Pathways One

Papers presented at the first national conference

Addressing issues of post-secondary education for people with disabilities

Deakin University, Geelong

2, 3, 4 December 1991

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The staff of the Disability Resource Centre wish to acknowledge the generous contributions made by various organisations and individuals to the "Pathways, Post-Secondary Education for People with Disabilities" conference held at Deakin University 2, 3, 4, December 1991.

Of particular significance was the generosity of the following organisations who's sponsorship enabled 80 students with disabilities to attend the conference:

Equity for Students with Disabilities Project- a DEET funded initiative between Victoria University of Technology and Deakin University

Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service

Post-Secondary Disability Integration Network (Victoria)

Deakin University Student Association Council

Student Association Councils at other Universities within each state

Equal Opportunity Units at other Universities within each state

Secondary School Councils

The keynote speaker Professor Paul Leung, Director of the Division of Rehabilitation Services, University of Illinois gave the conference an inspirational vision of what can be achieved within the higher education framework, as well as being available to converse and consult on an individual level with conference participants. We wish to extend our sincere appreciation to Professor Leung for his most valuable participation and contribution towards the success of the conference. The conference organisers would like to thank Mrs Wendy Leung whose charm, friendliness and willingness to participate, enhanced the spirit of the conference.

Appreciation is also extended to the other speakers of the conference for their time spent in preparation, and in the delivery of a wide variety of highly professional presentations.

In order to enable the maximum number of people with disabilities to attend and access the conference, attendant care and interpreting services were provided. The conference organisers wish to convey their appreciation to the people who provided these services, for their dedication, flexibility and professionalism.

The "Pathways" conference provided many opportunities for participants to share knowledge and exchange information. The conference organisers would like to thank the organisations and personnel who provided displays, shared their expertise, and contributed to this flow of valuable information.

We would also like to acknowledge the contribution made by the following people who introduced and chaired the various presentations

Professor David James, Acting Vice Chancellor, Deakin University, 1991

Professor Alan Lonsdale, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Deakin University

Dr Geoff Westwood, Acting Chair, Vera White Disability Resource Centre, Deakin University

Mr lan Slockwitch, Manager Student Services, Deakin University, 1991

Our conference secretary Rita Jennings, played a most significant part in planning the details of the accommodation and meals, the financial management and administration of registrations, and the travel and personal requirements of the registrants and speakers. Her efficiency and calmness contributed greatly to everyone's wellbeing and comfort.

Finally we would like to express our appreciation to the students and staff who attended "Pathways". If we all can continue to share the visions, resources and knowledge which was presented at this conference, we will have started to learn the lessons from the 'Lessons from Geese'. .

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Pathways Post-Secondary Education for Students with Disabilities

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Professor Paul Leung

Director of the Division of Rehabilitation Education Services

University of Illinois, USA

I am pleased, honoured and delighted to be here at the 1st national

conference in Australia related to persons with disabilities and Post-Secondary

education. I want to thank all those who have been so gracious and kind with

their hospitality for Wendy and I, especially Jenny Townsend, Chancellors

James and Lonsdale and all of you present.

From what I have observed and from what is apparent in the conference

program, there is no question that you have much going for you related to the

inclusion of persons with disabilities into higher education.

I recognise that there are many differences that separate the U.S. and

Australia, and I will not pretend that the program model of the University of

Illinois is either the best, or the one which would be most adoptable. Because

I am an academic, I did do some preparation in my attempt to learn a bit more

about Australia.

This is, by the way, the second time that Wendy and I have been in Australia,

though the first here in the southern part of the continent. The two books I

read in preparation may not be the best, and I hope that you may have further

recommendations. They were Robert Hughes' The Fatal Shore and Ross

Terrill's The Australians. I believe that there are many similarities, or things

that we have or hold in common. An example is what appears to be the rivalry

between Sydney and Melbourne. Similar rivalries are found in the U.S., even

in the relatively small community of Champaign and Urbana, which is only

separated by one street. Another concept that I picked up is something

thoroughly positive about Australians. You have turned something that is

generally perceived as negative into something very positive. The word,

down is generally used in negative ways, such as being down. Yet 'down

under' to Americans has a very positive, upbeat feeling. That you have

managed to convey this attitude is, in my estimation, quite important. That

positivism is to be admired.

I know that I have already learned much, and am looking forward to learning

more in the next few days.

Much of what I have to say may be "old hat" to you. The program certainly

illustrated a breadth of ideas, services, and programs related to students with

disabilities in postsecondary education. I do think that often in meetings such

as this, I may be "preaching to the choir or to the converted". In all truthfuIness,

programs such as the one I direct, or ones such as those you represent,

should not exist. But they do so only because age old beliefs, stigmas, and

stereotypes continue to exist and most institutions of higher learning continue

to perpetuate these myths.

The generalisation effect that Beatrice Wright, a rehabilitation psychologist,

talked about in her writings is relieved each moment of every day. A person

with a disability is still perceived as less able in all aspects of life.

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Pathways Post-Secondary Education for Students with Disabilities

So we have the examples of persons not talking to persons in wheelchairs

because they believe that they are retarded or unable to communicate, or to

talk louder to persons who are blind, believing them to be deaf as well.

Even in an institution such as the University of Illinois, which has perhaps as

long a history as any campus in the U.S. with regard to students with

disabilities, these attitudes still persist. And, perhaps our most difficult and

continuing task is the eradication of these perceptions and attitudes.

It is not enough to only provide needed services or to remove physical

barriers; we must attack belief systems. A recent poster by the National

Easter Seal Society in the U.S. illustrated the barrier well. It shows a picture

of a human hand reaching out to shake a prosthetic hand and has the

following caption: "Sometimes the worst thing about having a disability is that

people meet it before they meet you".

Before I get into specifics, I would like to address some issues on philosophy,

foundation, or rational. First, it is clear the support services in an educational

institution is not a drain, or user of resources. The inclusion and access of any

institution to persons with disabilities enhances the institution as a place for

higher learning. I don't know the situation here in Australia, but while higher

education should be the forerunner and trailblazer, in the U.S. it sometimes

lags behind because of its history, tradition, and the reluctance and difficulty

related to change. I firmly believe that the admission of diverse groups of

students, including those with disabilities, only adds rather than detracts from

the basic mission of what a university is.

Before going further I would like to share some insights about universities that

come from Ernest Boyer, a former U.S. Commissioner of Education. Boyer

believes that we need a "larger, more integrative vision of community in higher

education, one that focuses not on the length of the encounter, and relates

not only to social activities, but to the classroom too. The goal, as we see it, is

to clarify both academic and civic standards, and above all, to define with

some precision the enduring values that undergird a community of learning"

Boyer goes on to propose six principles which together defines the kind of

community every college and university should strive to be. And I continue to

quote: "First, a college or university is an educationally purposeful community,

a place where faculty and students share academic goals and work together

to strengthen teaching and learning on campus.

Second, a college or university is an open community, a place where freedom

of expression is uncompromisingly protected and where civility is powerfully

affirmed.

Third, a college or university is a just community, a place where the

sacredness of the person is honoured and where diversity is effectively

pursued. -

Fourth, a college or university is a disciplined community, a place where

individuals accept their obligations to the group, and where well defined

governance procedures guide behaviour for the common good.

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Post-Secondary Education for Students with Disabilities

Paul Leung

Fifth, a college or university is a caring community, a place where the well-

being of each member is sensitively supported and where services to other is

encouraged.

Sixth, a college or university is a celebrative community, one in which the

heritage of the institution is remembered and where rituals affirming both

tradition and change are widely shared.

The presence of students with disabilities on any campus provides the

opportunity that these six principles become operative, and enhances the

ability of the entire university community to meet its mission. The inclusion of

students with disabilities is part and parcel of what higher education is all

about. And in many ways, the benefits of increasing the numbers of persons

with disabilities on campus as students, faculty, and staff far exceeds what

'costs" there are. This, I think, is very important because often our exuberance

and belief regarding the equality of opportunity tend to be one sided. All of the

points brought out by Boyer are enhanced by having significant numbers of

students with disabilities on a campus.

It is educational for both the non disabled students as well as those having

disabilities, in learning about and with each other. It stresses the sacredness

of persons and the diversity of all of us. And it does present for us the

capabilities of being a caring community where each recognises, respects,

and supports the other.

At the same time, there are very pragmatic reasons why inclusion of persons

with disabilities is necessary, even beyond what is perceived now in the U.S.

as a basic right. Foremost is the obvious economic benefit that occurs from

having a college or university education. Recent statistics taken from me

Economist illustrates the differences in earnings by education level. The

results are very clear. Those with a tertiary education are more likely to have

much greater earning power than those without.

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Pathways Post-Secondary Education for Students with Disabilities

In addition, a recent Gallup poll of Americans found that 75% of the population

believed that a college degree is the ticket to a better life (Chronicle,

10/16/91). In contrast, at least in the U.S., persons with disabilities are much

more likely to lack skills and to be unemployed than persons without

disabilities. Participation in the labour force of men with disabilities has

actually dropped from 1981 to 1989 to 35.7% and for women it was 27.5%.

(The Economist Feb 9th 1991.)

The impact of disability and job or educational performance varies

remarkably. The U.S. disability statistics indicate 38% have physical

disabilities, 13% have sensory impairments, 32% have some type of mental

or brain dysfunction (even these do not necessarily interfere with intellectual

or reasoning ability). In looking at the future job or employment scene of the

U.S., the U.S. Department of Labour Statistics indicate that 90% of net new

jobs will be either information or service intensive. The need is for brain

power and not physical dexterity.

Adults with disabilities in the U.S are almost four times as likely as are non

disabled adults to have less than a ninth grade education. We, in the U.S.

have our work cut out for us. As an educator, I believe access to educational

opportunities as essential to changing that statistic and that access to colleges

and universities of persons with disabilities brings about careers and benefits

to both the person, as well as society, which are less likely to occur without

such educational opportunities.

I want to now briefly review some of the history related to the inclusion and

accessibility of higher education and persons with disabilities in the U.S. At

the same time, because the University of Illinois' history parallels this

movement, I will try to incorporate some of the University of Illinois' program

with the larger movement. Following that I plan to discuss some of the

legislation that has impacted upon our programs, and which undoubtedly will

continue to play a role in the near future.

In the U.S. probably the first support program of higher education for persons

with disabilities was the establishment in the 186O's, of Gallaudet College, a

liberal arts college for persons who are deaf or have hearing impairments.

While there were students with disabilities in various universities who

successfully completed their studies, not much occurred, and even until 1960,

there were fewer than two dozen in the country. The University of Illinois

Rehabilitation Education program had its beginning during the 1947-8 school

year on the Galesburg campus. With the closing of the Galesburg campus,

the program was moved to Urbana Champaign in 1949, where it has

remained. The founder was Tim J. Nugent, who saw a need for education

among WW11 veterans with disabilities. Tim said and believed the following:

"What better setting could there be for rehabilitation of those with severe

disabilities than tertiary (or higher) education:

What setting has more resources, more diverse facilities, a more challenging

environment, more inter-disciplinary interactions, more social and cultural

influences, and greater research potential for attacking and solving problems

(individually and collectively) than the campuses of our institutions of higher

Education. His philosophy was "In all my years I have not known a disabled individual. I

have known hundreds upon thousands of individuals with unique individual differences, one of

which might be a specific physical disability, which does not necessarily have to be a handicap

unless you or I, the individual or the environment makes it such".

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Begun as a one man program, it has generally grown- I say generally

because there has been some unevenness and about 5 years ago the

numbers of students with disabilities was at an all-time low of 115, probably

due to the rapid increase in numbers of universities across the country which

provided access and support services in the intervening years to the present

one.

The program involves a multitude of services and staff, including a graduate

level academic program in rehabilitation counselling and administration.

Our present situation is a campus of some 36,000 students of which

approximately 26,000 are undergraduates. The numbers of students we

serve has grown quite a bit during the past five years. This fall the numbers of

students registered (there are a number of students with disabilities on

campus who prefer not to register, as they have no need for our services) was

280. Of these students, approximately 120 use wheelchairs, of which 70 are

male and 20 female. Approximately 200 are Illinois residents. The rest

include 40 from 20 other states and 6 foreign countries. Students with

disabilities were enrolled in 11 colleges and 102 different curricula. The

different types of disabilities span just about any that can be named. This past

year 34 students with disabilities that we served graduated. 29 with

bachelor's degrees, 3 with master's degrees, and one with Juris Doctorate.

The fastest growing population continues to be students with learning

disabilities, a group I will return to later.

During these years through the 1960's there was no momentum as such

related to the inclusion of students with disabilities, and higher education and

the programs of support varied, according to the particular university and the

staff involved. Most campuses during this time paid little attention to

architectural barriers, and the idea of "programmatic access" was essentially

alien. At the same time, the University of Illinois and Tim Nugent continued to

forge ahead. The University of Illinois instituted numerous competitive sports

such as wheelchair basketball and track and field, and the awarding of varsity

letters to athletes using wheelchairs or who were blind. Research was done

regarding accessibility and useability of buildings and facilities, including

transportation systems, and the standards used today were a direct result of

Tim Nugent's work. Some 1300 persons with disabilities, many considered to

be severely disabled, have since graduated from the University of Illinois in

just about every major or academic area offered There have been graduates

in medicine, law, engineering, architecture, veterinary medicine, education,

agriculture, and the liberal arts. All of these students met the admissions

criteria, along with the specific requirements of individual academic units.

While the Division has played a role in the past in admissions waivers and

unconventional means for fulfilling requirements, this is no longer true. That

students with disabilities today are able to compete equally for admission is

indicative of progress.

As I may have indicated earlier, more students with disabilities were accepted

this past year than any time previously. There is another point here in our

continuing argument for additional resources. I constantly remind the Vice

Chancellor that the Division does not admit, but that the various academic

units do. lt's an important campus political and responsibility issue.

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One other point related to increased admissions is, that there has been

gradual improvement of the secondary education system for students with

disabilities that was not there in the 1950's, 60's or 70's. i

What does our program consist of at present? The design of the campus

generally affords full access to students with disabilities. l\/lost University

residence halls have the modifications which allow students with disabilities to

live independently with all other students. Those students who are severely

disabled and need assistance related to personal care, may live at Beckwith

Living Centre, a specially designed residence hall that is completely

accessible.

The Division operates a transportation system, consisting primarily of four lift

equipped buses. This is supplemented by the C-U Mass Transit District,

which operates lift equipped buses in the community. We provide a sensory

accommodation program for students with visual and hearing impairments.

This includes adaptive equipment, special testing services, instruction in

campus orientation, braille reading and writing, interpreters and notetakers.

Audiological evaluations, hearing aid evaluation, and speech and language

therapies can be arranged, Modifications in taking examinations may be

arranged, including use of a reader or writer, extended time, or other

adaptations.

A rehabilitation engineer is on our staff to assist with adaptations and

modifications of equipment, class room and laboratory arrangements, and

specialised mechanical or electronic equipment. A shop for wheelchair

repairs and fabrication of adaptive devices is available and often

tremendously important for keeping students in classes when their chairs

break down.

The Division has a physical therapy facility which offers assistance on

developing and implementing therapeutic programs, supervised exercise

programs, and specific functional skills training. A comprehensive sports and

recreation program is available for students interested in both competitive and

recreational sports, including men's and women's basketball, track and field,

baseball, tennis, football, and swimming.

Wheelchair and visually impaired student athletes competing at the

intercollegiate level are eligible to receive the University of illinois Athletic

Association's Varsity l Award, an award given to students who excel in

competitive athletics. We also have a physician with a specialisation in

physical medicine and rehabilitation available on a consultative basis, for

physical evaluations and limited treatment.

Staff nurses provide coordination with other health facilities, and education for

problem solving of disability related issues. In cooperation with the Illinois

Department of Rehabilitation Services (IDORS) , we are re-instituting a Driver

Education Program to evaluate and teach persons with severe disabilities the

skills needed to drive, thus increasing their independence.

All students with disabilities are encouraged to make full use of all the other

facilities, services, and programs in campus. Many students are active in

professional, honorary, and social fraternities and sororities.

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Many students with disabilities also participate in Delta Sigma Omicron, a

campus service organisation and have gained leadership skills and increased

self confidence planning for charitable activities, community involvement, and

working on the publication, Sigma Signs, a student magazine highlighting

events that have occurred each year.

Moving back to the American national scene, Jane Jarrow, presently the

Executive Director of the Association on Handicapped Student Service

Programs in Post-Secondary Education, has noted that 90% of the progress in

the field of supportive services for students with disabilities has occurred in the

past 10 years. This can be traced directly to the passage of the Rehabilitation

Act of 1973, and what has become commonly known as Section 504. This Act

mandated programmatic access to higher education for qualified individuals

with disabilities.

No otherwise qualified handicapped individuals .... shall, solely, by reason of

his handicap, be excluded from participation, be denied the benefits of, or be

subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal

financial assistance (Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973, May, 1977). The

1977 Act is important because even though the Act was passed in 1973, much

of the regulations were not implemented until much later.

Colleges and universities that receive Federal assistance must assure that the

same educational programs and services offered to all students be available

to students with disabilities.

Academic ability is the primary basis for participation in Post-Secondary

education. Accommodation included such things as modification of

examinations formats, but not fundamental changes or alterations, such as

waiver of essential coursework. Both physical and programmatic access is

more than the removal of architectural barriers and the provision of auxiliary

services. It means that reasonable accommodations must be made in the

instructional process to ensure full educational opportunity.

This applies to all teaching strategies and modes, as well as to institutional

and departmental policies. Allowing reduced course load, extra time for

examinations, or the tape recording of classes have all been considered to be

reasonable accommodation. Knowledge and sensitivity are the keys.

I believe it safe to say that the significant movement has only occurred recently

in the field that we call support services for students with disabilities. We are

just beginning to identify ourselves and what we are all about. The latest

national numbers suggest that during the last ten years the numbers of

students with disabilities in higher education has tripled, and make up about

10.5 % of all college students. But what is it that we know now after a little

more than a decade of experience. There is a considerable, though perhaps

not definitive, body of knowledge in the literature. One of the first things that to

me is striking, but should not be a surprise, is that the majority of what is found

in the current literature suggests that there are no significant differences

between students with disabilities and their able bodied peers. This is in line

with the underlying premise behind the provision of support services for

students with disabilities.

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Students with disabilities are more like every other student than they are

different and given the appropriate support, they are equally successful in

pursing and completing a Post-Secondary education. l would submit that this

is true regardless of the disability. The primary lesson to be learned, and one

that all of us may need reminders of, including faculty, but especially those in

administration, is students with disabilities are students and they bring the

same range of intelligence and scholastic skills as any other students. But

these students do suffer from some of the attitudinal barriers that I mentioned

earlier. These attitudes of defining the person by the disability. Attitudes can

undermine their achievement and performance and reinforce negatives, and

become self fulfilling prophecy and a major barrier to staying in school and

ultimate success.

Relationships and networks between and among service providers is

essential. Many of the students with disabilities on the campus are there

under the sponsorship of the Illinois Department of Rehabilitation (IDORS)

At Beckwith Living Centre, the residence hall for students with disabilities,

80% are funded through IDORS. IDORS supports 127 students

(approximately 45% of the total that have registered for services) with

disabilities on our campus, of which they provide direct monetary support of

$678.600. This is certainly a significant amount of funding.

Cooperation and communication are the elements that assist us working

together with these programs. One of the aspects that is particularly helpful is

the presence of an IDORS counsellor on site in our facility. He is in almost

daily contact not only with students that are IDORS sponsored, but able to

communicate daily with our staff. He also sits on the Rehabilitation

Accommodation Committee, which is the primary service coordination

committee of the Division. Relationship and networking within the University

community is a necessity for our programs to work.

We use a "case management" approach and have a designated coordinator

of services. We encourage our students to fully use those services available to

students on campus, such as the Dean of Students office, the Counselling

Centre, McKinley Health Centre, and the Minority Students Office.

Again, we came into being because early on there were no provisions, or only

minimal provisions for students with disabilities. This has been slowly

changing. The resources of the University have been, and are projected to

remain, somewhat static in the near future. The numbers of students with

disabilities will continue to increase. The only way to maintain quality and

excellence is to effectively integrate students with disabilities into what is

available.

Evaluation of programs will be an important element in our attempts to

increase resources. The amount of research even, within our Division, has

been minimal. Obviously, part of the difficulty relates to the pressures of

providing services, which mitigates against spending time to evaluate

programs. While the graduation numbers over the years is indicative of

success, there are other ways in which we must evaluate the impact. We are

beginning to look at retention rates of students with disabilities, as compared

to the able bodied student population, as well as other possible indicators.

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Though we have legislative mandates for much of what we offer, it is

incumbent upon us to develop the kinds of data that show our programs make

a difference. Associated with this is our internal use of such data. I believe

that we need to pay more attention to those students who begin to falter, and

perhaps could make it with more support.

The impact of technology and its use in student support programs is

something that we will have to face. Technology can augment a student's

capability and can remove the effects of the disability. Some have termed this

as equality, in that it allows the person with disability not to "just" function, but

to excel. The problem for us is the cost and keeping up with the changes.

There are a number of other challenges that programs which serve post

secondary students will have to face in the near future. Increasing numbers of

students with learning disabilities and those with traumatic head injuries will

be specific population for which we must be prepared.

Students with learning disabilities, as I mentioned earlier, are probably the

fastest growing in terms of numbers in our Division. It remains a controversial

area with administrators on our campus. Part of the difficulty relates to the

differences related to diagnoses, though there have been advances. Because

it is not something visible, many have difficulty in understanding what the

basic problem is. A disability group that will present further challenge is that

segment of the population that have psychiatric problems. The stigma and the

fear that many of us have of this population has limited their access so far.

Another area of challenge is one which faces not only student support service

programs, but all of higher education in the U.S. The demography of the U.S.

is in the process of significant change. Ethnic and cultural minorities are

increasing, and at a rate that will change the entire face of the America.

Immigration will also reinforce these changes. Our programs must be able to

accommodate the diversity that will occur.

The recent passage in the U.S. Congress of the Americans with Disabilities

Act is significant legislation which will increase awareness of all Americans,

and especially Americans with disabilities, of their rights in society and their

increased participation in higher education. ADA also prohibits discrimination

on the basis of disability and applies to most employers, public

accommodations, and public services. State colleges and universities are

considered public services under the Act, and the definition of public

accommodation applies to places of education. Evaluation of accessibility of

facilities and transportation will need to occur, as enforcement will occur

through both the federal government, as well as private lawsuits.

As Rothstein commented in a recent Chronicle article concerned with

disability and higher education, "Failure to make mandated changes could

result in significant financial liability, costly litigation, loss of public image, and

most important, loss of the valuable contributions that disabled individuals can

make to any academic community".

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l began with Ernest Boyer, and so it is perhaps somewhat fitting that I close

with him. His contributions have been particularly important to higher

education in the U.S. In a recent speech at the University of Illinois, he

suggested that higher education begin to focus on those aspects which all of

us have in common. These commonalties are: the life cycle, the use of

symbolic language, an appreciation of aesthetics, the ability to recall the past

and anticipate the future, the establishment of institutions, our relationship to

nature, our participation in the consuming and producing cycle, and the

search for a sense of meaning and purpose in life. Persons with disabilities

have all these in common with their non disabled peers. Boyer's conclusion

regarding the obligation of higher education as "not only to celebrate diversity,

but also to define larger, more inspired goals, and in so doing serve as a

model for the nation and the world" applies to the inclusion of students with

disabilities to higher education.

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I want to suggest and explore some new options.

First, let me classify users and needs

TABLE 1

Sensory Physically Cognitively

Mainly output Mainly output and Both & other

access, control

TABLE 2

Sensory

Need Problems not solved

Text/Braille/Voice translation Universal reader

Ability to scan

Identification of objects

Place finding

Text editing Linking with sophisticated

word processing programs

(which are screen orientated)

Voice to vision translation Mainly technical problem, but

\_ needs better understanding of

user

Physical

Need

Text input Keyboards, head-pointers etc

still not optimal for many

users

Control Dito, joysticks, tracker

systems, etc need

development

Cognitive

Need

Translation Many problems not even

Access to meaning specified

information enhancement

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For the first group we have:

» Ascii to Braille conversion systems

Reading machines

Notetakers (Eureka Machines)

° Special programs, editors, print enlargers

For the deaf, we still are some way from voice to print conversion devices.

However, we might start thinking about electronic note-taking systems now

being used by court and Hansard writers. (Perhaps a trade could be made to

supply the class with notes for the price of training one student operator)

Physically Disabled

Requirements include communication devices (range required to suit

individual needs - but many problems still exist). Some devices have been

likened to an albatross around one's neck.

A basic problem for many is producing adequate output. Computers are a

boon sometimes, but must match needs and abilities.

Access to information is usually a hassle since mobility is usually restricted

and energy comes at a premium price.

Cognitive Disability

People with cognitive disabilities have been largely ignored by tertiary

institutions in this country till now. This overlooks the possibility that adults

so tagged can benefit from a attending a tertiary institute.

Lately however, some remarkable things have been happening to challenge

what we have traditionally believed to be the limits of those labelled

"intellectually handicapped".

There is also a rising population of "Regarding Henrys" the brain damaged

person who did function at high level before trauma. Modified diploma and

degree options are now being offered in some US universities.

Technology may be used to facilitate people with intellectual/cognitive

difficulties. I can but only give few hazy suggestions here:

° Simplified notes

Reduced reference material

Aide memoire programs

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Advantaging

To follow that up a bit further, I want to introduce a proposition and a new term

"Advantaging" - which l will define as "using technology in ways to give

students with a disability a positive advantage".

This alludes to achieving not just equality, but to finding ways in which

learning can be enhanced over that expected of run of the mill students by

smart use of technology. Ways this might be done include:

- Special access to libraries with PC modems

Access to special files prepared by lecturer or groups

Access for special tutor help

Possible artificial intelligence assistance to reduce material to

essential concept (we lecturers make a game of convolution)

Using special students for concept tryouts and curriculum

development (A quid pro quo use)

Improved notetaking technology

Bulletin boards for access to resources contributed by other

students

Although this may smack, to some of cheating, it is not giving access to

answers by compensating for the disadvantages faced by students with

disabilities.

What is often not appreciated is that while student average can dart to the

library between lectures, or jump in a car and go home for the period, a

student visually impaired may have to just wait patiently for the four or more

hours. Thus a major chunk of the forty or so hours per week spent hanging

around the campus is just dead time. Even when active, simple processes

take time.

Once, as a demonstration l put a student in a wheelchair and sent him to the

library across the road to find a book. That took him, 40 minutes!

What we need are smart ways to fill these gaps. What we should be on about

is enhancing performance, not just allowing for some to be possible.

We need to provide this, not only on campus, but at home where all the real

work is usually clone.

This could go to being adapted PCs and reading machines Librarians take

note, a Kurzweil Reading machine in the library is a great help, but visually

impaired students sometimes find this frustrating). But let’s not end our

consideration here. lf we can develop the technology of "advantaging" for

tertiary training, we should insist also that it be carried beyond that into the

eventual careers of our students.

Finally, while this is but a short harangue, l hope that it stimulates people to

start breaking out of the mere "catch up" mentality. While it is certain that, if

advantaging techniques are successful, student average will soon adopt

these too, why not go for it. Maybe students with disabilities can pioneer

further ways to stay ahead?

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TECHNOLOGY FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED PEOPLE

Bertil Smark-Nilsson

Pulse-Data International

Introduction

There are two major problems faced by visually impaired people in every day

life, be it recreation, education or vocational activities. I am referring to reading

and writing.

There are various solutions to these problems. However, the scope of this

paper is limited to the use of technology and I shall therefore, leave out the

more traditional ways and means of compensating for a visual loss in these

areas.

Using technology is often quite expensive. I regret to say that I shall not

present any magic solutions to the funding of equipment. That will be covered

by my fellow speakers in other sessions at this conference.

Reading

When it comes to printed handouts and textbooks, many options are available.

The good old audio recording technique may seem obsolete to many people

but it is still a method for reading much preferred by many visually impaired

people. One of the disadvantages of using tapes is that it is somewhat

complicated to have random access to the recorded material. Neither is it

possible to mark text or make notes in the margin - at least not easily. In the

days of the reel-to-reel tape recorders things were easier. It was possible to fit

them with counters which could be read tactually. Even relatively cheap

models were four-track machines which meant that one track on each side

could be used for remarks and indexing. They were also fairly easy to modify

in a way that allowed you to superimpose indexing tones on the recorded

channel without erasing what was there already. Cassette players are much

more difficult to modify because of the miniaturisation of electronic

components that has taken place.

However, for those visually impaired people who cannot read braille and who

do not have enough residual vision to read print using some kind of

equipment, tape recordings still play an important role.

Print

Most visually impaired people have some residual vision. With the help of

equipment such as closed-circuit television (CCTV) and magnifiers these

people are often able to use their vision for reading. Because of their size and

weight most CCTV systems pose some problems in the regular school

environment as they cannot easily be moved between the various classrooms.

Some partially sighted visually impaired people are able to read enlarged

print. Traditionally, large print has been produced either by means of a large

print typewriter or by photographically enlarging the printed text. With the

development of laser printers and personal computers the quality of large print

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can be improved and the production of it has become less complicated and

as a result of this, less costly.

Braille

Braille gives visually impaired people direct access to the printed word.

However, only a minority of the visually impaired population are able to read

braille. It has been estimated that about one thousand people in Australia

read braille on a regular basis. However, it is reasonable to assume that the

average age of the visually impaired person who reads braille is much lower

than that of the visually impaired population as a whole. Thus, relatively

speaking, a comparatively large number of visually impaired people in

education can be expected to be braille users. \_

Until recently, braille production has been a time-consuming and costly affair.

However, new computerised methods have reduced the costs. With the

introduction of personal computers the incentive was there to develop braille

embossers to be used in conjunction with them.

A braille character takes about five times the space of a print character. In

addition, thicker paper has to be used. This means that braille material is

extremely bulky compared to print. During the last few years, equipment has

been developed which produces braille on a refreshable display one line in

length. The material is stored either on computer disks or on computer tapes.

Computer readable media

More and more, computers are being used in the production of print material.

Both at home and in the workplace we rely to an increasing extent on word

processors and database programs to provide printed material. Phone-up

databases are becoming more and more common.

There are various ways in which visually impaired people are able to access

material stored in computer readable form. For those who read neither print

nor braille a number of speech synthesisers are available which will read out

what is printed on the computer screen. Naturally, the quality is not such as to

offer an enjoyable rendering of Shakespeare but it is sufficiently good to allow

easy access to the material with complete accuracy.

For people with residual vision there are various ways of making text appear

in large print on computer screens. This can be achieved either by using

special software or by using specially designed peripherals.

For braille readers there are a number of options. Dedicated braille computer

displays give the braille reader access to the computer screen. Even if printed

material is available on paper only, there are ways of automatically converting

it into computer readable format.

Optical character recognition devices have been around for some time.

However, the less expensive models have, until recently, been very limited

both with regard to print quality but also with regard to the number of type fonts

that they can read. There have been machines available which could handle

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inferior print quality as well as a large number of type fonts but the price of

those has been in excess of $50,000.

Luckily, things are beginning to happen in the OCR area. We are now

witnessing what could be described as the OCR boom. For less than $4,000

equipment is available which is well on its way to equalling the expensive

machines referred to above. Most of these devices are designed to work with

personal computers - mostly IBM compatibles.

Reading machines

Since the beginning of this century attempts have been made to design a

reading machine for visually impaired people. There have been quite a few

prototypes but, only two devices have actually reached the production stage.

The Optacon, converts printed images into tactile ones. The print is scanned

with a hand-held camera in the user‘s right hand. The print appears as a

tactile image letter by letter under the user‘s left index finger. The reading

speed varies from individual to individual. Proficient users have attained a

reading speed of 80/100 words/minute. A good braille reader will be able to

read three times as fast. However, the Optacon does give direct and

immediate access to print.

The second reading machine that I would like to mention is the Kurzweil

personal Reader (KPR). This device converts the printed text into spoken

words. It is a very versatile machine which speaks six languages. It also has

the facility to produce output in ASCII code which is the code that is

understood by computers.

Writing - Producing print

The traditional way for visually impaired people to produce material in print is

to use an ordinary typewriter. Most visually impaired people have the ability to

learn to use an ordinary QWERTY keyboard. More and more visually

impaired people now use ordinary computers with word processing software

to produce printed material. By using special peripherals the operator can be

completely in control of the computer. Even when using this method it is

possible to obtain a hardcopy in braille if desired.

Computer Access

Computers can offer solutions to many problems faced by visually impaired

people. They will allow access to information to an extent which, fifteen years

ago, would have been regarded as science fiction. Databases, news,

encyclopaedias, dictionaries, shopping and banking are only a few examples

of what computers allow visually impaired people to carry out independently.

However, there is a complication. All output from computers is visual. To be

able to perform all these wonderful things means that one has to be able to

read a computer screen. This is, undoubtedly, a considerable problem but,

luckily, one that can be overcome.

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There are many peripherals available which will give visually impaired people

access to a computer screen. It is important to keep in mind that these are

designed to work with a particular computer system.

In most cases a peripheral consists of two components - a piece of equipment,

either a braille display or a speech synthesiser. These are referred to as

hardware. In order for them to work properly they need to be controlled by a

computer program software. In most cases the software will determine with

which computer system the hardware will operate.

There are many computer systems on the market of which the two most

common are those compatible with either IBM or Apple. There is plenty of

software available for both systems. There are also many peripherals

available for visually impaired people which will work with either or both

systems.

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DISABILITY POLICY FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS

Jeff Jones

Equal Opportunity Unit, University of South Australia

First Thoughts On A Disability Policy

In 1990 I was approached by the Equal Opportunity Unit of the South

Australian Institute of Technology who were looking for someone to write a

Disability Policy. I was advised immediately by my current employer, Jeff

Heath, Executive Director of Disabled People’s International in Adelaide, to

avoid this job at all costs. “Creating policy", he said, “is like doing housework”

- if it’s not done properly everyone complains and when it is done no-one

notices". And in a way, of course, he was right. No-one does notice policy

unless it’s done wrong and that’s probably the way it should be. If a policy,

say a disability policy for students at a tertiary institution, is functioning

effectively it becomes part of the operating mechanism. As a simple example

consider the problem faced by a sight impaired science student who is unable

to access computer programs without the aid of a voice card. Policy, if

properly developed, should provide this student with a series of options. It

should also empower this student in this classic situation which, historically,

has rendered people with disabilities powerless. Empowerment is what a

disability policy should be all about. This leads us to the first problem in policy

development. The only way to empower one group of people is to reduce the

power of another group. In the case of the tertiary institution the group that

must have their power reduced is that body of men and women who run the

institution, namely academics and administrators. This is a group which has

always wielded a great deal of power and divesting them of some of it is no

easy matter - but more about how to do that later.

