Project 2: Learning Approaches, Career Decidedness, Personality and Academic Success: A Multidisciplinary Perspective

Supervisor: Associate Professor Lorelle Burton (4631 2853; burtonl@usq.edu.au)

Research Purpose: To examine the relationships between personality, career-decidedness, student support services, learning approaches for students enrolled in each of the five USQ Faculties and to identify key predictors of academic success.

Research Description: (a) Key variables: personality (big five), learning approaches (deep, shallow, strategic), career-decidedness/efficacy, student opinions of university support services (e.g., administration, information, technology, student support, distance education services, and other USQ facilities), and academic performance (e.g., GPA, S1 and S2 2008).

(b) General overview of the proposed project:
The aim of this research is to examine the relationship between career-decidedness, learning approaches, student opinions of support services, and academic performance in a sample of students enrolled across each of the five faculties at USQ.

(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 is based on data from a large-scale study undertaken by Supervisor and Student Services at USQ and will extend work previously covered on this topic (i.e., predictors of academic success, personality, and learning approaches) by the Supervisor.

(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: (a) Approximately how many participants will be needed:
At least 100+ students (as many as possible)

(b) Where will they come from:
Students were recruited online in S1, 2008 via the USQ Student Services website. The sample comprises undergraduate on-campus and distance students from USQ (across the five faculties).

(c) The role that the student will play in recruitment:
Not required

Methodology: Include in this section
(a) Questionnaires that were used:

- The 2008 Student Opinion Survey developed by Student Services, USQ.
- The measures of career decidedness are Career Choice Status Inventory (Savickas, 1993), Academic Major Satisfaction Scale (Nauta, 2007), and Career Futures Inventory (Rottinghaus, Day,

& Borgen, 2005).
- The Approaches and Study Skills Inventory for students (ASSIST) will be used to measure three learning approaches (i.e., deep, surface, and strategic).
- Participants also provided relevant demographic details.
- GPA will be the measure of academic performance.
- Personality will be measured using the International Personality Item Pool (Goldberg).

(b) If laboratory based brief description of task(s)

(c) 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 and Peter McIlveen (Manager of Careers, USQ Student Services).

(d) The role that the student will play in data collection:
No active role required as participants were recruited online via Student Services website.

(e) If data collection is going to be shared with another project:
No

(f) If an archived data base is to be used, outline what this data base is and where did it originate:
Student Opinion Survey Research Project – ethics clearance obtained from USQ Psychology Ethics (EP2008026).

(g) If archived data is to be used, outline any data collection expectations:
The student will be required to track student GPA.

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.

If this is a replication study, include the reference of the original research project.

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

- o Ethical approval will be sought by supervisor; or
- √ Ethics approved – number EP2008026

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:
- □ _____

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