



# Encouraging HE for Educationally Disadvantaged Students

**A joint career development project between the  
USQ and the Toowoomba Flexi School**

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- Enhancing career development learning
- Widening participation - encouraging HE as an aspiration for educationally disadvantaged students,
- Better positioning students for entry into higher education

# About Toowoomba FlexiSchool



- Est. 1998, community-based initiative
- Create educational opportunities & pathways for homeless, disadvantaged, & disenfranchised youth
- Inclusive (culture, gender, disability, SES)
- Full range of syllabus subjects for Yrs 10, 11, & 12 students

# Partnership with the USQ



- Practicum opportunities for education degree students
- Mentoring, volunteer work, collaborative research
- Many USQ staff and students are in the Friends of Flexi network
- USQ provides a number of pathways (e.g., TPP) to tertiary study for FlexiSchool students

# Research Phases



- Planning & Consultation
- Ethics approval
- Pre-workshop survey
- 10-week workshop activities using “Making Career Choices” booklet
- One-on-one counselling
- Post-workshop survey
- Analysis and reporting

# Participants



	Time 1 (pre-workshop)	Time 2 (post-workshop)
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Age</b>	<b>14-18 yrs</b>	<b>14-18 yrs</b>
<b>Year 10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Year 11</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Year 12</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Not working</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Part-time work</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Casual work</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>



- Online surveys
- Career Decision Difficulties Questionnaire (CDDQ; Gati, Krausz, & Osipow, 1996)
- Career Futures Inventory (CFI; Rottinghaus, Day, & Borgen, 2005)
- Core Self-Evaluations Scale (CSES; Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2003)
- DASS (DASS21; Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995; 21 items).

- Over 10 weeks in Term 3 – embedded into curriculum
- Lesson times varied (approx. 40 mins each)
- Facilitated by project officer who is Psych
- Utilised activities in the “Making Career Choices” workbook (USQ Careers & Employment, 2010)



# Making Career Choices booklet



- Originally created for prospective & current USQ students
- Designed for self-directed and self-paced learning
- Guide through Myfuture website
- Looking in: My Guide section (interests, skills, values, etc.)
- Looking out: The Facts (occupations, study programs, etc.)



- DOTS model (Law & Watts, 1977)
- Systems Theory Framework (Patton & McMahon, 1999)
- Career Decision-Making Theory (Gati, Krausz, & Osipow, 1996)
- CIP (Sampson, Reardon, Peterson, & Lenz, 2004)



- Meta-analytic studies (e.g., Brown et al., 2003) show 5 critical components of successful career interventions:
  - Workbooks & written exercises
  - Individualised interpretations & feedback
  - World of work information
  - Modeling
  - Attending to building support

# Mainstream Schools



- Distributed to USQ partner schools (approx. 10,000 copies)
- Available in downloadable pdf format from USQ Careers & Employment website:

<http://www.usq.edu.au/student-services/careers/students/careerplanning/careerchoices>

- Assists with SET Planning for QLD Year 10 students.

# Overview of Content



Activities to:

- Assess readiness to make a career choice
- Stimulate thinking about a range of influences on their career choice
- Identify individual factors (e.g., interests, skills, values) that may influence their career choice
- Familiarise students with how the work of work is structured in Australia
- Explore career fields and occupations to suit their personal profile
- Develop a career action plan



- Assists students to identify any areas of career decision difficulty they are experiencing
- Uses the Career Decision Difficulties Questionnaire (CDDQ; Gati, Krausz, & Osipow, 1996)

# CDDQ Items Sample



Making Better Career Decisions - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Address <http://go.to/cddq>

## The difficulty

does not  
describe me

describ  
me w

I know that I have to choose a career, but **I don't have the motivation** to make the decision now ( I don't feel like it )

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8

Work is not the most important thing in one's life and therefore **the issue of choosing a career doesn't worry me much** .

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8

I believe that I do not have to choose a career now because **time will lead me to the right career choice** .

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8

It is usually **difficult for me to make decisions** .

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8

I usually feel that **I need confirmation and support for my decisions** from a professional person or somebody else I trust.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8

I am usually afraid of **failure** .

