

Changing identities, changing seasons: Early childhood educators' views & experiences of moving from Vocational Education & Training to University



Merryl Johnstone
Professor Ann Farrell
Dr Sue Irvine

School of Early Childhood
Queensland University of Technology

International ECEC context

- Human Capital Theory
- OECD: *Starting Strong*
- Increased ECEC quality: Long-term benefits



Growing up in New Zealand



Effective Provision of Pre-school Education



Race to the Top

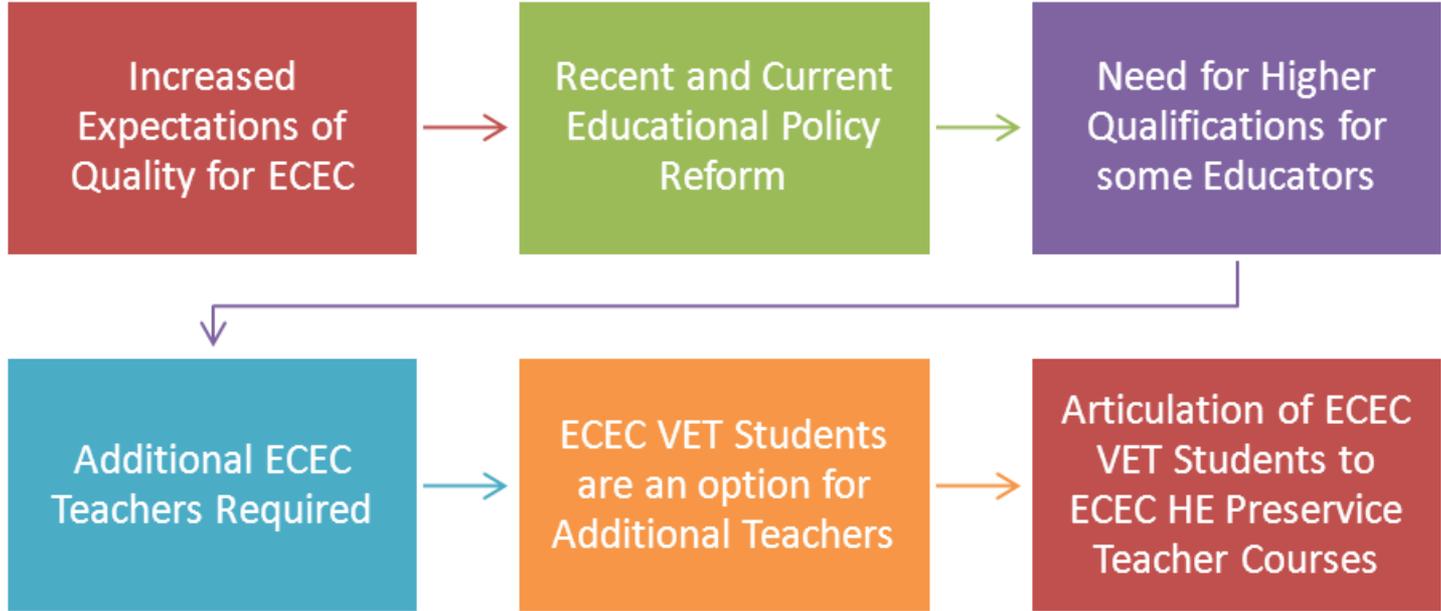
National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education

“... improve the supply and integration of early childhood services, including child care and early learning and development, through the delivery of universal access to quality early childhood education in the year before full time schooling.”

(Council of Australian Governments, 2009, p. 3)

“The inherent differences between the sectors ... means that transitioning students have to adjust to different learning cultures, expectations and means of assessment.”

