### Citation

### Annotation
**Context:** Research shows ‘mosaic’ of students’ experiences (ed/employment) “with a multiplicity of nonlinear pathways” (p.57) which are more fragmented for ‘disadvantaged’ students. “Vertical stratification” of institutional hierarchies increases the difficulties of transition, especially with “horizontal stratification” of regional, rural, remote Australia. Bases focus on notion that SES impacts on whole-of-life opportunities and that school achievement is affected by SES. When students’ post-school transitions are considered in context of equity, these “begin to unravel in light of the constraints and complexity of students’ daily lives in a fast-changing world” (p.60). Young people in rural areas have most fragmentary careers. Drawing on longitudinal study of Year 10 leavers in Tasmania, Abbott-Chapman identifies 6 pathways (1-3 = stable; 4-6 = ‘fragmentary’; p.60):

1. Continuous full-time study (which may also include unpaid work, including for family, such as in family business, or farm, or as carer for family member).
2. Continuous full-time study and part-time work (which may be casual and not continuous).
3. Mainly full-time employment (which may include vocational education and training (VET), combining work with training or apprenticeship).
4. Mainly part-time employment (made up of either a mixture of part-time, casual or paid work; short term full-time job; or short term full-time or part-time work, which may involve periods of unemployment).
5. Late starters into study and/or employment (reasons for delay may include periods of travel, ill-health, pregnancy or home duties)
6. Mainly unemployed (continuous or almost continuous unemployment with no study or training).

**Theoretical frame:** None explicit

**Methodology:** Essay

**Findings:** Strengthening student Resilience and study persistence: a discourse of welfare or a discourse of rights? Need to recognise that disadvantaged students’ choices = limited by circumstances and economic/social capital – problematic when coupled with neoliberal ideology – the entrepreneurial self and the ‘do-it-yourself’ biography (p.62) – and external challenges (such as geography and distance). “Teachers’ tendency to categorise students as
‘other’ overlooked their diverse life experiences, educational experiences and social class positions within ethnic groups” (p.63).

**Institutional responsiveness to student diversity**

Discusses ‘second chance students’ (“late entrants”, p.64) = 40% of university students. “Research suggests that disadvantaged students do better in universities which liaise closely with schools and the VET sector in preparing students before they make the transition to university, provide induction and orientation programs at the beginning of the first year, and continuing study support throughout the degree or a least in the first year (McInnis and James 1995)”, p.64. Institutional responses vary. More TAFE students transfer to regional/technology universities than G08 and ‘sandstones’ (p.64). Responsive institutions break down vertical and horizontal stratification through creation of cross-sectoral local ‘learning hubs’.

**Reflexivity in policy on higher education: rethinking the role of universities**

Refers to call to synthesise tertiary sector in Bradley review (2008). Abbott-Chapman notes that “Rethinking the role of universities, especially by the elite, research-intensive universities, will not be easy for it may seem to threaten their market share of a competitive international education industry” (p.66). However, changes to education and training demands (e.g. WiL) has put pressure on HE (“increasingly vocational thrust”, p.66)

**Core argument:** “The paper suggests policies and strategies which improve higher education access, retention and course completion of disadvantaged students should target the 3 ‘Rs’—student resilience, institutional responsiveness and policy reflexivity, within the context of broad societal changes” (p.58). To break down vertical and horizontal stratification, universities need to reconfigure as ‘traversing places’: “The borderless world has no centre and no periphery, just a complex network of connections with hubs” (p.67).

“Transition to higher education of disadvantaged students can therefore be facilitated by schools and universities working together to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for each student” (p.67)

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**Context:** Reports on DEST-funded project. Regional = regional, remote and rural

**Aim:**
- Provide a better understanding of the aspirations and expectations of students in regional areas of Australia;
- Identify the underlying factors that drive those aspirations and expectations, in particular, any factors differentiating the aspirations and expectations of students in regional areas from those of their urban counterparts – the ‘rurality’ factor(s);
- Identify barriers that might hinder students’ pursuit of their aspirations, and identify strategies that have proven effective in enhancing and sustaining the aspirations and expectations of students in regional areas.

**Methodology:** Series of focus groups with regional students, parents and teachers from 13 regional research sites across the country (excluding ACT) + 2 urban sites in Melbourne. Where possible, mix of schools in research site recruited (independent, catholic, public). Mix of sizes (towns), mix of school years (yr 10, 11, 12). 72 interview interactions in total (some co-ed, some single sex, 23 with teachers, 3 with parents. Authors note ethical issues (barriers for state DETs resulting in loss of time; difficulty in accessing school; term time constraints with exam time and holidays; difficult to access parents

**Findings:**

- Students generally had high levels of aspirations – most students sure that Year 12 not the end of educational journey, rather = transition point
- Students’ “awareness of changing economic and social structures and the need for further education and training was naturalised in student discourse” (p.246)
- Students’ aspirations = synonymous with leaving home/ communities: “data suggested that an inverse relationship existed between the strength of the local economy and the determination of students to pursue their lives and careers elsewhere” (p.247).
- Some contrary responses recorded where students wanted to stay in community = reminder there is no one student voice
- Rural parents and teachers = more pessimistic about students’ educational futures beyond school
- Authors note two key dimensions at play with students’ aspirations: personal (impact on self and friends/families) and experiences; social dimension= broader social impact (quality of schooling/ local economies/ paid work/ gender roles)
- Perception that rural spaces are ‘male’ could explain higher aspiration rate of females

**Key obstacles=** perceived cost of HE/ lack of occupational models/ lack of educational opportunities

| Alloway, N. & Dalley-Trim (2009). ‘High and Dry’ in Rural Australia: Obstacles to Student Aspirations and Expectations, *Rural Society*, 19(1): 49-59. | **Context:** Established body of work = rural students are more vulnerable to economic restructuring, shifting demographics, community reshaping = compounded by educational disadvantage (access/ opportunity)

**Aim:** To document the voices of rural Australian students; to examine students’ views of obstacles they face in terms of aspirations and imagined futures. Rurality = not homogeneous category. Issues rural students face: SES/financial issues (economic shifts, fewer employment opportunities), fewer role models/ networks, location |
of HEIs, quality of educational provision. Indigeneity and gender also significant: “For many young men and women in rural communities, it is difficult to construct aspirations and expectations that can move beyond the gendered culture of the communities within which they live” (p.52)

**Methodology:** Focus group interviews in 2002/3 = secondary school students (13 rural schools)

**Findings:** Majority of students expressed desire to ‘be something’ = “generally buoyant levels of aspirations and expectations” (p.53). But two key types of obstacles that rural students face: personal/ social (interconnected)

- Financial pressures: cost = related to material costs of relocating/ reliance on parents
- Apprehension: moving away from local community to city, lack of comfort/ familiarity: dislike of hectic lifestyle, unknown, fear for safety
- Attachment to home: balance emotional ties and support of family/friends with desire to move away for study (or work!) – many uses of term ‘close-knit’
- Fewer work opportunities (outside of core work of community)
- Diminished educational opportunities: smaller numbers, fewer resources, lack of ‘specialist’ teachers (due to difficulty of staffing rural schools) – mention of Distance Ed – and lack of competition in small schools [how does this impact on ATAR?]