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8

Continue

[Source: Gati, I. (2001-2010). *Facilitating career decision making – a ppt presentation*. Retrieved September 17, 2010, from <http://kivunim.huji.ac.il/cddq/expert.htm>]

# Identifying Career Influences



- Adapted from My Career Chapter (McIlveen, 2006)
- Open-ended questions (e.g., “what role does your family play in your career plans?”)
- Stimulates thinking about range of potential influences (e.g., preferred location, finances, labour market, family, media, friends, skills, values, culture, gender)



# Dreams/Aspirations



- Questions designed to stimulate thinking about ideal or imagined future. “Imagine yourself working in your ideal job”;
- “What are you doing (e.g. are you making or growing things, selling things, creating or designing things, fixing things, solving problems, helping people, operating equipment...)”
- “Who are the people around you (e.g., adults, children, sick people, tradespersons, customers...)”
- May reflect interests, personality characteristics, values.



- The following sections of the booklet use activities in My Guide My Profile aimed at identifying:
  - Interests,
  - Skills,
  - Work and Study, and
  - Values

- **Career Interest Test (Athanasou, 1988):**
  - Outdoor (R), Practical (R), Scientific (I), Creative (A), Business (E), Office (C), and People Contact (S)
- **Skills**
  - assessed on two work-task dimensions - People/Things; Data/Ideas (Prediger, 1996)
- **Work & Study**
  - (Work conditions; Preferred study location)
- **Values**
  - (achievement, conditions, recognition, relationships, support, independence, lifestyle)
- **Favourite School Subjects**



- Using Myfuture-The Facts to explore:
  - World of work
  - Work Sectors (community, gov't, private)
  - Industries & industry groups
  - Career fields
  - Occupations

# Exploring Career Ideas



- Using results of personal profile to explore occupations that fit with interests, skills, etc.
- Fact sheets with information about duties, personal requirements, related study programs, related jobs, etc.
- Selecting favourites and then ranking them
- Guidelines for information interviewing to gather more specific details about various occupations
- Creating a career action plan

# Results



Variable	Poss Range	Time 1			Time 2		
		N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
<b>CDDQ</b>	1-9	26	3.82	1.12	11	3.17	1.50
<b>CSES</b>	12-60	29	36.76	7.89	6	37.17	7.31
<b>Adaptability</b>	11-55	29	38.52	5.19	11	40.27	7.42
<b>Optimism</b>	11-55	29	37.24	7.45	11	39.36	9.52
<b>Knowledge</b>	6-14	29	9.59	1.70	11	6.00	1.95
<b>Depression</b>	0-21	29	7.76	5.77	11	4.55	4.89
<b>Anxiety</b>	0-21	29	5.55	5.69	11	4.55	4.89
<b>Stress</b>	0-21	29	7.24	5.05	11	4.55	4.89

# Results



Variable	Poss Range	N	Time 1		Time 2		Change
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
<b>CDDQ</b>	1-9	3	3.74	0.79	3.16	1.63	↓
<b>CSES</b>	12-60	3	29.33	9.07	37.00	11.52	↑
<b>Adaptability</b>	11-55	5	34.40	8.17	39.60	7.02	↑
<b>Optimism</b>	11-55	5	37.20	6.10	38.20	11.90	↑
<b>Knowledge</b>	6-14	5	8.20	2.05	5.20	1.79	↓
<b>Depression</b>	0-21	5	5.60	3.21	6.20	6.53	↑
<b>Anxiety</b>	0-21	5	5.20	5.36	6.20	6.53	↑
<b>Stress</b>	0-21	5	7.20	3.35	6.20	6.53	↓

# Reflections



- Students loved having their own booklet, but too wordy
- They generally didn't like the CDDQ
- Students preferred one-on-one rather than group
- Preference to self-pace through the booklet – select activities they were interested in
- Workshops were somewhat rushed
- Variability in class attendance



# Recommendations



- Simplify the booklet for flexi students
- More hands-on vs content heavy
- Use booklet as an adjunct to one-on-one career counselling
- Or, extend the workshops over several terms to allow for more individualised feedback to students
- Campus visits/tertiary taster – as part of the program to de-mystify university
- Qualitative research methodology (e.g., case studies)



Questions?

Thank you 😊