

BERA Conference, Warwick, September 2006
Symposium: TLRP's research on widening participation in HE

Degrees of success: the transition between VET and HE

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Hayward, Hoelscher & Ertl: *Degrees of success: the transition between VET and HE*



Outline

- Background
- Research design and questions
- Some methodological thoughts
- Challenges of obtaining data

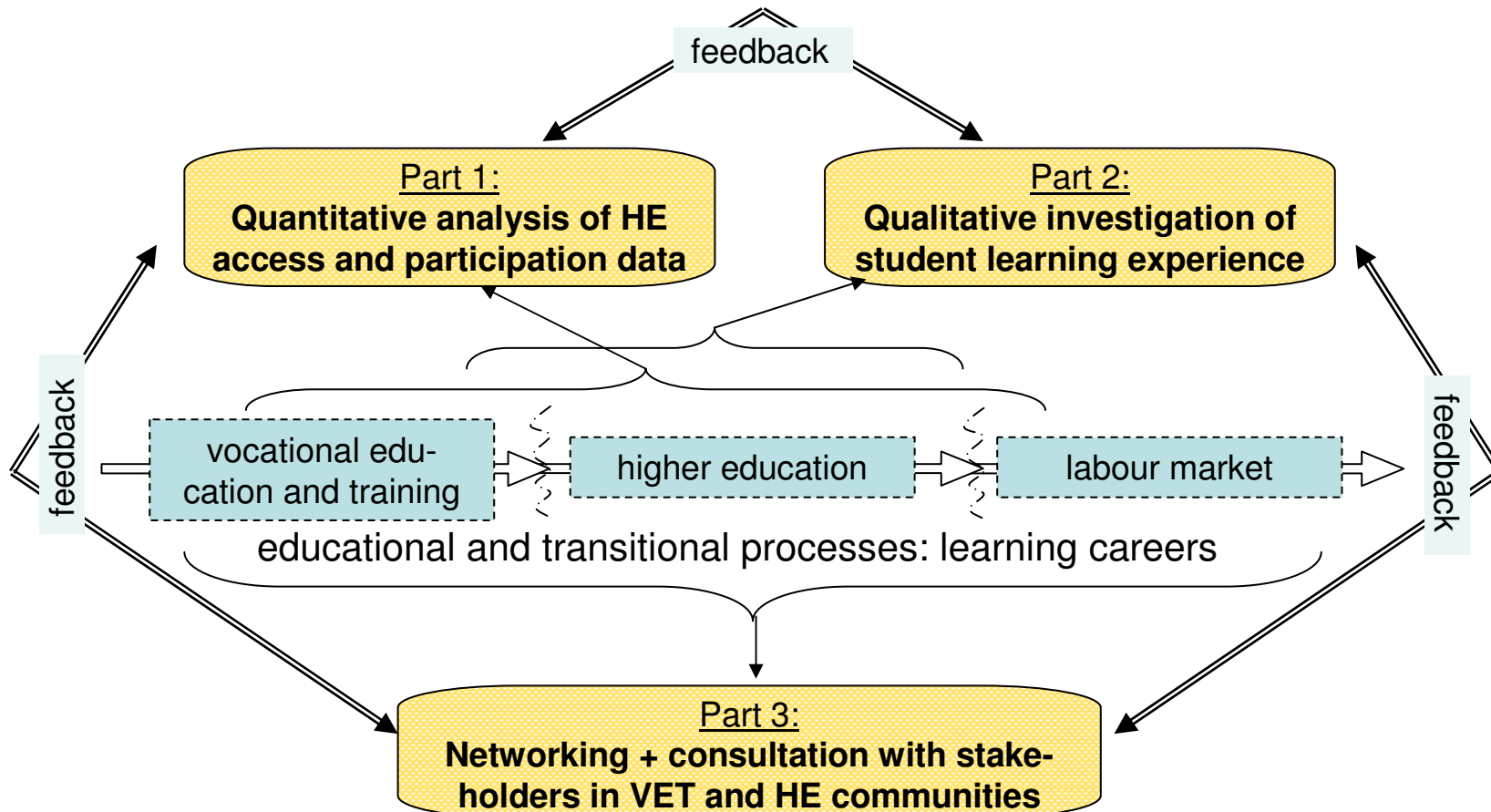


Background: Educational Expansion

- Massive increase in participation in full-time post-compulsory education between 1985 and 1994
- Increased availability of vocationally-oriented qualifications aimed at 16-year olds
 - Post-compulsory expansion regarded as pre-condition for widening participation in HE
- Incremental growth in HE student numbers remains greatest for students with traditional academic secondary qualifications
 - 'vocational education at secondary level ... does inhibit students' chances of continuing on to college'
(Arum & Shavit, 1993)
 - 'mirage of wider opportunities' (Pugsley, 2004)
 - 'social selectivity of secondary education' (PISA Consortium, 2001)