**Context:** Examines pathways taken by indigenous students in NT between VET (cert IV+) and HE, exploring students’ perspectives to understand pathways adopted, motivations for study and experiences while studying. VET and HE acknowledged as “crucial elements in Indigenous capacity-building” (p.7). Completion of cert IV makes university a ‘viable option’ but low numbers of students in ‘higher certificates’ makes this an ‘under-utilised’ pathway. In 2012 there were 1759 vocational education providers registered in the Northern Territory (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations 2012) – p.8. Report is situated within literature that outlines the disadvantage that indigenous peoples have traditionally and currently face in Australia, particularly for remote students. Proportional representation of indigenous students in VET is significant = more accessible, especially for students in rural/ remote locations. According to DEEWR statistics, indigenous students tend to be younger, more likely to be living in remote locations, have much lower levels of schooling and are more concentrated in lower certificate levels (41.9% = in cert I/II courses; 30.5% = cert III – diploma; compared with 23.5% and 51.3% respectively of non-indigenous participation). More are male. Many indigenous students are precluded from articulating to HE because of their low level VET qualifications. For indigenous students in HE, they have high attrition rates, low retention/ completion rates and a high failure rate. Patterns with indigenous participation in HE = high proportion enrolments in Humanities: health, education, society = 70% indigenous
enrolments in 2008. Health = fasting growing discipline. More women than men in HE. Most significant gaps between indigenous/non-indigenous = postgraduate. Starting salaries = significantly lower for indigenous graduates

Research Questions:
• What are the retention, progression and attrition rates among Northern Territory Indigenous students in the VET sector?
• What are the pathways adopted by Indigenous students in the Northern Territory in the transition from post-compulsory education to work?
• What is the experience of Indigenous students who transition from the VET sector to the higher education sector in the Northern Territory?

Theoretical frame:
Methodology: Mixed methods: uses enrolment data from 2000-2009 to explore patterns in enrolment and completion rates, and focus group interviews with 29 indigenous tertiary students from CDU, Bachelor and 2 private institutions

Findings:
Quantitative data: between 2000-2009, indigenous enrolments = 27.3% of CDU enrolments (60% male, 40% female). Most students were under 20. Indigenous enrolments concentrated in lower levels (cert I and II). Multiple course enrolments also observed frequently. Field with highest indigenous enrolments = agriculture and environment studies. Best success rates = hospitality. Between 2000-2009, 280 indigenous students enrolled at CDU (4.8% of total population). The most frequent basis of admission was previous higher education study, followed by alternative pathways (including ‘mature-age’, ‘tertiary enabling program’ and ‘other’), secondary education results, and vocational education studies – p.27. Most popular courses = nursing and education, followed by law, business and behavioural studies.
Qualitative data:
Common motivations for enrolling in VET studies were employment-related.
• For students who take cert IV+ courses (higher certificates), 17% transitioned from TAFE into CDU. However, given low numbers of students who study higher certificates, this translates into “relatively few students” (p.3)
For the students who transitioned from VET, they found their VET studies useful, but “some students were unprepared for the more academic environment of higher education and the emphasis on online learning” (p.3)

Some students perceived a lack of indigenous teachers, but were generally satisfied with their programs

All students surveyed received financial assistance (e.g. assistance with books, computers, transport, food and accommodation; childcare facilities; time off work; cultural leave; and additional time to complete the course) but all were dissatisfied with the amount of support and the child care facilities, as well as a lack of ‘culturally appropriate’ places to study

Some rural students found the move to more urban locations difficult, reporting feelings of social isolation and difficulties communicating in English

Core argument: A lack of social support, language issues and constraints on access to tertiary education remain barriers to participation and completion for indigenous students.


AUS

**Context:** Works from premise that non-traditional/equity students – focusing specifically on rural and remote students - have ‘an important role to play’ in diversity and quality of HE but this “remains undervalued and relatively untapped” (abstract). Paper from perspective of Residential Services at La Trobe and goes beyond access to exploring support. Argues that “success today implies a wider frame of reference than in the past” (p.6). In La Trobe, 33.6% of student body were R&R; Residential Services supports all the students who live in ‘colleges’. Works on a “cyclical process” – introducing/integrating new students, providing ongoing guidance, opportunity to draw on experiences to engage with peers (peer mentoring) = “interlocking suite of programmes” (p.8) and ‘beyond the classroom’ living and learning environment. Residential Services “delivers outcomes in employability skills and career readiness... [and] pathways to personal growth” (p.9)

**Aim:** To describe what La Trobe’s Residential Services offer

**Theoretical frame:** None

**Methodology:** Case study of Residential Services/ ‘tailored support mechanisms’ at La Trobe (outlines programs and examines the results: academic results and core graduate attributes). Presents evaluations of 4 programmes

**Description:** Residential Services offers 4 key programs:
1. Pastoral Care & Welfare programme (welfare and wellbeing)
2. Academic Mentoring & Support programme (academic mentoring and the ‘NET’ program for ‘at risk’ students)
3. Community & Outreach programmes (‘outreach’/community programs in other countries = subsidized)
4. Student leadership opportunities (competitive student leadership roles = for pay/kudos)
Evaluation: comparison of academic performance of residential students compared with wider university student body (residential students = 18% more As/ 21% more Bs)
Retention rates = higher for residential students (e.g. 83% compared with 76% La Trobe average)
Student satisfaction surveys (part of uni community/ part of group/ studied with other students/ ECAs) = consistently higher for residential students.

Suggestions
- Build stronger connections between residential and non-residential students (e.g. open selected orientation/socal activities to non-residential students)
- Duplicate some activities (e.g. opportunities for students to travel/volunteer) to wider student body
- Create ‘spin off’ of transition program (e.g. 6-week mentoring program)
- Create a buddy program for new entrants/ Yr 1 students
- Introduce student leadership opportunities

Context: Explores impact of scholarships on students in financial need at Swinburne University (2005 study of equity scholarships) in context of massified/ more competitive global HE systems that all seek to increase participation of ‘under-represented cohorts’. Slippage in terms used to talk about money offered: bursaries, scholarships, grants. Cites two major reviews (Long & Hayden, 2001; James et al. 2007) which both reported that students need more financial support for their studies. Swinburne = 10% low SES rate (VIC UG average = 13.52%). Government support = insufficient (also see Munro, 2012; Birrell et al. 2000). Argues = strong connection between likelihood to aspire to HE study and financial circumstances/SES background.; also discusses in terms of rurality and reliance on computers (digital divide).

Aim: To present evidence of the relief that financial support (from university) can bring to students in need

Theoretical frame: None

Methodology: Student Equity Unit conducted ‘client satisfaction’ survey with 2003/4 recipients of equity scholarships. Respondents outlined disadvantage they had encountered: not being able to afford food, travel (for study), heating, photocopy, study materials. Follow up research in 2005 (drawn on in paper) = impact of scholarship on financial hardship, students from rural areas and digital divide. Questionnaires posted: 38% (53/140: 42 = rural, 11 = metro; 26 = m, 27 = f; most traditional students = straight from school, 9 = 3-10+ years out of school). Financial disadvantage operationalized: computer at home? Afford books, clothing, food etc.?
Considered deferring/dropping out because of money? Rural disadvantage operationalized: If from rural area, was it stressful leaving home/ moving to city/ financially? Digital divide: computer at home? How old? Internet access? Broadband?

