement open entry are faced with a stark choice between lowering the academic standards expected of their graduates, *or* of rapidly culling the under-prepared students *or* putting in place a range of effective (generally costly) remediation and student support strategies.[9] Where these strategies are successful, the how and why need to be identified; where they are not, the causes for their failure need to be established. The answers will help determine whether the 'open door' policy is worth pursuing at all.

In conclusion, given the result in Hodges et al. (2013), this challenge demands substantial further research to determine to what extent it applies in the case of students in enabling programs. Even if it does not apply in the case of the majority of students, common-sense suggests that it will be a problem for at least some, where other countervailing factors are unable to overcome the initial disadvantage of low levels of academic preparedness, and these students will still present a substantial challenge. As a result, it can be assumed that lack of academic preparedness presents a problem for at least some students in enabling programs.

[9] And note that, on an expanded understanding of academic preparedness, especially in the case of students in enabling programs, these will have to include not only learning support and development but also a wide range of other counselling and support services.

2.3 The Challenge of Academic Standards

Given the relatively high numbers of students likely to be attracted to an open entry enabling program, one of the challenges will be to maintain academic standards in the face of the likely higher levels of failure amongst these students, whether by attrition or failure. Some fear that the pressure of student failure will lead to the lowering of academic standards for successful completion, whether this be by implicit creep or by deliberate policy. As Husen puts it:

> Expanded enrolment almost always means increased spread of performance. Then the crucial problem … becomes what segment of the enrolment sets the standard? As long as the top segment is the standard-setter, those with inadequate preparation or without conspicuous intellectual interest … act only as somewhat cumbersome ballast (Husen 2012, p. 193).

The choice, then, will be whether to throw away the “ballast”, accepting a significant level of student attrition as a cost of the open entry strategy, or to strive to achieve levels of student success similar to those of a restrictive entry program; whether this be by reduction of the standards for “success” or by implementing measures to overcome the deficits of the less well-prepared students (see below).

This view assumes a simplistic dichotomy, however, between lowering academic standards or culling the less well-prepared students. In fact, as Middlehurst (2011, p. 24) points out, there are other options, including an improvement in the preparedness of the student cohort, improved student support mechanisms, better curriculum design and improved pedagogies.

The question then is what processes are in place to ensure the maintenance of standards. The rhetoric of maintenance of standards is a familiar one (e.g. Whiteford, et al. 2013, p. 300) and at the undergraduate level a sophisticated framework of regulation has been developed to prevent any ‘drift’ in academic standards (e.g. Middlehurst 2011, pp. 22–3; Shah et al. 2011; Whiteford et al. 2013). This type of regulatory regime involves a combination of *internal* processes (such as robust and critical processes of program approval and curriculum renewal as well as periodic program reviews) and *external* processes (such as external markers, professional groups enforcing accreditation standards, ‘league table’ approaches and the action of regulatory bodies (-such as TEQSA in Australia-). However, underpinning all such processes is the behaviour of the marketplace: employers make ongoing judgements of institutional quality through the decisions they make when hiring graduates, typically measured in terms of percentage of graduates employed six months after graduation (Ashby 2004, p. 68) or in terms of average graduate salaries (Shah et al. 2011, p. 269).

The situation is rather different with enabling programs, however: no detailed regulatory framework exists for a class of programs which does not entirely fit within the higher education landscape. Due to the nature of the Australian student fees system, a student undertaking a government-funded enabling program does not have to pay tuition fees or incur a debt to the government, unlike those who undertake degree programs; equally, those who successfully complete an enabling program do not receive an award recognised under the Australian Qualifications

Framework (AQF). Accordingly, successful students in the majority of enabling programs gain a right of entry (of some degree of assurance) only to an undergraduate program of the parent institution rather than to all Australian HEIs and quality assurance is essentially the responsibility of the HEI offering the enabling program. Internal regulatory processes vary widely according to the institution, ranging from the relatively informal (e.g. teaching staff shared between the program and undergraduate disciplines) to a complete coverage by the institution's quality assurance processes (as is the case for the UON OFP, for example). There is a general movement to increasing overview by the quality assurance system of the HEI, including external reviews of programs, along with an increasing recognition of the widening participation potential of enabling programs. Primarily, however, program quality, including academic standards on completion, is underpinned by the performance of graduates within the undergraduate degree programs of the relevant HEI, in terms of both student retention and grade performance. If academic standards in the program are slipping, this will become visible in decreased levels of success once the student enters into the undergraduate sphere.

As an example of this process, the major process underpinning academic standards within the UON OFP has been benchmarking, more or less formally, against performance in first year undergraduate studies at the University of Newcastle. Early work concluded that OFP students performed and were retained on a par with or slightly better than their undergraduate peers (Cantwell et al. 2001). There has been little formal monitoring of OFP entrant student performance at undergraduate level until relatively recently, with a comprehensive review of the performance of students entering from the university's enabling programs in 2010. More recently, the university's enabling programs have been included within the purview of the university's formal monitoring processes and internal data indicates that students entering UON from the OFP "persist and perform generally on par with non-enabling students" (Bennett et al. 2012, p. 146). Certainly at the upper levels of performance, the OFP prepares students well: noting that entrants via OFP make up around 12% of the overall student population, in 2010 11.9% of recipients of the University Medal (for outstanding academic achievement) were former OFP students and in 2011 the figure increased to 12.8% (ELFSC 2014). These figures suggest that the academic standard of OFP is appropriate in preparing students for success at undergraduate level.[10] The limited data from other institutions has tended to confirm this successful preparation (see Hodges et al. 2013, pp. 19–20).

In general, the evidence available tends to suggest that enabling programs are successful in preparing many of their students for undergraduate studies, albeit at

[10] Recent reporting suggests a less rosy picture, with a drop in both retention and performance of students from UON enabling programs in undergraduate programs. This may be due to slippage in academic standards; equally, however, it may be the result of a change in student strategies of course choice (with a poorer match between enabling courses and undergraduate program resulting in less adequate preparation) or a change in the demographic make-up of the programs, with students being generally younger and, according to anecdotal accounts, less strongly motivated. These results are undergoing further investigation. More widely, recent studies present a more mixed picture of student success in the sector; e.g. NCSEHE (2016), Shah and Whannell (2016).

the expense of a high rate of student attrition. To what extent that attrition is simply a consequence of the 'filtering' process involved in taking in students who are under-prepared for academic study and to what extent it is a failure – or, at best, a limitation – in the design and implementation of the programs is an urgent, and difficult, question that needs to be answered.

One point that is clear, however, is that the maintenance of the academic standards of enabling programs is important and that means to monitor them are available. What is required is a commitment to a continuing process of benchmarking of the standard of successful students against the standards of undergraduate study. A note of caution is necessary here: enabling programs are not undergraduate programs and the standards of evaluation appropriate to one are not automatically and easily transferable to the other (Hodges et al. 2013, pp. 16–32). This entails that appropriate benchmarking procedures need to be developed and implemented consistently across the sector.

2.4 The Challenge of Student Support

As Tinto and Engstrom put it: "Access without support is not opportunity" (Tinto and Engstrom 2008). If educational institutions are to admit students who are academically less well-prepared and they are going to demand that those students meet the same academic standards in order to graduate from the program that any student has been expected to meet without any compromise in these standards, those institutions must be prepared to offer services to help those students to become better-prepared so that they are able to meet those standards.

There are two major routes to addressing this need: building in extra support (for a targeted subset or for all students) and/or allowing an extended period for the students to complete the enabling programs. Neither solution is, of course, free of costs. Providing additional support costs the institution – it costs "substantially more to provide for students who come into higher education with a less solid educational experience" (Bekhradnia 2005, p. 31) – but both options also involve costs to the student.

The costs for the institution are many. The costs of providing extra support for students are obvious: extra staff for counselling and learning support roles, extra infrastructure to support those services – both material (in the form of offices, and consultation rooms, among others) and non-material (in the form of investment in professional development for teaching staff and online and personal booking systems to name a few)[11] – and all too often the need for investment in overcoming institutional resistance to such a change in the culture of higher education (Stuart 2005, p. 157). Much of this cost may be offset by additional special-purpose funding (e.g. Whiteford et al. 2013, p. 300) or by the avoidance of penalties – financial and reputational – for failing to meet widening participation targets, as Middlehurst

[11] Stuart (2005), p. 156.

(2011) and Whiteford et al. (2013) indicate. Nonetheless, and to whatever extent the costs can be offset in this way, the costs are real and will be greater for some HEIs than others, depending largely on the extent to which this increase in student support is a departure from their traditional role. It is clear that these institutional costs will be higher the larger the proportion of under-prepared students enrolled at a HEI and that they will be highest for institutions relying on the open entry model at the enabling level.

For the student, taking up any additional support, whether in the form of remedial courses or of individual remedial or counselling support sessions, while representing a potential long-term benefit, nonetheless demands an increase in workload (Lavin and Hyllegard 1996, p. 43). This added cost in itself has the potential to increase the rate of attrition or of failure, as students’ energy goes into the remedial work at the expense of the course-work proper which their better-prepared colleagues are already undertaking. In addition, this increase in workload is likely to be particularly difficult for the open entry program students, as they are far more likely to work part-time (or even full-time) to support themselves through their studies. Allowing students a longer time to complete their program also results in costs to the students, both the opportunity costs of being a student rather than an income-earner for the extra years involved (Lavin and Hyllegard 1996, p. 55) as well as the direct costs incurred living as a student for longer. In general, it can be expected that given a conscious up-front choice between taking on the extra costs and not being able to successfully complete the course, many students would opt to cover the extra costs but some might decide against doing so.

The difficulty of getting the students who need support to access it is well documented and can be particularly acute in enabling programs (Hodges et al. 2013, pp. 77–9; Perin 2004, p. 560). The reasons for this reluctance to take up the available student support services are complex and not well understood. Constructive and creative approaches are being explored within enabling programs but the problem, although pressing, is not simple. Some success has been noted in close embedding of support programs into the overall program and into the student experience but the results are, so far, limited (see Hodges et al. 2013, chapter 4 for an extended discussion of this issue). What is just as important is the question of the most cost-effective targeting of this support: resources devoted to students who are at high risk of drop-out regardless of the support available, perhaps because of lack of motivation, are not available to offer support to students to whom it might make a significant difference, such as those who are highly-motivated but (perhaps) challenged by a steep learning curve or a range of life-events (Hodges et al. 2013, p. 55).

There is no doubt that the costs of increased student support in open entry institutions will be significant, both for the students and the institutions, nor that it is both important and, for a variety of not well-understood reasons, difficult to persuade students to access this support. Efforts to respond to this need are substantive and often creative but limited in their effect not so much perhaps by the amount of investment but by the reluctance of students most in need of them to access them. This is the real current challenge of student support: what educational institutions need to do to provide the support is clear but what they need to

do to get students most in need of this support to access it is not at all obvious. Solving this problem is central to meeting the challenge of responding to student academic deficits by providing increased levels of academic support. However, both understanding the issues and providing effective student support services will involve substantial costs.

2.5 The Challenge of Multiple Discourses: Beyond the 'Deficit Model'

The dichotomy on which the above discussion rests is increasingly being challenged as based on a dated and politically and ethically loaded characterisation of non-traditional students entering HEIs, including those entering via open (or less selective) pathways, as entering with academic *deficits*. That is, they are perceived by the institution and/or its staff as not only different from the traditional student but also as *deficient* in comparison to 'real' students: the assumption is that it is the students who must change while the institutions have no need for change, other than perhaps the adding on of some alternative pathways and additional student support.

Butcher et al. (2012), for example, are scathing, finding "in the discourse of 'widening participation' an outdated, dangerous and self-defeating deficit model labelling a low-achieving, limited aspiration learner" (Butcher et al. 2012, p. 68). Similarly, Lawrence (2002) sees this picture as based on "the idea that there is one mainstream discourse [operative in the university] and that languages and literacy other than the dominant mainstream represent a deficit or a deficiency on the part of the students that possess them" (Lawrence 2002, p. 213). More generally, she argues that "the social and cultural capital of some groups … helps them endow their children with the cultural knowledge and discourses more in tune with mainstream university culture" (Lawrence 2002, p. 217) while the parents of "other groups" are less capable of doing so and "may even 'marginalise' them" (Lawrence 2002, p. 218). The deficit model places the responsibility for overcoming this squarely on the student while she argues that the HEI has (at least) an equal responsibility to change its culture and modes of discourse to allow the student to flourish (Lawrence 2002, p. 219).

Stuart (2005) encapsulates the two contrasting attitudes to increasing student diversity in higher education at play here:

a. The "deficit model": Students need to develop the necessary skills to succeed in higher education and, for the academically less well-prepared, this means remedial and other forms of learning support (Stuart 2005, p. 160); the assumption here being that "in order to secure standards, students need to fit into the curriculum with the understanding that they may need additional support" (Stuart 2005, p. 160).
b. Re-design of HE: Institutions need to change "to meet the needs of the new economy" which includes the need to "recognise that increasing the diversity of

student background" has strengths and can itself create "a dynamic culture embodying a multiplicity of sub-cultures, each imbued with their own discourses, literacies and practices" (Stuart 2005, p. 160 in Lawrence 2002, p. 220). This means a radical re-design of higher education (Stuart 2005, p. 161).

Such changes have been underway to some extent for some time. Stuart (2005) notes that there is a significant amount of what might be called 'middle level' change in HE institutions and culture, quoting Layer et al. (2003) who state that HEIs are increasingly offering "more flexible approaches to learning and are offering greater choice and flexibility with respect to attendance, mode of study and levels of engagement" (Stuart 2005, p. 159, quoting Layer et al. 2003, p. 7) and that these changes are increasingly widespread (Stuart 2005, p. 159, quoting Osborne 2003, p. 48). In Australia, changes are under way in structures designed around student needs and increased learning support (Stuart 2005, pp. 159–160) deriving from a focus on the first year experience and the design and implementation of "transition pedagogies" (Kift 2009).

Others argue that these 'middle-level' changes to HEIs will be insufficient to make a significant difference to the experience of non-traditional learners in higher education and that there is a need for more substantive institutional changes (e.g. Burke 2012; Lawrence 2002). Stuart, too, argues for a deep sector change to a participatory model which will "transform the academy" (Stuart 2005, p. 157). She recognises that such a change involves substantial costs, financially, socially and for those involved (Stuart 2005, p. 157) but warns that failure to act means that "the costs to society will be much greater" (Stuart 2005, p. 157). For Burke, this is a challenge to "reconceptualise widening participation as a project of transformation of social justice" (Burke 2012, p. 189).

The effect of such a transformation on enabling programs would be far-reaching, demanding a reconceptualising of the whole notion of enabling programs. This would include a radical change in pedagogy to better equip students to negotiate changes in the culture of HE. The ultimate result of such changes in enabling programs could see them becoming redundant as their role in allowing access to HE and of preparing for it would become a mainstream HE role.

A fuller account of this view is outside the scope of this chapter. However, it is a view with radical consequences demanding major changes in the culture and perceived mission of HEIs. As such, it will inevitably face a steep challenge to find acceptance in the face of an established system well integrated into the marketplace and, especially, into the current funding and quality assurance environment with its emphasis on the measurement of cost-effectiveness in short-term and clearly defined parameters. Deep transformations do not occur easily and will be met with the familiar charge of "dumbing down". The key will be to re-think the attitudes, skills and capacities that are necessary in the new digital economy and to demonstrate that such a transformation of HE will effectively contribute to the development of these competencies rather than hinder them. This is not a short-term proposition.

These challenges to the deficit model are not minor: they pose a substantive challenge to the status quo in HE. The risk in positing a utopian vision so far outside

what is currently conceivable is that it may have the effect of marginalising the voices of its proponents. Any change to the higher education landscape will involve high financial cost and a substantial risk that the transformation would stall part way against the resistance of the current investment in regulatory standards and structures before any substantial benefits would accrue. Nonetheless, such a critique demands attention.

3 Conclusion: The Question of Costs and Benefits

The central question for this discussion is whether the putative widening participation benefits of open entry are outweighed by the costs – personal, financial and social to students, institutions and the sector generally – of the implementation of such a strategy, centrally, but not uniquely, the costs of the high rates of student attrition which seem to be associated with this strategy.

The current situation is that there is a mix of open entry and a range of levels of restrictive entry options for students wishing to access higher education. In the absence of evidence to decide which option is better, a range of alternative pathways open to prospective students can be considered advantageous. However, there are some disadvantages also: the existing mix of entry models is accidental rather than strategic, the geographic distribution is haphazard and the availability of attractive pathways to prospective students is likely to be far from optimal.

The ultimate decision regarding what pathways to provide must be made on the basis of a full cost/risk/benefit analysis. These issues are interrelated and complex and to develop a full analysis will not be an easy task nor one which will be completed in the short term. This seems to indicate that the current situation is likely to be the best one available for some time with all its limitations but, also, its apparent strengths.

An analysis of which pathways are the more effective ones then becomes an urgent task. Some preliminary efforts have been made in this direction[12] but no answer has been found with a potential for its generalisation. This chapter has identified some of the complex questions which must be addressed in the process. Foremost among them is the question of quantifying the extent to which the open entry policy is effective at attracting non-traditional, especially low socioeconomic status, students who would not otherwise have accessed the program. Anecdotally, this seems to be the case; however, to the best of the author's knowledge, the benefits of this strategy have always been assumed but the question has, surprisingly, never been addressed even informally at an individual program level. This is a noteworthy omission which should be rectified.

The attack on the "deficit model" is a significant one which complicates this evaluation dramatically: if it is accepted, the costs of responding to it increase hugely, if less clearly; so too do the benefits. In the current climate, acceptance of

[12] Foremost is Clarke et al. (2000), submitted but never released.

this challenge perhaps seems unlikely but it must be recognised as questioning the whole process in the way that it is generally conceived.

The above discussion has highlighted some of the questions which require further investigation in order to provide the evidence base from which they can be answered. The challenges of open entry entail significant costs as well as opportunities but exactly what is involved in each is yet to be determined.

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Part III
Transitions from the Vocational to the Higher Education Sector

Chapter 9
Filling the Skills Gap in Australia – VET Pathways

Alan Beckley, Clare Netherton, and Tracy Barber

Abstract In 2008 the authoritative Bradley Report into education in Australia identified a skills gap in the overall workforce in the country which, if not addressed, would disadvantage the nation in terms of international trade and technological innovation and development. The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) set targets for investment in potential students who would not traditionally enter tertiary education; that is, mainly those from low socio-economic backgrounds. The Australian federal government administered grants for states and territories to fulfil education targets through the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships (HEPPP) funds. The subject of this paper is the Bridges to Higher Education (Bridges) program, a collaborative initiative provided by five Sydney universities working in partnership to deliver widening participation projects in New South Wales. As part of the Bridges program, two universities- University of Technology Sydney and Western Sydney University- worked together on the Pathways/VET projects which developed several hundred pathways and many workshops for potential students. Two case studies are included to illustrate that significant outcomes were achieved through the project which was externally evaluated by Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler (KPMG).

In 2015, University of Western Sydney changed its name to Western Sydney University.

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1 Introduction

This chapter describes an innovative widening participation program that focused on vocational education and training (VET) and the construction of pathways for VET learners to progress to higher education (HE). The program involved two universities – the University of Technology Sydney and Western Sydney University – working in partnership with their local, public VET organisations, known as Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutes. The aims of the program were to develop and implement processes and activities to facilitate the successful transition of TAFE students to university and to give them the support they needed to succeed in their university studies.

The TAFE Pathways program was a key element of a broader collaboration with three other Sydney universities – Macquarie University, Australian Catholic University and the University of Sydney – aiming to increase participation, retention and academic outcomes of students from target equity groups in HE, with a particular focus on students from low socioeconomic status (LSES) backgrounds. Known as *Bridges to Higher Education*, this overarching five-university partnership received $21.2 million of funding through the Australian Government's *Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program* (HEPPP), to effect change in university enrolment patterns (Department of Education n.d.). HEPPP funds a variety of widening participation programs involving partnerships across the school, VET and HE sectors (Beckley 2014; Beckley et al. 2015; Munns et al. 2013; Peel and Beckley 2015) to attract and retain students from communities under-represented in HE (Department of Education 2014). The specified objectives of Bridges were: improving academic outcomes; increasing awareness, confidence and motivation towards HE; building teacher and community capacity, and increasing capacity to access HE (Bridges to Higher Education 2015). The program was externally evaluated by management consultancy KPMG (2015).

The chapter begins by describing the societal context which provided the impetus and also the capacity to undertake the TAFE Pathways approach to widening participation. It outlines the attractions for building and strengthening pathways, the limitations and challenges of this strategy, both in terms of achieving wider participation and in supporting students to make a successful transition between VET and university as well as the experiences of students who undertake these pathways. Two case studies of initiatives within the UTS and WSU TAFE-university programs are provided. These case studies illustrate the broader objectives and strategies within this context.

2 The Imperative for VET Pathways to Widen Participation in University Education

VET and HE in Australia are separate sectors in the education field (O'Shea et al. 2012). Pathways provide for movement between these two distinct sectors and, while this chapter is focussed on the potential widening participation benefits of the VET-university transition, it is important to also note the flow of student traffic in the opposite direction, with university graduates undertaking VET qualifications to strengthen specific vocational skills and potential employability. Between 2010–2013, at UTS on average 11% of commencing students entered through a VET pathway (University of Technology Sydney 2015, p. 56), while at WSU the number of such students reached 18% (Ellis 2014, p. 6). Entry is usually provided by diploma or advanced diploma qualifications, though a small number of courses also accept the lower Certificate IV qualification. In addition to those qualifications providing access to university, students may receive credit for their VET studies towards their degree. The credit received varies according to the 'fit' between the two qualifications, from credit for a particular subject, through to a full year of credit with students entering the second year of a university course.

VET entry pathways provide a valuable route for people who for a variety of reasons are unable to access university education. This includes those who have experienced disrupted education, come from disadvantaged backgrounds, and from families who have not traditionally participated in HE. Research has also established that low participation rates in university by people from LSES backgrounds do not necessarily stem from barriers to enrolment but could be linked to poor achievement at secondary school (Chowdry et al. 2013). VET pathways are a valuable access route to higher education for young people who completed year 12 of their high school education and have the ability to study at HE level but did not receive a high enough ATAR[1] score in the Higher School Certificate (HSC) to either gain entry or access their particular choice of course. Many people regard the use of ATAR scores to select the future for a young person as a far too simplistic process (Faruqi 2016, February 3). A practical example of using a structured personal portfolio to enable entry to university rather than rely solely on the ATAR score is the introduction of the Big Picture Education Australia program (http://www.bigpicture.org.au/).

There has, however, been a relationship of distrust and misunderstanding between the VET and university sectors (Weadon and Baker 2014). In more recent years, relationships between the two sectors have increasingly improved and the divisions have become blurred through organisational collaboration and the proliferation of institutions that offer both VET and higher education qualifications (Cram 2008; O'Shea et al. 2012; Weadon and Baker 2014).

[1] Australian Tertiary Admission Rank – see: http://www.uac.edu.au/undergraduate/atar/

These positive developments can be understood within the context of political, economic and social impetus in more recent years to increase educational participation and attainment across the population through greater ease of movement and collaboration across the VET and HE sectors. While the Australian government has advocated for nearly 30 years a ‘seamless movement’ between the sectors (Smith and Kemmis 2014), the recommendations and objectives of the authoritative Bradley Review (Bradley et al. 2008) catapulted Australian universities into a new era of equity targets that also impacted upon VET-university transition. Key to this were the objectives specified in the Bradley Review and adopted by the Australian Government that by 2020, 40% of 25–34 year old people are to have at least a bachelor-level qualification, and 20% of higher education enrolments are to be students from low socio-economic status backgrounds (p. xviii); this is a combination of what Brink (2009, p. 4) identified as *increasing* participation and *widening* participation. In terms of widening participation, the objectives were justified because demographic data showed that only 15% of HE students were from LSES localities, whereas this group comprised 25% of the Australian population.

The Bradley Review identified “clearer and stronger pathways between the sectors in both directions” as one of the key characteristics of an effective tertiary education and training system (2008, p. 179). The report panel specified that, although distinct sectors are important, ‘it is also vital that there should be better connections across tertiary education and training to meet economic and social needs which are dynamic and not readily defined by sectoral boundaries’ (2008, p. 180). Bradley urged the Australian government to act because in the acquisition of business skills, “Australia is losing ground” resulting in a “great competitive disadvantage unless immediate action is [to be] taken” (2008, p. xi). Growing the pathways between VET and HE is a strategy for upgrading skills and qualifications and supporting lifelong learning. This strategy is also evident in the Australian Qualifications Framework (Australian Qualifications Framework Council 2013), with its emphasis upon greater movement between the two sectors, and maximising advanced standing as recognition of prior learning.

Most education practitioners accept that the identification of pathways and advanced standing/accreditation agreements is beneficial certainly for students but also for VET and HE institutions (Smith and Kemmis 2014). Well-recognised pathways are a useful tool to illustrate study progression routes both for domestic and international students. The availability of these pathways can assist recruitment and enrolment procedures and aid understanding of the complex entry requirements (Bandias et al. 2011). In addition, Smith and Kemmis (2014) identified that pathways can reduce the cost of education to the public purse by avoiding duplication of costs.

The development of VET-university pathways as a strategy for widening participation was affirmed by research into other approaches under consideration at the time, such as providing access through developing new enabling or foundation programs. The Lomax-Smith Base Funding Review (Lomax-Smith et al. 2011) queried the benefits of enabling courses as pathways to HE. The review suggests enabling courses as *remedial courses* are effective in retaining students, but that the role filled

by pathway *enabling courses* 'may be diminishing or provided more effectively by other models' and notes the benefits of a VET pathway in providing an exit qualification for students and counting as credit towards university study. There are a number of risks in terms of effectively targeting and recruiting low SES students through enabling programs: they typically have high course attrition rates of around 40–50%, and the more an enabling program eases up entry requirements in order to facilitate entry for a wider range of potential students, the higher the base rate of attrition is likely to be (Hodges et al. 2013, p. 25, p. 52). The 2014 Kemp Norton report similarly states there are 'more risks and fewer benefits with enabling programs than other courses' (Kemp and Norton 2014, p. 75).

3 Issues with Widening Participation Through VET to University Pathways

While the benefits are acknowledged, there are significant challenges in creating pathways between VET and university that contribute to both widening participation of students from LSES backgrounds, and facilitating effective transition. An over-representation of students from LSES backgrounds and other equity groups in VET and an under-representation of these groups in HE is often linked to the equity aspect of entry pathways from VET to HE (Bandias et al. 2011; Griffin 2014; McNaught 2013). However, research demonstrates that VET students from LSES backgrounds are more likely to complete lower level certificates (Certificate III) while students from medium or high socioeconomic status backgrounds are more likely to complete the higher Certificate IV, Diplomas or Advanced Diplomas, thus enabling greater access to VET-HE pathways (Catterall et al. 2014; Griffin 2014; Wheelahan 2009). Also, where LSES VET students do enter HE with a lower certificate their retention and success rates are significantly lower than those of VET students with higher level certificates (Catterall et al. 2014). These are issues that universities need to address if pursuing the TAFE pathways option for widening participation. One approach recently adopted at UTS as part of the TAFE Pathways program (see Case Study 2) is the awarding of bonus points towards final ATAR scores to year 12 students who complete a TAFE delivered Vocational and Education and Training (TVET) Health Services Certificate III. Other options that could be explored include expanding university outreach aimed at building aspiration for university study to the lower level qualifications.

Another issue is addressing the perennial argument around "dropping standards" by accepting students into HE courses with lower entry requirements. This has largely been de-bunked; widening participation programs should be viewed as "optimising talent and tapping potential" (Brink 2009, p. 5) rather than lowering standards. Brink (2009) who was (among many other distinguished roles) the vice-chancellor of a large city university in England said it is necessary to differentiate entry standards from exit standards. If the university is providing adequate support for all students and a high quality program, Brink found there were equal exit

standards for all students from whatever background by advocating a process to turn 'weak starters into strong finishers", and that there is "now strong evidence for the claim that sufficient value-add measures can result in students with lesser entry standards attaining perfectly acceptable exit standards" (Brink 2009, p. 7). Therefore, to establish greater equity, multiple transition processes must be considered for entry thresholds for example, from school or work to VET, from lower to higher VET qualifications and from VET to HE (Griffin 2014).

UTS and WSU student data indicates that, while there are some gaps in levels of performance between students entering university via a VET pathway and all students, overall VET students are performing well. At UTS the success rate[2] for VET pathways students in 2014 was 80.4% compared with 90.8% for all students (University of Technology Sydney 2015, p. 62) and at WSU in 2013, 77.5% compared with 76.88%. The attrition rate[3] for VET pathways students at UTS in 2014 was 11.1% compared with 6.9% for all students (University of Technology Sydney 2015, p. 60), and at WSU in 2013, 28.3% for VET students (Ellis 2014, p. 10) compared with 12.48% for all commencing bachelor students (Source: DIICCSRTE 2013). Providing greater support to VET students in their transition and ongoing learning can further reduce these gaps in performance between VET and other students, as demonstrated in the case studies reported here.

4 VET Students' Experiences of Transitioning to University Study

Developing pathways between VET and universities requires understanding the experiences of students who follow these pathways, in order for these pathways to be effective and to provide the appropriate types of support. The *Bridges to Higher Education* program devised a carefully constructed and comprehensive approach to evaluating all its projects, which included all individual project holders undertaking evaluation with the support and guidance of a centralised team comprised of evaluation specialists, and in conjunction with an external evaluator (KPMG). In addition, further research was undertaken for certain projects, including TAFE pathways.

Findings from the evaluation and research at both UTS and WSU indicate that TAFE students overall have a positive experience of their transition to university. WSU research found that transitioning students saw the new learning context as a positive factor and responded to challenges with enthusiasm and resilience (Catterall et al. 2014). UTS undertook survey research of students who had entered through a

[2] Success is defined as the Equivalent Full Time Student Load (EFTSL) passed by students in a given year, calculated as a proportion of all EFTSLs attempted (University of Technology Sydney 2015, p. 46).

[3] Attrition is defined as the headcount of students who do not return to study after being enrolled in the previous year, expressed as a percentage of total headcount in the previous year (University of Technology Sydney 2015, p. 46).

TAFE background and similarly found that TAFE students reported positive experiences in relation to adjustment and expectations (Barber et al. 2015). The UTS research affirmed that TAFE pathways provide students with the confidence and capability to progress to university, with one student commenting that "I attribute my success to the base they gave me and I will be forever grateful for their belief in me", and another stating that:

> *With the skills provided to me at TAFE, I am able to confidently ask questions and publicly discuss my thoughts on a certain topic in class with little to no problems, also I have made a lot of close friends. Overall TAFE heavily influenced my university experience positively.* (Barber et al. 2015, p. 8)

Their VET experience "gave them the encouragement, motivation and confidence to continue studying", a sense of direction for their future and provided familiarity with the university course content (Barber et al. 2015, p. 7). In particular those students who most strongly identified with their TAFE background reported significantly higher levels of adjustment and fulfilled expectations.