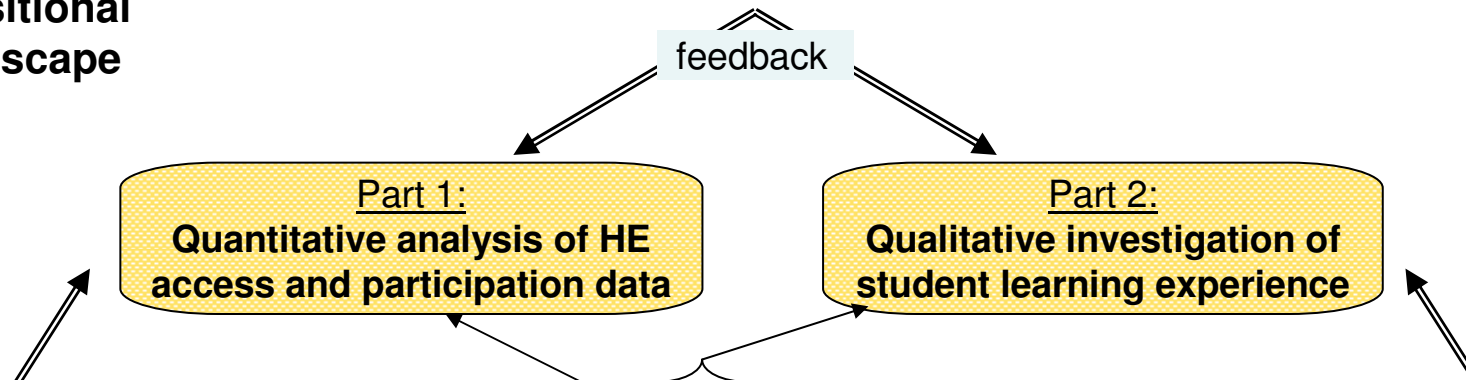


Research Design



Research Design

SYSTEMIC
PERSPECTIVE:
**Transitional
Landscape**



Research Questions:

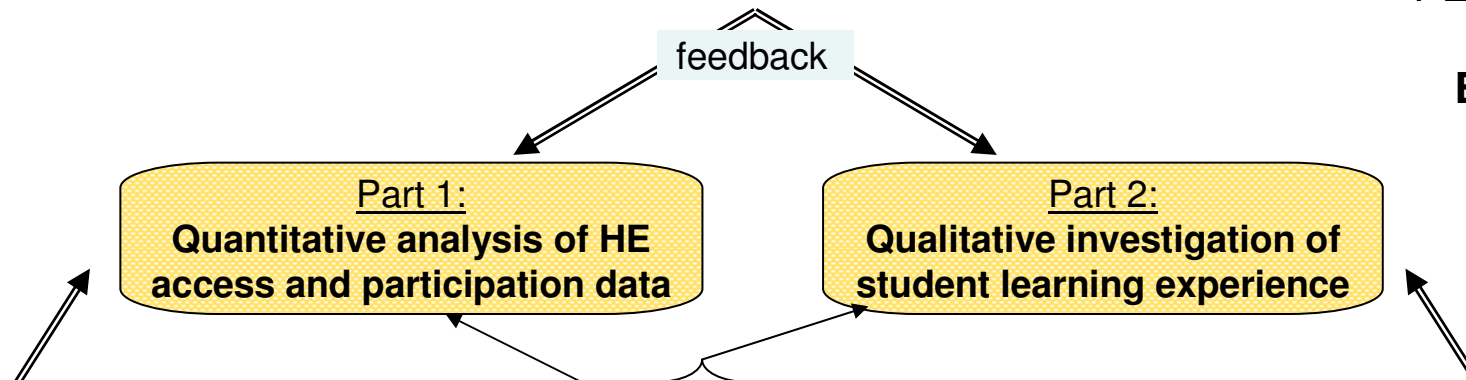
- How many people with vocational qualifications go on to HE?
- How has this changed over time?
- At what HEIs and in which programmes do people with a vocational background study?
- What are the factors associated with the probability of transition?

HOLDERS IN VET and HE COMMUNITIES



Research Design

PEDAGOGICAL
PERSPECTIVE:
**Learning
Experience**



Research Questions:

- What is the experience of students with a vocational background when they make the transition to HE?
- To what extent are these students prepared for studies in HE?
- What mechanisms are in place to remedy any lack of preparation?
- What are the main factors that shape the HE experience of these students?