Findings:
Most students (80.4%) had worked to save up prior to attending university. All students had borrowed money – but once student received scholarship, reliance on other sources (e.g. families) contributing to costs diminished to 55.8% and did not need to work as much (49.1%). ‘Dramatic decrease’ in students considering deferring (from 57.7% to 3.8%)
Degree of financial hardship decreased (all could afford rent and food, only 5.7% could not afford textbooks, compared with 19.2% pre-scholarship)
Two thirds considered the scholarship had given financial security and improved quality of life (64.2%)
For rural students, only 2 (5%) had not experienced strain from moving to Melbourne and all had experienced some degree of financial strain. Rural students less likely to have a computer at home. The scholarship allowed these students to purchase a computer

Core argument: Scholarships have a positive impact: “It appears the scholarships are giving students the ability to work less, allowing them to concentrate more fully on their studies” (p.55) and also decreased students’ decisions to defer or drop out

Limitations: No discussion/ recognition of researcher impact (as Equity Unit, students are likely to be grateful and thus positive in responses)

| Cuervo, H. (2014). Critical reflections on youth and equality in the rural context, *Journal of Youth Studies*, 17(4): 544-557. | **Context:** Based on idea that “young people living in rural communities have been impacted in their school and post-school transitions by a weakening of traditional structures and pathways to work enjoyed by previous generations, as well as by the significant lack of economic and cultural resources available in their communities compared to major urban centres” (p.544) – comparison is with metropolitan peers. Argues that dominant discourse of equality in discussions of rurality = liberal egalitarian but appropriated by neoliberal (rural disadvantage is individual issue; individual rather than social approach). Scope of the literature = lack of opportunities = main factor for leaving rural communities; also these communities can be socially/culturally isolated. Also impact of globalization on reconfiguration of rural spaces/places and identities within. Need to contest simple binaries (rural = disadvantage/ urban = advantage)

**Aim:** “to examine the ways in which young people make sense of and negotiate the challenges they encounter in their communities and in their post-secondary school goals and plans” (p.545). Late modernity society = impacts |
felt in rural spaces = important for education; “The weakening of traditional structures, institutions and post-school pathways has exacerbated the need for many young people to leave their communities. In this scenario of uncertainty, post-school education has become an important tool to adapt to the pervasiveness of risk for young people” (p.547).

**Theoretical frame:** Equality = strong organising principle for understanding inequalities faced by young rural people (social and economic) – critiques redistributive view of equality (creating a level playing field) and the neoliberal view of personal responsibility and taking risks (adopting prudential and entrepreneurial approaches; see p.546)

**Methodology:** Qualitative research: schools in rural Victoria. Paper based on case study of one school (2 focus groups with 10 students + 12 in-depth interviews) in last 3 years of school. Interviews asked questions around issues of social justice and equality, experience of living in rural places, post-school hopes and aspirations/goals. Rural area = relatively monocultural, agricultural, lower middle class with pop of 500. Town = example of ‘production in decay’ (p.548) = many traditional employment pathways are now closed to young people (have to travel to harvest/ farming is difficult)

**Findings:**
Participants = aware of barriers to post-secondary options – particularly with regards to distance and need to travel, shortage of teachers, breadth of curriculum (“The courses are sort of limited here”, ‘Emma’, Year 12; see p.549), lack of networks, lack of resources (e.g. ‘research books’). Limited options = both academic and vocational. Students recognised ‘equality of opportunity’ argument – pointing to need to distribute more resources (books, libraries, teachers): “They understand that availability or lack of these resources has a direct impact on their quality of education and on their possibilities for the transition from education into employment” (p.550-551), but from a social rather than individual perspective. Students define themselves primarily by place (their rurality).

All the participants described an intention to move away/ out of community when school finished because of a perceived lack of opportunity and perception that education = needed for full participation in economic/ social life. Students = strategies (e.g. moving to an urban centre where they had a family member or friend) and created discourse of ‘self-reliance’. Participants = generally optimistic: “many of these students encountered structural barriers due to locality, socioeconomic status or gender, but they utilised a discourse of self-reliance and resilience as a strategy and coping mechanism to manage these barriers” (p.552). Participants espoused a neoliberal view (“it comes down to you”, Stuart; see p.552) and in relation to structural inequalities (emphasis on...
self-reliance, individual choice and hard work) and a belief in the idea that everyone has the same chances. Cuervo cites work of sociologists who assert that becoming rational self-entrepreneurs = reaction to the risky and precarious situations as result of weakening traditional structures = investment in perception of increased opportunity [see ‘cruel optimism’ argument] resulting in: “When young people in this study project themselves into the future, the emphasis is placed on the individual rather than the social, highlighting a change from a collective identity to a personal autonomy with an increasing pressure to draw upon their individual resources” (p.553) and a shift towards merit conceptualisations based on individual effort and responsibility

Core argument: When at school, students are aware of the limitations they face as a result of their rurality; however, when looking forward, students appear to have adopted the self-reliance, individual effort/merit discourse (neoliberalism): “Faced with new challenges, students shift from the close environment of their community into a competitive and uncertain future favouring more individualised perspectives” (p.555). Cuervo argues this is problematic because “it has the potential to transform structural disadvantages into individual failures” (p.555). Cuervo advocates for a shift towards ‘radical egalitarianism’ = expanding issues of equality from what to whom (to expose roots of inequality and new ways to approach/resist)


Keywords: pathways, VET, higher education, rural students, youth

**Context:** Works from notion that R&R students have less access to HE and are more likely to undertake VET programs (possibly as pathway to HE). Works from research that suggests using VET as substitute for HE = puts R&R students at disadvantage (see Lee and Coeli, 2010). Differentiates between apprenticeship programs and non-apprenticeship programs in VET. Tertiary system is taken to mean VET and HE. Works from post-Bradley context (unified tertiary education system). Sets out arguments about school completion rates in rural Australia and quality of secondary education: cites research that shows completion rates between metro and rural/regional students have increased, despite completion rates improving overall. One issue raised in senate hearing into R&R education = issue of recruiting teachers. NAPLAN results suggest that ‘quality’ in R&R areas is lower than in metro areas. Committee also heard R&R students have lower aspirations for HE [this is resolutely challenged in literature]. Author navigates R&R aspirations literature and concludes, “despite regional students’ strong aspirations for higher education, both real and perceived barriers and a lack of shared enthusiasm for their goals may lead many students to compromise those goals” (p.22). **Author makes questionable claims about gendered pathways:** “The favourable labour market outcomes (employment status and earnings) from apprenticeships for males are good news in an otherwise concerning pattern of tertiary participation by regional and rural youth. However, for females, completion of Year 12 followed by a degree is the only
clearly effective pathway, and this pathway is less readily available to regional and rural youth” (p.23-4) = 

**Aim:** To analyse LSAY data to explore the extent to which VET is used as substitute for HE by rural youth and to examine models of cooperation between tertiary institutions. Poses 5 questions:
1. What proportions of metropolitan and rural youth plan to enter higher education, VET or undertake no post-school study?
2. What are the occupational aspirations of young people, taking into account location and SES?
3. What proportions of metropolitan and rural youth enter higher education, VET or undertake no post-school study?
4. To what extent do well-qualified rural youth enter VET rather than higher education?
5. For those who enter VET, what are the levels of the qualifications they undertake?