While these self-reported experiences are encouraging, the research, however, also identifies difficulties for TAFE students in the process of transitioning and undertaking university study, and that there is a need to provide more support (Ambrose et al. 2013). Factors affecting students' experience of transitioning from VET to university studies and their capacity to succeed have been well documented, and include personal, pedagogic, relational and cultural elements.

On a personal level, TAFE pathways students are more likely to be older, working full-time and have family responsibilities (Watson 2008). These factors are linked with greater risk of attrition, as students struggle to cope with the demands of managing and meeting their commitments while adjusting to the complexities of the new university learning environment.

The receipt of credit for previous study, while heralded as an advantage of the TAFE pathway to university study as it reduces study time, load and cost, also comes with potential pitfalls. Students who receive credit that enables them to transition into the second year of their degree may be missing orientation, social immersion and induction into their disciplinary culture (Ambrose et al. 2013; Cameron 2004).

Another key factor are the differences in aims, learning and assessment approaches between the VET and HE sectors, specifically the vocational focus and competency-based training and assessment processes in the VET sector compared with the theoretically focussed curriculum model in HE (Watson 2008; Wheelahan 2007). Wheelahan (2007) suggests that the competency-based approach of VET actually prevents students from accessing styles of reasoning represented in the disciplinary knowledges of university education. Academic literacies issues also impact on some students' capacity for success at university (Watson 2008), including skills in information locating, referencing, interpreting and usage; high level writing skills; note taking; volume and complexity of reading material; and comprehension of discipline-specific technical prose.

A greater focus on student autonomy and self-regulation at university can be a further challenge for TAFE students who are accustomed to a more individual and supportive TAFE environment (Weadon and Baker 2014; Wheelahan and Ovens

2005, as cited in Aird et al. 2010). Transitioning TAFE students describe their TAFE teachers as "more involved with the students than lecturers and tutors at university, they take more responsibility for student performance" which "leads to feeling respected" (Barber et al. 2015, p. 8). WSU students similarly noted the "perceived superior support for learning at TAFE through more face-to-face contact with teachers, teacher-prepared notes and general educational and personal assistance" (Catterall et al. 2014, p. 247). This difference in support is exacerbated by the larger classes at university and greater difficulty in connecting with both staff and with other students, "a lack of relationship, causing fear, anxiety and loneliness, which negatively affects performance and engagement" (Barber et al. 2015, p. 8).

Contributing to the challenge of transition for many TAFE students are perceived higher academic standards and levels of expectations at university (Cameron 2004). There is a perceived hierarchical social stratification with university education seen as more rigorous than vocational, and university students possessing higher intelligence and academic abilities. These perceptions impact upon transitioning TAFE students' identity with many feeling inferior to the mainstream student coming straight from high school, and many experiencing a "feeling of social dislocation and alienation, resulting in loneliness and a failure to thrive" (Goldingay et al. 2013, p. 173).

5 Pathways Projects – Case Studies

The two case studies below collectively demonstrate strategies and activities for effectively addressing the issues outlined above in making the transition to university study. The shared objectives of the Western Sydney University and UTS Pathways Projects were: building new and strengthening existing pathways and relationships between VET training providers and Universities, increasing students' awareness, confidence and motivation towards pursuing these pathways and providing academic support to enable students to successfully transition from VET to university while remaining in education to the successful conclusion of their studies.

5.1 Case Study 1: Western Sydney University Pathways/VET Project

5.1.1 Project Aim

This project was intended to increase students' knowledge, build aspirations, prepare students and expedite opportunities through accepted and recognised channels for students to access and succeed at university. The target audience for the project

was students studying at VET institutions such as TAFEs and UWS College[4] and also high school students in locations that have LSES backgrounds.

5.1.2 Project Objectives and Activities

The project comprised of presentations, seminars and campus tours providing information, advice and guidance for prospective VET students and those with the ability to continue or move on to higher education studies at university. According to research carried out at Western Sydney University (Ellis 2014), a large percentage of students entering the university progress through the VET route. Having studied and passed a VET Diploma, they apply for and are offered a place at university, in many disciplines commencing at the second year of study.

Much of the Pathways work at Western Sydney University was building and negotiating agreements for a framework of articulation and accreditation routes; this was pioneering work between the VET and HE sectors. The Pathways project also developed and disseminated information resources about pathways to university and how to complete an application for advanced standing. Information was produced in hard copy, presentations and the Western Sydney University's Tertiary Education Pathways and Partnership webpage.

Further innovative work in the Pathways project was completed in 2014 with the two projects of *Diploma Plus*, and *Let's Talk Uni*. The former is an enhanced student learning program incorporating university learning methods and graduate attributes as part of a TAFE Diploma. Launched in 2014, *Diploma Plus* combines vocational and academic elements as part of a TAFE Diploma of Community Services Work. Students gain a broader skill set designed to serve them well in aspects of their career, and facilitate a smoother transition to university. The latter project, *Let's Talk Uni*, was delivered at university campuses to VET students. It consisted of a 1 day seminar that was designed to support students with their transition to university by increasing academic preparedness, managing expectations and creating a sense of belonging for students in a seminar setting.

5.1.3 Project Outcomes

During 2014, 172 students attended the WSU Pathways project *Let's talk Uni* university preparation seminar for VET students. This presentation is designed to engage and prepare students for university, and student feedback shows that participation impacts positively on student confidence and sense of belonging at university. One student commented that "I am less nervous about uni now and hope I am accepted into UWS more than ever" (TAFE student, WSU Pathways/VET project, 2014) and another stated:

[4] Renamed in 2015 'The College'

> *Thank you for all the helpful tips I got on the day. And thanks to all the staff for being so welcoming and easy to talk to. It made me walk away from this event and think I would really love to come to uni.* (TAFE student, WSU Pathways/VET project, 2014).

Students also described feeling less anxious about their prospective transition from the VET to university environment following on campus experiences:

> *I am now less fearful and insecure about going to university. I still have concerns around the transition to a different learning environment and different assessments, but since I was at the open day I know that there is support available for me to access* (TAFE student, WSU Pathways/VET project, Bridges 2015, p. 26).

Effective dissemination of resources to promote TAFE to university pathways is also a critical outcome of the UWS Pathways/VET Project. The project was responsible for authoring, maintaining and promoting the WSU Tertiary Education Pathways and Partnership webpage, a valuable student resource that received 164,000 views in 2014.

5.1.4 Project Impact

Significant progress in relation to academic outcomes has been made with *Diploma Plus*. In its first year, *Diploma Plus* has engaged 130 students, with 30% (n = 39) submitting an application to university. Evaluation showed that 80% (n = 104) of students surveyed either strongly agreed or agreed that attending the lectures associated with the year-long university style research unit had encouraged them to consider university as their next step. One student highlighted the academic writing and study skills gained during the program and shared that "*Diploma Plus* has opened my eyes to the opportunities out there" and "definitely made me aspire towards university" (Bridges 2015, p. 27).

5.2 Case Study 2: TAFE to UTS Pathways in the Faculty of Health

5.2.1 Project Aim

The TAFE Pathways Project in the UTS Faculty of Health aims to increase awareness and potential of current TAFE students to study at university, to support processes around enrolment of TAFE pathways students at UTS, and to continue to support these students once they have enrolled in the Bachelor of Nursing and have commenced their studies at UTS.

5.2.2 Project Objectives and Activities

The project's activities are aligned with UTS Widening Participation Strategy themes:

- *Building Educational Aspiration and Attainment* by providing TAFE outreach sessions in TAFE classrooms, facilitating on campus visits and learning experiences for TAFE students and teachers, and sharing learning and teaching resources with TAFE teachers to improve awareness of and preparedness for university study.
- *Widening access* to university by promoting an established pathway between the TAFE Certificate IV, Diploma, or Advanced Diploma of Nursing (Enrolled Nursing) and the UTS Accelerated Entry Bachelor of Nursing course. This pathway awards advanced standing for previous TAFE studies and enables students to complete the course in 2 years of full time study at UTS. Access has been further widened through a scheme awarding bonus points towards final ATAR scores to year 12 students who complete a TAFE delivered Vocational and Education and Training (TVET) Health Services Certificate III.
- *Providing support for transition, retention and success* through targeted orientation week activities, a first year student representative initiative designed to improve student-staff communication and a range of academic support initiatives for students and teaching staff.

5.2.3 Project Outcomes

The TAFE outreach aspect of this project has increased students' awareness, confidence and motivation towards higher education. Between 2013 and 2015, over 400 TAFE students participated in Faculty of Health TAFE outreach sessions. Nearly all students surveyed (97%, n = 288) agreed that the sessions increased their awareness of what university offers and diverse pathways to university. TAFE students commented that these sessions "definitely encouraged [them] to look into uni" and left them feeling "excited" and "inspired". Students found the sessions "useful and helped [them] understand what opportunities are open and what road to take" and helped them to "feel more confident that [the course] is the right thing for me". TAFE teachers also reported benefits of the "hopeful journey to university" presented by the outreach program, and positive outcomes of the on campus professional development opportunities, including "learning several new approaches and strategies that will be very useful".

The project has also increased student capacity to access higher education. The enhanced promotion of the pathway between VET qualifications and the Accelerated Entry Bachelor of Nursing course has increased student numbers. The second year of the project witnessed a 46% increase in student enrolment into the course, from 69 students in 2013 to 101 students in 2014, accompanied by a 5% increase in the student retention rate, from 78% to 83%. These increases reflect both enhanced

awareness of opportunities to TAFE students to transition to university, and support available for these students once they commence their university study at UTS.

Improved awareness of academic support available to students once enrolled at UTS has been achieved through a range of initiatives including additional workshops and assignment support sessions. Students expressed the benefits of increased awareness of support services, suggesting the project “played a massive role in helping with our transition from work/TAFE to university”. All commencing students underwent academic language screening, involving an online assessment, and resulting in feedback including recommendations about how to access support appropriate for their ability and learning needs. A Written English Language Framework guidelines tool for assessment grading was also developed and implemented, with teachers describing it as “easy to use”, leading to “better consistency within marking” and allowing for better access to “timely and clear feedback to students” about their writing.

The First Year Representative (FYR) Intiative implemented by this project has improved dialogue between staff and students. The growth of student leaders within this strategy has built student capacity and attributes, particularly in relation to communication and collaboration. Students commented on the benefits of “seeing tangible change from the Faculty in response to student concerns, networking with staff and other students, and being informed and guided on the best way to tackle issues or concerns”. The FYR initiative showed students “how to raise issues in a productive way” and have ongoing dialogue about issues faced in their transition year from TAFE into university.

5.2.4 Project Impact

Academic staff members are increasingly aware of the unique attributes and strengths of students with a VET background, are becoming mindful of the challenges of transitioning to university from TAFE, and as a consequence are integrating support into their learning and teaching practices. Within the broader curriculum, transitional activities to support these students have been embedded into core subjects and are therefore not reliant on future project funding.

6 Conclusions

As demonstrated above, there are social, educational and economic benefits of widening participation through the construction of effective pathways from VET to university; pathways that both widen access, and set students up to succeed once they undertake university study. VET pathways are a second chance opportunity for learners with disrupted education, including those from LSES backgrounds and other under-represented groups, and serve a valuable role in diversifying the university population beyond the traditional middle-high socioeconomic status

background school leaver cohort. Developing these pathways is acknowledged as a strategy for simultaneously achieving both social and economic outcomes, providing a strategy for upgrading the population's skills and a structure for supporting continuous education. Both university and VET sectors benefit, with well-recognised pathways to university also strengthening the appeal of VET as a study option by providing a useful tool for illustrating study progression routes. VET pathways compare favourably with other non-school access pathways such as enabling programs, both economically and in terms of transition to university and success rates.

VET pathways function most effectively when there is a close fit between the VET and university qualifications, information provision and confidence building prior to commencement of university study, intentional design to facilitate student transition and ongoing learning support for students. Both UTS and WSU case studies demonstrate the effectiveness of VET pathways when these strategies and processes are put in place, in terms of students' levels of adjustment, fulfilled expectations, learning outcomes and overall quality of their university experience.

The development and maintenance of VET pathways does however require high degrees of resourcing and collaboration within and between the VET and university sectors. The additional resourcing provided to UTS and WSU through Australian government HEPPP funding was integral to this work taking place. Both organisations recognise that sustaining the initiatives will require an independence from this external funding and hence the embedding of VET pathways into mainstream core business.

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Chapter 10
The TAFE/VET Pathways Student Experience in Higher Education

Craig Ellis

Abstract Pathways to higher education widen access and provide an opportunity for TAFE/VET students to undertake further study by providing an alternate means of entry to university. In the context of the increased focus by governments on widened and larger participation in higher education and pathways, research in this study documents and analyses statistics pertaining to the participation and performance of TAFE/VET pathways students at a multi-campus Sydney metropolitan university over the period 2010–2014 inclusive. Of particular interest is the comparative experience of pathways students to their non-pathways peers; their likelihood of completion, levels of academic achievement, and some of the factors that influence these. A major finding of this study is that, irrespective of all other potential influencing factors, pathways students' academic performance significantly improves the more units of study they successfully complete at university. A significant implication of these findings is that a far greater focus needs to be directed towards programs supporting TAFE/VET pathways student's initial transition to university.

1 Introduction

Pathways to higher education are beneficial at many different levels. For students, pathways widen access and provide an opportunity for further study be it through raising students' awareness of opportunities to progress to higher education, or by providing an alternate means of entry. For institutions in the TAFE/VET sector,

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pathways may be used as a promotional device to enhance the attractiveness of their offerings. At the level of tertiary institutions, pathways provide a pipeline to supplement the supply of students beyond the secondary school leaver cohort.

The need to provide opportunity and access to higher education through a diverse range of "clear and easy pathways" and to strengthen partnerships between vocational and higher education providers in order to expand access and aspirational achievement was noted in 2002 by the then Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST 2002). In a critical review of the Australian higher education system, and the particular need for it to better serve students from low socio-economic, regional and Indigenous backgrounds, Bradley (2008, p. 179) identified "equal value [being] given to both VET and higher education" as a key characteristic of an effective tertiary education and training system.

Pathways to higher education also feature prominently in State and Commonwealth government education reform plans.[1,2] The NSW State government in particular cites strengthened pathways between the TAFE/VET and higher education sectors as key to meeting its prescribed target for participation in tertiary education of 44% of 25–34 year olds holding a Bachelor level award or higher by 2025.

In light of the increased focus by State and Commonwealth governments on wider and larger participation in higher education and pathways, research in this study documents and analyses statistics pertaining to the participation and performance of TAFE/VET pathways students at a multi-campus Sydney metropolitan university over the period 2010–2014 inclusive. Of particular interest is the comparative experience of pathways students to their non-pathways peers; their likelihood of completion, levels of academic achievement, and some of the factors that influence these.

Among the major findings of this research, I show that TAFE/VET pathway student attrition rates are on average 13-times greater than for the general commencing student population; longer term retention rates are comparable to those for non-pathways students; and pathways student GPA's significantly increase the more credit points of study are completed at the institution. A significant implication of these findings is that a far greater focus needs to be directed towards programs supporting TAFE/VET pathways student's transition to university.

The remainder of this chapter is structured as follows. Section 1 provides a background to the subsequent research by considering the distribution of TAFE/VET pathways students throughout the higher education sector, and the broad and narrow Fields of Education pathways students enrol in at the institution. The following section identifies and discusses the relative attrition and retention rates of pathways and non-pathways students and some of the factors that contribute to significantly greater pathway student attrition rates. A comprehensive analysis of the factors that contribute to pathways student's Grade Point Average is conducted next. The chapter concludes by presenting recommendations for strategies to support commencing TAFE/VET pathways students.

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[1] Upton, G. (2012). *NSW Government Review of Tertiary Pathways*.

[2] *Senators to hear first-hand the benefits of spreading higher education opportunities*. Media Release. The Hon. Christopher Pyne MP. 17 November, 2014.

2 Pathways Students' Destinations

Among Australian studies, Bradley (2008), Harris et al. (2005), and Keating (2006) in particular each note the significant increase in the number of students gaining admission to higher education on the basis of prior TAFE/VET studies since the early 1990s. Figures provided by Bradley (2008) show an increase from 5.8% in 1994 to 10.1% in 2006 in commencing domestic TAFE/VET pathways students. Despite the general consensus that both the raw number and proportion of pathways students has significantly increased in the last three decades, in so far that pathways students are relied on to self-identify for reporting purposes, questions remain as to the accuracy of data pertaining to pathways student numbers (Harris et al. 2005; Moodie 2004) and, not surprisingly, estimates of the numbers and proportions of these vary by author.

Compared to Bradley (2008), Karmel (2008) reported that in 2004 the proportion of students with a prior VET qualification was 16.1% of all commencing students and that in 2006, 9.6% of commencing students had a prior TAFE qualification. Noting that not all TAFE/VET students in higher education gain admission on the basis of their prior studies and that this also contributes to reported figures generally underestimating the actual number of students in higher education with a prior TAFE/VET award, Wheelahan (2009) reported the proportion of pathways students to be 10.1% of commencing domestic enrolments in 2007. Australia-wide the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) reported that in 2010, 7.0% of commencing domestic equivalent full-time students in higher education entered their currently enrolled course with a completed TAFE/VET qualification. An additional 1.4% of commencing domestic equivalent full-time higher education students in 2010 was reported to have an incomplete VET course upon entry to university (NCVER 2012).

Data pertaining to the number of commencing undergraduate students using a TAFE/VET qualification as their basis of admission to higher education at Australia's 39 universities is provided in Table 1 below.

Ranked in descending order of number of admissions, the table highlights significant variation in the numbers of pathways students being admitted. Among the recognised dual-sector universities[3] in 2013, Swinburne University of Technology and Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology themselves accounted for approximately three-quarters of pathways student enrolments in that group. Towards the bottom of the Table, it is observed that the combined number of commencing TAFE/VET pathways students in Group of Eight (Go8) universities[4] (2,187 students) was lower

[3] 'Dual-sector' universities are defined as those that have a substantial student load in both VET and higher education, and that engage in research and award higher research degrees. Australia's five recognised dual-sector universities in 2013 were Charles Darwin University, Federation University Australia (formally University of Ballarat), Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Swinburne University of Technology, and Victoria University.

[4] Comprising Australian National University, Monash University, University of Adelaide, University of Melbourne, University of New South Wales, University of Queensland, University of Sydney, and University of Western Australia, the Go8 is a coalition of research-intensive Australian universities.

Table 1 Commencing Students Using a TAFE/VET Award as Basis of Admission. (Australian universities 2013)

	2013
Swinburne University of Technology	3,875
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology	3,489
Charles Sturt University	2,282
Griffith University	2,199
Victoria University	1,803
Western Sydney University	1,785
Deakin University	1,758
University of Newcastle	1,712
Edith Cowan University	1,379
University of Tasmania	1,346
University of Wollongong	1,333
Queensland University of Technology	1,160
University of Southern Queensland	1,028
Australian Catholic University	1,002
Southern Cross University	986
La Trobe University	854
University of South Australia	836
University of Technology Sydney	800
University of Canberra	780
Central Queensland University	765
Monash University	713
University of New England	705
University of the Sunshine Coast	631
Murdoch University	629
Curtin University of Technology	580
James Cook University	522
University of New South Wales	482
Charles Darwin University	395
Macquarie University	390
Federation University Australia	354
Flinders University of South Australia	327
University of Sydney	313
University of Queensland	276
University of Adelaide	192
University of Melbourne	147
University of Notre Dame Australia	121
Bond University	70
University of Western Australia	35
Australian National University	29

Source: Australian Government Department of Education, University Statistics Section
Reference Number: 14–506 Ellis

than that for Swinburne University of Technology alone. The disparity in the number of pathways enrolments between the Group of Eight universities and 'non-Go8' in particular is noted by Wheelahan (2009) as evidence of ongoing stratification within the Australian higher education sector. Counter to this point, it is observed in Table 1 that among the Go8, Monash University enrolled only 36 fewer pathways students than the two 'smallest' dual-sector universities combined, namely Charles Darwin University and Federation University Australia (749 pathways students in total). That dual-sector universities and Go8 neither consistently enrol the most and least numbers of TAFE/VET pathways students respectively is evidence that whilst stratification of the Australian higher education sector is indeed prevalent, the formation of university networks[5] alone does not fully account for the uneven distribution of TAFE/VET pathways students among universities.

2.1 Commencing TAFE/VET Pathways Students at the Institution

Having considered the distribution of TAFE/VET pathways students throughout the higher education sector, we now turn to consider some characteristics of commencing pathways students at a multi-campus Sydney metropolitan university. Data employed herein and for the remainder of this study is as recorded at the Autumn semester census in each year and includes statistics on pathways student's prior education, commencing course and enrolment status, details of any Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), and their Grade Point Average (GPA). Summary enrolment statistics for commencing undergraduate and TAFE/VET pathways students for the period 2010–2014 are presented in Table 2 below.

On average, 18.0% of commencing undergraduate students at the institution in the period 2010–2014 gained admission via a prior TAFE/VET qualification. Of the 9,650 total commencing students with a TAFE/VET qualification in the period, 46.7% entered with an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Level 5 qualification; 24.8% with a prior AQF Level 4; 17.3% with a prior AQF Level 3; and only 11.2% with a prior AQF Level 6 qualification.

In the period 2010–2014, on average 61.9% of total commencing undergraduate TAFE/VET pathways students at the institution enrolled in an undergraduate course in the same broad Field of Education (FoE) as their TAFE/VET award. The highest proportion of commencing students with a prior TAFE/VET award in the same broad FoE (97.1% on average) was in the field '07 – Education'. The lowest proportion (35.4% on average) was in '09 – Society and Culture'. On average, more than two-thirds of TAFE/VET pathways students in the fields '02 – Information Technology', '03 – Engineering and Related Technology', '08 – Management and Commerce', and '0909 Law' enrolled in an undergraduate degree in the same broad

[5] In addition to the Go8, other Australian university networks are the Australian Technology Network; Innovative Research Universities, and the Regional Universities Network.

Table 2 Commencing Undergraduate Students by Field of Education, 2010–2014[a]

	2,010		2,011		2,012		2,013		2,014	
	VET	Total	VET	Total	VET	Total	VET	Total	VET	Total
01 – Natural and Physical Sciences	164	1,844	225	1,862	196	1,905	151	1,963	265	2,263
02 – Information Technology & 03 – Engineering and Related Tech.	204	1,154	222	1,390	165	1,350	181	1,413	241	1,438
0603 – Nursing	470	899	491	954	296	1,054	70	1,105	175	1,112
07 – Education	60	63	100	108	41	81	45	0	0	0
08 – Management and Commerce	675	3,011	580	2,376	398	2,139	411	2,019	459	1,946
09 – Society and Culture	186	927	261	1,089	230	1,364	233	1,226	368	1,643
0909 – Law	73	606	93	583	73	527	87	574	104	505
10 – Creative Arts	233	1,981	344	2,311	295	2,145	377	2,431	408	2,114
	2,065	**10,485**	**2316**	**10,673**	**1,694**	**10,565**	**1,555**	**10,731**	**2,020**	**11,021**

[a]Excludes courses that did not include at TAFE/VET intake in the given year

FoE as their TAFE/VET award. These findings contrast strongly with those of Harris et al. (2006) who reported that among students moving from TAFE/VET to higher education, less than 37% continued in the same broad FoE. Harris and Rainey (2012) similarly reported moves from TAFE/VET to higher education of only 40% in the same FoE. They attributed these changes to shifts in students' area of interest and the explicit choice by TAFE/VET students to undertake vocational studies in fields with higher employment prospects with the explicit goal of funding higher education in a different, preferred field. Drawing from the experiences of relatively small samples of South Australian students (n=49 and n=69 respectively), Harris et al. (2006) and Harris and Rainey (2012) identified and categorised a number of discrete non-linear pathways from TAFE/VET to higher education.

Indicative of the concentration of pathways students across few disciplines, commencing enrolments in the fields '08 – Management and Commerce' (26.1%), '10 – Creative Arts' (17.2%), and '0603 Nursing' (15.6%) accounted for 58.9.7% of all TAFE/VET pathways students in 2010–2014. These findings are comparable to those reported by Bandias et al. (2011) and Moodie (2012) who identify management and commerce, arts, and nursing as disciplines with amongst the highest proportion of TAFE/VET pathways students.

Disaggregated by gender, 44.2% of commencing students with a prior TAFE/VET qualification were male and 55.8% female during the period 2010–2014.

3 Attrition, Retention and Transition from TAFE/VET to Higher Education

Student attrition and retention is of particular interest and concern when considering the first-year experience of TAFE/VET pathways students. When viewed together, both measures provide useful insights into how long after commencing higher education students make the decision to leave. 'Attrition' is herein defined as the percentage of commencing students at the start of a teaching session who do not have an 'Enrolled' course attempt status after the HECS census date for that teaching session.[6] That is to say, attrition represents the number of commencing students who do not continue their studies beyond the first 4 weeks of semester. This is as opposed to 'retention', which measures the number of commencing students who do not return to their studies in the following year.[7] Commencing student attrition and retention rates at the institution for the period 2010–2014 are provided in Tables 3 and 4 respectively.

[6] Note that this definition differs from that used by the Department of Education, that defines the attrition rate for year x as the proportion of students who commenced a bachelor course in year x who neither complete nor return in year $x+1$.

[7] Formally, the retention rate for year x is defined as the number of students who commenced an undergraduate course in year x and continue in year $x+1$ as a proportion of students who commenced an undergraduate course in year x and did not complete the course in year x.

Table 3 Commencing Undergraduate Attrition (%) by Field of Education, 2010–2014[a]

	2010		2011		2012		2013		2014	
	VET	Total	VET	Total	VET	Total	VET	Total	VET	Total
01 – Natural and Physical Sciences	−48.1	−2.2	−34.6	−2.7	−40.8	−3.4	−23.0	−2.9	−52.5	−5.2
02 – Information Technology & 03 – Engineering and Related Tech.	−50.0	−2.8	−49.1	−0.7	−41.9	−4.3	−25.5	−3.7	−44.4	−3.4
0603 – Nursing	−32.6	−1.7	−27.2	−5.9	−66.8	−4.2	−42.3	−6.2	−30.9	−4.2
07 – Education	−55.0	−22.4	−32.0	−5.8	−31.7	−2.8	-	−0.0	-	−3.8
08 – Management and Commerce	−56.0	−3.4	−52.0	−2.8	−56.0	−3.6	−28.0	−2.0	−45.5	−2.0
09 – Society and Culture	−48.1	−2.2	−34.6	−2.7	−40.8	−3.4	−23.0	−2.9	−49.5	−4.1
0909 – Law	−63.9	−4.6	−46.3	−3.7	−45.3	−3.3	−28.8	−3.8	−46.2	−3.5
10 – Creative Arts	−55.5	−1.9	−64.2	−3.2	−57.2	−4.2	−31.5	−6.0	−44.9	−3.0
	−51.1	**−3.0**	**−45.1**	**−2.7**	**−45.8**	**−3.6**	**−28.3**	**−3.6**	**−44.8**	**−3.7**

[a]Excludes courses that did not include TAFE/VET intake in the given year

Table 4 Commencing Undergraduate Retention (%) by Field of Education, 2010–2014[a]

	2010–2011		2011–2012		2012–2013		2013–2014		2014–2015	
	VET	Non-VET	VET	Non-VET	VET	Non-VET	VET	Non-VET	VET	Non-VET
01 – Natural and Physical Sciences	80.9	79.5	74.1	80.2	75.2	79.2	74.3	77.8	75.5	79.0
02 – Information Technology & 03 – Engineering and Related Tech.	82.3	74.3	77.1	75.6	75.6	76.9	81.7	73.0	76.5	76.7
0603 Nursing	85.7	82.8	82.5	82.3	74.5	84.2	81.5	84.4	84.8	83.8
07 – Education	74.0	88.9	74.3	87.9	74.7	88.2	100.0	88.5	95.0	86.6
08 – Management and Commerce	81.6	80.7	79.6	79.8	79.6	77.7	78.1	79.9	75.3	75.6
09 – Society and Culture	76.7	78.4	80.1	80.4	81.7	80.3	77.2	81.1	76.2	81.0
0909 – Law	83.1	73.8	84.5	75.6	77.9	75.7	90.4	82.0	82.6	82.2
10 – Creative Arts	82.3	79.6	74.6	78.3	76.6	78.6	75.4	79.2	76.0	78.0
	80.8	**79.8**	**78.4**	**80.0**	**77.0**	**80.1**	**82.3**	**80.7**	**80.9**	**80.4**

[a]Excludes courses that did not include TAFE/VET intake in the given year

Figures in Table 3 show that attrition rates for commencing TAFE/VET pathways students in the period 2010–2014 are on average 13 times greater than mean institutional attrition rates. The mean attrition rate for TAFE/VET pathways students is −43.0%, compared to −3.3% for the total student population over the period. Attrition rates among pathways students are highest in the arts discipline and lowest in natural and physical sciences.

Data pertaining to commencing undergraduate retention in Table 4 shows the mean retention rate for TAFE/VET pathways students over the period 2010–2011 to 2014–2015 (79.9%) is lower than for non-TAFE/VET qualified students (80.2%), although the difference is not significant. On average, retention rates for TAFE/VET pathways students over the period 2010–2011 to 2014–2015 were highest in the law discipline (83.7%) and further were significantly higher than for non-TAFE/VET qualified students in the same discipline (77.9%). Mean TAFE/VET pathways student retention was significantly lower than for non-TAFE/VET qualified students in the education discipline (83.6% and 88.0% respectively). This is despite the fact that the mean TAFE/VET pathways student retention in the discipline was not significantly different than for the whole of institution non-TAFE/VET qualified student cohort.

Altogether, results from Tables 3 and 4 strongly suggest that commencing TAFE/VET pathways students are significantly more likely to have difficulties transitioning to degree studies; yet those who do remain enrolled in their first year at the institution are equally as likely to be retained as non-TAFE/VET qualified students. One implication of this finding is that TAFE/VET pathways students are far more likely to decide to leave higher education studies in their first month at university than are other student cohorts.

Relative to previous research into pathways student retention, the findings presented herein compare favourably with Phillips KPA (2006) and Young (2007) both of whom found that pathways students are just as likely or even more likely than other student cohorts to be retained in higher education. The finding contrasts strongly with that by Long et al. (2006) who reported pathways students as being over 10% more likely than non-pathways students to leave higher education after their first year. Ertl et al. 2010 likewise reported having a TAFE/VET background impacts negatively on retention rates.

That significant barriers to successfully transitioning from TAFE/VET to higher education exist is a common theme in the literature pertaining to pathways students' experiences of higher study. Among some of the common factors identified as impeding the transition to higher education are 'institutional' and 'personal'.

