The aim of this presentation is to contribute research that can promote policy and professional practice conversations about the value of older workers AND....

- their career development needs
- how to support their career engagement
- the importance of transferring their knowledge through effective and meaningful mentorship to younger mentees.

AGEING WORKFORCE

Governments & policy makers are alarmed by an ageing society with workforce productivity needing an injection of skills from older workers.

International Labour Organisation (2015)
Australian Government Intergenerational Reports (2010, 2015)
FIRST FOCUS on the OLDER AGE GROUPS

Do they wish to return to work?
What are their needs, worries and motivations?
How do they need to adapt?

Jennifer Luke
Current PhD Research
Extend on MEd investigation into motivation and career adaptabilities of retirees seeking an encore career.
Now focus on how to how to build their career adaptability and transfer their valuable skills to the younger generation through mentorship.

Roberta Neault
Career Engagement model
(Neault and Pickerill, 2019)
Will be discussed as an effective bridge between career counselling of older clients and employee engagement.
Jennifer Luke

Initial MEd Research

What motivates a person in retirement to re-enter career?

Semi-structured interviews with 22 retirees.
Age range: 56 to 78 years. Male & Female in Queensland, Australia.
All participants either working or volunteering.

Jennifer Luke & Roberta Neault, APCDA Conference 2019

Thematic Analysis
(Braun & Clarke, 2006) was conducted on the interview transcripts.

22 initial codes
5 Themes

EMPLOYABILITY
The themes within a person’s stories make meaning from traits, adaptations, and experiences in the world.

RESULTS
CAREER ADAPTABLES
Career Construction Theory (Savickas, 2005)

Concern
a future orientation to working

Control
sense of autonomy over work tasks & vocational future

Curiosity
interest in learning & developing new knowledge

Confidence
feeling positive about ability to contribute to workplace

PUBLICATION
A Thematic Analysis of Career Adaptability in Retirees who Return to Work


Current PhD Research

Extend on MEd investigation into motivation and career adaptabilities of retirees seeking an encore career.

Now focus on how to assist in transferring their valuable skills to the younger generation through mentorship.
feeling Insignificant

Over half of participants genuinely felt unsure that their career history and experience would be interesting & significant enough to others.

Jennifer Luke & Roberta Neault, APCDA Conference 2019

seek MEANINGFUL WORK

- In all interviews, participants spoke of their values. What gave them a sense of accomplishment.

For each participant that was interested in being a mentor – they wanted to be within a workplace that gave them flexibility of time, confidence, social inclusion and feeling significant as well as be respected.

Jennifer Luke & Roberta Neault, APCDA Conference 2019

Case Studies

Older workers, retirement and re-engaging with work

Sample of participants interviewed for Jennifer Luke’s PhD research with inclusion of Career Engagement Model by Roberta Neault

Career Engagement

Career Engagement Model

Strategic alignment of internal and external capacity with level of challenge

Career Engagement Definition

“The current emotional and cognitive connection to one’s career; . . . a state in which one is focused, energized, and able to derive pleasure from activities linked to work and other life roles”

~Pickerell, 2013, p. 4

Two Routes to Disengagement

Challenge too high for available capacity
Challenge too low for available capacity
Female – 65
newly retired to focus on family

- University qualified social worker.
- Extensive experience in counselling within hospitals, not-for-profits and high education (15 years at a University).
- Retired to focus on becoming a grandparent.
- Offered to return for casual hours at university the following year if needed.

Very humble about their accomplishments and feel insignificant.
Her adult children only see her as their mother and never as a professional and respected counsellor.
Will always help immediately to get a project moving and still wants to give back to the community.
Was well respected by her peers for her experience and guidance.

Case Conceptualization – Retired Counsellor

- At risk of feeling underutilized and, eventually, disengaged
- Explore potential new challenges
  - Find ways to continue to contribute
  - Keep up social connections

Male – 68
retired and now volunteers

- After High School became a Hydraulic factory worker for 1 year.
- Studied and became a Cardiothoracic Nurse then Hospital Intensive Care Unit Manager.
- Now volunteers at a Historical Restoration Society and provides First Aid lessons to community groups.

Male – 68
retired and now volunteers

- Very friendly, confident and a good leader / communicator with all ages.
- Had enjoyed teaching and mentoring other nursing staff grow in their roles.
- Retired from work due to physical health but still active in volunteer work.
- Also is married with a number of grandchildren and has a father in a nursing home that he visits often.

Case Conceptualization – Retired ICU Manager

- Reduced capacity (physical health concerns)
- Requires less challenge to achieve engagement
- Current additional challenges from complex life roles (caregiving for grandchildren and father in a nursing home)
- Volunteering and teaching First Aid part-time helps to align challenge with available capacity
Male – 85
retired then returned to work

• Mechanic, small business owner and missionary (Australia and in Papua New Guinea)
• Retired and moved back to Australia (age early 70s)
• Volunteered time at a local mechanic workshop.
• Offered fulltime work as a roadside service mechanic. Still in this role.

Male – 85
retired then returned to work

• Is accustomed to taking a leadership role in his community.
• Is very straightforward and has strong opinions.
• Was concerned about research topic until he realised it was focusing on the value of older worker’s skills and knowledge (and not an ageist attack).

Jennifer Luke & Roberta Neault, APCDA Conference 2019

Case Conceptualization
– Mechanic, 70+, back at work

• Underutilized in retirement
• Capacity recognized in his volunteer role
• Now actively engaged in his new community

Jennifer Luke
Current PhD Research
Extend on MEd investigation into motivation and career adaptabilities of retirees seeking an encore career.
Now focus on how to how to build their career adaptability and transfer their valuable skills to the younger generation through mentorship.

Roberta Neault
Career Engagement model
(Neault and Pickerell, 2019)
Will be discussed as an effective bridge between career counselling of older clients and employee engagement.

Jennifer Luke & Roberta Neault, APCDA Conference 2019

A conceptual framework for strategic structuring of
- Gradual/phased retirement
- Retirement activities
- Return-to-work plans
- Mentoring opportunities
- Integrated life roles

Without a strong understanding of the psychological factors that motivate an older worker to become a mentor and the adaptability required of them to transition successfully back into the current multi-generational workforce….

the labour market will be ill prepared in its ability to support the re-integration of this valuable cohort.
THANK YOU