**Theoretical frame:** None

**Methodology:** Uses 2003 LSAY data (school going, aged 15)

**Findings:**

One-third of students in regional locations and two-fifths of those in rural or remote locations are from families in the lowest SES quartile.

R&R = less likely to have one parent or more born overseas (which includes English language speaking countries). Authors points to differences in aspirations: more metro students aspired to complete Year 12 (90% compared to 86%); 20% of metro students intend to stop education at Year 12 compared with 33.3% of R&R. 66.4% of metro aspire to HE compared with 50% of R&R. Taking the three levels of VET qualifications together, 12.5% of metropolitan, 18.1% of regional and 20.6% of rural or remote students aspire to undertake VET study but this does not compensate for lower university aspirations. Two thirds metro and half R&R aspire towards professional careers. In NAPLAN, R&R students are under-represented in top achievement quartile.

R&R students = more likely to undertake VET studies than metro students

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Core argument: R&R students have high aspirations for post-school study and work but are lower than for metro youth. R&R students have lower participation rates in HE but higher participation rates in VET; “Participation in VET programs may not be an effective alternative to university study, as the level of VET programs taken by non-metropolitan students is typically lower than that taken by metropolitan youth, and lower-level VET qualifications have rather modest returns” (p.32). Quality of school education in non-metro areas is a concern and is essential for post-school transitions.

Aim: To explore participants’ talk for descriptions/ positioning of aspirations; ‘navigate students’ narratives’
Theoretical frame: Based on notion that aspirations and expectations = formed over period of time (Yr 10 = “where decisions about continuing to Year 12 crystallise” (p.111)
Methodology: “Multi-voiced” project. Draws on data collected for Alloway et al. 2004 (see that entry for details of methodology). Data collected Yr 10 and Yr 12. ‘Regional’ = regional, rural and remote
Findings: 2 |
| Drummond, A.; Halsey, R.; Lawson, M.; & van Breda, M. (2012). The Effectiveness of a University Mentoring Project in Peri-Rural Australia, *Australian and International Journal of Rural Education*, 22(2): 29-41. | Context: Set in post-Bradley context (40/20 targets) – notes that ‘peri-rural’ (up to 80km from metropolitan areas; rural = 80km+) = obvious point to examine in terms of meeting expansion targets. Explores a youth mentoring program with Year 9 students in peri-rural area (aim = raise aspirations for university study)
Aim: To present data on mentoring program; “to investigate whether the in-group identification of school students would be affected by contact with university mentors, and whether this in turn would affect their intentions to attend university following high-school graduation” (p.31); also “to investigate the social expectations on students to attend university or vocational education and the effects these pressures have on students’ intentions” (p.32). Mentors = part of ‘Inspire Peer Mentoring’ at Flinders: weekly interaction over 2 x 11 week terms in small groups. As part of program, mentees also visit campus twice (once per term)
Theoretical frame:
Methodology: Quantitative/ questionnaire. Participants asked to estimate in percentage terms likelihood of attending university/ how much contact with university mentors. 18 participants (14 = m; 4 = f) from a peri-rural school in SA. No mention of SES profile. 10 items in questionnaire = in-group identification (“Uni students are
just like me””) to create university and TAFE in-group scale. Other items measured contact with mentors and on other external factors affecting likelihood of aspiring to higher education

**Findings:** Data suggests that mentoring program increased students’ ‘in-group’ identification [see Slack et al. 2013 = ‘warm’ information], which increased estimated likelihood of intention to attend university. Campus visits did not produce same correlation. Aspirations to attend university or TAFE = don’t appear to be related – perhaps a result of the framing of a dichotomy (either/or), whereas students may aspire for one, both or none. There was no correlation between university mentoring and aspiration to TAFE (aka uni mentoring is useful for aspiration to university, not tertiary education more generally)

**Core argument:** If students can make meaningful contact with university students, they are more likely to aspire to go to university (confirming hypothesis on p.32): “Mentoring youth with active members of the university community appears to be beneficial for student aspirations for university education, and may be one critical mechanism for rectifying the inequity in university participation rates for rural students” (p.39)

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**Context:** Works from starting point that vibrant knowledge economy and managing ‘national productivity’ is dependent on ‘building successful learning outcomes’ among university graduates (p.151). Authors argue that “entrenched patterns of disadvantage inhibit the full development of individual talent and, hence, of the system overall” (p.151).

**Aim:** To examine Graduate Pathways Survey data to seek patterns in outcomes of ‘disadvantaged learners’ five years after course completion. Particular focus = pathways taken after completion of degree

**Theoretical frame:**

**Methodology:** Examines data collected via GPS and focuses specifically on indigenous, low SES, rural/remote and disabilities. All 40 (38 public, 2 private) universities in Australia invited to participate, “making the study a census” (p.153). Invitations to participate sent to all undergraduates who graduated in 2002 (choice between paper/online versions). N=9238 responses (=12% response rate). Data weighted accordingly. Analysis also compares genders (thus NESB is only equity category not included). Data collected in 2008

**Findings:**

**Indigenous:** 60 = indigenous = less than 1%. Results show that these respondents = slightly more likely to be working by 5th year after graduation (96.9% compared with 90.9% of non-indigenous). Indigenous students more likely to be positive about higher education, about overall benefits of work and for long-term career goals. 65.4% of indigenous students said their degree had been ‘very beneficial’ (compared with 50.3% of non-indigenous). 63.8% = saw it as ‘very beneficial’ for long-term career (compared with 49.6% of non-indigenous)
Low SES: calculated according to parents’ occupation, parents’ education level and childhood postcode. Low SES students more likely:

- attend institutions that were less than 50 years old or in regional locations;
- study in the fields of education, engineering, IT or business;
- attend part-time or externally or by distance;
- be slightly older;
- have a non-English speaking background;
- be of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin;
- identify themselves as having a disability; and
- come from a provincial or remote area (p.155)

These students = just as likely to be doing more education/training in 1st, 3rd and 5th years after graduation as other students. After 5 years, low SES = slightly less likely to have done PG study (22% compared with 25%). This group = more likely to be looking for work in 1, 3 and 5 years after graduation.

R&R: 55% of R&R students were living in state/territory capital 5 years after graduation. 84% students who attended metro universities = still living in capital cities. Little difference in type of work for all students by 5 years (but differences noted between R&R/metro students in year 1/3 after graduation). Metro students slightly lower unemployment rates one year after but unemployment rate patterns leveled after 3 and 5 years.

Gender: large differences in disciplines – more females in health and education, more men in IT and engineering. Males more likely to be involved in further study in 1st/3rd year after UG graduation but slightly less so 5 years after. Men = more likely to hold PG research qualification p.159. Men more likely to be participating in labour force 5 years after graduation (96% to 91%), even more for full time employment (96% to 87%). Women’s wages are also lower (AUS$70k to $57k) – with a steady gap growing from year 1 out of university.

All equity group students less likely to be in ‘professional or managerial’ jobs 5 years after graduation. Median salary = on par in 1st year post-graduation. Overall, students from disadvantaged backgrounds who were retained through to graduation “reported educational and occupational outcomes equal to their relatively less disadvantaged contemporaries” (p.156).

