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### Developing aspiration, pathways and access

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## Developing aspiration, pathways and access

### Abstract

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# Developing aspiration, pathways and access.

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# Today's Presenters



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# Today's session

- Setting the context
- Two University of Wollongong strategies
- Factors contributing to success
- Specific challenges
- Challenges within the sector
- Final considerations

# Setting the context

- Diverse students = diverse issues
  - Financial issues: *“My financial situation is often a source of worry to me”*
  - Mobility: *“not the place for me”*
  - Few *“knowledgeable others”*
  - Expectations and assumptions

# Expectations and assumptions

*They [teachers] said you probably won't be all that smart cos your parents didn't go to uni and I use to come home all the time and I remember they said it a few times and I'd say: "Oh Mum, you didn't go to uni but you are really smart" ...[but] I wasn't as dumb as people thought I was.. (Annie, 18)*

*...when I was actually growing up, a lot of the – especially kids in my area – it was basically almost taught that university was only for those that were really smart, extremely smart. ... I used to live up in XXXX and I thought, you know, "I'll never be able to go to uni up there" but it was like... mainly because people have actually turned around and some actually said a few years ago "You'll never go to university", same when they even turn around and say "You'll never own a house". Sorry, I'm at uni and I own a house. (Michelle, 43)*

# Expectations and assumptions

*I had an appointment with the XXX officer at Centrelink just coincidentally to talk about what your plans are and that sort of thing. I was feeling great cos I said “Oh I have applied for uni and this is what I am going to do and de, de, da”. And all he wanted to talk about was if I didn’t get in ...I came out of it feeling like I probably won’t get in (Catherine, 44)*

*I might have lost courage cos I had so many XXX advisers tell me not to bother studying until Max was 7 because I could stay at home until he was seven but I was like: **No, I wanna do it now if I don’t do it now I’ll never do it.** (Nicki, 33)*



One approach:



- Unique Partnership
- Multi-pronged approach
- Stage appropriate programs from Year 6 – Year 12
- Draws on both university staff and school staff
- In 2013, 23 high schools and 36 primary schools participated (between the far south coast of NSW and the northern suburbs of the Illawarra).
- Projecting that the program will work **with 3,698** primary and high school students in 2013 – programs still going

Kids In2Uni:  
"Starts a  
conversation"

Year 7 & Year 8:  
Academic  
Enrichment  
Program

Years 9- 10 Future  
Finder Workshop  
and UNique  
Experience Day

Year 12  
Preparation  
Program

Summer Master  
Classes and  
Scholarships

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## Stepped approach to engaging students...

Starts in the schools with a teacher delivered model and short on-campus activities

A Taste of Uni Life is offered in Year 7 & 8 via university style projects and modules that reflect the degrees at UOW – via Youtube

Year 9- 10: Faculty Taster Sessions on campus / Future Finder Workshops. Participants able to experience graduation and enrollment

Year 11 - 12:  
Enrolled as UOW student and access to on-campus study centre and mentors.  
Summer Master Class Arts001 – receive 6 credit points

# THE DJINGGI PROGRAM



- The Djinggi (Star in the Dhurga Language) program is a pilot school – university transition program.
- Unique partnership
- Focuses on Indigenous students in Year 11 who are interested in teaching as a career
- Initial intake from 10 high schools on south and far south coast of NSW
- Participants undertake Cert III in Ed Support, have paid work experience in a local primary school, attend a camp, come on-campus to UOW and the first cohort is currently moving into the university environment





# THE DJINGGI PROGRAM



# THE DJINGGI PROGRAM



- Wrap-around support
- Recognises the need for Indigenous teachers in schools and provides this 'through a sustained and connected investment in education' (Chandler, 2012)
- The university and relevant staff are introduced into the program in the early stages
- Aiming for a seamless pathway.





