

National Association of Enabling Educators of Australia

Flexibility: Pathways to participation

Refereed papers from the
NAEEA Conference
27 – 29 November 2013
Australian Catholic University, Melbourne Australia

Shah, M. (2013). Correlation or causality: Raising equity aspirations in the emergence of quality agenda.

In Proceedings of the National Association of Enabling Educators of Australia Conference; Flexibility: Pathways to participation, Melbourne, Australia, 27-29 November, 2013.
Accessed from <http://enablingeducators.org/conference/2013.html>

Published 2013 by the National Association of Enabling Educators of Australia, C/- Open Access College, University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia, 4350

This paper was reviewed using a double blind peer review process that meets DIISR requirements. Two reviewers were appointed on the basis of their independence and they reviewed the full paper devoid of the authors' names and institutions in order to ensure objectivity and anonymity. Papers were reviewed according to specified criteria, including relevance to the conference theme and sub-themes, originality, quality and presentation. Following review and acceptance, this full paper was presented at the NAEEA conference.

Copyright © 2013 NAEEA Inc. Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of research or private study, criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act, 2005, this publication may only be reproduced, stored or transmitted, in any form or by any means, with the prior permission in writing of the publishers, or in the case of reprographic reproduction in accordance with the terms and licenses issued by the copyright Licensing Agency. Enquiries concerning reproduction outside those terms should be sent to the publishers at the address above.

Correlation or causality: Raising equity aspirations in the emergence of quality agenda

Mahsood Shah
The University of Newcastle, Australia
mahsood.shah@newcastle.edu.au

Governments in a number of countries have introduced policies related to widening of student participation in a number of countries including Australia. Such policies are introduced to ensure that every citizen irrespective of social class has access to University education and to ensure that tertiary education contributes to productivity outcomes. As governments encourage the widening of disadvantaged student participation as part of its political agenda or public good, concurrent policies are also introduced to ensure that growth of students in higher education does not compromise academic quality, academic rigour, and educational outcomes. Most recently, the Australian government has argued that the growth of students in universities has compromised academic standards and outcomes with anecdotal evidence.

This paper argues the need for Universities to develop quality assurance framework to assure the quality of enabling programs and its students with focus on excellence. The paper outlines a framework that could be used to assure quality which may safeguard standards whilst achieving equity aspirations.

Governments have introduced policies to increase the access and participation of disadvantaged students in tertiary education. Such policies have been introduced in various countries including United Kingdom (UK), United States of America (USA), New Zealand, Australia, and various parts of Europe. Student access and equity policies have also been introduced in South Africa to eliminate the inequity of higher education access and attainment with black South Africans (Department of Education, 1997). The Australian government has set a target for 2020 to increase the enrolment of low socio-economic background students in undergraduate level by 20% (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations [DEEWR], 2009) whilst President Obama aims for USA to become the world's best-educated country by 2020 (The Chronicle, 2010). In the UK, the government aims for at least 50% of young people (aged 18 to 30) to enter higher education and to increase the participation rates of young people from poorer backgrounds (Department of Business, Innovation and Skills [DBIS], 2009). Similarly, in New Zealand the government plans to increase the success of Maori and Pasifika students in tertiary education (Ministry of Education, 2010).

The quest to widen student participation comes at a time when governments in some countries are also introducing concurrent policies around quality assurance with focus on academic standards to ensure that growth of students in higher education does not compromise academic quality, standards and student outcomes (Shah et al, 2011;

Whiteford et al, 2013). In the Australian context, the government has warned that the growth of students in universities must not compromise academic quality and outcomes of students (The Age, 2011; Trounson and Hare, 2011).

In recent months the outgoing Labor government in Australia signalled that it may shift its focus from widening the participation of students to capping of student places which will restrict over enrolments in Universities. The government argues with anecdotal evidence that widening of student participation has lowered academic quality and student outcomes (The Australia, 2013). Some universities with the history of success in disadvantaged student access and participation have strongly argued that increased diversity of students has resulted in innovative models of education delivery with inclusive curriculum and support structures to enable student success. One Vice Chancellor argued that there is no basis for considering equity as an abstraction from quality (Thomas, 2013), as the government uses the quality agenda to downplay equity.