Core argument: After 5 years, most social and cultural barriers are removed; however, “there are still clear gender differences apparent among higher degree educated people five years after completing university studies, even after controlling for a range of other influences on salary” (p.160). Authors argue that “studying
**Context:** Describes how University of Canberra’s *Aspire UC* program seeks to inspire aspiration in rural and remote (R&R) high schools/ communities in the Canberra area. Sets out an argument for focusing on R&R because of cost and distance associated with attending university - R&R and likely to also be low SES. R&R = have lower educational attainment and thus parents have limiting aspirations/expectations for their children (with a gender divide evident = girls more likely to aspire to university – perhaps to escape macho rural lifestyle/less opportunities for women). *Aspire UC* is a school outreach program that works with Years 7-10. Program is “age-appropriate, interactive and engaging” – working with each year level three times a year.

**Methodology:** Reports on survey of almost 3000 students from Year 7-10 from 23 schools relating to post-school aspirations and plans. Pre and post-program responses collected and analysed: 2890 pre-program and 2605 post-program responses collected. Data from 2012. Pre-program Q = ‘After I finish school, I plan to...’ and students chose from list of options (including ‘don’t know’); same Q repeated in post-program survey. Four areas on primary interest: going to uni/ going to TAFE/ apprenticeship/ FT work – these ascribed ‘yes’ or ‘no’ category and % calculated on that basis. Not just one option per person. Acknowledges that mean change could be acquiescence (limitation).

**Findings:** Broad analysis (collapsing age and gender) showed that positive mean change of 7.5% to attend uni, 8.25% to attend TAFE, 2.1% to attend apprenticeship, 7.88% to find FT work. Negative values found in TAFE (females, Year 8), apprenticeship (Year 7 females, Year 8 males, Year 9 males) = *Aspire UC* contributed to students being more likely to consider all (but slightly less for apprenticeship) after attending the program. Females more likely on average to change their minds post-program. Year level also appears significant: pre-program Year 7 average % for aspiring for 4 options = 65.25%; Year 10 = 48.5%. All Year groups experienced positive mean change in post-program surveys (Year 10 change % = highest). Main findings:

- Decreased interest in apprenticeships is significant for R&R students
- Pre-program results were highest in university category
- Girls more likely to want to go to university (all Year levels) and more likely to want to go to TAFE (except Yr 10)

Both genders inspired to consider further education after attending *Aspire UC*.

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**Keywords:** low socioeconomic status; regional and rural; school outreach programs; widening participation

**Context:** Discusses rural and remote students’ transitions through ACT Experience camp (a joint venture with Country Education Foundation (CEF) Australia, Uni of Canberra and ANU) providing “academically able” (abstract) rural students with taster of urban/university life. CEF’s mission is in part to support rural and regional communities/young people to participate in post-school education and training. ACT Experience = HEPPP funded. Every year, 50 students (Years 9-11) travel to Canberra – students chosen on basis of ‘academic ability’. Purpose of camps “to provide a unique experience relevant to rural youth who, despite performing well academically and perhaps already considering university, have difficulty envisioning themselves at university” (p.3). Camps also offer information about finances and scholarships. Discusses: adolescents’ post-school decisions, rural students’ views on university

**Theoretical frame:** Draws on discussion of ‘imagined futures’

**Methodology:** Mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative). Pilot study: 41 (31f: 10m; 35 = Yr10, 6 = Yr9; 3 = Indigenous) from 5 high schools in 2012; students asked about views of university at start/end of camp (survey = demographic data, questions about future plans; students asked write down 3 words that come to mind). Words rated as positive, negative, neutral. Main study: 48 (24f:24m; 39 = Yr10; 9 = Yr11; 3 x Indigenous) from 5 high schools. Pre/post-course surveys + focus groups 7 weeks after.

**Findings:** Pilot study: 82% interested in uni before camp; 17% undecided. Students = positive words about university got more positive

Main study: went into 2014 camp with “the intention of more accurately ascertaining students’ attitudes toward university, and addressing potential barriers” (p.6), particularly knowledge of university, confidence to transition and successfully live in city. Also included parents’ and friend’s plans for future. Students were surveyed and had to complete reflection (various formats) of what the camp meant to them (small groups).

Findings (main study): prior, 70% intended to go to university. Little change post camp. Focus group data themes: positive expectations/learning something interesting; concerns about university (financial cost, accommodation/moving away from home; students’ impressions of university: most students had not seen a university before; students’ changed views of university: after visiting two campuses, students were more positive; imagined selves as university students (expectations about workloads, work, friends, classes + going home at weekends); imagined selves beyond university.

- **Core argument:** Rural students are generally “less confident about their ability to succeed at university given their self-perceptions as being different to urban/metropolitan young people” (p.11). “[S]tudents reported (1) greater understanding of university, of their post-school options and of living in a city; and

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(2) increased confidence in their decision-making and in their ability to move away from home” (p.9); latter point is particularly relevant for rural/remote students. However, rural/remote students still need “assistance to believe that they can make the transition to university and (albeit temporarily) city life” (p.11).


AUS

Keywords: admission, higher education, scholarship, performance, academic support

Context: Describes programs and initiatives at USQ that encourage R&R students to enrol, remain and complete their degrees, such as Head Start Program (HSP), the School Partners Program(SPP), Guidance Officer Days(GOD), enrichment camps, academic bridging programs, scholarships; Indigenous Higher Education Pathways Program (IHEPP). Head Start = allows school students to participate in mainstream Year 1 UG classes (orientation/ access to university resources/ network building) + development of strong networks with partner schools through School Partners Program. Guidance Officer Days = orientation/campus visit program. Academic bridging = enabling (TPP/ Foundation Studies/ EAP/ Indigenous HEPP). Acknowledges concerns for R&R youth = cost, distance and financial challenges = university offers range of scholarships: “These services are designed to ensure that the transition into university life is simplified and comfortable” (p.2)

Aim: To explore “the factors that impact on the rural remote students’ participation in higher education and the services that enhance their progression and retention” (p.2): to identify factors of impact, to identify types of assistance and support needed, to investigate usefulness of services and supports

Theoretical frame:

Methodology: “Descriptive survey research” (p.2) = questionnaire included closed and open items about programs listed in context. 339 students invited to participate after being sampled systematically from total of 3389 R&R students at 3 USQ campuses. 89 students participated in 2010 (26% response rate)

Findings:
27% = 18 or younger
26% = 37 or older
62% = female
73% = enrolled through QTAC
13% = direct/ mature admissions process
29% = used internet as source of information about university
28% = used ‘other’ sources (e.g. school, employer)
25% = used parents or friends as source of information
18% = school visits/open days
Participants were somewhat aware of services (64% aware of scholarships; 49% = TPP; 20% = Head Start; 13% = Indigenous HEPP). 99% were not aware of other services/facilities.