In a survey of TAFE/VET to Higher Education articulation pathways and the experiences of Queensland TAFE/VET students, Blacker et al. (2011) discuss various factors identified as impacting upon TAFE/VET student transition to university. Among the 'institutional' factors discussed were differences in teaching and learning styles – e.g. theoretical versus applied knowledge, standards-based versus competency-based learning, unclear expectations surrounding assessment – and differences in staff-student interactions and relationships. Such institutional factors are consistent with those previously identified by Gardner (2002), also in review of Queensland TAFE/VET to higher education pathways, who concluded that the barriers resulting from these factors made the transition to higher education "more difficult and time consuming". That a significantly higher proportion of pathways students decide to leave within the first month of commencing in higher education should prompt institutions who enrol pathways students to give serious consideration to how they manage expectations of pathways cohorts in particular.

'Personal' factors identified by Blacker et al. (2011) included difficulties with time management relating to study versus personal commitments and financial hardship relating to the cost of study in higher education (see also Aird et al. 2010; Byrnes et al. 2011; Dickson 2000; Upton 2012). It is unclear, however, to what extent these personal factors influence pathway students' decision to leave within the first month. Anecdotal evidence from the institution suggests that some pathways students who leave prior to the census date are reluctant to acknowledge the real impact of institutional factors in their decision making.

3.1 Drilling-Down Attrition

In addition to the above described institutional factors known to contribute to TAFE/VET pathways student attrition, Tumen et al. (2008) also identified insufficient academic progress and low cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) as contributing factors in a pathways students' decision to formally – or otherwise – cease their enrolment.

The cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) is a numerical score, weighted by credit points or hours of study, of the mean of grades received by a student in all courses and programs attempted up to a certain point in time. These are often used by employers to rank students on the basis of their academic performance and by institutions to assess the eligibility of students for academic prizes and for entry to higher degree studies. The GPA assigns lower numerical scores to lower grades and higher scores to higher grades. Therefore, the higher the GPA, the higher the level of academic achievement. GPAs for Australian tertiary education institutions are typically calculated on a 4- or 7-point scale. Given, however, that both grading scales and the range over which GPAs are measured varies across institutions, these are not directly comparable between different institutions. The GPA in this study is measured over a range of 0 to 7 points per course attempt, with a GPA = 4 representing an average 'Pass' grade (i.e. 50/100).

Mean GPAs for Enrolled and Non-Enrolled TAFE/VET pathways students at the institution are provided in Table 5. Consistent with the findings of Tumen et al. (2008), the Table shows that the GPAs of TAFE/VET pathways students in the 'Non-Enrolled' group are significantly lower than those of enrolled pathways students ($\alpha = 0.05$) for each year in the period 2010–2014.

Table 5 Enrolled and Non-Enrolled Pathway Student Mean GPA, 2010–2014

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Enrolled	3,870	3,480	3,841	3,593	3,627
Non-Enrolled	2,193	1,866	2,361	2,820	2,890

Mean attrition rates by AQF Level are presented in Table 6. Consistent with data presented in Table 3 for attrition by Field of Education, attrition rates for all AQF Levels of qualification presented in the Table are significantly lower in 2013. Mean attrition rates for pathways students with prior AQF Level 3 to AQF Level 6 qualifications range from −45.5% (AQF Level 3) to −39.4% (AQF Level 6). There is no consistent evidence that TAFE/VET pathways students with higher AQF Levels of qualification (i.e. AQF 5 and AQF 6) have lower attrition rates than those with lower AQF Levels of qualification (i.e. AQF 3 and AQF 4).

Table 6 Attrition Rates (%) by Level of Qualification, 2010–2014

	AQF 6	AQF 5	AQF 4	AQF 3
2010	−54.1	−50.3	−47.8	−38.3
2011	−39.2	−39.1	−38.6	−34.5
2012	−44.7	−47.5	−61.2	−66.7
2013	−28.0	−30.0	−29.4	−31.6
2014	−31.1	−43.9	−48.0	−56.3

Reporting on University of Notre Dame Australia pathways students admitted to higher education via an AQF Level 4 qualification, McNaught (2013) noted attrition rates as high as 60% for this group. In contrast, attrition rates for AQF 4 pathways students at the institution are typically significantly lower than reported by McNaught.

Disaggregating attrition by sex, male TAFE/VET pathways students typically show higher rates of attrition during the period 2010–2014. Despite there being approximately 17% fewer commencing male than female TAFE/VET pathways students in the period 2010–2014, the mean male pathways student attrition rate (44.0%) slightly exceeded that for commencing female pathways students (41.6%).

Disaggregated by origin, attrition rates for TAFE/VET pathways students whose qualification was awarded by a TAFE are typically lower than for pathways students originating from private providers. Mean attrition rates for TAFE and private provider pathways students over the period 2010–2014 are 40.9% and 44.5% respectively.

4 Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA)

Mean GPAs for TAFE/VET pathways students and non-TAFE/VET qualified students for the period 2010–2014 are presented in Table 7 below on page 179. Disaggregated by Field of Education, GPAs for TAFE/VET pathways students are shown to be significantly lower ($\alpha = 0.05$) than for non-TAFE/VET qualified students in each FoE and in each year.

In light of this finding, a number of factors are examined to identify the significance of determinants of TAFE/VET pathways students' GPAs. The factors considered herein are the amount of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) awarded; the broad FoE of the TAFE/VET qualification; the number of credit points of study achieved at the institution; the institution from which the TAFE/VET qualification was gained; and the AQF Level of the TAFE/VET qualification. Using these factors, the following hypotheses are examined applying an unpaired (Welch's) t-test for the difference between two means ($\alpha = 0.05$):

1. GPAs for pathways students with 20 credit points or less RPL > GPAs for pathways students with 80 credit points or more RPL
2. GPAs for pathways students whose TAFE/VET qualification is in the same broad FoE as their higher education degree > GPAs for pathways students whose TAFE/VET qualification is in a different broad FoE to their higher education degree
3. GPAs for pathways students who have achieved 80 credit points or more of study at the institution > GPAs for pathways students who have achieved less than 40 credit points of study at the institution
4. GPAs for pathways students whose qualification was awarded by a TAFE > GPAs for pathways students whose qualification was awarded by a private VET provider
5. GPAs for pathways students entering with an AQF Level 6 qualification > GPAs for pathways students entering with an AQF Level 4 qualification

A summary of the outcomes of this testing for TAFE/VET pathways students enrolled post-census is provided in Table 8 below on page 180.

Table 7 Undergraduate Student Mean GPA by Field of Education, 2010–2014[a]

	2010		2011		2012		2013		2014	
	VET	Non-VET	VET	Non-VET	VET	Non-VET	VET	Non-VET	VET	Non-VET
01 – Natural and Physical Sciences	3,201	4,216	3,695	3,959	3,573	4,039	3,808	4,087	3,579	4,079
02 – Information Technology & 03 – Engineering and Related Tech.	3,586	4,348	3,324	4,070	3,617	3,975	3,382	3,982	3,484	4,101
0603 – Nursing	3,609	4,911	2,424	4,479	3,313	4,411	2,250	4,874	2,900	4,676
07 – Education	4,030	3,167	3,257	4,245	3,788	3,893	-	4,177	-	3,871
08 – Management and Commerce	3,230	3,900	2,759	3,893	2,186	4,039	2,637	3,968	2,712	3,956
09 – Society and Culture	3,940	4,243	3,670	4,243	3,885	4,291	3,116	4,167	3,653	4,243
0909 – Law	2,729	4,247	2,606	4,111	2,548	4,023	3,081	4,193	2,848	4,153
10 – Creative Arts	3,835	4,163	3,487	3,986	3,114	3,959	3,241	3,900	3,429	4,012
	3,566	**4,419**	**3,153**	**4,123**	**3,253**	**4,079**	**3,074**	**4,169**	**3,229**	**4,136**

[a]Excludes courses that did not include at TAFE/VET intake in the given year

Table 8 Determinants of TAFE/VET Pathway Student GPA, 2010–2014

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
1	Accept	Reject	Accept	Reject	Reject
2	Reject[a]	Reject	Reject[a]	Reject	Reject[a]
3	Accept	Accept	Accept	Accept	Accept
4	Reject	Reject	Accept	Accept	Accept
5	Reject	Reject	Reject	Reject	Reject

[a]Cognate discipline GPA < non-cognate discipline GPA at 0.05 level

The relationship between TAFE/VET pathways student performance and the amount of RPL that they are awarded upon entry to university has received little attention in the academic literature. Nonetheless, the limited findings available suggest no perceivable difference in performance upon completion (as measured by GPA) and the amount of RPL awarded at commencement (see Blackman et al. 2007). Despite the limited factual evidence, anecdotally at least, some academics have reservations about awarding advanced standing for 'their' courses.

As shown in Table 8, there is no consistent evidence of either a beneficial or detrimental relationship between the amounts of RPL awarded and average academic performance of TAFE/VET pathways students. The hypothesis that the GPAs of pathways students with 20 credit points or less RPL is greater than the GPAs of pathways students with 80 credit points or more RPL is accepted for the 2010 and 2012 commencing cohorts, and is rejected otherwise (no significant difference). Mean GPAs for both pathways groups (i.e. ≤20CP and ≥80CP) are provided in Table 9.

Table 9 Mean GPA v. Amount of Recognition of Prior Learning Awarded, 2010–2014

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
≤20 CP advanced standing	3,998	3,370	4,163	3,688	3,661
≥80 CP advanced standing	3,745	3,395	3,787	3,421	3,521

TAFE/VET pathways students who have undertaken prior studies (albeit at a lower AQF Level) in the same cognate discipline as their enrolled course of study at university should theoretically outperform students whose prior training is in an unrelated discipline. In the context of the Australian Qualifications Framework, course learning outcomes are scaffolded in terms of disciplinary knowledge and generic skills, the latter of which are non-disciplinary and transferable across disciplines.[8] When outcomes are properly scaffolded, students from cognate disciplines should therefore bring with them both knowledge and skills and students from non-cognate disciplines, skills only.

The hypothesis that GPAs for pathways students whose TAFE/VET qualification is in the same broad FoE as their higher education degree are greater than for pathways students whose TAFE/VET qualification is in a different broad FoE is rejected in all 5 years 2010–2014. Whilst there is no significant difference in mean GPAs for the two groups (i.e. same broad FoE and different broad FoE) in the 2011 and 2013

[8] AQFC (2013). Australian Qualifications Framework. Second Edition. January.

pathways cohorts, for the 2010, 2012 and 2014 cohorts mean GPAs for pathways students from non-cognate disciplines are in fact greater than for those whose TAFE/VET qualification is in a cognate discipline. The results suggest that the transferability of generic skills from TAFE/VET to higher education is at least important, if not more, as the transferability of disciplinary knowledge. Mean GPAs for both pathways groups are provided in Table 10.

Table 10 Mean GPA v. Similarity of Broad Field of Education (FoE), 2010–2014

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Same broad FoE	3,837	3,426	3,822	3,441	3,420
Different broad FoE	4,117	3,611	4,354	3,758	3,914

The hypothesis that GPAs for pathways students who completed 1 year or more of equivalent full-time study in higher education (≥80 CP) are greater than for pathways students who have completed less than one semester (<40 CP) is supported by the argument that the more units of study the students successfully complete, the more accomplished they become at performing in a higher education environment as opposed to a vocational one. The hypothesis is conclusively supported by the fact that mean GPAs for pathways students with ≥80 credit points of study at the institution are highly significantly greater than for pathways students with <40 credit points of study. Mean GPAs for both groups are provided in Table 11.

Table 11 Mean GPA v. Number of Credit Points Completed in Higher Education, 2010–2014

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<40 CP completed	2,043	1,915	1,517	2,594	2,099
≥80 CP completed	4,185	4,442	4,229	4,651	4,325

Numbers of students enrolled at private VET providers have doubled in the 5 years to 2013 to 537,600 enrolments. Over the same period, enrolments at TAFE have fallen from 1.25 million in 2009 to 1.19 million in 2013 (NCVER 2014). In 2010 the proportion of TAFE pathways student enrolled post-census at the institution was 86.0%. By 2014 this figure had fallen by more than 15% to 70.5%. In the context of these facts and the recent public enquiry into the operation, regulation and funding of private VET providers (see Commonwealth of Australia 2015), the comparative performance of TAFE versus VET student cohorts is examined.

As shown in Table 8, there is only inconsistent evidence that pathways student performance (as measured by mean GPA) is dependent on their institution of origin, TAFE or private VET provider. That mean GPAs for TAFE pathways students are significantly greater than for students from private VET providers in the last 3 years of study period is worth noting and provides justification for cohort tracking of pathways students from different providers. Whether this result is owing to varying standards within and across TAFE versus VET providers, or is simply reflective of the dramatic increase in proportion of private VET pathways students over the period requires further research. Mean GPAs for TAFE pathways and private provider pathways students are provided in Table 12.

Table 12 Mean GPA v. Institutions of Origin, 2010–2013

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
TAFE	3,899	3,494	4,036	3,728	3,795
Private provider	3,831	3,322	3,474	2,952	3,221

Levels contained within the Australian Qualifications Framework define the relative complexity and depth of student achievement according to their Level of qualification (Level 1 – Level 10). By definition, students with lower Level qualifications will have less breadth and depth of knowledge, skills and the application thereof than students with higher Level qualifications. As shown in Table 8, the hypothesis that GPAs for TAFE/VET pathways students commencing higher education at the institution with an AQF Level 6 qualification are greater than for pathways students with an AQF Level 4 qualification is rejected for each year in the study period. Despite therefore expected differences in the complexity and depth of pathways students' achievement and the relative 'gap' between their TAFE/VET qualification and their higher education degree (i.e. AQF 4 v. AQF 7 and AQF 6 v. AQF 7 respectively), this is not evident in comparative mean student performance. This finding appears in contrast to McNaught (2013) who reports that University of Notre Dame Australia pathways students with an AQF Level 4 qualification only were over-represented in the 'lowest performers' in the University's Post Entrance Literacy Assessment testing process. Mean GPAs for TAFE/VET pathways students with AQF Level 6 and AQF Level 4 qualifications are provided in Table 13.

Table 13 Mean GPA v. AQF Level of Qualification, 2010–2013

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
AQF 6	3,780	3,507	3,717	3,045	3,515
AQF 4	4,059	3,696	4,055	3,592	3,764

5 Recommendations and Concluding Remarks

Seamless pathways to higher education are widely recognised as being fundamental to State and Commonwealth education reform plans. Understanding the barriers to pathways students' transition to higher education and appreciating the factors that ensure their long-term success is therefore critical to increased and sustained growth in higher education participation. Research in this study identifies that commencing TAFE/VET pathways students are on average to 13-times more likely to leave higher education within the first month, than the general commencing student population. For pathways students who are retained beyond the end of their first year, the single most significant factor to future success in higher education is past success in higher education. Both of these findings appear to be independent in particular, of

the AQF Level (3 to 6) of the TAFE/VET qualification used to gain admission to higher education. That is to say, there is no consistent evidence that TAFE/VET pathways students with lower AQF Level qualifications are any worse prepared for tertiary study than those with higher Level qualifications. Nor are pathways students who transition to higher education in a different FoE any worse prepared than students who continue in the same FoE as their prior TAFE/VET qualifications.

In the main, however, many of the findings herein are indicative of a high degree of diversity among what is traditionally viewed as a discrete student cohort. The inconsistency of some findings with respect to pathways students' relative performance, in particular those findings in relation to the impact of RPL and students' origin (TAFE or private provider) highlights the need for adaptive and flexible strategies to support discrete cohorts within the commencing TAFE/VET pathways student group.

That evidence in this study indicates a significant proportion of TAFE/VET pathways students who enter higher education are making the decision – formally or otherwise – to cease further study within the first 4 weeks of commencement raises important questions as to the timing of activities designed to aid their transition. Specifically, 'o-week' activities (the week prior to commencement) may be too late for this cohort. Rather a formal process should be adopted whereby introduction and preparation seminars for pathways students who have been made conditional offers of place to higher education institutions should be conducted and continued from the time conditional offers are first made. Cooperatively organised with TAFE/VET providers, higher education institutes and disciplinary academic staff from both sectors, such activities ought to assist pathways students to understand the differences between the TAFE/VET and university learning environments and make them more confident about their impending transition. Noting the aforementioned apparent heterogeneity of the TAFE/VET pathways cohort, disciplinary based content would ideally be specific to the broad FoE into which students are transitioning, be this the same or different to their TAFE/VET studies. Specific information as to expectations around academic literacies in the field, in particular in nursing and law, would be one example where heterogeneous groups in the pathways cohort could benefit from bespoke transitional activities.

An alternate pre-admission strategy is to provide opportunities for potential future pathways students to formally engage in learning at a partner higher education institute, with an aim to transition pathways students to university during their TAFE/VET studies. In consultation with TAFE/VET providers, partner higher education institutes could allow pathways students in the final session of their TAFE/VET studies concurrent enrolment in a non-award course(s) at their institute, hence enabling potential pathways students to experience the myriad of differences between the two sectors and the demands of higher education in 'real-time'.

Whichever the approach(es) adopted to transitioning pathways students into higher education, however, it is imperative – as has been noted herein and by other researchers previously – that the TAFE/VET and higher education sectors work together to initiate, develop and continuously improve pathways students' outcomes.

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Chapter 11
Seamless Segues from Polytechnic to University: A New Zealand Case Study of a Dual Provider Partnership

Peter Richardson, Cath Fraser, and David Lyon

Abstract The higher education sector in New Zealand traverses quite an array of provision and provider models. They encompass universities, institutes of technology and polytechnics (ITPs), private training establishments (PTEs), and wānanga (a publicly owned tertiary institution that provides education in a Māori cultural context). There are also multiple provider agreements based on which introductory courses and entry level qualifications from one institute receive credits through recognition of prior learning, and ensure enrolment, or contribute to higher level qualifications awarded by another.

This chapter describes 20 years of experience in a pathway program offering management and computing degrees in a range of specialisations, with students commencing study at an ITP and progressing to university through a guaranteed credit arrangement - a unique model within the New Zealand tertiary education system. Integrated teaching teams, campus, library, online platforms, marketing and calendar planning mean that there is a strong element of "social exchange" (Haar and Brougham 2012). This chapter discusses the challenges and strategies associated with delivering these pathway programs, against a backdrop of formal agreements between dissimilar tertiary organisations, close industry and local business engagement, meeting national Tertiary Education Commission priorities, a focus on quality, and ongoing review and evaluation of the practice. Practitioner research offers evidence of the value students see in the arrangements that have been forged as well as in the transfer into the workplace of content and skills developed during study.

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1 Introduction: Key Players in the Qualification Pathway

Higher education environments are transforming rapidly, responding to a host of internal and external factors, and to the needs and aspirations of various stakeholder groups – most particularly the students and providers as the front-end participants, the government and their agencies as funders and policy-makers, and the employers/industry/professional associations as 'recipients' of graduates. In such a landscape of shifting fault lines, many institutions are searching for new, accessible routes to remain relevant, recognised and renowned within their community.

There are a number of drivers in the tertiary education sector: the need to support an increasingly diverse student body, the focus on employability as a graduate outcome, and even 'turf protection', where smaller regional institutions partnering with larger metropolitan organisations can offer their students pathways to externally awarded qualifications and so prevent a competing provider from setting up a satellite campus. Pathway programs offer benefits for both parties. For students, inclusive, introductory certificate and diploma-level qualifications offer a strong subject foundation, with often smaller class sizes and more personalized learning. In addition, degree and post-grad qualification-conferring organisations subsequently receive students who have been assisted in their transition to higher learning and supported in acquiring the requisite study skills, and who have learned the discourse and processes of academia. Within the institute of technology and polytechnic (ITP) sector, this has been achieved through strategic positioning and partnership, in university pathway provision.

1.1 The Learners at Tertiary Institutions

Where once higher education was the preserve of the "semi-elite", it is now available to the "semi-mass" (Nunan et al. 2000, p. 87), so that student populations comprise an unprecedented socioeconomic and cultural diversity. The evolution to open entry to higher qualifications means that educational institutions now have large cohorts of non-traditional students: mature students as well as early school-leavers, students from ethnic and cultural minorities, 'second-chance learners' who did not achieve well in their secondary schooling, 'first-in-family' learners, international students and students with disabilities (including learning difficulties) (Stanley et al. 2011). Some students are the so-called 'net-generation' or 'millennials' who are "the first true digital natives of the Information Age" (Sternberg 2012, p. 572), characterised by their multiple media literacy, their social connectedness and their comfort in virtual worlds (McCrindle Research 2012).

With the recognition of this new demographic, comes a growing emphasis on the importance of effective transitions to the "exciting but daunting" (Cook and Leckey 1999, p. 159) world of academia. Various reports note "international concern at the failure of a considerable and growing number of young people to make an effective transition from secondary schooling to postsecondary education and training" (e.g. Manukau Institute of Technology 2011), with a recent New Zealand study showing that, from 1998 to 2003, 33 percent of the equivalent full-time student (EFTS) allocation was taken up by students who dropped out in their first year of study (Zepke et al. 2005). There is a considerable literature devoted to identifying strategies which can assist the process of learner assimilation and adaptation into, through and beyond higher education (see, for example, Lynch et al. 2006 and Vaughan 2003). However, the dual-provider university pathway described in this chapter must certainly be one of the most effective.

1.2 Tertiary Education Providers

Every tertiary education institution, regardless of type, size, setting or specialty, will have its unique culture born of tradition, shaped by those who have passed through its doors. But for many, there will be a growing tension between wanting to preserve this character and meeting post-millennial demands which include globalisation, economic sustainability, currency and knowledge creation (Moutsios 2009). Then, too, there is the need to stay abreast of competitors who offer the same or parallel qualifications, and may encroach on market share with either satellite campuses, or online offerings. Sunal et al. (2000) suggest that students are ill-served when institutions engage in "turf conflicts" (p. 1) and consciously, or unconsciously, blur the differences and distinctions between alternate programs within a field or sector. A worse effect can result from misinformation and misdirection about alignment since they can lead to students believing that they have done all that they need to do in order to succeed and have a pathway, only to discover that a set of factors (wrong decision about course selection, inadequate preparation for that course, stressful and unsupported transitions, among others) has made success problematic. At its worst, says Middleton (2011), this can lead to disengagement and withdrawal, and the long-term loss of that student from higher education in general.

In New Zealand, a growing response to these issues by tertiary education institutions has been to work strategically and selectively with other organisations to craft an effective and appropriate pathway that will benefit all parties. The model described in the next section of this chapter is an example of a pathway in which two different types of providers – a university and an ITP – have 'played to their

strengths' to provide a structured and scaffolded transition option into a four-year degree qualification. Many authors (e.g. Vaughan 2003) have noted the importance of relationships, particularly for young people, when making the transition to higher education, and the value of introductory programs which allow for some 'personalization', or a sense that each student is seen as an individual, with services which can respond more directly to the diverse needs of individuals rather than imposing uniform solutions on all people (Keamy et al. 2007). As a smaller, regional New Zealander ITP, Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology's (TOM) Diploma in Business (NZ Dip Bus) provides just this type of environment, with class sizes from 20 to 100, but averaging under 50 students – quite different from most first-year university theatres. Then, after 2 years of acclimation, the University gains students who have had the opportunity to develop maturity and social coping skills, alongside academic capabilities and 'soft skills' such as time management, information literacy and technological ability (Haar and Brougham 2012).

1.3 National and Regional Imperatives Regarding Tertiary Education

New Zealand's Ministry of Education (MOE) (2007) also considers personalising learning as "central to transforming our education system" (p. 26) via a 'top-down' range of government strategies and initiatives to ensure that the learner is at the heart of the education system and that all students are "to learn and achieve personal excellence, regardless of their individual circumstances" (p. 5).

Following this directive, the Government's most recent Tertiary Education Strategy 2014–2019 (MOE 2014) specifically calls for a more "outward facing" and "high-performing" (p. 2) tertiary education system, with strong links to industry and the global economy. The economic outcomes sought include employment, relevant skills and knowledge for labour productivity, and better access to skilled employees for business. In many ways, the coupling of an ITP, with its focus on applied and vocational learning plus strong local business community connections, and a university, with its internationally regarded Management and Information Technology degrees, is the ideal package to deliver these outcomes.

The Bay of Plenty region in New Zealand is supported by an economic development organisation, *Priority One*, established in 2001 by the Tauranga and Western Bay of Plenty business community in partnership with the sub-region's local authorities. The manifesto *Bay of Plenty Tertiary Intentions Strategy 2014–2019* (Priority One 2015) brings together the collective vision of a number of agencies, providers, community organisations and industry/business. The objectives set out in the manifesto are to increase tertiary education participation through a focus on collaborative leadership, transitions, innovation, international education and campus development, achieved through partnership. The university pathway between TOM and the University of Waikato has been one of the models, and remains an integral component, of this strategic plan.

1.4 Employers, Stakeholders in Tertiary Education

At a national, regional and institutional level, there is an emphatic and overt focus on employability as a graduate outcome. It is increasingly recognised that in a complex workplace, with many industries in flux, subject-specific knowledge acquired through tertiary studies will rapidly become outdated. The skills employers are seeking in today's graduates relate to attitudes, values and motivation. They include skills for lifelong learning, information literacy, problem solving and critical thinking, working autonomously, alone and in groups. These are not skills in a vacuum, rather, they are firmly aligned to end use: graduates must be 'fit for purpose' in the greater global workplace. Experts in the field, such as Professor Geoff Scott (2015), discuss the 'work ready plus' factor, which includes being:

- Sustainability and blue economy (nature-based, sustainable technologies) literate
- Change implementation savvy
- Creative and inventive not just 'regurgitative'

This mix of practicable and cognitive attributes is particularly well fostered in an educational pathway which combines the complementary strengths of two different types of educational cultures and environments: a polytechnic and a university, working in tandem, and in accord.

2 History and Development: The Partner Organisations

2.1 Origins and Typologies

The University of Waikato was initially established as the Hamilton branch of Auckland University in 1960 and then gained the status as an independent university in 1965. Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology (TOM) began life as the Bay of Plenty Community College in 1982; then, the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic (BoPP) in 1988, and the current entity in 2016. All universities and polytechnics in New Zealand are publicly owned and operated.

At the undergraduate level the principal qualification offered by universities in New Zealand is a degree. While many universities also offered undergraduate diplomas, as either discrete qualifications or stepping stones to degrees, this practice is now less common and almost all students entering university for the first time at an undergraduate level would commence study towards a degree. By way of contrast, the most common entry points to an ITP were principally certificates or diplomas but more recently this has also included degree level study.

Within the New Zealand context there are currently eight universities and 18 ITPs – in addition to two colleges of education, three wānanga (indigenous universities), and approximately 650 private training establishments (PTEs). The universities

are located in the larger cities that also have at least one ITP. By way of contrast, many ITPs are regionally based in smaller urban communities. While the number of universities and university campuses has been stable over recent years, the number of ITPs is shrinking, with smaller regional polytechnics merging with larger ones or with another of a similar size. By way of example Aoraki Polytechnic merged with Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology on 1 January 2016 and the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic and Waiariki Institute of Technology merged on 1 May 2016. One consequence of having fewer, but larger ITPs has been an increasing focus on degree level education as well as the more traditional certificates and diplomas. Another consequence is a division in the sector with one group of ITPs defining themselves as the 'Metros' while the others are considered regional providers. Alongside these movements is an increasing regional focus of universities (drawing students into major population centres, or offering outpost/satellite campuses). Thus there is potential for considerable competition between these two provider groups for students – especially in disciplines such as business and management, covered by both ITPs and universities.

2.2 A Pre-emptive Partnership

In order to avoid the problems that could arise from competition between universities and ITPs, in 1990 the University of Waikato and five polytechnics, including the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic, formed an agreement that would enable students to commence study at a polytechnic and subsequently complete a degree at the university, with full academic credit granted for the studies completed at the polytechnic. The first students entered this pathway in 1991 and the agreement included the statement that "The parties to this agreement are committed to the further development of seamless education for management students at the University of Waikato and associated polytechnics" (University of Waikato and partners 1990, p. 1).

The agreement enables students at five regional ITPs to be awarded 2 years' credit towards the university's Bachelor of Management Studies (BMS) degree, and subsequently complete the third and fourth year at the university campus in Hamilton. A formal credit recognition agreement was entered into with each polytechnic and the arrangement marketed to students and other key stakeholders. The NZ Dip Bus is a two-year national qualification in business studies that has common prescriptions, is moderated nationally, and is awarded jointly by both the individual polytechnic and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA).

The outcome of this arrangement was that as well as the students entering directly into the BMS at the university, numbers in the third and fourth years were bolstered by graduates of the NZ Dip Bus entering at that point. The attractiveness of this arrangement from a student perspective has been threefold: firstly, that the academic entry criteria to the NZ Dip Bus are lower than those of the BMS; secondly that the NZ Dip Bus provided an intermediate qualification well recognised by some key

professional bodies; and thirdly, there remained the opportunity to gain university credit by commencing study closer to home and therefore reducing student debt.

The program structure of the NZ Dip Bus allows a variety of additional, optional courses to be developed and approved by NZQA as constituting courses within the NZ Dip Bus program of study. This opportunity was used by the university and polytechnic partners to include at least one University of Waikato course into each year of the NZ Dip Bus with specified entry conditions, e.g. year one courses must not be completed in the first semester of study unless the student meets the university's academic entry criteria for that particular course. The benefit of this arrangement for students has been that they are gaining actual university credits in each year of study and can also ascertain how they are achieving grade-wise against the whole cohort, including 'pure' university students, undertaking this university course in any particular period. For the university, it has provided an insight into the progress of students who will likely enrol with the university in the ensuing years. This insight is useful for planning purposes.

The positive experience of TOM with this arrangement led to other similar arrangements with other departments within the university. Two examples of this are Information Technology (IT) and Marine Studies. In respect of the former, the Polytechnic developed a two-year diploma in IT that constitutes the first two years of a BSc in Computer Science at the university. Similarly, in Marine Studies, TOM's two year diploma also constitutes the first two years of the BSc in Science within the university.

2.3 Continual Change of Partnerships Between Universities and ITPs

All of the larger Metro ITPs and most of the regional ITPs have developed and gained NZQA accreditation to offer their own business, IT and other degrees over recent years. In the field of business, the NZ Dip Bus has typically constituted the first two years of degree study, and also an exit qualification for persons not interested or incapable of successfully completing a third year to gain a degree. Regarding the pathway to the University of Waikato Bachelor of Management Studies, these developments resulted in four of the polytechnic partners abandoning the existing arrangement and only TOM seeking to maintain and strengthen it. By way of contrast with many of the other polytechnics, TOM did not rush into degree development but rather placed a high value on the existing pathway and the market value of business and other degrees awarded by its partner university.

From the original model whereby the students completed 2 years study in Tauranga and then 2 years study in Hamilton, the deans of the two business faculties agreed that, from 2000, the full 4 years of tertiary education would be offered in Tauranga with university students attending classes at the Polytechnic campus. In extending the original agreement, the two institutions recorded that "The parties

agree to discuss and collaborate on the development of management qualifications in Tauranga. This could extend to the possible development and delivery of joint degrees" (University of Waikato and Bay of Plenty Polytechnic 2000, p. 1). This further agreement also meant that suitably qualified polytechnic staff would work alongside their university colleagues to deliver many of the university classes in Tauranga. As the third and fourth year student numbers have continued to grow in Tauranga, it has been possible to increase the number of majors being offered within the current suite of three and 4 year degrees available to students. This significant development also resulted in common student services being provided, such as a single tertiary library and an integrated computer network that allows both university and polytechnic students common access.

