

The Tertiary Education Experience Programs – an innovative transition concept for high school students with disabilities

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Presentation Overview

- Current Educational Climate
- History of the Tertiary Education Experience (TEE)
- About the TEE programs
 - » TEE for students with disabilities
 - » Teacher Professional Development Program
 - » Uni-Vision for students who are blind or have low vision
- Uni-Futures and Uni-Access Blogs
- Questions

‘Shut Out’ Report

“Equal access to educational opportunities is considered a fundamental right, according to the Australian constitution. However, it is clear that when it comes to delivery of such educational opportunities to disabled people, real educational opportunities are hard to come by ... [The] lack of appropriate funding, classroom support and specialised equipment are enormous barriers to educational opportunities.” (FAHCSIA, 2009)

“... despite education standards drafted under the Disability Discrimination Act, the education system continues to fail to respond to the needs of students with disabilities and, as a result, these students continue to lag behind on a range of attainment indicators.” (FAHCSIA, 2009)

The Current Educational Climate

- Widening participation is the core element of the Government's "*Transforming Australia's Higher Education*" initiative
- Non-traditional students, such as those with disabilities, must be included in this transformation

History of the Tertiary Education Experience Program

- In 2004 Griffith University's Disabilities Service reinvented the former Unitaste program for high school students with disabilities.
- Unitaste had been a highly successful program, facilitated by the TIPD Cooperative Project.
- Consistent with Griffith's long-standing commitment to providing opportunities for students with disabilities, the Tertiary Education Experience was developed and funded through our Disability Performance Funding.
- The initial program was a collaborative program with TAFE Queensland.

What is the Tertiary Education Experience (TEE)?

- A suite of programs including:
 - » Annual on campus program for Year 10, 11 and 12 high school students with a disability
 - » Biennial on campus professional development program for secondary education staff, and interested community organisations
 - » Biennial on Campus program for Year 8 to 12 high school students who are blind or who have low vision

- TEE aims to:
 - » increase the aspirations and skills of Year 8 to 12 students with a disability
 - » give students a realistic view of University life

What is TEE? continued...

- No cost to participants
- Financial assistance is provided to students and teachers to attend from regional and remote areas (Queensland and Northern New South Wales)
- Students and teachers receive Griffith bags:
 - » USB stick on lanyard
 - all program presentations
 - Griffith program guides and information sheets
 - range of free/trial software
 - » *Griffiti* magazine
 - » Notepads/pens/movie passes/stickers etc

The Evolution of TEE

- Originally:
 - » Two day program for Year 11 and 12 students with disabilities
 - » Based at Griffith's Nathan Campus which has 12000+ students

- Now:
 - » Refined to a one day program for Year 10, 11 and 12 students
 - » Year 10's included with the aim of raising skills and aspirations before students commence their senior schooling
 - » Based at Griffith's Logan Campus, which hosts 2500+ students

Griffith University's Logan campus

- One of Griffith's 5 campuses in the Brisbane-Gold Coast corridor
- Logan campus is centrally situated in the middle of the rapid growth corridor for South East Queensland
- Smaller campus with all the same facilities, less overwhelming for high school students while still providing a university experience
- Community embedded; community focussed campus

How do we run TEE?

■ Promotion:

- » Disabilities Service have developed a network of Griffith Connect Schools, SEUs, School Transition Officers, and Advisory Visiting Teachers (actively promote the program within schools)
- » Disabilities Service Staff participate in annual Post School Options Expos, school careers and employment sessions

■ Participants:

- » Students with a wide range of disabilities, including students with:
 - Aspergers Syndrome; Depression, Anxiety and OCD; Deaf or Hard of Hearing; Blind or Low Vision; Muscular Dystrophy and Cerbral Palsy
- » Students attend with a parent/guardian, teacher or independently

How do we run TEE? *continued...*

Program sessions vary from year to year, including:

- Outline of the support available to students (from Disabilities Service and other University areas)
- Group discussion activities around challenges that students may face in the transition to university and ways to overcome these challenges
- Mock lecture or tutorial by an Academic staff member
- Computer lab session tailored to students assistive technology needs
- Career guidance workshop

Biennial TEE

Professional Development Program

- Aimed at staff from Griffith Connect Schools, SEUs, School Transition Officers, Advisory Visiting Teachers, school support staff and other community organisations working with high school students (Qld and Northern NSW)
- Opportunity for teachers to network and discuss issues
- Highlight important information regarding students preparing for, applying to and succeeding at university. Information includes:
 - » Inherent requirement of courses
 - » Assessment practices
 - » Style/format of lectures and tutorials
 - » Identifying to the Disabilities Service
 - » Reasonable accommodations

Biennial TEE Professional Development Program continued...

- Mock Assistive Technology Laboratory
- Overview of emerging software and hardware
- Mini Expo of Technology Providers, Support Services and Griffith Services



Uni-Vision – for students who are blind or who have low vision

- Program developed because students who are blind or who have low vision face specific challenges
- Partially funded from a Community Partnerships Grant
- Objectives
 - » Raise University staff awareness
 - » Deliver a customised program for students, parents/carers, teachers
 - » Improve student retention and success



Uni-Vision continued...