Students = overall satisfied with TPP (mean rating of 2.45)

Mean ratings for other services suggest they were neither satisfied or dissatisfied

Student recommendations:
1) disseminate information as comprehensive information pack
2) include a step-by-step guide to study and information about financial support
3) need to simplify online communication
4) have a support person to help with more pastoral/ connection support
5) need more personal assistance

Core argument: “Multiple information sources on educational pathways are important in decision-making processes for high-school students” (p.7)


Context: To explore goals and plans of Australian school students + attitudes towards education = focusing specifically on low SES. Drawing on previous research, James hypothesises that proximity (or lack of) to university campuses = significant factor, especially because Australian students tend to stay at home/close to home. Also notes SES-related family values and support for higher education

Methodology: Survey of Yr 10,11,12 students (n=7023; 40% usable responses) from both urban and rural settings. Critiques postcode methods of categorising SES and instead uses parents’ education as level, with higher SES = parent(s) have university degree; low SES = parents may or may not have attended school. Physical access = measured by distance from home to nearest university, which connects with rurality. Uses 4-part categorisation of access = low access (300km+ to uni), medium access (151-300km), high access/rural = fewer than 150km, high access/urban (fewer than 150km). Low + medium = rural students

Findings:
SES is significant influence on likelihood to aspire to HE, especially when combined with rurality – particularly related to completion of high school

Participation for R&R students less likely to be affected by distance/social context than SES

• Low SES students = on average less likely to report experiencing range of encouraging factors (p.465)
• High SES students = stronger perceptions of teacher/parental encouragement
• More ambiguous findings re: urban v. rural students
• Low SES = report more agreement with barriers to access
High SES students more likely to aspire to HE (70%); medium SES = 50%; low = 42%

Over 20% of low access = report having no intention of going to university

Core argument:
“...educational advantage and disadvantage are the result of a three-way intersection of family socioeconomic background, the characteristics of the urban or rural context in which people live, and the physical distance from campuses” (p.469)


Context: Research commissioned by Higher Education Council (HEC). At the time, low SES students = half as likely as mid/high SES peers to go to university. “With the expectation of completing secondary schooling now close to a social norm, tertiary education remains the locus of differing class expectations regarding educational participation” (p.49)

Aim: To investigate attitudes of senior secondary students towards higher education

Theoretical frame: Based on data previously collected from 7000 students from NSW, VIC, WA for HEC

Methodology: Based on data collected in 1998 by CSHE and YRC: students from Yr 10, 11, 12 from stratified schools (urban/rural/isolated, SES and gender). Survey asked students about post-school priorities/ intentions

Findings:
“The study reveals appreciable social stratification in the opinions of senior secondary students about the relevance and attainability of a university education” (Exec Summary). Differences in aspirations/attitudes = based on SES (biggest factor), gender and geographic location.

90% expressed desire to go to further study (in ideal circumstances) = 2/3 = university; ¼ = TAFE

High SES = stronger confidence in getting to university study (approx 70%) compared with 50% mid-SES and 42% low SES students. 16% low SES desired uni but did not think it was possible.

Low SES = more likely to view TAFE as more useful; have weaker interest in future subject(s); less confident that their parents supported desire to go to HE; stronger motivation/interest to earn money after school. Also, less confident academic results = good enough for entry to university; less likely to believe subjects studied at school = good for uni study.

Low SES = more likely to view cost as barrier to university study. 41% believed families would not be able to support costs and 1/3 perceived that they would have to self-support if they went to uni. View of cost as deterrent = heightened for rural students.
|---|

Gender: females more likely to show commitment to school. Males = less likely to see relevance and attainability of higher education. Females more likely to believe friends will go to uni and more likely to believe their teachers were supporting that aspiration.

Level of parental education = most closely tied with students’ aspirations for uni study

**Core argument:** Lower participation of low SES appears to be “created by the cumulative effect of the relative absence of encouraging factors and the presence of a stronger set of inhibiting factors” (p.xi). Five areas for further consideration:

1. measurement of SES (parental education = better than postcode method)
2. more research needed to understand how HECS is perceived, especially by low SES students/ families
3. more research into early outreach/ collaborations between universities and schools
4. more research to ascertain influence of curriculum on students’ aspirations/ how can curriculum accommodate p/t work

System-wide rethink of selection procedures = “vital ingredient” for making progress on access/entry for low SES students

**Context:** Examines ‘UniReady for Multicultural Groups’ at UniSA (in Whyalla) – aim is to attract ‘immigrant families’ to university. Pilot study = introduced participants to [idea of?] university study, degrees available and future planning for university. Set in context of widening participation. According to ABS data, in 2010, 719,600 migrants (unclear how they arrived; presumably economic migrants??) – 76% = born in LBOTE countries; 91% 15-41 years of age on arrival. 477,800 = temporary visas [457 visas??]. Describes educational backgrounds (e.g. 65% had ‘non-school qualification; 31% had received non-school qualifications since arriving in Australia; 46% of whom = BA or higher) – but unclear if these numbers include NES (UK/CAN/US etc.)

**Theoretical frame:** None

**Methodology:** 15/18 (83%) community members participated in pilot program = paper draws on experiences of participants and 4 staff members. Survey tool used = quantitative and qualitative data collected. Program advertised via flyers [unclear if these were translated]. Program consisted of 5 hours = intro to program, intro to pathways to study, discipline information sessions for Foundation studies, Engineering, Business, Social Work and Nursing.

**Findings:** Potential students: Most important information = ‘how to get started’ and clarity of information given. Staff: “reported the need to encourage people to consider studying in the area of Business” (p.76) and ‘opportunity to spread the word’
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Limitations:</strong> Program = recruitment exercise; little attention given to nuanced differences between national groups; very small mention of language barriers (not included as part of 'empirical work'). No acknowledgement of who authors are and where they are located.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Context:</strong> Explores political and methodological challenges of researching social justice and rural education. Inequity = result of considering rural and metropolitan schools as same = “geographical blindness” (Green &amp; Letts, 2007). Social justice in rural education = distributive form of justice aimed at overcoming economic differences. Result = essentialised view of rural education (treated as homogenous) “determining the needs of the rural in relation to the cosmopolitan values of urban élites” (p.765).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Aim:</strong> To explore social justice in rural education through use of space and place. “Distance and geography are entwined in the socio-historical construction of the rural” (p.766) + considerations of the fertility of the land in constructions of place. Rural = constructed as ‘backward’ and in need of ‘rescuing’ (p.766) and rural capital viewed as deviant and deficient by state’s paternalistic lens = has equity consequences: “Such inherently metro-centric and cosmopolitan views of equity and quality have resulted in deficit views of rural educational achievement, along with simple redistributive equity approaches that take no account of the particularities and affordances of rural social space” (p.766). Quality of rural education = judged against metropolitan [and increasingly global] conceptions and measurements – often explained by low SES make up and lack of resources (teachers). Existing notions of distributive social justice fail to recognise lived experiences of rural communities and do little to disrupt entrenched patterns of ‘disadvantage’ or underperformance. In discussions of rural disadvantage, geography (space/place) = factored out and “is not considered as a significant matter in relation to equity and social justice in its own right” (p.767). Disadvantage happens with/ because of the powerful deciding on behalf of the disenfranchised = issues of recognition (Fraser, 1995). Authors argue that the rural has not achieved the same level of recognition as other equity groups. Rural students = constructed by virtue of their geography (‘out there’) as deficient, in need, and needing to master metro-centric curriculum. Rural connotes with local; metropolitan connotes with global in notion of standardization as marker of quality</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| **Theoretical frame:** Draws on Soja’s notion of spatial justice to explore particularities and subjectivities of rural places (remembering that there are people in these places). Rurality = viewed as “a concept that is at once geographic, demographic, and cultural, and hence as cutting across disciplinary and (meta-)methodological lines and boundaries” (p.766). Spatial justice = “distributive, recognitive, and representational justice are regarded as addressing either historical or socially constructed inequities and, as such, are limited in their ability to recognize
and interrupt disadvantage” (p.768). Also works from Cuervo (2012) to acknowledge more forms of capital. Draws also on Bourdieu notion of field.