The success of the relationship between the Waikato Management School and the School of Business Studies of the polytechnic provided the template for a larger agreement between the two institutions that resulted in a formal agreement being signed in 2005 and coming into effect in 2006. The parties acknowledged universities and polytechnics have different but complementary roles in stating "Both parties recognise the benefit of a differentiated system of tertiary education in New Zealand, in which universities and polytechnics have distinctive but complementary contributions to make to the delivery and support of relevant, quality, tertiary provision (Bay of Plenty Polytechnic and University of Waikato 2005, p. 1).

Since this two party agreement was signed in 2005, in recent years it has been extended to include a wānanga and a second polytechnic in 2012. While the wānanga tertiary offering is complementary, in providing education from a Maori perspective, the second polytechnic (Waiariki Institute of Technology) is a large provider of both degree and masters level tertiary education in its own right.

2.4 Cultural, Academic and Logistic Challenges of Alliances Between Universities and ITPs

Program alliances generally begin, says Moxley (2005), when a group of academic practitioners begin a collective conversation about what they might achieve together "for the mutual benefit of their disciplines, faculty, and students" (p. 2). The difficulties in reaching a binding agreement are often not evident until the larger units and institutions become involved. Reflecting on the development of the TOM university pathway, six key challenges can be noted which each had the potential to de-rail the partnership, but were successfully avoided.

One of the advantages to a smaller regional polytechnic is flexibility: institutes such as TOM have a history of adapting rapidly to community and industry needs as well as of fine-tuning and adapting programs over subsequent iterations. The first challenge for TOM, then, came with the realisation that large universities not only have a far longer lead-in time for introducing new programs, but also require a substantive case for the investment needed to develop and offer them. Any new degree

comes with a risk, and Waikato University wanted to gauge the demand before supplying the product. This cautionary stance affected the pace of the original development, and will inevitably affect future partnership work as the qualification suite is reconfigured in the near future.

A second challenge was the 'cultural divide' between a vocational education provider and an academic 'ivory tower'. While administrators from the two organisations recognised alignment and congruence across numerous elements of each organisation's suite of business and management programs, some faculty members and managers were more reticent. As Moxley (2005) notes:

> Generally, "alike" institutions (public/public; research intensive/research intensive; private/private; two-year/two-year) find collaboration easiest. When institutional partners in the alliance differ on a critical measure (type, size, status), alliance developers will need to manage the power and/or prestige imbalance in ways that assure that teamwork can thrive in the presence of the differences (p. 3).

Issues of academic integrity and 'reputational risk' were raised, and it was recognised that the program design had to meet the standards for approval at both partner institutes via a full review. The solution reached was a 'guaranteed grade average' for pathway students, who had to achieve a B average overall in their Diploma, and at least a B in Commercial Law and Business Communication, as these were second year degree papers at the university, whereas they were often selected as a first year option by the polytechnic students.

A third, related challenge was the external accreditation process. Where staff teaching at the Tauranga site were delivering the university's papers, they needed to be included in the university's accreditation, but in fact were often ineligible, as they did not meet the criteria related to research outputs and scholarly activity. The negotiated solution was to refer to the polytechnic teachers as 'tutors' rather than 'lecturers', although it was acknowledged by both parties that this distinction tended to perpetuate, rather than mitigate, the cultural divide.

Fourth, the different focus of each organisation was also apparent in the 'self-identity' of the staff involved. In an ITP, the attention is firmly on teaching, and most professional development endeavours are linked in some way to improving student outcomes through growing teaching and learning capability. In a university, a much greater percentage of the job role is likely to be dedicated to research (Zepke et al. 2005). This affected, to various extents, the commitment and motivation of individuals to developing shared teaching resources and lesson materials as a priority, and required a shift to a more collaborative way of thinking. It happened, but took a long time.

Two logistical challenges were technology and timetabling. Where there were gaps in skill sets among the Tauranga ITP staff, classes were streamed via video conferencing from the university campus in Hamilton. However, there were some technical problems that resulted in communications not running as smoothly as planned. In addition, some students do not like attending lectures during which they can only interact with a screen and some lecturers are unaware of the need to be inclusive and change their delivery style. A solution implemented to overcome this

challenge was for staff from both organisations to provide additional face-to-face sessions for third and fourth year students as well as extended office hours to allow for drop-in access and additional support sessions.

Timetables were initially problematic, and continued to be so for several years, due to the different calendars for teaching weeks between organisations. Eventually, the decision was made to adjust the diploma's semester dates to match those of the university. This strategy achieved the desired effect but meant that this one program is now operating to a different academic schedule than all the other programs offered by the ITP. This has negatively impacted on staff opportunities to attend institutional workshops, seminars and retreats.

Overall, the solutions to all these challenges have been achieved through compromise and negotiation by senior management, teaching and adjunct staff, against a backdrop of trust, networking and relationship-building. The five simple principles advocated by Moxley (2005) offer a good description of what was experienced in the field throughout this adjustment period: "Behave as equals; Share leadership; Respect and accommodate institutional differences; Simplify student access; Seek low input/high impact solutions" (p. 5).

Then, just as the partnerships were starting to function effectively, the decision of the Minister of Tertiary Education late in 2015 to merge the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic and the Waiariki Institute of Technology has re-awoken many of these discussion points. Such a merger poses a potential threat to the long established pathway from polytechnic to university education that has operated successfully since 1991, with a new larger partner which may introduce a new set of dynamics. Change does not seem to cease in the tertiary education partnership sector.

3 Evidence of Success

3.1 Pathway Student Records, and Research

With so many changes looming across the sector and within the University of Waikato, it was timely to report on how well the dual-provider pathway was serving pathway students. Enrolments continue to increase: 2015 saw the largest cohort ever, with 320 full-time equivalent domestic students (EFTS) who were either part of the NZ Dip Bus program with the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic (260 EFTS) or enrolled with the University of Waikato in a business degree program (60 EFTS). Domestic students in New Zealand have part of their fees paid for by the Government, and their numbers and outcomes are always reported separately – in any case, they make up the bulk of the University of Waikato student population. There were also approximately 30 international students in these classes. However, since most of

them usually enrol specifically in the Diploma program as their study visas tend to constrain movement between organisations, they are less of a focus in this discussion of the university's partnership pathway.

While numbers have been growing for some years, the University of Waikato had not previously canvassed its graduates about their first destination intentions, and how successful the NZ Dip Bus program was as a pathway in preparing graduates for higher qualifications and employment in their field.

Therefore, over 2014–2015, a retrospective study was initiated in order to:

- Gather data on student demographics and stated destination *intentions* (employment or higher qualifications) for enrolments in NZ Dip Bus level 6 program between 2008 and 2014
- Identify *actual* graduate outcomes from NZ Dip Bus students who have completed a Business degree with the University of Waikato
- Gather student testimony about their perceptions and experiences of the NZ Dip Bus as a pathway into university study

Organisational records of student enrolments, completion and success were used to identify graduates for the university's target population, as well as to benchmark demographics against which the survey sample could be compared.

Next, an online survey was created, with the link sent in an email to identified candidates explaining the purpose of the survey. These emails were sent to 349 valid email addresses of graduates and, over a two-week period, 107 responses were received (30.6% response rate). A series of questions identifying the demographic characteristics of graduates were asked together with closed and open questions about their Diploma and degree experiences. The questions were dependent on whether the respondent continued on to enrol with the University of Waikato and complete a business degree or alternatively finished studies after the NZ Dip Bus. Students were also asked to expand on their ratings by providing key reasons for their responses including a comparison of their initial expectations and graduate outcomes.

IBM SPSS Statistics was used as a data analysis tool including descriptive statistics and correlation, in particular identifying relationships between demographic groups, ranking answers and key theme responses.

More than two thirds (69.6%) of valid responses (n = 71) were provided by female students which is consistent with the gender enrolment data over the 2009–2014 period. Also consistent with enrolments was the age of respondents with more than 60% being 30 years or fewer at the time of the survey, that is, after they had graduated with either a degree or diploma. There was one area of variation: most survey participants were primarily NZ European, whereas the actual demographics of graduates from the program include a much larger number of Māori (indigenous New Zealanders), who comprise approximately 20% of total graduates.

3.2 Key Findings

3.2.1 Enrolment Motivations

The majority of students are school leavers and an estimated 80% indicated at the application interview that they were enrolling for the purpose of graduating with a University business degree. An overriding motivation for enrolling in the program is the choice students have to stay in their home city and not have to leave family, friends, employment and lifestyle in order to complete the foundation Diploma qualification with full credit into a degree.

One example of a 'lifestyle' decision involved a current All Black (New Zealand's national team) rugby player who chose to enrol in the pathway to be able to play for his region while studying full-time. A study plan was tailored for this student to enable him to train and play as a semi-professional rugby player. A similar example was a successful international surf lifesaving competitor who began her Diploma studies in 2013, balancing a heavy sport schedule with full-time studies. In 2014, she not only graduated with the NZ Dip Bus but was successful in winning a gold medal at the world championships.

Participants described a number of challenges, which tended to vary according to age, ethnicity and financial situation. Younger students (school leavers) are often faced with the challenge of transitioning from a school to a tertiary environment and of the changes they need to make in terms of time management and responsibility. These students stated that the foundation Diploma program ensures that transition is less chaotic. Māori and Pasifika students may face different issues such as 'whanau' or family commitments that can impact on their ability to attend classes. Adult students generally face issues around child care and financial concerns. Teaching staff have a strong focus on pastoral care outside of the classroom to help students catch up if they miss classes or get behind on their learning. Many students recognised and valued this support to 'get them started' and felt that they would not have had the same smooth transition experience if they had enrolled directly into a university.

Balancing study, work and family is a challenge for adult students. The full-time to part-time ratio is 70/30 but, in addition, most students are working part-time if they are studying full-time; this is particularly important for adult students who are supporting a family. Students also have a choice of face-to-face day or night classes and an online option; their choice depends on individual circumstances. However, the majority of students prefer the face-to-face option if they are able to attend classes: they like the more personalised learning environment and social connection with peers and teaching staff.

3.2.2 Employment Outcomes

According to graduates, the foundation Diploma assisted them to gain teamwork, reporting, communication, presentation and research skills among others. For 75% of the students these 'soft skills' were also identified as most important in their chosen field of employment after graduating and this perception is supported by other recent studies (see Azim et al. 2010; Magogwe et al. 2014; Sultana 2014).

Students also shared some of their personal experiences which attest to the importance of an accessible, entry-level pathway program. In the case of students who have left secondary school at the age of 16 or 17 without completing their final year, the less restrictive Diploma entry criteria enable those students to move forward with their chosen pathway to employment a year earlier than if they were applying directly to the University. They are also able to stay at home thus receiving family support towards their success as tertiary students. An example was offered by a student who entered the Diploma program at the age of 16 and then progressed to a Bachelor of Management Studies majoring in Accounting, which she completed in 4 years. She was then employed by the Port of Tauranga and by the age of 24 she became a senior financial accountant.

3.2.3 Benefits for Māori

The number and percentage of Māori students on the program has increased substantially in the last 5 years. Successful study completion, particularly that of students from diverse backgrounds, has added to the brand strength of the pathway. One respondent, a mature Māori woman, began her studies in 2007 as a part-time student working full-time and studying whilst supporting her family. She was successful in gaining a scholarship grant after completing the Diploma in 2012 which enabled her to study full-time. In 2015 she completed a business degree and has since been employed as a financial analyst for an Iwi tribal trust authority that analyses risk when making decisions on fund allocations.

Despite individual success stories such as this, unfortunately, the overall outcomes for Māori once out of study were less satisfactory: only 46% of Māori graduates were employed, compared to 89% of NZ European graduates. In addition, only 38% of Māori graduates continued on to enrol in the degree program with the University compared to 76% of NZ European graduates. This is a concern which requires additional research to be addressed – especially as it is both an institutional and a national priority to realise more Māori and Pasifika learners achieving at level 4 and above, particularly in work-related qualifications and bachelor and higher degrees (Ministry of Education 2014).

3.2.4 Students' Perceptions of Value

Research indicates clearly that undergraduates choose where, what and how to study in order to improve their prospects of future employment (Gedye et al. 2007) and that a 'quality' learning experience is one in which the provider supports students' aspirations past the end of the enrolment period (Kandiko and Mawer 2013). 97% per cent of the participants stated that the NZ Dip Bus pathway assisted them in the transition to study at the University of Waikato. When asked to expand on their answer as to how the Diploma assisted or inhibited their degree studies, 43 students identified 'foundation knowledge' as the characteristic of the diploma that most helped them transition. When asked to rate the Diploma from 1 to 5 (1 being 'not at all helpful' and 5 being 'very helpful') in preparing them for study at the University of Waikato, the mean response was 4.18.

3.2.5 Internships and Stakeholder Engagement

Student employability is a key focus of the NZ Dip Bus program at undergraduate level. Work placements and internships have been found to be some of the most effective strategies to enhance a student's employability (Kinash et al. 2014), and along with cadetships, graduate recruitment and student job search form a major part of the NZ Dip Bus program and the student culture. An example of this focus is the formalised cadet scheme between TOM and the Port of Tauranga whereby students are employed on a part-time basis whilst studying full-time. The cadet is taught and participates in all facets of the Port of Tauranga terminal container operations which include financial, logistics, supply chain, customs inspections, shipboarding and strategic planning tasks. Other formal internship arrangements that add value to student employability options include accounting summer internships, market research part-time positions, summer research projects, a 'Skills for Entrepreneurs' summer program and the student ambassador program coordinated by the TOM Marketing department. Students are also gaining experience through voluntary internships such as TEDX or Technology Entertainment Design, an annual conference where students are involved in public relations, event management and sponsorship administration. TOM also offers a number of other employer-related activities such as an online employment notice board, graduate recruitment sessions and industry guest speakers .

4 Future Developments and Challenges

In December 2015 the Minister of Tertiary Education announced the forthcoming merger of Bay of Plenty Polytechnic, and the Waiariki Institute of Technology on 1 May 2016. While TOM has developed pathways into the University of Waikato degrees in business, IT and science, Waiariki Institute of Technology held

its own accreditation for degrees in business, IT and many other fields up to and including degrees at a master's level. The new merged entity is now one of the largest polytechnics in New Zealand and will have accredited degrees in discipline areas that until this point in time have been attained through the university pathway partnership described above. It remains to be seen whether the new entity will continue to value working with the university in this manner, or whether it will choose to compete directly with it thus requiring students to choose between completing either a polytechnic or a university degree.

As Tauranga is the fastest growing city in New Zealand, and the largest one without its own university, the potential challenge of the forthcoming merger may cause the University of Waikato to decide to work independently in Tauranga and not sustain the pathway for students that has been operating successfully for 25 years from its introduction in 1991. Given the success of the unique model that has been based on a successful relationship between a university and a polytechnic for so long, it is tempting to be change-averse and insist that the current model is already the best. However, mergers bring opportunities to expand into new territories too, and TOM's staff may be pleasantly surprised.

5 Final Thoughts

The constant changes in the educational landscape, such as the merger described above, bring challenges, certainly, but also opportunities. New systems and processes will allow tertiary qualification providers to re-examine and question long held practices, and the widespread consultation which accompanies change on this scale will ensure currency and relevance. An educational system has to serve the people who enrol as learners, and also the society at large.

Meantime, the investigation into TOM's graduates' perceptions and experiences of business degrees delivered through a vocational and academic partnership allows the teaching team to bring evidence of a successful model to the planning table. The graduates surveyed placed a high value on the pathway program that the two institutions have developed, recognising the different philosophies and ideas on educational delivery, and appreciating the facilitated transition process. Key to program success is the 'seamless' segue for students whereby their programs are aligned and a study plan is available for both Diploma and degree qualifications.

While this 'hybrid' model of a business degree pathway offered through a polytechnic-university partnership is highly contextualised, many of the features may be transferrable to other providers in other settings. The contribution the authors hope to make with this chapter is to show how a small institution within a potentially competitive field and location, can build strong, reciprocally advantageous relationships with larger players to achieve an optimum platform of offerings, entry and exit points. Meantime, our TOM learners gain professional and academic credentials with immediate utility. With fingers tightly crossed, our organisation looks forward to the future and the forging of further pathway agreements.

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Part IV
Issues of Curriculum and Pedagogy in University Pathway Programs

Chapter 12
Pathways and Praxis: Designing Curriculum for Aspirational Programs

Lucinda McKnight and Emma Charlton

Abstract As lecturer/researchers, we use documents mapping the design process, and our own reflections as the basis of a case study of curriculum design for the Associate Degrees of Arts and Education, pathways programs at Deakin University in Australia. In this way, we view curriculum as both personal and political, rather than as a package to be delivered. In this chapter, we share our inspirations, practices and constraints, so that other lecturers and researchers may use our insights in further thinking, teaching and learning in this area. We believe that reflexive attention to the curriculum design process, especially in neoliberal contexts in which a delivery model is foregrounded, highlights institutional challenges that complicate achieving the rhetoric of success for pathways students. We argue that these complexities need to be acknowledged, so that barriers to innovative curriculum design and enhanced student participation can be more fully understood before they can be tackled.

1 Introduction

This chapter takes the occasion of the design and introduction of two new first year pathway units at Deakin University, Australia, in 2015 to reflect on curriculum design in this sector. The on-campus cohort taking these units within the Associate Degrees of Arts and Education, across four Victorian sites, includes urban and rural students, and Indigenous students at the Institute of Koorie Education. As lecturer/researchers, we use documents mapping the design process, and our own reflections as the basis of a case study of curriculum design. In this way, we view curriculum

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from the standpoints (Smith 1987) of those involved in the expert, locally situated and everyday work of curriculum design, rather than as the anonymous articulation of aims and pedagogy to achieve outcomes. We view curriculum as emerging from complex discursive entanglements, particularly around race and class, as we imagine and make pedagogical decisions for the future subjects we hope to create.

We recognise these subjects themselves as created by competing discourses that simultaneously construct students, for example as future citizen workers in global economies and as the products of more traditional and humanist educational rationales. We negotiate the social justice imperatives of the university, our own commitments to effecting social change through our teaching and the contemporary neoliberal imaginary of Australian education (Connell 2013), as we plan learning experiences, sequences and synergies.

The focus on this design space, rather than on student achievement, highlights the challenges we face in articulating intentionality for a diverse group of students, many of whom are on a university campus for the first time, through the Associate Degrees. We offer our insights and innovations as a contribution to the broader global conversation about how we can best engage, delight, inspire, support and retain these students, through reflexive attention to the complexities of curriculum design.

2 Background to the Associate Degrees of Arts and Education

Deakin is one of Victoria's larger universities; student enrolment in 2016 was over 52,000, including 12,000 off-campus students, over 8000 international students and 12,000 students enrolled in postgraduate programs. In 2015, Deakin accepted 194 students into the Associate Degrees, with 77% continuing on to a second year of study.

The Associate Degrees of Arts and Education provide a direct pathway into the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Education (Primary) programs for students who would not otherwise be eligible for entry. Many of our students are similar to other non-traditional students described in related literature (for example by Gilardi and Guglielmetti 2011); they are often older, first-in-family at university, of diverse ethnicity and indigeneity, from low socioeconomic status backgrounds or experiencing learning difficulties. Some students pursue varied pathways: they can also apply to transition with credit into a range of other Bachelor degrees, commonly health sciences, nursing, science, management and accounting.

The direct pathway courses each comprise 16 units: four on-campus foundation units and 12 core units from the students' target degrees, completed over 2 years full time study, and 4 years part time. Indigenous students at the Institute of Koorie Education follow a mixed mode community-based learning model, so that they complete the face-to-face components of units during intensive courses that do not require sustained absence from their communities. The four core units (Digital Literacy, Communication Skills, Critical Thinking and Teamwork) are designed to teach and assess the knowledge and skills needed for successful undergraduate

study; two of these units were developed in 2015 in response to the university's five year review process and alignment with government standards requirements (Australian Qualifications Framework Council 2013).

The Associate Degrees follow the extended curriculum model (Kloot et al. 2008), which grounds student learning in disciplinary content, rather than "filling the gaps" or focusing on study skills. Unlike other documented programs (see also Allie et al. 2009; Marshall and Case 2010), the Deakin Associate Degrees are transdisciplinary and designed and staffed by academics who also teach in the Faculty of Arts and Education. This allows conceptual permeability and aligned expectations across the contemporaneous core and target degree units in the first year. Around half of the universities in Australia offer Associate Degrees (Gale et al. 2013), but these are not generally framed as supported entry programs (more often they facilitate early exit) and the flexible, discipline-based articulation of the Deakin Associate Degrees is unusual in the Australian context.

In Australia, the neoliberally driven push for widening tertiary participation of non-traditional and diverse people in education (Gale and Tranter 2011) has led to an increase in numbers of such students. However, recent research demonstrates that merely widening entry does not lead to inclusion (Meuleman et al. 2015). Simultaneously, there is interest in the potential of first year "transition pedagogy" (Kift 2009, 2010), accompanied by a range of detailed resources supporting good practice and student retention (Devlin et al. 2012; Nelson et al. 2014) including unit design checklists and templates. Transition pedagogy is described as "third generation" pedagogy, incorporating co-curricular and curricular interventions in a holistic institutional approach. This has been followed by calls for a fourth generation pedagogy incorporating broader communities (Penn-Edwards and Donnison 2014). In this chapter, however, we follow advice to avoid a focus on needs, deficits and support (Haggis 2006) and instead look to careful and critical consideration of higher education cultures, in this instance, those formed by the conflicting discourses of curriculum design.

3 Designing Curriculum for the Associate Degrees

For the purposes of this chapter, we adapt the definition of curriculum as "the totality of the undergraduate experience" (Kift 2009, p. 9) which locates curriculum with students' academic, social and support encounters. This entails a more dialogic understanding of curriculum as the "complicated conversation" (Pinar 2011, p. 2) enacted by students, staff, institutions and society from which political and personal choices around pedagogy emerge. This conversation is woven from complex discursive entanglements producing both teacher and first year student subjectivities, or performances of self in the social contexts of universities. These subjectivities also include the imagined future selves transformed by the interactions of learning.

This definition emboldens us to write about curriculum design in our pathways program without relying only on outcomes, objectives, standards and strategies,

instead responding to the call for teachers of students from low socioeconomic status backgrounds to involve colleagues in critical reflective practice (Devlin et al. 2012): in this instance we look specifically at curriculum design. We have taken this opportunity to debrief together at the end of a year in which we created two new pathways units and to conceptualise this debriefing as dialogic research exploring our own practice (Mason 2002; Radnor 2002).

We expand this curriculum design space with Dorothy Smith's conceptualisations of standpoint (1987) and institutional ethnography (2005, 2011). Fundamentally, institutional ethnography critiques the study of social movements as objects, and "reorganises the social relations of knowledge of the social" (Smith 2005, p. 28). Curriculum, thought this way, does not reside in documents, nor is it the discrete and rational articulation of objectives and outcomes. Instead, curriculum becomes socially located praxis, evolving from the actualities and conversations of our everyday work and the intersections of our politics, histories, memories and dreams. The designer is not neutral, but driven by rhetorical intent (Kress 2010) and deeply held beliefs (Gale 2010), working from a standpoint located but never fixed. This precludes thinking about curriculum as if we exist outside it and merely *apply* it.

Instead we reflect on our design work through dialogue and via review of the series of documents we have created in our everyday unit design work, our outlines, notes and presentations, examining these artefacts to author meaning together, always aware that these material relics are not anonymous, but imbued with our desires, denials and intentions. Rather than performing close critical discourse analysis, we think more about the texts in use (Smith 2005, p. 169), about their sources and the other documents to which they link. In our discussion we seek a problematic (Smith 2005, p. 180) or set of questions yet to be posed emerging from this territory, and the sites of struggle from which curriculum emerges. In composing this chapter, we write to inquire (Richardson and St Pierre 2008), sketching a case study and also suggesting that there is much that cannot be named or confined within our reflections.

We can also begin to understand why even when principles for inclusive or first year curriculum design are identified (for example by Kift 2009) they may not readily translate into practice. While the characteristic modes of articulating curriculum are impersonal and "governed by organisational logics and exigencies" (Smith 1987, p.11), we think about curriculum "where we are actually located, embodied, in the local historicity and particularities of our lived worlds" (Smith 1987, p.20) then link this to larger social processes. The feminist and social justice imperatives of Smith's concepts align with our own commitments in pathways education.

Smith notes that one of the dangers of institutional ethnography is that it is easy to become trapped in the empty shells of the conceptual language of institutions and their documents (2011). Instead, in writing this account, we focus on the ways we find ourselves in conflict with institutional imperatives. Curriculum documents rarely articulate the biographies of their designers, so we attempt this

here, not in a deterministic way, but to colour in the neutrality of curriculum with possible rhythms and synergies that emerge as we discuss “where we come from” in the design of our units.

4 Locating Ourselves in Design

Emma lives in Warrnambool, a regional city on the south western coast of Victoria with a population of around 33,000 people, four hours drive from the nearest main city; this informs her curricular activism about connection and belonging for rural students. She has a first degree in sociology, has been a secondary English and History teacher and her research interests are in student subjectivities in transitional spaces. Her passion for student success emerges from research and tutoring at the University of Cambridge in England, a highly striated environment in which much related to academic culture is implicit. She deliberately builds explicit teaching about assumptions into curriculum and seeks to go beyond short-term interventions such as induction programs. She believes that students’ understandings of university culture take place progressively and recursively.

Lucinda first entered a university campus in 1985 to enrol in a Bachelor of Arts, straight from secondary school. University was not definitely on her agenda. Her father left school when he was 15 years of age, at Year 10, or GCSE level. Her mother, a builder’s daughter, had gained a similar degree through the Australian Commonwealth Scholarship Scheme in the 1950s, but as a homemaker, never mentioned her studies. Lucinda’s first year of university was a lonely, unsettled time. Other students were widely read or had travelled and seen the paintings being discussed (Giorgione’s *The Tempest* at Galleria dell’Accademia in Venice) or the landscapes of the set novels (Thomas Hardy’s Dorset). Her essays were returned with the same comments: “too much reliance on secondary sources”. Yet having an original thought in this rarefied environment seemed impossible. In third year she left university without completing her honours degree. Her teaching experiences have emphasised the intangibility, persistence and pervasiveness for students of feeling “outside” and the stark contrasts in educational systems.

These brief bios suggest the motivations and rhetoric of our curriculum design endeavours, in which we are inspired by empathy for our own remembered selves, and for students with whom we have worked, as we wish to save, protect or spare others from what we have perceived to be unjust or to cause unhappiness. We do not so much subscribe to discourses of “difference, diversity and deficit” (Hardy and Woodcock 2015, p. 141) as to those of class-based justice or humanist fulfilment. We simultaneously construct students as in need of protecting and nurturing, and highlight what we describe as “tightrope” of curriculum design, the desire to support and include without inscribing vulnerability or deficit.

We make pedagogical choices in dialogue with our own stories, with these intertextual narratives with their imagery of sandstone universities and fine art, and references to White, male, western canonicity, all powerful symbols of privilege

that we (White, female, able-bodied and middle class) both desire and decry. Lucinda's experiences of 30 years ago, and Emma's observations of education in Australia and England mirror what the literature describes for current non-traditional university students: that the commitments of individual educators are not enough to counter the weak hold that principles of inclusiveness have on the development of university policy at higher levels (Hardy and Woodcock 2015; Meuleman et al. 2015). This also suggests why third age transition pedagogy (Kift 2009) might be difficult to achieve, in the face of entrenched conservative values that resist the called-for transformation of the university itself.

The Associate Degrees are located within the Faculty of Arts and Education and we work in a university culture with School of Education colleagues who have strong social justice commitments in a non-elite university with an inclusive entry policy which is also, inescapably, a neoliberal university responsive to the demands of government. Potential Associate Degree students are inevitably constructed, by the institutional frameworks we work within, as neoliberal subjects "yet to consume" (Hughes 2015, p. 306) with all the choices and opportunities of meritocracy at their command, and success defined as full participation in the labour market and global economy predicated on hard and compliant work in our units.

Our awareness of this gives rise to ambivalence, and to the desire to subvert, so that the intensity of our written and spoken teacher language fluctuates as we perform as mouthpieces for neoliberalism, with words borrowed from those discourses, and as passionate advocates for our own student visions. We enact what Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin describes as "ideological becoming" (1981, p. 342), or the clash of authoritative and internally persuasive discourses. We are motivated by a desire for students to experience themselves differently within the university, to feel they belong, rather than the need to equip them with skills for the knowledge economy, which we read as both necessary and reductive. And we are aware of our own courses' point of difference in the marketplace, being embedded in the Faculty of Arts and Education, taught by incumbent lecturers, and potentially offering a more "academic" pathway; we cannot escape constructing our students as consumers/customers and ourselves as products (Bauman 2007) to ensure our own ongoing employment and survival in a competitive environment. We are even competing for students with Deakin College, our partner organisation providing streamlined pathways into tertiary study.

These reflections on our backgrounds and teaching contexts begin to describe curriculum design as a "space" of struggle where various standpoints coalesce, rather than a "place" (Gale 2010) where particular curricular changes (inputs) will inevitably lead to desired successes (outputs) if only they can be adopted and implemented effectively.

5 Curriculum Theory

As well as describing our theoretical resources and current literature on curriculum design for pathways programs, we situate our thinking within curriculum theory itself, with the belief that engaging with these critical dialogues provides insights for design in all disciplines; our own roles as teacher educators, as well as Associate Degree staff inform this position. We teach pre service teachers that curriculum designers draw from a range of models that are either based on objectives or naturalistic interaction (Churchill et al. 2016). One of the challenges of our work in the Associate Degree is that we have attempted to adopt a more naturalistic approach to planning, identifying and reflecting on shared "beliefs, theories, principles and visions about the possibilities of what curriculum might entail" (Churchill et al. 2016, p. 233) yet we work within a university that privileges impersonal and externalised outcomes, objectives and standards. We want to talk, to think, to read and to draft ideas collectively, in a way of working sympathetic to our epistemological orientations and our ways of relating to each other and to our students; however this creative and dispersed authority does not sit well with the central control of universities organised panoptically (Foucault 1995). Control and surveillance in the name of quality take precedence. We must negotiate and mediate competing and largely irreconcilable discourses: liberatory, feminist, inclusive, critical and performative in the neoliberal sense (Ball 2003).

For our units, we inherited pre-determined graduate learning outcomes and assessment task outlines written by professional staff (in another layer of curriculum work) who have not worked with the cohort, and created prior to any discussion around learning activities. This is based on an approach known as backwards design (Wiggins and McTighe 2005) front loading assessment, and defining teaching as purely "a means to an end" (2005, p. 19). While it purportedly gives rise to purposeful learning, such a formula may veer towards the linear and deterministic, leading to curriculum design antithetical to negotiation and involvement of students in their learning. This is an approach grounded in the work of earlier twentieth century Western curriculum theory (for example Tyler 1949) and re-imagined to serve neoliberal aims.