The widening of student participation in Australian universities is driven by two key imperatives. They include government policies to provide additional funding for universities to increase the access and participation of underprivileged students, and University mission to increase the participation of students from various equity groups (West et al, forthcoming). Various initiatives have been implemented by universities in Australia to take advantage of additional funding. They include (1) the establishment of University Colleges to provide first year diploma or associate degrees which provide a pathway into the second year of undergraduate programs; (2) increased partnership between universities, vocational providers, and high schools; (3) lowering the entry score in various programs to enable increased participation of students; and (4) alternative entry pathways for students such as enabling or tertiary preparatory programs (Cullity, 2007; Noone, 2007, West et al, forthcoming; Shah and Nair, 2013).

At a national level, the outgoing labor government introduced the policy as part of higher education reforms post Bradley review in 2008. The review suggested that an effective higher education sector which makes greater use of Australia's human capital enhances national productivity and global competitiveness (Bradley et al, 2008, p. 27). The review further suggested that the success of students in higher education benefits the whole society with its contribution to national productivity. A study found that 'over the working lifetime of a university graduate the financial gain generated from income is more than \$1.5 million or 70 per cent more than those whose highest qualification is Year 12' (National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling [NATSEM], (2008), p. 1).

Disadvantaged student performance

It has been found that students from lower socio-economic status backgrounds perform comparably to those of higher socio-economic status backgrounds (James et al, 2009; Marks, 2007), however, students from lower socio-economic status backgrounds face greater challenges in completing tertiary study (Devlin & O'Shea, 2012). A study in Australia with undergraduate nursing students entering into the University using various entry schemes show that there is no significant difference between students' success and their mode of entry (Jacob et al, 2011). Marshall and Jones (2002) found comparable academic performance of traditional and non-traditional students in undergraduate and

postgraduate radiography program and concluded that increasing the participation of non-traditional students does not compromise academic standards.

A study undertaken with black African American males who are underrepresented in higher education in USA suggest that such students now have better academic records, and greater confidence in their skills and abilities than their peers who entered college in earlier decades (Griffin et al, 2010). Researchers have found that first-generation students heavily rely on self-motivation, self-efficacy, and an internalised locus of control to persist (Naumann et al, 2003). However, such studies documenting the successful achievement of these students are few. Grebennikov and Skaines, (2010) findings in Australia suggest that despite poor grades of one equity group, non-English speaking background students carry on with their program even if they have academic difficulties, while traditional students with fewer difficulties are more likely to withdraw. This, at least in part, confirms one finding of McKenzie and Schweitzer (2001) stating that 'high academic achievement is not necessarily related to retention and poor academic performance does not always result in attrition' (p. 29). These findings are similar to various other studies in Australia which suggest that disadvantaged students perform comparably to the traditional students based on academic outcome measures such as retention, progression, and student attainment of generic skills (Shah and Nair, 2012).

According to Richardson (2012), ethnicity is almost certainly not the effective variable influencing student's academic attainment; rather it is a proxy for other factors that have yet to be identified. Study by Fike et al (2010) on the achievement of Hispanic students in the School of Pharmacy suggest that such groups of students are underrepresented in health care professions. Hayes (2008) suggests that increased racial/ethnic diversity in health professions is needed, noting that 'evidence indicates that diversity is associated with improved access to care for racial and ethnic parents, greater patient choice and satisfaction, better patient provider communication, and improved educational experiences for health profession students' (p.3). Edwards and Coates (2011) suggest that the major indicator of productivity of university education is the extent to which it can enable people from disadvantaged backgrounds to successfully complete a university degree. They also argue that the transformative power of university study is fully evidenced when people who start from behind are able to succeed at the highest level (p. 154).

