Pathways to Employment Education and Training

A partnership between TAFE NSW & Community Offender Services, NSW DCS

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Overview of session

- Background
- COS and TAFE partnership
- About the PEET program
- Aims and rationale
- Benefits of PEET
- Roles of COS and TAFE
- What works well
- PEET as a model for other programs
Background

- Campbelltown COS and Outreach program (1998)
- Drug summit funding for state wide PEET (2004 - 2007)
- Further funding for increased provision (2007 - 2011)
Benefits of COS and TAFE partnership

- **Flexible**

- TAFE Outreach staff coordinate and deliver the educational component of PEET programs as they have experience in dealing with students with a variety of health and behavioural issues which are serious impediments to learning.

- The collaborative relationship between the local TAFE and COS facilitators has proven successful.
About PEET

- TAFE NSW provision of a program targeting adult offenders supervised in the community by Community Offender Services, NSW Department of Corrective Services (DCS)

- The program is designed to assist offenders to engage in VET and employment pathways

- Main focus is on the provision of a transition program, the TAFE Statement of Attainment in *Pathways to Employment, Education and Training* (PEET) and the collaborative partnership between the TAFE Outreach and Corrections Unit and DCS, Program Development and Implementation Unit in providing the course to Community Offender Services (COS) clients
About PEET (cont’d)

- Collaboration of the two agencies and how this reflected in program success and outcomes for students

- Not a stand alone program – it is linked to other TAFE programs / short term training options linked to government agency and local industry needs eg trade tickets and Green card and is a pathway in itself as the title suggests

- Inclusive - as it caters for participants who may have literacy and/or numeracy issues
COS and TAFE partnership

- TAFE and COS have established a partnership delivering a service to offenders in the community that has shifted from individual intervention to a group work model.

- Partnership emphasis is on a co-facilitation model which has proven positive in addressing the educational and vocational needs of participants while addressing their responsibility to the justice system.

- Partnership has been successful largely because of the flexible implementation practices adopted by TAFE and COS staff at each location while adhering to the goal of reducing re-offending.
PEET aims

- To identify realistic educational and/or employment pathways and options
- To develop self confidence, self esteem and communication skills
- Link offenders to further appropriate access courses or mainstream TAFE courses
Rationale

- Rehabilitation program that addresses recognised criminogenic factors
- Lack of employment and education - factors which are known to be linked to recidivism so PEET is directly focussing on these deficits
- DCS programs are required to be evidence based in that the rationale underpinning their content has been proven to deliver sufficiently positive outcomes
- DCS emphasis on targeting offenders with a high risk of re-offending
- NSW State Plan priority to reduce re-offending within two years of sentencing by 10% by 2016.
Target Group

- PEET program is designed to enable offenders with drug and alcohol issues to develop the necessary skills to gain employment and/or further vocational training.

- Those with low literacy and/or numeracy; histories of chronic unemployment; negative educational experiences.

- Drug and alcohol history - can often be disenfranchised and marginalised and come from low socio-economic backgrounds.
Target Group (cont’d)

- Probationers, parolees, offenders subject to intensive supervision and some of those subject to community service orders provided they have the requisite number of program hours in the orders
- Medium to high risk of re-offending on LSI-R
- Present with mental health issues and have an educational/literacy history
How it happens

- First session is held at local COS district office where ground rules are explained and group protocols are established – all subsequent sessions are delivered at the local TAFE college – this has the effect of reducing the label of ‘offender’ and replacing it with that of ‘student’

- Huge identity shift
PEET Course

- Program is currently made up of three modules, each module consisting of three 4 hour sessions
- Nine weeks duration or as arranged by agreement between local TAFE and P & P office
- Modules can be delivered flexibly eg students can attend one or two sessions per week or in the evening to suit group needs
- 36 hours for a TAFE Statement of Attainment
- Ideally up to 15-18 offenders are identified for each program recognising that there is likely to be attrition
- Program can be telescoped into a shorter number of longer sessions although this is not a preferred model
TAFE Facilitator Role

- Coordination and liaison with COS co-facilitator regarding students needs
- Course planning with COS facilitator on content, delivery and teaching strategies
- Communication with Outreach Coordinator regarding enrolments, debriefing and college arrangements
- Arranging team teachers and TAFE support services
- Evaluation reports including compilation of student evaluations
Outreach Coordinator Role

