Project Report

2006 Victorian Equity Projects – An Office of Training and Tertiary Education initiative

Project title: Learning and Support Service: E-Learning.
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Project summary
This program introduces equity groups to the benefits of the e-learning system. It provides students with the skills and confidence to explore the programs, resources and support provided by TAFE virtual campus.

Topic areas include: Study skills, Research and Library Skills, Referencing, Writing Essays, Time Management, Chat Room and Message Board and direct access to the library.

A CD was produced as a support resource. Students acquire the CD upon request and are then able to explore the different features at their own pace and revisit features as often as they like.

The learners
The primary target group was the 100 students in the TAFE Pathways Program. These students are enrolled across all teaching centres and BRIT campuses. They are given the opportunity of individual and group teaching to introduce them to e-learning and enable them to develop the necessary skills to access TAFE Virtual Campus.

Access to this program was also offered to groups of students undertaking the Certificate I General Education of Adults through five two hours sessions.

Access was also offered to students in the first week of new courses as part of a Return to Study Program.
The challenge
To introduce students to flexible learning using TAFE Virtual Campus e-learning. Students are encouraged to accept the challenge and embrace what for many is a new, exciting resource, a means of learning and a valuable tool to be used to achieve personal goals and successful study outcomes and experiences.

Mature Age students returning to study after a long absence, often with limited computer skills and lack of confidence have benefited from the introductory and follow up programs and by having a CD resource that addresses specific problems they may encounter.

E Learning is an important component of the Return to Study program as it develops students’ confidence, group rapport and provides access to a resource that will assist in achieving desired outcomes.

Your approach
The program was offered both as a ‘one on one’ and as a group activity. Often the individual assistance was requested as a follow up to a group activity.

The broad aim of Pathway staff is to offer each individual the assistance required to achieve their goals. The staff appreciates the effort, personal sacrifices and challenges many students have overcome to return to study as single parent, mature age student or a person from a non English speaking background.

Developing rapport with students is a crucial first step. The next step involved an honest exploration of the expectations and commitments required when returning to study and undertaking e-learning. From here tutorial assistance was offered as required.

The results
Developing student support groups was a successful strategy. Students realised that they were not alone in experiencing problems. Support from peers as well as Pathways staff is required.

All students who are part of the 2006 TAFE Pathways Program are continuing their courses. This would not have been the case without the support offered by the program and Pathway staff.

Lessons learned
The key lessons included:

- Don’t expect too much too soon.
- Take time to develop rapport and for students to accept and appreciate the e-learning concept. Follow up students, take a personal interest.
- Important to clearly define guidelines, expectations and obligations of both staff and students. Reliability and commitment of all concerned is crucial.
- A personal, caring, consistent approach is required that takes into account each students strengths, concerns and Pathway Plan.
Contact details for queries regarding the project

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Product 1

Study Skills CD

This CD website that students can use to improve their chance of success when beginning study. The CD contains pages on Study Skills, Essay Writing, Referencing, Time Management, Research and useful Websites.

It can be changed to suit a specific course as required.