Policy Development In The University Of South Australia

At the University of South Australia policy development and implementation

for people with disabilities is the responsibility of the Equal Opportunity Unit of

the university. The South Australian Equal Opportunity Act prohibits, among

other things, discrimination in education and employment on the grounds of

impairment and it is the EO Unit's role to police this legislation. After writing

the SAIT Disability Policy on a consultative basis I was eventually employed

as a Project Officer with the EO Unit and one of my tasks was to oversee and

implement the new policy. This took two forms - there are ongoing procedures

in the policy which require attention at regular intervals, such as inspection of

new buildings on campus or provision of special equipment. More

challenging are the one-oft problems that arise with a specific problem. As

many of you probably know these problems can be time consuming and

difficult to solve unless policy is in place to provide strategies and guidelines.

Policy as a solution to welfare also allows disability issues to be taken out of

the student counselling or welfare services areas of the university. In the past,

services for students with disabilities have largely been provided by way of

counselling thus reinforcing the perception that students with disabilities have

problems that are personal or psychological rather than political or structural

in nature.

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There is no doubt that counselling services at tertiary institutions around the

country have made gallant attempts to deal with individual problems for

students with disabilities but denial of fieldwork placement to a student with a

disability on the basis of his or her disability is not a counselling matter - rather

it is a denial of human rights and demands a political and legal solution. A

political solution, of course is easier to apply where policy is in existence.

The Policy

The University of SA has a set format for policy preparation. A policy

document will begin with a statement from the Vice-Chancellor outlining the

commitment of the institution to the objectives and thoughts contained within.

The preamble will follow on the next page - this is a basic motherhood

statement and will included references to the obligations of the university

under the relevant legislation. On the following page there is a list of policy

statements - these provide the framework tor the procedural provisions in the

body of the document. The policy statements refer broadly to learning and the

built environment, allocation of resources for services, staff development and

the role of the EO unit in implementation of the policy.

Going Through The Policy

Let‘s now examine the policy closely to see what it says and how it says it.

Procedural issues make up the bulk of the document. Under the policy

heading of Access a series of strategies has been compiled - they refer to

inspection of plans for new buildings, consultation by relevant groups during

the planning process for new buildings, car-parking and design standards

among other things.

Equity and Entry considerations are dealt with early in the policy because they

are important preliminary matters to resolve before attempting to develop

outreach programs. By providing alternative entry requirements for people

with disabilities who have been unable to qualify for entry to university in the

normal ways, it is possible to accommodate individuals who have the ability to

study at tertiary level but who, because of a disability have been unable to

complete secondary schooling or accumulate the qualifications accepted by

the university. As Power and Stephens have observed, unless these flexible

entry provisions are in place, any attempt at outreach, which is discussed later

in the policy will be a dismal failure.

This is not to say that merely be claiming a disability an individual can expect

to take his or her place in a chosen university course without further ado. At

the University of SA, a Panel of Review will have responsibility for determining

eligibility for alternative entry to the university. We'll learn how the panel of

review operates later.

Procedures for general support are based on a general thrust to create an

environment which allows students with disabilities to progress through

courses on an equitable basis. Strategies to achieve this involve EO Unit

input for providing services for individual students, purchase of special

equipment and liaison with library staff.

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Jeff Jones

Facilitation of the policy will initially be the responsibility of the EO Unit. By

interacting with Academic Administrative Officers and the Student Union on

matters related to people with disabilities the EO Unit will be able to foster

positive and informed attitudes among the university community towards

people with disabilities. As this process gets under way the role of the EO Unit

will decline so that each section of the university can assume its own place in

facilitation.

Staff Development will be part of the facilitation procedure and will come from

programs designed to improve skills in relation to meeting the education

needs of students with disabilities.

Well so far this policy has been sailing along with little or no resistance. We

now come to the thorny issue of Curriculum Adaption an area of the greatest

importance to students with disabilities but also an area considered sacred in

the world of tertiary education and traditionally controlled by academics. The

University of SA Policy stipulates that where necessary the university will

adopt teaching methods and course work requirements in individual courses

to suit the needs of each student with a disability. This is a broad undertaking

and is qualified by the following statement which says that this will only occur

where it is possible to avoid compromising academic standards or the

essential nature of courses. There is also reference to safety issues and as

per the legislation the university has created systems for assessing the

potential for dangerous situations and taking appropriate action. This will be a

task for the Safety Committee of the university. Given a stated commitment to

disability issues and equity by the university there nevertheless appears to be

no way around this problem of academic standards - indeed there is no point

in looking for a way around - universities are institutions dedicated to higher

learning and to undermine this in any way would be quite wrong. However,

the notion of "curriculum adaption", although the very words tend to startle the

academics, represents a genuine advance in the whole area of education for

people with disabilities. Ftather than posing a threat to academic standards,

curriculum adaption should allow people with disabilities to broaden the

concept of merit and performance in tertiary education.

An important procedural step in this policy calls on the university to encourage

students or applicant students with disabilities to indicate ways in which

assessment requirements or conditions might be tailored to take account of

specific impairments. Staff are also encouraged to redesign field work or

practical work components of unit assessment requirements to take into

account the capacities of students with disabilities provided that the skills and

knowledge being tested are not compromised.

Distance Education also features in the area of Curriculum adaption. At the

University of SA the DEC in conjunction with the EO Unit will develop an

action plan to extend services to people with disabilities.

Planning for students with disabilities is also addressed in the policy. A major

in this area is the establishment of a data base of students with disabilities in

order to facilitate planning for improved services. Students will be

encouraged to make the university aware of their disability in order to gain

access to support.

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This issue of disclosure is a difficult one for many people with disabilities. The

many people living with the so called 'invisible' disabilities often feel tempted

to take advantage of the false sense of security this invisibility brings. In my

own case, for example, disclosure of disability is practically complete without

me saying anything. All l really have to do is put a label on my disability for

the purposes of statistical collection. However, for people who have a hidden

disability or who are in the habit of not disclosing their disability, "coming out",

can be a traumatic experience. My response to this is simply to say that a

disability is nothing to be ashamed of. lf it is OK to be pregnant, Aboriginal,

gay or to come from a multi-cultural background then my question is why is it

not OK to be disabled?

To discourage disclosure, even to allow it in my view is counter productive - it

perpetuates the myth that there is something inherently wrong with being

disabled - that it is in some way socially unacceptable. Until people with

disabilities themselves confront this issue of disclosure and resolve it in a

positive even aggressive fashion then the fight for rights for people with

disabilities will never be won.

Role Of The Equal Opportunity Unit In Policy Implementation

The role of the EO Unit in policy implementation generally at the University of

SA is pivotal. In the case of this, policy it is essential. By the terms of the

disability policy the EO Unit assumes specific responsibility for disability

issues at the university. It will liaise with community support organisations for

disabled groups and all other sections of the university with relevant expertise.

Workshops and development programs will be the responsibility of the EO

Unit which will also act as a mediator on disability issues in the university and

assist in the process of conflict resolution. .

Panel Of Review

The Panel of Review, which is convened when needed by the EO Unit will

advise on admission to university courses. The panel will consist of the EO

Officer, Registrar and course co-ordinator, and will have the authority to seek

advice from relevant groups inside and outside the university. As the need

arises the Panel will meet with the applicant, who may be accompanied by an

advocate in order that the applicant can demonstrate to the Panel the need for

varying the entry provisions based on the natures and extent of the disability.

Committee Structure

The Disability Policy also includes provision for committee structure to advise

all sectors of the university on matters relating to disability. At the University of

SA there will be a Disability Advisory Committee which will advise the EO Unit

on all matters concerning equal opportunity for students with disabilities. This

committee will also monitor the development and implementation of the Policy

and will be represented at sub-committee level by separate campus reference

groups.

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Jeff Jones

This has particular relevance for the University of SA which is spread over five

metropolitan campuses with another in Whyalla. The Disability Advisory

Committee will be composed of student representatives, academics, and

general staff who have an understanding of and commitment to disability

issues. It goes without saying that as many people with disabilities as

possible will be included on this committee.

Budget

Well obviously we have got quite a comprehensive piece of work here. We

have provision for purchase of specialised equipment, re-deployment of staff

and a fairly broad allocation of general resources within the university. What

we do not have is money - in other words we haven't got anything unless we

include a Budget Provision in our policy as a specific procedural device. Item

20 of this disability policy says "there shall be a special budget line for the

implementation of this policy". This is followed by a list of strategies calling on

the EO Officer, in consultation with the Campus reference groups to prepare a

budget submission - the EO Officer also assumes responsibility for

administering the budget. This problem of budget allocation brings us back to

the question of empowerment. It is basically impossible to implement many of

the provisions in this policy unless a budget line is included and accepted by

the university decision makers. When a budget exists it becomes a simple

matter to negotiate services and support for students with disabilities with

academics and administrators who would otherwise have to make allowances

from their own resources for equipment, or allocation of staff.

Conclusion

Process of circulating the document through the university community for

comment and final approval.

This is an important final detail in policy preparation - It alerts the university

community to the impending arrival of the policy and allows the person writing

the policy to take on board any last minute additions or alterations.

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Pathways Post-Secondary Education for Students with Disabilities

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POLICIES, PRACTICES AND PARADOXES:

DISABILITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Barrie 0'Connor 1

Queens/and University of Technology

If the view is accepted that people with disabilities have right of access to all

facets of life in the higher education community, there are many attitudes, polices

and practices that need to be challenged to ensure that appropriate study and

employment opportunities are translated into reality. This paper canvasses a

range of philosophical and practical issues concerning such access goals, and

examines seven paradoxes (in/distinguishability, in/discretion, in/flexibility,

in/visibility, in/capacity, in/dependence and in/dignity) that need to be

acknowledged and resolved by those who would sensitively promote increased

and appropriate access for people with disabilities in higher education.

We have seen in recent years the emergence of a socio-political climate in

which the social justice agenda has progressed from mere rhetoric to a more

intense, though somewhat pragmatic series of interventions on behalf of a

wide range of hitherto dispossessed, under-represented, non-powerful,

undervalued and misunderstood groups in our society. Access to higher

education for people with disabilities is but one such issue attracting the

spotlight in the Australian Government's A Fair Chance for All initiatives

(Department of Employment, Education and Training [DEET], 1990). This

paper addresses some assumptions underlying the concept of disability,

reviews a range of policies and practices that have been adopted in higher

education in recent years and examines several paradoxes that seem to

surround such practices. It also suggests future challenges to be met if our

quest for improved opportunities and outcomes for students and graduates

with disabilities is to become a reality.

Disabilities Theories And Policy

The development and implementation of appropriate equity policies provide

an important platform for change at national, state and institutional levels. One

imperative, to increase the participation rates in higher education for people

with disabilities, is invoking its own particular challenges as we seek to define,

identify and monitor such students. While we can debate the content of the

policies, we must also critically examine the underlying assumptions that

determines them. Several disability theories are outlined to assist in this task.

Although we professionally make use of the term "disability" to describe the

target group whose interests we seek to support-and often take for granted

such a practice so long as we put "people first," there are those who argue

from a sociological perspective that the term has multiple meanings which can

lead to limiting outcomes for those so labelled. Oliver (1986, p. 6) reported

several views of disability, two of which are described here. The first was

referred to as a "personal tragedy theory" of disability, in which the people so

described cannot or do not participate fully in society because of their physical

or psychological limitations. Such a view in part is reinforced by the charitable

1 While my thoughts have been greatly stimulated by the diverse and challenging ideas of

colleagues on the QUT Access for People with Disabilities and the Higher Education Disability

Network (Qld), I take responsibility for the views expressed herein, as these do not necessarily

reflect the position of those groups.

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response to those "less fortunate," that is still promoted by some disability

organisations, and indirectly by governments that subsidise funds raised in

this manner. This is very much an individual perspective on disability which

places ownership of the condition upon the person.

The second view was labelled a "social oppression theory," explained not in

terms of people's limitations but in terms of "social restrictions imposed upon

them by society." One example of oppression may be seen in the low levels of

government funding for disability initiatives associated with medical aids, and

the decisions made about which will be supplied free, subsidised or excluded

from aid.-Oliver (1986) noted: "That disability continues to be medicalised is

testament both to the power of the medical profession and the continuing

need of the State to restrict access to the disability category" (p. 12).

Reformists who accept this explanation, regard society and its institutions as

having a responsibility to remove the barriers typically found in attitudes,

behaviours and the built environment that maintain the oppression against

those viewed as disabled.

More recently, Fulcher (1989) described four main discourses on disability

based on medical, charity, lay and rights orientations, as a basis to developing

her own theory of disability. She argued that the medical version, in which

disability is seen to arise from impairment-described by Harris (1971) as a

physiological loss, or defective body part or mechanism-very much implies a

deficit owned by the individual. This conception, she continued, also has the

added weight of presumed scientific status and neutrality, thus depoliticising

disability. It becomes a scientific entity that appears difficult to challenge,

rather than a socio-political one that is more amenable to political debate.

Finally, she argued that it professionalises disability, in that medical

practitioners have the social power to make the judgment that someone has

such a condition.

Associated with the medical view of disability is a traditional view that the

practitioner knows best, thus conflicting with a growing discourse on

consumerism which uses the language of client's rights, and addresses what

they know they want rather than what others say they need. Of course, other

disciplines such as education, social work and psychology may also use

similar professional powers to impact on the lives of those known to "suffer"

disability.

Fulcher (1989, p. 28) highlighted the individualistic and victim blaming stance

of the medical discourse on disability:

The individualism of medical concepts provides a context for

developing other individualistic concepts relating to disability: accident-

prone, compensation neurosis, ‘Mediterranean back'. These concepts

flourish despite evidence that impairment is socially created and

socially distributed. A medical approach encourages a discourse of

person blame. Responsibility is assigned to the victim.

Such a position reinforces the view that the label "disability" applies only to

some people in the community, that somehow they have singled out for some

kind of special treatment. This process is also seen by some as a mechanism

for social control, "based on the need to render harmless more and more

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BAHMAYS Post-Secondary Education for Students with Disabilities Barrie O’Connor

potential disruptives" as Oliver and Manning (1985-cited Oliver, 1986, p. 14)

have indicated. Oliver (1986, p, 16) further argued that "personal tragedy

theory has served to individualise the problems of disability and hence to

leave social and economic structures untouched." He indicated that the

emerging social oppression theory offers the opportunity to take action on

social attitudes and structures that limit people with disabilities in the

community.

Yet, we have all had some personal experience with taking on the 'disabled

person" role, if even during times of temporary illness. For example, the

person admitted to hospital the evening before minor elective surgery, is

usually required to change into pyjamas, go to bed and begin to play the role

of the "sick person" even through the real pain is still 12 hours away! In

another situation, someone who has suffered symptoms with an unknown

cause for several months is usually relieved when a name can be given to the

condition. I would suggest that, in part, the naming process helps clarify the

appropriate role to be played in relation to that condition. Certainly, the

treatment process can be more clearly defined on the basis of an accurate

diagnosis. The first example suggests that specific roles are imposed by

institutions; the latter, that we ourselves seek the appropriate role.

The term, disability, popularly implies a generalised deficit model of the

human organism; disabling characteristics are emphasised and generalised

to all facets of human functioning. Those with the "disabled" tag are seen quite

differently from those without it. Such a view dichotomises what is essentially

a continuous, although multi-faceted entity within any human organism-

ability. Whilst I argue that ability and disability should be viewed along a

continuum, with everyone's functioning in different areas variously placed

along it, there are those whose physical features or behaviours trip a socially

contrived circuit-breaker that leads them to be disconnected from the

mainstream ability pole, and switched into the disability end of the continuum.

The pervasiveness of this dichotomised view of the human organism has to be

addressed and the faulty circuit-breaker removed. A key goal in higher

education ought to be the development of a physical and social environment

in which people with disabilities who are capable of successfully completing

studies, are accepted as valued, regular members of the campus community.

increasing tolerance needs to be generated for a wider range of human

performance differences that can be accommodated within the tradition of

higher education institutions pursuing academic excellence. The central issue

is the valuing of diversity and the translation of that value into informed

administrative and educational practices. While such ideals may be desirable,

their mere statement does not provide the pathways to their fulfilment.

How then do we pursue goals of increased inclusion? What standards should

we adopt to guard against any present and past strategies which reinforce

such deficit-orientated, victim-blaming, and helped-dependent views of our

targeted client group.

These issues are addressed through reference to seven paradoxes that

remind us that the pathways are not always clear and direct. We need to be

vigilant in our policy development and practices to ensure that they reflect

positive, proactive views of an enabling process that counters the oppression

of the disabling process.

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The Seven Paradoxes

I was drawn to this explanatory framework by repeated contradictory

experiences in the field of disability, of "things seeming not to be as they at first

appeared." Such discrepancies have sufficiently unsettled me to attempt an

explanation, ranging from polarised viewpoints to subtle contradictions, which

I have labelled loosely as paradoxes. These are tagged as polar opposites in

the headings, for brevity. The ideals continue to be restated, but attention is

also paid to strategies directed to such goals.

1. In/distinguishability

I begin with this concept as it typifies the continuity and variability in the

human condition that is central to my argument. l would argue that, for

students and staff with disabilities to enjoy greater inclusion in higher

education, there needs to be a reconstruing of the established membership

norm of that community. In time, there should no longer be cause for remark

that the institution now employs someone who is deaf, or recently enrolled

someone who is deaf-blind.

Herein lies the distinguishability paradox. While I suggest there should be

wider tolerance for a new norm that does not emphasise the artificial and

socially-imposed dichotomy between disabled and able-bodied, others may

wish to persuade me that such an ideal will be reached, indeed even

accelerated if, in the short term, we use strategies which do indeed highlight

and make distinguishable the differences by creating special admission

targets, special services, special positions and special funds to meet special

needs. Certainly, social justice principles assert the value of positive

discrimination to overcome a history of under-representation, a need for equal

outcomes rather than just equality of opportunity. As Fisher (1985, p. 3)

pointed out, the "fair game" metaphor of equal opportunity in which players

start from the same position and play to the same rules cannot apply in real

life, since the game does not have a starting point; it is ongoing. In contrast,

the means to create equality of outcomes are seen to justify the ends,

although there are potential disadvantages to be managed. For example,

there is the possibility of backlash both from the consumers whose interests

we seek to promote, and from other campus members who resent such

overcompensation. There is also the danger that the "specialness" of the

responses becomes so institutionalised that the ability-disability dichotomy

remains in place.

Another illustration supports the nature of this paradox, insofar as it applies to

the issue of counting numbers to set an accurate baseline for doubling student

intakes by 1995 (DEET, 1990). This requirement raises several important

issues for the students and the institution. Who should be deemed disabled

and what outcomes can be expected from the exercise?

DEET recognised the difficulties in defining and counting this population, and

left it to institutions to develop their own strategies.

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The Queensland University of Technology (1991a) Equity Plan attempted an

operational definition:

Students with disabilities are those for whom special consideration or

services are required for them to participate successfully in the

university.

There are many people enrolled at universities with a wide range of

disabilities - permanent or temporary, visible or invisible - that do not

impact significantly on their studies or require special consideration or

support. While not suggesting that such disabilities may be insignificant

to other aspects of these students' lives, it is important that such

students are not included in the "disability count" merely to help boost

the institution's recruitment target.

This policy acknowledged the institution's need to know based on its

responsibility to serve. Again, the paradox suggests that a student with

disabilities has a duty to disclose his or her distinguishable differences, in

order to obtain those considerations and services which should permit the

difference to blend into the rich diversity of people represented and valued in

the institution.

But the paradox goes even further. If the goal is to embed "special" services

within a mainstream response so that these are seen as part of the institution's

regular service provisions, then such acceptance negates part of the

operational definition of a student with disabilities-someone needing a

special service. If the service is no longer special, then the student should no

longer be counted for DEET purposes. Clearly, the social goal of increasing

access to a distinguishable group, is at odds with the social goal of increasing

inclusion within mainstream institutional life since the first requires

maintenance of disability-ability dichotomy, and the second actively

discourages it. This dilemma requires very close attention from policy makers

at government and institutional levels. I believe there needs to be further

refinement to processes undertaken to increase access for this group, and

those used to provide ongoing support, so that the dichotomy in not

perpetuated. This too is difficult, because we have an interest in the target

group not only at the point of initial access, but also throughout their academic

career to ensure that access to study translates into access to an award and to

postgraduate employment. Some may regard this problem as cost of

providing social justice, but l believe some refinements are possible through

closer investigation.

The final example illustrates a somewhat different view of the paradox. A

colleague (L. Chenoweth, personal communication, November 11, 1991)

recently observed that quite a number of students with disabilities had applied

for admission to a course on human services in which she taught. She

learned that many had applied because the course enjoyed a strong

reputation for supporting students with disabilities or that they thought a

course on human services would fit in well with their experience of disability.

She expressed concern that some people may be influenced by their image of

themselves as disabled and thus restrict their choice of courses, either on the

basis of available support or on the basis of personally knowing the field,

rather than making judgments based on other important personal attributes

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that they possessed. Such a view is also supported by Hartman (1989). The

paradox suggests that some who have had a long, lived experience with

disability, may be unable to distinguish its effect on the self from that of other

life-shaping experiences. Such issues invite further research.

2. In/discretion

This paradox relates to the judgment that students have to make about

whether or not, when, and to whom they should disclose information about

special needs relating to their study programs. Using the typical connotations

for discretion and indiscretion, one could argue that discretion is required in

divulging information on a need-to-know basis, and indiscretion may well be

the explanation for one whose late- or non-disclosure in a non-threatening

environment creates added study burdens and possible course failure.

The issue of disclosure is obviously an important one for both parties and

requires sensitive initiatives from the enrolling institution as well as a

responsible and assertive stance from the student. Clearly, people with

disabilities are not obliged to disclose information if they feel it may be

misused or if the condition has no bearing on the successful completion of

their studies. However, they must also take responsibility for the

consequences of non-disclosure or late notification should problems emerge

that might have been avoided earlier.

Institutions need to make clear their need for, and ultimate use of, such data.

Power and Stephens (1990) noted the importance of providing positive

reasons for such disclosure, for example, indicating that some support

services may need to be arranged well in advance of enrolment, such as

developing non-print resources and hiring interpreters which typically need

considerable lead time. And of course, data is now also required as evidence

to DEET that institutional equity objectives are being met.

institutions can encourage disclosure, where appropriate, at different stages in

the process: (a) well in advance of formal application so that students' interest

and potential for success can be explored through informal contact with key

people such as counsellors, disability resource officers or course

coordinators; (b) upon application for admission at which time special

consideration might also be nominated; (c) at enrolment or during orientation

week on appropriate notification forms; or (d) once enrolled, at any time during

the year when disabling circumstances arise.

Candidates need to be clearly advised of guarantees about the use to which

this information can be put. For example, any data base on disabling

conditions and associated service requirements should remain confidential

and separate from the student's academic history. Disability information

collected on the enrolment form can be coded for restricted data base

access-to counsellors and disability resource officers. Alternatively, a brief

question on the enrolment form about student need for support services

arising from a disabling condition can allow the institution to monitor the

adequacy of such services at a later time. Students should be advised that

such was the purpose of the exercise. A separate Assistance Request form

can be developed to collect more detailed information about required support

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services, and returned to the appropriate office such as counselling, student

services, disability resource officer, or equity section for follow-up.

In accepting the responsibility to provide appropriate services, institutions

have the right to request disclosure of relevant information and can further

remind students when the offer of a place is made. For example, at

Queensland University of Technology, the offer letter stipulates that admission

is predicated on the assumption that appropriate disclosures have been

made. Although many pass through our institutions without drawing attention

to disabilities which have little impact on their day to day study lives, the

disclosure by those whose disabilities do significantly affect their work should

lead to improved support levels, which in turn should lead to a wider view of

what is considered the norm.

3. In/flexibility

The third paradox relates to inflexible views and practices concerning

disability imposed upon a variable and changing learning environment.

Catering for individual differences has long been a cherished educational

goal, and many practitioners across the kindergarten-higher education

spectrum have demonstrated effective pedagogical practices that meet this

end. But some educators find it difficult to extend the notion of individual

differences to those with disabilities, perhaps fearing that such people are

already too different and may become too individual if given the chance! And

what would that do to the normal curve when totting up marks at the end of

semester?

Advances both in technological resources and in our understanding of the

learning process should be leading tertiary educators to provide more

enlightened teaching and learning experiences for students. Variation in

preferred learning styles (Jacobs & Fuhrmann, 1984) and teaching styles

(Joyce & Weil, 1986) can be augmented by a wide range of electronic

resources, including those designed for students with disabilities (Lepage,

1991), as well as by different arrangements of student groups that recognise

the value of such strategies as autonomous learning, small group inductive

strategies, and the more traditional large group lectures enhanced with

interactive processes and audiovisual technology. In spite of such exciting

developments that promote greater flexibility in teaching and learning, access

to the curriculum is still one area providing frustration for students with

disabilities.

Problems arise, for example, with inflexible administrative and lecturer

attitudes, lack of appropriate equipment, lack of adequate support services

and lack of adequate time as many students will assert. Several illustrations

highlight these concerns.

- Ellie suffers considerably from muscular fatigue and finds it difficult to

keep up with note taking during class and approached her tutors for

permission to tape record their classes. They refused, using the excuse it was

against university policy-although none existed in this area.

° Jill requires large print resources and has negotiated unsuccessfully for

the past four months with the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service to gain

access to a laptop computer.

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° Ken is legally blind and needs an amanuensis each semester to

complete his commerce examinations. His faculty is consistently late in

arranging this support person who is different each semester, and Ken enters

the examination without prior opportunities to meet and discuss amanuensis

techniques with his new helper. His complaints to faculty get him off-side with

the Dean.

» Trousselot (1990, Section 5.2.1) reported the comment of a student who

had swapped courses because the lecturer "refused to give me copies of the

material he used on the overhead projector. l felt I would not do battle with that

this year, but sort it out next year."

° Graham is blind and waits two weeks after each lecture to have read

onto tape the case study print resources handed out in class. He says he

accepts the fact that he can only work for a pass grade because there is no

time to be chasing higher grades.

Such stories are not uncommon and highlight the struggle and compromise

that many face daily. It is their norm. Relentless efforts through advocacy and

education are needed to change the institutional ethos that creates it.

Many people in the institution who dismiss such concerns, arguing these

students are lucky or privileged to be there, merely reinforce the personal

tragedy theory described earlier. That some students have come to accept as

normal those circumstances that preclude their performance at usually no

better than a pass grade, is a devastating indictment of a system that tolerates

blatant forms of oppression.

Once again, there ls a need to clarify the rights and responsibilities of

institutional officers and students. Students with disabilities have the right to

request reasonable accommodation in the learning environment so that they

have the opportunity to succeed in circumstances that neither unduly

disadvantages nor advantages them in relation to their peers. Indeed, many

requests for accommodation may well benefit other students as well. Several

examples are listed:

a. seeking agreement that someone unable to sit for long periods is able

to stand and move about the room or lie down for a short time

b. seeking agreement to tape record lectures

c. asking that the lecturer provides time for copying an OHT, free from

ongoing discussion, or that printed copies of the OHTs are distributed

d. asking for a printed or disk copy of the lecture notes, the latter being

accessed through voice synthesisers

e. seeking greater flexibility in assignment deadlines, particularly given

exacerbation of time management problems which Newsome (1975)

pointed out had emerged with semesterisation of courses.

In turn, staff have the right to request responsible student behaviour in regard

to these accommodations, particularly audiotape or disk copies of lecture

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material, to prevent unscrupulous use by others. Plagiarism and intellectual

property rights are two important concerns that need to be addressed. There

may also be occasions when lecturers preclude audiotaping, for example, in

sessions dealing with confidential information which they do not want taken

from the classroom.

Another example of inflexibility in higher education is often found in the

assessment variations offered to students with disabilities. Although we may

have moved along the road somewhat in providing alternative options, there

is need for greater clarity surrounding the appropriateness of such options.

One institution which introduced an alternative assessment policy for students

with temporary and permanent disability, then had to face such questions as:

"But when a student broke an arm, we used to defer the exam until the

end of next semester! Do we really have to find a writer now and let

them do it at the same time as the other students? lt's going to be

expensive. Everyone will get on the bandwagon!"

"But we have always given them an extra ten minutes every hour! Why

would they want any more? Anyhow, we can only fit that length of

extension into our exam time-table."

As no doubt has occurred in other institutions, an assessment policy for

students with disabilities has been adopted by QUT which acknowledges a

student's right to negotiate with lecturers about suitable assessment strategies

consistent with a commitment to academic excellence and equality of

opportunity. This information is published both in the University annual

handbook, as well as in the guide booklet for students with disabilities (QUT,

in press).

But some confusion persists over the suitability of adjustments. For example,

one blind student answered a 3-hour examination on audiotape, which the

lecturer asked to be transcribed prior to marking. When confronted by a 96-

page typed transcription, the lecturer expressed grave concern about the

fairness of the adjustment. In response, it could be argued that oral answers

are typically "padded out" because of the redundancies so common in oral

language and because such a candidate is unable with ease to review and

refine the flow of language regularly during the examination period. While

typed material can provide a halo effect, the apparent disorganisation of the

unrefined transcript can also blunt the marker's enthusiasm for delivering a

fair grade.

The bulk of research effort emanating from the United States has focused on

the reliability and validity of students with disabilities taking standardised tests

that are typically used for screening applicants to higher education courses

(Benderson, 1988; Laing & Farmer, 1984; Ragosta, 1987; Ragosta 81 Kaplan,

1986; Rock, Bennett 81 Kaplan, 1985; Solomon, 1982). The literature has not

provided a clear guide to valid and reliable alternative forms of non-

standardised assessment typically used by lecturers in their courses. The

Higher Education and the Handicapped (HEATH) Resource Centre in

Washington DC has published guidelines for measuring student progress in

the classroom (Hartman & Redden, 1985). It assembled useful information for

instructors in a fact sheet format, outlining considerations that should be made

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for timing, proctoring and adapting examinations to the needs of students with

disabilities. Solomon (1982) reported specifically on examination condition

adaptations for visually impaired students through the use of braille, large

print format and audiotapes. For the SKILL organisation in the United

Kingdom (National Bureau for Students with Disabilities), Simmons (undated)

compiled an information booklet on examination arrangements for students

with disabilities, including advice on policy development. No empirical

evidence could be found in these reports to support the advice proffered.

Although time limits for examinations are considered open to student and

lecturer negotiation, such negotiation does not necessarily lead to satisfactory

outcomes. Ensuring that appropriate examination conditions are established

depends on the vagaries of such factors as student ability to articulate needs

clearly and assertively (B. Bishop, personal communication, April 1990),

lecturer sensitivity and willingness to meet special needs, and lecturer

understanding of valid and reliable alternative assessment strategies.

A small research project 2 is currently being undertaken, investigating the

realities of alternative assessment provisions for several students, by

videotaping entire examination sessions held in separate rooms. We seek to

identify through these case studies the realities which each student faces and

to examine the appropriateness of the allowances made.

4. In/visibility

This paradox suggests that those who look disabled indeed may not be, and

those who do not appear disabled, may well be; in short, it is difficult to make

accurate distinctions, particularly based on lay understanding and learned

prejudice. There is a real concern that, as visible signs of disability are clearly

apparent, there is perhaps greater potential for institutional response than in

cases of hidden disability.

While we have used the term disability to describe functional variations in

human performance arising from the limitations of impairment, its adequacy

must be questioned in circumstances where it is wrongly applied to false data

and yet not applied to true data. For example, there is a general assumption

in the community that those who look, sound and behave differently are

probably intellectually disabled because certain physical performance

characteristics are often associated with the stigmata of intellectual disability.

In contrast, intact, but hidden intellectual capacities are not readily

distinguishable from the more obvious signs of the physical disability that may

be displayed by those with cerebral palsy or other forms of severe physical

impairment that particularly affects speech. The problem here relates to

people's misunderstanding that, because one aspect of functioning is

affected, all others will be as well. Thus the term disability is generalised to

falsely assumed data.

In the case of disability data being misinterpreted as some other condition,

there are many examples of confusion surrounding the slurred speech

deriving from cerebral palsy or stroke and that of drunkenness; the person

having an epileptic seizure dragged from the gutter and imprisoned for

2 The researchers are B.A. O'Connor, J.M. Ballantyne and P.Pelusi.

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drunkenness, and the deaf/mute treated as intellectually disabled. Strictly

speaking, the visible behaviours mentioned all qualify as examples of

disabling or functionally limiting behaviours, but the problem arises in the

differential social values attaching to each condition. Because our views of

normalcy develop through limited personal experiences, there have been too

few alternative examples to challenge our theories about the human

condition. In short, people have to come to accept that there are those who

display visible signs of difference, yet are able to perform ably, contrary to our

learned expectations.

There remains in the community a strong assumption that people with

disabilities somehow look and function very differently from others, and in

many cases, there is much tangible evidence to support this belief. If one

accepts the World Health Organisation (1980) definitions of impairment,

disability and handicap, which I will loosely translate respectively as physical,

functional and environmental problems, we can readily think of people

severely affected by cerebral palsy, severe intellectual disability, phocomelia

and low vision whose day to day functioning stands out as being quite

different from others. It is how we handle such differences, in our attitudes and

our behaviours, which largely determines the extent to which handicap

follows.

The supportive institution seeks to make adjustments to the physical

environment for those with mobility problems, ensuring kerb Cuts, ramps and

lifts serve those using wheeled accessories (baby strollers, wheelbarrows,

equipment trolleys, wheelchairs) and well-marked stairways and pathways

assist those with visual impairment. Those who would simply adopt the current

building standards (Standards Association of Australia, 1988) need to be

reminded that this merely indicates minimal requirements. Such information

needs to be augmented by informed input from user groups with the practical

experience of disability to ensure a final design that is more appropriate for

the setting and potential client group.

There are also many hidden forms of disability that need to be confronted in

higher education. While those with not so obvious physical impairment arising

from illness and disease (e.g. arthritis, heart disease, multiple sclerosis,

psychiatric illness) may vary in the frequency of need for support, others

having difficulty processing oral language or the printed word and having

difficulty organising and presenting their ideas clearly and logically may need

considerable assistance in making the transition to higher education (Ness,

1989) and ongoing support to improve their academic self-help skills.

Institutions vary in their approach to this concern with learning difficulties. At

an individual lecturer level, some staff take the attitude that they are not

teachers of English and so provide very little feedback to students on writing

style. In contrast, others accept their responsibility to educate students, not

only in the writing genres peculiar to different purposes within their own

course or profession, but also in overcoming significant difficulties in written

expression. At an institutional level, additional support may be offered by way

of effective learning and study skills workshops. An interesting point to ponder,

is whether some students should be required to complete these, and if so,

whether such a course should be provided as a mainstream alternative. That

is, should not the program carry the visibility and full weight of academic

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value, rather than be tacked-on as invisible extra, thus creating an additional

load which further jeopardises the student's chance of success.