- Coordination and liaison with COS office
- Assisting in identifying offenders to the program from an educational perspective
- Bookings for TAFE rooms, activities and guest speakers
- Arranging visits to other TAFE colleges
- Quality assurance of course
- Conducting the course risk assessment
COS Facilitator Role

- Co-facilitates in the administration and course delivery
- Acts as a liaison person between TAFE NSW and DCS COS, ensuring appropriate client referrals to the course
- Feeds back information to the offender’s supervising officer that will assist with the case management process
- Follows up client issues such as attendance and reminds the offender to attend by telephone
- Deals with any other case management related issues
- Briefs TAFE NSW staff on demographic and general background of client population undertaking the course
Before the course

- Program planning well in advance including booking of TAFE classrooms and other support services
- Support from the local COS district office
- Conducting Train the Trainer workshops
- Having a gender and age balance in the program wherever possible – enhances group dynamics – recognising though that most offenders are young adult males
Before the course (cont’d)

- PEET course leaflet at local COS District Office for potential students – promoting the course and outcomes

- Adequate lead time to program – allows for appropriate student selection and adequate planning processes between TAFE and COS

- Selection of participants - Appropriate selection and placement of offenders to the program – emphasis on pre program interview – in some locations this is a joint activity between TAFE Outreach coordinator and COS facilitator
Beginning of course

- TAFE student identification cards issued
  - library access and borrowing rights
  - means of identification
  - positive shift in identity from ‘offender’ to ‘student’

- Short debrief at the start of each session to deal with changes or outstanding issues

- Negotiating and agreeing on group rules and standards of class behaviour

- Modelling appropriate behaviours by co-facilitators eg time management
Beginning of course (cont’d)

- Interactive ‘TAFE tasters’ to other TAFE college sections

- If required eg computer support, Language Literacy Numeracy, Counsellors, Aboriginal Coordinators
During the course

- Creative use of the Teacher Guide – customising the content to suit group needs
- Incorporating local teaching content and strategies to cater for learner groups eg Aboriginal learners, students in remote communities
- Involving Aboriginal teachers/Elders/role models with Aboriginal learners
- Experiential project based sessions & innovative learning strategies eg digital storytelling
During the course (cont’d)

Inviting guest speakers:
- Centrelink, Job Network advisers
- Aboriginal Services
- Welfare Rights
- Local MPs
- Local TAFE counsellor
- Head Teachers of various vocational areas
- Graduates of previous courses
Flexibility

Length and number of sessions can be varied to suit local conditions – in remote locations where childcare or transport issues exist some programs have been modified by having fewer but longer sessions.

Addressing other variable factors through local initiatives eg transport assistance for country participants, meals, delivery mode – particularly in remote /isolated areas eg Kempsey where sessions were delivered in an Aboriginal space created within TAFE grounds.
What Works Well

- Conducting programs which are not interrupted by TAFE holidays. Timetable breaks are particularly disruptive to students targeted for PEET.

- Inviting TAFE counsellors to assist with the career pathways component by way of Career Voyager program – (a vocational assessment software program).

- Documenting success stories of past students – very empowering for new students.
End of course

- Ensuring that students have established goals to work towards once they have completed the PEET program

- Provision of ongoing pathways support to students, including information about appropriate prevocational and VET courses including teacher’s contact details plus enrolment information

- Students to be provided with updated information re local government/community based support services once they have completed the program eg employment services, child care services

- Graduation ceremony
PEET Outcomes

- Between 2004 and Semester One 2007, over 140 PEET programs were conducted across COS District Office locations.
- 1250 students enrolled in these programs.
- 800 students completed the PEET program.
- 640 of these students went on to do other TAFE/further study and/or found employment.
- Given the potential impediments to success in the target group, these are good results which provide sufficient impetus for the continuation and further funding of PEET programs for suitably identified offenders.
PEET Outcomes (cont’d)

- COS has moved from an ad hoc relationship with TAFE to a more structured approach.
- Funding has been made available through Drug Summit 3 for PEET to continue from 2007 - 2011 with slightly increased funding.
Using PEET as a Model

PEET has demonstrated its value as a post release program

There are two youth PEET programs being piloted with the Department of Juvenile Justice for offenders in the community – one pilot has been completed with a second in progress

There is a good basis for extending it as a pre release program – modifying it and offering a number of modules while offenders are still incarcerated and completing it in the community

As a post release Gateway program – a ‘door opener’ or engagement program engaging offenders in a structured learning environment which may lead to further TAFE courses and/or employment options