

Project 1: Learning Approaches and Personality as Predictors of Academic Success over Time: Mature-Age versus School Leaver

- Supervisor:** Assoc Prof Lorelle Burton (4631 2853; burtonl@usq.edu.au)
- Research Purpose:** The research examines key predictors of academic success, tracking students 1-3 years after their initial enrolment.
- Research Description:** Key variables: personality (big five), learning approaches (deep, shallow, strategic), age (mature-age versus school leaver), academic performance (e.g., GPA, 2006 - 2008).
- (b) General overview of the proposed project:
The aim of this research is to examine the relationships between personality, learning approaches and academic performance, to examine key differences between mature age and school leavers.
- (c) Particular theories that the student would expected to draw upon or theories that have been used to develop the proposed project:
Learning theories, individual differences (personality), career literature, predictors of academic success.
- (d) Past research, especially if this is a replication project:
This research will extend work previously covered on this topic (i.e., predictors of academic success, personality, and learning approaches) by the Supervisor, by tracking a cohort over time.
- (e) Any additional information that would help the student understand the project:
Honours projects on related topics were previously completed by Nanette Irvine, Lee Crozier, Louise Nelson, Jenny Sztaroszta, Liria Ropolo, and Caroline Cave-Wilkinson, Di Corser and Ros Ballantine.
- Participants:** Include in this section
- (a) Approximately how many participants will be needed:
At least 100+ students (as many as possible)
- (b) Where will they come from:
Archival data – The S1 2006 USQ undergraduate (on-campus and distance) student cohort will be tracked over time.
- (c) The role that the student will play in recruitment
Not required
- Methodology:** Include in this section
- (a) Questionnaires that will be used:
- Personality was measured using the International Personality Item Pool (Goldberg).
 - The Approaches and Study Skills Inventory for students (ASSIST) was used to measure three learning approaches (i.e., deep, surface, and strategic).
 - Participants also provided relevant demographic details.
 - GPA (S1, 2006 – S2/S3 2008) will be the measures of academic performance.
- (b) Data collection information (i.e., where data collection will

- occur): Students were recruited as part of a large-scale research project led by Dr Lorelle Burton.
- (c) The role that the student will play in data collection: No active role required as participants were recruited online in 2006.
- (d) If data collection is going to be shared with another project: no.
- (e) If an archived data base is to be used, outline what this data base is and where did it originate: Student Learning Profiles Research Project – ethics clearance initially obtained from USQ Ethics and later from Psychology Ethics.
- (f) If archived data is to be used, outline any data collection expectations: The student will be required to track student GPA over time.

Data Analysis:

Include in this section

(a) Broad type of analysis (i.e., quantitative/qualitative)

- Descriptive statistics
- Reliabilities (internal consistency)
- Correlations
- Regressions

(b) The level of analytical independence that you expect from the student:

The student is required to independently perform all analyses.

(c) If student is expected to engage in analyses that have not been covered in their undergraduate degree, indicate how the student is expected to obtain these skills and knowledge:

All analyses are covered in Honours research courses.

(d) Brief overview of statistical/data tasks that the student will be expected to perform (e.g., data screening, checking psychometric properties of questionnaires, separating participants into particular groups based on questionnaire responses, etc):

Basic data screening will be required. Psychometric properties of online surveys will need to be checked. Analyses will be performed as appropriate to the specific research question/s.

(e) If archival data is being used, outline what tasks the student would be expected to perform on this data (e.g., transcribe):

The student will be required to track student progress (i.e., GPA) over time to measure academic success.

Student friendliness:

Include in this section

(a) Whether project is suitable for external/on campus students. Suitable for either distance or on-campus student.

(b) If the student needs to travel for data collection, make this clear in this section.

N/A

(c) Supervision expectations (e.g., weekly, fortnightly, face-to-face, etc): Contact as required - phone, email, or face-to-face.

Further reading:

Diseth, A., & Martinsen, O. (2003). Approaches to learning, cognitive styles, and motives as predictors of academic

achievement. *Educational Psychology*, 23, 195-207.

Diseth, A., Pallesen, S., Hovland, A., & Larsen, S. (2006). Course experience, approaches to learning and academic achievement. *Education & Training*, 48, 156-169.

Entwistle, N. J., & Peterson, E. R. (2004). Conception of learning and knowledge in higher education - Relationships with study behaviour and influences of learning environments. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 41, 407-428.

McKenzie, K., & Gow, K. (2004). Exploring the first year academic achievement of school leavers and mature-age students through structural equation modelling. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 14, 107-123.

Expected research outcomes: Include any potential research outcomes that you predict may be associated with the final product or hope to associate with the final project (e.g., APS Conference Presentation 2010; Journal Article): Conference publication and/or journal article.

Ethics:

This acts as a check for the supervisor

- Ethical approval will be sought by supervisor; or
- Ethics approved – number EP200706

Resources:

This acts as a check for the supervisor

- Project able to be funded within \$150 departmental limit
- Project not able to be funded within \$150 departmental limit – additional funds will come from:

Filename: 95181C92.doc
Directory: C:\Documents and Settings\User\Local
Settings\Temporary Internet Files\Content.MSO
Template: C:\Documents and Settings\User\Application
Data\Microsoft\Templates\Normal.dotm
Title: Getting Inside Heads: Using Cognitive Mapping to
Enhance Learning and Teaching
Subject:
Author: Faculty of Sciences
Keywords:
Comments:
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