Staff development workshops in higher education institutions need to focus on

understanding how people with varying disabilities function, with particular

attention paid to dispelling the learned myths surrounding disability and to

developing positive relationships between students with disabilities and their

fellow students and staff. The AccessAbility project materials developed at

Griffith University (Stephens, Power and Hyde, 1991) tackle such issues in

depth. They provide advice on training support workers and on changing the

institutional ethos to become more proactive in its policies and programs for

people with disabilities. While workshops can be developed with such a

specific focus, it is also important to reinforce the wide variability of student

needs by embedding the disability message within other regular staff

development programs such as induction for new staff and topics on student

assessment and learning.

5. In/capacity

The fifth paradox relates to the assumption that people with disabilities have

generally limited capacities and therefore cannot expect to succeed in studies

or employment. Such limited expectations held by others merely confine the

aspirations of people with disabilities, thus helping to generate and

perpetuate the myth of incapacity. LaFontaine (1988) confirmed that such

views abound in higher education, listing 18 courses in Victorian institutions

which chief executive officers and equal opportunity officers regarded as

unsuitable for students with physical disabilities. Reasons given by the

minority who offered a response, included building inaccessibility and "a risk

or danger to self or others" (p. 14). Such responses raise the question of

appeal mechanisms for students whose exclusion from programs may well be

predicated upon administrator ignorance and preconceived notions about

disability. Without an appeal mechanism, including the requirement to

disclose decision reasons, there is little opportunity to redress such

discrimination.

In the early fifties, former national ski champion and then recent quadriplegic,

Jill Kinmont, was told she could never become a teacher-basically because

she could not attend classes in her wheelchair at UCLA and no one could

envisage her teaching in a schoolroom. She worked as a volunteer in Indian

reservation schools until she could prove otherwise (Valens, 1976). The

barriers are too readily erected. "The deaf can't teach the deaf because they

can't hear the fire alarms" In another case, one student became a paraplegic

several weeks before her final examinations and the Department of Education

terminated her teaching scholarship two weeks into her recuperation. Eight

months later she insisted on completing her examinations and the following

year she approached her former high school principal to employ her, because

she could access this newer, ground level school. The inspectors who

assessed her teaching (English and History) insisted she go down to the oval

to take Physical Education for good measure.

But such historical data needs to be balanced against positive contemporary

initiatives. For example, the Queensland Department of Education has

approved a trial program in which teachers with disabilities who need either

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initial reasonable adjustment by way of specialised equipment to give them

independence in performing their duties, or who require selective placement,

additional equipment and ongoing support, can be productively employed.

Such an approach creates positive role models, not only in a system which is

highly visible to future employers and employees, but also to other employer

groups.

We need to attack the patronising attitude that experts know best, a practice of

some professionals with which Fulcher (1989) took issue. In terms of

employment, I would argue that effective work outcomes revolve around

individual expertise that emerges from familiarity with the task, and that is hard

to demonstrate when unemployed.

We have to be creative as advocates, destroying old stereotypes about what is

job suitable and what is not, and what criteria should be used in assessing

suitability of the person for the job or vice versa. Course coordinators who

would restrict access to their programs on the basis of "future" employability

should be challenged to support their crystal ball findings with an accurate

prediction of what employment will actually exist at the end of the course some

3 or 4 years later. For example, computer technology continues to open

exciting new opportunities for people with disabilities to undertake studies and

employment hitherto considered beyond their scope. Indeed, legislation in the

U.S.A. now mandates that computers purchased or leased by the federal

government are accessible to end users "with or without disabilities" (Brill,

1989, p. 1). The author reminded higher education authorities of another

reality: "Computer access technology has allowed students with disabilities to

compete and succeed in secondary education. As these computer-liberated

students mature, they will expect similar access in Post-Secondary education

and the workplace" (p. 2). The gatekeepers of professional and other industry

bodies need to widen their horizons in this area.

The location of support services in institutions also tends to create an image of

how the client group is valued. Meekosha, Jakubowicz and Ftice (1991, p. 28)

argued that placing support services for students with disabilities under the

umbrella of counselling reinforces “the perception in universities that students

with disabilities have individual problems which are personal rather than

political or structural in nature." Therein lies yet further evidence of the

paradox. Counselling services exist for all students, and include positive and

proactive programs such as course and career advising in addition to their

stereotyped role of responding to personal crises; an overriding, negative

perception of the service is unfortunate.

The paradox is particularly illustrative of current dilemmas surrounding

government initiatives to improve both individual and institutional capacity to

reduce the effects of disability. Although most people support a policy to

increase representation of students with disabilities in higher education, DEET

(1990) made it clear that institutions would need to draw significantly on their

own resources to pursue that goal-a test of their determination and capacity

to respond appropriately. Meekosha et al. (1991, p. 21) noted the sceptical

reaction from some to this apparent “‘big stick' approach with universities with

few, if any carrots on offer.” The process reportedly adopted for distributing

special equity grants to the 36 universities in 1992 tends to reinforce this view,

but with a special twist; the carrot is the big stick.

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Those who have been judged to have achieved the most in their equity plans

will gain the greater rewards, perhaps up to $200,000; those seen to have

achieved not as much, the lesser rewards, around $90,000. Some are

expected to get none of these funds. What impact does this funding approach

have on institutional capacities to respond next year? Does not the gap widen

when capacity for some is further enhanced while incapacity for others is

further assured? Such a process encourages an adversarial rather than a

cooperative stance, both between institutions and DEET, and among the

institutions themselves. The above process contrasts considerably with the

cooperative spirit engendered by DEET funded disability projects such as

Tertiary Initiatives for People with Disabilities (TIPD) project in Queensland?

Although federal and state governments have almost concluded the transfer of

many responsibilities in the disability field, the diversity of support sources for

students and institutions in higher education need urgent review. I understand

that the issue of disability in higher education was not part of the final

agreement between the Commonwealth and the States. The role of the

Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service in supporting students with disabilities

in higher education also has attracted its share of criticism (Meekosha et al.,

1991). Thus, there remains ongoing concern about effective ways of

supporting and funding individual students and individual institutions. The

Queensland Government Office of Disability has made an important, indirect

contribution for the past two years, through the provision of executive support

for the Higher Education Disability Network.

Highly valued by the network members, such government commitment clearly

models one of its own goals-"to promote recognition of the competence of,

and enhance the image of, people with disabilities" (Department of Family

Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs, 1991, p. 8), in an aspect of life

that has not traditionally been promoted by disability interest groups. This

support ensures that the networking occurs more broadly throughout the

State. \_

The capacity of institutions to provide additional support services is another

issue reflected in the paradox. Some institutions have sought to redress

funding shortfalls by seeking volunteer support from fellow students, outside

agencies or individuals, and even funding support from community service

groups. Meekosha et al. (1991, p. 34) argued that it "is disturbing that charities

and volunteers are increasingly central in ensuring access for students with

disabilities in higher education." Voluntarism can be valuable both to the

volunteer and the person assisted if both feel there is mutual benefit and

neither feels disadvantaged. But it is fraught with several pitfalls that need to

be anticipated. First, volunteers may loose motivation so that there is a drift in

consistent support, which in the case of peer-student volunteers

understandably occurs at times when they too are stressed by their own study

demands. Second, an aura of charity often surrounds these services; the

service user has the perception of second class citizenship confirmed, or

needs to be grateful (Fulcher, 1989) for the help received. Third, while some

3 A joint project of Griffith University, University of Queensland, and Queensland University of

Technology, funded by DEET, and staffed by an Education Project Officer (Louise McPake -

07 365 1506) with goals to improve access to university study and to postgraduate employment

for people with disabilities.

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volunteer programs may be operated at a consistently very high standard,

others may operate with a wide tolerance for quality variation so that students

finish up having to accept poor quality material. Finally, there may be

inevitable time delays if volunteers are not dependable in meeting strict

timelines.

The Volunteer Reader Program operating at the University of Queensland is a

useful example of how institutional financial incapacity to pay for much of the

service was overcome with volunteer resources. It was estimated by one of

the disability resource officers (L. Duggan, personal communication,

November 7, 1991) that volunteer time contributed to the service totalled 2925

hours, and involved producing 1020 new tapes. Were those services borne as

direct costs, l estimate that the institution would outlay $30,000 to $40,000 to

fund that effort. The tape reading is one typical adjustment to service provision

that is referred to as "reasonable accommodation" in the recent Americans

with Disabilities Act (ADA) (1990). Kramer and Dorman (1990, p. 9) noted that

the definition included inter alia, “the provision of qualified readers or

interpreters; and other similar accommodations for individuals with

disabilities." This concept has also been defined and discussed in a recent

Australian report on national disability discrimination legislation (Shelley,

1991). If a service meets a realistic demand within the institution, I believe

students and staff have a right to expect that such a service will be fully

funded, and institutions have a right to expect government to recognise such

costs in their funding. Institutions seem not to question the ready adoption of

expensive, advanced technology for libraries and classrooms, but have

difficulty recognising the priorities of basic media for students who learn

differently. lf students with disabilities are to be seen as part of the mainstream

of university life, their services need to be funded as a mainstream activity,

rather than marginalised by volunteer support.

But the above comments on voluntarism in higher education must be put in

perspective. institutions themselves are targeting the charity dollar, seeking to

augment their government and industry funding sources by direct appeal to

alumni and other benefactors. What used to be considered "begging," has

become a mainstream, high profile, corporate activity.

6. In/dependence

This sixth paradox relates to the perceived degree of dependence that people

with disabilities bring to the higher education setting. Six major points emerge

from this paradox. The first is that most people place independence very

highly on their agenda of wants, perhaps even more so those whose

opportunities for independence may be compromised by disability. The desire

for control over one's destiny, one's life style and one's day to day activities is

an important source of motivation that kindles the human spirit, even though

we also operate interdependently with each other. Everyone has suffered

temporary disability through significant illness or accident at some time, and

should be able to relate to the frustration that emerges from increased

dependence on others during those times.

Second, the quest for independence implies the availability and exercise of

choice. In higher education, candidates' choices are often limited by the

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availability of quota places, and apart from special consideration options, little

has been done to overcome that situation.

But there are encouraging signs that access to further study can be enhanced

through tertiary preparation programs (Hartley, Anderson & Cheney, 1991).

These are designed to equip students with disabilities to handle the

academic, physical and psychological demands of higher education study, or

simply to meet a new academic challenge and boost their confidence to tackle

other tasks in life.

Another facet of choice relates to the location and type of program available to

students. At a time when special education support services at the school

level are being decentralised, it would seem counterproductive to herd

together people with similar support requirements into institutions specialising

in that kind of support. This limits their choice ot course, their place of abode

and above all takes the pressure off other institutions to respond appropriately

to emerging community needs. Thus it was disturbing to read in A Fair Chance

for All the suggestion, although described as a "medium term solution," that

"individual institutions might concentrate on small numbers of students with

similar support requirements" (p. 41). There is, however, merit in investigating

the establishment of regional resource centres that can provide expertise to

nearby institutions.

Third, there is a common misconception that facilitating independence for

people with disabilities is a costly exercise. As already noted, effective

contemporary teaching strategies recognise and value variability in student

learning styles; providing learning materials in differing formats can be helpful

for more than just those with particular disabilities. Similarly, well planned

buildings and surrounds should benefit diverse mobility needs. Later

rectification of erroneous design in new buildings is typically more expensive

than careful planning at the outset. Any attempts to reduce effective access

designs invariably compromise appropriate access standards. For example,

designing spaces so that wheelchairs users must access through back door

entrances or seek assistance on ramps that are too steep is unacceptable.

Effective design should seek to maximise the independence of all users.

Fourth, the purchase of specialised equipment for students with disabilities

also enhances their independence, and this can be viewed in the same way

as institutions have already developed expensive and sophisticated

audio-visual holdings for the wider student body. For example, QUT (1991a)

has recently adopted a special equipment purchase and loans policy for

people with disabilities which states:

QUT will seek to make reasonable adjustments to the learning

environment of students with disabilities, by purchasing and lending

equipment and resources required for them to perform effectively in

their studies, in circumstances where such support is not available from

other sources. Equipment purchased includes software packages,

computer hardware and physical appliances. Reasonable adjustment

means negotiated changes to regular study environments which enable

students with disabilities to access learning through media and

materials appropriate to their learning needs.

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But there are pitfalls here as well. A project officer from the Tertiary Initiatives

for People with Disabilities Project serving the three Brisbane universities

noted that the decision not to fund equipment available from other sources

could see students frustrated by delays from agencies and institutions

deciding who would fund and supply the equipment (S. Hensby, personal

communication, October 16, 1991). Such an issue needs to be closely

monitored.

Fifth, it needs to be remembered that dependence is too readily created by an

environment hostile to the functional needs of people with disabilities.

Handicap can be created by both physical and social factors that limit an

individual's use of residual or alternative abilities. One challenging view that is

gaining prominence is the concept of consumer focused funding in which

consumers with disabilities are given the money directly from government to

purchase equipment and services that meets their needs in a more direct,

timely and personalised fashion. Such level of independence may not suit all,

but the opportunity is there for people to have greater control of their own

lives.

Finally, the paradox can be viewed from an institution's organisational

standpoint. Those of us who are committed to the advocacy role need to be

sure we are not unwittingly creating or permitting dependency from officers in

other sections of the institution.

Disability resource officers and counsellors well know the danger of others

"dumping jobs" onto the specialists, rather than learning to take responsibility

themselves. Although there are mixed views about a generic approach to

service delivery (Power & Stephens, 1991), I am persuaded that, if we want an

ethos of acceptance and understanding to permeate the institution, we must

encourage all areas of management and service provision to take

responsibility for appropriately meeting the needs of people with disabilities.

By the same token, advocates still need to be vigilant, ensuring that

appropriate decisions are made to maximise user independence (O'Connor,

1981)

7. In/dignity

The final paradox relates both to the manner in which those with disabilities

are treated by others and to the manner by which they themselves and their

advocates seek to redress the circumstances that contain and confine them.

As with many groups in the community who are marginalised by such

differences as age, ethnicity, and gender, many people with disabilities

continue to be viewed as significantly different from the rest of the population,

and treated as targets for pity, derision, and devaluing rather than with human

dignity. As a balancing factor, there are those who fight to be noticed, and to

have their cause taken seriously so that in the long run, they need not stand

out as so noticeably different, that social exclusion follows. Paradoxically,

advocacy strategies often promote outrage and indignity to win ultimate

dignity. Meekosha et al. (1991, p. 30) reported on the response to disability

activists at Sydney University: “Some students feel that it is only when

individuals carry forward a sustained campaign for change that the University

responds, and thereafter adapts its practices in the light of that incident."

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It is desirable that students with disabilities should have the opportunity to

involve themselves in institutional change processes, without compromising

their study efforts. Meekosha et al. (1991, p. 30) further reported the views of a

student activist:

More students with disabilities are not articulating their case because

they are too busy trying to survive. lf I want to articulate my case I go to a

meeting and articulate it myself. I wear them down, then people get fed

up with you so they give it to you.

The day to day experiences of students with disabilities, their unique

viewpoints and general concern for improving quality of life in the institution

are valuable assets to be tapped, as indeed is the case for any student. This

input can be harnessed through specific-focus working parties or ongoing

committees charged with the task of developing informed policies and

practices and monitoring progress. The student union can provide

representation on these activities and also support the establishment of a

student special interest group supported by union funding.

In Canada, the National Education Association of Disabled Students

(NEADS) is an active voice in advocacy and self-help activities, producing a

regular newsletter and publishing profiles of students with disabilities at post-

secondary institutions in Canada (National Education Association of Disabled

Students, 1991).

Conclusion

This paper outlined a number of theoretical positions on the nature of

disability and the manner in which society views this entity. It also explained

seven paradoxes through which we filter much of our understanding about

how people with disabilities operate in higher education and how we try to

serve them. I hope that these ideas provoke further discussion, as we seek to

challenge and inform each other-administrators, teaching staff and students,

to challenge and inform our own institutional community, and to challenge and

inform governments on approaches to increasing tolerance for a wider range

of human performance differences within higher education.

Several imperatives emerge from this discussion:

First, we need to monitor closely our actions at all levels of involvement to

ensure they fit within an overall philosophy that reconceptualises disability

from the personal tragedy and social oppression viewpoints to one of valuing

and celebrating human diversity.

Second, we need to develop sound principles of operation and appropriate

service standards that can be used to inform our own institutions, the wider

community and government.

As advocates in the disability field, I believe we need to establish a national

voice to advocate for input into such matters as government funding and

service support. It is timely that we act to play a significant role in future policy

and funding directions.

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In conclusion, I was encouraged to read recently some vicarious support for

the theme with which this paper began. Nora Groce (1985) eloquently

described life in Martha's Vineyard during several generations of settlement

where there was an unusually high incidence of congenital deafness in the

community, often affecting more than one family member. Those who grew up

and lived in this close-knit community simply accommodated such a common

variation in the human condition and were enriched by the additional

communication strategy that it required. It became so ordinary that it was taken

for granted that "everybody here spoke sign language," a phrase that titled her

book. It is possible to view disability as part of human diversity without drawing

special attention to it.

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Pathways Post-Secondary Education for Students with Disabilities

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FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A 24 HOUR

ATTENDANT CARE SERVICE AT A VICTORIAN UNIVERSITY

CAMPUS

Kevin Murfitt

Vera White Disability Resource Centre

Deakin University VIC

Executive Summary

This feasibility study for the establishment of a 24-hour attendant care service

at a Victorian university was initiated in response to a perceived gap in the

provision of attendant care services for people with disabilities, which was

reported to be restricting access to higher education for some people with

disabilities.

This paper describes:

the background to the proposed service;

current attendant care services available;

a brief description of the proposed service;

the goals and objectives of the proposed service;

the consistency of the proposed service with similar organisations providing

attendant care services;

consistency with potential clients wishes and needs;

consistency with relevant government policies;

consistency with the potential host organisation's policies and facilities;

proposed funding for the service;

staffing issues;

current and potential demand for such a service;

and the conclusions and recommendations.

Background

The principal reason for the perceived need of a 24-hour university based

attendant care service came with the observation that while secondary school

students were provided with attendant care services at school through the

Department of School Education's School Support Centres, no similar

provisions are made for tertiary institutions. Consequently, students with

attendant care needs are being precluded from attending university unless

they are covered by one of the other attendant care schemes available in the

community.

Other reasons cited for the proposal included:

the success of integration strategies and technological developments indicate

that the number of people with disabilities desiring to enter higher education

is increasing;

higher education is highly desired if not essential for many people with

disabilities, especially those with high support needs;

current attendant care schemes restrict the consumer to a pre-set, inflexible

time-table not appropriate for university life;

a client centred, "on-call", university based service could facilitate the desired

flexibility;

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the university based service could also be a means of empowering those

students inexperienced in coordinating attendant care with the necessary

skills; and a similar service was operating successfully in Canada.

CU|’I`€l1'l Attendant Cafe SCHBITIGS

Eight attendant care schemes were described, none of which specifically

target university students.

It was observed that the schemes available could not cater for the wide

population of potential university students with attendant care needs, although

some were portable and could feasibly be transferred to a university service.

It was also noted that the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service, formerly the

major provider of services for tertiary students with disabilities, was becoming

increasingly prohibitive to potential university clients due to an increased

focus on vocational rehabilitation rather than further education or independent

living assistance.

Brief Service Description

The proposed service could operate out of the Student Services section of the

university involved. A coordinator would be responsible for the daily running

and development of the service in addition to performing attendant care tasks

when casual assistants were not rostered on. -

Personal assistants would be employed on a casual basis, and be selected

from interested community members and/or students living in residence.

The service would operate so that throughout most of the day, a personal

assistant or the coordinator would be on duty to provide attendant care when

required to students living in residence, on-campus day students, and off

campus students when visiting the campus. Clients of the service would be

able to call for immediate or unscheduled assistance via a telephone or

buzzer.

The remainder of the 24 hours (eg between the hours of midnight and 7 am)

would be covered by a personal assistant being on call.

Service Consistency

Client Consistency

An evaluation of the Canadian 24-hour attendant care service was described

and had found that clients were satisfied with the service and had gained

greater independence and control over their lives.

A survey of potential and current Victorian university students with attendant

care needs had indicated both a need for the service and support for such a

service.

Similar Organisations

Only one university was identified which offered limited attendant care

services (i.e. 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.).

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It was also observed that the proposed service would be similar to the

Canadian service which had been successful in increasing the number of

students with disabilities participating in tertiary education.

The proposed service was also reported to be consistent with current

attendant care agencies in the community.

Government Policy

The proposed service was found to be consistent with the social justice

policies and strategies of both the Federal and Victorian governments, and the

Disability Services Act (1986). The proposed service was also found to be

directly relevant to the objectives of the equity policy and strategies of the

Department of Employment Education and Training.

Host Qrganisation

The proposed service would be consistent with the equity policies of all the

institutions evaluated (e.g. Melbourne University, La Trobe University

Bundoora, Victoria University of Technology St Albans, Monash University

Clayton, and Deakin University Geelong). Deakin University was found to

have the best facilities for the proposed service, although the majority of these

universities have facilities which could cater for such a service.

The only exception is the Victoria University of Technology which only has off

campus accommodation which is inaccessible for wheelchairs at present.

Funding

It was noted that funding could be sought from three principal sources. Firstly,

under the Disability Services Act (1986) as an eligible service (as for the

Work-Based Personal Care Pilot), or as a research activity.

Secondly, through the Department of Employment Education and Training

under the Commonwealth Responsibilities section of "A Fair Chance For All"

(DEET. 1990), or through the equity funding given to universities in response

to their equity plans (n.b. it was noted that this latter source may be difficult as

the equity funds for 1992 have already been allocated). Finally, through the

attendant care schemes currently available. The portability of some of these

schemes means that this coverage could offset some costs of the proposed

service.

A 12 month budget was estimated at approximately $50,000, which could

cover 4 or 5 students depending on the level of care each required.

Staffing

The study indicated a need for one full-time coordinator, and several casual

personal assistants to perform attendant care duties. The casual staff could be

gained from the community or from students at the university concerned as

was preferred by the clients of the Canadian service.

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Current and Potential Demand

It was found that only Deakin University (Geelong) had the current and

potential numbers of students with attendant care needs to make the

establishment of the proposed service feasible.

Conclusion

It was concluded that the investigation had identified a need for such a

service, a clear mandate for the service, and a feasible model which could

deliver the service.

Recommendations

It was recommended that a pilot 24-hour attendant care service be

established in 1992 at Deakin University Geelong, with funding being sought

through the avenues described in the report.

It was also recommended that:

an evaluation of the pilot service be conducted towards the end of 1992 and

that the subsequent recommendations be incorporated into the equity plans of

all other Victorian universities for 1993;

that all universities encourage applications from people with disabilities by

promoting attendant care as a possible service option; that the Monash

University attendant care service be made more flexible to cater for the current

clients' needs;

and that the inconsistency identified in the report regarding the administration

of the Accommodation Support service and Rehabilitation Programs with the

Disability Services Act (1986) upon which they are based, be investigated.

’ A full copy of the Feasibility Study for the Establishment of a 24

Hour Attendant Care Service at a Victorian University

Campus is available on request, from the Vera White Disability

Resource Centre, Deakin University.

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EQUITABLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS WITH

DISABILITIES

Georgie Kelly

Equity Officer (Disability) Curtin University of Technology WA

As we know, there are a variety of different ways to look at this topic, including:

clarifying what equity means to different people in different focus of this whole

subject.

Post-Secondary institutions are certainly recognising the need to address

access and equity for students with disabilities. In WA for example, there are 4

universities, and by early next year, it appears that 3 out of 4 will have full time

disability/equity officer positions. Equity staff are involved in identifying needs,

improving access, developing policies, and so forth. Essential ingredients in

addressing equity issues l believe is: a real commitment by the institution:

funding: and appointing a person (Equity Officer) with an appropriate

background and giving them a high enough status & support within the

university to have an impact. My own position is fortunate to have 3 year

DEET funding, with Curtin University undertaking to mainstream the position

at the end of 1992. Curtin has over 18,000 students and the issues for this

position to address have in the past 2 years been many and varied.

Today l will focus on the broad aspects of equity and the importance of staff

attitudes and students disclosure of disability and its impact on equity.

So what is equity?

Dictionaries explain the meaning of the work equity, with words such as

fairness, equality and justice. Equity can be pursued in a number of different

ways. It is often value laden and it is subject to various interpretations.

Many are familiar with the term equal opportunity, but how can we achieve

equality in education for a student with just 5% vision, relative to a student with

no impairment? There needs to be realistic expectations of what equity is for

each individual student with a disability, relative to other students, and to do

this there needs to be a clear understanding of the disability, what the

impairment is and how it affects the person in all relevant aspects of university

life.

Students choose different ways to deal with their studies, to seek help or not

and that is clearly their choice, however the issue of disclosure is an important

one to consider. In reality for example: in whose best interests is it for the

student to disclose an ilIness of disability?

Certainly, if all the students with disabilities were known to us, services could

be better planned and it would be easier to justify needs. (For example, in

1992 we need 5 parking bays for people with disabilities adjacent to the

education building). However, in my experience, many students with

disabilities, (in particular those with a hidden disability such as a hearing

impairment) are reluctant to inform staff of their disability and seek help, for

fear of being treated differently from other or being discouraged in some way.

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It is true that some staff do have a narrow view of disability and lack

knowledge, objectivity and empathy.

Many students with disabilities have expressed that a ma'|or area of concern at

university has been how the staff react (the staff attitudes) towards them, once

staff knew of their disability.

Research Project

It is for this reason, we chose to undertake a research project, evaluating the

attitudes of staff, both academic and general, to having students with

disabilities at university.

The study was undertaken in two parts. A questionnaire was designed which

with minimum changes was forwarded to all academic staff, then to general

staff (total; of 2000 staff surveyed) and the results correlated (general staff are

all the non teaching staff, such as maintenance workers, administrative staff

and so forth).

The questionnaire consisted of 2 sections, with the initial part dealing with

demographic data such as level of appointment, area of work, age, sex and

experience of working with students with disabilities. The second section of

the questionnaire was designed to provide a descriptive picture of attitudes

about students with disabilities rather than a diagnostic tool to define changes

in attitude. The questionnaire was adapted from Yuker's Attitude Towards

Disabled Persons, which measures the extent to which the respondent

believes that persons with disabilities are the same as able individuals or

whether they are different and need special treatment.

The questionnaire used in the university staff survey, had three major aspects:

1. Attitudes about students with disabilities, both educational capabilities

and personal attributes.

2. Belief about how interacting with students with disabilities would affect

the staff member.

3. Attitudes about special provisions and support believed to be requires

for students with disabilities.

Major Findings Of The Survey

A 53% response rate was achieved from both academic and general staff.

Firstly it was pleasing to report that there was support for students with

disabilities and most attitudes expressed were positive.

There was no follow-up of missing responses (47%) and one might surmise

that non-respondents may have less favourable attitudes compared to the

respondents.

Some of the more significant findings will now be described, with some direct

quotes form the comment section of the questionnaire.

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Georgie Kelly

Regarding personal attributes of students with disabilities: 61% of academic

males, compared with 77 % of female academics tended 'to believe that

students with disabilities displayed more self pity than other students. Other

questions asked regarding personal attributes such as self confidence, need

for sympathy, distress levels, need to prove themselves, indicated

respondents were not aware of any differences in presentations.

Quotes:

" My experience of students with disabilities is that they want to be as

similar as they can to students without disabilities, and they don't want

to be treated differently".

"In the event that a student has a disability, it is usually true that l do not

find out after the event".

"l have encountered all kinds of attitudes. Perhaps it shows you should

never let outward disability blind you to a student of personality and

commitment. One of my problems is advising students that our

professional field is one where there are only limited jobs they can do

and this may not be a form of blind discrimination but sheer practicality.

Are we building up false hope, confidence and esteem?."

Educational Capabilities

There were some differences between male and female staffs' responses to

certain questions - for example, 71% of female academic staff agreeing more

strongly about the capability of students with disabilities that 54% of their male

counterparts.

Effects on staff

In analysing questions regarding the effect of students with disabilities on

staff, there was some tendency to agree that students with disabilities were

inclined to take more teaching staff time and increase workload. I wonder

how much of this is an accurate perception when 58% of tutors found this less

of a concern than 77% of professors and 93% of associate professors. As we

know tutors tend to be in a closer contact with students, compared with

professors who have more of a decision making role.

Quote:

"Students with disabilities should not have to suffer the increasing cut in

funds to universities that has affected all areas of teaching, but my fear

is that they will".

"l have no doubt disabled students are more demanding from a

teaching and admin. point of view, however l do not in any way resent

putting the extra time in ".

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Knowledge about students with disabilities

75% of staff responded that they felt comfortable with students with disabilities

but also agreed that they did not know enough about relevant issues for these

people.

63% of academics who have not previously taught this group would have

preferred to have more knowledge about disabilities prior to teaching these

students.

Quote;

"One of my students has claimed that she has dyslexia, but I can't see

that this is really the case."l!

Special Services

Of the staff, 85% felt that students with disabilities have a right to special

services, with 92% of library staff in full agreement with this statement. There

was also strong support for special government grants to assist the students

with disabilities, with 93% of those at professorial level supporting this.

Quotes;

"Disabled students should be given a chance, but there is no need to

be over ambitious.

"l just plain help them out when necessary".

"They don't tell me they have a problem and I don't pick up the signs".

Quote:

"l see very few disabled students - perhaps there is a barrier to

admission somewhere?"

"Each case needs to be examined on merit and a realistic assessment

needs to be made".

Summary

In summary, the research highlighted the need for education programs to

inform staff of relevant issues for students with disabilities and:

~ demonstrated there to be considerable support for special services to

be provided, both from a commitment within the university and from

Government support,

showed what services staff currently offer and what referral channels

they use,

showed there to be some difference in response rates from

schools/divisions and male/female responses.

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Georgie Kelly

raised concern about the increased workload involved in working with

students with disabilities,

~ raised awareness of issues for students with disabilities on this campus

by respondents completing the questionnaire,

some of the direct quotes will be used as discussion points in staff

education programs.

Now moving away from the research into more general equity issues;-

What are some of the equity issues seen by students?

There is a breadth of equity issues facing university students and I will touch

on some of the individual instances that have arisen. Moving from the

resource planning through choice of units, study, associated activities,

assessment and through to graduation.

Pre course planning

It is not an essential requirement for students to indicate if they have a

disability prior to enrolling for a course. Students are however, encouraged to

seek appropriate counselling prior to entry to choose a course they are

interested in, are able to complete, and have reasonable employment options

(if desired). Access to the chosen campus and classes as well as availability

of facilities must be considered by individual students; eg notetakers,

lifts/ramps to lecture theatres, or a university's reputation will sway students to

choosing to study there.

Still today we hear of a student with paraplegia being advised to study

computing science as his only option because he is confined to a. chair, yet

he expressed no interest in the field. It is also interesting to note that of the

student with permanent disabilities we know of a Curtin University 16% (14

students) are enrolled in the Social Work course, when there are over 180

different courses to choose form at this university. Some of these students

have indicated that they have had positive encounters with social work staff in

the past and this has been a contributing factor in their career choice. In

another instance, a prospective student with a back problem was discouraged

from entering the teaching facuIty, by a staff member whose personal opinion

was that she would not be an effective teacher as she would not be able to

bend over student desks.

Considerable work is needed in addressing the quality of counselling advise

provided for prospective students.

Units of study

Issues here may include careful timetabling, eg a student who needs to take

regular breaks during the day.

Fieldwork requires special consideration. Consider a student who has

disability such as occupational overuse syndrome which has caused her to

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cease her previous employment: she then chooses to study social work but is

then expected to complete 12 weeks full time fieldwork placement.

In this instance we needed to consider a work assessment, a graded work

program, and supply of special equipment. This particular situation was

compounded by the student only deciding to disclose her disability just prior to

her placement)!!

Study

Students spend ( or should spend) considerable hours at their desk at home

and are likely to need more specialised equipment than other students. There

is often free time for students during the day, where students can make use of

this time to study in the library. Special library services such as a librarian to

assist accessing information, and also equipment such as closed circuit

televisions, computers, ergonomic furniture are important examples of how to

provide equitable opportunity, as without this equipment these students are

not able to use their time as effectively as can other students.

Associated

Attending a sporting event or just an informal social gathering requires

advanced planning and additional time to negotiate transport barriers. Such

things often isolate a student with mobility impairment from the mainstream of

student life and activities. Other issues associated with studying which can

affect students can include family support, finances and hospitalisation.

Assessment

Just last week Curtin's exam period finished and this is certainly a busy time

for us as Equity Officers, in ensuring that modified exam conditions for

individuals are equitable. Many previously unknown students present to us

requesting special exam conditions.

A 1991 journal article stated that in a recent US court decision American

colleges were required to evaluate formats for examinations before they

require learning disabled students to take muItiple choice exams. This

example highlights the need for fair and equitable assessment to be

considered very carefully.

At Curtin last semester, we arranged for a student's exam paper to be brailed,

however when the student read the paper, she was aware it was only half the

content as described by the lecturer to the whole class. This was a case of the

lecturer trying to 'help out" by altering the exam for this individual - but in fact

upset the student because she was expecting something different. Although

she felt confident to do the whole exam, she wasn't able to be assessed on

the same footing as others. This is an example of inequity in action by a

supposedly "well meaning" academic as opposed to the more common

situation of the lecturer that refuses to allow alternative methods of

assessment.

Graduation and Professional registration

Just last month we heard of a newly graduated teacher who was not given a

job by the education department because she was deaf.

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Georgie Kelly

lf a legally blind student completes a pharmacy course, will she become

registered by her professional association? Will she get a job? Should this be

a criteria for her to be allowed admission into a course; ie is university for

students to broaden their knowledge or for attaining a job?

These questions have not been clarified and really each course needs to

consider what the barriers are for certain disabilities in their course, what are

the core skills needed, and the core units expected to pass before a

degree/diploma will be awarded. How can courses be adapted, how much

should they be?

At Curtin, we are currently investigating individual schools policies and

procedures and this will hopefully be able to provide more accurate

information for students to address perceived course barriers and secondly be

able to more clearly and objectively assess and address if staff/schools are

offering equitable opportunities.

Academic staff need to check that they have a fair, objective and flexible

assessment, recognise staff attitudes, encourage open communication and be

familiar with current university policies. Schools need to consider how much

involvement can and should they have for a student who has a disability

which will affect studies and possible attainment of an award.

