

An Evaluation of a Pathway Program: The Students' View

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Presentation Outline

- Setting the Context of the Research
- Research Results
 - Student Profiles
 - Student Expectations and Experience
 - Assessing the Quality of the Experience
- Student Tracking
- Conclusion

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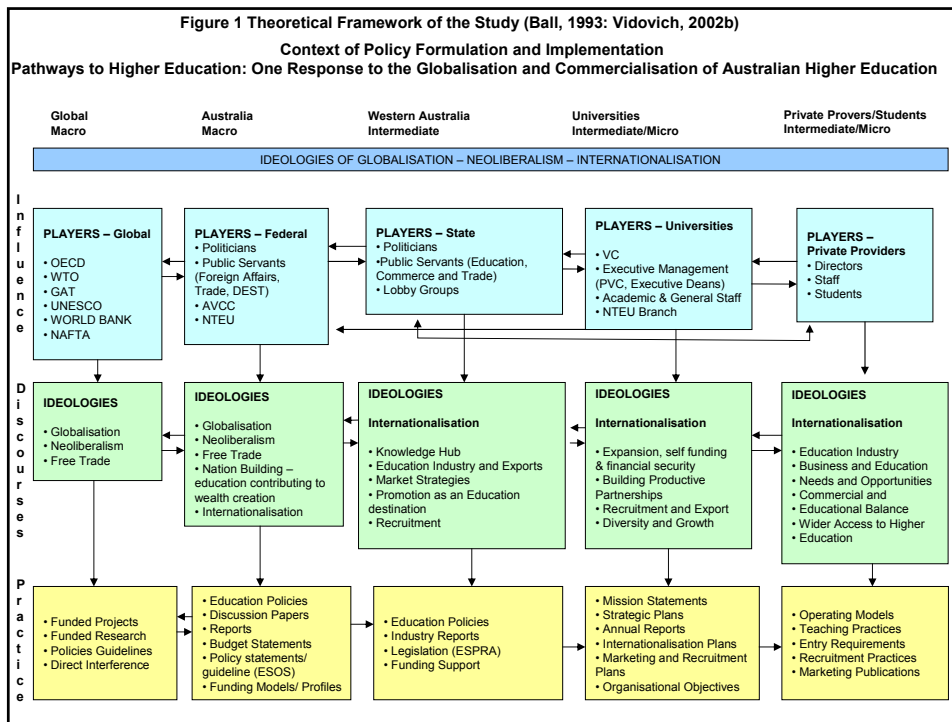
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Setting the Context

- Critique - Policy Process (Ball 1990-1998)
 - Influence
 - Production/Discourse
 - Practice/Implementation
- Macro to Microanalysis (Vidovich 2002)
- Global, national, and local ('Glonacal' Marginson and Rhoades 2002)

Setting the Context

Study pathways are a unique feature of the Australian education system, with many international students following study pathways rather than limiting their study to a particular sector or level of the education system. (DEST, 2006)



Setting the Context

- Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)
 - Transparency
 - Credibility and Currency
 - Mobility

- Certificate IV and Diploma Programs

- IBT Model
 - Strategic alliances with universities
 - Students' destination determined by their selection of college

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Setting the Research Context

- Two colleges in Australia and UK
- Universities associated with Australian colleges designated as University A & B
- Student cohorts
 - Pathway students in Australia – 165
 - Pathway students in UK - 84
 - Ex Pathway students in mainstream - 146

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Summary of Student Profiles (Top Four)