Impact of widening participation in Australia

The 2012 higher education statistical data produced by the Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIICCSRTE) suggest that despite increased enrolment of students in higher education, the attrition rates of commencing domestic and international students have decreased. The attrition rates for all commencing undergraduate students decreased from 18.1% in 2001 to 16.5% in 2012. The progress rates of all commencing undergraduate students have been consistent with slight change over the 12 year period with 84.4% in 2001 and 83.7% in 2012. Retention rates with all commencing undergraduate students suggest improvement from 81.4% in 2001 to 83% in 2012 (DIICCSRTE, 2012). The recent data aligns with the Bradley review findings, which suggested that low socio economic background students have high success rate and their participation in higher education does not have detrimental impact on overall academic quality (p.30). Similar findings

are also concluded in a study conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) as part of the Longitudinal Survey of Australian Youth (LSAY) which found that 'if students from a low socio-economic background get to university, their background does not negatively affect their chances of completing the course' (Marks 2007, p. 27). The outgoing labor government's 2020 target to increase the enrolment of low socio economic background students in undergraduate level by 20% is on target with 2012 data suggesting 17% progress.

The academic performance data presented above confirms that universities are successfully developing structures and models of support to assist disadvantaged students in higher education. The national data shows that progress has been made to ensure that disadvantaged students in undergraduate programs have comparable academic outcomes; however results of individual universities show inconsistent patterns. Some institutions have experienced consistent positive trends, and others have experienced declined trends in recent years.

Change of government and implications

The change in the Australian government with increased focus on cost savings may have impact on the ongoing funding of various policy initiatives related to widening student participation. Most recently one elite University has announced that it will use a minimum Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) score of 80 as a cut off in any of its undergraduate programs. The elite universities have always argued that lowering the entry score and increasing the proportion of less academically prepared students will have an impact on academic quality, rigour, and academic outcomes. They have also argued that the increased participation of underprepared students will require additional funding of academic and non-academic support services to assist students. The incoming liberal government has in past introduced performance based funding using a number of performance measures to reward universities. The government may use academic outcome measures to reward universities using equity related indicators. The labor government rewarded universities for increasing the access and participation of disadvantaged students with limited focus on rewarding excellence in academic outcomes of such students. The liberal government may take a different approach with more focus on the impact of widening participation. University funding for widening participation may come under review to find out the extent to which the academic outcomes of disadvantaged students are comparable to traditional students.

The growth of enabling programs, coupled with increased focus on quality outcomes and standards require universities to develop robust quality assurance framework to safeguard academic quality and standards. The incoming liberal government with a history of rewarding outcomes requires an increased focus on assuring the quality of enabling programs, support services and comparable academic outcomes of students in undergraduate programs. Most recent research on enabling programs suggests an average of 50% attrition (Hodges et al, 2013). Scholars have argued that attrition in enabling programs cannot be compared with undergraduate education due to the nature and characteristics of enabling programs and students (Clarke et al, 2010; Cleary and Nicholls, 1998; MacMillan, 2005; Simpson, 2003). There is limited study on the academic performance of enabling students into undergraduate programs in Australia. Anecdotal evidence suggests that enabling completers perform comparably to other

students in selected disciplines such as nursing, and in other cases enabling completers have low progression and completions in disciplines such as engineering.

Assuring the quality of enabling programs

Critics of widening student participation have argued that lowering the entry criteria has an impact on academic quality, resourcing of various support services, and academic outcomes of students. Scholars have argued that entry score is a strong predictor of student progressions and success. According to Grebennikov and Skaines (2008) the following indicators of academic achievements provide powerful predictors of success at undergraduate level:

- Previous academic performance and education qualifications;
- University entry score;
- Previous course performance as students move through their studies;
- Gender (women show higher academic achievements than men);
- Age (students in their late 20s and 30s are more likely to perform better than younger or older students); and
- Socio-economic status (SES) (the higher, the better achievements).

Studies have shown two key criteria of university student success traditionally recognised in the literature including: academic achievement (e.g., McKenzie & Schweitzer, 2001; Tait & Entwistle, 1996; Tangney, Baumeister, & Boone, 2004) measured by grade point averages, earned credits or passing letter grades; and student retention and completion of their program (e.g., Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2004; Johnes, 1990; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2005; Tinto, 1999). Inversely, students “at risk” are defined in many of the above studies as those who tend to leave before completing their program (and not re-enroll later) or those demonstrating academic under-achievement.