A concept people need also to consider is that the student is an individual and

if eg. a course has difficult y accommodating students with a particular

impairment eg. visual, it doesn't necessarily follow that the next student with

visual impairment will present the same difficult ies. Schools do however,

need to be clear what the expectations are, and clearly inform students and be

open to discussion on, if, and how a unit/course can be adapted to suit the

person.

Summary

In summary, students must be independent and resourceful to 'survive' at

university and those with a disability, even more so.

Although legislation on equity issues has given legal authority to correct

inequalities across educational, work and social situations, modifying

attitudes to be consistent with policies, is a difficult task.

Equity for students with disabilities is a developing area in higher education.

However there remains a lot yet to be achieved in adapting university

environments, improving coursework and assessment procedures, improving

staff awareness and attitudes, and in facilitating students to seek appropriate

assistance.

By raising the knowledge of and educating those working with students with

disabilities, this should increase opportunities for students with disabilities,

and increase the responsiveness of staff to the needs and potential of this

student group.

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Pathways Post-Secondary Education for Students with Disabilities

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SEARCH FOR A CAREER FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

Joanne Davis

Employment ConsuItant

Whitehorse Employment Access, VIC

Introduction

I am Joanne Davis, working as an Employment ConsuItant for Whitehorse

Employment Access under Whitehorse Employment Skills Training Inc.

My personal background: -

I was born deaf, attended a school for Deaf in Kew, then entered the

workforce at an early age for nine years. I graduated from Footscray Institute

of Technology (Bachelor of Applied Science Phys Ed), Hawthorne Institute of

Education (Grad Dip Ed), and Victoria College (Grad Dip Sp Ed).

In this paper, I will present Issues on "Search for a career for Disabled

People". It will mainly focus on Training:- Job Search Skills. This paper

covers Career Search, Decision Making, Job Search, Application, Resume,

and Interview.

Career Search

What is the best way to look for a career chosen by a disabled person?

You can search for your career through the JAC computer which is available

at colleges, career service and schools.

Use the Job Guide book. This book helps you to find out more about access

for the disabled, work environment such as safety-accessibility in work,

communication, level of pressure, employers perspective views, peers and

skills level.

If this book doesn't help you, you can always ask your employment counsellor

before you decide what you really want to do.

Accord to Job Guide book. You may find a particular job has disadvantage

aspects, however you can always find related occupations in this book. It is a

good idea to go around and ask anyone with a similar disability to find out

more about their job.

It is fun to seek further information.

Good luck with reading this material and with your Job Search.

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Decision Making

Self Confidence

Self Motivation

How to find a successful job without letting myself down.

It is fun and challenging to find a job with success but how much does it

involve?

I know that finding a job is not easy, but it is fun. You have to find a way to find

the most suitable, challenging, ambitious .... etc. job.

git how ??

The first step on the track is to look at your goals. You need to think about

what you really want to do in the future.

Think about your dreams! Do not let your dreams spoil your ambition.

Think about what you really want to do. You can be a doctor even if you

cannot speak or walk, your brain is not affected. You can go to university to

study medicine because you are clever, not because your disability is special.

So do not look at the negative side of your disability. Look at yourself and

believe in what you can do.

A good idea is to set up the goals which are important to you. It is important to

achieve your goals. There are many ways to achieve your goals. Achieving

goals such as 'Think Big', is a very big one. Make your long term goals

exciting and challenging. The bigger you achieve, the more rewarding is the

achievement. ,

There are two attitudes to help you to achieve your goals: - "Self Confidence"

and "Self-Motivation".

Self-confidence is a positive 'self talk'.

Your need to think and talk about what has happened to you or what you are

about to do. Try and replace your negative thinking such as " l cannot do this

because of my disability". You need to change that attitude to "l know l

cannot do it, but I can find another solution to overcome a problem". Create

your own positive 'self-talk'. This will improve your self-confidence especially

when faced with criticism, failure, or a difficult task. .

Self-motivation is a good thing to learn. Try to keep yourself motivated

(keep going, do not give up) to work towards achieving goals. This can be

difficult at times but no one can be perfect.

l believe the best way to keep yourself motivated is when you enjoy doing

something.

Think "Motivation does lead to success".

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Joanne Davis

Job Search

Looking for a job

Action Plan

How to look for a job.

You may be sitting on a rock, thinking and saying to yourself "How could l find

a job'?" l have assumed that you have researched a career and you have

made your decision about a career which has interested you.

Once you have made up your mind in what job does interest you, the next step

is to go out and find a suitable job. Look at Action Plan, it tells you how to find

a job successfully.

Action Plan

Always prepare your resume or curriculum vitae, before you start looking for a

job.

lf you are not prepared , you will not have success in finding a job.

1. Go to your nearest Commonwealth h Employment Sen/ice (CES Job

Centre).

2. Look through the Employment section in daily newspapers. You have

to respond at least 80% to a newspaper advertisement. Submit a

written application and resume in a professional way. In other words

you can't just ring up for an interview then going without presenting your

application and resume as requested in the newspaper.

3. The Australian Bureau of Statistics recently released figures which

showed that 80% of positions are found through networking and the

hidden job market.

4. You can do your own networking by developing your own contacts

such as:

Business colleagues, past and present,

Former bosses,

Former work colleagues,

Your college tutors,

School/university friends,

Fellow members of a clubs /organisations,

Professional people you deal with in your personal life, eg

doctor, dentist, police,

Trade or employer organisations.

Remember you are not just looking for people who might be able to assist you

to find a job. You are asking everyone you know whether they might be able

to tell you of others who could help you. I understand that this is an

embarrassing situation, but the result is worth the trouble and most contacts

are only too willing to help.

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Application

Written Application

Application Form

Written Application

It is very important to know how to write an application.

A written application is a letter to an employer, asking for a job.

You have to read and follow these important steps to make your application

look good.

First Sep:

Look in the newspaper, look under 'Employment".

Find which job is suitable to your experience and skills.

Read the advertisement first, look for the person who to write to.

PART TIME

CLERICAL ASSISTANT

Required for Brandon Park Primary School, to work a

minimum of 5 hours per week over 2 days for a small

remuneration. Word Processing skills essential, Word

Perfect desirable.

Apply in writing to:

P 0 Box 79

Mulgrave North, 3170

Closing date December 18, 1991

Check if the advertisement says hand written or typed application.

It is best to have your application typed.

Second Step:

Write a rough copy first.

Think about what you want to say.

Take your time to write.

Do not write before you think.

Always talk/sign the sentence, then write exactly the same way you talk/sign.

Never write more than two pages.

Make sure that your application looks business like and neat.

The way to write an application is by writing about each point, telling them

why you want this job, and what experience you have.

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Joanne Davis

Example points on how to write an application

1. What job/ am applying for.

Write the same as in the paper.(eg Part time Clerical Assistant)

2. Where I saw the advertisement.

What paper and when.

3. What am I doing now.

Explain what you are doing, such as looking for work, or just finished

another job.

4. Why I am interested in the position.

You have to explain why you want that job.

5. Why I am qualified to do the job.

You have to tell them;-

a) Your experience and jobs held before,

b) If you have done a course at college,

c) If you have done work experience related to the job

advertisement,

d) How long you have done work experience and how you

liked the work experience.

After you have finished writing the application:

If you know you cannot check for English mistakes, always ask someone who

has good English to check your application for any wrong spelling and

grammar.

Head your rough copy again.

Third Step:

Type your application.

If you cannot type, get someone to type for you.

lf you make a mistake, start a new sheet of paper.

Do not use white paste or a rubber to fix the mistake.

Never send an application to an employer if the application looks messy and

untidy.

Get someone to check your application before you send the application to the

employer.

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Application Form

An application form is a questionnaire type paper which the employer will

send to you to fill in. Check the advertisement to see if they request you to

ring for an application form.

APPRENTICESHIP

Fitting and Turning

Minimum Year 11

Radio Tradesman (Electronics)

Minimum Year 12

This is an excellent opportunity for school leavers who

have successfully completed Year 11/12 Maths and

English and who have a genuine interest in the above

trades.

Application forms can be obtained by/\_phoning Carol on

532 1759 between 10am-noon from Dec 11-18.

Applications close December 23

For selected candidates it will be necessary to

undergo aptitude testing.

Ring the person, ask them to send the application form to your address. They

will send you an application form.

What will you do with the application form?

Check each question before you send the form to the employer.

1. Read all the questions carefully.

2. Do not till in until you finish reading all the questions.

3. Look up any new words in the dictionary. lf you have trouble

understanding the word, ask your friend or teacher to explain the new

meaning.

4. Write the form in pen, not in red pen or pencil.

5. Write the application form in CAPITAL letters.

eg JOHN FLYER not john flyer.

6. Try to fill in all questions.

7. lf the question is not clear, leave it blank.

8. Write neatly, do not write too fast. There is no Time Bomb!

9. Do not forget to sign the form.

10. Ask someone to check the wrong spelling and grammar.

11.

12. Read your application form again.

It is a

good idea to photocopy the application form for your records.

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Joanne Davis

What goes the Application Form look like?

(Write your address): 30 Help Street

GOODLUCK VIC 3144

(Today's Date): 5 November, 1991

The Personnel (Who is the person)

Austair Ltd (Company's name)

P O Box 555 (Company's address)

BORONIA VIC 3222 (Company's suburb in CAPITAL LETTEFIS)

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am applying for the position of ..(what position)... which was advertised in

..(which paper)... on ..(when)..\_.

I have just finished my job at ..(which work)... and now am looking for full time

work. (You don't have to write this if you have been unemployed for more

than ten months).

OR

I left school at (what month you left school) after completing (what year you

finished) and am now looking for full time work.

I am interested in working with your organisation because ..(you have to tell

why you want this job).

I am available for an interview at your convenience, and can be contacted by

telephoning (phone number where you can be contacted)... or by writing to

the above address.

Attached is a copy of my resume and I look forward to the opportunity to

discuss my application with you in more detail.

Yours faithfully

(you have to sign here)

Mr Lee Downs

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Resume

Curriculum Vitae

How can I prepare my resume?

But, what is a resume? or what is a curriculum vitae?

A resume is the meaning of gathering information (personal summary) for an

employer to know about your personal background including your name,

address, age, schooling, qualifications, training and work history.

Always remember that a resume or curriculum vitae (CV) should be

comprehensive (tell them about yourself and your experience not other

rubbish talk), and not to long. Just try to make your resume short enough.

Three or four pages about yourself and experience is enough for an employer

to know.

When you write your resume, an important part of the resume is your work

history and your achievements. These two points will make the employer

catch an interesting part on your performance.

For example: Truck Driver 1966 to 1990

Duties:

Driving semi trailer to deliver goods to various firms in the

Eastern suburbs.

Work flexible hours to complete the job tasks.

Complete the log book at each job task.

Achievements:

Getting the job tasks done on time.

Long term working with the same firm.

Excellent driving record.

Achievement

The main part of a good resume or CV is the achievement statement.

These statements should only be listed for the jobs you have had in the last

two years. List your best achievements eg. gained a promotion etc. The

information should be brief and consist of a couple of short paragraphs.

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Joanne Davis

Preparing your resume

One, two or three even four pages is enough.

Make sure your resume is short, sharp, clear, and accurate.

Type your resume if possible.

Use headings in bold and set out information in point form.

Make plenty of copies, so it is handy every time you apply for a job.

It is important to prepare a rough copy first by filling out the details, then

the information onto clean white paper.

Remember, you may need to change your resume when it is necessary.

Interview

Preparation

Interpreter

Questioning styles

Interview

Umm, I'm nervous for my first interview. How can I be prepared for my

interview?

There are various ideas and information in this section to help you to

overcome your stress, anxiety, nerves and lack of confidence.

There is a lot of preparation before going to the interview, it is just something

similar to having to prepare for a talk in front of an audience.

Preparation is important

Preparation before an interview should consist (made up) of collecting

questions, preparing answers, and plenty of practice.

During an interview, always talk in a positive manner, never introduce

negatives regarding past employers or situations. Never ask questions about

salary and conditions during an initial interview.

Make sure when you leave the interview that you had the opportunity to

market yourself successfully. Think about how well did you sell yourself.

Before you finish your interview with an employer, make sure to ask the

employer some questions you might like to know which were not mentioned

during the interview.

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Some hints on before you go for your interview.

Start finding out all you can about the job and the company. The answers can

be found through CES staff, teachers and talk to parents or friends.

Prepare answers for questions the employer is likely to ask such as:

Your best school/college subjects

Your hobbies, interests etc

Your future study plans

Why did you apply for the job?

What do you know about the job and company?

Prepare questions that show you are interested in the job.

Ask the employer about:

The type of work

The training given

The possibility for advancement

The hours of work and general working conditions including salary.

At an interview

Do not be so nervous

Stay calm

Be there on time

Dress appropriately

Be polite

Watch and listen carefully

Speak or sign clearly and face employer

Do not look at the interpreter only or look around the room

Keep everything relevant

Do not go off the track.

Interpreter

How to get an interpreter

Sometimes it is difficult to arrange an interpreter at short notice but sometimes

you can be lucky to grab one.

It can be handy to use an interpreter for an interview, however there are few

hints which can make your interview successful.

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Joanne Davis

Hints:

(You need to know what to do with an interpreter)

Arrive at the interview approx 5 to 10 minutes early so you can have

time to talk to your interpreter and to get to know that person.

Talk directly to an employer and it is a good idea to introduce the

interpreter to the person who will be interviewing you.

During an interview, try to arrange the best position for yourself, the

interpreter, and the employer, as this will lead to a smooth conversation.

Follow the same way as mentioned in the last section - “At an interview"

Questions

There are various questions style which an employer will use.

Opportunity (a chance) Questions:-- Some questions will provide you with a

golden opportunity to expand (telling them in more details) on your strengths

or give key information about yourself.

eg. Tell me about yourself?

What are you good at?

What did you learn in that job?

Achievement (did something well) Questions:- These questions will provide

an opportunity to express your achievements.

eg. What are you doing best right now?

Why do you think you got that job?

What are you most proud of in your career?

Potential (being clever, can do it) Questions:- An interviewer will avoid

hypothetical questions except in this area where he of she is trying to assess

your suitability not just for the job on offer, but a career with the Company.

eg. What do you see as the next step in your career?

In the long-term what do you want to achieve?

What do you see yourself doing in 5 - 10 years time?

What is the ideal job for you?

Weakness (not good at all) and Failure (never pass or win) Questions:-

Interviewers take more notice of weaknesses than they do of successes.

eg. What is there in your work that is making it difficult to succeed?

What is the biggest problem at work you have had to overcome?

What are your weaknesses?

What is the most difficult aspect of your job?

Objections (do not like it) and Nasties Questions - Sometimes you get

questions which are far from encouraging and you will be tempted to ask

yourself "Well why am I being interviewed".

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Remember sometimes your CV has got you onto the shortlist when you do not

match the person specification. Also, the interviewer may ask you the

questions they will be asked by their senior when recommending your

appointment.

eg. Why have you been out of work for so long?

Why is your salary so low given these achievements in your

Curriculum Vitae?

Why did you fail in that job?

What happens after an interview?

As you walk out of the office feeling relief, you will also be pondering what will

happen next?

Will I get that job?

Most employers will not give you an answer on the spot. They generally say "l

will give you a call tomorrow or I will get in touch with you before the end of the

week". Remember, the employers are looking for people who will not only

work well but also contribute to a friendly atmosphere in the workplace.

After receiving their reply saying “You are not successful”

Why I missed out on the job?

There are various reasons why you miss out on a job:-

Too much competition - someone with better qualifications, skills,

experience got the job.

Presentation unsuitable for the job.

Lack of enthusiasm/interest in the job.

Poor speech

Late to the interview.

Lack of knowledge about the job.

Not doing enough talking, not knowing how to assert yourself.

Relying on the interpreter to do most of the talking.

Do not give up after the first failure.

You can learn by your mistakes, and will do better at the next interview.

KEEP TRYING!!!!

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GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR DEAF

STUDENTS

Associate Professor Des Power

Centre for Deafness Studies and Research

Griffith University OLD

Deaf people, parents of deaf students and educators of the deaf for some

years had the ambition to see more Australian deaf people becoming

themselves teachers of the deaf: both to capitalise on the undoubted ability of

many deaf people, to provide to deaf students unique role models of

successful deaf professionals and to bring to bear on issues and practices in

education of the deaf the insights of deaf people who know deafness and its

effects "from the inside". This proved very difficult to accomplish while

education of the deaf in Australia remained predominantly oral in its approach

to communication and while relatively low academic expectations were

placed on deaf students. With the swing to "oral plus" sign-accompanied

educational methods in the nineteen-seventies and higher academic

expectations and better opportunities as most high school age programs for

deaf students were placed in regular high schools, this state of affairs began

to change.

Hence, in 1981 staff of the then Mt Gravatt CAE began to explore the

possibility of beginning to train deaf people as teachers of the deaf. Mt Gravatt

CAE was particularly suitable for such a venture because it had the only

program in Australia which could train teachers of the deaf at an

undergraduate level in the Diploma of Teaching (Primary and Special

Education). The College accepted the idea with enthusiasm, but funding

proved difficult to find, and it was not until 1984 that the program began with

an intake of five deaf people, with funds provided by a Commonwealth

Rehabilitation Sen/ice Program Grant, with extra support from the Quota Clubs

of Australia. By this time the Mt Gravatt College had become a Campus of the

Brisbane CAE, where the program continued with the support of the Brisbane

CAE after the CRS Program Grant was no longer available. (It is worth noting

that despite the undoubted benefits of New Directions, some good things

disappeared, because the new Act's emphasis on individual client services

meant that Program Grants were no longer available, and the Deaf Student

Support Program had a couple of lean years, although some support

continued from the Brisbane CAE.)

Changes in Government policy (signalled in A Fair Chance for All) meant that

Equity Program Grants became available to support disabled students in

universities in 1988. Such a grant was applied for under Brisbane CAE and

was received for a three-year period. During this three years the Mt Gravatt

Campus of Brisbane CAE became the Mt Gravatt Campus of Griffith University

through one of the most successful of the "Dawkins Mergers". One of the

conditions of Equity Mainstream Grants was that the institution begin to fund

the program from its general operating grant. Griffith University agreed to do

this, so the program is on a firm (although lean!) funding basis for the

foreseeable future.

With the move to Griffith, the program has expanded from its base in teacher

education and can provide support for deaf students in any of Griffith‘s

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programs on any of its five campuses (Nathan, Mt Gravatt, Gold Coast

College, Queensland College of Art and the Queensland Conservatorium of

Music).

In 1992 the program supports students in degree programs in education,

humanities, leisure studies, biomedical science, commerce, science and

technology and environmental studies; a total of 24 students.

Services available include sign/oral interpreting, note-taking (in 1992 part of

the University's generic note-taking service), tutorial support, technical aids,

counselling and staff consultations. Regular staff development programs for

general and academic staff are also conducted. The Program operates under

the co-ordination of the University's Centre for Deafness Studies and

Research, which conducts research and development and training projects in

many deafness-related areas.

It became clear early on in the Program's life that there was a considerable

pool of very able deaf people whose educational history was such that they

did not have the educational background to enter TAFE diplomas or university

courses, even though they had the undoubted capacity to succeed in them.

Negotiations with TAFE-Qld eventually resulted in the University (again

through a DEET Equity Grant) and Ithaca TAFE College mounting in 1991 a

Certificate of Adult Tertiary Preparation, a TAFE-accredited full-time one-year

course which provides graduates with the possibility of entry to post-

secondary education. A group of twelve full-time and three pan-time deaf

students entered the course in 1991 and all completed it. Three of the

graduates are now enrolled in Griffith University and eight in TAFE Associate

Diplomas in various fields (computing, business and welfare). Students came

from three states. Regular high school teachers were engaged for the

subjects offered and worked through interpreters where necessary. The Co-

ordinator of the Course was a teacher of the deaf with previous experience in

courses at this level. Twenty-four deaf students from three states are enrolled

in the course in 1992. We have now discovered that there is a need for a

"bridging course to the bridging course" because there appears to be another

pool of deaf people in the community who need more academic preparation

before entering the Certificate of Adult Tertiary Preparation. A TAFE College

would be an ideal environment for such a course.

Reflection on the development of our programs and our experience with them

raises a number of interesting issues that are still far from resolved, and which

apply to all disability services post high school, not just those for deaf

students.

Among these are whether services for low-prevalence disabilities such as

deafness should be centralised at one university (nationally or in each state?)

or whether every university should be open to any deaf student who applies,

and who would be entitled to any services he or she needs. Especially for

those deaf students who need interpreting this would be very expensive and

difficult to organise (especially given the current national shortage of

interpreters). On the other hand, deaf students probably have a right to attend

the university of their choice, especially where going to another means going

into a course they really did not want to do, just because support was

available only at another university. General policies need to be developed in

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this area. One possibility, of course, is for institutions (at least in the cities) to

form consortia that service low prevalence needs across a number of

institutions. This possibility needs to be explored.

The other major issue is the perennial one of “Who pays?" At the moment,

except for special grants from the DEET Equity Program, universities are

expected to find disability support funds from within their ordinary operating

grants. This is fine if universities will (or can) comply, but there is a real

danger of inequity across programs if (as will be inevitable) some universities

put good programs in place and others not-so-good ones, with consequent

disadvantage to disabled students in the latter group. Grants are helpful

because they at least get programs started, but once the grants lapse it is too

easy for financially hard-pressed institutions to lapse into less good support

for their disabled students.

It seems to me anomalous that DEET has for nearly twenty years provided

continuing funding for disabled student education at preschool, primary and

secondary school level, but has consistently refused to provide stable

continuing funding for what should be the crown of those efforts - programs for

disabled students in higher education. This state of affairs needs to be

remedied as a matter of urgency.

My own preference is for guaranteed continuing funding to universities for

disabled student support programs over and above their routine operating

grants. This seems to me to be the only way to provide reasonable equity for

disabled students across the whole system.

Other possibilities are available; e.g., a Disabled Student Allowance on the

British model which would allow the student control of her or her own funds to

"buy" such services as he or she needs. In principle this is fine, but it does

pose some organisational difficult ies for service providers and there are

economies of scale for "provided" services for expensive low-prevalence

services such as interpreting or Brailing. (An allowance may not be enough to

cover the level of interpreting or brailing that the student needs.) Some

disabled students may also find it quite difficult to negotiate their own services,

although some kind of "broker" system could help overcome that problem.

(None of this overcomes the problem noted above of whether services should

be dispersed across all universities or concentrated in a few or even one.)

Another possibility is that funds for university disability services could be

provided by a non-educational source; for example, the Commonwealth

Rehabilitation Service. l am not afraid of taking funds for services from

whomever I can, but I, in principle, support the view that it is not a CRS

responsibility to fund services for disabled students in universities except in

some very special cases. Usually, disability services in university programs

are not "rehabilitation", they are education, and hence an educational equity

rights issue, and should be funded from educational sources; in the case of

universities, by DEET.

One way of ensuring that universities meet their obligations to students with

disabilities would be to put in place a set of "performance indicators" about

disability services. DEET has signalled its intention to use a performance

indicator system to scrutinise universities, so it is disturbing to find that in the

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"Report and Recommendations" to DEET of the Research Group on

Performance Indicators (Performance Indicators in Higher Education) the

Section on "Participation and Social Equity Indicators" makes absolutely no

mention of indicators for disability service provision, indeed, specifically

indicates that it did not address this issue (among others), in itself a good

"performance indicator" of the low priority of disability services.

This is a glaring oversight which must be strongly and immediately protested

about by those associated with disability services. Lack of indicators in this

area is just not good enough, because without an adequate set of such

indicators the need for provisions in this area will not be constantly brought to

the awareness of universities, and services could easily assume a very low

priority.

All these issues and others need to be soon determined if university disability

services are to move to a more equitable provision basis and if the promise of

A Fair Chance for All is to be realised, to have "higher education that's within

everyone's reach".

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THE ROLE OF THE COMMONWEALTH REHABILITATION SERVICE

Brian Macdonald

National Manager CRS

Thank you for inviting me to speak at the conference. As the national

manager for the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service, I am happy to be

given the opportunity to talk about the role played by the CRS in assisting

people with disabilities and how this relates to tertiary education.

The main areas I would like to talk about are the origins and history of the

CRS and some recent changes to our ways of doing business, the legislative

authority for our service, what we do or try to do, the sorts of programs we

offer, and where I see this fitting in with tertiary education for people with

disabilities.

However before discussing these issues I would like to say that the Mission

Statement of the CRS is to "reduce the cost of disability to the individual and

the community by being the best provider in Australia of vocational and social

rehabilitation". The mission statement governs our business, and guides our

approach to service provision.

The CRS is no longer a welfare organisation, but a semi commercial business

undertaking which competes in the open market with private sector interests.

Because of this nature, it is inappropriate to view CRS as an arm of

government with broad ranging responsibility for the welfare of the disabled. It

is a tightly focused and resourced organisation and much of what I have to say

today reflects this situation.

You might be interested to know that the CRS turned 50 last month. In the

way of the world, this fifty-year journey has returned the CRS to the point from

which it started on 25 November 1941. Our goals and priorities for our clients

have not aItered - more jobs, and better jobs for people with disabilities.

History

The CRS came about as a result of Government decisions during the Second

World War to provide special support to disabled Australians so that they were

able to return to work, and reduce their reliance on the Invalid Pension. From

its origins, the CRS focused on vocational rehabilitation for people with an

acquired disability, including servicemen and women not eligible for

repatriation assistance. This purpose has remained constant while eligibility

has gradually been widened, so that the CRS current client target group

includes all Australians between the ages of 15 and 64 with a physical,

sensory, psychiatric or intellectual disability which affects their ability to work,

and for whom a rehabilitation program would substantially increase their

capacity for employment or to live independently.

In those earlier days, the CRS operated along quasi-military lines. An early

film shows patients at a rehabilitation centre being lined up and marched from

one area to another - the military air emphasised by the use of Nissan huts for

occupational therapy, workshop and other activities. Programs tended to be

fairly inflexible, with not too much regard for the individual’s situation or

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background, and delivered in a no nonsense “the doctor knows best for you"

manner.

Lip service only was paid to many principles which are seen as important

today, such as consumer rights, access and equity, individual program

planning and other issues. The emphasis of activities was on making the

client for the program, rather than tailoring the program to meet the needs of

the individual.

Through the intervening years, and benefiting from the insight of research, the

trend has been increasingly towards planning programs to meet individual

client’s needs. These days it is quite rare to see a group of clients undergoing

the same program at the same place, although CFlS does run back care,

stress management, pain management and other group programs where

numbers warrant.

Nevertheless, by the early 1980's the CRS was still an organisation based in

large metropolitan institutions, which operated on a medical model treating

clients as if they were ill. The centres offered return to work and personal

independence rehabilitation by directly providing medical, nursing,

counselling, social work, physiotherapy, psychology and occupational therapy

services.

It is not unusual for patients (as they were known in the early days) to stay in

for 18 months or two years, with all their accommodation, nursing, meal aids

and appliances, education and social support needs being met. Some 1,100

staff provided programs for about 9,000 clients a year, and they boasted

around 3,000 vocational placements annually. Funding for these programs

was, by special arrangement, unlimited.

While they were invaluable in returning a small number of people to work and

independence, there were problems - the centres cost a great deal, the model

of service delivery encouraged compliance and dependence in many people,

and by separating clients from their communities for treatment, they didn‘t help

in breaking down the barriers to community acceptance of people with

disabilities.

The introduction of the Disability Service Act in 1986 heralded change. its

aims were to offer people with disabilities choices about their lives, to treat

them as much as possible like other citizens, and to optimise their

opportunities for employment and life in the wider Australian community. The

CRS and other government funded services for people with disabilities were

to share that philosophy and, as a start, the institutional approach was

dismantled and replaced with small regional units which could respond to

individual needs and offer people better access to mainstream Australian life.

In the midst of this, the CHS also faced staff cuts and tough new funding

arrangements. Other notable changes in recent years have included an

Australia wide regionalisation program, and introduction of a case

management approach to service provision, and a more business like

approach to the provision of rehabilitation services.

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Coping with change

Within 12 months of the enactment of the DSA the CRS had responded,

selling its expensive urban establishments (returning $30 million to the

taxpayer in the process) and leasing small offices in shopfronts and houses in

rural towns throughout the country. The CRS now operates out of 146 units

throughout Australia.

The new emphasis is on tertiary rehabilitation. To clarify that term - the World

HeaIth Organisation delineates three stages in recovery from illness or trauma

- primary and secondary rehabilitation, in which the patient's physical and

mental condition is stabilised and as much function as possible is restored,

and tertiary rehabilitation, in which a person with a disability adjusts to their

social and vocational environment. The first two stages are generally

managed by the State Health system. The third stage is the area in which the

CRS operates as do a large number of private rehabilitation providers,

although some responsibility for support and accommodation as part of the

third stage of rehabilitation will rest with the States under arrangements now

being agreed with the States under the auspices of the Special Premiers

Conference.

The CRS also developed a service delivery model including case

management by professional staff, with clients being able to remain in their

local community whilst undertaking a rehabilitation program.

People with disabilities are no longer treated as being 'ill' and requiring help;

the emphasis is on the abilities and skills each client possesses. The client's

capacity is assessed with the help of professional staff, and the clients are

assisted to devise their own programs to achieve their goals, with the support

of professional counsellors and therapists. The focus is on short term

intervention to assist a client to meet vocational needs and goals rather than

on lengthy medical programs.

Leadership

As well as being the longest established rehabilitation provider in Australia,

CRS is now the largest, and, if I may boast somewhat, has established a

reputation as a leader in the delivery of services in line with increased

community concern for people with a disability, a leader in the private

rehabilitation market-place, and a leader in reform of government service

delivery. The CHS will continue to provide tertiary rehabilitation to Australians

who need our services, and the next three years will see continued expansion

of the number of CRS units located in rural and remote areas of Australia, a

large increase in the number of clients assisted by CFlS, and a commitment to

increased vocational outcomes for our clients.

Social Justice

In July of this year, the Hon Brian Howe MP, the Minister for Health Housing

and Community Services, tabled in Parliament the Governments statement on

'Social Justice for People with Disabilities'. In it, he mentioned that one of the

main challenges we face in the development of social policies which are

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sustainable into the next century is that of removing the attitudinal, structural,

institutional and physical barriers which inhibit social justice.

The Governments vision of a fair society is one where all Australians can

share equitably in the distribution of resources, and those include education.

Despite its semi-commercial nature, the CRS wholeheartedly supports the

principles of social justice, including the principle that people with disabilities

have the same right to tertiary education as everybody else in Australia.

l fully appreciate that when it comes to education, as with so many other areas

of life, most people with a disability are at a distinct disadvantage to the rest of

the community. The facts speak for themselves: people with disabilities start

from behind the eight ball, and they have less chance of completing their

education than students who do not have a disability.

However, I must also make it clear that under the legislation which governs

the operations of the CRS, the Disability Services Act, it is not the CFlS's role

to sponsor all Australians with disabilities through tertiary education. It is the

CFlS's role to assist its client group to find and keep jobs. The CRS is

restricted in providing educational courses for people with disabilities to those

who have been approved to participate in a rehabilitation program, and who

cannot obtain employment without tertiary training. This now brings me to the

subject of money.

Funding and a vocational focus

As with all publicly funded programs, we in the CRS have to make decisions

about where available finds are to be allocated. The reality is that we have to

live with a tightly guarded public purse.

In a situation where funds are finite and wants or needs are infinite, some form

of rationing has to take place, and this is what is happening in the CRS today.

Most of our clients tell us that they come to us because they want to find work.

To meet their expectations, the CRS has determined that it should dedicate

the bulk of its available resources to achieving vocational outcomes for its

clients.

With this responsibility in mind, and in view of legislative requirements, it has

not been possible for the CRS to offer carte blanche assistance for people

with disabilities to obtain a tertiary education.

As part of a comprehensive program of rehabilitation, the CRS will sometimes

assist with the costs of aids and equipment, and will also occasionally support

tertiary training where this is the only way that a client will receive suitable,

stable employment. This has led to the misconception that CRS is a provider

of general support services for people with disabilities. This is not the case.

Our core business is the provision of short term interventions which will lead to

a client obtaining employment and the 'normalisation' and community respect

and acceptance which comes from holding down a job. As the CRS has a

responsibility to offer programs to as many people in the target group as

possible with the resources allocated to it, we try to achieve the goal of

employment as cost effectively as we can.

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In developing a program with a client, the CRS will examine ways in which a

client's existing skills would enable them to enter the workforce. Where further

skills are required, all avenues of achieving the skills are examined, and the

most suitable and cost-effective methods of gaining them is selected - often

this would be a period of on the job training with an employer, rather than

formal education. The decision on the most appropriate program to offer

depends on what the client needs to achieve a vocational outcome.

In the current economic climate, the pressure is on the CHS to demonstrate its

value to the Australian community. The way we will be able to demonstrate

this value is by sticking to our business.

However, you should not interpret these comments as a statement that the

CRS is pursuing a course designed to limit its use of tertiary training in

programs. This is not the case and we will continue to sponsor clients where it

is appropriate. In this context you might be interested to know that the CRS is

currently sponsoring over 500 clients through tertiary training institutions. The

total number of clients on the books at this moment is t0,000.

You might say that only represents 5% of the total but it needs to be

considered in the context of our service which l will outline briefly.

The CRS provides five basic service packages, each one containing agreed

goals and activities designed to achieve them. The services are:

1 . Assessment

An assessment is an analysis of a disabled person's specific situation. It

usually forms the basis for recommending options for that person's

rehabilitation, but need not necessarily lead to a CRS rehabilitation program.

2. Return to work for injured workers

The goal of any return to work plan is generally to return the injured worker to

his or her pre-injury position as soon as possible. Where a full return to the

pre-injury position is not possible, alternative options are considered in

consultation with the worker and his or her employer. This will include an

assessment of the worker's capabilities, and a workplace and job analysis

which form the basis of a return to work program.

3. Job Preparation and Placement

The aim of this service is to provide people with disabilities with the

opportunity and training to participate in the workforce. This program may be

offered to people with disabilities who have never worked, who have been

unable to work for a considerable time, or who are unable to return to a

precious position or profession due to a disability.

4. Independent Living

An independent living program is designed to give a person greater

independence in the home and greater access to the community. It might

include driver training, training in the use of public transport, and providing

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equipment to minimise the effect of disability on a person's every day life. This

program would usually be offered as part of a return to work or job preparation

program, but can also be offered as a separate service.

5. Rehabilitation Consultancy

The CRS can provide employers, unions, groups and individuals with

professional advice and training in Occupational Health and Safety,

workplace design, back care, pain and stress management training, and

disability issues. Advice and recommendations are based on CRS wide

national experience in the fields of disability and rehabilitation, and is

provided by professionally qualified staff.