Research Design

feedback

Research Questions:

- How could the transition between VET and HE be smoother and easier to manage?
- What curricular, organisational and pedagogical changes are needed to facilitate the transition between VET and HE?
- What are the main obstacles to implementing changes and how can they be overcome?

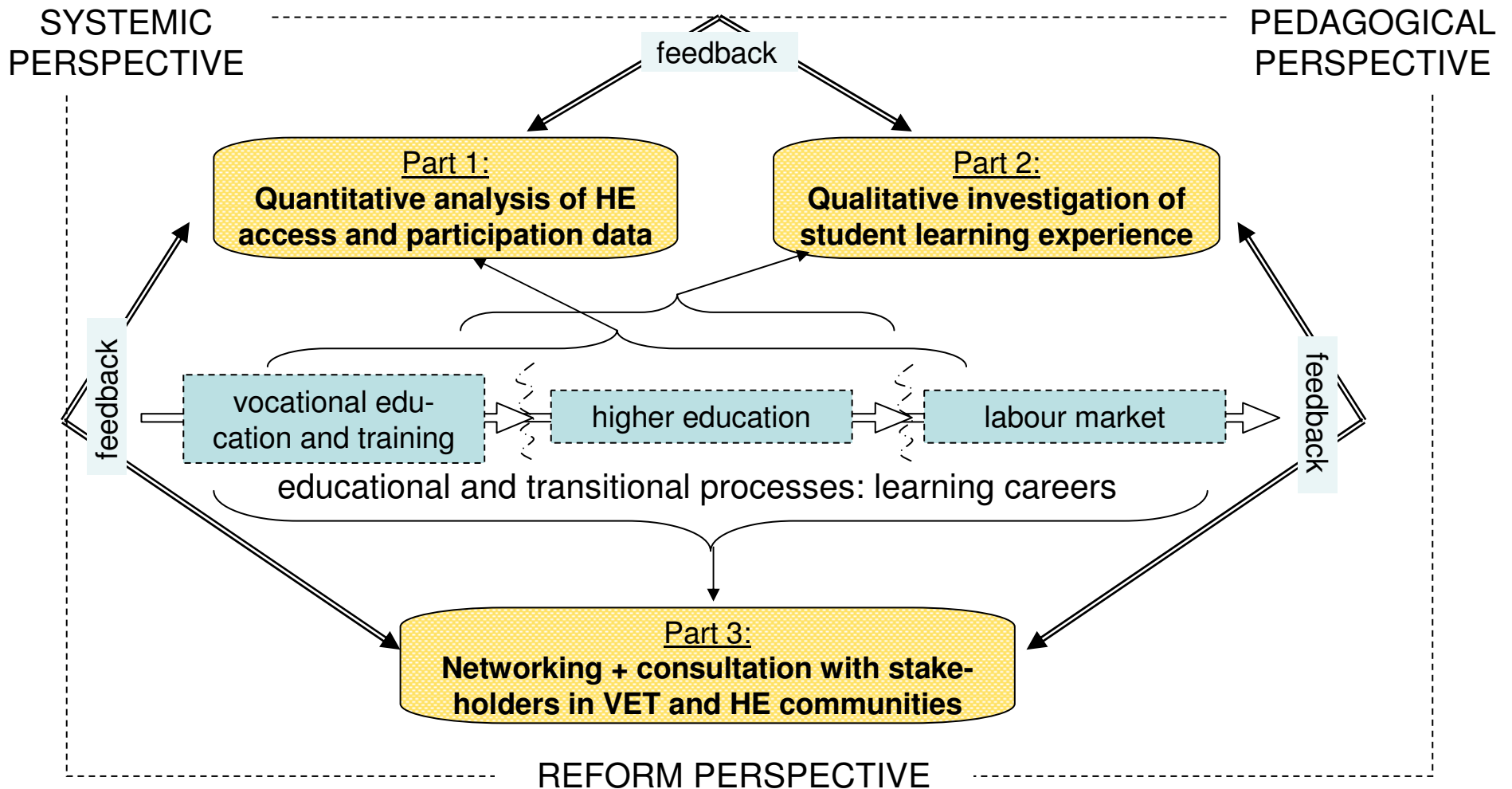
Part 3:

Networking + consultation with stakeholders in VET and HE communities

REFORM PERSPECTIVE:
transitional frictions



Research Design



Some methodological thoughts (I)

- Two different kinds of questions:
Description and explanation
- Results of both depend on theoretical perspective
- In educational research a semi-structured theoretical framework is advisable
- But: advanced techniques of data analysis are demanding regarding data quality and theory



Some methodological thoughts (II)