Profile	Aust. Pathway Students N=165 %	UK Pathway Students N=84 %	Aust. Mainstream Students N=146 %
Country of Origin	Other - 21 Hong Kong - 19 Indonesia - 16 Malaysia - 15	China - 50 Hong Kong - 30 Other - 12 Myanmar & India - 2	Indonesia - 21 Malaysia - 15 Hong Kong - 14 Singapore - 10
1 st Language	English - 27 Cantonese - 20 Mandarin - 17 Indonesian - 16	Cantonese - 37 Mandarin - 36 Other - 23 English - 2	English - 39 Indonesian - 22 Cantonese - 18 Mandarin - 13
Academic Entry Qualification	Other - 47 GCE 'O' levels - 15 HKKCE - 11 Senior Middle - 7	Other - 33 Senior Middle 3 - 32 HKKCE - 13 GCE 'O' levels - 13	GCE 'O' levels - 27 GCE 'A' levels - 24 SMU 3 - 24 HKKCE - 11
English Entry Qualification	Other - 34 IELTS - 31 GCE 'O' level - 16 SPM English - 11	IELTS - 59 TOEFL - 13 Other - 12 SPM - 8	IELTS - 40 GCE 'O' level - 32 TOEFL - 17 SPM - 11

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Student Expectations and Experience

- Factors that influenced their choice of college;
- Expectations they held, both academic and social;
- Whether these expectations had been met;
- How they evaluated their experience.

Influences Affecting Choice of College

Influences	Aust. Pathway Students N=165 %	UK Pathway Students N=84 %	Aust. Mainstream Students N=146 %
Offered best pathway courses	66	80 *(1)	84 *(1)
Destination	62	71 *(3)	62 8(4)
Reputation of the partner university	59	74 *(2)	69 *(3)
Agent Recommendation	44	70 *(4)	52 *(5)
Trimester System	42	71 *(3)	70 *(2)
Reputation of the College	39	52 *(5)	31 *(6)
Couldn't get anything else I liked	30	43 *(7)	31 *(6)
Friend's Recommendation	25	45 *(6)	27 *(7)

* Denotes order of influence with 1 = biggest

Why was the pathway college chosen?

Why did you choose this college?	Aust. Pathway students N=165 %	UK Pathway students N=84 %
The college has a good reputation	13	6
The University has a good reputation	55	66
Both the college and the university have a good reputation	32	29

(Response to: 'Why did you choose the college?')

Influences Affecting Choice of College

“...this college offered me the opportunity to study and become prepared for university studies, as well as providing direct entry into second year of my chosen degree at ...”

“My family knew the University’s reputation and did not feel that we needed to look elsewhere.”

Student Expectations of the Colleges

Expectations	Aust. Pathway Students N=165 %	UK Pathway Students N=84 %	Aust. Mainstream Students N=146 %
Preparation for university studies	88	89 *(1)	86 *(2)
Obtain a place at university	88	78 *(2)	93 *(1)
Improve Study Skills	77	74 *(4)	76 *(3)
Access to university facilities	64	69 *(5)	73 *(4)
Improve their English	59	77 *(3)	53 *(5)
Meet & socialise with new people	53	46 *(7)	55 *(6)
To meet local students	30	55 *(6)	32 *(7)

*Denotes order of importance 1=most important

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Have expectations been met?

Expectations of Mainstream Students N=149 %	Importance of Expectation %	Expectations Met %		
		Yes	No	Percentage of 'No' cases whose first language was not English
To obtain a place at university	93 N=133	97 N=85	3	100
Preparation for university studies	86 N=133	71 N=85	29	68
Improve study skills	76 N=137	73 N=84	27	61
Access to university facilities	73 N=132	80 N=83	20	82 $X^2(1) = 5.761, p < 0.05$
Meet and socialise with new people	55 N=131	87 N=85	13	91 $X^2(1) = 5.726, p < 0.05$
Improve their English	53 N=135	60 N=79	40	63
To meet Australian students	32 N=127	53 N=80	47	74 $X^2(1) = 5.647, p < 0.05$

(Response to: 'Please indicate whether this expectation has been met.')