(White, 2014, p. 4)



ECEC workforce development

- **National ECEC Workforce Census: 2010**
- **Early Years Workforce Strategy: 2012 (National)**
- **ECEC Workforce Action Plan: 2011-2014 (Qld)**

Early Childhood Teacher Scholarships
Bridging Program for Primary Teachers

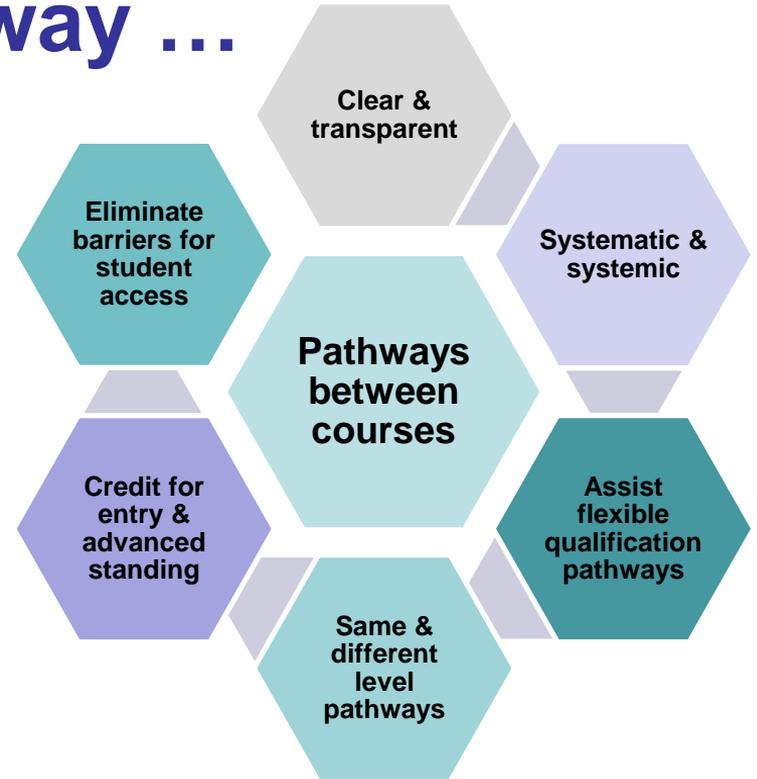


Australian Government
Department of Education



Another pathway ...

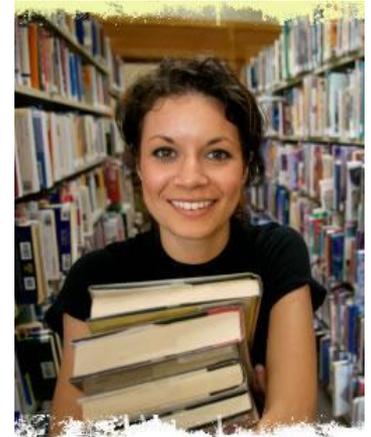
- VET to university: Articulating students
- Widening participation
- Strengths & challenges



(Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 2011, p. 76)

Articulating Students' Conceptions (ASC) Study

What are the qualitatively different ways in which ECEC preservice teachers view and experience articulation from VET to university?



Preservice teachers' articulation experiences

Preliminary categories

- Stress & anxiousness
- Being organised & prepared
- High expectations
- Sense of support: Staff, students & family
- Pursuing career goal



Stress & anxiousness

“I've actually struggled ... it was a massive jump up from the diploma. I became very self-conscious of my grammatic (sic) skills and then led to the fact, “Oh, I can't write, I can't write!” ... I just put this big barrier up so the anxiety blocked my ability to take on information. I was just permanently anxious about my writing skills ... which made me doubt my choice ... I think it was like diving off the highest diving board.”

Georgie

Being organised & prepared

“I was overly organised ... I didn't want to slack off or have to redo stuff or anything. So I came into uni here doing library tours, doing library sessions. I had everything ready. I knew my way around the whole of the university ... I wanted to know as much as I could ... I was really prepared. Because of my nerves, I was prepared.”

Estelle

High expectations

“I knew in my mind I had to write academically and write well structured assignments ... I think, in my experience anyway, my work I've done through (an RTO) I didn't have to write to that level ... referencing and citing ... but I knew I had to do it. So it's probably something you know is there ... I never did it. When I went to (an RTO) or anywhere.”