A CRS program might include any combination of the activities l have just

outlined. Where a service is essential to successful completion of a

rehabilitation program, and the CRS cannot provide it internally, external

organisations are increasingly being used to provide them. Services in this

category include aids and equipment, specialised vocational training, and,

very occasionally, tertiary education.

Into the future

Future activities will centre on further expansion of the CRS network, to better

service Australians in smaller communities and participation in the Disability

Reform Package.

Other types of non-vocational assistance will remain the province of other

Government funded programs, both Federal and State.

The Disability Reform Package

Reflecting the CRS business orientation, we have developed a ‘Memorandum

of Understanding' with the Department of Social Security (DSS) to enable

the CRS to play its part in the Government's Disability Reform Package.

The Governments Disability Reform Package aims to improve the chances of

people with disabilities of gaining and keeping employment by making

rehabilitation and training services more accessible to clients, and by

removing systemic disincentives to their workforce participation. The CRS has

been closely involved with the development of the reform package, and

supports its aim of focusing attention on the abilities of people with disabilities.

The Disability Reform Package will for the first time link pension a benefit grant

and payment to a system of support and assistance for the clients concerned.

Along with the Commonwealth departments of Social Security, and

Employment, Education and Training, CRS will form Disability Panels which

will meet with suitable applicants for Sickness Allowance and Disability

Support Pension, and aims to short-circuit the gradual loss of self esteem

which in too many cases accompanies the forced inactivity of ilIness or injury.

The Disability Panel will discuss with the client various activities which may

increase their chances of gaining or keeping work, and develop with the client

an agreed plan to provide and undertake the services selected.

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The activities which might be included in the 'Activity Plan' include DEET job

and training programs, Supported and Competitive Employment Training and

Placement services, and CHS rehabilitation programs. A rehabilitation

program involving tertiary studies is an option if the applicant for pension is

passed to the CRS. The CRS has guaranteed places in its program for 14,700

DSS clients in the next year.

Federal/State Government services

One of the unique challenges of governing a country like Australia is the

management of government itself at its different levels of local councils, State

or Territory Governments, and Commonwealth . The various responsibilities

of the States and the Commonwealth are set out in the Constitution, and in

some areas, such as Foreign Policy and Defence, the divisions are relatively

clear-cut.

The areas of social justice and assistance for people with disabilities however

are not so clear cut. States and Territories have different legislation providing

different levels of assistance for a wide variety of disabilities.

For some time both the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments

have noticed the complexity, overlap, duplication and gaps in the provision of

health and community services. This lack of clear definition of roles has

meant that conflicts between the States and the Commonwealth have become

institutionalised, effort and resources were sometimes duplicated, and also

some people with disabilities have had added difficult y in organising the level

of support they need to live and work independently in the community.

Following extensive negotiations, the Special Premiers Conference in 1990

agreed in principle to a framework of significant rationalisation of the provision

of services between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories. In

July 1991, the Special Premiers Conference signed the Commonwealth /State

Disability Agreement. This landmark agreement separates responsibility for

employment services from accommodation and other support services,

assigning employment services, such as the CRS, to the Commonwealth ,

while the States have responsibility for accommodation and support.

Before this separation occurs, however, consumers' rights will be protected by

a requirement that each State enact legislation complementary to the

Disability Services Act 1986, which defines the Commonwealth 's approach to

service delivery in this area. The DSA was developed after extensive

consultation with consumers, their parents and carers, and representatives of

service provider organisations, and upholds consumer' rights to privacy,

independence and choice. The CRS will remain within the Commonwealth

sphere because of its client orientation.

Client numbers and network growth

Over the first few decades of CPS operations the total numbers of CRS clients

grew slowly until by 1986 it had reached 11,000. It has increased its

operations dramatically over the last 5 years so that during 1990-91, CRS

assisted almost 25,000 clients. In 1991-92 we are aiming to assist almost

29,000 clients.

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Over the next two years, CRS client numbers will increase to over 30,000 by

1994, an increase of approximately 57% over current numbers. Professional

staff numbers will increase by 20% and 30% (300 new staff compared to

either 800 professionals) in the same period. New CRS units will open during

1991/2 in South Granville, Wyong, Maroubra, Epping, Berwick, Beenleigh,

Inala, and Enfield. By the end of 1992, 160 units will provide tertiary

rehabilitation services across Australia.

The CRS will not rest on its laurels - we still face significant challenges. To

give you some idea, we are planning a 57% increase in client numbers while

resource levels will increase at a lower level; and we have commenced 11

pilot programs for the rehabilitation of people with psychiatric disabilities.

The new initiatives with psychiatric disability presents both a challenge and an

opportunity. CRS is anxious to prove it can meet the challenge and will be

opening units across Australia to test tertiary rehabilitation programs for

people with psychiatric disabilities. While the philosophy will remain the

same, that people with psychiatric disabilities have a right to access the

support they need to allow them to compete for jobs, these programs will

obviously need to recognise the differences in psychiatric disability, with more

intensive support of these clients and possibly longer programs. An extensive

round of consultation was conducted to determine what model, or models of

service delivery, would be most effective with this client group and our

proposal has been well received by potential clients and their representatives.

The program will be evaluated at the end of two years.

To service the increase in our number of clients, we need more staff in the

community. To achieve that, we have begun a major recruitment drive with

the aim of adding 300 professionals (principally occupational therapists and

rehabilitation counsellors) to our numbers.

We are also thinking long-term and are offering cadetships to final-year

students. Twenty-three cadets have been appointed and will take up duty in

regional units next year on completion of their studies. As well as helping our

recruitment, this will promote CRS as an employer of quality and opportunity.

A new group of cadets will be appointed for 1992 in December of this year.

Applicants are being interviewed now.

Changes in management practices will continue to support the increases in

productivity demanded by client targets. Devolution of responsibility will

continue. A new fully integrated client management/financial management

system has been introduced. Aggressive marketing to insurance companies

and compensation authorities will be undertaken, and Regional units will be

given incentives to continue to improve services in terms of revenue retention

for over-target performance.

We will continue to focus on achieving the best possible result for our clients

and we have begun measuring our performance, not by counting the numbers

of clients we assist, but by measuring the 'outcomes' those clients achieve -

with particular emphasis on ‘vocational outcomes'.

In the 90s and beyond, CRS aims to continue doing what it does best -

providing relatively short term vocational rehabilitation programs, and acting

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as manager and expert broker to provide, manage, co-ordinate or buy in

services after assessing client need.

Conclusion

I'm sure you would all agree with me that people with disabilities still suffer

disadvantages with respect to the rest of the community. One area in which

the weakness of the current situation becomes apparent, is in the provision of

aids and equipment for people with disabilities. As you would be aware, the

cost of disability can be crippling in itself - particularly if the disability is a

severe one. A better deal for people with disabilities is an essential part of

the Government's vision of Australia's future as a fair society, where all

Australians can share equitably in the distribution of resources, especially

employment opportunities.

The cost of disability is so immense that no one organisation, no single level

of government, no institution, and no individual can be expected to bear the

entire cost. Each organisation in this field has its contribution to make - the

tertiary institutions rendering higher education more attractive and accessible

to people with disabilities, the State governments providing aids and

equipment, accommodation and long-term support services; and the

Commonwealth Government, through its funded services and through service

providers such as the CRS, providing employment training and placement.

Australia has made great progress in this area in the last decade, marked by

the United Nations as the 'Decade of the Disabled'. At the CRS Conference

held in Melbourne in April this year, international delegates expressed their

high opinion of the work which has been done here to forward the cause of

people with disabilities. I intend to maintain the CRS's contribution to this

progress - restoring an increasing number of our clients with purpose, place

and pride, through access to fulfilling and meaningful work.

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Pathways Post- Secondary Education Students with Disabilities

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DISABILITY AND DISCRIMINATION

Moira Rayner

Commissioner for Equal Opportunity (Victoria)

It is timely for me to be talking about discrimination against people with

disabilities today.

First, there is a real possibility that the Commonwealth will, following the work

done by the Disability Advisory Council of Australia, enact comprehensive

federal legislation prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability or

impairment.

There is already a lot of law at Commonwealth , State and intemational levels

which makes discrimination against people with disabilities unlawful. Four

States, and Victoria is one, have disability discrimination legislation. The

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission has had jurisdiction over

discrimination in employment on the ground of disability since January 1990

but it cannot provide a remedy, as it can for sex and race discrimination, and

as the State legislation does provide. Internationally there are guarantees

against discrimination to which Australia is a party - in the International

Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Declaration of the Rights ofthe

Child, the Declaration of the Rights of Disabled Persons, and the Declaration

on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons.

Secondly, today the High Court delivered its second ever decision on indirect

discrimination against people with disabilities in what is colloquially known as

'the MET case'.

You may remember the dramatic events of 1989/1990 which led to this

appeal.

In 1989 the Public Transport Corporation announced that it intended to

introduce ‘scratch tickets' and remove conductors from trams in Melbourne,

This stirred the relevant Unions up considerably. As well, various disability

rights groups challenged the PTCV's decision, saying that the proposals

indirectly discriminated against people with some impairments. In early 1990,

during a minor public transport strike, the Equal Opportunity Board

courageously - in the 'Yes Minister' sense of the word - made orders requiring

the Government to vary its policy. The Government appealed to the Supreme

Court, which overturned the Board's decision, and it is from that decision that

the disabled groups appealed to the High Court.

The government had argued that they could not be found to have

discriminated because:

(a) their transport policy did not 'require' disabled people to use trams

with or without conductors"

(b) financial considerations made it a reasonable policy, even if it did

have a disproportionately adverse impact on some people with disabilities

(c) they had been directed by the Minister to adopt the policy, and since

he had the statutory power to direct them in that way it was necessary they

comply with that directive, and that they were therefore entitled to claim an

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exemption under the act even if the act they were required to do was directly

on indirectly discriminatory and would otherwise have been unlawful.

The High Court found that the policy was capable of being discriminatory

towards disabled people, and that the requirement that they be able to use

public transport on those terms did affect them adversely far more than other

commuters.

The Court also effectively overruled, again, the decision of Fullagar J, of the

Victorian Supreme Court on Arumugam which had suggested that a

complainant of discrimination needed to prove 'conscious' discrimination by

the Respondent. The Court said that to interpret the Act in such a way as to

allow government to exempt corporations from their duties not to discriminate

under the Equal Opportunity Act would lead to an absurd and unintended

result , (the Act expressly binds the State) and could not be accepted.

As well, the Court considered the extent to which a complainant's perspective

should be used in deciding whether a condition is or is not reasonable. The

Public Transport Corporation argued that is was reasonable for them to

change the transport system in the way they did because the existing ticket

system and the presence of tram conductors was too expensive. They argued

that their actions were reasonable on the basis of financial considerations -

that is, to the Corporation. The complainants argued that in deciding whether

the PTC's action was reasonable, the effect on the complainants ought to be

considered as well. For them, the changes meant they would find it very

difficult , if not impossible, to use the public transport system. The Court found

that the Board should reconsider the case and determine whether or not the

conditions imposed by the PTC transport policy were 'reasonable' in all the

circumstances of the case. So it isn't over yet.

So where does that leave us?

1. Discrimination - the present law

Anti-discrimination legislation prohibits only certain types of discrimination.

Firstly, there must be a ground. In Victoria law it is unlawful to treat someone

less favourably than someone else because of their having, or being thought

to have, an impairment.

This covers present impairments - such as cerebral palsy or measles - past

impairments - eg broken leg or a history of mental illness - and impairments

that are imputed to a person, such as that a person has an intellectual

impairment because he/she speaks slowly.

It is also unlawful to discriminate against someone because of characteristics

which people who have impairments are generally thought to have - eg that

people with head injuries are intellectually disabled because of their manner

of walking or talking.

'Impairment' is defined to mean total or partial loss of a bodily function; the

presence in the body of organisms causing disease; total or partial loss of a

part of the body; malfunction of a part of the body, which includes a mental or

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psychological disease or disorder, or a condition or malfunction as a result of

which a person learns more slowly that persons who do not have that

condition malfunction, and a malformation or disfigurement of a part of the

body.

Secondly, the discrimination must happen in an area of public life covered by

law. You can discriminate as much as you like in conversation at the pub,

over the kitchen table or in the seminary. Employment, of course, is the most

significant major area covered by the legislation - 80% of my complaints are

about work.

Last year I received 983 informal enquires and complaints about

discrimination on the ground of impairment but note than 22% of my formal

complaints were on that ground. So far this year I have had 54 compared with

30 formal complaints in the same period last year. Very few of the complaints

were about education. 80% were of discrimination in employment, followed

by accommodation and goods and services, 1 against a qualifying body, and

only 3 in education. This year 40 of The complaints so far have been about

discrimination in employment, 2 in education, 3 in clubs, 1 in accommodation,

and 8 in goods and services.

2. Direct and Indirect Discrimination

All the anti-discriminatory legislation which applies in Victoria - the Equal

Opportunity Act (Victoria), the Racial Discrimination Act (also Commonwealth )

prohibits two quite separate forms of discrimination. Society thinks of

discrimination as something pretty obvious, where the factor that made the

difference is readily apparent. But that’s only one sort of discrimination; direct

discrimination.

A person is directly discriminated against when he or she is treated less

favourably than someone else because of one of the prohibited grounds of

discrimination. It need not be the only reason. In Victorian law it must be a

substantial ground or reason.

Under all of these laws the discriminator need not have intended to

discriminate, but (leaving aside the sometime difficult y of proving that the real

reason was one of the prohibited grounds), identifying direct discrimination is

usually quite straight forward.

For example, if an employer was to ask job applicants about their health and

to make comments about, say, people with HIV infection or Crohn‘s disease

being unreliable employees, then an unsuccessful applicant who had a

disability or impairment but was qualified for the job would have some fairly

strong evidence on which to base a complaint of direct discrimination.

Similarly, an employer who closely questioned manifestly disabled, but not

apparently fit, job applicants about their sick leave history and then did not

offer the job to a person in a wheelchair, would run a very great risk of a

complaint or direct impairment discrimination.

Indirect discrimination, however, is quite different. For a start it is usually much

broader in scope. Usually the complaint is about an institutional practice,

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which has implications for a whole class of potential complainants as well as

the one who did complain. Indirect discrimination is also subtle. It usually

arises from an apparently neutral rule, often embedded within an

organisational culture, sometimes to the point of being an unwritten rule or

informal practice at odds with written rules or formal structural requirement. It

is often perceived as 'fair' because it applies to everyone'.

There have not been many indirect discrimination claims because of the

perceived difficulties in proving it. This is changing. Lawyers representing

particularly disadvantaged people have begun a more sophisticated and

targeted challenge to entrenched discrimination. They have become more

familiar with the concept, and more easily identify it, and are more willing to

take complaints on.

Essentially, indirect discrimination is about blanket conditions which are

applied to everyone; but with which some people cannot comply.

The particularly difficult thing about anti-discrimination law is that it is a new

area, where conflicts between ordinary principles and new concepts of social

responsibility arise all the time.

In many cases the conflict between the demands of 'able' society and the

person with the impairment is seen, by the service-provider or educator or

accommodation provider or employer to be complete. Yet the Act actually

requires able Victorians to accommodate the needs of less or differently abled

people, and where conflict arises tries to resolve it in terms of that weasel

word, 'reasonableness‘.

Let me look first at discrimination in education.

3. Discrimination in Education

'Educational authorities' - which includes all schools. universities and other

institutions which provide education or training - are not allowed to

discriminate on the basis of disability in students' admission to and the terms

on which they are admitted to a course, or the benefits of the education offered

to such a student, or to subject the student to any other detriment, including

expulsion, because of their impairment.

Education is one of the major areas of discrimination in Victoria society.

Parents of children who have disabilities fight a constant battle to have their

children integrated, if that is what they want, into the mainstream system. -Lack

of provision of services is usually given as the reason for governments

wishing to deny their responsibilities to provide adequately for all persons

who require additional Support.

Assuming that the person has, however, surmounted these obstacles and

gained an education or training, they face similar problems at work or in

attempting entry to the trades, callings, or professions of their choice.

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4. Discrimination in Employment

The Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 1984 makes it unlawful for employers,

prospective employers and their agents, and qualifying bodies to discriminate

on the ground of impairment in recognising qualifications for work, in offering

or not offering employment, the terms of employment and access to

occupational training, opportunities for promotion, transfer of training 'or to any

other benefits connected with employment' or dismissing a person or

'subjecting the employee to any other detriment'.

5. The Defence of 'Special services or facilities' which cannot

'reasonably' be provided

There is a fundamental obligation by an employer or and educator to

accommodate the reasonable needs of a person with a disability but it is

expressed in the negative, in the form of a defence. lf, because of a person's

impairment, he or she would require special services or facilities that cannot

reasonably be provided, then the school (or an employer) may act in a way

which is otherwise discriminatory. Employers may lawfully discriminate

against people on the basis of impairment if, having taken into account the

work reasonable required of the job, the person would require special

services or facilities to do it, and these cannot reasonably be provided in the

circumstances.

The discriminator must be prepared to demonstrate that the defence applies.

This means that they must document their investigation and decision-making

process, which is a step in the process very commonly missed. An employer

has to show what the genuine occupational requirements of the job are, and

that these are reasonably required of the employee, that he/she needs special

services, and that they cannot reasonably be provided.

Genuine occupational requirements are those which are necessary for the

safe, efficient and reliable performances of the work. These have to be

separated from the optional elements. They should be part of the job

description, and be the basis of assessing an applicant's suitability.

Special services or facilities cannot reasonably be assessed without at least

asking the person who has applied for the job, what they think they need.

The employer cannot necessarily assume that 'reasonableness' can be

attributed to any particular thing that the employer does not wish to do or

provide.

6. The defence of a person being a risk to themselves or others

If there is a substantial risk that a student or an employee, because of his or

her impairment, will injure themselves, or an unreasonable risk that they will

injure other, then the educational authority or employer is entitled to act in a

way which is otherwise discriminatory. An educational authority may refuse to

allow the student to participate in part of the educational program for these

reasons, though this does not allow the educational authority to expel the

student or to refuse to allow him or her access to other benefits.

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Whether or not the risk is 'substantial' will depend on the type of the

impairment and the nature of the program or work, as will the degree of risk to

others and the reasonableness of undertaking that risk.

The risk has to be real, not remote. The risk of injury can, of course, be offset

by the provision of special services or facilities which the employer may be

obliged to provide.

All of these overlap with every employer's obligations under occupational

health and safety legislation. An employer has a duty to provide a safe

workplace, that is safe to all workers including a person with a disability.

There is a creative tension between occupational health and safety law and

anti-discrimination law which is resolved by looking at the employer's

obligation to make reasonable accommodation of the employee's needs.

They do not have to be prioritised!

7. Special exemptions: education

A decision to exclude or impose conditions on a student's entry to a course of

study or training on the ground that they are unable to benefit substantially

from the educational program, whether or not special programs or services

are provided, can be used. The nature of the program and the type and extent

of the person's impairment would have to be carefully considered before this

exception would apply. lf the impairment only marginally reduced the benefits

the student would derive from the program, then the exception would not

apply. Again, this places a heavy onus on a University or College, for

example, to demonstrate the steps they had taken to check this out.

An educational authority is permitted to select students with abilities relevant

to the educational courses offered. This only applies if the way in which a

person's abilities are measured is reasonable. A student who can't write

shouldn’t for example, have their mathematical abilities assesses on the basis

of a written test.

8. Indirect Discrimination

Now let me turn to indirect discrimination. There are a number of important

parts to this. indirect discrimination is far more widespread than direct

discrimination.

(i) Requirement of condition

The first element of the definition is that there must be a condition or

requirement which applies to everyone. ll a policy were intended to rid the

workplace of all people with disabilities, for example, it would be a

discriminatory policy. [Styles v Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs

(1989) EOC 92-2391.

Some sorts of conditions or requirements might be difficult to identify because

they are not express. For example, if students were required to attend all their

lectures in a lecture theatre to which there was no disabled access, or if

prospective maths teachers were required to pass written examinations, this

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would be a requirement which he/she must fulfil to avoid failure or not being

employed. Whether that can be complied with by all potential employees or

students is a matter of fact.

(ii) Adverse impact on one group of people

The second part of the definition is differential impact. One group of people

required to comply must either have more difficult y in complying with the

condition or requirement than other groups (Victorian Equal Opportunity Act

Section 17 (5)) because they have certain impairments.

(iii) Meaning of ‘substantially higher proportion'

The Victorian legislation requires that a 'substantially higher proportion' of

other people must be able to comply with the condition.

What is important is to be able to show that more people, percentage wise or

however, are able to comply with the condition than the group described by

the prohibited ground. lf no-one can comply with it, it will not be indirectly

discriminatory against any group of people.

The group you compare the complaining, or allegedly affected group with,

must be selected in a way that ensures they were not affected by previous

discrimination.

Thus, to compare say actual applicants for jobs rather than all potential

applicants would create an unrepresentative group, one affected by past or

present discrimination; people might have been deterred from applying for

work if a particular, discriminatory condition had been known to apply.

(iv) 'Does not or cannot comply'

As well as needing to show that a significant proportion of people can comply

with the condition, the person complaining of indirect discrimination has to

show that he or she, and others like him or her, does not or cannot comply.

This does not necessarily mean that it is physically impossible for them to

comply. It need only be fundamentally impractible. People with disabilities

could use driver-only trams, even if some of them would require a permanent

attendant so to do. However it was not seriously disputed, in the MET case,

that they could not comply with the requirement to do so, in practical terms.

(v) Unreasonableness

The final criterion is that the requirement of condition must be unreasonable.

lf the condition is reasonable, no matter how many people cannot comply with

it, then there is no indirect discrimination.

Assessing reasonableness is a tricky business. Reasonableness can be

looked at from two completely different points of view. That of the employer or

that of the person complaining of indirect discrimination. In the MET case the

Court has now said that you must consider the vantage-points of both.

Respondents' views about 'reasonableness' - usually put in terms of financial

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considerations or efficiency - are not necessarily any more valid than that of

an individual complainant and it would be dangerous to assume that one will

be able so to persuade the court.

Courts do consider:

° economic efficiency

° fairness consideration - in Styles v Secretary of Department of Trade

(1988) EOC 92-239 the court of appeal considered a 'precept of fairness that

persons be employed according to the substantive level of their qualification'

(the issue was that a substantially higher proportion of men could comply with

the requirement that, applicant journalists for London posting preferably be

graded A2, though A1 could apply) (as Ms Styles did).

° safety (eg industrial safety requiring close-fitting or no head gear, which

affects Muslims women's wearing of the Veil). May I point out that there is no

'choice' between anti-discrimination law's, equal opportunity, and

occupational health and safety requirements. They neither conflict not require

prioritising, as Worksafe Australia recently suggested, but complement and

must accommodate the other.

° customer/client preferences (a matter of corporate style): this has been

interpreted strictly in the US - should one reinforce community racism by

refusing to employ Aboriginal people?

° lack of aIt ernative options (which at least requires an attempt to canvas

all available options); and

° industrial harmony.

Let me say something about the latter consideration. It is unwise, if not

dangerous, to rely on industrial consideration alone. Discrimination is

entrenched and systemic in any society because of the natural human desire

to surround ourselves with people just like us.

Anti-discrimination law is required because this is seriously anti-social in

some areas of public life, such as employment. Left completely to the

agreement of existing workers or industrial organisations, the terms and

conditions of working environments might, if the individuals were uninformed

and unenlightened, amount to direct or indirect discrimination. They might not

only be unlawful - see Kemp v Ministry for Education (1991) EOC 92-340;

Australian lron and Steel case (op cit) - but expensive for the employer. It

should be remembered that industrial pressure or lack of support for an

individual worker is not a defence to a complaint of discrimination. The

employer in Ardeshirian v Robe River Iron Associates (1990) EOC 92-299)

was severely criticised, and held responsible for the damages awarded by Sir

Ronald Wilson, for failing to act on complaints that an Iranian man was

seriously racially harassed by fellow-workers - direct discrimination in that

case. They had failed to act in his interests because the relevant Union

exercised its industrial muscle in favour of the discriminators.

The High Court decision may add strength to my view that is it not possible,

merely by following a statutory procedure such as leads to the creation of an

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industrial agreement, to make lawful - discrimination - what is unlawful under

the Equal Opportunity Act even if the Act does not necessarily say so, as the

Western Australian Act does.

But it is up to the court to find whether or not a requirement or condition was

reasonable in light of its continuing discriminatory effect. That will include the

degree of the disparity; the numbers of people affected; the surrounding

circumstances (the size, capacity and nature of business of the employer) and

It 's EO obligations and all the surrounding circumstances.

9. Conclusion

The High Court decision is too recent for me to say much more about its

impact on anti-discrimination law. However it has clearly said that even

though the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act is poorly drafted - in my view it is

one of the worst pieces of anti-discrimination law in Australia - it still works. It

has been interpreted in the light of the international human rights instrument

which created the concept of anti-discrimination law in the first place, and has

clearly laid down that governments which enact such laws cannot then purport

to exempt themselves from it by administrative fiat.

Anti-discrimination laws do work, even when their administrator' resources

and funds are inadequate, even in 'difficult economic tomes' and they can be

made to work very well by interest groups, such as the groups who sponsored

the challenge to the transport policy changes in Victoria in 1989 which

result ed in such a success today.

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THE CONCEPT OF TASTER COURSES: A way to mitigate some

disabling aspects of current policy and practice in Australian

Higher Education

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Overview

Despite Federal Government policy as presented in the policy paper 'A Fair

Chance for All' (DEET, 1990), Australian universities do not provide for equal

opportunity of access for marginalised consumers, such as people with

disabilities. It is generally recognised by people with disabilities that policies,

structures, admission procedures, and course design and assessment are not

usually flexible enough to accommodate students who do not conform to

norms set to cater for those who go onto universities, ie the traditional student.

The underlying reason for this inflexibility can be found in the traditional and

misinformed attitudes of the majority of the university community towards

'disability'.

It is suggested that one way of partly addressing this anomaly would be the

adoption of the idea of 'taster' courses, as a recognised part of the university

structure. These courses have the potential to empower students with

disabilities through personal development of strategies to counter disabling

policies and practices they may meet in the university environment. Thus,

there is less need for the creation of 'special services' for designated

'disadvantaged' groups such as people with disabilities.

The driving force behind this concept is the ultimate goal of taking 'special

services' out of education, recognising that even though some people do not

necessarily learn in ways accepted as normal or use standard equipment and

materials, they may, nevertheless, be 'able' to succeed in higher education,

and have the right to do so. It must be recognised that students with

disabilities, have the same needs and desires as all students and that the best

possibilities for change lie in accessing generic systems and providing

individual supports through existing structures. There is no need to adopt a

special approach to higher education for people with disabilities, but instead,

to have an environment which provides equal opportunity for all students

based on a human rights approach.

Introduction

In 1986, Jim T, a student with quadriplegia, enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts

degree course at the [now] University of Tasmania at Launceston. His

experience of being a student with a disability in an able bodied university

environment led to a DEET-funded project to develop an admissions and

support model designed to improve access and equity in higher education by

people with disabilities (Walker, 1990). An important part of this was

identification, by students with disabilities, of the lack of opportunity to find out

possible stumbling blocks, and ways to deal with them. It was suggested that

enrolment in a course to explore both the university environment, as well as

academic requirements, might 'bridge the gap'.

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This paper traces the development of the idea of such 'taster' courses,

describes the forms they took, and presents short vignettes of two students.

These highlight students' belief that it is not necessary to have 'special

services', provided there is opportunity to determine what individual support is

required, through existing structures.

For the purposes of this discussion, disability is defined as 'functional

limitation within the individual caused by physical, intellectual, emotional or

sensory impairments‘. Handicap is a 'loss or limitation of opportunity to take

part in the life of the community on an equal level with others due to physical

or social barriers'. Disability has too long been viewed as a problem of the

individual and not the relationship between the individual and his/her

environment. (Disabled Peoples' International.).

Since the issue of attitudes towards 'disability' is so important, a brief overview

of the basis to traditional attitudes towards the concept of disability is provided.

Traditional attitudes towards the concept disability

It is argued that the handicapping effects of disabilities are socially and

politically constructed. This argument challenges traditional medical and

welfare models of disability. In the literature, four models, or discourses of

disability are referred to:

(1) medical

(2) lay

(3) charity

(4) human rights

which 'inform practices in modern welfare states and variously compete or

combine to constitute legislative decision, report writing, educational and

other practices' (Fulcher, 1989:26).

The medical model has dominated perceptions of, and policy and practice

about disability. It is rooted in emphasis on clinical diagnosis. Because of

this, the image of 'handicap' has been closely linked with illness and has led

to the creation of a strong rehabilitation system dominated by professionals. It

focuses on individuals and their physical deficiencies - it individualises

disability and makes it a 'personal trouble' rather than a 'public issue'

(Borsay, 1986). Through a medical view, responsibility for disability is

apportioned to the "victim'. It tends to identify disability with an inability to

work which in turn influences 'special' practices for /the disabled; in education,

housing, public places, employment- which often result in exclusion. These

are socially and politically constructed arrangements. To a very large extent,

society in general, and university communities in particular, have been

successfully conditioned about disability through medical explanations.

Lay and charity discourses of disability are closely related to medical

discourse. Their roots go back to the humanitarian movement of Victorian

times and have shaped attitudes of pity, dependence and burden by a society

towards people with disabilities - the 'personal tragedy' syndrome (Oliver,

1986). Lay perceptions of disability are informed by medical and charity

discourses and it is these themes of tear, prejudice, pity, ignorance, misplaced

patronage, and resentment which inform social practices which are blatantly

discriminatory. Because of ill-informed perceptions of disability, most people

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assume that students with disabilities do not go on to universities because

they are incapable of learning. It is assumed that people with disabilities do

not work because they art not capable of working. Special and separate

services are created, with their own criteria, which result in the provision of

services exclusively for people with disabilities.

A human rights discourse in disability is the most recent and it opposes

medical, charity and lay discourses. It is the response to these because it is

consumer based, with independence, equality and self-reliance as key words,

opposing concepts of oppression, discrimination and exclusion. It stresses

the right to equality of opportunity, the right to be recognised for ability rather

than inability, the right for control over one's own life, the right to take risks.

The basis of a socio-political perspective in disability is that disability stems

from the failure of a structured social environment to adjust to the needs and

aspirations of citizens with disabilities. rather than from the inability of an

individual with a disability to adapt to the demand of society (Hahn, 1986). A

socio-political construct of disability has provided the basis to the human

rights discourse on disability. It is argued that people with disabilities will not

achieve lair and equitable status, including more representative access to

higher education, until those involved in making decisions which affect people

with disabilities, change their attitudes towards disability, from a medical-

welfare to a socio-political perspective.

While the trend towards a socio-political orientation is very positive in

identifying problems and solutions to these problems, it is not universally

accepted. The Australian higher education sector is particularly indifferent to

the rights of students with disabilities because, traditionally, people with

disabilities do not go on to universities. At present the narrow professionalism

of much of the higher education sector is in conflict with the Federal

Governments quest for access and equity, which, in turn, ,may be in conflict

with their own quest for efficiency and effectiveness, and quality and diversity-

The 'Target" initiatives

The 'Target' initiatives were two projects funded through the federal

Department of Employment, Education and Training‘s former higher education

equity program - Target 89 in 1989, and Target 2000 in 1990. They were

based on the [then] Tasmanian State Institution of Technology - which is now

known as the University of Tasmania at Launceston. Each project was funded

to the amount of $35,000 (Walker, 1990, 1991).

The idea behind the Target 89 project was to establish a system to provide

access to and support within higher education for and by people with severe

disabilities. Target 89:

~ identified barriers to access and success through a survey of people

with disabilities who had experience of higher education

established ways of ameliorating the situation by developing a

workable structural model based on information garnered from the

survey and from negotiations with relevant departments

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initiated steps towards increased access to higher education in

Tasmania by people with disabilities with the formation of the

~ Tasmanian Tertiary Education Disability Advisory Committee

(TTEDAC).

Target 2000 aimed to build on the impetus created by Target 89 and had

three major aspects:

~ incorporating the Target 89 program into mainstream activities by

developing a marketing plan to promote higher education opportunities

to people with disabilities, evaluating the admissions and support

model, drafting disability policy and strategies, promoting physical

access issues, developing staff awareness of disability issues and

establishing a peer support register:

° developing the concept of 'taster' courses for people with disabilities by

designing and trialling two types of courses to facilitate access to higher

education:

extending the concept of the Target initiatives Statewide through

spearheading the development of a strategic plan for TTEDAC.

The nature of the projects was at all times participatory, collaborative and

practical - to improve access and equity in a higher education system whose

handicapping social and educational policies and practice deter people with

disabilities. Critical reflection of the experiences of students with disabilities,

from their perspective, was a crucial factor. The development of the admission

and support model and subsequent development of 'taster' courses was

based on students participating in the process of change - the setting agendas

according to their requirements, not as others perceived their requirements to

be; participating in the collection and analysis of data, and controlling the use

of outcomes and where whole process.

Development of the idea of 'taster' courses

The concept of 'taster' courses was introduced in response to the issues

highlighted through the Target 89 survey which, amongst other things,

highlighted:

° the necessity for a support stricture to be part of the university's existing

infra-structure, not superimposed:

lack of opportunity to try out and then negotiate a program of study to

suit individual students within the university environment:

lack of opportunity for people with disabilities to participate in the

decision making process at all levels.

Concerns were expressed both by potential students and the Commonwealth

Rehabilitation Service(CFlS) about the high drop-out rate from university

courses. Many felt that this was due, in part, to uncertainty as to students'

expectations of the university, and vice-versa. A 'taster' course would provide

an opportunity for students and staff to experiment about effective

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teaching/learning situations, routines, techniques and individually appropriate

learning materials.

Target 89 pilot 'taster' course

The co-ordinator of the project had been a lecturer in charge of a 'Returning to

Study' course for mature-age entrants, for a number of years, and used her

knowledge and experience in this area as a basis for the pilot 'taster' course

in 1989. She drew on the experiences of Jim T, who was employed as

consultant to the project, along with two academics, Henry K. (with a disability)

and Bob C, as a computer consultant.

CRS looked for five willing volunteers to take part in the pilot, The only pre-

requisite was a real interest in higher education. The students were located in

different parts of the state (this was intentional) and the first stage involved

negotiating what type of course should be offered. In addition, the computer

consultants started working individually with students to seek not only the

most appropriate hard and soft ware to fulfil individual and study

requirements, but also the most cost effective - wherever possible, adapting

existing equipment. The students presented a range of disabilities and

experiences. One student had completed two and a half years of a Bachelor

of Science degree before an accident which left him brain-injured, with little

movement range and without speech. Three students used wheelchairs, and

one spent most of his time in bed.

