



Wellbeing, Tick, but are they Career Adaptable? Exploring Career Development Education in High School Flexible Learning Programs

Naomi Ryan and Nancey Hoare, *University of Southern Queensland*

Marginalised students enrolled in alternative or Flexible Learning Programs (FLPs) gain a second chance to complete their education in an environment conducive to building relationships, positive wellbeing and self-esteem. Generally, there is also a focus on providing the students with options for transitioning to further education, training, or employment, on completion of their secondary education. However, within the alternative education sector in Australia there are a number of different approaches to provision of career development curriculum. Whilst there is evidence of improved wellbeing and support for marginalised youth and increases in self-efficacy through work experience and completion of VET qualifications, there is little research on graduate outcomes and the career development frameworks that are utilised in these programs.

This session will deliver findings of a qualitative research project conducted at a regional flexible learning centre in which 26 participants took part. The research, conducted over a two-and-a-half-year period included ethnographic data collection techniques, such as participant observation and semi-structured interviews, to gain insight into how career development is delivered in the curriculum and the impact on the students' career adaptability. A number of outcomes will be discussed regarding strengthening career adaptability in students through embedding practices into pastoral care group work, mentoring sessions, general curriculum, and vocational certificate classes. Career development interventions in FLPs are vital to ensure that students gain career adaptability skills for successful life and career transitions.