- Clarity of concepts and theory needed to derive to testable empirical hypotheses
- Data-quality issues are central



Some methodological thoughts (III)

Two aspects of data quality

- **Reliability**

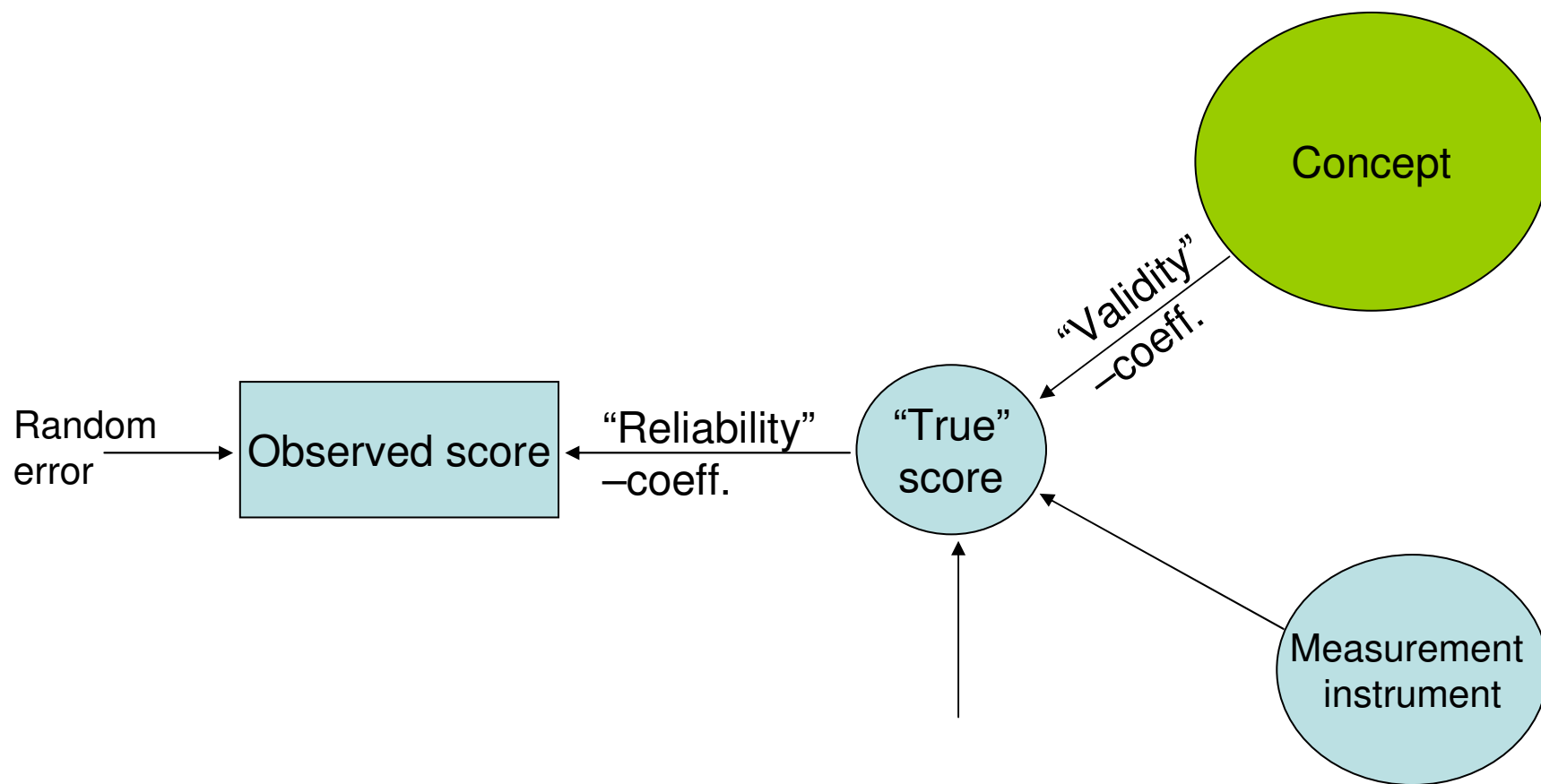
Errors and mistakes in the data?

- **Validity**

Do our indicators measure what we want to measure?



Some methodological thoughts (IV)



Some methodological thoughts (V)

Conclusion:

Theory and data analysis

and

quantitative and qualitative approach

have to inform each other in a
recursive process



Obtaining the data

- Protracted negotiation over what is and what is not public
- Data protection issues reduce the quality of information for fuzzy matching
 - Match yourself
 - Let the agencies do the matching
- Data extraction is costly - be prepared to pay!



... thank you for your interest!

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