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**The post-school destinations of young low socio-economic status adults:
The place of Vocational Education and Training in the lives of Queensland's Year 12 completers**

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Introduction

1. Give a picture of the post-school destinations of Year 12 across four years(2005,2006,2007,2008) based on the Queensland *Next Step* survey.
2. Contribute to a longitudinal analysis of the *Next Step* survey by comparisons of Year 12 completers' destination by SES in relation to VET, higher education, work or other activities.
3. Test the potential of Sen's conceptualisation of inequality, achievement, freedom & their interrelationship for better understanding the post-school destinations of young adults according to their SES & the place of VET in the lives of those completing Year 12.

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Literature review

- Research on socio-economic disadvantage in the Australian and international contexts.
- Notable differences exist between students by SES, both at an individual level and between schools.
- Socio-economic background is an important influence on tertiary entrance & performance.
- The international assessment indicates a significant relationship between SES & educational outcomes in Australia & overseas.

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Research Method

- **Focus:** "post-school destinations for Year 12 completers"
- **Policy context:**
- *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA, 2008)*
- *Towards Q2 (Queensland Government, 2008)*
- **The data set:** Queensland *Next Step* Survey: 2005-2008

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Research Method

Conceptual framework (Source: Sen, 1992)

- Inequality, achievement & the freedom to achieve

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Findings

University destination – comparison of Year 12 completers, by socioeconomic status, Queensland 2005-2008

Year	Lowest SES quartile		Highest SES quartile	
	No.	%	No.	%
2005	1300	30%	2116	49%
2006	1971	25.6%	3948	51.3%
2007	2069	25.6%	4158	51.8%
2008	1928	23.3%	4005	48.3%

- Year 12 completers from the highest SES are twice as likely to enter university as those from the lowest SES.
- University entry for low SES students decreased from 2005-2008.

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Findings

Total VET – comparison of Year 12 completers, by socioeconomic status, Queensland 2005-2008

Year	Lowest SES quartile		Highest SES quartile	
	No.	%	No.	%
2005	1403	32.3%	1149	26.6%
2006	2484	32.3%	1785	23.2%
2007	2455	30.4%	1748	21.6%
2008	2367	28.6%	1856	22.4%

For the lowest & highest SES groups, VET as a post-Year 12 destination dropped approximately about 4% on average over the years 2005 to 2008 years.

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Findings

Working full-time – comparison of Year 12 completers, by socioeconomic status, Queensland 2005-2008

Year	Lowest SES quartile		Highest SES quartile	
	No.	%	No.	%
2005	680	15.7%	453	10.5%
2006	1227	15.9%	789	10.3%
2007	1418	17.5%	905	11.2%
2008	1629	19.7%	1121	13.5%

Year 12 completers in the lowest SES entered full work at an increasing rate, rising by 4%; 3% for the highest SES group between 2005-2008. It may be presumed that this employment rate was positively related to the global economic boom between 2005-2008.

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Findings

Others destination – comparison of Year 12 completers by socioeconomic status, Queensland 2005-2008

Year	Lowest SES quartile		Highest SES quartile	
	No.	%	No.	%
2005	956	22%	602	14%
2006	2012	26.2%	1172	15.2%
2007	2138	26.5%	1244	15.4%
2008	2356	28.5%	1302	15.7%

The “other” destinations include working part-time; seeking work; not studying/not in labour force. For the lowest SES group, this increased by 6.5% between 2005-2008, but only 1.7% for the highest SES group.

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Discussion & conclusion

A divergence in immediate outcomes for young adults reflect inequalities in their socioeconomic status

Policy considerations

- connections between education, life chances & dimensions of social disadvantage
- a need for further research to extend current policy considerations

The connections between education, life chances and dimensions of social disadvantage, mean that one needs to gear a multiple choices that will impact on social disadvantage in later life provided by the school, the community, training providers and government.

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