**Methodology:** Argues for methodological polytheism (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1998) = variety of data and methods, working with reflexivity to unpack preconceptions and experiences of rurality. Authors propose “a philosophical position informed by a spatial understanding of the rural and social justice” (p.770) – rural = constructed in trialectic of perceived, conceived, and lived space on different scales and within a skewed power dynamic. Also works with a critical pedagogy of place (Gruenewald, 2003) = values particularities rather than generalisations.

**Discussion:** In terms of educational policy, placing rural at the centre would disrupt the metro-centre power over rural schools. Authors argue that “rural meanings have been overlooked as valuable ways to understand the modern global world” (p.771)

Need to consider scale when discussing and describing what counts as rural and what counts as disadvantaged: “Thus, we get a picture of various intersecting scales of educational advantage: nationally, from remote to urban, and inland to coastal; state-wise, from rural to capital, large rural towns and their satellite villages, and the distance out from the capital in terms of centralized bureaucracies; and citybased, in terms of inner city–outer city and geographic distribution of capital across suburbs” (p.771).

Also need to consider the temporal – metro efficiencies through technological innovation challenge rural lifestyles and ways of knowing and being and doing

**Core argument:** Need to develop understandings of how rural is distinct but not recognised and is “culturally dominated by urban cosmopolitan ideals” (p.767). Rural education = judged against a set of standards that rural actors have little/no input into.

Methodologically, bringing together “Bourdieu and Soja allow us to expand on existing concerns about the distribution of economic capital, recognitive or recognitional justice to also include the particularities of places and spaces, and the geographical determination of social and economic disadvantage” (p.772) and facilitates a focus on context.

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**Context:** Explores how university campuses in rural/regional locations can interact with communities “to shape aspirations and flexibly deliver sustainable academic programs” (abstract) in various modes. Works from assumption that various factors impede rural/regional students’ engagement with HE (small populations making difficult to run programs/ distance education not good for all). Starts from Dalley-Trim & Alloway’s 2010 paper, and highlights the limitation of not being able to access those who had already left school. Notes difficulty of
defining what counts as ‘rural’—careful about treating all people who live outside of metropolitan areas as homogenous group (p.81). Argues that not all rural students want to move away from home, but may be limited in options as a result: “A campus that cannot provide a reasonable variety of programs runs the risk of, simultaneously, patronising its target population and reinforcing entrenched social stereotypes” (p.82) = leading to forms of (social) exclusion. Therefore, policy rather than geography = determining factor in social exclusion

Aim: Asks: to what extent are those living in rural and remote communities ‘free’ to pursue their dreams of higher education? What would count as adequate educational opportunity for those embracing regional and rural lifestyles? (abstract)

Theoretical frame: Draws on Isaiah Berlin’s two concepts of freedom: negative freedom (free from interference from others) and positive freedom (freedom as self-mastery); discourse of ‘option-freedom’ (as opposed to ‘agent-freedom’) and discourse of social inclusion/exclusion. “Option-freedom reflects two things: the character of the options that are accessible to the agent; plus the nature of the agent’s access to those options (Pettit 2003, p.389), p.82). Also draws on Gidley’s 3-part typology of ‘social inclusion’ agendas (2010)

Methodology: Essay

Discussion:
1) considers ‘one-room’ campus (regional/rural centres) offering IT access for external/blended learning – notes pros and cons. Ideal: “To ensure greater success for one-room classrooms, it would be desirable to follow each remote-delivered lecture with a face-to-face tutorial allowing instructors to test and confirm students’ understanding of lectures, plus students’ skills in extracting information and meaning from print-based course materials” (p.87)
2) Flexible programming: regional campuses need discretion to enact flexibility
3) Scholarships
4) Regional campus as ‘shaper of educational demand’: metrocentrism pushes a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach: “regional university campuses would be well-advised to follow the lead of rural community schools in modelling academic possibilities to the local population” (p.88)
5) Local knowledges and local course content: curriculum needs to be relevant to communities served – calls for place-based education
6) Symbolic importance of rural campuses: “needs to become a locus for aspects of community life, including teacher education and continuing professional development” (p.90)
7) Supporting teacher education: based on research that argues where teachers train to become teachers is strongly connected with where they work.

8) Supporting professional development:

**Core argument:** Regional/rural students are important and warranted more attention and different approaches; they “represent a gain to their universities and to the higher education system as a whole” (p.91). For regional/rural campuses to respond to local communities = based on assumption that they know what they want; “rural campuses must act not only as brokers between rural populations and higher education institutions, but as educators of public opinion and shapers of local educational aspirations” (abstract).

### References


**Keywords:** remote islanders, Indigenous, equity, aspirations, transitions, migration, longitudinal, ethnographic

**Context:** Explores students’ experiences of transitions to later-years schooling and post-school futures in the particular (‘specialness’) context of remote islander inhabitants who attend school on the island until Year 10 and then have to migrate to mainland for Year 11 and 12. Paper focuses on “place attachment”. Discusses educational issues that rural students face; notes the mitigating influence of home schooling (but with challenges). Offers history of Tasmania (p.3).

**Aim:** To examine “social, cultural and locational factors which result in low post-compulsory retention rates of remote island students” (abstract) and also to explore perceptions of and aspirations for post-school futures, relating to senses of identity and belonging in context of migrating from rural to urban environments.

**Theoretical frame:** Works from notion of place as a social construct connected to cultural values and social capital that also acknowledges emotional connections (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) to the land. Authors note [similar to Roberts & Green, 2013] the deficit positioning of rurality against metropolitan norms. Similarly, authors note the importance of ‘place conscious education’ that “recognizes spatial as well as cultural diversity in education and challenges the locational homogenization associated with economic globalization” (p.2), but without romanticizing rural places and the challenges that people face.

**Methodology:** Longitudinal ethnographic research (mixed methods) using grounded theory. Study followed group of Year 10 students from a small island off Tasmania to Year 11 in secondary school on the mainland. One third of participants = Indigenous. Research site = ‘very remote’, where trend of ‘out-migration’ is local concern and which represents a physical and psychological journey (need to fly to mainland); also issues with internet/communication reception = isolated and remoteness.

**Research design:** Stewart = teacher of 25 years on the island (see page 5 for explicit unpacking of her positionality). Research set around Year 9 ‘work studies’ module and project around aspirations/experience of island life. Stewart’s observation = students with high aspirations and achievement did not always complete Year...
11 or 12. All 16 students (9 girls, 7 boys; all NESB) took part in subsequent interviews in Year 10 prior to leaving and then in Year 11 after moving. Questions included topics such as education and employment aspirations, what they thought they would be doing and where, the following year, in five years time and in 10 years time.

**Findings:** Data identified “socio-spatial ambiguities experienced” (p.1) and factors that influenced students’ transitions into later years of high school and factors that contributed to persist or disengage: “Attachment to the island as their home place and the emplacement of their cultural ties to family and community contrasted with the displacement experienced in the urban environment” (p.1). This sense of community and attachment = more for Indigenous students.

Tracking students over three years showed strong continuation from Year 9 – 10 (100%) but discontinuation happening in Year 11 (8 completed Year 11; 7 completed Year 12) – lower academic achievers more likely to return home without completing (but acknowledgement that moving away to attempt Year 11 = an achievement in itself). Where students stayed on the mainland = significant.

