

## Community, credit, connections and careers

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## TAFE/VET learning

- Third in a series of research papers emanating from a research master project completed in 2006.
- Interview with 7 TAFE students initially to critique CBT and Training Packages
- The findings of that research indicated the breadth and diversity of TAFE learning
- Narrowness (TP) & breadth (student motivations)

## Community, credit, connections and careers

- 2007 "Education credentials & working lives"
- 2008 "Vocation and technical learning: building toolboxes from metal and clay"
- 2009 "Community, credit, connections and careers"

## Community

- Communal experience of being a student- TAFE student
- Learning is always social and in TAFE includes the experience of community of practice –student in a distinct industry / vocational field of study
- Skill in the community services industry is people oriented
- Para-professional education-VET learning in community services

## Credit

- Credit transfer is a complicated policy issue in tertiary education both in Australia and internationally.
- Involves the valuation of achieved education and learning
- Confused and confounded by other assessment practices, RPL & exemptions
- Credit transfer arrangements are the processes used by institutions or faculties/schools/departments to determine the type and amount of credit to be granted to a student on the basis of relevant prior or concurrent formal studies. Credit transfer from VTE to higher education involves establishing and recognising an equivalence of learning outcomes between parts of the VTE qualification and parts of the higher education qualification, and granting credit to the student in the higher education qualification on the basis of satisfactory completion of the relevant VTE studies (Phillips KPA: 2006, p. 32).

## Careers

- Bloomer and Hodkinson (2000) proposed a definition of the 'learning career' that indicates an individual's course through life. Such courses through life are more often than not often disrupted by detours, potholes (Sennett:1998) and a plethora of choices about routes and which ones to take in order to get 'somewhere'.
- A 'learning career' is an educational concept that captures the ways in which contemporary education participation has indeed become non-linear and not as straightforward as the lexicon of pathways suggests. Learning careers involve a diversity of learning experiences both formal and informal, in a range of contexts, through different formats, in a diversity of institutions, for a variety of purposes.
- 'It is a career of events, activities and meanings, and the making and remaking of meanings through those activities and events, and it is a career of relationships and the constant making and remaking of relationships, including relationships between position and disposition. Learning career refers to the development of dispositions to learning over time (Bloomer & Hodkinson, 2000, p.590).'

## Connections

- Contemporary students in Australia are knitting together learning trajectories that cross the sectoral boundaries of VET and HE, in spite of different approaches to knowledge, assessment and learning (**students**)
- "Credit involves granting students some level of exemption, status or advanced standing (these terms are used interchangeably) in the course they are entering in recognition of relevant prior studies and/or work experience and/or life experience. When granted credit, a student is not required to study the unit or units for which exemption, status or advanced standing is granted". (Phillips KPA: 2006, p. 32) (**policy & practice**)
- How can fair, and equitable determinations of credit be made when connections between VET and higher education are difficult to make?

## Louise

- Certificate III in Children's Services
- Diploma of Children's Services
- Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood)

"In my industry particularly, having your diploma kind of only gets you so far. It only gets you to work in a childcare centre and, for me, my passion was with particularly the three to four age group – four to five. And to secure a job in the industry it's better to have your Bachelor in Education, because they want to secure kindergarten teachers, so they get funding from the government. It was a little bit about pressure, but it was also about extending my skills. I thought that obviously university can offer me something else as well. The degree I chose also equips me to be a primary school teacher, so it's just great to constantly have that extra benefit, so that I can choose what I want to do, and constantly evolve."

## David

- Certificate IV in Disability Work
- Diploma of Community Development
- Bachelor of Human Services Work
- Graduate Diploma in Alcohol and Other Drugs
- "I probably should say during the second year of the diploma I was made aware of the option of going to university after the diploma, and on completion of the diploma if you were eligible if your marks were reasonable, and you submitted (you had to submit some papers that you'd done) you'd be eligible for going into basically a third year university course – Bachelor of Social Science. That was a bit of an impetus for me. I really wanted to do that for a lot of reasons. One to get to that university level of study...once I was aware of that, and then heard of this opportunity to go to university as well, and basically to knock out of two years of university, and just complete a third year, that was appealing. That was really appealing."

## Conclusion

- Pre-arranged –credit transfer and articulation provides more of a guarantee to students for further study, than do, individual, person to organisation, after the fact, credit arrangements
- What contemporary tertiary students' experiences show is that learning careers and the episodes of learning and patterns of credentialing they are pursuing are not easily reducible to equivalences but are notoriously different. It is these differences and the idiosyncratic learning careers that people are now making for themselves through education systems, and work and employment experiences that claims for a more truly inclusive and fair 'credit transfer' process rest.
- Moving beyond notions of 'equivalences' and 'broad relativities' in 'credit transfer' to thinking and valuing learning on its own terms.