The group (students and consultants) agreed that the first 'taster' course

should incorporate standard study skills topics, such as:

- managing time and coping with stress

lifestyle adjustments

discovering learning needs/styles

producing assignments for assessment

organising and studying for exams

listening and notetaking, participating in tutorials

reading and assimilation techniques

academic expectations and standards

- use of libraries and resources.

In addition, other aspects were incorporated, in response to students' ideas:

- study materials to suit individual requirements

alternative methods of assessment

appropriate and available equipment and aids

physical access

support, on an individual basis

financial assistance

coping with administrative systems

- coping with negative attitudes.

Since time was limited (a major draw-back of short-term funded projects) and

armed with the philosophy that it was preferable to adapt existing materials

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rather than design 'special' material, feelers were put out for suitable study

skills courses, in a distance education package, which could be adapted. The

[now] University College of Southern Queensland Continuing Education

course, Developing Student Study Skills seemed to meet the criteria, and with

their permission it was adapted to a one-off, five module, flexible course to be

serviced by the Target team.

The course was presented as five modules conducted over a flexible time

period of about eight weeks. Communication was through weekly telephone

tutorials and individual contact. The modules were available in a variety of

formats depending on individual choice - print and comb-bound (for ease of

page turning), computer disc, and audio cassette, The themes of the modules

were:

getting started

getting motivated

getting organised

finding support

- developing study skills.

The course materials were dispatched by module on a weekly basis. During

the telephone hookups, handsfree telephone equipment, obtained through

Telecom Disability Services, was tested. The co-ordinator conducted each

tutorial from a different location so that she could rotate among the student

group. The student who did not speak had a slow voice synthesised laptop

Computer. He teamed up with another student in his locality and participated

in telephone tutorials by pre programming his computer prior to the session.

The course content was adapted to enable students to think about how their

personal situation might reflect in their desire to study in a university

environment, as well as introducing them, realistically, to the demands of

study and the skills required to achieve sound academic performance.

Greater emphasis was placed on motivation, confidence building,

organisations and individual support mechanisms, rather than actual study

techniques (they could enrol in one of the 'Returning to Study' courses if this

was a concern). The reading and assignment requirements of the course

represented the equivalent of four weeks study and different approaches were

used to illustrate typical differences between types of courses.

Four of the five students enrolled in university courses in 1990. Summative

evaluation revealed that the opportunity to 'taste' materials and equipment

was the most valuable part, as well as allowing students to prepare for entry

into higher education. The course material used was not a success, but

provided the opportunity to reflect critically in the reasons why. The result s

were incorporated into the Target 2000 project.

Target 2000 'taster' courses

Developing the concept of 'taster' courses as part of initiatives to encourage

people with disabilities to consider tertiary education as a viable option was

the second major aspect of Target 2000 and was the direct result of reflection

of the activities of Target 89'. Feedback from consumers, practitioners and

agencies indicated strongly that two distinct types of 'taster' course should be

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developed. First, a pre-tertiary short course for people who are being

encouraged to retrain through education, but are apprehensive about

succeeding in an unknown environment. Second, enrolment in a single

subject by people who have made the commitment to a tertiary course, but

require the opportunity to ease themselves into university study.

The first type of 'taster' course, concentrated on general coping and study

skills and de-mystifying some of the myths about a university education. For

want of better name, this was called HOST (How to Survive in Tertiary Study).

The aim was to develop and trial a short, self-paced, independent, distance

learning kit, in print, audio and computer disc formats, which would, after trial,

evaluation and refinement be serviced by a 'trained' facilitator in any post

secondary institution which purchased the kit.

The development of the concept of HOST evolved, in part from CRS, who,

under new sponsoring guidelines were looking for shorter courses for clients,

which might yield more immediate attainment's of goals than a three of four

year degree course, where financial and personal commitment was high, and

so was attrition. As part of a more flexible, statewide approach, the Target

team came up with the ideal of the HOST independent learning package - not

restitched to higher education, but to all forms of Post-Secondary education.

The philosophy of empowering people on a long term, not a one-off basis,

was uppermost. A general 'taste' of Post-Secondary study would provide

students with the opportunity to plan individual support on the basis of

experience, and to acquire materials and equipment necessary to study

successfully, in the longer term. An agency, such as CRS, might be more

inclined to fund a short course, but a course which would have implications for

the longer term.

It was envisaged that four modules would be presented as stimulating

answers to four questions:

1. What's involved in tertiary study?

2. Is tertiary study for me?

3. What resources do I need?

4. What survival skills do I need?

Appendix A gives an idea of the approach taken in Module One.

Two modules have been designed and written. Due to time and funding

constraints, this part of the Target 2000 project was not completed.

The second type of 'taster' course was acronymed TEST (Tertiary Education

Study Taster course). Evaluation of the pilot revealed the need for a more

specific 'taster' course for people who had made the decision to enrol in a

degree or diploma course, but require an opportunity to ease themselves in

gently, by studying a real subject in a real setting before embarking on a full

course. The emphasis is on accessing the generic system, rather than

creating a social transitional program. The key lies in providing individual

supports within the generic system. The idea behind this type of course was

also reflected in the higher than average attrition by students with disabilities,

and the major comment in this regard was 'overload' when not fully prepared

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to cope in an environment which does not readily provide opportunities for

success for many students with disabilities. Appendix B is a 'flier' for this idea.

The course was developed along the lines of a study coach model. During

the TEST project, five students enrolled. Three students have quadriplegia,

one paraplegia, one cerebral palsy. (This student is deaf). All students

applied for admission to the university in the usual way and enrolled in a

single unit offered by the Department of Humanities - Social History of Modern

Europe. This first year unit is recognised as an elective in any course offered

by the university. It is also a unit which is offered as an off-campus distance

learning package. The facilitator acted as coach in the initial stages, but

students set their own agendas, and identified priority areas as they went

along. Academic concerns were taken care of by the regular tutor in the unit.

Other concerns, such a support networks, administrative arrangements for

timetabling, room allocations and examination arrangements, negotiations for

teaching and learning strategies and assessment, and general coping skills

(who are the 'good guys' in the university - who to avoid) were worked on

individually with the coach, and in the group. Students conferred regularly

through the facilitator using tele-conferencing. One student had to withdraw

the first week. The other four all completed, successfully, and received 'real'

credit points which will count towards there qualifications. All have now

completed their first year of full study \_

Vignettes ~

The two students presented in these vignettes have not been deliberately

selected as 'cases' to be studied for the purpose of research. Both are known

personally to the writer and over time, informal observations were made,

information solicited, and recorded in the form of personal notes. The term

'vignette' is used (a short, delicate literary sketch) because these are informal

snapshots, not a fully worked picture. The aim is to personalise the project

and to show that these students are regular people studying at a university.

They do not desire specialist facilities, rather the opportunity to learn in the

context of their particular learning style and requirements.

John E has cerebral palsy. He sometimes has difficult y expressing himself

verbally, limited movement on the left side of his body, and is deaf. Since

leaving an institution for ‘spastic children' he has lived at home. His schooling

was sporadic and he left school with no formal matriculation. He was part of

the Target TEST group and has just completed first year studies towards a

Bachelor of Social Work degree, studying off-campus through a regional study

centre.

John sees his deafness as the biggest block to being a student in higher

education. It is associated with high frequency loss, so it's like trying to

understand a sentence with all the consonants removed. It also means he

has difficult y in speech discrimination. On situations where there is

background noise, particularly in large gatherings of people, a deaf person,

even using a hearing aid, may not be able to communicate effectively. It is

almost impossible to differentiate speech in there situations. Tutorials become

worthless. But is not just difficult y hearing in an environment which relies so

heavily on the spoken word which is disabling. Because deafness is not

obvious, hearing people expect the person can hear and this expectation

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influences the way they interpret behaviour and responses. Giving the wrong

answer in a tutorial because you have misinterpreted the question, may make

you feel inadequate, and hearing people may see you as rude or slow, which

in turn reinforces a sense of inadequacy and a perception by hearing people

of your inability to handle university study.

John, at age 35, decided he wanted to be a social worker, so that he could

pass on the benefits of his experiences to others in similar situations. Through

the auspices of the Target networking system he became part of the TEST

taster course, and enrolled in History 2. Since his biggest worry was not

being able to present assignments in acceptable format, he spent time

working with one of the computer consultants, and they came up with a

compatible system. As well as the academic component of History 2, an

important part of the course was having time to negotiate arrangements for

admission to the School of Social Work. The facilitator acted as advocate

when John felt is necessary, and successful completion of the History unit was

presented as 'proof' of his ability. Despite the inevitable administrative

bungles (a feature of the informal aspect of TEST was developing strategies to

deal with 'administration'), he was one of forty out of one hundred and twenty

applicants who was successful in gaining a place.

John's realistic approach to being a university student, and his determination

to succeed, provided him with the ammunition necessary to pre-empt the pit

falls and work out strategies. His major concern was to overcome his

reluctance to admit to a disability and build from that base. He knew from

experience on the TEST course that he requires more time than others to

complete written assignments as his physical disability slows him down and

leaves him feeling very tired. In lectures and tutorials he does not take notes

and requires a word processing application to produce written work. This

means he has to work out strategies to obtain lecture notes, and to negotiate

examinations as well as extra time. He points out that the stress involved in

having to do this is a factor not always taken into account.

On the whole, because he was so well prepared, John has received the

individual support he required, but only because of his tenacity and

persistence. It would have been much more palatable if the university

environment was flexible and policy (and practice) conducive to people who

do not always fit the perceived norm. He is proving that most things are

possible if you initiate the ideas yourself and suggest alternatives to others in

order to facilitate change His most difficult assignment has been learning the

'rite of passage' within a university - where to go to get result s and how to go

about doing it.

To John, the most positive aspect of being a university student has been the

way his attitude towards himself has had to change. It has forced him to

become self-assertive and to lose his fear of mentioning deafness. Being part

of the TEST course meant that he had the time to experiment with alternative

media and ways of studying. Because he has been part of the generic system

from the beginning, he has learnt the rules through experience. But, he is

insistent that there must be access to an advocate or facilitator as and when

he requires.

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Penny D is in her early thirties, married, with one child. She left school after

grade 10 and has no formal qualifications. She has epilepsy and takes anti-

convulsant drugs on a long-term basis. Side effects of medication are the

worst aspects for Penny as they include drowsiness, inability to concentrate

for long periods of time, poor skin type, weight increase, and problems when

used in conjunction with other drugs. Penny has never considered herself as

a person with a disability - "it just one of those things" and because of the

stigma attached to people with epilepsy, created by widespread ignorance

which leads to fear and uncertainty, has never voluntarily disclosed it. Penny

was not part of the TEST team.

Penny realised at the beginning of her university course, as an off-campus

student, that epilepsy and her medication affected her learning. Although

regular medication controls seizures, she experiences frequent mini seizures

which are not visible to the untrained observer. This means she-often misses

out on part of a tutorial or conversation. She 'comes back' and makes an

irrelevant remark - people tend to laugh and question her ability. Penny soon

worked out that if she planned carefully and strategically she could get

through a unit of study successfully without anyone suspecting she was any

different. By selecting those units she could complete with minimum face-to-

face contact, and which did not require attendance at study schools, she could

cope on her own, with frequent phone calls to lectures (which cost her money,

and left them wondering why she never turned up at tutorials). As a result , her

choice of subjects was considerably limited and she missed out on a major

learning process - interaction with peers. After her first experience of sitting an

exam (which she had to abandon after 10 minutes because of a seizure), she

developed a strategy of excelling in course work, and failing the exams since

she never sat them. It did not occur to her that might be able to negotiate

alternative forms of assessment.

For a year Penny managed her study in this way and was finding it very

difficult - in fact she was on the verge of withdrawing. Through the influence

of another student who she met at the Study Centre, she contacted the

counselling facilitator, talked about her situation and made her own steps

towards negotiating a program of study. This included tactics for talking to

lecturers, working with an advocate initially, and negotiating extra time and

alternative exam techniques. She also discovered the local epilepsy self-

help group.

To Penny, the most frustrating aspect was 'wasting a year". The most positive

was actually disclosing epilepsy, and discovering that she was 'allowed' to

initiate change, and was not treated as a 'special case'.

This vignette of Penny reinforces some of the issues raised by John of being a

person with a hidden disability which can affect equal opportunity in higher

education if the facility to discuss and act on options and alternatives is not

there. It raises issues over the need for flexibility in time tabling, and

acceptances by academics that it is not the end of the world if a student does

not adhere to strict timelines. There is another dimension too - the need for

effective curriculum design in, on, and off campus university courses. Working

ahead or behind schedule is helped by effective design of the course so that

is possible to identify what to learn, why and how, and to work at an individual

pace. Taking part in the TEST course introduced students to a unit which is

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effectively designed, so that they know what to look for, and what questions to

ask in another unit which may not be so clearly constructed.

Conclusion

Many issues will emerge from this discussion of the concept of taster courses,

and presentation of two vignettes. Not all the issues arising will be of an

educational nature, but may cover economic, social, moral, personal,

technological and political areas as well.

Perhaps the most critical educational issue is the recognition that attainment

of university qualifications provides credibility for people with disabilities, and

is a very important factor in breaking down barriers between the worlds of

able-bodied people and those with disabilities. Success in higher education

enables people to be recognised for their abilities, not their disabilities.

Recognition of this at primary and secondary levels of education will assist in

breaking the cycle more quickly, but is believed that this will only be achieved

through generic settings with effective individual support and facilities as pan

of the regular environment. This involves both altering traditional attitudes

towards disability and recognising the diverse nature of 'disability'.

This emphasises the importance of having input by people with disabilities in

the decision making processes at all levels, particularly in universities. When

new policies regarding attendance at examinations are mooted, advice must

be sought from a range of consumers including people with disabilities. A

representative of people with disabilities should be in all major committees

and decision making bodies, as one positive pro-active way of altering

prevalent attitudes towards the idea of extending access to higher education,

beyond the recognised traditional boundaries.

The concept of 'taster' courses reflects the belief that social, educational, and

political structures all serve to handicap people with disabilities, denying them

equal opportunity in life, and, for those who wish, equal opportunity in higher

education. Features common to both types of 'taster' course describe,

include:

- encouraging potential students to explore their abilities

- providing realistic expectations about tertiary study

- empowering students by recognising that barriers to success are likely

to be socially, educationally and environmentally constructed, and developing

individual strategies to counter these barriers.

Most important of all, these 'taster courses are flexible, and must evolve from

within the university's existing infrastructure, rather than creating a social

service which serves to segregate further.

Active and vital efforts will always be needed, but it may be possible to build

on an integrated post-secondary movement based on: full integration at the

outset, the right to the same range of education options available to adults

without disabilities, and the inclusion of all adults regardless of the degree of

disability' (Uditsky, 1988:25).

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Such 'taster' courses, through affirmative action and use of generic systems

will mitigate some disabling aspects of current policy and practice in

Australian higher education.

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APPENDIX A

Module one

What is involved in tertiary education?

Objectives

On successful completion of this module, you should be able to:

describe what 'tertiary education' means

assess the purposes of tertiary education in the light of your own

purposes.

debunk some of the myths surrounding tertiary education, particularly

with regard to eligibility

describe commonly held notions of intelligence and assess your own

potential

analyse the implications of a system of teaching and learning known as

'mastery' learning to you

develop strategies to find out about costs and resources relevant to

tertiary education

think constructively about the rights of people with disabilities to tertiary

education.

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2

Introduction to Module

It's difficult to know where to start in a course like this, but based on our own

experiences, and those of other people with disabilities, we thought we should

begin by focussing on the myths and realities surrounding tertiary education,

before turning the spotlight on you, your reasons for thinking about tertiary

study, and strategies for survival.

This module aims to give a clear interpretation of ‘tertiary education' so that

you may be able to find your way more easily around the unfamiliar ground of

tertiary study. When you go in cold to a situation, with little perception of what

it's all about, you are at a disadvantage. As a person with a disability you

need to be aware of the short cuts and have some ammunition to use to

negotiate 'terms' in order to partially compensate for the handicap caused by

disability.

This module will also challenge some of the conventional ideas about

intelligence and academic potential and introduces you to the academic

concept of 'mastery' learning. A .

We are also seeking to encourage you to think about your rights to education

as a person with a disability. For too long, people with disabilities have been

denied access to an education of their choice. We encourage you to think

constructively about your rights. We introduce you to a visually impaired

student to give you some ideas of what you may encounter, and the ways

others have reacted.

Finally, we are asking you to 'have a go' and produce a bit of work yourself,

primarily to think about the methods you might use to produce work for

assessment - so that, again, you can fine tune these skills before you make

the decision about tertiary study. It may affect your decision.

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APPENDIX B

UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA AT LAUNCESTON

TASTER COURSE

'Tertiary Education Study Taster' course

for people with disabilities

WHO IS IT FOR?

People with disabilities who are planning to apply for entry to a degree or

diploma course at the University of Tasmania at Launceston.

WHAT IS IT?

A 'taster' course - to give you the opportunity to 'taste' a real unit of study in a

'real' academic setting, before starting your mainstream course. Successful

completion means you start your mainstream course with credit points in

hand.

WHAT DOES IT INVOLVE?

Enrolment in History 2, either in or off campus, with additional tutorial support,

and on-going advice as to the most appropriate ways for you to present

assignments, manage time, organise materials etc.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

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or

Ms Rachel Grant

Extended-Campus Studies Department O03 260 548

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LAUNCESTON 7250

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Pathways Post-Secondary Education for Students with Disabilities

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STUDY SKILLS

Elizabeth Hastings

Student Counsellor La Trobe University VIC

I want to give you my credentials for being an expert on study skills first. I

think it is important that you know who is talking to you and I did actually

manage to drag myself by hook, crook, tears, pleadings, promises and

general disintegration and re-integrations through a degree at the

University of Melbourne. I started when I was nineteen. I do remember that

I had to go twice to my lecturers and apologise for what a dreadful student I

had been and tell them what a difficult thing it was being a cripple at

university and how I had fallen in love and all this kind of stuff. I finally did

get my degree and was finally released on the world as a Psychologist.

I have also in my academic career withdrawn from two Post Graduate

Diplomas and two Masters Degrees and I am currently, optimistically, once

again compulsively enrolling for another Masters Degree. I have no idea

whether I will actually finish it or not - so I don't really know if you want me

to go on talking about study skills after that.

It is definitely going to be a case of do what I say, don't for heaven's sake

do what I do unless you enjoy that sort of thing, in which case go right

ahead.

I have been asked to do something which is basically impossible. I have

been asked to talk to you for an hour and I have got 45 minutes and I am

going to cover study skills, being a university student with a disability, and if

I can manage I will tit in something about employment later and there is

going to be question time. So I have been trying to work out how I am

going to do all of this and l have decided to try to do two of the things at

once, one of them not at all, and that is the business of employment, and

the question time I will try to have time for at the end or comments from you.

The two things I am going to do at once are about study skills and also

about the special problems and difficulties of being a student with a

disability doing tertiary study.

The way I have worked out to do this, the main shape of my talk to you will

be about the process of writing an essay. For most of us the major task in

studying is writing an essay. That is the thing that keeps on coming up you

have to do, or it might be a lab. report which requires a similar approach.

The framework of this session will be about the processes that you need to

follow in order to get going and write an essay. I will try within that to talk

about the special difficulties of being a disabled student.

The essay topic we are theoretically going to consider is: 'How do the

factors pertaining to tertiary study and to disability inter-relate and what are

the implications for the disabled tertiary student?'

My structure will be about the process of writing the essay and my content

will be the answers to some of these questions.

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What do you reckon is the first step in writing this essay?

Interview people.

Gather data.

See if there is any previous literature on the subject.

Break the title up into its elements.

Define the terms.

Slowly we are working our way back to the first step.

Look at the meaning of the word disability.

Find out the Lecturer's hidden agenda.

Understand the question.

We have worked almost to it. The last couple of suggestions are pretty

close to it. I would say the very first step is that you should ask yourself

'Why are they asking me this question now? Why? What do they want?' In

other words - what is the Lecturer's hidden agenda? They have always got

one. What do they want to know that l know - which is why you don't rush

out and interview your friends first because you have got to make sure that

you are asking the questions that are pertaining to what the lecturers want

to know. l don't know what subjects you are all doing but say you might be

doing Sociology. lf this had been a Sociology question you\_ would want to

be aware of the kinds of concepts that you had been studying in your

lectures, tutorials, or however it is managed for those of you off campus, so

far. You would be thinking about concepts about groups, group formation,

value systems, norms, in-groups and out-groups, hierarchies, whatever it

might have been. You would know that whatever questions you have got

on your list of choices will be related to the basic concepts in the discipline.

So your first questions is "What is the purpose of answering this question

now?" If the subject were Sociology and the topic had been about groups

and values and so on, you could have questions about the internal

management of a convent, questions about the way a family incorporates a

new member, questions about the hierarchy of the local football club. They

would all be to do with groups.

Your first job is to try and work out the concepts that you have to show you

understand and whatever theoretical tools, such as analysis, comparison,

inter-relationships, whatever the theoretical tools of the discipline are that

the lecturers what to know you can use. That would be your first step.

lf you have a list of topics, of course, you choose the one that is of most

interest to you. Choose the one that gives you a sense of excitement or

delight. Don't just choose the one that looks the hardest to impress. If it

looks hard it is probably because it is something that you are not really

tuned into at some level. Some people thing Marxist analysis is as easy as

anything and they would always go to that question. Other people think

that it is very difficult because they are not tuned into it. So go to the one

that you feel tuned into because the basic idea is to get to the underlying

concepts.

Then you need to look at the actual question 'How do the factors pertaining

to tertiary study and to disability inter-relate and what are the implications

for the disabled tertiary student?'

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Elizabeth Hastings

There are some things to be defined. Tertiary study, disability. l think these

are the two main things you need to define in this essay so you would need

to know that you knew what these were. What is tertiary study, is actually a

very important question to consider in terms of study skills. It is a very

different study and very different from primary study and if you are still

operating particularly out of a set of secondary assumptions you are not

going to make it in a tertiary institution. If you think in terms of primary

learning being the basic tools of writing, reading, arithmetic, the basic tools

of communication and as you get on in primary school some of the basic

manipulations and basic ideas that our culture is founded on.

In secondary you begin to learn how to use these more, and you are given

a lot of factual information, and you are taught a little bit on how to question

certain things, but a lot of the time you are basically asked in secondary

education to give back what is given, to show that you have received it and

digested it and can give it back. That is very largely what it is even though

a lot of us like to think it is not.

Tertiary education is different. It is third level. That's what tertiary means, it

is about analysis concepts, about an overarching idea of thinking which is

quite different from what you might have been doing before. Although you

might have been doing it naturally in everyday life, in after dinner

conversations and things, it is formalised in the tertiary sector. It certainly is

not about learning the facts. What it is mostly about is comparing

arguments about facts or so called facts, even questioning whether there is

any such thing as facts if you are doing philosophy. If you are doing

Australian History these days you certainly do not know for sure any more

that Australia was used as a penal colony because the hulks in England

were overflowing. If you have done any history, especially at Latrobe

University where l work, there is a great argument going on about why

Australia was really founded. So a lot of the easy things that we think we

really know become a little more vague once you get into tertiary study.

So tertiary study is about research, questioning, wondering, comparing and

sharing ideas. It is no longer about reading, inwardly digesting, and then

regurgitating.

So, now, what is disability? Who is disabled? In the International Year of

Disabled Persons we used to talk about the as-yet-not-disabled with a kind

a malicious gleam in our eye as all these people would bounce around

looking frightfully efficient and mobile and we would say "you wait; it just

hasn't happened to you yet"; as, "if the bus doesn't get you then old age

will." So everybody is potentially disabled.

Otherwise, what is disability? Those of us have been so-labelled do know

that it does mean, something as well as nothing. It means that there are

certain extra difficulties you have to deal with. Perhaps extra fatigue, extra

complications in getting from one place to another, difficulties in

communication.

lf your disability is invisible then there are great problems with trying to

persuade somebody that it exists and once you have persuaded them that

it exists there are great problems trying to persuade them that there is more

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to you than that. And when you are in a wheelchair or you have got a

visible disability, you just start off behind the eightball; you don't have to

persuade them that something is wrong, you have got to persuade them

that you are OK. And when you have persuaded them enough that you are

OK, you have got to persuade them that you are not that OK and you still

need help. It is a constant balancing act being a disabled person. You are

constantly having to educate people, even good friends need constant

education as all human beings have to do with each other. It is just that

with disabled people we have to do it more so.

Those are two basic ideas l have about tertiary study and disability. If I

were going to write an essay on this matter I may start to research more in

those areas and start to think about them and how those particular factors

inter-relate.

The next step then is: having decided that these are the ideas, to work out

your own experiences and ideas. That is important because that will help

you form your essay. There would be very few essays that you would have

to do that you wouldn‘t already have had some experience in, that you

could not in some way bring your own knowledge to bear, to help you

develop a set of questions which will then generate a research plan. Even

if you were asked to do something in the area of tribo-physics: 'Gosh' you

might say, 'well I know nothing about tribo-physics so I am not going to

have a hope of writing anything intelligent and I certainly would not have

any experience of my own.' But if you went to a dictionary and looked up

tribo-physics you would find that it was nothing other than the science of

adjacent moving surfaces, so it is to do with friction. Suddenly you know a

lot about it. You know that when you rub your hands together they get

warm. You know that if you do it long enough they get dry and sore. And if

you did it long enough it would go through to the bone. ~ However that

would not be a good experiment if you were trying to write an essay. Those

of you with wheelchairs will know that if you get grit in your wheels

everything slows down. Even just in ordinary life you know a lot about

adjacent surfaces. You know that the movement produces heat; things

have to be lubricated; you need certain different kinds of oils and so on for

different surfaces, etc. etc. So even in a topic where you think you may

know nothing you will know something.

So really your first step when you are writing an essay or reading a book or

thinking in a tutorial or whatever you are doing is to bring your knowledge

to bear. For goodness sake honour the knowledge that is in you. You have

all lived a whole lifetime and you have not lived it totally isolated from the

universe. You do know a lot of things. You will probably be astonished to

know what a depth of conceptual knowledge you have got that you can

apply 'high-falutin' names to which just feels like ordinary life. But that is

basically what education is - categorising very ordinary things and seeing

what is in common with them and making a new category and comparing

categories and so on.

As you write this essay you should start to think about your experiences of

disability. What are the factors of disability that you are aware of? You

could make a note. You could have a brainstorming session where you

just spend half an hour jotting down everything you can think of about the

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topic, with questions. This may seem a waste of time if you are writing an

essay but I would say that is an essential step that you begin to generate

your own ideas so that when you begin to read, the reading that you do has

something to hook on to. If you start reading with no ideas of your own

most of it goes straight through. In one eye and out the other. It is largely

because you probably have not thought about a lot of it first and generated

some of your own questions. So that would be the next step, to do your

own generation of questions about tertiary study, about disability, and how

these things could possibly be inter-related.

One not to subtle factor affecting disability for example would be that I am

not able to reach most of the shelves in the library; I can't push on carpet for

too long; the computers for getting access to information are usually out of

reach; and all the counters are too high. These are some of the factors of

disability which affect the gaining of knowledge and they inter-relate in a

totally frustrating way but what are the implications for me. I have got to be

warm, charming, and ask total strangers to do a lot of things for me. So I

have got to develop a whole personality around this. You would start to

think about these sorts of things in this area. If you were doing a research

essay, or a social essay, then you might start interviewing other people as

you suggest. You would have some ideas and you would want to get a

feeling for what your group thought. So this is the time to start collecting

information and to plan your research; what things you have to find out

more about. That, of course, has a lot of implications for us disabled people

in that we do have to develop the ability to ask for help whilst at the same

time maintaining an equality of relationship with the people we are asking.

Otherwise you end up feeling like a little four year old in the world the

whole time, and it is very hard to develop good friendships so it is a very

subtle balance that we constantly have to keep between getting assistance

and maintaining equality, and it would be very nice occasionally if we could

find people to give assistance too.

When I give lectures to rehabilitation people I point out the huge gap in the

rehabilitation process is that it is all one way. All of it. And it is

unnecessarily so. There are many ways in which disabled people can

contribute significantly and importantly within that system of rehabilitation

and it doesn't all have to be this unequal receiving. But when you come to

a university you are actually living in a world which is not designed for you,

and you do have to develop the ability to ask for assistance while

maintaining self-respect and mutual equality. You are not always going to

make it. Sometimes you just have to ask for assistance, be patronised to

death, and don't ask that person again. These things happen. You can't

have total control over what goes on.

So, at this point with your essay writing, you might generate your research

plan. A lot of people would suggest to me, 'You go now and read your

books'. Well you have got to work out what you are going to read, why you

are going to read it, and what you are looking for.

If you start reading anything simply because it is there, or simply because

someone has told you to read it, or because it might have something useful

in it, then you are putting yourself at an even greater disadvantage than is

necessary. Everything can be made relevant to everything else and there

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is absolutely nothing you can read which could not, with a very small effort

of imagination, be made relevant to anything you may be writing about. In

which case you will end up with ‘l00's & 1,000's of words of notes and you

have got to struggle to write a 2,000 word essay. It is a dreadful

experience. Have you done that? It is terrible, you get so emotionally

involved in all these notes you have taken, the ideas you have had, the

connections you have made and then you look at this tacky little question

and you think, 'There is no point in answering that. It is meaningless.' You

get angry and resentful and go out to a party and have to get extensions

and all that sort of stuff.

So do try to keep your research related to the question and in that way the

question will actually retain some meaning. When you start going off on all

kinds of tangents, the question gets more and more meaningless. Anyone

who has done a PhD can tell you this.

A common problem is that you write a 2,000 word essay for and against the

existence of God, some people want to answer the question, don't be

ridiculous. You have to take two or three arguments and evaluate the

arguments and see how they hold up against each other.

You are not expected at Undergraduate level to write the definitive work,

certainly not in 2,000 words. Most PhD's are not the definitive work in

anything either and they have got 100,000 words to play with. So it is

important when you are doing your research that you keep a realistic

picture in mind.

lf you are asked to do a 500 word assignment, you can probably make two

or three not very deeply argued points, or one well-argued point. It is a bit

sobering isn't it. Part of the business of tertiary study is learning this ability,

learning to edit out the unnecessary, learning to see what is absolutely

necessary. You should be able to give the main point probably of a PhD in

a short after-dinner speech. You should be able to write it down on the

back of an envelope. You would not be able to give all the beautiful and

elaborate arguments and proofs and illustrations but neither would your

after dinner audience be interested. You should be able to, in your mind,

carry your thesis in a short and encapsulated way and get that across and

then It is a bit like the two great commandments that the Christian Church

talks about, one is, you shall love God with all your heart and sole, mind,

and strength, and second is that you love your neighbour as yourself and

Jesus Christ said 'This is the law and the Commandments' and I think

Hielel, the Jewish Philosopher said 'All else is commentary', which is a

pretty cogent way of putting out how human beings should live together

and relate to God and probably would have gone on the back of an

envelope. So, practically everything else that is written in the area of

theology, religion, philosophy, sociology, psychology, everything else is

elaborating some aspect of those two things.

So, you do have to think about how long your essay is going to be and

organise yourself accordingly. You also have to think how long your

speech is going to be and organise yourself accordingly.

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So you have now organised a research plan. This is something that many

students do not do. I think when you are disabled it is particularly

important. You cannot afford to be rushing backwards and forwards to the

library, seeking books that are not there for reasons that are not good

enough. You just cannot afford the time or the energy. You must work out

a research plan, decide what you need to know, why you need to know it,

and how it is going to fit into your general thesis or your general idea. So

basically before you do your major research on an essay you must have

your thesis in mind.

The thesis probably is, for example, that studying with a significant disability

reduces the energy and flexibility of the student to quite a large extent and

therefore the implications for tertiary study are that the person will have to

be highly disciplined. You almost have got to be a Zen expert to be a

disabled person at a university.

Then you do your research, not always just to support your thesis, because

if you happen to be wrong, you are not going to find out if you are only

looking for answers to support your thesis. With some thesis in mind your

research will then have meaning and if you have a particular thesis in mind

and then every book you read contradicts this, you may probably be wise to

question your theses but you can even use that process and what happens

to you in that in your essay. There is nothing wrong with working in that

direction as well. In fact that is what a null hypothesis is all about and that

is what a lot of people do in terms of work. If you are trying to answer a

question you start from the opposite of what you think and see what that

might mean and that often clarifies a lot of issues.

So, make a research plan and then try to stick to it. That means keeping in

mind how long the essay is going to be, how much time you have got, and

what you can realistically do, how many people you can get to realistically

help you, how many times you can actually get to the library before you

conk out with tennis elbow etc.

No lecturer is going to be impressed that you have read 400 books for a

2,000 word essay. They certainly are not going to be impressed if you write

down everything from all those books that you learnt, simply because you

have got so attached to the ideas that you cannot let them go. They will be

deeply unimpressed if they get to your essay at 4.00a.m. when they have to

give them back at the first tutorial the next day and yours is 5,000 words

long and it is only meant to be 2,000 words long. The chances are that they

will blow up your wheelchair. It is a discipline. Part of tertiary education is

that discipline.

Having made your research plan and done your research in a sensible

way, you then need to sit down and think about your thesis and whether

your original thesis holds up and if it doesn't it is quite legitimate to start off

going the other way and prove yourself the other way.

Your conclusion can be that the original idea does not hold water and this

would require further thought. We usually, in the western world, start off

telling them what we are going to tell them, and then we tell them, and then

we tell them what we have told them. That is the debaters rule of thumb

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and it is well worth writing down or remembering or getting someone to

record this for you. It may be that you tell them what you want to tell them

and then tell them at the end why it wasn't right. At least you have indicated

to your lecturer that you know what you are talking about and that you are

able to evaluate your own ideas.

This is something that I have found tertiary students have great difficult y

with. They don't mind saying Thomas Aquinas was wrong or that Marx was

an idiot, but they get very miffed if anybody suggests that their ideas may

not be absolutely watertight. You must learn to evaluate your own ideas.

Just because you had it does not mean it is right. Especially if you had it

before you actually read anything on the matter. Do learn to evaluate your

own ideas.

I am now assuming that you have read efficiently, that you have surveyed,

questioned, read, and marked points, reproduced and reviewed and that

you have been very efficient in your reading. I was told I didn't have to do

that bit as someone had already done it for me. The other thing, when you

are disabled and running out of time, is you use whatever other resources

happen to make themselves available, like the previous speaker.

So, having done your research, and thought out your thesis, you then really

need to be able to write down your idea and thesis in a few simple words.