The characteristics of enabling students and their level of preparedness to undertake undergraduate education requires a robust quality assurance framework to assure the quality of education delivery, adequacy of physical and human resources, support structures, assessments, and range of academic and non-academic support. In an environment of increased scrutiny within the University and by the government coupled with shrinking funding, there is a need to develop a sustainable approach to quality assurance. The development and effective implementation of a quality assurance framework for enabling programs will compliment a systematic approach to internal and external reviews with increased focus on tracking and enhancing systems, processes, and outcomes.

Figure 1 outlines a suggested model of quality assurance framework that could be used in enabling programs. The framework is developed around the journey of an enabling student with the aspiration to complete undergraduate degree. The framework depicts the risk level of students in the beginning with a blue colour ocean indicating the risk of withdrawal based on many challenges faced by enabling students.

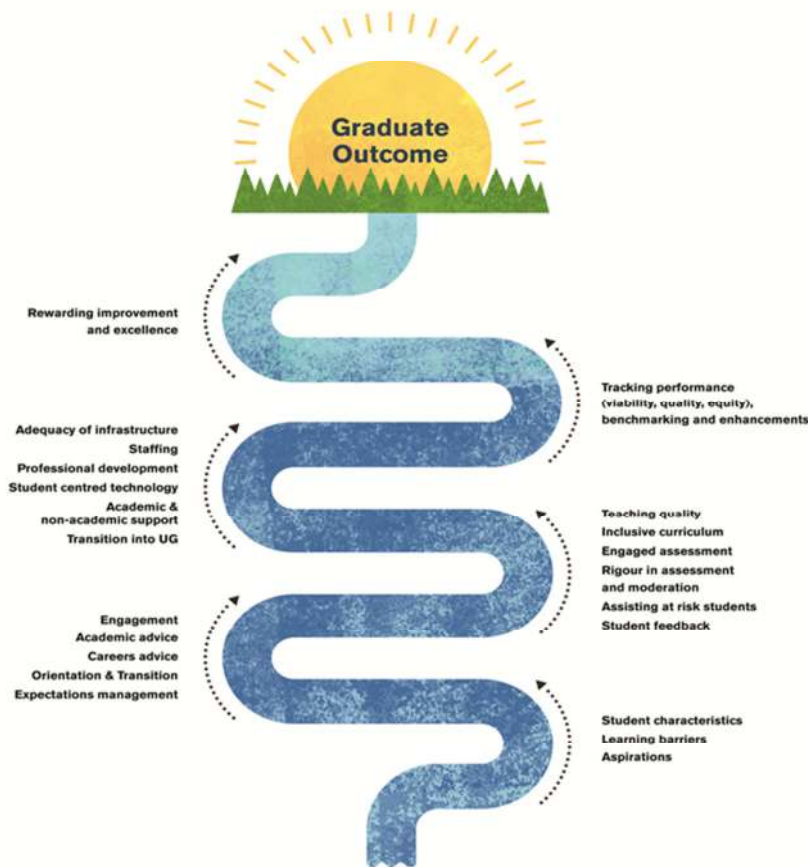
The framework has six interrelated components resulting towards graduate outcome. First the framework argues the need to research and acknowledge enabling student characteristics, their learning barriers, and their aspirations. Various studies and reports

with disadvantaged students have confirmed the need to raise the aspiration of students (Behrendt, Larkin, Griew, and Kelly, 2012, pp. xviii and xix; Craven et al. 2005; Thomas et al. 2012). Research on enabling student's characteristics, learning barriers and aspirations inform the second component of the framework which requires strategies for engaging students in all aspects of learning and support. They include academic advice, careers advice, orientation and transition, and managing student expectations in enabling education. Various studies in Australia confirm that student judgement of quality is based on both in class and out of class experiences. These studies, together with other national studies (ACER, 2009; James, Krause and Jennings, 2010; and DIICSRTE, 2012), confirm the importance of academic and non-academic support in improving student transition, retention, and engagement in learning. Various studies have found that student academic and non-academic support plays a critical role in student learning and success (Nelson, Smith, & Clarke, 2012; Tinto 2005; and Kift, 2009).