6 How Do We Design Curriculum?

In line with this approach, with one eleven-week trimester to design units for the following trimester, we inherited our "high level unit outlines" each containing a brief description, unit and university-wide graduate learning outcomes and assessment tasks complete with word lengths and weightings. The rationale for these units was determined by senior staff to address two of the university's graduate learning outcomes, "Critical Thinking" and "Teamwork", themselves predicated on the broader Australian push for explicit teaching of generic skills for tertiary

graduates, both from policy and standards (via the Australian Qualifications Framework) and from industry; with the aim of increased productivity in highly competitive globalised environments (Bowman 2010, p. 5).

We then worked as a team of three ongoing staff members, with our Course Director Dr. Julie Rowlands, to interpret the high level outline, which both visually, via its tabular layout, and conceptually provided a framework to support and confine our thinking. We also worked with other institutional design imperatives at our university, including particular interpretations of authentic learning, inclusive learning, Universal Design for Learning (CAST 2016), and work-integrated learning. In our reflections, however, we describe these as “what you have to do”, language that suggests authoritative discourses might be less motivational than our personal understandings of concepts such as “inclusion”, as we “become” through design (Bakhtin 1981).

We experience design as the transposition of concepts and directives that do not necessarily emerge from our own standpoints, design as the product of the interwoven work of professional and academic staff all trying to achieve goals both imposed and personal, fraught with our own assumptions, preferences and hopes for our students and ourselves. Yet there are no openings for dialogue in the development of the high level outlines- these documents arrive as givens, de-professionalising academics within organisational structures, in itself a feature of contemporary managerialist cultures across many workplaces, and a barrier to achieving holistic, integrated third generation transition pedagogy (Kift 2009). As early career researchers, we balance doing what we are told, with our own passions for grounding our design work in our reading, our personal commitments and our attempts to empathise with students. We are frustrated, for example, that critical thinking must be assessed by an online multiple choice questionnaire.

Our next design stage was the development of our own unit outlines for sharing and feedback. These take the form of A3 sized tables, with columns for concepts and content, lecture and tutorial objectives and activities, readings, questions for readings, links to assessment and links to other units, in particular the other three core units, but also the units we are aware students are taking within their Bachelor of Arts or Education course maps. This final column (reading from left to right) serves to embed mapping in the actual design process, and is key to our multi-layered, recursive and explicit approach. Thinking, in an institutional ethnographic sense, of these documents in use, our hard copies soon became dog-eared; they were much referred to and valuable.

Our outlines emerge as richly intertextual collages of borrowed language (Bakhtin 1981), with snatches from the original, high level, policy-driven outline, our thematic and student-facing ideas, language from our meetings and the titles of videos, articles and books sourced from other authors. In the final column we quote each other, checking and cutting and pasting from each other’s documents, performing ourselves as collaborators, while the workplace constructs us as competitors. Every time we log in to our computers, our portal screens are filled with a graph displaying our publication metrics; the time we spend on teaching, on designing, is time we are not pursuing the meritocratic demands of the digital workspace.

Our guiding metaphor, in fleshing out our outlines, is the reciprocal welcome, an embodied, human trope of hospitality, rather than the bridge, which is another useful and frequently employed architectural figure (used for example by Devlin et al. 2012), evident even in the naming of “bridging programs”. As with all metaphors, their inevitable failure, the necessary gap between tenor and vehicle, provides generative space for reflection (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). The bridge both links and separates, those who pass across it leave where they have come from behind and all too often it seems that the traffic on the bridge is one way. This trope also appears in inclusion literature as “a bridge too far” (Hughes 2015, p. 306), unlikely to be traversed.

In the reciprocal welcome, we meet each other in a space, rather than a place, as Gale (2010) advises, that we will re-make together, and our curriculum designs are geared, within the parameters set for us, to opening up this space, to creating opportunities for students to welcome us into their worlds. Our fundamental orientation is to “work with” students rather than “act on” students (Gale 2010, p.11) and this is true across all our teaching, whether with first year or doctoral students, with the goal of making university feel like “home” and students feel as if they belong. In this sense, we avoid offering a “segregated solution” (Slee 2013, p. 906) for Associate Degree students, but employ adaptive and appropriately differentiated curriculum in all contexts.

6.1 Imagining the Units

In designing the critical thinking unit, Emma imagined a playful space created by highly interactive lectures and seminars. She imagined the impenetrable edifice of “argument” broken down into blocks to be played with, to form explicit structures made and re-made, wobbly and sound. She imagined her seminars full of laughter, mistakes and fun, with cartoons and film stars and urban myths, popular culture come to life. Reading broadly in the theory of critical thinking, she was guided by empathy in interpreting theory for students, wondering how she would like to encounter it.

Lucinda, refining the Teamwork unit, remembered her own tertiary teamwork experiences: the research project during which one member simply disappeared, for example, and the friend’s team that ended up having to consult lawyers over a dispute. She thought of her previous students with their familiar refrains: “our group is not working out”. In her reading, she pursued theory (Tuckman and Jensen 1977; Wheelan et al. 2003) that would support students in gaining or articulating metacognitive distance from the emotions of group interaction, and practical strategies (Loo and Thorpe 2002), so that students might find fulfilment in their collaborations. She imagined experiential, games-based tutorials with students working in teams from the outset, and reflecting on their encounters.

We designed for resonance across the units: comparative analysis of blog posts tackling social loafing in teams, for example, requires the higher level thinking skills of Bloom’s taxonomy, the ability to make valid claims, and the strategic use

of evidence taught in Critical Thinking. The conflict resolution skills from Teamwork were intended to be valuable when arguments in Critical Thinking became heated, and an understanding of logic would help students reason with each other and negotiate team issues. Unit design, through our discussions and shared drafts, evolved symbiotically and in our enactment of curriculum through pedagogy, we referred explicitly to work of other units in our classes. Aware of students' desired career trajectories, we also planned links to the workplace and target units; with animation students, for example, we would talk about working in multidisciplinary media production teams.

Imagining future classrooms in the design process, we see ourselves enjoying learning; this might be read as an assumption that students will be similar to us, or alternatively as a resistance to "othering" students. We seek pleasure and intrinsic reward in what happens in the welcoming classroom, where *we* learn what students want to argue about, and what *their* teamwork experiences have been. The skeletal institutional framework of the high level unit outline, with its numbered outcomes and links to digital badging for the graduate as product, is transformed by our pedagogical imaginations as we move forwards, from our own expanded unit outlines to creating weekly presentations, lesson plans and the student-facing content of our learning management system.

6.2 Design Climate

This reflective summary of the design process brings us now to making pedagogical choices for the classroom. These choices, however, are made within another, less clearly defined field, but one that is formed of shared tacit understandings of Associate Degree staff, including that:

- Students are working towards shared social capital (Bourdieu 1986) via the formation of a collaborative, empathetic community, as much as towards skills acquisition.
- Students may be more or less proficient or aware than we are in Digital Literacy; we have students who have never used computers, and those who manage multi-platform social media empires. Tasks are differentiated with this in mind.
- We draw on student knowledge and experience wherever possible, seeking opportunities for peer learning and for the lecturer to learn.
- Tutorial size is strictly limited to 20 students.
- As lecturers, we talk about our own research, and what lecturers do on a day-to-day basis, to unpack roles in universities for students, and explicitly demonstrate how research informs teaching and learning.
- All core units (Digital Literacy, Communication Skills, Critical Thinking and Teamwork), while providing important skills, must also have theoretical and conceptual depth and links to historical and social contexts.

- Students need to feel at home on the physical campus, and we meet out of the classroom where possible, physically discovering how to access resources together.
- We recognise and value the vital role of work in our students' lives and draw on their professional experiences in pedagogy.
- No assumptions are made about language. For example, we do not just show students how to navigate the university's online "Cloud" environment, but collaboratively define what a "learning management system" is, debating the pros and cons of this form of digital organisation and investigating what preceded it.
- We have some capacity to tailor institutional requirements to better meet the needs of our students, for example seeking exemptions to photocopying quotas so we can print hard copies of unit guides for the first units.
- In the core units, we maintain close and supportive email and telephone contact with students, for example in relation to late assessment tasks.
- Assessment is scaled, with marking and penalties becoming more rigorous (and in line with the Faculty) as the first trimester progresses. Feedback on work is detailed and students are invited to resubmit where appropriate, especially in early stages of a unit.

These examples form some of the myriad understandings that influence how plans for learning are shaped, and how they play out in the classroom; understanding and interrogating this climate needs to be incorporated into any curricular intervention. In this spirit, we seek to describe some critical moments of struggle that emerge in our curricular conversations around design documents, rather than providing lesson plans as if they might be simply implemented in other climates. We look here particularly to how we might seek to engage third generation pedagogy, specifically in relation to collaboration between professional and academic university staff (Kift 2009), but also to the challenges we face in doing so.

6.3 JobShop Team Teaching

In the Teamwork unit, Lucinda worked closely with professional staff in the JobShop careers counselling service to implement the university's work integrated learning policy. In the final seminar for the trimester, she organised for a JobShop staff member to team-teach with her, to answer questions about employer requirements, deconstruct teamwork-related selection criteria, discuss strategic interview skills and then conduct mock job interviews in which students would be asked genuine team-related job interview questions. The focus was on how students could use the experiences, knowledge and skills from the unit to answer these questions with concrete and specific evidence, along with strategically incorporating other relevant life experiences. Lecturer (applicant) and careers counsellor (employer) modelled a job interview prior to the student interviews, which provided much entertainment for students, then also modelled reflective self and peer assessment of performance.

This seminar was appreciated by students; some who chose not to participate in the mock interviews in the tutorial setting took up the JobShop invitation to do the same activity in a subsequent one-to-one session.

In designing this session, Lucinda was inspired by her former community and government job skills work and by her observations of elite and non-elite Year 10 students undergoing work experience. She and the JobShop staff member designed the sequence of activities together, and debriefed together afterwards. Yet this small project took time to set up, to seek an appropriate staff member, to get necessary permissions, to share and draft documents, to meet in person, to establish a trusting relationship on which to base team teaching and to disseminate to other staff and campuses. Deakin's multiple campuses offer diverse resources and also obstacles: relationships with other lecturers and JobShops at two other campuses (one with only sessional lecturers) also needed to be established for this activity to take place across the cohort. It is not clear whether, the following year, under new arrangements, the JobShop staff member would be allowed to undertake this work again.

Reflecting on this curricular innovation, we also find ourselves with ambivalent feelings about work-integrated learning, resisting authoritarian imperatives that conflict with our deeply held ideas about knowledge for knowledge's sake and the potential for university to be about more than preparation for employment. Through our discussions, we confront our personal biases, assumptions, and also potential elitism: by withholding the skills of workplace learning in order to achieve some "higher" goal, we potentially reinforce privilege. Our own degrees in history, literature and art link us to Arnoldian notions of culture, and we desire to share our access to these rarefied pleasures, yet this places us in an uncomfortable attitude of benevolence. Lucinda cannot shake the memory of elite school students in their parents' law firms and medical rooms, exuding confidence in an embodied, postural way. How might our students find their own forms of confidence? The students approaching the JobShop independently after the seminar are on this path.

Yet are we not, in designing this activity, constructing students as lacking, even as we encourage them to bring their broad work experience into the classroom? Here we are again on the tightrope, facing the "access paradox" (Janks in Gearon et al. 2009, p. 144) in which we must see what students need, without maligning this as a deficit. In theory, we are meant to adopt a positive stance, assuming social and academic competence (Edmiston 2014, p. 127), yet this is to ignore our intuitive understandings, based on our own experiences and knowledge of our students, that this would do them a disservice.

Theoretically, we need to incorporate new knowledges (Meuleman et al. 2015) but if these new knowledges are not valued by "mainstream" culture, where does this leave our students? The potential to introduce new knowledges through unit curriculum design also feels piecemeal and tokenistic, while vitally important. The inclusion of a slide showing Indigenous artwork in Red Hands Cave, with impressions of multiple, different sized hands created by the Daruk people between 500 and 1600 years ago, in a teamwork seminar presentation dominated by White, conservative, male psychology and management theory provides an example; it is used to suggest that the concept of cultural knowledge about the best ways to live and

work together is as old as human civilisation, and crosses all cultures. Yet in isolation, this slide also serves to essentialise Indigenous culture as historical, while we have Indigenous students in seminars at our campuses and the Institute of Koorie education with whom we do not negotiate the curriculum in its early stages.

6.4 "Ask and See" Planning Visits

In another Teamwork unit initiative involving both academic and professional staff, all student teams visited our Faculty-based support group (Ask and See) in tutorial times to collaboratively complete trimester planners, adding in important dates and assessment task deadlines. This provided small group orientation to a personalised support service, both geographically and conceptually, broke the ice with relevant staff (an important aspect of 'welcome') at the beginning of trimester, allowed for assisted planning, made planning expectations explicit and reinforced team building through a shared, collaborative activity. This also enabled us to make links to the set readings on the importance of organisation to effective teamwork. Students (and lecturers) also took away a potentially valuable artefact: a colourful and purpose-designed trimester template planner printed by the university which they had completed using different coloured highlighters to clarify milestones for individual tasks.

Progressive funding cuts, however, meant that this support service was only available at two of the three campuses and, at the end of the trimester in which this initiative took place, we heard that the service would not continue, despite ardent support from both teaching staff and students. The shifting landscape of university funding can act as a deterrent to a seamless, interdisciplinary, partnership-based approach to curriculum design, if significant and time-consuming groundwork does not result in sustainable initiatives. Anecdotally, the cessation of this service has led to significant workload increases for Associate Degree staff, leaving us with less time for curricular innovation. Our excitement at being able to trial our interpretations of transition pedagogy (Kift 2009) is accompanied by disillusionment at how ambitious philosophy fares against pragmatism in the workplace.

Sharing such conflicting feelings models an alternative way of writing about curriculum that constitutes both reflective practice and writing as inquiry; as we talk and write, our understandings coalesce. Curriculum is not only a neat set of dot points or headings to be implemented, but a multilayered, messy space where different discourses and structural realities rub up against each other, where we perform multiple selves in relation to imagined pathways students: saviour, mentor, guide, friend, liberator, host, gatekeeper. We, ourselves, and the texts we create "perform at the juncture between local settings and ruling relations" (Smith 2005, p. 101), a space that both enables and constrains us.

7 Conclusion and Future Directions

Advice to stop "tinkering at the margins of academic life and make student success the lynchpin about which [universities] organise their activities" (Tinto cited in Kift 2009, p. 11) is a dream for junior academics designing everyday pedagogy as they are progressively written out of decision making in relation to higher level unit design. We imagine what might be possible if curriculum design was genuinely collaborative at all levels, and involved students too, and even families and communities; if staff at all levels had time to reflect on standpoint; if there was open communication across courses and units, so that we had more information about target degree units and students' experiences in them; these wonderings form potential directions for further research.

An instrumental approach to curriculum design (for example as a series of strategies to put in place) does not adequately address the complex range of competing rhetorics that designers both deflect and absorb, and risks replicating a delivery metaphor that resists change. Principles for curriculum design such as those developed by Kift (2009) identify what we might aim for, yet the pathways towards these aspirations in praxis are as fraught for us as they might be for our students in achieving their goals.

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Chapter 13
Students on the Threshold: Commencing Student Perspectives and Enabling Pedagogy

Jennifer Stokes

Abstract Australian Higher Education policy emphasises the role of widening participation to prepare the educated populace required in a knowledge economy (Bradley et al. 2008). As universities strive to engage students from diverse backgrounds, enabling programs have been developed in order to provide a supported transition for traditionally under-represented cohorts. Students from equity groups are attracted to these pathways; however, enabling program retention, completion and success rates are lower than the undergraduate average rates (Hodges et al. 2013; Klinger & Murray 2011, p. 143). To understand student needs better, over 200 commencing students were surveyed during 2015 orientation for a pathway program at an Australian university. Survey responses capture students' university preparation, expectations, motivations and challenges prior to commencing enabling classes and offer insight into the educational needs of this cohort. This case study employs critical pedagogy and a constructivist approach to analyse survey responses and generate recommendations for pedagogy. Analysis of survey data indicates the needs of diverse students and ways in which these students can be supported through praxis. Pathway programs can actively transform university culture through valuing diverse knowledges, and support a better educated populace, enabling individuals who are committed and capable to access the opportunities university education provides.

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1 Introduction

Australian higher education policy emphasises the role of widening participation to prepare the educated populace required in a knowledge economy (Bradley et al. 2008).[1] Current policy is focused on achieving "proportional representation" of graduates from under-represented demographic groups (Gale and Parker 2013, 5). As universities strive to engage students from diverse backgrounds, enabling programs have been developed in order to provide a supported transition for traditionally under-represented cohorts. Students from equity groups are attracted to these pathways; yet, enabling program retention, completion and success rates are lower than the undergraduate average rate (Hodges et al. 2013; Klinger and Murray 2011, 143). Therefore, further investigation is needed to identify ways in which to support the complex needs of these students. Many enabling programs have emerged as a result of policy interventions: however, there is a lack of research into the specific needs of this diverse cohort (Levy and Earl 2012; Ramsay 2013, 11) and a recent study of retention in enabling programs recommends the sector "develop a range of appropriate enabling pedagogies" (Hodges et al. 2013, 6). It is timely to consider what works and what may be absent from existing programs in order to value diverse knowledges and further inform enabling program pedagogy.

Students undertaking enabling programs face complex issues when negotiating the transition to academic culture, such as language and cultural barriers, being "first in family" at university, and anxiety about formal education. Studies of first year undergraduate students have found that there is a mismatch between commencing student expectations and university experience (Brinkworth et al. 2013; Nelson et al. 2008), evidencing a gap between the needs identified by students and the curricula designed by academics. Academics clearly have much to teach the students; however, to identify what students need they must "defamiliarise" themselves from the institution to "see the strangeness of their familiar ways and the need for this strangeness to be explicated to newcomers" (O'Regan 2005, 137). It is crucial for academics to understand student needs and challenges, as "only through being attentive to students' realities will critical educators develop teaching practices that accept and validate the different kinds of cultural capital that influence the ways students make meaning of their learning" (Degener 2001, 5). Here, under-represented students, new to academia, may be better placed to offer insight into what is required to transition successfully into university culture. Through analysing over 200 commencing student survey responses collected during the 2015 Orientation for pathway programs at an Australian university, this case study outlines student-identified learning needs. This research employs critical pedagogy and a constructivist approach to analyse survey responses, which capture students' university preparation, expectations, motivations and challenges prior to commencing classes. By examining student responses at their first point of

[1] For further discussion of policy, please see Gale and Parker (2013) and Harvey et al. (2016).

university engagement, this research provides greater understanding of the educational needs of this under-represented cohort and what they identify as necessary for successful university transition.

2 Widening Participation at Australian Universities

Despite educational qualifications providing benefits for the individual and society, access to higher education is not evenly distributed. Individuals from high socio-economic status backgrounds are more likely to attend university and access the subsequent benefits (Munro 2011). Most university systems are grounded in putatively meritocratic entry pathways, which present additional challenges for individuals born in disadvantaged circumstances. Students from low socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds are under-represented in the university sector due to systematic barriers to university entry (Gale and Parker 2013, 53), including under-achievement at school due to a range of factors often beyond the students' control. Nevertheless, once these students access the university system, they perform at 97% of the level of their middle and high-SES peers (Naylor et al. 2013). To support the development of the nation as a knowledge economy and encourage greater social inclusion, the Australian Government established widening participation policy targets, based on the findings of the 2008 Review of Higher Education which at the time identified that "20 per cent of undergraduate enrolments in higher education should be students from low socio-economic backgrounds", informing a larger target wherein "40 per cent of 25- to 34-year-olds will have attained at least a bachelor-level qualification by 2020" (Bradley et al. 2008, xiv). Providing greater educational access for capable individuals aims to ensure undergraduate student demographics are more representative of the Australian populace.

As universities strive to engage students from diverse backgrounds with tertiary study, enabling programs have been introduced. Enabling programs are:

> bridging or foundational programs that provide opportunities to undertake higher education for those who lack the usual or traditional prerequisites for university entry and which enable them, not just by providing access, but by actively preparing them for success in their future undergraduate studies (Klinger and Murray 2010, 118).

Many enabling programs have been developed in Australia as a result of policy and Federal Government funding, in the context of an increased rate of undergraduate admissions in a demand-driven system. A national audit by Baker and Irwin (2015) identified 35 Australian enabling programs. These programs focus on academic literacies and prerequisite knowledge for undergraduate degrees; however, duration, structure and entry mechanisms are varied. As university pathway programs increase in prevalence due to global widening participation agendas, research is needed in order to better understand and support the needs of this growing cohort.

3 Critical Pedagogy and Enabling Program Research

Enabling programs present an opportunity for universities to provide more socially inclusive outcomes. The research reported here employs critical pedagogy, an approach which is firmly grounded in praxis and perceives education as a political act (Freire 2004). Critical pedagogy understands education in terms of systemic power wherein some groups are privileged and others oppressed (Freire 2004), an understanding that clearly resonates with the social inclusion objectives of university enabling programs. However, if the programs act to reinforce dominant ideologies and exclude those who cannot conform to the established system, then their potential will not be realised. Academics embody the university cultural capital (Bourdieu, as cited in Mullen 2010); however, this limits their ability to perceive what may be required to join this environment and may actively or accidentally devalue "different cultural capital" which students possess (Brinkworth et al. 2013, 25). Education can be employed as a system to reinforce hegemony, or it can be a place for dialogue between educators and students, supporting understanding and recreating the world (Freire 2004; Degener 2001). Critical educators assist students in lifting the "ideological veil" (Torres, 1993, 125 cited in Villacañas de Castro 2015, 81) so that they may better see the societal forces which have worked to shape them; this leads to *conscientizaçao* – an awakening of "critical consciousness" - and greater ability to forge one's own destiny. In this way, critical pedagogy offers an opportunity to create transformative experiences and work with students to build a new world (Mayo 2012). As the revolutionary language suggests, these ideals were shaped in the developing world, so the challenge for many educators is adapting these approaches for diverse teaching environments. While acknowledging the critique of and challenges inherent in implementing critical pedagogy, particularly within the specific constraints of first world institutions, Keesing-Styles nevertheless advocates the importance of these approaches: "each teacher must react to the particular context in which they work and attempt, to the best of their ability, to participate in practice that promotes inclusion, engagement and empowerment of learners" (Keesing-Styles 2003, 10). Through adopting critical approaches, educators open possibilities for combining research and reflection to inform teaching as praxis, developing transformative curriculum and effecting social change (Degener 2001). The first step is listening to students' voices in order to foster understanding and collaboration.

As enabling programs present a key pathway for marginalised people to enter the university system, research into these programs benefits from being informed by the student voice in order to determine whether curricula is responsive to students' stated needs. Critical pedagogy encourages listening to the diverse and marginalised voices of students, in order to better identify systemic limitations and critically reflect on ways in which education operates to maintain the status quo. Educators may adopt the dialogic method to better understand their students' lived experiences and thus inform situated teaching: "epistemologically it is possible, by listening to students speak about their understanding of their world, to go with them towards the

direction of a critical, scientific understanding of their world" (Shor and Freire 1987, 20). The process of critical reflection assists the educator to gain distance from the system in order to identify existing power structures, question current models and propose alternatives, leading to transformative educational experiences (Freire 2004, 230). By employing critical pedagogy as a framework, academics are better placed to consider ways in which enabling program students may be supported to develop voice and agency, and become successful members of both the university and the broader community.

It is recognised that "some attrition from an enabling program is actually desirable", as enabling programs act as a "filter" to ensure that only capable students proceed to undergraduate programs, which partially explains the lower success rate in these programs compared to undergraduate degrees (Hodges et al. 2013, 5). However, it is imperative that these programs do not bar capable students through systemic or pedagogic limitations. Subtle hegemonic processes encourage students to blame themselves for their own position without recognising complex structures that may limit their ability to succeed (Freire 2004, 45). Critical pedagogy highlights the transformative power of education, wherein curriculum can be designed to make students aware of ways in which they have been systematically marginalised and give them tools to challenge this positioning (Freire 2004). Here, the teacher works with the students to raise awareness of how the self is constructed, and supports the development of agency (Kincheloe 2011). As marginalised students are guided by teachers to understand and critique the world, they gain voice and agency, and are better able to challenge existing structures, increasing the potential for social transformation (Degener 2001). If students can perceive the structural limitations that marginalise them, they may be better placed to negotiate these barriers and find ways around them to success.

In order to capture student perspectives prior to university engagement, the author analysed survey results from commencing students in enabling programs at a South Australian university college. This college is a separate faculty within the university, designed to support widening participation by delivering pathway programs to Australian students, permanent residents and students holding Humanitarian Visas. The college was selected due to the large and diverse student body and the strategic orientation of the university. A voluntary, confidential survey was delivered at the 2015 Orientation event. Two hundred and twenty-eight responses were received from approximately 270 attendees, which represents a third of the 2015 commencing college student cohort.[2] The survey was based on two established surveys: the Commencing Student Questionnaire from "Enabling retention: processes and strategies for improving student retention in university-based enabling programs" report (Hodges et al. 2013, 148–152), and the Commencing Student Survey from "Student and staff expectations and experiences" (Brinkworth et al. 2013, 37–44), and also included additional cohort-specific questions developed by the researcher. Data was analysed in order to identify student needs and expectations

[2] In line with university ethics approval criteria, 23 responses from students under the age of 18 were removed from data prior to analysis.

at commencement. Quantitative data offered a broad view of the student cohort, while qualitative data was coded using Critical Discourse Analysis to identify themes and offer deeper insight (Rogers et al. 2004). Student data was considered in light of relevant research to provide recommendations for enabling pedagogy.

4 A Snapshot of Enabling Program Students

The enabling program cohort is characterised by diversity (Hodges et al. 2013). In order to better understand the needs of these students, the first section of the survey gathered demographic information. Enabling programs have been designed as pathways for students from Australian government-defined equity groups, which include: low socio-economic (SES) status, regional and remote areas, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) backgrounds, Non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB), students with a disability, and women in non-traditional areas (Bradley et al. 2008). Recordkeeping from 2011 onwards indicates that low-SES students have consistently comprised half of this program cohort (Stokes 2014), which is well above the 2020 target of 20% undergraduate participation (Bradley et al. 2008). Low SES often acts as a proxy indicator for multiple disadvantage. Analysis of postcode data for SES (ABS 2013) indicated that a third of respondents came from the lowest decile rank for educational and employment opportunity in Australia. Data also revealed that 60% of respondents came from areas below the national SES average, demonstrating that the majority of commencers have limited access to employment, education and subsequent benefits. Other equity groups were also well represented amongst the respondents. Many regional and remote students select enabling programs at regional campuses or in external mode; however, a number move to the city, alongside outer metropolitan students who also move closer to campus. For students who relocate, the transition to university presents additional challenges as they adapt to a new home and related changes. Some students also identified as ATSI, NESB, and as students with a disability. ATSI and disability rates were similar to the undergraduate commencing domestic student average (DIISTRE students, 2011, as cited in Gale and Parker 2013). NESB students have embraced this pathway opportunity, as the percentage undertaking the programs was more than three times the sector average (DIISTRE students, 2011, as cited in Gale and Parker 2013). The institution's programs appeal evenly to both sexes, which is noteworthy as South Australian undergraduate enrolments have been skewed towards female students in recent years (Brinkworth et al. 2013, 23). Among this diverse cohort, the strong representation from equity groups indicates specific educational needs and also demonstrates that these programs are serving their purpose in attracting under-represented demographic groups to university education. While the students may present challenges for institutional notions of cultural capital, their diverse backgrounds contribute other valuable traits to the academy. NESB students bring linguistic flexibility, ATSI students possess broader cultural knowledge, students juggling work and caring responsibilities show familial capital, determination

and discipline, while students reengaging with education after negative past experiences demonstrate courage and resilience. If universities can value these diverse traits, both the academy and society at large will be strengthened.

Student enrolments reflect financial pressures and educational experience. The cohort is similar to the general undergraduate population, with 87% of valid respondents aged 18–24 and 94% of respondents enrolled in internal, full-time study. Almost 75% of respondents undertook the one-year Foundation Studies program, which presents a prerequisite and fee-free[3] pathway through which students earn a grade point average (GPA) for competitive application to undergraduate study. A quarter of commencers enrolled in the HECS-HELP[4] two-year Diploma in Science and Technology, Business, or Arts. Diploma entrants require a mid-range Australian Tertiary Attainment Rank (ATAR)[5] and receive guaranteed entry to the second year of linked undergraduate degrees, provided the student passes all of the Diploma courses. All of these pathway programs prepare students with academic literacies and prerequisite knowledge for undergraduate studies; however, the open access Foundation Studies program attracts greater student numbers due to the minimal entry requirements and low financial risk. Over time, this university's pathways cohort has also grown closer to standard undergraduates in terms of educational experience: 85% of respondents were last in formal study in the past 5 years and two-thirds of respondents had completed secondary school. Nevertheless, a wider range of parental educational attainment is evident. While a quarter of the students had at least one parent with an undergraduate or postgraduate university degree, half of the students were either unsure about their parents' educational attainment or identified that their parents had not completed high school. For those with limited parental experience of higher education, friends and siblings act as a key source of university information; 59% of students had an immediate family member who had been to university and 82% also knew a friend who had been to university. Academics who teach in these programs must be cognisant that many of the students are first in family, which may bring specific challenges, such as "limited knowledge of degree programs available… unrealistic expectations of university study… and broader responsibilities" (Luzeckyj et al. 2011, 95). This wide range of educational experience and attraction to lower financial risk programs offers insight into student needs, including their limited knowledge of university culture.

Student rationale for undertaking the enabling programs reveals their motivation on commencement. Students were attracted by what they understood as guaranteed entry,[6] and were interested in the thorough preparation for university provided by

[3] Fee-free except for the Student Amenities Fee which is waived for Humanitarian Visa holders on application.

[4] HECS-HELP is the Australian Government Higher Education Contribution Scheme. This deferred loan supports students to undertake approved studies and repayment is due once students reach a set income threshold.

[5] The competitive tertiary application score earned by Australian students on completion of secondary school.

[6] A number of these respondents were not actually in the guaranteed entry Diploma pathway, suggesting a lack of understanding of guaranteed entry.

the enabling program. Over 65% of the respondents started seeking information about the enabling program in the latter half of the previous year, suggesting that this is a key time to market to potential students. When asked why they chose the enabling program, the most common response was because it offered a pathway to university, followed by *"did not gain entry to preferred degree"*. Over half of the students commenced their program from this position, having not attained the required ATAR or prerequisite knowledge for their desired degree. While students value the pathway opportunity, this negative positioning may impact on student self - esteem and resilience if left unattended; alternatively, if acknowledged and managed effectively, it presents itself as an opportunity to develop student self - esteem and capability through tailored interventions.