Data from Year 10 (interview 1)
5 students thought they would progress to VET or university and 3 wanted to join the military. Only 3 thought they would return to the island. Students expressed vague (and sometimes unrealistic) = “relationships, marriage and family, but more often they imagined being able to own and drive cars, have money, drink alcohol and to enjoy a “good lifestyle” (p.7).

Academic transition viewed as less challenging than practical challenges of moving – students feared being ‘dispossessed’ of place and identity and anxieties about practicalities of living away from home and managing a budget

Data from Year 11 (interview 2)
Most were feeling good about their studies (minority finding it tough). Students exploring new opportunities and “the demands of academic study did not in themselves create pressure to discontinue” (p.8), rather the issues were located in the size of campus and complexity of course offerings. Students = supported by teachers and Home/School Liaison Officers (but not always + lack of familiarity with teachers = challenging). Students found punctuality difficult and they got lost often + fear of crowds. Accommodation = problematic (not like home), as was difficulty in finding part-time work and homesickness/ place-sickness (missing way of life) was common: “The highs and lows of place attachment and detachment made settling-in a very slow process. It also contributed to feelings of losing social competence and concern that teachers might see them as not coping” (p.9).
Authors offers dualities:
- Location and displacement
- Freedom and lack of freedom
- Fear and lack of fear
- Familiarity and lack of familiarity
- Support and lack of support
- Mastery and lack of mastery

Home and college = created ‘hybridities of place and identity’

**Core argument:** “The island students’ experiences of the educational transition process, and their subsequent academic outcomes, emerged as closely linked to their attachment and sense of belonging to place and community in both the sending and receiving places, and to their experiences of location and dislocation” (p.1). Whole of institution approach needed to help compensate for challenges faced by students who need to migrate to study, particularly for school age children (suggestions made in last section of paper). Rural and metropolitan education should not be “regarded as separate and unequal but as interconnected and of equal value, and resourced by governments as such” (p.12)


**Context:** Set in post- Bradley context (increased participation targets) and with La Trobe’s strategic/operational planning intention to raise participation of regional participation rates (responding to need to increase numbers of R&R students). Focus = outreach and “enhanced relationships” with schools, VET and community providers. Particular focus = mature age students (defined as 21+). Scope of the literature = major themes include issues with motivation and challenges related to time, responsibilities and money

Also set “in the context of increased competition between various cohorts for limited places in regional social science programs” (p.329).

**Aim:** To identify how mature age individuals experience barriers in accessing, progressing and succeeding at university

**Theoretical frame:**

**Methodology:** Qualitative educational research with context-specific ethnographic elements with staff and students in one Faculty. Participants = 10 staff (7 tenured discipline lecturers + 3 support services staff) – interviewed on experiences of recruiting, teaching and coordinating mature age students. Also: email survey with 20 (16 f; 4 m) mature age students (Year 3 and 4 of Social Work and Social Policy) about negative and positive aspects of being a mature student on regional campus
Findings:
Mature age students have additional barriers to participation in higher education = financial and time constraints and distance. Participants report that “mature age students present with pre-existing competing priorities when entering higher education” (p.332) which create greater complexity. Participants perceived requesting support (either formal or informal) = positive impact on studies.
Staff perception = mature age students have higher expectations and greater commitment; they are more willing to engage in ‘learning conversations’. Other perceived elements = connection to university and friends/support networks. Major theme = significance of prior experiences; bringing a sense of ‘richness’ into classroom dynamic and more conceptual discussions (p.334). Staff did not feel separating younger and more mature age students was a useful strategy.

Core argument: Need to consider the principles of andragogy: “Adult learners in a regional community context could gain more from formal and informal learning experiences if all adult education programs adhered to well informed adult learning principles” (p.335)

Aim: To explore aspirations of low SES/rural and remote primary and secondary pupils to enter higher education
Theoretical frame:
Methodology: Mixed methods. Study site = 8 schools in NE NSW: n=143 students focus groups of up to 10 children/young people aged 11-17 (84 girls, 59 boys). Questionnaires also sent home for parents to complete; 60% responses rate. Used ‘Leximancer’ text analysis software
Findings:
82-100% of parents who had TAFE/uni/teachers/nurses aspired for children to go to university or TAFE; similar results from parents with secondary school. Other parents mentioned a specific job or something about them being happy.
Young people’s responses illustrated strong cultural capital (influence of parents and siblings) and social capital (local environment), especially in last 2 years of primary and first 2 years of secondary. Children in Years 5-7 demonstrated an understanding of value of education.
Perceived challenges include: financial support/distance from home/leaving family and friends/public transport/cost of HE.
Recommendations: need for early intervention – preparation programmes including “literacy and study skills, careers information and mentoring from adults to strengthen young people’s resolve and move beyond possible
| Wilson, S.; Lyons, T.; & Quinn, F. (2013). ‘Should I Stay or Should I Go?’: Rural and Remote Students in First Year University STEM Courses, *Australian and International Journal of Rural Education*, 23(2): 77-88. | **Context:** Focuses on R&R students and STEM – notes falling participation in physical science and maths in schools and under-representation of rural students in higher education. Also R&R students = underperforming (according to PISA scores) in STEM subjects (mathematical and scientific literacy). Examines perspectives of R&R STEM university students regarding intentions to complete and possibilities of withdrawing. Paper positioned at intersection between global concerns over STEM participation and remote/rural access to higher education. Literature review scopes STEM literature and R&R literature: notes issues related to schooling (rural students = consistently lower achievement in STEM school subjects than metro counterparts) and finances. Lack of experienced teachers in rural places = noted issue (two positions in teaching difficult to fill = rural posts and STEM roles). Other research shows that Year 10 rural students = had significantly less positive attitudes towards science than those in larger population centres (Lyons & Quinn, 2010). Also draws on research that suggests that rural students are more likely to consider deferral or withdrawal (particularly with reference to family commitments or financial issues, and issues related to feelings of not belonging).  
**Aim:** To explore the experiences of rural students studying STEM subjects at university:  
1. What are the responses of a sample of rural/remote Australian first year STEM students at Australian universities to the question: “I will probably decide to leave this course before I finish”, and how do these compare to the other location categories?  
2. What reasons are given by rural/remote students for considering withdrawing from their STEM university course?  
**Theoretical frame:**  
**Methodology:** Draws from large-scale international IRIS project (Interests and Recruitment in Science). Data collected in Australia from 3496 STEM students from 30 universities. Survey instrument used with Likert-scale items (exploring factors behind choosing STEM/ experiences of first year). 2 items examined in this paper (“I will probably decide to leave this course before I finish” and an open-ended question eliciting reasons if so). Sample = 274 students from ‘small rural or remote town’ (266 responses)  
**Findings:** At end of Year 1, R&R student = no more or less likely to drop out but 20% of rural cohort had considered withdrawing  
224/266 = disagreed with the statement about considering leaving, 17 = neutral and 25 agreed/strongly agreed. This pattern of responses = similar to students from other geographic locations. |

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| 53 rural students had considered leaving; reasons included: changing to another course, unenjoyable course, lacking clear goals, content difficult, not sure what I want, cost of living, course = pathway elsewhere, distance, limited career prospects, workload = demanding (top 10). |
| Limitation = survey does not capture views of students who have already dropped out |