The word thesis comes from the Greek and it means 'position' or 'stance'. It

does not mean the last word on this matter. It does not mean the correct

answer. It does not mean the definitive proof. It means a position or a

stance. If you are writing an essay be aware that you will take up a position

or a stance and you will then try to support that in the body of your essay

and you will also perhaps demonstrate to your reader that you are aware of

some of the difficult ies of keeping that position but also the difficult ies of not

keeping it are even greater.

Next you need to do your essay plan. How many of you do an essay plan?

A few. A lot of students think it is not necessary. A lot of students just start

writing and I imagine many of those students will have had the experience

that when they got to the end they found that their conclusion disagreed

with their introduction which would not have mattered if they had been

aware of it at the time but they were not until they finished it and got their

essay back later. You must really have an essay plan. One way to do this

is to make a note that you are going to have an introduction, you are going

to have the body of the essay, and you are going to have the conclusion. In

the introduction you tell them what you are going to tell them. There is

room for a bit of style and flamboyance in introductions. You can introduce

things that you are not going to follow up and also your main ideas. You

tell them what you are going to tell them. Then you take each of those

points and as you write the essay plan, just make a note of the main points.

Make a note of the thesis or your main arguments, then you make a note

under that of the main arguments you are going to use to support those and

the sub-arguments, and the evidence that you are going to use to support

your sub-arguments.

What you end up with is an overarching thesis. I suggest that people write

their essay plans under three headings - what I must say in this essay, what

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I may say in this essay, and what I would like to say if I have the space and

time in this essay. I liken this largely to a meal, what I must say is like the

protein of the meal. What you may say is a bit like the vegetables, the

minerals, etc. that go with the meals. The final 'may say column' is the

tomato sauce and the pavlova and if you are writing a 2,000 word essay the

chances are that you leave it out or you stick a little bit of it in the footnotes.

You must learn as a tertiary student to evaluate your ideas and that not

everything is of equal importance. Certainly not just because you found it

in a book. Many books are of absolutely no importance at all. Nothing in

them is of any importance - certainly many books will only have one idea of

importance for your subject in them. You have to learn to have this ruthless

simitar in your mind that just chops stuff off that is not relevant. If it is

interesting, delightful, or pertains to your point then you put it in the 'may

say' column. So, if I were going to write an essay on studying at a tertiary

institution I might like to entertain my reader with a discussion of the

difficulties I have had over thirteen years of using the men's toilet at Latrobe

University, which does indeed add to my stress and strain, and to theirs, but

it is not a major aspect of the difficulties of studying at tertiary level. No

toilet at all would be far more major.

An essay plan is actually an extremely freeing thing. Because when you

have got the essay plan you can then choose to spend half an hour doing

one little bit of it and you have not got to worry about loosing your train of

thought or whether the bit that you are doing is going to connect up with

other bits because you have got all the beads on the string already and you

are just doing them, one at a time, in order. You have not got to worry

about interruptions or about digressions because you are not going to

digress. You have written the plan. You are not still researching as you go

along which is a big mistake a lot of students make. You are not going to

have to worry if you actually can't get the thing finished and you can't get an

extension. You can hand them the essay plan.

Having done an essay plan you then sit down and do it in bits. Don't ever

think you are going to sit down and write an essay. That would be setting a

goal which is not attainable. I have set a goal for this session which is not

attainable and I am now going have to just give you an outline of what I was

going to do.

I was going to talk to you about setting small and efficient goals and

organising your time. The disabled student particularly needs to organise

their time. We have often got to organise attendance, readers, interpreters,

medical appointments, etc. Organising time and setting small and

manageable goals is very important.

Most people who went through the school system tend to assume that study

is a sort of a three hour thing. I would suggest that you think of study as a

half hour thing and you decide that in that half hour that you will do a

certain small amount of stuff. You spend two minutes deciding exactly what

you are going to do and why and how it fits in, 25 minutes doing it, and 3

minutes reviewing what you have done and checking that it does indeed fit

backwards and forwards to the next thing you are going to do.

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When you have got the essay plan you have got the freedom then to set

these half hour goals because you can say, right in this half hour I am going

to make that point and illustrate it with those three illustrations. In that half

hour you might write two paragraphs and you have actually achieved a

goal, so that at the end of the half hour you feel like you have had a

success instead of getting to the end of a two or three hour block when you

were going to write your essay and you still have not finished it. All you do

is give yourself a massive failure.

It is very important to create for yourself a continual sense of achievement,

especially when reaching achievement is a little bit harder than it is for the

average person.

Finally, having done that, you will have your first draft. You might want to

go through that and clean it up a little bit and take out 5,000 words of

extraneous pavlova and tomato sauce and just end up with your protein

and cabbage. Then you should theoretically put it away for two days and

then come back and look at it later. Unfortunately, most students usually

are writing at 1.00 a.m. and there are not two days to put it away in because

it is due. However, if you could possibly organise yourself to write it in time

to put it away for two days and then come back to it, or even for a few hours,

you can look at it with a clear mind. You think you have said what you are

thinking and what you have actually said may be quite different. That's why

proof reading really needs to be done by someone else because you

cannot see your own errors - grammatical, spelling, logic - until you get a bit

distant from it. Then you can look back over it and do a fair copy, put in

some head notes, and bibliographies and so on.

I have gone through essay writing in particular because it is the major task

that we all get involved in and bogged down on and includes many of the

other tasks. A lot of the things that I have said are equally applicable to toil

work, to the way you go about your reading, if you start off with thinking and

ideas, and questions before you start to read, you will get much more out of

your reading. It pertains to the way you attend lectures, the kind of mind set

you have, which should be active and thinking. People need to be open-

minded, thinking and questioning. When the lecturers, and the authors

that you read, and the friends that you talk to give you ideas, then there is

somewhere for them to sit otherwise you just have a sense of vacancy.

To conclude my theoretical essay, the implications are that you do need to

be deeply self-respectful - so that in the face of difficult y and in the face of

disappointment when people have forgotten to collect books for you, to get

photocopying done, have not organised to get the lecture taped, have

forgotten that you cannot see and started writing everything on the board;

when you get isolated because your friends are so used to you being

ordinary that they go off without you and you are left behind, you cope. You

also have to have a sense of humour. What disabled person who has got

past first base does not know that you have to have a sense of humour?

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THE PROJECT ACCESSABILITY KIT: DISABILITIES

TRAINING FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

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their support.

The aims of the Project were to enhance the expertise of higher education and

TAFE College staff who teach or lecture to students with disabilities, to assist

the development of support networks and to address the note-taking, study

skills and tutoring needs of such students. In January 1990 a preliminary

phase of consultation and literature research was initiated which included an

examination of existing training materials and approaches as well as videos

on disabilities issues. The aim was to identify key training needs for staff

which related to enhancing the numbers of students with disabilities within

post-secondary educational institutions and the quality of their educational

experiences.

The Project research indicated a strong underlying need to initially address

attitudes towards access and support and also, stemming from this,

institutional policy issues. It seemed essential that post-secondary

educational institutions become more proactive in equitable provision. The

materials which were ultimately developed contain useful elements for those

providing peer tutor and study skills initiatives which embrace the needs of

students with disabilities, but the main training foci became attitudes towards

provision, appropriate communication, disability policy and note-taker training.

The draft materials were distributed to nineteen pilot institutions in April 1991

for critical comment and trial implementation of selected elements. Comments

received through the evaluator from these pilot personnel and from a number

of other people in the disability field were used to direct the re-draft.

The resulting Kit is designed for use in pre-service and in-service training of

staff, students and volunteers; the materials can contribute also to training

programs which address staff equal employment opportunity and to courses

for students which address disability issues. Although primarily directed at

higher education and TAFE settings it could also be useful in training staff in

other service settings and for enabling such staff and organisations to better

respond to the needs of people with disabilities.

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The Materials in Overview

The Kit comprises five training books and associated resources:

Introduction to the Mt

Myths and Realities

Access and Support issues

Appropriate and Effective Communication

Note-taker Training.

Introduction to the Kit discusses why staff training in disability issues is

required and possible ways this might be conducted. The nature of the Kit is

explained and an overview of its components and approach is given. A

glossary discusses training terms and appendices provide planning sheets

and activities which help facilitators to plan their training programs.

Myths and Realities is the first of three modules examining attitudinal, factual,

policy and communications issues underlying the provision which institutions

make for students with disabilities. In these three modules (over two hundred

pages in length), fifteen options provide diverse workshop possibilities from

which facilitators can select materials to construct training programs suited to

the needs of their particular institutions. Each option gives goals, preparation

required, notes for facilitators, suggested procedure, discussion questions and

worksheets and data sheets.

The content of the options is diverse. In Module One some options address

thoughts, feelings and perceptions about disability, or myths which foster the

denial of rights. Others can be used to raise awareness of the educational

implications of disability or enable discussion of government action,

legislation and ways to produce attitude change across the institution. Module

Two, Access and Support Issues, includes options which enable participants

to conduct surveys of the physical accessibility of settings, or discuss and

formulate disability policy. Module Three focuses on appropriate and effective

communication including the need for pre-planning by instructors. Further

details on the content of the modules are provided in Appendix 1.

Twenty overhead transparencies and a series of charts (from Access Arts

Incorporated) are supplied for use in Modules One to Three, together with four

appendices which examine myths, discuss legal and associated issues and

provide some background data pertinent to support provision. Three video

components are supplied (some others are recommended) and there are

visual impairment simulation goggles and an audiotape for use in the

sensitisation exercises of two of the options.

Module Four, Note-taker Training, discusses recruitment and training

approaches for those wishing to screen and train people to take notes for

students with disabilities. Overhead transparency masters, a trainee's booklet

and taped lecture segments for note-taking practice are supplied. Up to ten

hours of training can be delivered and may be supplemented with more

extensive skills training if required, using additional tapes and print materials

from other sources.

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Michelle Stephens and Des Power

Training Needs and Approaches

In classrooms, lectures and many campus venues students with disabilities

may experience handicaps resulting from a lack of awareness or inertia on the

part of educators, administrators and other personnel. In some cases the

barriers stem from more extreme negative attitudes. To those who work

closely with students with disabilities it may seem almost unbelievable that

staff are unaware of the rights and capabilities of such students, yet this is

often the case.

Only when staff training is conducted does it become more obvious just what

ignorance can exist. People are often totally unaware of the hours of extra

effort which disability may already impose on a student and need assistance

to identify ways in which equity is enhanced. Data from Project consultations

indicated that some staff actively look for ways to exclude students with

disabilities from courses because of mistaken beliefs that they are inherently

unsafe, unemployable or an unnecessary burden. A knowledge gap

regarding the bases for support provision may exist -- for example, one staff

member believed that support for students with hearing impairment is

supplied by saying hello when you see them.

Training which hopes to improve attitudes towards, and provision for, students

with disabilities must focus on, and target, specific attitudes and needed

provisions pertinent to the organisation.

There is a need to provide skills to a wide range of staff with major or minor

policy-making functions across all spheres of organisational operations,

including library, administrative, teaching, tutoring, facilities or grounds staff.

Through training workshops, potential allies may also be identified and given

confidence and skills to work formally or informally to raise the general level of

awareness in various sectors of the organisation.

Some training needs are best addressed in common interest groups, for

example, skills development for lecturers, teachers and tutors or a workshop

to develop library policies and procedures. Regardless of the focus, attitudes,

actions and skills, not just facts, must be targeted in an on-going training plan

which focuses on rights. There should be a commitment to a workshop-based

training approach, rather than just the dissemination of information leaflets.

Training workshops are essential to target attitudes and skills. They can

provide more avenues for people with disabilities to be heard; improve

effectiveness, efficiency and equity within organisational operations; and

lower staff stress. They can also be enjoyable experiences for participants

and facilitators, especially where a workshop uses varied approaches, and

encourages and builds on the contributions of those present.

Some Features of the Kit

The substantial degree of research which went into the Kit gives facilitators a

head start in planning and conducting training programs. Other key features

include the provision for active learning, and the Kit's accessibility, flexibility,

and compatibility with other training approaches.

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Background data, many worksheets and suggested approaches for training

options are provided in the Kit, enabling facilitators to target specific attitudes,"

needed skills and institutional provisions. Focussed discussion, role-play and

sensitisation exercises are used in which people with disabilities can play

important roles as facilitators and expert sources.

When issues and needs surface in a supportive workshop environment,

participants may re-assess their views in the light of new data and

experiences. Indeed, during the trial of the materials trainers were frequently

amazed at what revealing comments were made during workshops and there

was evidence that many participants gained insights into their own attitudes

and behaviours, and later applied these insights.

The Kit materials are easily accessed by trainers; this is enhanced by the

explicit links between the resources and suggested procedures, as well as the

notes to the facilitator and the detailed nature of the resources themselves.

The Kit also saves facilitators' time. All worksheets are provided separately for

photocopying, as well as in the trainer's guide, and overhead transparencies

for the first three modules are already prepared. The preparation required for

each option is explicitly stated, as are goals, needed resources and notes on

implementation.

The chosen Kit structure of options, each with clear goals, together with the

breadth of the resources means it is possible to combine the options in a great

variety of ways. The resources also may be used in alternative ways and

training approaches may incorporate additional materials from other sources.

The training outcomes thus depend on the particular pathways chosen

through the modules, the degree of supplementation from other sources, and

the experiences of participating personnel prior to, as well as during, the

workshops. \_

Changing attitudes and improving provision requires that facilitators work with

the complex interplay of past and new experience, beliefs, expectations, the

views of significant others, and factors such as the effects of existing policy

and legislation. The Kit is broad in scope to enable these areas to be

addressed. Facilitators are also explicitly encouraged to use additional data

where necessary, to specifically address institutional and regional needs,

problems and solutions, and to update and amplify regarding legislative and

administrative actions which have a bearing on disability provision within their

institutions.

The FUtUl‘9

Traditionally staff training has been a low priority within many Australian

organisations and in some post-secondary educational institutions there has

so far been insufficient provision for staff to conduct or participate in training in

disability issues.

There have been many calls for a focus on training as an important part of

achieving equity for students with disabilities ( 1, 2, 3). There is a role for

government in such training, through funding support, policy formulation and

equal opportunity legislation as each of these factors may provide a stimulus

to training efforts within post-secondary educational institutions.

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Michelle Stephens and Des Power

People with disabilities, as facilitators and expert sources, can play significant

roles, and may work in conjunction with other institutional facilitators,

specialist or generic. Post-secondary information networks also have a role to

play in facilitating training, by sharing persuasive data which is directly

pertinent to training initiatives.

We believe that the Project AccessAbility Kit is an excellent starting point for

anyone conducting training of staff and volunteers with respect to disability

issues. All of the issues which have been raised in the fora of this Conference

have been touched on in some way in our materials. Regardless of the

training foci or backgrounds of the participants or facilitators, the suggested

training approaches and resources of this Kit can form nuclei, scaffolding or a

substantial structure for diverse training programs. The breadth within the Kit

also means that it can continue to be a valuable resource for training

purposes over quite a number of years.

People with disabilities have in the past put up with being less than third-rate

citizens in the eyes of many Australians. Neither they nor their advocates are

prepared to let inequity in educational provision continue. Now is the time for

concerted attempts within all institutions to improve access and support for

people with disabilities; in such attempts, training plays a vital role.

[Some overhead transparencies from the Kit were projected. The Kit was then

examined by those attending the presentation; the Note-taker Training module

was not shown. Order forms for the entire Kit and further information were

made available. A limited number of Kits was available from mid-December.

For further information, contact Michele Stephens or Des Power, Division of

Education, Mt Gravatt Campus, Griffith University, Nathan, QLD 4111. Phone

(07)-875-5654.]

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Appendix 1

The contents of Introduction to the Kit encompass:

the need for access and support;

possible participants and foci for training;

an overview of the Kit and its approach;

questions and answers about the Kit;

combining workshop options;

planning for training; '

a glossary of training terms;

ice-breakers for workshop use;

energisers for workshop use. s

Module One, Myths and Realities, enables trainers and workshop

participants to address, to the chosen depth:

thoughts, feelings and perceptions about disability;

breadth and diversity in disability;

handicapping actions and attitudes;

myths which foster the denial of rights;

knowledge about the educational implications of disability and needed

educational provision;

issues of government action and legislation;

institutional and personal actions to enhance equity.

Both Module Two, Access and Support Issues, and Module Three,

Appropriate and Effective Communication, are best used in conjunction with

some elements from Module One, since Module One focuses on assisting

attitudes held by workshop participants to surface for discussion.

Access and Support Issues enables more detailed discussion, data collection,

role-play and action on:

attitudes towards educational provision;

needed campus and departmental initiatives to enhance access and

support;

disability policy formulation and implementation.

Module Three, Appropriate and Effective Communication, has links with the

options of earlier modules, in particular with options 1.3, 1.5, 1.7 and 2.2. In

the first option of Module Three, participants use a video and data sheets to

discuss and role-play appropriate communication. The other two options of

the module are for instructors and enable practice of effective communication

as well as developing awareness of the need for pre-planning.

Module Four, Note-taker Training, discusses the need for note-takers and

suggests approaches to recruitment and training. It gives outlines for possible

note-taker training workshops involving student note-takers, as well as paper

masters for thirty overhead transparencies. Audio-cassette tapes and a thirty

page trainee's manual are included.

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TRANSITION PROGRAM

Vivienne Riches

Unit for Rehabilitation Studies, Macquarie University NSW

Executive Summary

Post compulsory education and training opportunities and participation rates

for people with disabilities in the 15 to 19 age group have long been

acknowledged to fall well below those of their non-disabled peers. The NSW

Transition Project is attempting to rectify this situation through a model of

operation that is developing policies and promoting a number of initiatives

and strategies, many of which could be addressed on a national front.

A system of individual transition planning has been instituted that begins for

students with disabilities as early as age 12 years, enables students, parents

and other relevant individuals and agencies to comprehensively plan and

program for student needs, interests, and ability levels. Such a system it is

anticipated, will facilitate better career planning and increase post compulsory

education and training participation rates.

Inter agency cooperation is occurring in the Transition Project through the

individual transition plan system, through local Community Transition Teams,

and through policy and planning at a Steering Committee level. Further

cooperation is required to create a more flexible education and training

system for students in transition. Evaluation of various aspects of the program

to date appear very promising.

Improving pathways through transition

Transition to post school opportunities and the actual outcomes for people

with disabilities have long been of concern in Australia. A post school option

study (Parmenter and Knox, 1989) found there were severe limitations in the

Post-Secondary schooling options available to people with disabilities. Most

individuals were tracked into sheltered employment, where further education

opportunities were non existent or severely restricted, wages and promotional

opportunities were minimal, information poor and co-operation between

different agencies and departments was spasmodic.

This report recommended greater co-ordination between agencies concerned

with meeting the needs of young people with disabilities. Such co-operation

and co-ordination was seen as critical to avoid duplication of services and

also to ensure that all areas of the young person's life were effectively met.

(Parmenter and Knox, 1989, p. 47)

Co-operation between generic and specialist agencies was also

recommended, to promote a sharing and growth of knowledge on the part or

parties from quite different backgrounds, whilst ensuring that the young

person with a disability would receive the specialist support required in the

environment of a generic, community based organisation.

Typically service organisations have considered that education authorities

should bear the responsibilities for the task of developing a young person's

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skill and knowledge, but as Parmenter (1986) pointed out, for students with

disabilities, an inter-agency approach involving all sectors that will eventually

be involved in the transition process should begin while students are still at

school.

The importance of shared responsibilities amongst relevant service agencies

and organisation to ensure the best quality and most appropriate services are

provided for the young person with a disability has now been widely

established. (Will, 1984; Halpern, 1985; Johnson, Bruininks and Thurlow,

1987; Hardman and McDonnell, 1987: Parmenter and Knox, 1987).

Post compulsory education and training opportunities and participation rates

for people with disabilities in the 15 to 19 years age group have long been

acknowledged to fall well below those of their non disabled peers.

(Parmenter, 1986). A realistic national target for the participation rate of

persons with disabilities in post compulsory education and training should, it

is contended, be at least equal to and consistent with that attained by non

disabled peers. The challenge has become how best to bring the dream to

reality.

The NSW Transition Project

The NSW Transition Project for students with disabilities commenced

operation in 1989 as a pilot project. Transition education as a concept was

not new, and a number of models have been suggested for use. However the

current model and strategy being trialed in NSW originated from an OECD

sponsored inquiry which developed a national strategy for assisting students

with disabilities in transition. (Australian Steering Committee OECD CERI

1985).

Disappointingly, until the emergence of the NSW Transition Project, no

Australian government or non government education system adopted the

recommendations of the strategy statement and the subsequent

implementation plan that was drawn up in 1986. (Australian Steering

committee OECD CEFII, 1986.)

Originally involving 3 players:- the Department of School Education;

TAFECOM, NSW; and the Unit for Rehabilitation Studies, Macquarie

University; the project within a short time period attracted the active

involvement of key federal and state departments. Currently representatives

at the Steering Committee level come from the federal Departments of

Employment, Education and Training (DEET); and Health, Housing and

Community Services (DHH&CS); and at the state level from the Departments

of Industrial Relations, Further Education, Training and Employment

(DlRFETE); Community Services (DOCS); and the NSW Ministry of Education.

The purpose of Transition is to lay a strong foundation for maximising the level

of community independence that will be enjoyed by young adults with

disabilities when they leave school.

This is achieved by ensuring the cooperation and collaboration of all relevant

stakeholders in the transition process. These stakeholders include students,

parents, community resources, government agencies and private industry.

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They supply leadership, as well as provision of, a comprehensive and

dynamic system of services within Transition.

The model that has been adopted in NSW targets:

1.) improved planning and provision in education and training in key

curriculum areas for students with disabilities, beginning at the

secondary school phase and continuing through to adult

independence, as well as

2.) improved community involvement through the mechanism of

local community based Transition Teams.

Critical factors that have been found to influence successful transition into

adult living are:

a. the quality and appropriateness of student preparation,

b. formalised plans involving the students, parents/care givers,

and/or advocates and community agencies that are responsible

for providing services,

c. linking students to community services and training options prior

to leaving school,

d. a range of meaningful training and employment options,

e. the promotion of the level of participation and independence

within the community in a number of important areas, such as

residential arrangements, leisure pursuits, personal/social

behaviour.

Individual Transition Planning

The transition project has been instituted to provide strategies whereby

students can move smoothly from secondary education to adult

independence, and in particular to increased options in the areas of further

education, training and employment. This process rightly begins very early in

a young person’s life and in NSW all students with disabilities in the project

areas are being targeted from age 12 years and up.

The individual transition plan is the mechanism used at the individual student

level, by which possible and desired pathways are identified and explored,

key individuals from relevant agencies, employment areas etc. who can

supply the necessary information and assistance can be contacted or brought

in while the student is still at school, and programming in the various relevant

contexts beyond school can be planned.

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An Individual Plan (IP) is a written plan agreed to by a school based transition

team of which the student is a member. This is a working document which

may accompany the student as S/he moves from school to aduIt life. The

major purpose of the IP are:

1). To outline appropriate transition goals, measurable objectives

and relevant strategies by which goals can be achieved within

the essential curriculum areas

2). To coordinate the involvement of adult community agencies

3). To promote active participation in the transition program by

students, parents/care givers and advocates

4). To monitor and evaluate accomplishments and revise goals as

necessary

It is anticipated that this system will facilitate better career planning and

increase post compulsory education and training participation rates. Early

effects of these measures are already being seen through increased

participation in education and training for the 15 t0 19 years age group.

(Parmenter and Riches, 1990 Riches and Parmenter, 1991).

Curriculum

The transition program addresses the following relevant areas within the

secondary school curriculum:

A. Cross curriculum areas: ,

Communication , Interpersonal Skills and Behaviour Management

B. 1. Continuing Education

2. Vocational Training and Placement

3. Leisure and Recreation

4. Community Living

5. Personal Management

6. Transport and Mobility

Individual transition planning encourages greater flexibility in terms of

curriculum, as the balance between traditional and functional academics;

career counselling and vocational training; and other important areas should

be determined on an individual basis, taking into account the needs, interests

and abilities of each student.

This project is forcing a reassessment of the secondary school curriculum to

occur at all levels and has highlighted the fact that innovative curriculum and

instruction opportunities are required to better meet the needs of students and

equip them for the Post-Secondary environment. Although all areas require

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urgent attention, to date one of the areas most addressed in this project in

terms of new initiatives has been that of vocational training and placement.

Barriers that have frequently operated to prevent students with disabilities

achieving better educational and training outcomes have included:

° low parent and community expectations

° low student expectations and involvement in career planning and

learning experiences

inappropriate and/or inadequate secondary schooling and post

secondary curricula

° disincentives to further training and enrolment through the use of

pensions and tracking into sheltered employment options for security

reasons

minimal career counselling and training

° over-emphasis on labour market entry often to the exclusion of

maintenance of employment and ongoing career and professional

development

limited resources especially for expensive facilities and services eg.

notetaking for the deaf

limited personnel with specialised knowledge for facilitation training

° extremely limited options for some disability groups

Vocational Training Options

An increasing body of research has indicated that context for instruction is

critical. More and more trainers. employers and employment specialists are

finding that much of the vocational training required is best acquired either on

the job itself or in highly structured simulation situations. The demand for

increased technological skill, the costs of acquiring and maintaining

equipment and resources, and awareness and application of learning theory

that demonstrates that learning in the real environment of context is most

successful, places such training beyond the realm of secondary schools and

even many traditional TAFE courses.

What is required is a curriculum and a system of instruction that is more

flexible, and allows for young persons over the age of 15 years to engage in

education and training not merely on one campus but possibly in several

locations. Vocational components at the secondary school focus upon

establishing appropriate work habits, practices and attitudes, and developing

job seeking, interpersonal and negotiation skills. Training programs beyond

the school can then provide more specific work skill instruction. This is the

concept currently being trialed in NSW.

Present arrangements allow students with disabilities who are still enrolled at

school to access:

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TAFE courses - (mainstream, modifies mainstream or special courses)

On site vocational training with support from a Job coach or Enclave

trainer '

° Some Skillshare programs (by special arrangement)

Those in country as well as city areas have responded very positively to this

initiative, as have students and parents from ethnic and aboriginal

communities involved. New ideas are being trialed, especially with special

TAFE courses, and attempts are being made to find new, valid and diversified

employment opportunities. »

Many teachers are reporting that such provisions are having the effect of

increasing motivation both for vocational training and general education, as

students find greater relevance for what they are learning and begin to set

their own goals and take more responsibility for their learning. Such

provisions could and should be extended so that young people are able to

move smoothly from school to post compulsory education and training without

'dropping out' of education and training altogether.

Student numbers in TAFE Transition courses demonstrate the interest and

potential of such courses.

During 1990, a total of 550 students with disabilities from 8 pilot sites around

NSW attended 122 TAFE Transition courses. The majority were students with

an intellectual disability (approx 71%), although all disability groups were

represented (hearing impaired 20%, visually impaired 3%, and physically

disabled 6%. These courses operated from 20 different TAFE Colleges and

included 13 mainstream courses and 12 modified mainstream courses as well

as the special courses designed by the TAFE Disability consultants involved.

Evaluations of the 1990 courses were incomplete, but 398 students for whom

post course destinations were known, 11 percent continued study at TAFE

post school, 22 percent gained employment, 55 percent continued on at

school for another year and 12 percent pursued other options. (See table 1,

page 1-33) Courses were seen as critical by students and staff in increasing

motivation and self confidence, and in developing appropriate employment

related skills.

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Table 1: known post course destinations for students in TAFE

Transition Courses 1990

Post Course Destination Number Percent

TAFE related field 11 2

TAFE unrelated field 33 8.3

'Employment related field 56 14.1

Employment in related field 32 8.0

Continue at School 217 54.5

Other 49 12.3

Total 398 100.0

Throughout 1990 and 1991, TAFE Transition courses have been streamlined

to provide maximum efficiency and relevance, and a pool of knowledge and

expertise has been developing within both secondary school staff and TAFE

staff for assessment, delivery, and administration of these courses. Similar

ventures with other training organisations and agencies are beginning to

occur. Provisions of Job Coaches through FETE funding and involvement in

DEET Skillshare courses for young people with disabilities in transition are

new initiatives begun in 1991 and which have wide ranging implications for

policy, assessment, accreditation and funding.

RBSOUFCGS and FUl1(|il1g

Current vocational training costs for students with disabilities attending TAFE

Transition courses per semester are averaging approximately $1250 per

student. The costs range from $60 per student (in a mainstream class) to

$6500 for an individually designed on-site training course for one student with

very high support needs. The total cost of courses are currently being met by

the Department of School Education on a fee for service basis. Both the NSW

Department of School Education and the TAFE Disability Unit have indicated

dissatisfaction over the fee for service arrangement, and investigations are

being made into the possibility of TAFE funding transition courses.

However interagency cooperation and collaboration are required at policy

and funding levels to negotiate a more flexible system which may include

young persons with disabilities utilising dual or multiple services whilst in the

transition phase, and for negotiating more flexible entry and exit points within

and between agencies and departments. The involvement of unions and

employers in such negotiation would also be critical.

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Careers Education and Counselling

Constantly school teachers, TAFE personnel and employment agency staff

complain that they lack necessary assessment data on student performance

and that students with disabilities are lacking;

a. awareness and knowledge of possible /suitable career paths

b. interest and motivation and/or

c. adequate skills and abilities in areas of interest of choice.

Adequate and effective career counselling and assessment opportunities are

required which will enable students with disabilities to test out interests in

selected areas to promote informed choices.

Local Community Transition Teams

The focus of the community team is to enhance the range and quality of the

various service provisions available in the community during transition, not to

provide direct service. The aim of the community based team is to establish

an interagency team based in the community to identify present and future

transitional needs and priorities, and to work towards enhancing the capacity

of schools, service agencies, employers and parents/care givers to deliver

effective transition services to meet the needs of that community. At present

14 such teams are operating throughout the state.

Community Transition Teams in established pilot areas in NSW have

consistently identified problems with lack of information flow occurring

between institutions and agencies, and most teams are in the process of

identifying service needs and service gaps in their localities for people with

disabilities. This team approach is required on a broader front.

Conclusion

A systems model evaluation of the NSW Transition Project is being conducted

by Macquarie University. Results to date indicate that the transition strategies

being trialed are all having effects, in particular the individual transition

planning process, the provision of specialised courses and training through

TAFE Colleges and Job coaches, and the work of community transition teams

to promote increased options for students with disabilities in the community.

The first year of the project saw an increased retention rate at secondary

schools in the 4 original pilot areas of 46 percent for students with disabilities

in the 15-19 years age group. A number of students with disabilities who have

completed special TAFE courses are securing employment, others are

continuing on to mainstream courses and even apprenticeships, while others

are enrolling as adult students in TAFE courses after having left school. A

follow up system of the Post-Secondary experiences and successes of

students with disabilities who have left school is presently underway, and

details of the result s will be published in 1992. .

The first National Conference of Transition Education for Students with

Disabilities was held in Sydney on June 27th and 28th 1991, where

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recommendations were made to return transition education to the national

agenda and facilitate relevant national cooperation, planning and policies in

key areas. Particular issues requiring attention include continuing staff

training and technical support, and the funding of services in the various

sectors.

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ATTITUDES AND INDEPENDENCIES

Larry McCloskey

Paul Menton Centre For Persons With Disabilities

Carleton University, Ottawa Canada

Introduction - Decade of Development

The first recognition of disability at Carleton University came with

establishment of half-time position in 1981, International Year of

Disabled Persons.

Paul Menton held the first post of Coordinator for the Disabled under

the auspices of Health Services. The primary reason for the position

was to work with access and Vocational Rehabilitation Services

issues for students with disabilities in residence. The position did not

have a budget.

I took over in the half time position in 1982 and the position became

full-time in 1983. A budget of $10,000 was established - $5000 for

access and $5,000 for the program.

1986 - VRS restricts funding for full-time students - no formal

organisation exists to protect policy: - 3 Students and myself apply to

Secretary of State federal government to fund a national conference

for students with disabilities - NEADS is founded.

The position became part of Counselling Service in 1987 (in order to

make a departure from a medical model association).

1988 - Colleges under MCU ministry have received substantial

funding but not universities: - meeting organised at York University

to lobby for equivalent university funding - IUCSNS established.

1989 - Universities funded basically according to student population

(about $200,000 this year) for services, programs and the creation of

new centres and staff positions:

- money cannot be used for retroffiting:

- lobbying for retrofitting budget continues.

The office of the Coordinator for the disabled remained a single office

without secretarial support under the funding from the Provincial MCU

in 1989 - result ed in the opening of the PMC in January 1990.

Today there are 4 full time established positions

- 4 full time contract positions

- 30 part time student positions.

1991 - a comprehensive accessibility survey conducted in anticipation

of access money.

Carleton requires $5 million to be a barrier free environment not

withstanding its relative accessibility reputation throughout Canada.

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Attendant Care Program - An example of independence

Some

1970's - first students with disabilities and attendant care needs start

living in residence.

The rooms are not accessible; attendant care is arranged by students

and VRS (Vocational Rehabilitation Services) without university

involvement; attendant care services are basic, with morning and

evening care.

VRS provides funding to university students on an individual basis to

pursue approved employment related occupations (thus utility aspect

of education key as opposed to learning for the sake of learning).

However in 1980, as precursor to 1981 International Year of the

Disabled, VRS agreed to pool individual client funding in order to

collectively renovate residence rooms; doorways were widened,

bathroom showers installed and 11 accessible rooms were created

(by 1980 standards).

In the ensuing 6 years there was an increasing need to accommodate

attendant care need students: - more students; greater severity of

disability.

1987 - I applied for funding to Ministry of Community and Social

Services for 24 hour program:

- proposal less expensive than community

- first program on university campus

- combines grant as well as collective application for VRS.

January 1991 - a new residence opens on campus with 20 accessible

rooms.

May 1991 – further funding for 12 month program received, based on

fiscal year rather than academic year.

June 1991 i- an attendant care advisory committee established to

ensure client input-consumer directed care and accountability.

Ongoing Issues

Student attendants (except for Co-ordinator and Team Leader)

- distinguishing professionals;

-friendship, otherwise roles ie. students and attendants may live in

same building

Housing office relationships

a/ housing rules

b/ housing tour and conference summer agenda

c/ client politics and human rights

d/ attendant equality

e/ confidentiality

f/ budget constraints

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Larry McCloskey

(g) community move - after graduation

(h) environmental limitations

Learning Disability Program - an example of changing attitudes

1983 - Committee on learning disabilities established - responsibility

to halftime coordinator with recommendations to full time status.

Position of coordinator became full time in 1984.

piece meal program until 1990 - full time LD specialist (York U. 5 F/'I'

specialists).

Comprehensive testing available in psychology department.