Maree

Sense of support: Staff, students, family

Staff: “... a 25 minute session with a librarian. I started with that and then I said, ‘I'd love the ongoing sort of support’. Just to check assignments, make plans about what I'm going to do and make sure I'm on track ... it could be once a week ... great to know it's there.” Elyse

Students: “We also had a peer mentor from 4th year that stepped us through one whole subject and met with us every Wednesday ... We were able to see previous assignments and (ask) any questions and (get) any help with referencing, and that was valuable.” Karen

Family: “My mum can tell as well! When she proofreads my assignments she says, ‘Yes, you're getting better’.” Elissa

Pursuing career goal

“The primary reason is just so I could study more ... Also it has a lot to do with regulations. Because I want to get into a kindergarten, I need to be qualified by the end of 2014 or 15 when it comes into legislation that every child care has to have a Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) qualified person. So I want to get the best for me so I can get a good job and I can have the skills I need to be the best I can be and to teach my children.”

Joy

What helped these students?

Links to prior learning

Developing academic literacy skills

A question: What might help in the future?



QUT is acknowledged for its financial contribution of Domestic Conference Support for this presentation.

References

- Australian Qualifications Framework Council. (2011). *Australian qualifications framework* (1st ed.). Canberra, ACT: Australian Qualifications Framework Council for Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment.
- Centre for Longitudinal Research – He Ara Ki Mua. (2012). Growing up in New Zealand: A longitudinal study of kiwi children from before birth into adulthood: The university of Auckland. Retrieved September 2, 2012 from <http://www.growingup.co.nz/>
- Council of the Australian Governments. (2009). *Investing in the early years: A national early childhood development strategy* [EBL version]. Retrieved September 11, 2011 from http://www.coag.gov.au/coag_meeting_outcomes/2009-07-02/docs/national_ECD_strategy.pdf
- Cuthill, M., & Schmidt, C. (2011). Widening participation: Challenges confronting a research-intensive university, *Journal of Institutional Research*, 16(2), 13-25.
- Department of Education, US. (2009). *American recovery and reinvestment act of 2009*. Washington D.C: Department of Education.
- Department of Education and Training. (2011). *ECEC workforce action plan 2011 - 2014*. Brisbane, QLD: Queensland Government.
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. (2010). *National ECEC workforce census*. Canberra, ACT: Australian Government.
- Heckman, J. J., Moon, S. H., Pinto, R., Savelyev, P. A., & Yavitz, A. Q. (2010). Reanalysis of the perry preschool program: Multiple-hypothesis and permutation tests applied to a quasi-randomized experiment. *Quantitative Economics*, 1, 1-49.

References cont.

- Ishimine, K., Tayler, C., & Bennett, J. (2010). Quality and early childhood education and care: A policy initiative for the 21st century. *International Journal of Child Care and Education*, 4(2), 67-80. Retrieved August 31, 2012 from http://acecqa.gov.au/storage/7.Ishimine_Australia_.pdf
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2001). *Starting strong: Early childhood education and care*. Paris, NFR: OECD.
- OECD. (2006). *Starting strong II: Early childhood education and care*. Paris, NFR: OECD.
- OECD. (2012a). *Starting strong III: A quality toolbox for early childhood education and care*. Paris, NFR: OECD.
- Reynolds, A. J., Temple, J. A., Robertson, D. L., & Mann, E. A. (2001). Age 21 cost-benefit analysis of the title I Chicago child-parent center program: Executive summary. Retrieved August 23, 2012 from <http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/cls/cbaexecsum4.html>
- Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood. 2012. *National Early Years Workforce Strategy*. Canberra, ACT: Commonwealth of Australia.
- Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P., Siraj-Blatchford, I., Taggart, B., & Elliott, K. (2003). *The effective provision of pre-school education (EPPE) project: Findings from the pre-school period (Research brief no. RBX15-03)*. London, BR: Department for Education and Skills.
- White, S. (2014). *Transitioning from vocational education and training to university: Strengthening information literacy through collaboration*. Adelaide, SA: National Vocational Education and Training Research Program.