

Studying in Vocation Education and Training

This is an English transcript of the Auslan video: <https://vimeo.com/235682902>

For further information about this topic, visit: <http://www.deafconnected.com.au/where-to-study>

How did you learn about the role of the DLO?

I actually found out about the DLO when I arrived at TAFE in Box Hill. I just walked in with no idea how students like me could just rock up and get on with a course.

At the reception, I asked how I could enrol in a course, and that was when they referred me to the DLO. That is when I learned about the role of the DLO – to look after my needs in relation to my course, and to figure what access I needed in each of my subjects. That is how I started to learn about the DLO.

How long did you study and what qualifications do you now have?

I studied for 6 years. I have two qualifications: an Advanced Diploma of Computer Engineering, and a Bachelor of Computer Systems.

How did you decide which course to take?

When I started looking at courses, the most important thing for me as a deaf person was how they would work with me – like the teachers, and the DLO (Disability Liaison Officer), whose job is to ensure all deaf students have interpreters, that teachers are aware of the needs of deaf students, and to provide notetaking or live captioning, etc.

What are the differences between school and TAFE?

I believe that TAFE has more of a focus on how you should present yourself in a workplace and how to prepare for working with colleagues and management. They teach us how to apply ourselves in real life. Whereas in school, the teaching is more one way; they teach us and we learn. There is less application to real life situations in school.

The DLO process

When the DLO and I sat down, the DLO asked about my deafness, whether I could lip-read or not, and what else I needed. I was surprised at the questions – but it was because they

had previously had a hard of hearing student who could lip-read very well, but this is not the case for me. So, I had to talk about my needs, and they asked me about interpreting agencies, which agency provided the best service, the costs and whatnot, and whether they could get a discount. I did not know anything about it, and I was not even aware that there were different interpreting agencies. I then had to wait until I was enrolled in my course, as they needed the timetable so they could determine which classes I would need support for, and when and how long I would need an interpreter. For example: I may only need an interpreter for the first hour as I would study and work by myself for the rest of the class. It was something I had to negotiate and it was not easy.

How did you know what kind of accessibility you needed?

When I was in Year 12 at VCD (the Victorian College for the Deaf) I learned that for us to learn and understand fully, we would need either an interpreter or a teacher who can sign – this would enable us to communicate and get full access to information. This is crucial because without this access, I wouldn't be able to study to my full potential. So, I had to demand this kind of access. Knowing my needs, I was adamant about this because full communication is absolutely vital.

Did you face any barriers?

Yes, definitely. It was never a smooth ride. The biggest reason for this was that every time there was a change in DLO, I had to start all over again and build a new relationship with the new DLO. This was the same with teachers. I had to build a new relationship with every new teacher. So I wouldn't say it was a smooth ride.

What advice do you have for aspiring students?

Really, when you are at school, try to ask your teachers about TAFE because they will have some knowledge of TAFE. Ask them about how they got their qualifications. You could also ask about where to get more information. Ask your parents if they have been to TAFE or university. Asking people who have been to TAFE or university in your social circles is also great way to discuss what you need to know, and to help you to prepare.

More information

If you want more information, it is worth checking out this website: www.deafconnected.com.au and seeing the range of experiences people have shared.