

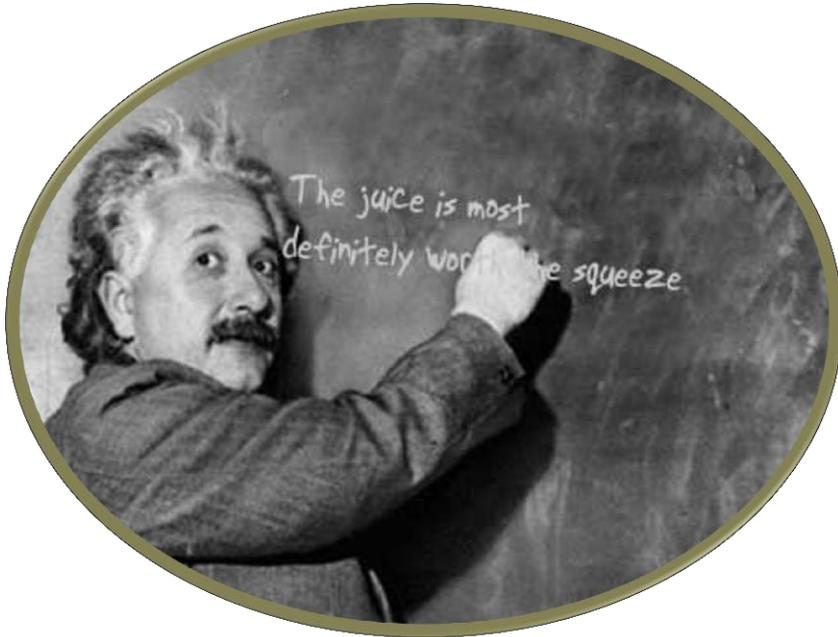
Breaking the Barriers:

Forum on First-in-Family students in university

An OLT Seed Project

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First in Family
Students'
Strategies for
Success: *'the juice
is most definitely
worth the squeeze'*

First in Family Students' Strategies for Success

1. Organisation

- “... it’s a means to an end here for me so I’ve got a definite difficult period here where I need to be really organised and sort things out but it’s very short term for long-term gain.”

(Gemma, 42, 3 children, u/g online)

- “So I learned the hard way I guess and I’ve just tried to be really organised from there; I try to start everything really early, I take the leave if I need to. ... It’s just about being disciplined and making sure I know I have to do it and just sitting down and getting it done because there’s no other choice really.”

(Grace, 24, u/g online)

2. Being pro-active/asking questions

“If you’ve got a question and you can’t find it, you just go ask someone. I’m sure there’s someone who can answer that question for you.”

(Daniel, 30, on campus u/g)

“I just get any help that I can. At the moment it’s been all different people. It’s just the teachers and anyone that I can approach to help.”

(Allana, 30s, 2 children, on campus u/g)

“I’m someone who’s not very ashamed of asking for help so often I’ll just ask, I’m happy to call up all the faculties and all those sorts of things and just see what needs to be done and ask if there’s any advice.”

(Ned, 23, on campus u/g)

3. Persistence

- “I sort of just say ‘It’s hard but it’s worth it.’ I’m enjoying it but yes, I don't know, I’m at home five days a week doing assignments (laughing). Yes, I’m doing well but yes, of course it’s hard.”

(Angela, 20 on campus u/g)

- “And as long as you keep consistently tugging away at it, it’s not that hard. ... I’ve have learned not to get worried about all the little things. “

(Yvonne, 38, 2 children, prior enabling, on campus u/g)

4. Containment - keeping uni separate

“You go to work, you can’t get interrupted in what you’re doing because you’ve got to finish one run before you start the next and as long as you get the bus back without damage well, you go home and you don't think about work again until the next day.”

(Lance, 46, 2 children, u/g online)

“And then while the children are not here, that’s when I study and everything else has to be done. The children cope better with me doing housework and jobs and other things while they’re around; they don't cope with me saying “I need you to be quiet. I’m thinking.”

(Susanna, 43, 3 children, u/g online)

I don't sleep (laughing). No, I do sleep but ... how do I manage my time? I do what I can with the time I've got and I think perhaps working three jobs as well as uni has taught me to manage time well. I know my schedule and I know when certain things have got to be done and why and I kind of have to fit those in around each other thing but, perhaps, I wouldn't say that I've got the luxury of any one of those four things having to give. So, it's taught me excellent time management skills and I certainly think that, you know, perhaps, oh actually I'll definitely acknowledge that my social life has definitely suffered because of the stringent requirements of what I do and perhaps if there's a regret that I've got that would be it, but at the same time, it's just the life I live and I get on with it.

(Lachlan, 24, on campus u/g)

Introducing the First in Family Website

“The world didn't end, I just kind of shrugged and settled into the new system.”



1. Engagement of FiF

- **Harnessing the Power of FiF Narratives to Inspire**
- **The positive promotion of possibilities (James, 2008: 137-138)**

Our Sources as Resources for example, we created composite narrative resources in which we harnessed the power of FiF Narratives so that they could affirm one another.

- **Quotable quotes on rotation**
- **Pechu Kucha with voice and images**
- **Stories to address the specificity of level/mode of the student using the site, namely:**
 - Enabling Story – Melinda’s Story
 - Undergraduate Stories – Jamira’s Story, Ryan’s Story
 - Online Story - Joe's Story
 - Generational Story – Nonna’s Story

Engagement of FiF CONTINUED

Interconnections - FiF as Embedded in Private Worlds

For example for children we created:

- Everybody learns (colour me in) (for pre-school)
- Emily and her mummy go to school (for junior primary)
- Five things you should know when your parent goes back to school (for young teens)
- How can I help? (for older children)

2. Support of FiF from FiF via Knowledge and Empowerment

- We created a range of resources for FiF built upon the research evidence which we also give alongside.
- The mode and level of study became important at this point for example in the 'Top Tips' resources drawn from the interview and survey data.
- The data was also used to generate a list of quotations for all of the students around 'What I'd wished I'd Known' as well as a 'Let's Celebrate!' list that gives support for FiF to embrace the positive possibilities, ambitions, and transformative potential of HE in their lives.

<http://firstinfamily.com.au/index.php>

