The Enacted Learner Identities Framework

The potential to improve VET delivery

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by 2025, 40 per cent of all 25-34 year olds will have a qualification at bachelor level or above’ and that ‘by 2020, 20 per cent of higher education enrolments at undergraduate level should be of people from low socio-economic backgrounds (Gillard 2009)

Improving the enrolments and qualifications levels of adults involves understanding:

a) the underlying drivers of adults’ decision making about engagement in post compulsory education decision making,

b) the groups in Australian society who have the potential to significantly increase their participation and

c) the pathways through VET to undergraduate qualifications.

Attitudes to lifelong learning engagement (or disengagement):

• those who are sceptical about education’s potential for achieving social change,

• those who participate but reject some kinds of participation to avoid indecision,

• those who actively engage in lifelong learning as part of personal development and community participation (Field 2005)

Engagement is a risk

• to an individual’s identity as a learner
• to learners’ membership in a range of local, global and learning communities
• to an individual’s sense of self efficacy
Social Partnerships in Learning

- **Resistant**
  - resisting the transformative effects of learning and maintaining the integrity of the individual’s existing learner identity

- **Persistent**
  - trying to adapt to and respond to social processes and identities and mirror the dominant identities sufficiently to complete a qualification

- **Transition**
  - experimenting with different learner identities over a short term in a nonlinear order without settling in one identity

- **Enacted**
  - negotiating and actively managing the intersections between the inherent social values and processes

**Learner Identity Elements**

- **Purpose**
- **Networks** (bonding, bridging and linking ties)
- **Identity resources**
- **Processes**
- **Alignment of community, family and workplace identities**
- **Sense of Agency**
- **Access to information and resources**

**Implications for VET delivery**

- Learners are engaged in learner identity work
- Support services build learner identity and connections
- Making the underlying social structures and knowledge processes of formal educational institutions explicit and connecting people to those structures and processes.

- Providing opportunities to experiment with a range of identities and reflect on what this might mean for their existing identities.
- Co-production of knowledge
- Recognising the learners strengths and skills as the starting and reference point for learning

- Normalising empowered identities in difficult situations. Ensure learners have the opportunity to examine the reasons that institutional discrimination occurs and what that means for them and their identity
- Providing learning experiences that support people to practise and articulate their decisions about engagement
- Work in partnership

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