Students were asked to identify how they initially discovered the enabling program. Their responses indicate that targeted and new media campaigns were more effective than traditional media advertising, emphasising the benefits of direct marketing and word-of-mouth promotion for enabling program enrolments. Targeted online and physical guides, alongside advice from trusted people were the key information sources for potential students.

Students were positive about their intended courses of action on completion of enabling programs, with close to 90% planning to apply for an undergraduate degree with the institution, and 16% also considering applying for a degree at another institution. Degree preparation and entry is the priority for students in these pathways and pedagogy must be designed to support this.

5 Enabling Program Students' University Expectations

Enabling program students arrive at university with a range of expectations and understanding of tertiary study which was explored in the second section of the survey. Student responses help identify transition needs, as they juggle external pressures alongside excitement about the possibilities university presents: "I hope it's challenging and I will learn new things" (Sam).

Regardless of high school experience, survey data shows that students commencing university have high expectations of the institution. Responses collected via a 10-point Likert scale were heavily weighted toward the high end of the scale with a mean of 7.83, a median of 8, and standard deviation of 1.44, demonstrating that students expected to be highly satisfied with their university experience. These responses were in clear contrast to student satisfaction with their high school experience, which had a lower mean of 5.74, a median of 6 and greater variance with a standard deviation of 2.51. In pathway programs, students arrive from varied backgrounds which include interrupted educational careers and mixed high school experiences. The vast majority of students were aware of the increased expectations and workload of tertiary study, and hoped for a satisfying university experience. Student comments captured their enthusiasm ("I'm excited to begin" (Maria)), high expectations ("I just want to do my best possible to get where I want to be"

(Mohammed)) and concerns about commencing university ("A lot of support will be needed" (Tom)). Some were also keen to shake their negative previous educational experiences ("I hope to do better this year in my course than I did in high school" (Kristin)). These comments indicate the fragility and optimism of these students as they commence tertiary study, alongside a specific opportunity for enabling programs to reconfigure life trajectories through a positive educational experience. This positive experience helps engage capable students who have been disillusioned or excluded through previous negative experiences. Educators must be aware of these attributes and opportunities in order to support students to rise above early challenges at university.

Students hoped to build personal, academic, career and degree-related skills and knowledge through their enabling program. A quarter of respondents hoped to improve study skills, and a sixth of respondents identified literacy as an area for development, specifically English language, essay writing, and communication skills. Students also desired to improve social skills, including teamwork and public speaking, personal attributes, such as motivation and discipline, and 10% wanted to build their confidence, including "ease of nerves" (Alvin) and managing anxiety. Respondents were also interested in improving many areas of knowledge. The most common single response from one-fifth of respondents was a desire to increase general knowledge - knowledge of "everything" (Jess). Almost a third of respondents were keen to improve their English knowledge, while a sixth of respondents desired to improve their mathematics knowledge. Students showed interest in discipline-specific knowledge including Business, Physical Sciences, Social Sciences, Information Technology, and Health Sciences.[7] Students wished to develop general knowledge about being a university student including organisational and study skills as well as referencing. A small number of respondents were unsure about what knowledge and skills they would require. Overall, students strongly desired study skills, personal and group skills alongside general knowledge, literacy and numeracy, and a discipline-specific knowledge base that they believed would lead them to succeed at university.

Students were also aware that their behaviour and commitment to studies would be essential factors in university success. Almost all students highlighted the roles of effort, planning, positive behaviours and support in order to succeed at university. A third of the students felt that organisation was critical for success and another third noted that studying hard, focus and dedication would help them succeed. Over a quarter of respondents identified that establishing positive behaviours would be important for success. Students noted that maintaining interest, motivation, understanding, attendance and engagement would be critical to gaining both success and pleasure from study: "to make the experience joyful while putting the hard work in" (Jackson). A small number also identified the importance of making and maintaining friendships. While most responses focused on the importance of the

[7] Historically, enabling program students at this institution have clustered in professional degrees, particularly teaching, nursing and social work. However, new cohorts of students have indicated broader degree interests.

student's own behaviour, an eighth of respondents also noted the role of family, friends and university staff. Some responses indicated a balanced approach toward success based on "motivation and support of my family, friends and lecturers" (Sophie), whereas others highlighted specific needs, such as "help as required re: health issues" (Luke). Overall, these responses suggest self-reliance and a sense of positivity and resilience within the cohort. However, these responses may also suggest a lack of awareness of the services and assistance available to university students.

Students outlined the number of hours they expected to spend on each subject per week and also indicated their other responsibilities. Although the university expectations were provided at this Orientation session, only a third of the students anticipated spending the recommended six to ten study hours per course per week. The varied responses suggest a split between the other students, who were either overconfident and felt a small amount of time was required, were unsure about time requirements, or were anticipating spending an unrealistic amount of time for each course in order to complete the required activities, perhaps due to anxiety or limited knowledge of requirements. Over half of the respondents had a paid job, ranging from less than five hours per week (9%) to over 25 hours per week (13%). Over a third of the students also had family, carer, sport or volunteer commitments, ranging from less than five hours a week (15%) to 15 hours per week (4%). Given 94% of the students enrolled in full-time study, it is concerning that over half are trying to balance study alongside significant part-time or full-time work (15 or more hours per week), often in conjunction with additional commitments. Such unrealistic time commitments suggest that more information and support is needed to ensure students are able to devote adequate time to study in order to succeed.

Students outlined the positive changes they had made in preparation for university; however, their responses also indicate the increased pressure faced by these students during university transition. A third of students had prepared study space at home and a third had also reduced or changed work hours, including quitting their jobs in some cases. A fifth made changes related to time management and organisation, including arranging calendars and family timetables. Other changes included: seeking support from family and friends; investigating transport options; and changes to accommodation to better facilitate study, including relocation, moving to cheaper accommodation and arranging housemates to share rent. Almost 10% also focused on positive behavioural change, including preparing to focus on study and reducing social media usage. Some indicated planned changes ("I am looking at moving out of home so I can have my own space to study" (Destiny)) or the desire to change, which was complicated by circumstance ("Need to reduce work hours, really scared to ask!" (Kim)). A tenth had made no changes or were unsure of what changes were needed. When asked whether there was anything missing from their study preparations, two-thirds of the respondents were confident that they were well prepared. Of the remaining respondents, desired additional preparation included: appropriate workspace, resources such as internet and computer access, self-preparation through reading practice and research, and institutional support, including early enrolment and career services. Some responses indicated specific needs relating to the increased challenges faced by students from equity groups, such as

accommodation, financial support, English tuition and taxi vouchers. A number of students also indicated that they were unsure of what they might need, suggesting a lack of knowledge of the tertiary environment. To support new students, a section of Orientation is dedicated to promoting student support services. This appears to have been effective, as over 89% of students indicated that they were confident about accessing university support for academic difficulties and career questions. However, a fifth of students were not at all confident about seeking support for financial difficulties and close to a fifth were not confident regarding personal difficulties. The broad range of responses and preparation undertaken demonstrates positive changes; however, they also reflect the extra responsibilities students from equity groups often have to balance as they enter tertiary education.

6 Insights for Enabling Pedagogy

This case study identifies particular needs within the enabling program student cohort. These insights can inform pedagogy and support academics to design learning experiences which assist these students in transitioning to and succeeding at university studies.

6.1 Equity Groups and Multiple Transitions: "Moving from a rural area, leaving a job and having to find another. Find a house." (Toby)

Many of the students in enabling programs are undergoing multiple transitions, as they join university culture, adopt student identities, change employment and adapt to new environments. Nevertheless, the university environment has been designed to serve high SES students, which can result in a disorienting and confronting experience for commencing students from low and middle SES backgrounds. Jack (2014, 456) identifies that "class marginality and culture shock in college is contingent on the social and cultural dissimilarity between one's life before college and one's life in college". Enabling programs can provide a space in which students may transition into university life and come to understand academic culture and literacies, while also valuing the diverse knowledge and experiences non-traditional students bring to the institution. In this way, these programs may act as a supported transition into academic culture and the attendant new identity.

As survey results outlined above indicate, enabling program students face additional external pressures including managing complex health issues, childcare, employment and carer responsibilities, financial pressures, and relocating for study. This case study demonstrates particular engagement from low SES and NESB students. For the third of commencers in the lowest SES decile and the 60% from areas

below the national average of education and employment opportunities, university is typically a foreign place. These students benefit from guidance in academic literacies, often due to minimal knowledge of study practices, university terminology and culture. For those from backgrounds of intergenerational unemployment, even fundamental expectations, such as punctuality and adhering to deadlines, may represent complex undertakings. For some NESB students, explicit guidance in English language, literacy and cultural norms may be required. Pathways cohorts are characterised by "extreme heterogeneity" (Hodges et al. 2013, 32); therefore, educators need to build rapport and understanding in order to better identify individual needs. Here critical pedagogy can assist: "through dialogue, reflecting together on what we know and don't know, we can then act critically to transform reality" (Shor and Freire 1987, 13). This heightened awareness will assist educators to adjust their teaching to address cohort-specific needs, connect students to relevant support mechanisms and aid them as they develop positive practices to support independent learning. Content needs to be made accessible for these diverse groups and practitioners must be cognisant of the additional pressures students face as they commence study.

A large proportion of enabling program students, including those whose responses are reported here, are first in family (FIF); that is, they are the first in their immediate family to attend university, ahead of parents and siblings. Research identifies that FIF students:

> …often had limited knowledge regarding the range of degree programs available; unrealistic expectations of university study, for example the time required for self-directed study, broader responsibilities, for example needing to work to support themselves through university, or family caring responsibilities (Brinkworth et al. 2013, 25).

These issues are present in the survey data and suggest certain knowledge gaps which enabling programs can address. In analysing university access across four first world countries, Jerrim and Vignoles (2015, 914) found that "parental education had a strong independent association with university participation, even after parental income and prior school achievement were controlled". For FIF students, particularly those from low SES backgrounds, parental knowledge and guidance is limited: "respondents' familial well of information about getting in, and consequently navigating college was dry (Lareau and Weininger 2008; McDonough 1997). Encouragement and support, however, came "without specifics" (Jack 2014, 459). This lack of knowledge may lead students to overcommit to significant work and extra-curricular responsibilities alongside full time study, as was evident in students' survey responses.

Alongside complex transition challenges, low SES students also face increased financial pressure as many reduce work hours to focus on study: as one survey respondent noted, "I have resigned from my job as I am unable to do work as well as school" (Claire). In analysing disadvantage in Australian higher education, Wierenga, Landstedt and Wyn identified that "time-stress is explicitly linked *directly*

to financial stress… for working students who are living independently, the pressures can be felt particularly acutely. Pressure is amplified for those who have family care responsibilities" (Wierenga et al. 2013, 10). Multiple additional pressures and commitments are often present for those commencing enabling programs. Universities can assist commencing students through providing information about how prior cohorts of students have managed the 'juggling act'" (Wierenga et al. 2013, 19), including interventions such as peer mentoring by enabling program alumni, tailoring orientation to student needs, staggering assignment deadlines, and providing assistance with course work, such as making lecture notes and podcasts available online. As is often the case, many of the practices of good university teaching, which benefit all students, are extremely valuable for students facing additional external challenges. Through closer awareness of student circumstances and needs, engaging and relevant content can be delivered; in this way "critical pedagogy may in fact be allied with general excellence in teaching" (Keesing-Styles 2003, 10).

The transition to academic culture presents particular challenges for those students who enter the institution with limited university experience and knowledge. It is useful for educators to draw upon transition pedagogy, which has been developed for first year undergraduate students (Kift et al. 2010) and to extend this approach in pathway programs, as the challenges of university transition "are experienced more acutely and some appear particular to these students" (Levy and Earl 2012, xii). As Southgate et al. (2014, 42) acknowledge, "FIF students were more likely to seek help from university services". This may be due to complex life circumstances: "as universities attract higher numbers of low SES students, they also attract extra students who may struggle to find the necessary practical, economic and social support to complete their studies" (Bexley et al. 2013, cited in Wierenga et al. 2013, 10). Alternatively, this may be a cultural expectation, as "FIF students have been socialised into working class interdependent norms… they bring these norms to university, experiencing a clash of culture in the help-seeking process" (Southgate et al. 2014, 41). In order to support these new students in the university learning environment, enabling programs can connect students to existing support services, while also embedding learning strategies that assist them to flourish as independent adult learners. Survey data demonstrated that a fifth of enabling program students were unsure about financial support and a similar amount lacked confidence in accessing support for personal issues. It would be beneficial to provide further information about counselling, wellbeing resources, financial support options and scholarships early on and throughout their academic journey. Program content can also work to empower students for their undergraduate studies through the delivery of "tailor[ed] induction programs" and "subjects within the curriculum where students are supported to think about their own learning, their career and learning strategies" (Wierenga et al. 2013, 19). In these ways, the transition through the enabling program can assist students with the initial supports they need while also building long-term strategies for university success.

6.2 Heightened Anxiety and University: "I'm scared. Please say hello!" (Huy)

Many enabling program students commence university with high levels of anxiety about their studies. In contrast to other South Australian undergraduates who largely choose their program on the basis of "interest (71%) and job prospects (46%)" (Brinkworth et al. 2013, 23), surveyed students chose their enabling program as a pathway to university (69%) where, irrespective of pathway, 55% of all respondents noted that they did not gain entry to their preferred degree. Hodges et al. (2013, 31) argue that students enter open-access programs with "less than satisfactory, indeed at times negative" prior educational experiences; Gallacher et al. (2002) observe that negative educational experiences lead to "fragile learner identities". This is reflected in survey responses: "considering I did not have a good time in school, I need a second chance to reach my goals" (Jared). The enabling educator can create a break from negative experiences by supporting students to move away from deficit conceptions.

It is the role of the critical educator to assuage student concerns and offer empowering learning experiences through transformative pedagogy. Educators can build rapport and dialogue through respectful and empathic teaching (Villacañas de Castro 2015). The teachers' actions, language and attitudes shape the educational experience as they "impact on student formation through teaching… education is simultaneously a certain theory of knowledge, going into practice, a political and aesthetic act" (Shor and Freire 1987, 31). An educator's pedagogical decisions shape the student outcomes. Do teachers choose accessible language that allows students to forge connections with theory through familiar concepts? Or do they obfuscate to demonstrate their expertise, thereby increasing student isolation and anxiety? In this author's teaching experience, the first few weeks with new students in enabling programs are often focused on building trust and establishing a respectful learning environment so that all students are free to learn. Students adapt to an adult learning environment in which their opinions are respected and they are treated as equals: in Freire's praxis:

> a significant degree of tolerance, student freedom, and student equality had to permeate the whole educational experience granted the learners… Teacher and student equality was not justified on epistemological but pedagogical grounds, not on account of their present knowledge but as a prerequisite of the knowledge to come (Villacañas de Castro 2015, 83).

However, while students are treated as equals, a dialogic classroom is not permissive; rather, it presents a "permanent tension between authority and liberty… permitting student freedoms which emerge, which grow and mature precisely because authority and freedom learn self-discipline" (Shor and Freire 1987, 16). As Digiovanni and Liston (2005, 128) suggest "classroom rules can lay a foundation for what students can and should do to affirm the dignity of others within and outside of the classroom". These are particularly important for supporting respectful interactions in a diverse learning community (Renshaw 2004, 8). Dialogic approaches draw upon both Socratic reasoning and Bakhtin's conception of language as identity work

to establish mutual understanding; "the teacher and students are trying to create a common language and worldview, and a tacit set of ground rules that sustain smooth interaction between community members over time" (Renshaw 2004, 8). Clear expectations and guidelines for interaction within the learning space assist those with disrupted educational experiences to understand how this new environment operates. These expectations and guidelines also foster respectful behaviours, which support all to engage in learning.

Educators can further support students to gain trust in this new educational environment by designing course content to build confidence. Teaching can be conducted in a constructivist manner by valuing students' existing "funds of knowledge" (Gonzalez et al. 2013) and using these as a starting point for accessing university concepts. A dialogic approach encourages educators:

> to very carefully negotiate the students' gradual construction of knowledge, every step of which had to advance just one inch beyond the learner's level of awareness… Dialogue was the only means by which teachers could really attune their didactic interventions to the students' cognitive level, precisely because dialogue allowed the students to set the pace of their learning (Villacañas de Castro 2015, 82).

Through familiarity with individual student needs and progress, dialogic approaches assist enabling educators in meeting the diverse needs of each class: "to engage and challenge the more advanced students while at the same time reiterating content and building confidence to engage the less advanced students" (Hodges et al. 2013, 32). A scaffolded approach to learning, which starts by building learner confidence, sets high expectations and supports students to reach these expectations, will result in a positive classroom culture wherein students reach their goals (Tinto 2012). Time spent completing relevant activities in enabling programs will assist learners to build self-efficacy and "increase students' confidence in their ability to study at university" (Habel 2012, 821), thereby facilitating students' establishment of positive learner identities for undergraduate success. Student survey responses evidence motivation and a commitment to their studies. Many students have made significant sacrifices to focus on their studies in the hopes of accessing better work and life opportunities: embracing this chance "to reach my dreams" (Reza). Well-designed enabling programs will encourage engagement with and critical understanding of the university system, while also helping students to build agency and confidence in their achievements.

University friendships provide important support networks for all students, and are particularly salient for FIF students (Southgate et al. 2014). Wierenga, Landstedt and Wyn identify:

> a need to address social isolation in students, who feel that they are tackling issues of economic hardship and poor mental health alone, especially those who are not able to draw on family and friends who have knowledge about their studies (2013, 10).

Southgate et al. (2014, 42) note that it is critical that educators "encourage FIF students to develop rich support networks during their first year at university", as this support remains once the scaffolding of transition courses is removed and students are left to rely on their own networks. In a South Australian context, "the majority

(80%) of new students agreed it is important to have a close group of friends for support at university" (Brinkworth et al. 2013, 23); however, "innovative measures" are required to build student networks, as students are aware of "the importance of social support and friendships but many found it difficult to establish friendships if they did not know anyone in their course" (Brinkworth et al. 2013, 30). Awareness of the need to build friendships at university can inform the design of Orientation and classroom activities, ensuring that students have many interactive moments with peers to forge connections.

6.3 Enabling Program Content: "I just want to learn all which I will need in my life" (Victoria)

It is clear that the students see pathway programs as a "stepping stone" on their journey to undergraduate study; therefore program content must be designed to build the requisite skills and knowledge for undergraduate entry and success. Given the broad range of desired undergraduate degrees, some choice within programs will support students to focus on relevant subject areas while also gaining foundation skills and knowledge. Students may also lack awareness of prerequisite knowledge required for specific degrees, so enrolment guidance is also beneficial, especially when linked to career planning. Surveyed students desired general knowledge and career based skills. Here it is appropriate for the educators to extend this learning through carefully designed content which builds lifelong learning skills and fosters societal awareness. Through examining their life experience and making connections to social, historical and global contexts, students develop broader perspectives and "a critical view on reality" (Shor and Freire 1987, 18). However, limited knowledge of university requirements meant that survey respondents were not able to identify specific academic literacies, such as research, argumentation and referencing, required for success at university. In connecting with this knowledge gap, academics can play a key role by designing content which addresses student identified learning needs, while also ensuring that the academic skill sets and ICT knowledge required for university success are also present. Through integrating theory and prior experience in their praxis, educators can co-create valuable learning experiences with students.

Praxis assists critical educators to design content which actively engages students with university concepts. In order to support retention, it is imperative that students are engaged within the first 2 weeks of enabling programs (Hodges et al. 2013). Critical engagement can be encouraged "through problem-solving and research projects organised around issues that [are] objectively and subjectively relevant to the learners" (Villacañas de Castro 2015, 83). This can be achieved through "learning and subsequent assessment [which] are intrinsically linked with student realities and lives" (Keesing-Styles 2003, 12). Dialogue and reflective practices

assist the critical educator in ensuring content has relevance to the students. Here, the teacher plays a creative role, adjusting content in response to student needs: "reformulating academic knowledge so that it absorbs the students' subjective position" (Shor and Freire 1987, 28). Strategies such as negotiating assessment topics and co-designing assessment criteria assist in the development of relevant and authentic assessment tasks (Keesing-Styles 2003). As student engagement and ownership of topic choices increase, so does the likelihood of affecting deep learning outcomes (Ramsden 2003). As students gain trust with educators and reconstruct their student identity, a community of learners emerges in the classroom. Diversity becomes an asset, shared problem solving and respectful debate occurs, and multiple perspectives are evident in discussions. Once this community has been established, dialogic inquiry comes to the fore:

> Dialogic inquiry… stands for a co-constructed view of knowledge in which more mature and less mature participants engage in semiotically mediated activity together…. a vision of the ideal classroom as a collaborative community where participants learn from each other as they engage in dialogic inquiry (Renshaw 2004, 9).

Through deliberately embedding critical and collaborative approaches in enabling programs, educators support all members of the community of learners to transform and gain confidence as learners.

Widening participation offers the possibility of a transformative university experience for students and the potential to transform the university system and broader society through socially inclusive outcomes. Rather than embodying a deficit position, critical pedagogy can assist students in understanding systemic positioning and using this knowledge to affect change (Degener 2001). Critical understandings assist educators and students in valuing diverse cultural knowledge and the possibilities this brings for informing and changing existing systems. This understanding can then permeate the institution as Brinkworth et al. (2013, 25) argue:

> First in family students do not lack cultural capital per se, rather they have a 'different' cultural capital and... the onus should be on the university sector to change in order to recognise and value this cultural capital. First in family students bring new forms of knowledge and ways of knowing that interact and challenge current dominant understandings. To fully capitalise on this potential, the university sector needs to develop a greater understanding of the capital that students bring to their studies so as to structure experiences in ways that facilitate the success of all, including an expanding first in family cohort.

Enabling programs are at the forefront of this change. Observations made possible through these programs lead us to posit that universities and academics must change in order to better address and reflect new student needs, harness students' strengths, and support social inclusion and advancement. Through informed pedagogy these programs must reflect a valuing of diversity and design content which forges connections between students' life experience and tertiary knowledge.

7 Conclusion

Greater understanding of student needs assists educators to improve the outcomes for those accessing university via pathway programs. This case study demonstrates that enabling program students come from complex backgrounds, experience multiple transitions and additional pressure on university commencement, and have support networks with limited knowledge of higher education. Critical educators can support students by designing content which is sympathetic to cohort-specific needs, engages through dialogue, and provides a safe space to explore and understand university culture. Employing critical pedagogy within this supported learning environment and establishing respectful dialogue among a community of learners, encourages students to build positive learner identities through "a social process of illumination" (Shor and Freire 1987, 23). The use of supportive and informed enabling pedagogy will assist students to gain knowledge, skills and confidence, and establish study practices for lifelong learning. These approaches will assist students to cross the threshold into university and flourish in undergraduate degrees. Armed with this knowledge, skills and institutional awareness, enabling program alumni are arguably better prepared for undergraduate study than those transitioning straight from secondary school. Through embedding these approaches, enabling programs can prepare students for both undergraduate success and their own "long-term educational process, open to constant dialogue and political participation" (Villacañas de Castro 2015, 90). Ultimately, pathway programs can work to transform university culture and support a better educated populace through social inclusion, enabling individuals who are committed and capable to access the opportunities university education provides: supporting individuals to, as one of the students states, "achieve my full potential. I know that university is for me. I am ready to learn, study and work hard" (Jo).

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Part V
Internationalisation and Privatisation of University Pathway Programs

Chapter 14
Quality and Innovation for International Pathway Programs: Good Practice and Recommendations for the Future in the UK Context and Beyond

Anthony Manning

Abstract The provision of international pathway programs as a means for international students to gain access to Higher Education is an area of activity which has developed rapidly in the UK and in several other countries in recent decades. This paper will examine a range of features which can be seen as markers of quality in international pathway programs. It will also identify areas of innovation, support and stimulus for international pathway providers, which can contribute to ongoing quality enhancements. In the process of discussing quality markers and innovative practices, features of curriculum, program design and student experience are discussed and mechanisms for the development of educationalists are explored. Reference is made to content and language-related considerations from the UK and other regions of activity and relevance.

1 Introduction and Regional Context

As Leask (2009) contends, institutional interest in aspects of internationalisation is a result of the "increased interconnections between nations and peoples of the world", produced by globalisation (p.205).

In regards to internationalisation, the author of this paper firmly believes that, 'international students are also crucial to the diversity of our campuses and the experience of UK students, both academically and culturally. When students return home

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or move on to the world of work, it is these strong professional and personal links that provide long-term, 'soft power' benefits for the UK.' (Manning in Britcher 2017)

Despite these core global benefits of international education, the economic impact of international education can also not be overlooked. In recent years, international student recruitment has become a fixed priority for revenue generation both for the UK and the international university sector at large (Hyland 2006). In line with this phenomenon, the provision of international pathway programs as a means for international students to access Higher Education is an area of activity which has also developed rapidly in recent decades. The term international pathways can refer to a range of different areas of program delivery, including International Foundation Programs (IFPs), pre-masters programs and pre-sessional courses in English for Academic Purposes. Whilst this report frequently refers to the context of IFPs, it is believed that much of the material cited is equally relevant to the other aforementioned program types.

In the UK the importance of international student recruitment to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) has been partly due to a period of governmental capping of home-student recruitment, which has only been removed relatively recently (Morgan 2013), in addition to the increased burden of tuition fees passed on to UK home students. In both circumstances, as in many other countries of the world, unrestricted revenue opportunities presented to Higher Education Institutions by the recruitment of international students (beyond the EU in the UK's case) is significant. Competition within the EU seems only likely to develop more rapidly, when or if the impact of Brexit changes fee status in the UK or if loan or finance access for EU students seeking to study in the UK is more restricted.

The competitive aspect of such circumstances is highlighted further as the number of students coming to study in the UK risks ongoing decline (HEFCE 2016 and UUK 2015b) as noted in Morgan (2016) during the current period when the number of UK-educated 18-year olds is also in decline. The Higher Education landscape is further jeopardised due to the lack of clarity surrounding Brexit and the impact of other recent policy changes pursued by the British Home Office, such as removal of the post-study work visa (Paudel 2014). Due to the importance of international students to the sector Rathbone (Morgan 2016), Chair of the British Universities Finance Directors Group stresses that:

> International students are a vital part of the sector, for both financial and academic reasons; and in my view we should continue to extend the relative scale of [recruitment] for the benefit of both home and international students.

Indeed, the current situation for European student recruitment is unclear. An initial slump in the September 2017 intake, arguably created by political uncertainty in the UK has been followed by a rise in applications from the EU in 2018, perhaps indicating a-last-minute rush before the full implications of Brexit are felt (Adams 2018). Given these factors, it is perhaps unsurprising that the importance of international pathway programs has grown, given their function as a mechanism for maintaining or growing the volume of full-fee paying international students who are

eligible to study at undergraduate level. A recent estimation (Study Portals 2015) has calculated more than 1,000 programs across the world and almost two thirds of programs based in the UK.

Despite research undertaken by the UK's former department for Business, Innovation and Skills (UUK 2015a), a considerable amount of guesswork is still required when analysing the size of the international pathway market due to the mix of routes of provision and the lack of central record-keeping. According to Study Portals (2015, in Education Investor 2015) the foundation program market alone has grown to over £534.8 million ($825 million).

According to some of HESA's most recent statistics (2015) 7,990 non-UK domiciled students were registered at UK Universities for non-degree undergraduate courses, many of whom would represent registrations on IFPs or pre-masters courses, however this number will also include other non-degree provision.

The most recent data for private providers (CentreForum 2011 and UUK 2015a) shows that private providers in the UK enrolled more than 15,400 students onto their pathways in 2011 and that an estimated 40% of non-EU HEI students had previously studied via a pathway provider in the UK in 2013/2014. In line with research completed by Cope and Kalantzis (2000), Leask (2009) highlights the valuable role played by interaction amongst home and overseas students on university campuses. However, it is also emphasised that institutional engagement is required in order to create the right setting for all stakeholders to derive optimal success from the engineering of communities of students from different national backgrounds in this manner (Hellmann and Miranda 2015).

As a result of these circumstances, quality and innovation are of crucial importance to allow international pathway programs to continue to thrive. This paper will examine a range of key features which can be seen as markers of quality in international pathway programs. It will also identify areas of potential innovation which could help to ensure that students taking international pathways have a high-quality experience that is sufficiently innovative and responsive to their needs and diverse backgrounds.

In the process of discussing innovative and principled practices, features of international pathway curriculum and mechanisms for the development of educationalists will be explored. In order to take into account good practice from beyond the UK, developments from the US and Europe will also be explored, so as to identify ways in which the UK model can learn from beyond the UK context.

2 Markers of Quality in International Pathway Provision

Given the broad range of pathway provision (UUK 2015a) and the proliferation of program options from within universities and the private sector, prospective pathway students are faced with a complex decision when it comes to selecting the program which they feel best fits their needs. The following section has been devised

in order to highlight some of the key features which can be considered markers of quality of which students and their advisers may seek to be aware. For the purpose of this report, the author has summarised these as follows:

- Linkage and connections with the host HEI
- Considerations related to private or university-led provision
- Program structures – one size does not fit all
- Student welfare and experience
- Experience of assessment and external/commercial examining

2.1 Linkage and Connections of Pathway Programs with the Host HEI

The connection between universities and their international pathways can be described in a number of ways, given the range of interfaces, levels and transitions which are involved. In some respects, these connections are similar to those experienced by international students within different stages of degree programmes and are reflected in the phases of international student experience as summarised and supported by the International Student Life Cycle[1] project (HEA 2015). Nevertheless, international pathway programs also have a tendency to require other forms of linkage which may or may not manifest themselves in the most optimal manner.

With regard to international pathway programs which are embedded within core university provision, it is likely that such pathways, as part of University unit provision, will demonstrate at least some features of what Weick (1976) described as the classic collegial academy that operates as part of a loosely coupled system. However, as noted by McNay (1995, 1996 in McCaffery 2010, p.51) a range of models of organisation exist within universities, described as collegium, bureaucracy, enterprise and corporation. In broad terms, in the UK and Australia HEIs have moved from the loosely coupled collegium towards a corporation model in recent years. Nevertheless, it should be noted that in any one institution more than one of these operating models can exist in different units at the same time (Bolden et al. 2008; Coaldrake and Stedman 1998; McNay 1995, 1996 in McCaffery 2010).

Given the prevalence of loosely coupled collegium connections between the international pathway providing unit within HEIs and the academic schools onto which students will progress, it should be noted that aspects of linkage between

[1] 'The International Student Life Cycle' is a series of pedagogical resources provided by the UK's Higher Education Academy (HEA). The materials, made available on the internet, offer key guidance and support to educators linked to broad range of educational needs which international students have as they navigate the challenges from the application stage to seeking work after graduation.

schools and the in-house pathway unit can have a significant impact on the nature of provision. This can be manifested in some of the following areas of connection and associated scenarios:

2.1.1 Recruitment and Admissions: The Extent to Which Pathway Staff Are Able to Control or Be Involved in the Decision-Making Process

As professionals in the field of pathway provision, pathway educationalists and administrators should ideally have involvement in the admissions process in order to ensure that the recruited students have a realistic chance of success on the programs. The importance of associated academic staff involvement in the making of valid admissions decisions for their own courses is highlighted by Fetter (1995). This connection arguably also extends to the provision of opportunity to students who the experienced international pathways professionals deem suitable to use the program as a conversion course in circumstances where previous study has not allowed progression. Where recruitment and admissions are divorced from the expertise of program providers, there is a danger that the final international pathway cohort selected in a recruitment cycle will be less than optimally configured.

