

MAPs to Success: Improving the First Year Experience of alternative entry mature age students

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Abstract

Successfully supporting wider participation in higher education requires a coherent blend of administrative, social and academic support. Access is a necessary but insufficient element of equitable participation. This is a vital distinction given the outcomes of the Bradley Report and the expectation that higher education institutions will significantly increase the enrolment and participation of equity target groups. Our project, MAPs to Success, was designed to achieve the best possible outcomes for underprepared mature age students who have been granted alternative entry to the University of Western Australia through the Mature age Access Pathway (MAP). This alternative entry pathway was first offered in July 2008. In late 2009 we secured a Learning Teaching Performance Fund Grant to provide support for the original and subsequent cohorts. This paper outlines the theoretical perspectives underpinning this project's social and academic components, and evaluates the impact this project has achieved after its first year of operation.

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