Chapter 4
Personal and Professional Perceptions:
Pre-University Pathway Programs, Pedagogy, and Praxis

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ABSTRACT

This chapter is focused on the Eynesbury Institute of Business and Technology's (EIBT) Diploma of Business pathway, as business-related programs are most common in the Australian pre-university Higher Education (HE) sector. EIBT's diplomas are deemed equivalent to the first-year of the corresponding Bachelor's degree at the partner university for 'international' students who did not reach direct entry requirements due to their English language proficiency and/or previous academic results. While many sessional academic staff work cross-institutionally, there are few occasions for associating with fellow EIBT colleagues on a personal level and equally few to learn about the professional experiences that have contributed to their pathway teaching philosophy and/or pedagogical practice(s). The author-researchers decided to undertake a period of self-reflection and composed their own narratives to story the notable differences between teaching in a pathway school compared with mainstream university.

INTRODUCTION

Increasingly, "pathway" institutions offer valuable partnerships for the Higher Education (HE) sector in Australia and it is beneficial to conduct research into this division in order to strengthen and improve the overall teaching and learning experience. The pathway model that evolved in the late 1980s and 1990s was developed to address this issue of attrition. This innovative model tailored a learning solution that enhanced student transition i.e., cultural and social integration and academic support. For the purpose of this chapter, there is scant literature on pre-university pathway educators and their perceptions of teaching in this context. This chapter contributes to bridging that gap by drawing attention to narrative inquiry as a medium of personal/professional development for teacher growth. Our research finds that narrative inquiry employed as a pedagogical medium in our undergraduate pre-university classrooms invites educators to reflect upon their praxis with significant implications for professional development. Rushton (2004) stated that "lived experiences can be translated into rich narrative stories useful for both teaching and research" (p. 62).

BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The Pre-University Pathway Model

"Navitas" is an Australian global education leader providing pre-university and university programs, corporate training services, creative media education, English language courses, migrant education, professional development, settlement services, and student recruitment. There are more than 80,000 students across a network of over 110 colleges and campuses in 27 countries (Navitas, 2014). The origin of the Navitas "pathway" model began with the establishment of the Perth Institute of Business and Technology (PIBT) in 1994. While the private sector had assumed a significant role in international education within Australia at that time, PIBT heralded a new era of pathway colleges and extended public-private relationships beyond that previously established.

In Australia, according to Shah and Lewis (2010), "Navitas contributes to more than 30 per cent of annual international student enrolments with more than [AUD] $60 million turnover for two year degrees with more than 2500 students each year in each partner university" (p. 85). Pedagogically, the model was predicated on the acceptance of students with lower academic entry requirements than for direct university entry. The model provided a "second chance" (Norton, 2013; Ross & Gray, 2005; Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009; Wheelahan, 2009) for students who did not

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