2.1.2 The Pathway Curriculum

The extent to which the pathway curriculum is informed directly by the requirements of degree programs at the HEI onto which students will progress can have an impact on the extent to which pathway programs prepare students for their degree study and equip them with the core skills required. In particular, for the case of 1-year IFPs, this consideration could be deemed as key, given that, in contrast to secondary-school based routes, they are a year shorter in structure and commonly positioned as fitting more closely with degree provision.

In such circumstances, a marker of quality should ideally be evidenced in features of the curriculum which demonstrate close linkage with degree program curriculum and program design at the institution where pathway students intend to progress. This could take the form of collaboration between subject tutors teaching pathway programs with those teaching degree programs onto which students will progress. This would also ideally involve design of curriculum features or elements which are informed by degree-level provision in linked programs or subject areas. Baratta (2009) outlines a good example of how international pathways can be positioned to equip students to understand what constitutes proficient writing in their particular academic disciplines. Reichard and Stephenson (2014) also present a system for joint marking of assessments in order to build task authenticity (Alexander et al. 2008) and encourage dialogue between language and subject tutors. In addition, also in the context of international pathway programs, Manning (2009) outlines the potential benefits of moving on from preoccupations with power imbalances in staff collaborations, such as those suggested by Hyland and Hamp-Lyons (2002,

p.6), Bool and Luford (1999, pp. 29–35) and Raimes (1991, p.243) which Manning (2009) believes focus predominantly on practitioner status-related issues rather than providing practical mechanisms for encouraging meaningful collaboration. It is noted that such collaborations offer an opportunity to harness the diverse philosophical backgrounds of academic staff from different disciplines working in a shared international context. Linked to this view, Hoodith (2013) refers to collaborative initiatives amongst language and science teachers in international pathways contexts which foster awareness of the priorities of both sides of the curriculum and associated classroom practices.

2.1.3 Progression from Pathway Programs to HEI Degree Programs

Connection and interaction with HEI admissions officers for the purpose of setting and monitoring arrangements for progression to HEI degree programs is of key significance in order to ensure that suitably qualified students are able to join their intended degree programs but also to allow for the situation whereby students who have not met set rules of progression are not permitted to progress. This ensures that the quality of students transitioning from international pathways to degrees align with other routes into HEIs and maintains quality and respect amongst internal stakeholders. Where students are not able to progress within the institution in which they have taken an international pathway program, then another marker of quality from the student perspective is the provision of guidance and support for alternative programs at other universities which may have entry points set at lower tariffs. The annual Warwick Circle of Friends event (University of Warwick 2013) for graduating foundation year students is a good example of how one institution has sought to proactively assist certain students who are seeking alternative universities after taking a pathway program at one particular institution. Private institutions providing pathways are also often able to connect students with a range of different HEIs linked to their partnership networks. The University Pathway Alliance (UPA) an alliance of eight UK university-in house providers of international pathways is also seeking to support students who are aiming to move from international pathways onto degrees within their network. Expertise in understanding and monitoring student progression can also be identified through tracking projects such as the one described by Fava-Verde (2008) which seeks to gain feedback from post-pathway students and their lecturers in order to identify patterns of success and additional opportunities for pathway program enhancement for future cohorts.

2.1.4 Pathway Staffing

The recruitment of staff to teach international pathway programs and their connection with degree provision at HEIs is also of key significance in managing quality and in order to ensure that academic staff are suitably informed of the requirements and expectations of HEI degree provision. There are a range of typical profiles of

staff who teach content and language modules on UK pathway programs which tend to follow some of the following patterns:

2.1.4.1 Hourly-Paid Staff

Hourly paid staff who teach on pathway programs may also be experienced teachers of other levels of provision within the HEI and have affiliation to other schools or units within the institution. These staff members may have been recruited through recommendations from staff and research students within the HEI academic schools or recruited directly by the international pathways providing-unit, from a pool of local freelance professionals, including experienced HEI teachers and senior, experienced teachers of relevant subjects in Further Education or secondary school contexts.

2.1.4.2 Full-Time Staff

In certain institutions, the pathway provision may be organised in a manner which allows or encourages degree-providing academic schools to offer staff to teach on international pathway programs, within the scope of their existing workload allocation models. One example of this is in place at the University of Reading (Sloan and Vicary 2013) where it is claimed that employing subject tutors from within existing teams in university departments helps to ensure parity of module content and assessment on international pathways and linked degrees. In other contexts, the pathway providers may directly employ full-time subject teachers either with prior HEI teaching experience or with similar Further Education or Secondary School experience, as previously referenced with respect to hourly-paid staff.

The international experience, intercultural awareness and academic level-related commitment of staff working with students from diverse educational backgrounds is of key significance to the quality of provision. Overcoming such related challenges in this area is a key aspect of curriculum internationalisation and of managing or training staff in order to avoid personal blockers linked to a lack of commitment to internationalisation (Leask 2015, p.114). The key to success is likely to lie in the mobilisation of a successful institutional strategy. Some of the potential risks involve lack of knowledge of transition requirements based on idiosyncrasies pertaining to different educational systems, non-internationalised approaches to curriculum and learning methods as well as disengagement due to a sense of lower priority in comparison to teaching activity at higher levels of study within the academy. Problems may also arise due to employment status, particularly in the case of hourly-paid staff who may be on zero-hours contracts and who may harbor a sense of dislocation from mainstream provision, due to direct employment through pathway units rather than central academic schools. As suggested by the UK's University and College Union (UCU 2014), it could be argued that zero-hours contracts are not compatible with developing a professional workforce that will deliver high quality services, due to the drawbacks in contract and employment status compared to permanent regular

work. Ultimately, irrespective of the staffing pattern adopted by the international pathway provider, the crucial factors for quality of provision can be considered to include some of the following elements:

2.1.5 Student Access to the Mainstream Student Experience at the University

Given that the primary purpose of international pathway programs is to prepare students for the experience of study at degree level within an HEI, it is logical to assume that preparation for the academic experience will be coupled with access to authentic elements of the broader student experience at the destination institution. Again, there is a range of challenges to this which HEIs should consider mitigating in order to ensure that an authentic and rewarding student experience is available to international pathway students. These challenges include:

2.1.5.1 Avoiding Ghettoisation Both Academically and Socially

Due to the fact that many pathway units provide their courses through a separate building and a dedicated team of cross curricular staff, it is often the case that even in-house provision operates as a quasi-separate unit with a different culture to many of the other sections within the university. The challenge of offering students an authentic experience under such circumstances is not inconsiderable and whilst the facilities provided by newer private pathway partnership companies are often of a high quality standard, it is arguably the case that 'in some circumstances' they may also detract from integration into the host HEI.

Even on smaller campuses an international student club or housing arrangement can lead to a ghettoisation environment (Deardorff 2009, p.212 in Andrade and Evans 2009) through the creation of a more defined and less representative sub-culture. The challenge may also be aggravated in circumstances where provision is outsourced to a location which is distant from the HEI campus or main faculty buildings. Whatever the physical proximity or distance from the main HEI locality, it is important that every effort is made by the international pathway providing unit to build bridges for international pathway students between the international pathway unit and intended degree-providing schools. This could be achieved through student mentorship, briefings, guest lectures, student visits or observation sessions.

2.1.5.2 Encouraging Interaction Between International Students and Home Students

Whilst the number of international students participating in international pathway programs will contribute to the institutions' statistics related to international registrations, it is important to note that simply recruiting international students does not

necessarily create a meaningful internationalised educational environment (Arkoudis 2010). As Putnam's (2007) investigation noted, greater diversity within the HEI community has actually led to a greater level of distrust and adequate preparation for interactions with each other is required, for both home and international students. It is also noted in this study that support needs to go beyond orientation in order to build intercultural skills. With a more specific focus on the international pathway programs, Jones (2013) states that the best kind of IFPs offer strategies to students for befriending and working with home students as this helps international students on the program and broadens the global perspectives of local students. With similar ambitions in mind, Nukui (2009) identifies a mechanism for raising cultural awareness amongst students on IFPs through the use of critical incidents, using a model inspired by Cushner and Brislin (1996) where student participants are presented with a series of scenarios in which people from different cultures interact with the intent of pursuing a common goal.

In addition, as many international pathway programs do not seek to recruit home students, in order to espouse a holistic approach to internationalisation which fosters appropriate community interactions, mechanisms should be sought to allow students on such programs to interact with home-student counterparts as, the better the diversity of the group, the better the learning (Newman 2007). It needs to be acknowledged that internationalisation is for all students at the institution. Therefore, communities should be built which include different groups of students in order for students to develop into global citizens who can work in societies where cross-cultural competence is a key asset (Shiel 2006). Another good example, linked to the fostering of global citizenship and interaction between international and home students and the involvement of staff in a pathways context is presented by Bressan and Green (2011) who describe the design of assessment tasks which require home and international student interaction and foster the development of intercultural awareness and global citizenship skills.

2.2 Considerations Linked to Private or University-Led Provision of Pathway Programs

Over the last decade, an increasing number of British universities have opted to develop strategic partnerships with private companies which recruit international students and deliver international pathway programs. However, the contention that a HEI can best serve and retain international students by outsourcing recruitment, support services and instruction to private providers is not without controversy (Redden 2010). In some cases, it has been argued that such private providers bring an associated risk of reduced academic standards due to overambitious recruitment targets and less than secure procedures (Fulcher 2007, 2009; Hamp-Lyons 2011; Lipsett 2008). A detailed and politically-impassioned account of the opposition to privately provided pathways which include teaching English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is also available from

the University and College Union (2012), however it should be noted that the stance is not fully objective in nature. With similar concerns in mind, in a context which also overlaps with international pathway provision, Hamp-Lyons (2011) describes, in an arguably more balanced manner, the dangers of re-classifying EAP education, often a key component of pathway provision, as 'professional' or 'support' activity.

In contrast to some of the views expressed above, the potentially powerful contribution of University partnerships with the private sector is described by reference to the context of Glasgow Caledonian University (OBHE 2014) and their experience of working with the private sector in order to establish an international foundation college. This interaction is cited as having had a pivotal role on the wider institution's development, internationalisation and economic sustainability.

In response to the good practice sharing and communications benefits of collaborating across a linked network of pathway providers, as pioneered by private providers and consortium activity such as that led by NCUK, eight UK universities have recently joined forces to share good practice and strengthen communications through the University Pathways Alliance (UPA). Institutions of this alliance share an ethos to prioritise excellence in the in-house provision of international pathways and the support of students, parents, schools, embassies and other stakeholders (UPA 2018).

It should not be considered to be the case that all HEI in-house led international pathway provision is inherently superior to privately provided provision, partly due to the fact that many of the teaching professionals who are teaching on privately provided courses may have formerly worked in embedded HEI-led pathway courses, before private take-overs were undertaken. However, there are clear negative implications for international pathway provision, whether they be privately run or embedded within institutions, if HEIs do not position academic quality or professionalism as central to good academic practice for international pathways.

2.3 Program Structures –'One Size Does Not Fit All'

Various factors have been identified as pushing or pulling international students towards international destinations for higher education purposes (Gong and Huybers 2015). Matters such as quality, cost, lack of local availability, and enhanced opportunity or employability upon completion have been highlighted as notable pull factors. These considerations, amongst others, reflect the wide range of choices available in the global education market (Agarwal and Winkler 1985; Bodycott 2009; Mazzarol and Soutar 2002; Yang 2007). The structural differences discussed below highlight some key aspects of the diversity of provision which contribute to the many options available to internationals students seeking pathway programs.

2.3.1 Pathways and the Reflection of Subject Specialisms at HEI Level

In their investigation of the functions and aims of universities, Bolton and Lucas (2008) refer to one of the key functions of HEIs as the provision of high-level specialised education and training. It therefore follows that international pathways which are designed to lead to success in degrees at HEIs should reflect and prepare students for the specialism of those HEIs. Effectively, this means that international pathways should demonstrate some tailored provision which links with the specialisms of the academic portfolio of the HEI onto which their students are seeking to progress. For example, if an institution is known to specialise in Architecture and has an international pathway to that subject, then one would expect that the pathway design would involve research into the particular features of or skills required for that specific area of study rather than a more generic, less tailored model. Linked to this, Hunter and Whiteside (2010) describe the development of a module for their IFP, which adopts a holistic approach. This model goes beyond developing reading and writing skills by seeking to assist students in understanding the wider idiosyncrasies and purposes of academic communication in particular disciplines.

2.3.2 Language, Academic Skills and Content

In the 2003/4 academic year the UK's Quality Assurance Agency identified a series of intellectual and transferable skills which they considered to be critical at all levels of higher education. The intellectual skills identified included analysis, synthesis, evaluation and problem solving. Those transferable skills when further described included communication, teamwork and research skills (Durkin and Main 2002). Since that period, it has been common for international pathway programs to incorporate a range of academic skills provision. Not surprisingly, dedicated published resources have emerged for use on pathway programs, such as the multi-modular resource known as the Transferable Academic Skills Kit (TASK) (Manning and Nukui 2007).

In the section above linked to subject specialisms, the different academic foci of universities is acknowledged. In line with this situation, it stands to reason that different subject areas and different academic levels may need different balances of academic skills just as different subject pathways may need a different range of core modules or subject modules. This flexibility also needs to be mirrored in terms of differentiation for students who may have various personal requirements and skillsets. As noted by Manning (2013), in providing quality international pathways, one size does not fit all. This is both in terms of the needs of pathway students' and the diversity of options available to meet their requirements.

Tomlinson and Imbeau (2010) describe differentiation as the process of attaining balance between academic content and learners' particular learning requirements. This objective can be seen to align particularly well with pathway programs, as educators endeavor to assist students in applying existing skills and knowledge to a new educational context, in the form of degree-level study.

According to Hyland (2006, p.73), in the context of bridging the needs of international students developing their skills for academic purposes, educational provision should recognise the importance of affective, personal and social expectations of learning. It should also embrace many aspects, incorporating learners' goals, backgrounds and language proficiencies along with their reasons for taking the course. Jordan (1997, p.1994) also takes into account factors such as learning styles, academic culture, general culture, and British life and institutions. Similarly, Alexander et al. (2008) stress the importance of accepting that in a new academic context the rules or expectations that students bring from their previous educational experiences can operate at different levels.

2.4 Students' Welfare and Experience

As noted by Sibley (2015), in order to succeed in their studies, international students need to adapt to a new social and educative environment. Sibley, highlights the range of issues which international students have to potentially contend with, through reference to historical studies over the years such as Ward (1962); Zwingman and Gunn (1983). These studies describe psycho-social issues that students may experience and some methods of managing these circumstances. Importantly, a key finding from Sibely's study shows that students who are not able to acculturate to their host academic and social culture also tend to face challenges in making academic progress. As a result of this, in relation to international pathways, interventions which support student experiences and welfare through acculturation activities appear to be a very worthwhile investment for providers as these activities diminish marginalisation or acculturative stress which are debilitating for students (Berry 2005). These activities also help students to progress from a pathway program to degree-level study. If this acculturation does not take place, then pathways students risk feeling alone or restricted to an 'at-home' bubble of cultural and linguistic sameness (Hawkes 2012).

One particularly useful metaphor which highlights key features of good quality pathway provision and of the learning experience which providers should both avoid and seek to implement, compares pathway programs to either a bridge, a ferry or a ford (Jones 2013). This has been adapted and extended to add a tunnel-route in Figure 1:

The bridge	At its best, a bridge is a solid and secure form of support across the water as a two-way conduit to academic transition. However if the distance to travel is too long, then the end destination may be difficult for students to visualise and therefore to reach. Crucially, the structure will also require maintenance.
The ferry	The ferry transports students to their destination but also deposits them without the same ease of access back in the direction that they came from and without a life-vest of ongoing support from the foundation provision. In addition, dangers can arise if the vessel is overloaded.
The ford	The ford provides very little support, leaving students to have to wade to the other side with only intermittent stepping stones of support which leave crucial and unreliable gaps.
The tunnel	The tunnel allows transition from point of embarkation to destination, either from country to country via TNE routes or from private provision to HEI. However, the traveler sometimes may be less aware of their changing social and academic surroundings as they make their journey. This risks adding additional acculturation and adaptation challenges at the point of destination.

Figure 1 International Pathways as a Bridge, Ferry, Ford or Tunnel. (Adapted and extended from Jones 2013)

2.5 *Experience of Assessment and External/Commercial Examining of Pathway Programs*

2.5.1 Assessment

Cizek (1995), Popham (2001), and Stiggins (1995) describe the challenges facing the classroom teacher of managing the complex matrix of skills and associated activities which constitute Assessment Literacy in the contemporary context. This challenge is particularly relevant to international pathway programs given that they recruit international students from diverse backgrounds working in a broad range of disciplines. With specific reference to in-house language tests created within universities, O'Sullivan (2011, p.265–270) also acknowledges the potential threats to test quality through in-house test design and claims relating to levels of student proficiency if teachers' Assessment Literacy is limited.

In contrast, certain key points are also made about the benefits of the local contexts in which many in-house tests are created. This includes language tests which are part of modules on international pathways programs. Rea-Dickins (cited in O'Sullivan 2011) argues that, in most situations, local tests are more likely to allow

practitioners to make valid assumptions about test- takers. It is also suggested that local test developers have opportunities to focus on specific domains and contexts which are relevant to local needs.

As with any testing system, within international pathway programmes or elsewhere, what is significant in assessment is construct validity, or the extent to which the items in the test accurately represent the skills being targeted for assessment. In the past, some tests and assessment tasks have been developed using less principled approaches than those which have emerged from more recent research into assessment good practice (Fry et al. 1999, p.44).

As in other areas of education, construct validity is of key relevance to Assessment Literacy (Moss et al. 2006, p.116) and in turn to international pathways. Indeed, an understanding of this area is critical to the building of quality tests and assessment tasks, to the avoidance of the negative influence of poorly operationalised constructs (Fulcher 1999, p.226; Messick 1989, p.226), or to representations of content and academic skills in tests, commonly found on international pathway programs. Support for a more scientific paradigm for testing and Assessment Literacy can be linked back to research into psychological testing conducted by Cronbach (1990, p.192) and Messick (in Linn et al. 1989, p.16–17).

2.5.2 Experience of External and Commercial Examining of Pathway Programs

The origins of an external examining system in the UK in its most common form lies in the nineteenth century when Durham University was first established and an agreement was developed with the University of Oxford. This agreement aimed to increase and support the pool of assessment expertise and to demonstrate the reliability and validity of awards (HEA 2012). Whilst external examining is common place across undergraduate and post-graduate provision within the UK, the adoption of external examining within international pathway programs is less uniform. This might be due to credit frameworks and internal QA units which have tended to focus attention predominantly on provision, which is considered core from FHEQ level 4 onwards.

Again, referring to assessment literacy linked to international pathways programs, Manning (2014) highlights the need for pathway professionals to extend their skills in assessment. Working with external examiners on practitioners' own courses and acting as an external examiner is one way of developing key assessment skills which can enhance the quality of pathway provision through the continuing professional development of both language and content tutors.

External, and allegedly 'standardized', high-stakes and commercially-operated EAP tests are ever growing in impact (Blue et al. 2000, p.8). It is therefore logical to consider that familiarity with large-scale assessment practices associated with English for Academic Purposes should form part of the international pathways teacher's Assessment Literacy toolkit, in order to inform in-house standards and quality.

Whilst examination boards are frequently criticised due to the powerful influences they can have on individuals and institutions (Shohamy 2001), there is a

strong case to argue that the overlapping foci of psychological testing and language testing through the USA's Educational Testing Service (ETS) has proactively encouraged the exchange of key theories and concepts across these two influential testing domains. It is also clear that the wide-spread nature of such tests, used for admissions purposes and providing opportunities for international pathways teachers to train as examiners, serves to heighten practitioner awareness and professional development through the facility to critique and gain inspiration from large-scale commercially provided tests.

3 Suggestions for International Pathway Providers Regarding Areas of Potential Innovation, Support and Stimulus for Scholarly Activity

3.1 Cross Curricular Collaboration

Although it is inaccurate to suggest that all international pathway programs are designed in such a way as to facilitate optimal communication streams, it could, nevertheless, be argued that the structure of many international pathways is apt for fostering a cross-disciplinary collaboration amongst peers. This is mainly the case due to the collocation and shared management of subjects from across the curriculum, as described by Barron (2003) and Hyland (2006). Examples of this in the IFP context are described as follows by Manning (2009):

- IFP modules are often designed in and managed from within faculties and departments across the institution, thus creating opportunities for the development of a program specification which comprises methodologies and approaches grounded in a range of disciplines and philosophies.
- Innovation and advancement are often facilitated as new developments can be channeled to the IFP via multiple routes established by teaching and learning colleagues located in numerous faculties and departments.
- Representation on IFP committees and Boards of Studies is usually indicative of the curriculum breadth and the varied stakeholders across the University. This can provide a rich diversity of institution-wide input to inform the development and implementation of policies and procedures.
- IFP students are simultaneously multifarious in nature and yet collectively idiosyncratic in their shared 'international' status. Irrespective of the intended academic discipline, this often engenders a dynamic shared interest amongst tutors who pursue the same goal: teaching a single cohort of international students that is comprised of both culturally and educationally diverse individuals. This also seems to lead to a heightened peer identity amongst IFP tutors of very different subjects.
- IFPs often benefit from a cross curricular team of external examiners who are able to review and scrutinise teaching and assessment procedures for a single program, whilst bearing in mind a range of different subject-specific philosophies.

3.2 Learning from Alternative Pathways Providers Beyond the UK

Whilst there is arguably much to learn from the range of international pathways providers and different levels and foci of provision that are currently found in hubs of activity such as the UK, due to the global focus of international pathways, it would also be restrictive and contrary to the principles of curriculum internationalisation not to take into account innovations which emerge across the wider academic world. In addition, given that the pathways market has been structurally quite unregulated, taking steps to consider what developments in terms of provision have occurred in international contexts seems particularly worthwhile. A sample of practices from across the world which could be explored or learnt from are described below.

3.2.1 Universities of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands

The higher education system in the Netherlands has a two-track system, offering a range of higher education and research opportunities. Students who wish to pursue a more vocational approach may opt to follow a pathway at a University of Applied Sciences. Typically, in this form of provision, work-based internships are embedded as a compulsory element of undergraduate education and replace the requirement for empirical enquiry which is more common at a research-led university (Cazemier 2015). Undergraduate study at a University of Applied Sciences is usually in the form of a 4-year program in contrast to the 3 years at a research led university. Such models demonstrate routes to tertiary education which go beyond a skills deficit approach and offer food for thought to other international pathway providers and emerging new universities, especially in the light of possible future expansion of more vocational apprentice-related degree options. There are parallels between this model and new inroads made by universities into degree apprenticeships.

3.2.2 Community College Pathway Programs in the US

Another HEI access structure which is very worthwhile for international pathway providers to reflect upon is a system in action in the US. This system offers a two tiered two-plus-two articulation route, in conjunction with Community College pathway programs (Bali 2015). Via this pathway, students are required to complete 2 years of core courses based at a community college before transferring to a university for the final 2 years of study. This enables students to work towards an undergraduate degree at some of the most prestigious universities, whilst making a considerable cost saving on tuition fees. In such circumstances, the degree costs approximately half of the usual fee, and yet takes the same customary 4 years to complete. There are clear benefits here to students in terms of finance and positive

linkages with community colleges. This could potentially inform innovations further afield, if visa regulations are adapted to allow for these changes. Such a model would serve to establish better connections with existing colleges of further education which, in the case of the UK, have struggled to compete internationally in recent years due to a range of reasons and governmental restrictions linked to regulations for student visa issuance.

3.2.3 Transnational Education (TNE) Provision Based Outside the UK

The number of international branch campuses (as defined by the OBHE 2013) has risen over the last decade, from 82 branch campuses in 2006 to 162 in 2009 and 200 in 2011. The OBHE envisages that this figure will have reached 280 by 2020.

International provision based fully or partly overseas through branch campuses or other articulation arrangements can also contribute intelligence and expertise in international pathway provision to the wider sector. In particular, this might involve the development of academic and program delivery good-practice linked to the learners' educational requirements in the target region, including an understanding of the idiosyncrasies of working with mono-cultural groups. A relevant example of localisation of the pathways curriculum is evidenced by Lange (2012) and the management of transnational QA processes which deal with student integration issues when students seek to progress from overseas articulations to UK-based course elements.

3.3 Professional Networks and Scholarly Activity

Over the last decade, along with the international development of pathway provision, the breadth of networks which have emerged as sources of support and stimulus for pathway-related scholarly activity have increased in volume and more direct linkage to the international pathway field. With regard to pathway practitioners linked to the field of EAP, professional bodies include:

- The UK-based professional network and email-discussion list provided by BALEAP
- The US-based online-discussion platform offered through the TESOL International Association
- The Australian-based email forum provided through the Association for Academic Language and Learning
- The internationally-focused UK/internationally-based email-discussion list for practitioners in English for Specific purposes, provided through the IATEFL ESP Special Interest Group

The growth of international pathways has meant that the scope and coverage of the above organisations, their discussions and conferences are now frequently relevant to international pathway providers who are engaged in language and academic skills training. However, it was not until 2008 that a dedicated international pathways publication first emerged in the form of the InForm journal. As noted in the first issue of InForm (Manning 2008), the journal was '…launched with a view to providing a forum for the discussion of IFP-related teaching and learning issues which recognizes the breadth of the IFP curriculum and extends beyond the boundaries of English language teaching.'

As evidenced by some of the references linked to this article, the contribution from the sector has been both cross-curricular and insightful since the journal commenced. An annual conference is also held. Given the development of networks of privately provided international pathways, opportunities now exist for conferences and professional exchange which extend across networked international pathway colleges from the same organisation. In many cases this has enabled practitioners who are employed within such private university partnership institutions to network and collaborate with colleagues from all over the world. A recent development in the UK is the University Pathway Alliance (UPA 2016) which allows a network of university-led foundation providers to share good practice related to international pathway provision. It is hoped that in the years that follow additional support resources will emerge so that pathway international academics can continue to share their expertise in order to benefit the related programs and the experience of international pathway students.

4 Conclusion

It is clear that international pathway provision has matured over the last decade and that there has also been significant growth in volume and diversity of provision. There are notable areas of quality which can inform future provision and a range of pitfalls which practitioners can learn from in order to seek to avoid the negative experiences of others in the delivery of their own programs.

Given the range of provision across the world, it is pleasing to note that there are good examples of innovation and alternative routes which will continue to provide a source of inspiration to improve student support and curriculum design in future years. Now that networks and support resources have more widely recognised the academic distinctiveness of international pathways, this also offers an exciting platform for information sharing across institutions and borders with the global student at the centre of the provision. This opens up important avenues for curriculum internationalisation for pathway programs which in many cases are inherently even more internationally positioned than the degrees which pathway students subsequently progress on to.

The author hopes that, as practitioners continue to capitalise on the ever more developed academy of international pathways, the academic credence afforded by other

members of the academy who specialise in alternative levels of provision will also continue to strengthen, so that that the key role of international pathways is given even more value and the opportunities for cross-curricular collaboration can be harnessed optimally.

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Chapter 15
Canada's First International Partnership for a Pathway Program

Timothy J. Rahilly and Bev Hudson

Abstract This chapter describes North America's first international university pathway program, a partnership between Simon Fraser University (SFU) and Navitas. After extensive community consultation where strong arguments in favour (e.g., internationalising the institution, achieving enrollment targets in a competitive global market, creating a reliable revenue stream) and against (e.g., the commodification of education, resistance to a private- for- profit partner) were heard, the University Board approved an agreement between the University and Navitas to open a pathway college. Fraser International College (FIC) opened in temporary facilities and welcomed its first students in 2006. Eleven years later, the partnership is considered a great success except by those who retain a philosophical opposition to a public-private partnership in a higher education context. FIC has over 2,700 students from over 60 countries and more than 2,500 students have transferred to and are either currently studying in or have graduated from SFU. The SFU/FIC partnership has served as a model in Canada and a similarly successful program was subsequently founded at the University of Manitoba. Other Canadian institutions have since implemented pathway programs, either with a private partner, or on their own. However, they have yet to have the level of success of the SFU and University of Manitoba partnerships. This chapter outlines the antecedent history leading to the formation of the pathway partnership as well as the University's student recruitment and retention goals. Lessons learned regarding partnerships with academic and administrative units, separation and integration of student support programs, and how the two institutions both draw and blur lines between its students are also discussed. The success of the partnership has resulted in significant change at the University. The challenges and benefits that accompanied this change are discussed in terms of the academic and non-academic aspects of campus life. The chapter concludes with a reflection and observations about these types of partnerships and about change management at large institutions.

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1 Introduction

In 2004 Simon Fraser University (SFU), located in Vancouver, Canada, embarked on a journey with Navitas Limited, an international provider of pathway programs, to form what would become the first international university Pathway in North America. After extensive community consultation where strong arguments in favour (e.g., internationalising the institution, achieving enrollment targets in light of global competition, creating a reliable revenue stream) and against (e.g., the commodification of education, resistance to a private for-profit partner) were heard, the University Board approved the agreement and Fraser International College (FIC) was born.

The College opened in temporary facilities and welcomed its first students in 2006. FIC is SFU's partner institution but is itself a separate educational entity. Students at FIC are admitted to SFU after they complete their Pathway program, however during their time at FIC they are able to live in SFU's residence halls, use the SFU library, and benefit from a range of student support services (e.g., recreation, medical and career services, among others) alongside SFU students.

Ten years later, the partnership is considered a great success. FIC's current enrollment is over 2,700 students representing over 60 countries. The program has generated consistently positive student outcomes, with an average 92% progression rate (i.e., students who have successfully completed the Pathway program and have matriculated to a SFU degree program). Further, over 2,500 former FIC Pathway students are now currently studying at or have graduated from SFU. Although dozens of other North American institutions have followed suit, implementing pathway programs either with private partners or on their own, none have yet achieved the same level of success as that of the SFU/FIC partnership. Despite its positive outcomes, there are nevertheless some staff members within the institution who retain a philosophical opposition to a public-private partnership.

2 SFU's International Student Recruitment Goals

Before addressing SFU's international student recruitment goals, it is important to situate them in the overall recruitment goals at SFU, the Province of British Columbia, and Canada. While SFU currently benefits from deep knowledge and established practices in Strategic Enrollment Management (Black 2001; Dolence 1993), that was not the case 15 years ago. At that time, SFU was growing and recruiting domestic students was less challenging and an unintended and unspoken message to students was "*are your marks good enough to be admitted*?". The Province of British Columbia (BC) did not have enough university seats and BC was the largest exporter of domestic students to other parts of Canada than any other province (Junor and Usher 2002).

