



How authentic online learning can support equity and accessibility for students

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20 August 2020

La Trobe University

- Total number of students 38,000 (*Aug 2020*)
- Students at regional campuses 7,529 (*Aug 2020*)
- Victoria's only state-wide university
- Campuses – Albury-Wodonga, Bendigo, Bundoora, Melbourne (CBD), Mildura and Shepparton
- La Trobe Rural Health School is Australia's largest rural health school & distinctive for being entirely based in the regions
- Primary provider of new graduates for the health and education workforces, especially in regional Victoria

La Trobe University student equity

Participation

Students with a disability	9.4%
Indigenous students	1.1%
Regional students	27.4%
Low SES	18.8%
Non-English background	11.5%

Success rates

Students with a disability	81.9%
Indigenous students	79.7%
Regional students	89.3%
Low SES	86.3%
Non-English background	84.6%

Online as a key driver of success and equity

- Effective online learning can be a key driver of access and equity
- Pre-CoVid19, almost 25% of commencing domestic students in Australian universities choose to study on-line
- A high proportion are older, female, part-time, first in family, low SES, regional and remote, Indigenous or disabled
- Online learning allows study in amongst parenting, employment and other life demands
- CoVid19 means more students are now grappling with unemployment, or working from home while caring for children
- Purposefully crafted and well-designed on-line learning has enormous potential to meet their needs

Online learning it's core business

- From urgent necessity, teaching remotely in the easiest ways possible – basic tech tools, LMS, email and phone
 - Universities shouldn't conflate remote learning with online learning
 - Urgent remote delivery does not equate to best practice (or even good practice) online learning
 - Remote delivery can resemble '[pedagogy triage](#)' or '[panic-gogy](#)'?
- On-line learning should not be less effective for student engagement and success



Latrobe

Supports equity

Online learning



Moving teaching online

Dedicated support for staff

Ask EdTech Helpdesk

Workshops – How to teach on Zoom,
online exams, groupwork online.



COVID19 online learning support

- All learning support services were converted to online delivery.
- 10-fold increase in the use of important services such as the Learning Hub
- 100% increase in the utilization of StudioCity; more than 85% of our allotted minutes for the year being utilised by the end of July
- We have subsequently negotiated an extension to our StudioCity agreement to ensure adequate support from StudioCity for the remainder of the year.

Wellbeing and other support services

- All Student support services were transitioned to online delivery by the end of the pause to teaching
- A new wellbeing check-in service was launched that provides support to students that may not require assistance at the level of therapeutic counselling
- Call Campaign - Over 200 staff across the University made over 47,000 calls made to 92% of the students
- These calls were designed to support students as they transitioned to online learning and to highlight the range of support services available to them.

COVID19 response credit bearing subjects

- Two new subjects; LTU3COV and LTU5COV, were established in semester one to recognise and reward the experiences and achievements of students who have contributed to surge workforce and/or community support during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Students were able to apply for credit under the requirements of this subject and needed to demonstrate their contribution towards relief efforts and their achievement of the subject intended learning outcomes
- Examples of relevant activity included working or volunteering in medical professions, government agencies, or community-based welfare organisations

Discussion questions

Is there potential to achieve improved outcomes for student equity through online learning at your institution?

What are the challenges to achieving this?

What can you do in your role to facilitate this ?

To conclude

- It's time to recognise well considered on-line learning as a key component of the core business of universities
- The transformative potential of higher education is only possible, if access to, and opportunities within, education are equitable and accessible – online learning is one effective driver for achieving this.

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Thank you

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