Located at : <https://vimeo.com/47217496>

# Factors contributing to success

- Meaningful activities
- Sustained engagement
- Dual engagement – engaging the school students **and** university mentors (In2Uni – currently employs 80 mentors)
- (O'Shea & Vincent, 2011; O'Shea, Harwood, Kervin & Humphry, 2013)



# Factors contributing to success

- Changing cultures –situating programs within both schools & university assists in changing perceptions & assumptions around these young people.
- Both projects *incorporate regular ‘touch points’* with partners.
- Opportunity for regular and substantive feedback from all stakeholders



# Challenges for these outreach programs

- Building real partnerships rather than providing a service
- Building partnerships and collaboration between stakeholders – uni-directional

“In order for partnerships between universities and schools to effectively enhance the opportunities for students, the partnership needs to focus on addressing the needs of both organisations... collaboration needs to exist from staff at every level of each organisation and in every phase of the project from development through to evaluation.”

(Austin & Mitchell, 2013)



## Outcomes

ARTS001: 100%  
of the students  
who completed  
and applied to  
UOW received  
entry

**Numbers of schools participating  
increased from 21 in 2011 to 59 in  
2013**

*It has made me  
think about what I  
am going to be and  
I think about how  
I am going to get  
there when I grow  
up – Year 6  
Student, 2012*



# THE DJINGGI PROGRAM

## Outcomes

- Program has just received funding for 2014 intake
- 17 student started in 2012 and 14 completed – 13 have applied for a place in UOW within Teaching programs
- Possibility of reengaging youth in education
- Valued in a work environment and provides an alternative qualification

*I really like and enjoy the experience the program has offered me, it makes me feel so good to work and help students with their learning.*  
(Djinggi Participant)

# Broader considerations around outreach programs

- The troubling nature of 'Aspiration'
- Understanding difference as '**socio-cultural incongruence**' (Devlin, Kift, Nelson, Smith & McKay, 2012) [www.lowses.edu.au](http://www.lowses.edu.au)
- The politics of funding



Some final thoughts on the common challenges across the sector:

Reporting and Measuring

Level playing fields

Extending outreach



# Reporting and Measuring

**How do we capture the ‘invisible outcomes’ of such programs and leverage this potential?**

In 2013, **223 (n= 522)** parents indicated on their feedback forms that the Year 6 In2Uni Engagement Day had encouraged them to consider university for themselves.

Conversations about learning – have the possibility to change the ‘*tactile fabric*’ of the household (Wainwright and Marandet, 2010, p461)

I'm the first in our immediate family to go to university and it has changed the dynamic of the immediate family because where it seemed that no-one would go on to tertiary education to better themselves, it now – especially for my younger brother who sees me as a role model – it now feels that that door has been opened because someone else has gone through it first. I had always asked him “Do you want to go to university” – if I'd asked him ten years ago he would say “No. I hate school, I don't want to go on and do university”. Now he's like “Oh, okay” – he's reconsidering because he's seen what I do at university and how it's different. His perceptions were – as was my whole family – that it was just too hard and that it was unattainable. We're just a blue-collar family but I've worked hard...so that's ricocheted in the family.

*(Nigel, 26 B.Ed (Primary), Wollongong campus, 26)*

**How do we ensure that students are not expected to assume a position on a 'level playing field' when really the playing field is not level at all?**

*When I got my Australian studies assessment back, it's like if you maybe... whoever marked it had an understanding that up until 13 weeks ago, I'd never written an academic paper in all of my life...*

*(Yvonne, Wollongong campus, B.Arts, 45)*

*I suppose my terror has been [...] I'm a fraud – I should not be here...it's just that I'm fraudulent so if I'm a fraud how can I possibly be here? Just "I'm not good enough to be here. I don't have the brains to be here". All of those types of things. I don't deserve to be here. I haven't worked hard enough to be here. I suppose it's always in the back of my head – those things and I have to try and push them aside and say "Well, you know, you can actually do this...I think it's probably more myself and how I grew up. I think that's mainly where it all stems from – how we grew up as a family, what the expectations were.*

*(Yvonne, Wollongong campus, B.Arts 45)*

# How do we engage with those students who have disengaged with formal education by high school?

*...it's just kind of, it's just this place that you don't go when you're a kid, it's like the university you just stay away from it for some reason. I don't even know how to explain it, it's just ... It's just this weird phenomenon that just happens. No kids my age kind of go near the university.*

(Jye, Inner City, 2012)\*

\* (Harwood, V (2012). ARC Discovery Project: Imagining University DP DP110104704

# Final Thoughts and Questions

Want to hear more about In2Uni:

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