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Most Common Problems

Problems	Australian Pathway Students N=165 %	UK Pathway Students N=84 %	Australian Mainstream Students N=146 %
Studying enough	56	21 *(9)	54 *(2)
Organising time	52	22 *(8)	56 *(1)
Improving English	41	57 *(1)	37 *(5)
Understanding what is expected	39	30 *(6)	49 *(3)
Living away from home	36	36 *(5)	45 *(4)
Understanding the language in units	35	39 *(4)	29 *(7)
Understanding lecturers	34	51 *(2)	37 *(5)
Getting assignments in on time	32	21 *(9)	37 *(5)
Making new friends	29	42 *(3)	31 *(6)
Studying in a large university	19	29 *(7)	24 *(8)

*Denotes most encountered to least 1=most encountered
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Assessing the Quality of the Experience

- Recommendation to other students
- Quality of the education received
- Preparation for a university environment
- Better or less prepared than peers

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Recommendation of the college to other students

Response	Aust. Pathway Students N=165 %	UK Pathway Students N=84 %
Yes	89	91
No	11	9

Quality of education received at the college

Response	Aust. Pathway Students N=165 %	Aust. Mainstream Students N=146 %
Fair	17	14
Good	42	39
Very Good & Excellent	38	43

Preparation for the University environment

Response	Aust. Mainstream Students N=146 %
Not well at all	4
Just OK	39
Well	39
Very Well	18

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Better or less prepared than other students

Response	Aust. Mainstream Students N=146 %
Much better prepared	15
Better prepared	48
Less prepared	13
Don't know	24

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Student Tracking

Are the long term objectives fulfilled?

- Results of ex-pathway students in the Bachelor of Commerce
- 2004
 - Semester Weighted Averages
- Current
 - Pass rates
 - Retention rates

Comparison of pathway students in mainstream and international mainstream students (who gained direct access) -2nd year, semester one 2004 results

Course Name	Ex Pathway Students		Non Pathway Students	
	Student Count	Average of SWA	Student Count	Average of SWA
Bachelor of Commerce	228	56.69	216	57.91
Bachelor of Arts	27	54.50	57	63.42
Bachelor Arts (Design)	22	53.39	48	63.51
Bachelor of Arts (Mass Communication)	15	61.06	18	60.49
Bachelor of Science (Computer Sc.)	10	47.42	11	54.77
Total	302	54.61	350	60.02

Pathway student pass rates compared to international and domestic students – second year of Bachelor of Commerce

Ex Pathway Students			Non Pathway International Students			Domestic Students		
Passed	Number. assessed	% Pass	Passed	Number. assessed	% Pass	Passed	Number. assessed	% Pass
(S2,05) 141.3	180.3	78.4	280.0	354.0	79.1	340.0	410.8	82.8
(S1,06) 99.6	71.1	71.0	323.5	247.6	77.0	461.9	378.5	82.0

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Pathway student retention rates compared to international and domestic students – second year of Bachelor of Commerce

Ex Pathway Students			Non Pathway International Students			Domestic Students		
Head Count S1, 05	Head Count S1, 06	Retention Rate	Head Count S1, 05	Head Count S1, 06	Retention Rate	Head Count S1, 05	Head Count S1, 06	Retention Rate
252	242	96.0	694	550	79.3	1014	864	85.2
Head Count S2, 05	Head Count S2, 06	Retention Rate	Head Count S2, 05	Head Count S2, 06	Retention Rate	Head Count S2, 05	Head Count S2, 06	Retention Rate
383	373	97.4	725	695	95.9	1012	924	91.3

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What can be concluded?

- Research indicates that overall the pathway experience is positive in meeting students' expectations:
 - quality of the experience
 - in meeting long term objectives
- Students are selecting pathway courses to 'add value' and prepare them for the tertiary environment.
- Pathway programs are significant in what they have contributed to the Australian tertiary sector.
- The research is not commensurate with the importance of the sector.

Conclusion

“To datevery little has been known about the nature of these pathways and the number of international students undertaking them” (DEST, 2006).

THANK YOU