VOCEDplus HIGHLIGHTS

NCVER's international tertiary education research database

A snapshot of a selection of items added to VOCEDplus

MARCH 2021

The full list of new additions to VOCEDplus is available at www.voced.edu.au

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Improving the breadth and quality of vocational education made available in New South Wales high schools is key

The Gonski-Shergold Review in New South Wales, Australia

In the same sentence: bringing higher and vocational education together / David Gonski and Peter Shergold.

Sydney, New South Wales: Department of Premier and Cabinet, 2021. 57 pages.

In 2020, Professor Peter Shergold AC and Mr David Gonski AC were commissioned by the New South Wales (NSW) Government to lead a Review on the NSW vocational education and training (VET) sector. They were asked to provide advice on how the state's VET system could best address ongoing and emerging skills shortages, paying particular regard to its quality, efficiency and structural complexity. It was indicated that they should consider how to integrate secondary, vocational and higher education learning opportunities, how to re-imagine industry engagement and how to improve career advice to support lifelong learning. It was also suggested that they should seek to understand any negative public perceptions of VET. The request reflects the NSW Government view that an effective and sustainable VET sector is crucial for providing the skilled workforce needed for a strong NSW economy. The report was released on 18 March 2021 and the NSW Government has accepted all five recommendations of the report.

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Apprenticeship should not just be about bringing people into employment, but about securing their long-term employability

Apprenticeship in Europe

Apprenticeship: a pill for every ill? / European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop).

Thessaloniki, Greece: Cedefop, 2021. 4 pages.

Following the financial crisis and the ensuing economic downturn in the past decade, apprenticeship sparked renewed interest among policy-makers both in Brussels and the EU Member States. Since, European and national crisis management strategies have advocated apprenticeship both as a short-term solution to youth unemployment and a useful response to companies' skill needs in the longer term. Increasing the uptake of apprenticeships has consequently been at the heart of a massive policy effort that has resulted in a proliferation of apprenticeship schemes with different purposes: vocational training fully preparing learners for an occupation, short-term skills development, social inclusion, and offering second-chance pathways for VET dropouts and other vulnerable groups.

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A greater variety of tertiary programmes and changing perceptions on the role of women in society may have encouraged more young women to pursue tertiary education

Gender and tertiary education participation

Why do more young women than men go on to tertiary education? / Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Paris, France: OECD, 2021. 5 pages.

Understanding the gender dynamics in educational transitions can help target policies to support equitable access to education as well as its quality and labour-market outcomes. In almost all OECD countries, the gender gap in favour of women is wider in tertiary education than at upper secondary level. Differences in programme orientation and girls' educational performance at school may give them greater access to tertiary education than boys. Changes in the courses on offer in higher education, and the social value of a university education for young women may also influence their choices. In addition, young women tend to gain more from a tertiary degree in the labour market than their male peers, both in terms of employment and earnings, which may make pursuing higher education more attractive.

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The obstacles facing rural community colleges are interconnected and investing in one can have a domino effect that begins to knock down others

Strengthening rural community colleges in the US

Strengthening rural community colleges: innovations and opportunities / Rachel Rush-Marlowe.

Washington, District of Columbia: Association of Community College Trustees, 2021. 20 pages.

This study found the most significant challenges for rural community colleges are access to high-speed Internet, funding inequities, and meeting students' basic needs particularly in mental health. The report analyses these three challenges, highlights programmes in each state that are working to overcome these challenges, and offers policy recommendations to bolster the solutions colleges know work in the interest of ensuring viability and vitality of the nation's rural community colleges for the future.

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Individuals from humanitarian migrant backgrounds face multiple and unique barriers to education participation and success, over and above those faced by other migrant groups

Higher education and humanitarian migrants in Australia

Understanding access to higher education amongst humanitarian migrants in Australia / Francisco Perales, Matthias Kubler, Ning Xiang and Wojtek Tomaszewski.

Perth, Western Australia: National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education, Curtin University, 2021. vi, 70 pages.

An important channel for humanitarian migrants to successfully integrate into mainstream society is participation in the local education system and, particularly, higher education. This study found humanitarian migrants were approximately half as likely as Australian-born individuals to have a university degree, a third as likely as family migrants, and a fifth as likely as skilled migrants. Engagement with higher education amongst humanitarian migrants in Australia is modest. Limited English-language proficiency and prior educational experiences were identified as core barriers to education participation and success, more prominently among some humanitarian migrant groups. The research found that targeted support would particularly benefit humanitarian migrants with limited English-language skills and educational experiences.

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In this study, approximately 71 per cent of apprentices who terminate their initial training begin another training programme and thus remain in the educational system

Early termination of vocational training in Germany

Early termination of vocational training: dropout or stopout? / Gabriele Wydra-Somaggio.

Empirical research in vocational education and training, volume 13, number 1, 2021, pages 1-23.

Dropping out of the educational system has marked negative consequences in the labour market. Dropping out is followed by an early termination that does not necessarily mean leaving the educational system without graduating. Apprentices may reassess their initial choice by starting another VET programme and preserve their labour market chances when graduating. This article examines the factors that drive the decision to stop out (start new vocational training) after an early termination. The analysis is based on a data set for VET in Germany (Ausbildungspanel Saarland) that contains detailed information on the VET careers and labour market outcomes of almost 3,000 apprentices who terminated their education early. The results show that termination at an early stage of VET and training in a small establishment are more likely to lead to stopping out than to dropping out. Stopouts who terminate their contracts during an early stage of their VET programme are more likely to change their occupation and obtain a formal VET degree. The results suggest that dissatisfaction with VET must be recognised at an early stage in order for students to take appropriate measures with the aim of graduation.

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Non-participating enrolment (NPE) results weigh heavily on overall university success rates and present a distinct challenge as compared to other types of failure

'Ghost students' in higher education in Australia

'Ghost student' failure among equity cohorts: towards understanding non-participating enrolments (NPE) / Bret Stephenson, Beni Cakitaki and Michael Luckman.

Perth, Western Australia: National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education, Curtin University, 2021. v, 43 pages.

Every year, a significant percentage of students remain enrolled in one or more of their units yet exhibit no evidence of having engaged in learning or assessment activities. This 'ghosting' phenomenon, the most severe form of student disengagement and failure, frequently goes unnoticed at institutional and national levels, as it is obscured by high-level metrics such as the all too binary 'success rate'. 'Ghosting' behaviours have ramifications for students (a record of academic failure), institutions (a reduction in their published 'success rate'), and the Australian government (little return for the allocation of Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP) funding). This report provides an in-depth examination of 'ghost student' failure among commencing domestic bachelor students generally but focuses particularly on four student equity cohorts: regional and remote, low socioeconomic status (SES), Indigenous, and non-English speaking background (NESB) students.

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