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Presentations:

(A) "I am not like that but why treat me the same way?" Stereotyping International VET Students as Mere 'PR Hunters' and its Impacts on Their Learning and Well-Being

(B) Intervention for Retention: How Can Academic and Social Support Help Universities Keep Their Students?

Time: 1030-1130 15/10/2010
Room: B103
Chair: Mr James Bennett, IDP Education

Presentation 1: (A) "I am not like that but why treat me the same way?" Stereotyping International VET Students as Mere 'PR Hunters' and its Impacts on Their Learning and Well-Being – 25 mins

Key Interests: Learning & Teaching
Sectors: Vocational Education
Speakers: **Dr Ly Thi Tran**
RMIT University

Numerous articles in the media and the publications by some academics have constructed the image of international VET students as mere 'PR hunters' and are not truly interested in or engaged in learning. This paper reports on the learning experiences of international students in the VET sector and the impacts of the stereotype that holds international VET students as mere 'PR hunters' on their learning and emotional well-being. It draws on 150 interviews with international students, teachers, support coordinator, managers and CEOs from 22 public and private VET providers in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria. Other sources of data for this study include follow-up telephone and email dialogues with students and teachers, participation in student activities, visits to their homes and workplaces and observation of their theory and practice classes in order to observe and understand the multiple and hidden dimensions of their life and study in Australia. The empirical data from this study shows that the generalisation of all VET international students as solely motivated by the desire to secure PR and disinterested in learning can lead to the inadequate provision of the educational commitment and resources individual students have the right to deserve. The paper reveals that this stereotype held by some teachers results in adverse associated implications and attitudes toward teaching and treating international students in the classroom. The findings of this research also highlight the manners in which international students are disadvantaged in their workplace and in the wider community as a consequence of the popularisation of these students as mere PR hunters. In particular, the paper argues for the critical need to address the current destructive way of constructing international VET students based on listening to the voices of international VET students themselves and staff directly involved in working with this student cohort.

Friday 15 October 2010