After many years of increases in the number of high school graduates in BC and rising entrance requirements, a demographic shift occurred which institutions did not foresee. The school-aged children population in BC peaked in 1999 (BCTF 2013; Province of British Columbia n.d.) and the number of high school graduates began to decline. Senior administrators and academic leaders began to champion new messages about student recruitment that recognised student enrollment could not be taken for granted.

Nationally, Canadian universities were coming to realize their position in the market for international student recruitment at a global level (Altbach and Knight 2007; Association for Universities and Colleges of Canada 2009) and were articulating goals to be more competitive (Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2012; Gee 2007). A similar awareness was growing in BC (Ministry of Advanced Education 2012). With respect to international student recruitment, there had historically been a desire to have international students on campus but the University had not articulated any formal goals and had not expended a great deal of resources on attracting or retaining them. That is not to say that SFU was not a leader in its own way. Indeed, early in its history, SFU was the only university in BC that accepted international students. As early as the 1970s, SFU participated in a number of large collaborative international projects in Indonesia and China, and thus grew its student mobility programs and strategic international partnerships (Simon Fraser University n.d.). Starting in 1992, and continuing to the present day, SFU serves as the administrative home of the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development (CCICED), a high level non-governmental advisory body, which was established by the government of China to strengthen cooperation and exchange between China and the international community in the field of environment and development (Tow et al. 2013).

Through the influence of some key leaders and, perhaps, also due to a recognition of economic and geopolitical changes along with the presence of international faculty members and students, SFU moved to articulate its international enrollment goals. In the late 1980s, SFU formalised its desire to increase the presence of international undergraduate students as part of its internationalisation plan (SFU 2006). Among the justifications offered at the time were beliefs that international students greatly assist in the institution's ability to facilitate an international dimension to teaching, research and community service, and thereby improve the quality of higher education for all students (domestic and international). These beliefs were later supported by researchers such as Leask (2009, 2015) who found that all students gain intercultural competence within a campus environment that facilitates interaction between domestic and international students.

The University judiciously increased international enrollment primarily through recruiting international students already studying in BC at secondary schools and community colleges. In 2003, SFU set a goal of 10% international student enrollment (SFU 2003). While SFU was able to increase its proportion of international student to 8.5% in 2004/5, two issues became apparent to academic, enrollment, and student service leaders. Firstly, it was clear that students recruited directly from secondary schools abroad were not as academically successful as

those who transferred from a school in BC. This point was illustrated by a later study (Johnston and Gajdamaschko 2011) which examined the academic success of international students at SFU from 2005 to 2010. This study indicated a 12.3% higher proportion of high school graduates from countries other than Canada were experiencing academic difficulty or had been required to withdraw due to poor academic performance but that number was halved for those who had transferred from other local and international post-secondary institutions. Secondly, competition was increasing to recruit the international students already in the Province (Steenkamp 2008), but many were insufficiently prepared for direct entry to a university, and SFU needed a strategy to recruit students from abroad.

In the early 2000s, SFU had a small international recruitment capacity, was concerned about the preparation of international students entering directly from secondary school, and felt some urgency around achieving both domestic and international recruitment targets. Therefore, SFU formally undertook a Strategic Enrollment Management approach and was focused on improving the quality, persistence, and graduation rates of all students (SFU 2005a, b). SFU recognized that a contractual relationship with an external provider would both improve its recruitment of international students and foster their academic success once enrolled. The initial goal was still to recruit the majority of students (60%) from within Canada but to increase the number of students from the U.S.A. to 10% and those from overseas to 30%. The overseas component has subsequently been refined to address a desire to have a greater number of countries represented among the SFU international student population. This desire is based on both ideological and practical grounds. Ideologically, there was recognition of the educational benefits of internationalisation, specifically in the interaction between domestic and international students. This includes domestic students gaining new cross-cultural perspectives and awareness, greater tolerance and acceptance of others and greater awareness of world politics (Geelhoed et al. 2003; Luo and Jamieson-Drake 2013). University leaders also recognised the great success SFU had in attracting students from Asia, but felt international enrollment should reflect a broader range of cultures and perspectives from other parts of the world. At a practical level, the University aimed to manage the risk associated with recruiting heavily from one region, especially one that was investing heavily in post-secondary expansion. In addition, after the economic woes of Japan in the late 1990s and early 2000s, Canadian Universities became very aware of the impact of changes in foreign economies on student recruitment.

Within 4 years of establishing FIC, SFU's international student enrollment reached 13.9% and SFU welcomed students from countries that had rarely been represented before such as Kazakhstan, Pakistan, and Nigeria while the number of students from Asia, South America, Russia, Mexico and Africa also increased. SFU currently has 18% international undergraduate students. Within SFU, the internationalisation strategy was widely recognised as successful with the Fraser International College external review (SFU 2010) finding that "a high level of satisfaction with the first five years of operation is evident for all of the stakeholders".

Many Canadian Universities have conducted site visits since they intend to replicate the success of the SFU/FIC partnership.

3 Curricular and Instructional Integration

The integration of the SFU and FIC curriculum was of huge importance to the University in order to assure the academic preparation of students who were transitioning to the University through the Pathway program. Although SFU had noted the higher overall success rate of post-secondary transfer students compared to high school students recruited directly to the University, it was clear that not all post-secondary transfer students shared the same preparedness. SFU observed significant differences between students who had attended some private Canadian colleges catering to international students and those graduating from Canadian public colleges or international institutions. These differences were not always apparent based on students' entry grades but surfaced during their undergraduate studies: a proportion of students were warned as being on academic probation or required to withdraw soon after entering SFU.

At the outset of the FIC-SFU partnership, the integration of the curriculum engaged academic staff within the university departments who played an active role in the design and approval of all FIC degree credit courses. Not only did this assist with the administrative integration of the curriculum, but it also instilled a high level of confidence within SFU in the academic preparation of FIC students. Courses taught at FIC are not "transfer courses" to SFU, they are SFU courses. Moreover, the recruitment of teaching staff, the course content and assessment tasks must be approved by SFU. However, the teaching methods and environment are different. The courses taught at FIC can be described as highly responsive to transition pedagogy (Kift et al. 2010). That is to say that the teaching methods are proactively responsive to the various levels of preparedness and cultural capital that characterise heterogeneous cohorts. "Cultural capital can be acquired, to a varying extent, depending on the period, the society, and the social class, in the absence of any deliberate inculcation, and therefore quite unconsciously" (Bourdieu 1986). Further, the methodological approach is part of the broader curriculum that blurs the lines between administrative support programs and traditional in-classroom teaching and learning activities. There is a strong emphasis on creating a sense of belonging and affiliation among the teaching staff and the students (McLean et al. 2013). In some cases, the teachers also teach at SFU. Courses taught by these members of staff at SFU are highly sought by FIC graduates. At FIC, the classes are smaller, there is more contact time between teachers and students, more examples and practice time are provided, there is a greater emphasis on group work, presentations, peer assessment, and classroom etiquette. In addition, FIC embeds additional information about academic honesty and plagiarism within the North American context as this is viewed differently in some cultures. There has been significant collaboration between FIC and the SFU's Teaching and Learning Centre. In addition, FIC offers

training to its instructors on effective instructional methods for teaching its particular student population.

FIC students have the benefit of moving to SFU with advanced standing as they are given full credit for the courses they complete at the College. FIC students differ from other post-secondary transfer students in that students from other institutions have to go through a transfer credit evaluation which typically results in some courses not being included within the recognition of prior learning scope.

The success of FIC students at SFU is closely monitored and the FIC curriculum has been and can be modified based on SFU's observations of the experiences of FIC graduates. For example, should it be noted that FIC students are having difficulty with elements of an SFU course, academic departments work with FIC to examine prerequisite course(s) to determine if the content or teaching methods need to be modified along the lines outlined by Kift et al. (2010) as First Year Curriculum Principles (FYCPs). These principles which include "Transition, Diversity, Design, Engagement, Assessment, and Evaluation & Monitoring—become that organising framework when explicitly and intentionally deployed to facilitate student engagement, mediate learning support and address the development of discipline knowledge and learning skills which are contextualised and embedded through the curriculum" (p.11). Typically, this is a collaborative and non-controversial process with a high degree of importance placed on student success. This simply would not be possible with any other autonomous institution that has its own curriculum development and approval process.

The relationship between SFU and FIC is highly collaborative at many different levels of the institutions. At the outset of the partnership, each SFU Faculty (e.g., Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Faculty of Business, and Faculty of Science, among others) assigned an Academic Advisor to the Pathway program. The SFU and FIC advisors worked collaboratively so that students could see how they could draw on the services of both institutions. SFU faculty advisors personally invite FIC students to different workshops and events in preparation for their time at SFU. This has many advantages such as assuring that SFU advisors have a high degree of knowledge of the Pathway program and helping students feel the integration of the FIC/SFU programs. In addition, the high degree of pastoral care promotes students' engagement and persistence in the program which facilitates their progression on to SFU.

4 Integration of Student Support Programs

The external partner chosen to help launch FIC was Navitas, an experienced provider of post-secondary pathway programs characterised by a high level of student support services and programs. SFU had observed a higher rate of student attrition within its own international student cohorts than its domestic ones. Accordingly, there was much discussion about how to best collaborate to assure students would complete the FIC program, make the transition to SFU, and complete their SFU program of choice. The discussions were informed by strategic enrollment

management literature (Bontrager 2004), student retention and persistence research (Tinto 1993) and past practice. As SFU had fully embraced the Strategic Enrollment Management approach, the work on student retention seemed particularly relevant. Persistence, as described in Tinto's (1975, 1993) seminal work, is based on students' need of both academic and social integration. His research is reflected in the contemporary literature on Strategic Enrollment Management (e.g., Smith and Gottheil 2011).

Academic integration, as partly discussed above, includes instructional methods (grading, feedback and students' identification with the curriculum, among others). Social interaction includes having connections, friends, having a feeling of fitting in, personal contact with faculty/staff (e.g., they know students' names and smile when passing them by). In discussing student academic integration and social interaction, Tinto (1993) identified three major sources of student departure: (1) academic difficulties, (2) the inability of individuals to resolve their educational and occupational goals, and (3) students' failure to become or remain incorporated in the intellectual and social life of the institution. FIC and SFU worked to address each of these potential sources of student departure with an aim of promoting high degrees of student satisfaction. The overall approach was to work towards assuring that students felt safe and comfortable in the Pathway program; FIC was their anchor point as they developed a sense of belonging to the SFU community.

FIC and SFU expressed a desire to integrate student support programs. It was recognised that the university had an array of specialised services and facilities that FIC did not need to duplicate. Further, as the intent of the SFU-FIC partnership was to have students transfer to SFU, it was logical that the University should, where possible, integrate students into the SFU campus. FIC offers its students orientation sessions, peer-support programs and student advising among other services. SFU offers student accommodation, libraries, health services, counseling, recreation, and some administrative services such as ID card production to name a few.

An FIC alumnus explained the benefit of the SFU-FIC Pathway program in the following way:

> All students arrive knowing how to drive. However, the rules for driving are so different here that suddenly they don't know how to drive. They need to be separated out to take a few lessons to be able to confidently integrate/merge and avoid unnecessary tickets, and accidents. A Pathway program is like driving school without having to suspend or lose your license in the learning process.

Within the context of the FIC-SFU partnership, "teaching to drive" entailed anticipating and reacting to a diverse set of student needs. These included, social, cultural, linguistic, academic, and technological needs. While they can be considered individually, these needs can also be viewed within a developmental framework such as vector theory as outlined by Chickering (Chickering and Reisser 1993). According to this theory, students need to develop competence in intellectual, physical and interpersonal areas. For example, they need to manage their emotions, move through autonomy towards interdependence, develop mature

relationships, establish their identity, and develop a sense of purpose. Ecological systems theory (Bronfendbrenner 1979) also seems relevant when attempting to meet students' needs as it posits that each ecosystem contains roles, norms, and rules that shape development. In this case, a given student from mainland China or Russia faces challenges in the Canadian context that perhaps a Canadian or someone from the U.S.A. might not. Other factors such as the presence of family, school, religious institutions, neighborhood, and peers have a strong influence on student development too.

4.1 Transition and Practical Support

It is well known that for international students, there is a significant emotional price to pay when transitioning into the tertiary education system of a country that is foreign to them. As early as 1954, the anthropologist Kalervo Oberg coined the term "culture shock" and outlined its key factors (Oberg 1960). This type of shock may be especially acute for students transitioning to a large university campus. They are still learning cultural characteristics of the new country where they live and how to physically navigate their way around campus or the city. In order to support students, institutions can first assist with meeting the basic needs that students experience. These may be simple and practical issues including providing them with key information to meet physical needs (e.g., where to buy specific food), helping meet their social needs, and assisting them to understand academic expectations. While both FIC and SFU work to support student transition, the needs of the incoming FIC students were more acute as almost all of the new students articulated into the Pathway program directly from their home country.

The practical support provided by FIC is similar to that of other institutions that deal with large numbers of international students. Students are met at the airport, transported to the school, assisted in obtaining housing, taken food shopping, and assisted with advice and practical aspects of their integration into Canadian culture.

SFU assists FIC students with some programs and services; however, special attention is required to refer them to the appropriate service that they require. For example, FIC students typically need assistance to prepare for a non-urgent trip to the medical clinic. Depending on the student's origin and level of independence, this might require showing them how to make an appointment, or making the appointment for them and explaining what will happen at a Doctor's appointment in Canada. It might also require accompanying the student to the appointment or assisting in pre-filling of forms. SFU has extensively trained staff members on cultural expectations, cultural capital and cultural competence. Staff found this training quite challenging since they had to acquire a large volume of knowledge in a limited amount of time. Based on student reports, it is not uncommon for the expectations of an international student not to be met in a 15-minute doctor's appointment. Some FIC students have seemingly been more frustrated or disappointed if the doctor suggests an over-the-counter product that can be obtained from a pharmacy rather than providing it at

the time of the visit. Wells (2008) found that there are differences between how social and cultural values affect persistence in colleges and indeed it seems that the extra support offered FIC students has resulted in higher levels of persistence than those characteristic of students who embark on a three or 4 years' degree.

The trip to the doctor is only one example of the level of support and collaboration required between FIC and SFU. Other examples include seemingly straightforward activities such as borrowing library books, finding and entering the interfaith centre (a multi-faith religious support centre on the SFU campus), getting a gym pass, and obtaining a student identification card. The type and style of student advising offered at FIC also needed to adapt in order to provide appropriate referrals which would ensure students had a positive experience when accessing university services.

Another aspect of transition and practical support is the development of technological literacy skills. Like many parts of the world, there is an expectation that students in Canadian post-secondary intuitions will be technologically competent. Given the large number of countries from which FIC draws its students, assuming students will know how to use the internet, email, or word processors is unwise. FIC provides workshops and tutorials to fill in the gaps in students' technological literacy skills to ensure that they can access library services, online resources, email instructors, and submit assignments, while still learning basic keyboarding skills.

4.2 Social and Academic Integration

SFU campus is large and the student body is quite active. Therefore, multiple activities, workshops, programs and events are on offer throughout the year. It is FIC's goal to assist Pathway students to build their confidence, resilience, and stamina to partake in the opportunities to socialize available on campus.

Peer support plays a pivotal role in supporting FIC students in transition. During the first year of operation, it was not possible to provide this type of support, so FIC and faculty staff did. While every effort was made, the support that peers provide is quite different in nature. Fortunately, FIC was able to recruit student leaders after the first semester and trained them to be peer supporters/helpers. Further, FIC was able to draw on the recruitment, training, and support procedures used at SFU.

As both, SFU and FIC, admit new students three times a year, FIC began inviting student leaders to assist with new student orientation. FIC and SFU met to identify the main topics covered in orientation sessions and to ensure that these were covered the same way at FIC. However, additional points related to cultural values and context were included in the FIC orientation sessions. FIC soon added a Peer Tutoring program to match students for one- on- one academic support. Later, it became evident that, once FIC students had volunteered and been trained, they were willing to do the same when they had moved on to SFU. This was seen as a huge benefit to SFU as it soon had a ready and willing group of trained student leaders that could meet the needs of domestic and international students who entered SFU directly. It was further observed that, after FIC students transfer to SFU, the leader-

ship of the majority of cultural and language based clubs at SFU was dominated by FIC graduates. FIC students are now woven tightly into the fabric of SFU and occupy roles as Teaching Assistants, Research Assistants, and some have even become SFU employees.

This success can be traced to FIC's early history when an emphasis was placed on the social integration of students. Students were encouraged not only to participate in campus events, but also to attend workshops and varsity games. Much effort went into promoting all activities available in the hope that students would enjoy everything the campus had to offer, and benefit from enhanced social and cultural integration. As the literature suggests (Poyrazli et al. 2002; Smith and Khawaja 2011), it quickly became evident that if the more confident students and those with high levels of social influence in the inaugural class attended an activity on their own and felt awkward or frustrated, they lost motivation and would not make another attempt. When it was noticed that this type of students who could become leaders were not participating in campus life, it became imperative for FIC to take action.

With the goal of ensuring students would successfully transfer to SFU and thrive there, FIC determined it would emulate SFU programming to build community spirit among students and instill confidence in them. A microcosm of sorts was created where the same conditions and experiences the students would encounter at SFU were offered in a safe, small, and controlled space. It was believed that this would prepare students for similar programs and activities at SFU and ensure that they felt they understood the social and cultural expectations of any type of activities in which they might subsequently participate. Some campus experiences provided by FIC were delivered in a similar fashion to SFU so that FIC students could have a separate but common experience. The rationale was that if a FIC student living in SFU housing was chatting with an SFU student, they would have something in common or perhaps, after leaving FIC and attending SFU, the student would be able to speak of a shared experience with students who had not attended FIC. For example, SFU runs a large scale new student orientation program which FIC students do not attend. The information given at SFU's orientation program would not be suitable for FIC students; however, the campus tour would be suitable for both cohorts. FIC based its orientation program on SFU's and even used the same campus tour script.

Many programs created at FIC had similar goals and were delivered similarly as SFU ones, but differed in that they provided the social and cultural support that facilitated FIC students' participation and supported their perception of success and competence. For example, programs and activities provide a foundation of Canadian academic and social expectations including points that are commonplace of Canadian culture such as nametag etiquette, ice breakers, asking to go to the washroom, small talk training, poster making, body language, and audience etiquette. Through this type of program, FIC recreated the social foundation learned over a lifetime by domestic students and helped international students acquire the necessary cultural knowledge within a year. This was not provided in a manner denoting conformity but rather cultural similarity and differences. As the FIC students are from a broad range of countries, through this program Canadian social and academic practices were explicitly shared with international students.

Although language barriers can make students' social integration difficult (Sampasivam and Clément 2014), anecdotal comments from students did not reflect this concern. However, students did report that they did not feel confident in some situations. For example, program content in a North American university includes some topics that are often viewed as taboo or inappropriate by some international students. SFU has a number of popular health promotion programs that focus on diet, exercise, relationships, and sexuality. Many are led by student peer-educators to encourage frank dialogue about personal experiences and much emphasis is placed on allowing students to share their questions and concerns. A young Muslim girl who has recently arrived in Canada may find it challenging to attend such a program, speak, attempt to make social connections, all while hearing information and views that are very unfamiliar or downright offensive to her. Indeed, even the posters on the SFU campus advertising these sessions can be overwhelming. Because of the importance of these topics to both personal wellbeing and social integration in the Canadian context, FIC provides programs that include the same topics but attempt to introduce them sequentially so as not to overwhelm students. The workshop titles were worded in terms that will not cause offence, context was provided, students were personally invited by multiple members of support staff or academic staff. At first, a workshop might have 4 students attend, but provided it was a safe and positive experience the next offering would have 10 and so on.

By providing these versions of programs and activities, FIC enabled students to build a solid support network with other students and thus form supportive friendships and meaningful connections. This greatly facilitated FIC students' attempts to also form connections with domestic students. FIC students did report that integrating with Canadian students is difficult and many struggled to find a way to build relationships beyond a surface level. A frequent experience reported by FIC students is as follows: At a campus activity, the FIC student meets a domestic student and the domestic student states something to the effect of "we should grab coffee sometime." In due course, the FIC student learns, to their surprise, that an offer of grabbing coffee does not necessarily mean there will be any follow-up. For a student without a social support network, this kind of cultural interaction can have a negative emotional impact. Facilitating the creation of strong networks of international students does not preclude or discourage an individual from interaction with domestic students. Instead, FIC students with a strong network reported greater success in connecting with domestic students as the perceived rejection is less stressful given the fact that they already have established friendships.

Further, through their enhanced networks, FIC students report meeting domestic students. FIC has always provided a warm and welcoming space for current students, for FIC alumni studying at SFU, and for any SFU domestic students. By having access to a "hang out space", students report that they feel they have an anchor point throughout their time at FIC and SFU. Providing a space for a mix of students has led to many opportunities to take students spontaneously to SFU events and activities. It is not uncommon to see small groups of students walking together to various fairs, programs, and activities on campus. Senior students model appropriate behaviour and coach peers on engaging with the wider university community.

These small integration activities have been important for students' confidence building and have had a ripple effect on others in the FIC community. This has also helped SFU achieve its goal of creating opportunities for domestic students to interact with international students.

5 Policies and Practices

As previously stated, there was a strong desire to integrate FIC students to SFU in an effort to encourage student success and to transition seamlessly from the College to the University. Although there was a short period of time between the approval for the setting up of FIC, its creation, and the arrival of the College's first students, it seemed expeditious for FIC to adopt as many of SFU's policies as possible. One key benefit of following this strategy is that Pathway students are already familiar with the SFU policies when they move to mainstream programs. The best way to support a positive student experience is to make all aspects of the transition seamless; policy understanding is one of those aspects. For example, FIC and SFU staff worked together to review policies related to academic integrity and student conduct. In some cases, the policies had to be slightly modified, but overall the policies mirror each other.

As some FIC students live in SFU Residence & Housing, some SFU policies and procedures had to be modified to clearly state which institution was responsible for which matters. It quickly became evident that some application forms for housing as well as some contract documents had to be modified so that both institutions could be fully compliant with the Provincial legislation related to protection of privacy. For example, should SFU observe students in personal distress it was important to both institutions that information could be shared so that the students could obtain the necessary support throughout the entirety of their studies. Although the FIC-SFU partnership is in its 10th year, minor issues with policies and practices do occur as it is simply impossible to anticipate all possible scenarios. When an unexpected situation occurs, the strong institutional ties and high levels of collaboration among FIC and SFU staff are a tremendous asset in formulating immediate and longer-term solutions.

6 Campus Life

SFU students have benefited from the non-academic aspects of campus life with the variety of cultural clubs on campus increasing. New clubs that aim to improve student support, such as a mentorship club, have been founded on campus; different SFU resources have been able to access the Pathway program as a safe space to pilot ideas and support initiatives such as workshop trials in classes, easily accessible

focus groups, captured audience for linguistic research as well as appropriate groups for research for graduate students.

A challenge is getting the awareness and knowledge about the Pathway program to filter down to frontline staff. If this does not happen, it results in students having negative customer service interactions and having Pathway staff constantly defending the Pathway program and their roles when attempting to collaborate with staff in charge of student recruitment. Areas that were more open to integration saw successful interaction fastest. SFU Housing, for example, was open to collaboration early and students living on campus have been well supported with great communication between the two areas on all levels. The Pathway program students help fill on campus accommodation all year-round, support their initiatives and provide opportunities for staff training on managing international students.

7 Change Management & Lessons Learned

Post-secondary institutions are resistant to change due to multiple reasons. These include: competing interests, aversion to risk, past practice, and strongly held values, to name just a few. Upon embarking on this Pathway partnership strategy, SFU identified change management as an area that required attention. The institution did not anticipate that any one approach to change management would be completely effective but it was evident that active support from important university stakeholders such as students, staff and faculty would be of paramount importance. At SFU, it was recognized that no change could be undertaken unless stakeholders were involved in the decisions leading up to the approval of the partnership. Failing that support, the implementation and operation of the agreement would be very difficult. The reflections below are included to note the learning process in which SFU staff participated and to provide advice that could prove valuable to those embarking on managing change.

In order to get meaningful support for Pathway programs, stakeholders needed to understand the reasons for change as well as be given the opportunity to express their views on whether these programs were an appropriate and effective strategy for change. Discussions and a thorough consultation process were essential steps as was the active engagement with the university's governance processes. Active, engaged and thoughtful leadership by senior administration was pivotal for the successful implementation of this process. Failure at this stage might have resulted in the downright rejection of the partnership, or in damaging, passive and continuing resistance that would have led to sub-optimal implementation.

Once agreement to implement a Pathway program was reached, the active participation of stakeholders, especially faculty and staff as well as their support of the many implementation decisions on Pathway programs was crucial. From a Pathway student's point of view, the Pathway from the FIC to the University needed to be as seamless as possible. Pathway students needed to feel that they were welcomed by the University and that they had full access to all the extracurricular activities, facili-

ties, and services that are available to other students. Registration, recreation and athletic opportunities, student clubs, residence and all other facilities needed to be available to these students. The rules for gaining access to popular programs needed to be clearly explained to facilitate understanding by Pathway students. At the same time, it was important that domestic students did not feel disadvantaged.

8 Staff Engagement

Staff are the first point of contact at the University for Pathway students and, therefore, needed not only to be fully engaged in the change process but also to fully participate in the design of transition Pathways.

Strong student services leadership was crucial in dealing with the feeling that change is not necessary and in raising awareness regarding the university's objective of internationalising the student body. Awareness of national and international trends in international student mobility, the benefits to domestic students and student learning, as well as the social and economic benefits of internationalisation needed to be explicitly discussed. Comparative data on international student enrollments, progression rates and views of the University needed to be developed and explained. Objections and concerns were identified and addressed through vigorous discussions.

At the implementation stage, it was important that a staff person, employed by the University, fulfill a liaison role between the College and the University community. This person was a member of the senior leadership team and had full access to the Vice President Academic and Provost in order to signal commitment by the administration to resolving implementation issues. This staff member became someone who the Pathway Program Director could work with and trusted. This liaison person was familiar with University academic programs and facilitated the coordination of the Pathway programs to the degree programs. This staff member also assisted with enabling the College Director to effectively engage with all aspects of the University. For example, if there were issues with students accessing library or information services, the College Director could quickly contact the liaison staff member so that rapid problem- solving could occur. This liaison person was especially useful when the Pathway program was first being set up.

Staff throughout the University should perceive Pathway students as important as any other students. Staff members' participation in the decision to implement a Pathway program facilitated the development of this understanding among them. However, at SFU, the administrative staff members needed to recognise that additional students require additional resources and that academic and administrative staff in turn require more resources to meet students' needs effectively. An obvious example was library services. Pathway students needed access to all information services and some needed more support than domestic students who are more familiar with library related procedures. It was unreasonable to expect the library to provide additional service relying solely on existing staff. Some funds generated by the Pathway programs needed to be channeled to the library and other student support services.

9 Faculty Participation

Faculty staff members are sometimes suspicious of the need for change and, especially skeptical of public-private education partnerships. Yet, these staff members must actively participate in Pathway programs at many levels. Importantly, faculty staff members must be involved in and understand the reasons for establishing a Pathway program. They are part of the governance structure of most Universities, especially the Academic Council or Senate. Without the support of this body, it would be very difficult to implement a Pathway partnership. Supporting change and including faculty staff members in the process is a necessary prerequisite for the implementation of transition pedagogy (Kift et al. 2010). This approach in the teaching and learning practices of the College promotes collaboration among faculty and college staff which results in student success.

At SFU, Faculty staff members were involved in the decision to implement a Pathway program in several ways. As a prerequisite, historical and trend data on domestic population demographics and participation rates, student retention and promotion rates, internationalisation trends and a number of other salient factors were researched and the results were made widely available to the University community. Town hall meetings were held to discuss the data and identify issues and concerns. Information sessions with the University Senate were scheduled prior to a decision session in which faculty students and staff expressed views on whether the University should enter into a Pathway partnership. Support by the Senate was a key factor underpinning the Board of Governor's decision to approve the partnership.

Also key to the Academic Senate's support of the program was the assurance that Pathway courses would have appropriate academic oversight and governance and that the partnership academic outcomes would be reviewed within 5 years of their implementation. Governance was established through a committee chaired by the Provost and with representatives from academic departments, student services and the Pathway college. Periodic reporting to the Senate was established.

Academic departments at SFU played a key role in the Pathway program. Their staff members were required to approve Pathway course content, nominate, vet and approve proposed instructors and approve examination and grading practices in courses taught in the Pathway programs. This active support of the programs was essential to their success. Fortunately, departmental resources were provided without imposing any conditions on to FIC.

10 Students

At SFU, like at many Universities, students play an important role in University governance. Their views are listened to and their votes count. More importantly, students are a key part of the culture of the institution. Student clubs, the student

society, and student athletic and social events are an integral part of the culture of a University. For the partnership to succeed, Pathway students should feel welcomed at the University and feel that they are an important part of that culture. Therefore, it was important that the student body understood and supported the Pathway partnership.

This approach is consistent with the concept of students as partners in change (Hargreaves and Shirley 2009) where students have access to, and participate in, the same fora that staff and faculty do. In this way, students are not perceived as the naïve target of change but are instead afforded the opportunity to participate and provide formative feedback, as change partners. By engaging students as change agents, they are empowered to take ownership and enhance their learning (Zhao 2011).

Understandably, local students (as many of their parents and members of the public) may have the additional concern that increased numbers of international students will displace domestic ones. In the early stages of discussion about the Pathway partnership, SFU provided assurances that increased numbers of international students would result in expanded capacity in terms of additional facilities and faculty staff members. It was also important to highlight the benefits of internationalisation to the local community and the economy.

Underpinning all of the stakeholder issues at SFU was the need for leadership. Obviously, senior administration was convinced of the need to approach the internationalisation of the University more effectively. Senior administrators were also convinced that a Pathway program was an important part of the road to that internationalisation. However, this was only a minor part of the whole process. Staff leadership was important to recognise the need for developing the relevant data to build a case for expanded efforts. Staff leadership was also crucial at the implementation stage. Faculty staff members and students needed to be open to discussion and change. Furthermore, Pathway college leadership at FIC was crucial for developing and nurturing trust which was essential to the success of the partnership. As is the case with many change initiatives, ongoing discussion and evaluation of the initiative will be essential to the continued success of the partnership.

11 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the history and development of the first international Pathway program in Canada. In 1996 SFU had 515 (3.1%) international undergraduate students and 10 years later, the year FIC opened its doors, SFU had 1,906 (9.2%) international undergraduate students. At the end of 2015, that number rose to 4,457 (17.6%). This growth of the international student body would not have been possible without the SFU/FIC partnership.

The partnership between SFU and Navitas celebrated its 10th anniversary in Spring 2016. It remains a great success that has been made possible as a result of both parties being fully committed to ensuring positive outcomes for international

students. To date, more than 1,300 former Pathway students have earned degrees from SFU and another 2,500 are currently (April 2016) enrolled at the University.

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