The program now includes:

- testing

- individualised

- policy on exam accommodation

- faculty advocacy

- community out reach.

The lack of awareness is still cited by students as the greatest

problem.

1991 An awareness video produced (IODE) with WO. Mitchell,

broadcast quality, first dealing with LD students in university, Title: A

Question of Perception.

1991 Senate committee established on policy and determining of

appropriate accommodation.

Ongoing Issues:

Testing - no existing standard battery ot tests for university students

are available:

- cost of testing

Poor documentation from students from high school - sometimes

legacy of inaccurate labelling (bill 82).

Reluctant, refusing faculty ie. Engineering.

Dealing with students who do not qualify (but may have a history of

accommodation).

Determining appropriate accommodation for individual students:

- 50% extra time - what about more?

- oral exam what about M.A. English?

Authority and respect throughout campus community for invisible, grey

area - challenge of attempting to draw lines.

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Pathways Post-Secondary Education for Students with Disabilities

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TERTIARY STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

PARTICIPATION AND SUPPORT

Dr R J Andrews

Consultant in Education and Community Services

In this paper I will briefly report on two consultancies undertaken for the

Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET)(1), and the

Review Committee (Finn Committee) appointed by the Australian Education

Council to inquire into post-compulsory education and training(2). I will also

detail a number of measures to respond to existing barriers for people with

disabilities in tertiary education, which were included in the latter of the two

projects.

Participation

In the past, a small group of people with disabilities has successfully attended

higher education and TAFE institutions and completed courses in a range of

disciplines and employment areas. Many institutions began to provide

physically accessible buildings and campuses in the 1970s and 1980s, and

adapted administrative practices to expedite the entry and examination of

these students. It can be expected that students with disabilities who

completed tertiary level education and training and gained employment at this

time were those who were academically able to meet the demands of their

chosen courses, and who were able to undertake their studies with the limited

institutional assistance available to them.

As with other ‘disadvantaged groups', however, we are aware that

participation of people with disabilities in tertiary education is influenced by a

range of factors. These include a lack of personal confidence, self-esteem,

career aspirations, and role models; the absence of adequate information and

guidance on options in post-compulsory studies; and uncertain employment

prospects. Other factors may be the location and accessibility of education

and training institutions; on-campus access to classrooms, student resource

areas and social facilities; the availability of bridging courses and course

structures which facilitate participation; and financial need. When enrolment

in tertiary education is achieved today, many of these difficulties are still to be

faced, together with the recurring problem of the availability of support

measures required by many students for the successful completion of a study

program.

Using the information obtained in the data study for DEET, the best possible

estimates which can be made of students in tertiary education in 1991 are that

some 4,160 students with disabilities are enrolled in higher education (or 0.99

percent) and more than 7,000 in technical and further education (or 0.84

percent). These numbers, however, are not complete due to the lack of data

available in most States on students in mainstream TAFE courses, and the

option which many people with disabilities exercise in not identifying as

disabled or learning disabled when attending a tertiary institution. The report

for the project also included a literature review and detailed summaries of the

data located 1.

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The review project on the participation of students with disabilities in the post-

compulsory school years, including tertiary level education and training,

confirmed a view that the support programs provided for students with

disabilities by tertiary education authorities and institutions include some

which are comprehensive and well-coordinated, and others which are recently

established and at a comparatively early stage of development. There also

was evidence that the differences in support programs for disabled students

reflects different levels of commitment to equity provisions among tertiary

education authorities and institutions. There are examples where minimum

resources and provisions are applied to the task of providing support;

examples where there are well established policies but little central planning

and coordination of service development; and examples where a clear priority

is given to equity issues, and programs are at an advanced stage of

development. This latter group includes the TAFE program in New South

Wales and the Vera White Disability Resource Centre program at Deakin

University in Victoria.

Recent studies in this area, including some reported at this conference, have

highlighted a range of issues in tertiary education which were also particular

concerns that arose in these projects on the participation of students with

disabilities. The issues included the following:

° Low participation levels across higher education and TAFE, with

significant differences among institutions in the number and proportion

of students identifying as having a disability.

The lack of data collection nationally for planning and coordination of

support services for students.

The fact that few attempts have been made to actively recruit students

with disabilities into tertiary institutions.

An absence of formal structures to ensure student support in

institutions, especially provision of a dedicated staff position;

established in an equity or student services unit, with assistance in

meeting student needs from on-campus generic student and university

services; and identified funds to help provide support as required by

students to successfully follow study programs.

The need for special provisions in teaching facilities and learning

resource areas, including audio loops, library assistance, and a

resource area housing a range of basic equipment for improved

student access to course materials and general library resources.

The need for staff awareness and development programs in the area of

students with disabilities.

Continuing difficulties with physical access on campuses, including

access to teaching facilities and learning resource areas.

The need, at some institutions, for special accommodation for students

with mobility problems and those who require attendant care as part of

campus residential provisions.

Barriers to participation

Many of these issues reflect factors which significantly affect the participation

by students with disabilities in post-secondary education and training.

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Eight major barriers (Table 1) were noted in the work undertaken. These

included the following:-

1. The fact that many institutions are unclear or undecided on

their roles in tertiary education and training for students with

disabilities, and on the planning and support services needed for

a coordinated approach to meeting the needs of these students.

For example, while the TAFE sector has for a number of years been seen as a

relevant tertiary provision for students with disabilities, an overview of current

provisions in TAFE indicates that there remains, in many States, a number of

impediments to TAFE institutions fulfilling the role for these students that has

generally been sought. These impediments include a lack of experience in

providing for students with disabilities; the complexity of such provision; the

range of courses and programs that would be required to meet all needs; the

general restriction of funds to meet the educational and training requirements

of students with disabilities, and initiate the support programs they would

require; and the long-term cost implications evident from the special programs

and level of support which some institutions have been able to mount. In

many higher education institutions the same lack of clarity or decision exists;

for example in institutions which have made some key access provisions but

have not provided appropriate staffing and resources to enable detailed

planning and coordination of support services.

Table 1

Barriers to participation in post-secondary education and training

A lack of clarity and decisions by tertiary authorities and institutions on their full

role in education and training provisions for students with disabilities.

A low level of student identification at tertiary institutions which impedes

planning and support service development for students with disabilities.

An inappropriate approach to students' need for support, which is basically

reactive to individual student circumstances.

An absence of modified and alternative curriculum and courses in post-

secondary education and training.

An absence of constructive links between schools and post-secondary

education and training institutions.

A lack of liaison and recruitment programs to increase participation by students

with disabilities.

inadequate physical access at many tertiary education and training institutions.

A lack of post-school options for students with disabilities completing

secondary education.

Source: See reference 2.

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2. The considerable difficult y being experienced in tertiary

education in respect to student identification, an important

prerequisite to providing any assistance needed. This barrier

involves both TAFE and higher education Institutions.

The fact that people with disabilities will choose whether to identify

themselves as disabled and in need of assistance, or not, must be

acknowledged and respected. Many understandably adopt the view that after

years of perceived dependence in schooling they want to demonstrate their

independence as adults, and demonstrate their capacity to succeed as

autonomous individuals in tertiary programs. There is also evidence that

these students have no wish to be `labelled'; and frequently have serious

doubts that any useful benefit or value would result from their providing tertiary

institutions with information about difficulties they have in accessing a chosen

education or training path. These circumstances reflect both the right of

choice which people with disabilities have in identifying themselves as

`disabled', as well as a number of contentious questions about the best way to

ask, or encourage, students to identify themselves as people with special

needs.

Some TAFE authorities and universities include an identification question on

official enrolment forms, and may ask students to indicate their `disability'.

Others see this approach as intrusive and perhaps capable of leading to

discrimination, such as in selection for admission. No matter which procedure

is used to request students to identify themselves, it is generally reported that

the response from students is at times very low, reflecting concerns they have

or a desire not to seek special assistance in their studies. Some students later

come to the attention of support staff through coordinator interviews for course

entry, teaching staff encouragement, the need to resolve difficulties faced in

the areas of access or progress with studies, or when requesting special

consideration in assessment or examinations.

3. The inappropriate approach to support for students with

disabilities adopted by most tertiary institutions.

With few exceptions, support for these students is given as a `response' to

particular expressed needs. That is, individual support and assistance is

provided if possible by an institution as a response to a request. While this

`reactive' approach may be considered to work well, and be appropriate to

‘low key' assistance which does not unduly separate students with disabilities

from their peers, it carries with it a number of disadvantages. These include

that ‘ad hoc' or ‘one off' responses tend not to lead to the development of

comprehensive or coordinated on-campus provision. In addition, there is

limited value in the approach for institutional or authority planning, or indeed

for establishing designated budget arrangements to support students with

disabilities. Neither does it tend to lead to an understanding of the overall

needs of students across the programs of an institution in respect to support

services development, nor lead to pro-active approaches to increasing

participation by students with disabilities within the institution.

4. The absence of education and training programs for students

with disabilities outside of mainstream programs.

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Some TAFE institutions provide special or alternative curricula for students

with disabilities who cannot be accommodated in mainstream programs due

to their educational backgrounds. These, however, are the exception. The

limited provision of modified and alternative curriculum and courses excludes

many students from post-secondary school options needed for their continued

education and future employment. This is a barrier which also exists in higher

education.

5. The absence of constructive links between schools and post-

secondary education and training institutions.

Formal and informal links between schools and post-secondary education are

acknowledged as an important element of appropriate secondary education

for most students. But these links between secondary and tertiary education

and training programs are as important from a tertiary institution viewpoint as

they are from the secondary school viewpoint. Apart from helping to ease the

movement of students between sectors in both a personal and educational

sense, they make an important contribution to the transition process, and

expedite access to further education and employment preparation for students

with disabilities. The lack of such links is a considerable barrier to increased

participation.

6. A lack of liaison and recruitment programs to increase

participation by students with disabilities in post-secondary

education and training.

There are few examples of tertiary institutions undertaking recruitment

activities specifically to increase the participation of students with disabilities.

The generally accepted approach is to wait for students to enrol, and then

seek to provide a measure of assistance; again, a `reactive' rather than a ‘pro-

active' position. The recent provision by the Commonwealth of equity

initiatives grants(3) may have provided an opportunity for tertiary institutions in

some States to begin to redress this situation. While recruitment initiatives

can be undertaken by individual institutions, collaborative activities could be

expected either to lead to cross-institutional recruitment programs, or to

information projects and planning which will support a more active and

collaborative approach to recruitment, with consequent contributions to

participation levels. It can be noted that in recent years a number of student

support units in government school authorities have been building links to the

tertiary sector to help promote early identification and recruitment of students

with disabilities by tertiary institutions. This has especially been the case in

respect to visually and hearing impaired students.

An example of this practice by a tertiary institution is to be found in project

work undertaken in collaboration between the University of Queensland and

the Queensland Department of Education(4).

7. Inadequate physical access at many tertiary education and

training institutions.

The barrier of physical access to tertiary education institutions continues to be

of concern. Despite many years of an emphasis on campus and building

design and construction to remove physical barriers to students with

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disabilities, free movement around many tertiary education campuses is still

not possible. ironically some buildings which have been completed as

recently as the last academic year have inaccessible areas. Problems of

accessing multi-storey buildings remain. Inappropriate doors and ramps are

common. There are instances of the lack of graded pathways on campuses,

impeding movement by students with mobility problems on sloping sites.

Support measures

Measures to reduce the effects of these barriers on student participation and

to increase benefits from tertiary level studies were also discussed, in the

project report referred to, together with proposed strategies to implement

them. The measures proposed related to the barriers listed in Table 1, but

focus on seven major actions by government and tertiary institutions

considered to be critical to achieving changes to present arrangements. In

brief, these are as follows.

1. Tertiary institutions and authorities to review equity measures

to ensure appropriate education, training and support responses

are made for a range of students with disabilities.

The range of options for some secondary school leavers is limited, including

in respect to further education and training opportunities. While an

appropriate level of academic achievement is important for success in

advanced studies in TAFE, and for studies in higher education institutions,

there is considerable room for concern that under-representation of students

with disabilities in these institutions is, to some extent, due to a lack of

preparedness by institutions to undertake course and subject modifications

which will enable a wider range of students to participate. Apart from modified

course structures and curricula, the availability of assistance such as bridging

courses, tutoring, and remedial help can enable students with severe

disabilities and high support needs, as well as students with specific learning

disabilities, to succeed in studies in these institutions. Australia lags

considerably behind in these developments, especially in assistance to

students with learning disabilities(5).

Unfortunately, the development in the 1980s of alternative courses for people

with lower levels of educational achievement has foundered nationally

because of limited resources and a lack of decisions about who should pay

the costs of school-TAFE link programs and special courses. This remains a

significant gap in the array of education, training and employment options

available to a large group of students with disabilities. It has been noted as a

major policy and services problem in many States and Territories. The

significance of this discussion here is that urgent reviews of the roles and

responsibilities of TAFE and other tertiary agencies are needed with a view to

early clarification of the issue. These reviews should not just focus on funding

deficiencies, but on policies that are appropriate to the respective authorities

and agencies.

It is particularly important that TAFE authorities nationally determine their roles

in these provisions. There is wide expectation in Australia that the experience

in overseas countries, including the United Kingdom, will demonstrate the

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need for a major new education and training emphasis to meet the needs of

this group of people with disabilities(6).

2. Support for an appropriate infrastructure in tertiary institutions

to plan services and support students with disabilities.

Some institutions already have a well-developed program for students based

on appropriate organisational structures. These, however, are in the minority.

In the last year or so, others have established full-time liaison or counselling

positions to provide a service for students with disabilities. Other institutions,

however, rely on arrangements that have emerged over time, utilising staff in a

number of generic student services who contribute toward a pattern of

assistance. A few institutions continue to rely on one staff member from the

student services area who is allocated a few hours weekly to undertake a

support role.

Although the staff concerned are characteristically enthusiastic and

responsive to students' needs, there is evidence that, in general terms, many

of these arrangements have proved to be inadequate. It is suggested that the

low identification rate for students with disabilities in many institutions may

reflect this situation, as well as student perception of the support likely to be

available.

The collective experience of institutions seems to suggest that at least one full-

time staff member is required as a basic provision. Preferably this staff

member would be located in a section of the institution associated with equity

concerns, and be backed by the range of other student services on a campus,

which would be utilised by students with disabilities as required. The staff

member needs to establish links with other institutions and off-campus support

agencies. There needs to be an appropriate level of funding available to meet

the costs of providing the services and supports offered by institutions to

students on the campus.

The Commonwealth Government has in the past made grants to some

individual institutions for the appointment of a staff member to initiate planned

services for students with disabilities. This action should be expanded to

other institutions where appropriate. A table of some of the elements of the

infrastructure needed to support students with disabilities is provided in Table

2.

3. Direct grants to assist students with high support needs in

tertiary education and training institutions. This support measure was

particularly advocated in respect to students in post-secondary education and

training. This is perhaps the most difficult support area for institutions. For this

reason, and because of the nature of the personal learning assistance

required by the students concerned, it was seen as a key measure which will

both increase participation levels and help maintain students in their tertiary

studies, and into employment.

As has been the experience in the school sector in developing support

services for students with disabilities, funds are needed above standard

student costs to ensure that these students have access to educational

programs through support arrangements which are essential to their

participation.

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This ‘positive discrimination' has been practiced in tertiary education in

Australia in recent years to increase participation among a number of under-

represented student groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

students. Apart from the existence of support services being one determinant

in student decisions to attempt a tertiary education program or not, there is

anecdotal evidence that a number of students are not able to sustain their

study program due to the inability of institutions to provide the supports

required. It can be expected that few if any institutions can provide the high

cost personal learning assistance required by some students, including

learning assistants (personal care and note-taking for physically disabled

students), scribes, interpreters (for hearing impaired students), braille

materials, and communication and learning equipment. ‘

Table 2

Tertiary institutions: Some elements of the infrastructure needed

to support people with disabilities

General provisions

A campus designed and landscaped for free movement by people with

disabilities.

Buildings designed and constructed to be accessible. ‘

Special access provisions in respect to learning resource areas (eg lecture

rooms, furniture, libraries, laboratories, computer facilities), student amenities

and social facilities.

A campus committee to advise on the participation and needs of students.

Provision of a disability coordinator as an established position within

institutional equity arrangements.

Adequate financial resources to provide essential student support.

Support services within generic campus services

Secondary school liaison and recruitment.

Information, career guidance, personal and study counselling, and advocacy.

Enrolment assistance, orientation, induction, special assessment and

examination provisions.

Bridging courses; tutoring as required.

Alternative teaching and learning arrangements as required.

Study skills programs, including problem solving and learning strategies.

Health and welfare services.

A network of faculty/departmental Contacts.

Staff awareness and professional development programs.

Student support groups to assist them to maintain confidence and personal

identity.

Examples of specific support services

Personal reader service Interpreters

Scribes/note-takers Braille support

Taped lectures and materials Typing access

Equipment loans and provisions Campus travel support

On campus accessible accommodation Communication aids

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It is noted that this support is included in the range of grants for students with

disabilities in higher education in the United Kingdom. The levels of grants in

1991 were, in equivalent funds -

» A general allowance of up to $2,500 per annum for book costs, and

extra costs of studying at home.

A specialist equipment allowance of up to $7,500 over an entire course

for items such as a computer or word processor, recorder, and radio

microphone system.

A non-medical helpers allowance of up to $10,000 per annum for the

costs of, for example, sign interpreters, note-takers, and mobility

aides(7).

4. Modified and alternative curriculum development projects in institutions

While all tertiary education and training institutions need to look

at the issue of modified and alternative curriculum development, as discussed

above, the major group of institutions which can be expected to undertake this

work will be TAFE institutions providing mainstream vocational courses for

students with disabilities, and an alternative curriculum for students enrolled in

special programs. This is an important development for TAFE institutions,

which will not be equipped to respond to the range of educational and training

needs of people with disabilities until it is achieved.

Many modified curriculum projects will be specific to individual courses and

subjects in tertiary institutions, and can be expected to be undertaken by the

institutions. It may be necessary however to stimulate this activity by seeding

grants which have the purpose of enabling institutions to develop guidelines

and procedures for this support service, and encouraging staff awareness of

the needs of students for such assistance.

5. Establish collaborative disability support centres or units

among groups of tertiary institutions to promote Options and

support services in Post-Secondary education and training.

The key purpose of these centres, in addition to avoiding duplication and

competition in information and recruitment activities, and enhancing

collaboration among tertiary institutions, is to provide a link between schools

and tertiary institutions which strongly supports the transition of students with

disabilities from school to further education and training.

A recent review by Power and Stephens(8) highlighted the lack of `outreach‘

and recruitment programs, lack of information and literature in accessible

formats, and the lack of well-established and effective support structures in

tertiary institutions to encourage participation and assure potential students

that the provision of necessary support is a feature of institutional activities.

The findings were confirmed by the studies being reported in this paper. The

1991 equity initiatives program of the Commonwealth provided four grants to

consortia of institutions in four States `to provide a comprehensive range of

support programs for students with disabilities'(9). The grants ranged from

$150,000 to $300,000 per consortium. The implementation of the projects

and activities selected by each group is now in progress.

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Some funds have been directed toward the preparation of information

statements, student recruitment, staff awareness and development programs,

and reviews of appropriate support arrangements in institutions.

One of the benefits of these projects is the sharing of ideas, information and

plans among tertiary institutions in a process directed to collaboration and

improvement of support services. Because of the early stage of development

most institutions are at in this field, many will also benefit from advice and

assistance in their efforts to establish an appropriate organisation and

program in this important equity area, as well as in respect to elements of their

support services for students, especially those which are highly specialised.

The collaborative activities arising from the initiative should form the basis for

a series of disability support centres or units affiliated with groups of tertiary

institutions. They would be an effective contribution to recruitment, increasing

participation levels, and the provision of information to senior secondary

schools on student options in post-secondary education and training. It could

be expected that there would be considerable benefits to students and

institutions from collaboration in this form. At the same time, it is emphasised

that such ‘centres or units will not negate the importance of an appropriate

support infrastructure for students within each tertiary institution.

Viable activities for disability support centres to undertake on behalf of the

collaborating institutions could include the provision of information and advice

for schools, students, parents, and secondary education student support

services. This would be in accessible formats, and would detail study

opportunities, courses, and support available in each institution. Other

activities might be joint student recruitment programs; information on and

assessments of special equipment items for students; information and advice

to secondary schools and students to inform transition planning for students;

collaboration with school-level counselling and careers centres; liaison with

school support services on potential students and their transition plans on

behalf of institutions; and an information and resource centre for parents of

disabled students involved in transition planning with schools and school

support staff. The centres would also be an avenue for advice on external

agencies providing student support, and equipment available, together with

assessments of the advantages and capacity of the equipment items. In this

way disability support centres would be an important transition initiative.

6. Support for the removal of barriers to physical access on

tertiary institution campuses..

This issue has long been on the agenda of measures needed to improve

participation of students with mobility difficult ies and other access needs. It is

no less important in the 1990s. Institutions report that action to improve

campus access over recent years has been dependent on the availability of

funds.

Major physical barriers remain at most institutions. For a number of reasons it

can be expected that some institutions will not be able to resolve all these

difficulties. These include cases where building alterations cannot be

undertaken in cost-effective ways, and where historical buildings cannot be

altered. Institutions regularly try to find ways around the access problems of

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individual students by actions which include the reallocation of lecture and

seminar rooms.

A major concern in this area is the continuing construction of new buildings on

campuses which do not meet established standards for access. While

governments generally require buildings they construct or occupy to be

accessible to people with disabilities, they should also take steps to ensure

that all publicly funded buildings, such as schools and tertiary institutions are

constructed to be accessible by students with disabilities.

7. 5\_Support for the expansion of alternative education and

training options in TAFE, and the expansion of places in training

options provided by private and community agencies.

This proposal builds on the measures proposed for a clarification of the roles

and responsibilities of tertiary education and training institutions in providing

for students with disabilities, and support for the development of modified and

alternative curriculum. Its focus however is on the large gap in provisions for

students with disabilities on leaving secondary school. This has been

highlighted by recent projects being undertaken by education authorities in a

number of States. This measure requires a significant injection of funds into

the TAFE system nationally to establish a new group of courses especially for

students with intellectual disabilities and severe learning disabilities. These

should be prepared at a number of achievement levels, and emphasise

pathways which link into mainstream courses. It also requires a new look at

curriculum assistance in higher education. The real focus of this measure,

however, should be on the acknowledgment that a greater number of students

with disabilities must be supported through post-compulsory schooling and

into tertiary education and training, rather than being deflected into work-

related activities after completing compulsory schooling.

The barriers and support measures discussed above were included in the

issues paper prepared for the Review of Post-Compulsory Education and

Training. The Review Committee report identified a number of the proposals

discussed and selected six for further study by a working party, which would

then report to the Australian Education Council.

These were:

~ Modified and alternative curriculum development projects in the senior

secondary school and tertiary institutions with the proviso that these be

coherently articulated into mainstream further education and training

opportunities;

Individual transition planning for students with disabilities;

Links between secondary schools and tertiary institutions for planning

and student support;

Establishing collaborative disability support centres or units among

groups of tertiary institutions to promote options and support services in

post-secondary education and training; and

Continuing efforts to remove barriers to physical access on tertiary

campuses.

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Support systems

Much of the material that has been discussed above describes measures to

focus on the needs of individual students, or to build up infrastructure

conditions and services to benefit all students. To achieve equity for people

with disabilities in tertiary institutions through increased participation and

relevant support measures it has been suggested that it is necessary to re-

think the nature of institutional support systems required by the students,

rather than focus on one-off support actions.

The rationale for support systems for people with disabilities across tertiary

education tends to be the same as for other under-represented student

groups, yet we seldom relate policy or institutional experiences with support

measures in one equity area to others. This is done briefly as a conclusion to

this paper, using the experience of developing support systems for Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander people to increase their participation in tertiary

education and training. If we paraphrase the work of Jordan(10) and policy

discussion documents in that field, a basic support system statement would go

something like this.

The rationale for support systems for people with disabilities is based

on the following:

1. The educational backgrounds of the students have not provided

a model for academic achievement, or a climate for pursuing

long-term study objectives.

2. The educational backgrounds of the students have not provided

a study program conducive to the profitable use of libraries,

lecture time, note-taking skills, the analysis of material, and

assignment writing.

3. The backgrounds of the students have been characterised by

prejudice or neglect in education, and as individuals, which has

restricted the exercise of normal student-student or student-

teacher interactions.

4. Students will have experienced negative stereotyping as

disabled persons.

5. Students may have problems of identity, low self-concepts and

little confidence in their educational capacity.

6. Students may have lower levels of educational achievement

and/or possible weaknesses in key content areas, study skills or

in communication needed for their chosen studies. They may

have dislocated educational experiences which have

contributed to these circumstances.

7. Students may have experienced possible disorganisation in

family background, or personal crises of health, financial

support, or relationships.

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There are two essential elements required in appropriate support

systems. These are:

(i) academic support, and

(ii) personal support.

Academic support will include assistance for students to fill gaps in their

past educational experience, and will work toward students

consolidating the studies being undertaken to achieve their objectives.

It will provide special entry programs, including for mature age

students, catch-up and remedial assistance, tutoring and study skills

programs.

In a wider context of participation, academic support extends to:

a) activities which introduce students to tertiary studies;

b) the provision of bridging programs which include study to meet

entry requirements, core units in academic preparation and

study skills, special units in career areas, and bridging programs

to professional and other studies;

c) orientation programs;

d) entry to award courses; and

e) off-campus studies which advantage the student.

Academic support will focus on the achievement by students of awards

and qualifications; on employment after study; on students with

disabilities enrolling in the full range of faculties at both under-graduate

and post-graduate levels.

Personal support includes counselling services appropriate to people

with disabilities, assistance with personal identity and relationships,

assistance with accommodation and housing, and child care

provisions. People with disabilities will benefit from contacts with social

networks, and activities which will help them gain knowledge of and

insights into ways of increasing the control they have over their lives

and over adverse circumstances which are related to their studies and

motivation.

The requirements for effective support systems are also important.

These include:

1. The institutionalisation of support. Support services which are

add-ons or temporary are seldom fully effective. They need to be

institutionalised to the extent of being funded from institutional

budgets, recognised as an essential part of the overall academic

program and the structure of the institution, and provided with

appropriate buiIt space and equipment which contribute to the

work of the support system. In the long term, `equity', `initiative'

or other non-recurrent grants will not of themselves provide in

institutions the support systems, structures or assistance needed

by students, even though they are, at least at some stages of the

development of services, an essential contribution.

2. Support within an appropriate `culture'. This is achieved by such

measures as the employment of people with disabilities, where

possible, disability specific student assistance programs, and the

availability of role models and people with disabilities who have

succeeded in a range of study areas.

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3. Provision of a separate space. To assist on both an academic

and personal level, students with disabilities benefit from a

separate space available to them within an institution. This can

provide for special shared equipment to aid students' study

programs, a rest and study area, and the facilitation of special

access to resources.

This support system approach emphasises the need for significant

development in most institution programs to increase participation of, and

support for people with disabilities. Where institutions are part of a TAFE

authority or one of a number of campuses of a university, they should build on

a systems approach to support put in place by the central authority. The

`reactive' approach followed by most institutions has, of course, served some

students well in the past, and a support systems approach will not necessarily

produce changes that all students will need. However, fully effective

participation and equity programs need to be underpinned by a more

structured system of support than is found today in most tertiary institutions,

and by a broader view of the needs of all people with disabilities in achieving

continuing education and training.

Conclusion

Participation in education equals improved life chances. All young people are

entitled to benefit as fully as possible from the educational provisions made in

the community. As a nation Australia generally lags behind comparable

countries in post-compulsory education and training options for people with

disabilities, and in recognising that this stage of education is for all people

regardless of their abilities, backgrounds and interests. Students with

disabilities, including those with learning disabilities, would be better

accommodated in education and training courses if the focus was on their

educational need rather than their `disabilities'.

Equity measures in tertiary education and training will not work unless they

are adequately planned and resourced. In the case of tertiary institutions,

there is a need for a positive approach to recognition of and support for

measures taken to provide assistance to students with disabilities. No matter

what arguments we mount against them, there are already important changes

occurring as a result of recent Commonwealth initiatives in higher education

through grants to improve student support programs, to establish collaborative

projects among institutions, and to help fund equity initiatives in institutions.

The requirement for the development of equity plans and targets for improved

participation by students with disabilities is also stimulating important change.

Unfortunately the national TAFE system has missed out on these important

initiatives. These developments can still be significantly built on however, and

uItimately the success of the measures will depend on institutional responses

to the support needs of students. It is suggested that, among other actions, a

serious study of equity focused support systems for people with disabilities in

tertiary education, together with increased levels of planning, and a

comprehensive approach to support, will make a major contribution to

meeting the equity objectives for these students which we all subscribe to.

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INTRODUCTION TO STUDENT PANEL SESSION

Michelle La Fontaine

Disability Liaison Officer

Victoria University of Technology

My name is Michelle La Fontaine and it is my role this morning to introduce

the Student Panel session. We would like to share with you our experiences

of post-secondary education. This session could be considered one of the

key sessions because as students with disabilities in Post-Secondary

education, we and the issues we raise with our choice and desire to

participate are the reason why this conference is taking palace.

So, this morning, l would like to introduce Kevin Murfitt, Frank Conroy and

Rebecca Adams. Each of our perspectives of Post-Secondary education is as

individual as we are. Each of our experiences is affected by the nature of our

condition, its cause and the course of our lives with it. We become experts in

the management of the implications of our conditions, become very much

aware of our capabilities, and thereby can become greatly challenged to

maximise the abilities we possess. Post-Secondary education is one pathway

towards this.

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THE VERA WHITE DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTRE

Terri Patterson and Jenny Townsend

Disability Resource Centre, Deakin University, VIC

The History

The origins of the Vera White Disability Resource Centre began in 1980 when

the Head of the Centre for Educational Services, Mr. Eric Gough decided to

offer 3 courses from the off campus program in 1981, on a trial basis, to

people with a visual disability. This was to be done by producing the

traditional printed study material in an audio taped version with accompanying

raised line diagrams produced by both Deakin University and the Royal

Victorian institute of the Blind. The alternatively formatted study material was

advertised throughout the disability network. It attracted a small number of

people with a visual disability, as well as others who could benefit from the

use of audio taped material. All of these students enrolled and studied through

the oft campus program and all were mature aged students.

From this small beginning, funded by grants from charitable trusts and the

support of the RVIB, a Centre of significance and leadership in Australia has

grown. The Centre now co-ordinates support services for approximately 400

on and off campus students with a disability across 5 university campuses.

Presently the Centre is funded by a recurrent university grant with additional

annual support from DEET'S Equity Branch which funds new and ongoing

equity projects.

During the 1980's individual students received significant support from the

Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service's sponsorship program. This allowed a

large number of students with a disability to access tertiary institutes by

providing them with personal assistance, notetakers, signing interpreters,

independent living aids, computers and paramedic support programs. As

more students with a disability qualified for entry into universities, both

students and the CRS questioned whether support of this nature should come

from a rehabilitation service or rather the educational institute. This was

particularly relevant as the number of new students were increasingly coming

directly from the secondary school system and didn't require a rehabilitation

program.

The future of the Vera White Disability Resource Centre depends largely on

adequate funding and the support of the University. DEET are still to address

the need for a 24 hour attendant care service to allow students with very high

support needs to live alongside their peers if they need to leave their home to

attend university. The area of graduate employment has enormous potential

once Australia gets through its present difficult times.

The 1990's brings to a head the issues of ongoing funding to provide the

support services that students with a disability need if they are to have parity

of the learning experience in tertiary education. The success of the integration

programs in the primary and secondary school system, the increase in

awareness of civil rights and equal opportunity plus the push for people with a

disabilities to reach their full potential and become role models for future

generations have all played a part in the current situation of demand

exceeding the limited resources.

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Services provided to students with disabilities through the

Vera White Disability Resource Centre

All students at Deakin University have the opportunity to register with the

Disability Resource Centre and avail themselves of the services offered. A

Notification of Disability form is enclosed with other administrative information

from Student Administration Branch after the offer of enrolment has been

accepted. The completed forms are then forwarded directly to the Student

Advisers of the Disability Resource Centre who acknowledge their receipt and

follow up the various requests.

The student response to this method of information distribution and collection

has been most successful for several reasons. Students are not required to

disclose their disability prior to acceptance of their offer of a university place

although a number of students do contact the Student Advisers to discuss

requirements for the following year. These discussions are most useful for the

planning and allocation of resources, and for students to receive advice

regarding preparations for tertiary studies. Secondly the Notification of

Disability form focus upon the effects that disability may have upon academic

performance and the services which can be provided to address this

disadvantage. Students therefore perceive disclosure of their disability as

having positive and beneficial educational outcomes.

The following services are offered through the Disability Resource Centre to

on and off campus students studying in either full or part time mode:

° Loan of audio tape study material and set texts

Provision of alternative examinations on campus or home supervised

examinations for off campus students

Arrangement of alternative methods of assignment presentation

Loan of specialised study equipment

On campus personal care needs service

On campus note taking service

Personal and academic reading service

Arrangement of specialist library services

° Pre enrolment counselling

° Specialist conferences seminars and workshops

° Advocacy service for students with disabilities to University and

community departments and organisations

° Advisory service to a number various University departments on matters

affecting students with disabilities

Support services such as those listed above have provided equity and

opportunities for students with disabilities to participate and engage in the

stimulating and varied aspects of university life.

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Lessons FROM GEESE

1. As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an 'uplift' for the bird following. By

flying in a 'V' formation the whole flock adds 71% greater flying range

than if the bird flew alone.

LESSON: People who share a common direction and sense of community

can get where they are going quicker and easier because they are

travelling on the thrust of another.

2. Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and

resistance of trying to fly alone, and quickly gets back into formation to

take advantage of the 'lifting power' of the bird immediately in front.

LESSON: If we have as much sense as a goose, we will stay in formation

with those who are headed where we want to go (and be willing to

accept their help as well as give ours to the other).

3. When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back into the formation and

another goose flies at the point position.

LESSON: It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks and sharing leadership

with people, as with geese, we are interdependent on each other.

4. The geese in formation honk from behind to encourage those up front to

keep up their speed.

LESSON: We need to make sure our honking from behind is encouraging

and not something else.

5. When a goose gets sick or wounded or shot down, two geese drop out of

formation and follow it down to help protect it. They stay with it until it is

able to fly again or dies. Then they launch out on their own, starting

another formation, or catch up with the flock.

LESSON: If we have as much sense as geese, we too will stand by each

other in difficult times as well as when we are strong.

Milton Olsen

Courtesy of Paul Leung

Keynote Speaker

"Pathways" Conference

Deakin University, Geelong

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