Project Team

- Sharon Garside, Disabilities Service Officer (Assistive Technology and Accessible Formatting)
- Ellen Reid, Disabilities Service Assistant (TEE Programs and Accessible Formatting)
- Melissa Wortel, Disability Support Advisor (INS)
- Benjamin Whitburn, Uni-Vision Project Officer (current Masters of Education student who has a vision impairment)

Uni-Vision continued...

Research-based

- International/National benchmarks and case studies
- Survey of schools/TAFE's
 - » Student demographics
 - » Current Assistive Technology use
 - » Student support provided
 - » Mobility training and support

Our vision for the program

- Capacity building – practical learning activities and resources
- Student support – financial, resources, role models and mentors
- Collaborative – build partnerships with internal and external stakeholders, a ‘joined-up’ approach

Survey Results

What did the survey respondents tell us they wanted?

- Program aimed at both students and support staff
- Student program:
 - » Support available at university
 - » student responsibilities in organising support
 - » What students should expect at university
 - » What is expected of the students at university
 - » Length - two days, to provide increased opportunities to get to know the other students
 - » Highlight support needs they may not be aware of and identify the levels of independence they already have
 - » Orientation to technology students will use at university

Survey Results continued...

What did the survey respondents tell us they wanted?

- Additional Staff Development program:
 - » Innovations in assistive technology
 - » Opportunity for teachers to network/ discuss issues
 - » How to prepare students to succeed at university



What Uni-Vision delivered...

Two Day Student Program

- Practical learning activities
 - » “How I found it” interview with current student highlighting the difference between high school and university
 - » Tutorial “Criminal Celebrity” delivered by Academic staff member who has a vision impairment

- Accessibility Challenge
 - » Online computer task developed to test skills and train students in use of assistive technology
 - » Scheduled over 3 sessions throughout the program to scaffold the students learning
 - » Free USB stick loaded with the entire program and a range of free/trial software
 - » Tailoring Assistive Software to meet students individual needs
 - » Uni-Vision Blog to promote communication between students

What Uni-Vision delivered...

continued...

- Technology
 - » Display of University Assistive Technology Lab
 - » Assistive technology displays from external service providers including: Quantum, HumanWare, Vision Australia, QUT Ophthalmology Clinic, Qld Narrating, Griffith Services
 - » Evaluations using Survey Monkey - students independently completed confidential evaluations using their chosen Assistive Technology software (JAWS, ZoomText)

- Tying it all together
 - » Uni-Vision Drama - comical and interactive drama performance about the challenges of surviving the first day at university. Developed specifically for students who are blind or who have low vision
 - » Mentoring from current students and graduates who are blind or who have low vision
 - » Financial support (travel and accommodation scholarships)

Student Feedback

“I believe that Uni-Vision is a highly positive and effective program which gives vision impaired students like myself a view into the availability of various resources and assistance to the blind”

“I feel a great deal more confident about entering uni, as I am now aware that it is not as daunting as it sounds.”



What Uni-Vision delivered...

Teacher Professional Development Day

- Held concurrently with second day of student program
- Program Content
 - » Academic and support service information sessions
 - » Free USB stick with the entire program and a range of free/trial software
 - » Mock assistive technology laboratory
 - » Assistive technology suppliers displayed specialised software & resources
 - » Financial support (travel and accommodation scholarships)

Teacher Feedback

“A great initiative...very beneficial for students and teachers...It is so important for the students to have a future direction”

“Brilliant; students are now so motivated and energised as am I”

“It was brilliant! Carry on with your exceptional work and support. We support you 100%.”

Uni-Futures and Uni-Access Blogs

- Uni-Futures blog will be launched for use by future students next week at our annual TEE program
- Uni-Access Blog is under development – to be used by Education Qld, Independent Education, TAFE and Community staff
- Both blogs designed to help facilitate communication and build networks
- Uni-Futures site content:
 - » Articles of Interest
 - Have a read
 - Tell us about your experiences
 - Ask for help or share a tip
 - » Links to assistive technology providers

Blog: Uni-Futures

<http://apps01.domino.griffith.edu.au/apps/blogs/Uni-Futures.nsf/>

Uni-Futures

Uni-Futures

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Pathways 2010

Posted: November 19th, 2010 by Melissa Wortel
Categorised as:

Three days of thought-provoking discussion, information-sharing, strategising and problem solving as well as some great social events and networking. A stimulating conference program has been put toge

Full article - [Pathways 2010](#)

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Welcome High School Students


Posted: November 8th, 2010 by Melissa Wortel
Categorised as:

This blog has been set-up to facilitate communication between high school students with disabilities. Come in, introduce yourself and share a few words about why you have come along to one of Griffi

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What works about the TEE programs?

- Widespread promotion
- Involvement of school staff and families
- Sponsoring regional students
- Involving current students with disabilities as mentors
- Students able to build relationships with peers and the Disabilities Service team
- Not run as a Griffith promotional activity
- » We highlight that there are similar processes at all universities
- » Students encouraged to attend even if they are not planning to study at Griffith University

Any Questions?

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