The third component deals with curriculum, pedagogy, and assessments. It argues the need to engage academics who are passionate about teaching and engaging student in learning. It calls for an inclusive curriculum design which engages students in productive learning and raises student aspirations. Assessment is a key part of this component and it argues the need to ensure the use of different assessment methods, rigour in marking, and providing timely and constructive feedback in learning. The use of moderation is critical to safeguard assessment standards and monitoring grade inflation. This component also enables the identification of at risk students, and using student feedback (qualitative and quantitative) to enhance teaching quality. Large scale studies in Australia (Scott, 2006; Grebennikov and Shah, 2013) clearly suggest that students regard the design of curriculum, assessments, and theory and practical links as mostly important indicators of learning.

The fourth component of the framework requires the alignment of student growth and resourcing. It argues the need to ensure adequate learning infrastructure, human resources, staff professional development, use of student centred technology such as online learning, models of academic and non-academic support for enabling students, and strategies for student transition into undergraduate study. The fifth component of the framework requires the need to track and improve performance based on a systematic approach of reviewing programs/courses, support services, student experience, and academic outcomes of students. It also requires the need to assess the performance of enabling programs using performance measures related to viability, quality, and the extent to which enabling programs increase the participation of students from various equity groups. This component also argues the need to benchmark key aspects of enabling education such as programs, teaching methods, support structures, and academic outcomes of students.

The final component of the framework argues the need to reward improvement and also excellence based on performance assessment. It requires the need to reward staff based on performance outcomes. Ongoing trend improvement which exceeds benchmarked performance indicates excellence in teaching, research, and other outcomes. The successful implementation of the framework results in excellence in graduate exit standards and its impact on social and economic outcomes.



Quality Assurance Framework for Enabling Education

Figure 1: Quality Assurance Framework for Enabling Education

Conclusion

The renewal of quality assurance in higher education with increased focus on standards and outcomes requires an innovative quality assurance framework for enabling education. Such a framework is important as governments are increasingly focusing on improving the quality and standard of higher education whilst encouraging universities to widen the participation of disadvantaged students. The quest of balancing quality outcomes, academic rigour and increasing access and participation of students from various equity groups is challenging the academy. Ignoring quality outcomes and maintaining standards may have several implications. First enabling programs could be at risk of funding as governments are more interested on the impact of such programs in terms of student success, academic outcomes of students, and the contribution to the society. Secondly, high attrition of enabling students due to University related factors in first year undergraduate program may have significant impact on the student, and their

families with questions being asked about the effectiveness of enabling programs in preparing for student success.

A focus on quality assurance and maintenance of standards in enabling programs will safeguard rigour, and academic outcomes of students. If such framework is effectively implemented, it could be a model for widening student participation whilst maintaining quality outcomes and standards.

References

- Australian Council for Educational Research. (2009). Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE) report, Available at http://www.acer.edu.au/documents/aussereports/AUSSE_Australasian-Student-Engagement-Report-ASER-2009.pdf
- Behrendt, L., Larkin, S., Griew, R. & Kelly, P. (2012). Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People: Final Report, Commonwealth of Australia, available at <http://www.innovation.gov.au/HigherEducation/IndigenousHigherEducation/ReviewOfIndigenousHigherEducation/FinalReport/IHERFinalReport.pdf>
- Bradley, D., Noonan, P., Nugent, H. & Scales, B. (2008). Review of Higher Education – Final Report, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, available at <http://www.innovation.gov.au/highereducation/ResourcesAndPublications/ReviewOfAustralianHigherEducation/Pages/ReviewOfAustralianHigherEducationReport.aspx>
- Braxton, J. M., Hirschy, A. S. & McClendon, S. A (2004). Understanding and reducing college student departure. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report, Vol. 30, No. 3. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Clarke, J., Bull, D., Neil, C., Turner, L., & Birney, D. (2000). The Cost and Effectiveness of Enabling and Related Programs in Australian Tertiary Education. Unpublished report.
- Cleary, M. & Nicholls, R. (1998). Understanding and Improving Module Completions. State Training Board of Victoria.
- Craven, R., Tucker, A., Munns, G., Hinkley, J., March, H. & Simpson, K. (2005). Indigenous students' aspirations: Dreams, perceptions and realities, Department of Education Science and Training (DEST), available at <http://www.voced.edu.au/content/ngv4477>
- Cullity, M. (2007). The nature of Alternative Entry Programs for Mature Age Students: A Snapshot. HERDSA News, April 2007, 7–10.
- Department of Education. (1997). A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education. Available at http://www.che.ac.za/documents/d000005/White_Paper3.pdf
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. (2009). Transforming Australia's Higher Education System, available at <http://www.deewr.gov.au/highereducation/Pages/TransformingAustraliasHESystem.aspx>
- Department for Business Innovation and Skills. (2009), Higher Ambitions: The Future of Universities in a Knowledge Economy. Available at <http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/higher-ambitions>
- Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education [DIICCS RTE] (2012). Selected Higher Education Statistics 2012, available at <http://www.innovation.gov.au/highereducation/HigherEducationStatistics/StatisticsPublications/Pages/Students12FullYear.aspx>
- Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education. (2012). University Experience Survey report 2012, available at http://www.acer.edu.au/documents/UES_2012_National_Report.pdf
- Devlin, M., & O'Shea, H. (2012). Effective University teaching: views of Australian University students from low socio-economic status backgrounds. *Teaching in Higher Education*. 17(4): 385-397.

- Edwards, D. & Coates, H. (2011). Monitoring the pathway and outcomes of people from disadvantaged backgrounds and graduate groups, *Higher Education Research Development (HERDSA)*, 30 (2), 151-163.
- Fike, S.D., McCall, L. K., Raehl, L.C., Smith, R. Q. & Lockman, R. S. (2010). Improving Educational Outcomes of Hispanic Student in a Professional Degree Program, *Equity and Excellence in Education*, 43 (4), 527-538.
- Grebennikov, L., & Shah, M. (2013). The Student Voice: Using Qualitative Student Feedback to Enhance the Student Experience. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 18 (6), 606-618.
- Grebennikov, L. & Skaines, I. (2008). University of Western Sydney Students at Risk: Profile and Opportunities for Change, *Journal of Institutional Research*, 14 (10), 58-70.
- Griffin, A. K., Jayakumar, M. U., Jones, M. M, & Allen, R. W. (2010). Ebony in the Ivory Tower: Examining Trends in the Socioeconomic Status, Achievement, and Self-Concept of Black, Male Freshman, *Equity and Excellence in Education*, 43 (2), 232-248.
- Hayes, B. (2008). Increasing the representation of underrepresented minority groups in U.S. colleges and schools of pharmacy. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 72(1), 1-4.
- Hodges, B., Bedford, T., Hartley, J., Chris, Klinger., Murray, N., O'Rourke, K., and Schofield, N. (2013). Enabling retention: Processes and strategies for improving student retention in University-based Enabling Programs, Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching.
- Jacob, E., Chapman, Y., Birks, M. (2011). Entry Criteria Versus Success in Undergraduate Nursing Courses, *Journal of Institutional Research*, 16 (2), 54-62.
- James, R., Krause, K., and Jenkins, C. (2010). The first year experience in Australian universities: Findings from 1994 to 2009. Melbourne, Australia, *Centre for the Study of Higher Education*. Available at http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/research/experience/docs/FYE_Report_1994_to_2009.pdf
- Johnes, J. (1990). Determinants of student wastage in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 15 (1), 87-100.
- Kift, S.M. (2009). Articulating a transition pedagogy to scaffold and to enhance the first year student learning experience in Australian higher education. Final report for an ALTC Senior Fellowship Program. Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia.
- Kuh, G., Kinzie, J., Schuh, H & Whitt, E. (2005). Student success in college: Creating conditions that matter. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Marks, G. (2007). Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) Research Report 51, Completing University: Characteristics and Outcomes of Completing and Non-completing Students, Australian Council for Education Research.
- Marshall, G., and Jones, N. (2002). Does widening participation reduce standards of achievement in postgraduate radiography education? *Radiography*, 8, 133-137
- McMillan, J. (2005). Course Change and Attrition from Higher Education. *Australian Council for Educational Research: Camberwell*.
- McKenzie, K., & Schweitzer, R. (2001). Who succeeds at University? Factors predicting academic performance in first year Australian university students. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 20(1) , 21-33.
- Ministry of Education. (2010), Tertiary Education Strategy 2010-2015. Available at: <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/TertiaryEducation/PolicyAndStrategy/TertiaryEducationStrategy.aspx>
- National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling [NATSEM]. (2008). What price the clever country? The costs of tertiary education in Australia, AMP.NATSEM Income and Wealth Report 21, University of Canberra, November.
- Nelson, K. J., Smith, J. E., & Clarke, J. A. (2012). Enhancing the transition of commencing students into university: An institution-wide approach. *Higher Education Research & Development*. 31 (2), 185-199.
- Noone, J. (2007). An organized pre-entry pathway to prepare a diverse nursing workforce. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 46(6), 287-291.

- Naumann, W. C., Bandalos, D., & Gutkin, T. B. (2003). Identifying variables that predict college success for first-generation college students. *The Journal of College Admission*, 181 (Fall), 4–9.
- Scott, G. (2006). Accessing the student voice: Using CEQuery to identify what retains students and promotes engagement in productive learning in Australian higher education. Canberra, ACT: DEST. Available at: http://www.uws.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/63955/HEIPCEQueryFinal_v2_1st_Feb_06.pdf
- Shah, M., & Nair, C. S. (2013). Private for–profit higher education in Australia: Widening Access and Participation and Opportunities for Public-Private Collaboration. *Higher Education Research and Development (HERD)*, 32 (5), 820-832.
- Shah, M. & Nair, C. S. (2012). Can standards drop? Social inclusion agenda and academic standards. Proceedings of the 21st Annual Teaching Learning Forum, 2-3 February 2012. Perth: Murdoch University. <http://otl.curtin.edu.au/tlf/tlf2012/refereed/shah.html>
- Shah, M., Lewis, I., & Fitzgerald, R. (2011). The Renewal of Quality Assurance in Australian Higher Education: The Challenge of Balancing Academic Rigor, Equity and Quality Outcomes. *Quality in Higher Education*, 17 (3), 265-278.
- Simpson, O. (2003). Student retention in online, open and distance learning. Kogan Page: London.
- Richardson, E.T.J. (2012). The attainment of White and ethnic minority students in distance education, *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 37(4), 393-408.
- Tait, H. & Entwistle, N.J. (1996). Identifying students at risk through ineffective study strategies. *Higher Education*, 31, 97-116.
- Tangney, J. P., Baumeister, R. F. & Boone, A. L. (2004). High self-control predicts good adjustment, less pathology, better grades, and interpersonal success. *Journal of Personality*, 72, 271–322.
- The Age. (2011). Quality must not be sacrificed to quantity, 2 March, pp. 5.
- The Australian. (2013). Academic quality must be universities’ main priority, 3 July, pp. 11.
- The Chronicle. (2010), Obama: education is the economic issue of our time, August 11, pp. 46.
- Thomas, J. (2013). One-size model won’t fit all needs, The Australian, July 24, pp. 33.
- Thomas, L., Bland, D. & Duckworth, V. (2012). Teachers as advocates for widening participation, *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, 14 (2), 40-58.
- Tinto, V. (1999). Taking retention seriously: Rethinking the first year of college. *National Academic Advising Association Journal*, 19(2), 5-9.
- Tinto, V. (2005). Reflections on retention and persistence: Institutional actions on behalf of student persistence. *Studies in Learning, Evaluation, Innovation and Development*, 2(3), 89-97.
- Trounson, A, and Hare, J. (2011). Minister Chris Evans warns universities ahead of uncapping, The Australian, 2 March.
- West, S., Clark, H., Goode, E., Shah, M. (forthcoming). Online Enabling Education and Widening Student Participation in Higher Education, *Journal of Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, forthcoming.
- Whiteford, G., Shah, M., & Nair, S. (2013). Equity and Excellence Are Not Mutually Exclusive: A Discussion of Academic Standards In An Era of Widening Participation. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 21 (3), 299-310.