The STC course as an alternative preparation for tertiary education

Margaret Botten
Australian Council for Educational Research

Usefulness of Year 12 course to school leavers

One year after leaving school, students were sent another questionnaire; they were asked to give details of their work and study activities during the year and to comment on the relevance of their Year 12 course to their current lives. Only a small percentage of the respondents (2.8 per cent of Group 1 students and 4.5 per cent of Group 2 students), 36 per cent of Group 1 students and 50 per cent of STC students were in full-time employment, and 12 per cent of Group 1 students and 27 per cent of STC students were full-time students in tertiary institutions. The most common tertiary choice for both Group 1 and STC students was a college of advanced education. After that came universities for Group 1 students and TAFE institutes for STC students.

Data on respondents' perceptions of their current work and study lives were obtained from a vehicle entitled "survey form", a structured and one open-ended model. The structured measure was preceded by the question "show how well did your Year 12 course prepare you for your life today by developing the following skills, knowledge and attitudes?" followed by 22 statements with a four-point response scale beside each item, ranging from 'very well' to 'not at all well'. The items clustered into two scales, one focusing on development of skills and the other on knowledge and attitudes. A glance at the items which produced the greatest differences between the two groups shows how wide-ranging the skills, knowledge and competencies acquired through their Year 12 course by STC students, qualities that are valued by employers and tertiary institutions. Another interesting finding is that 100 per cent of the respondents agreed that "since leaving school, my work or my study have become more interesting". While a significant number of students admitted that they had difficulties in their work and study, the majority of them agreed that "I have learned and gained a better understanding of common subjects".

STC Year 12 as a Preparation for Future Life: Personal Development

It is of particular interest to look at the comments of the STC students on the ways in which their Year 12 course helped them cope at tertiary level, because this group of young people possessed certain character traits that might be expected to work against a satisfying and successful first-year tertiary experience. Many of these character traits were not shared by disadvantaged groups (in terms of social background), all had experienced a Year 12 course, and were responding from a different perspective on a different topic (from the usual type of academic preparation for tertiary study provided by public secondary schools; all had gained entry by non-traditional means — a descriptive report, not an Anderson score which is commonly regarded by the community as the best measure of academic competence). Two benefits of the STC course that were seen as particularly relevant to tertiary life were its emphasis on the development of the individual as an independent learner and the development of self-confidence. The increased confidence was valued by students for different reasons; the confidence of academic accomplishment, the confidence in yourself as a scientist, your ability to cope with difficult situations and your ability to cope with the work of the class, your ability to cope with difficult questions and your ability to cope with the work of the class, your ability to cope with difficult questions and your ability to cope with the work of the class, your ability to cope with difficult questions and your ability to cope with the work of the class, your ability to cope with difficult questions and your ability to cope with the work of the class, your ability to cope with difficult questions and your ability to cope with the work of the class, your ability to cope with difficult questions and your ability to cope with the work of the class, your ability to cope with difficult questions and your ability to cope with the work of the class, your ability to cope with difficult questions and your ability to cope with the work of the class, your ability to cope with difficult questions and your ability to cope with the work of the class, your ability to cope with difficult questions and your ability to cope with the work of the class, your ability to cope with difficult questions and your ability to cope with the work of the class, your ability to cope with difficult questions and your ability to cope with the work of the class, your ability to cope with difficult questions and your ability to cope with the work of the class, your ability to cope with difficult questions and your ability to cope with the work of the class, your ability to cope with difficult questions and your ability to cope with the work of the class, your ability to cope with difficult questions and your ability to cope with the work of the class, your ability to cope with difficult questions and your ability to cope with the work of the class, your ability to cope with difficult questions and your ability to cope with the work of the class, your ability to cope with difficult questions and your ability to cope with the work of the class, your ability to cope with difficult questions and your ability to cope with the work of the class, your ability to cope with difficult questions and your ability to cope with the work of the class, your ability to cope with difficult questions and your ability to cope with the work of the class, your ability to cope with difficult questions and your ability to cope with the work of the class, your ability to cope with difficult questions and your ability to cope with the work of the class, your ability to cope with difficult questions and your ability to cope with the work of the class, your ability to cope with difficult questions and your ability to cope with the work of the class, your ability to cope with difficult questions and your ability to cope with the work of the class, your ability to cope with difficult questions and your ability to cope with the work of the class, your ability to cope with difficult questions and your ability to cope with the work of the class, your ability to cope with difficult questions and your ability to cope with the work of the class, your ability to cope with difficult questions and your ability to cope with the work of the class, your ability to cope with difficult questions and your ability to cope with the work of the class, your ability to cop
... it is worth pursuing the base of access.

The STC course didn’t... prepare us for the work and exams that we have to face when completing a tertiary course. (STC student)

The hard work, and the amount of it, that was demanded of us during the courses. HSC has prepared me very well for my science course, as I was able to cope with my workload this year. (HSC student)

This year has been hard work at times, but really enjoyable. I believe that the dedication to study which is so much a part of HSC has been very helpful... HSC taught me to memorise facts for the exams, and these study methods which I developed have been most helpful while studying for exams. (HSC student)

I feel that HSC prepared me for exams memorising, careful time allocation in exams, competition, cooperation, and competition. University life is much more demanding. One must have motivation to study. At St. Mary’s, even one student working hard is not enough to complete the work. There is a lot of pressure and hard work involved but I believe that the individual shall survive in the final exams. However, the ability to cope with exams pressure involved in the final exams. However, the ability to cope with exams pressure involved in the final exams. (Student)

The ability to work hard is an important attribute to a tertiary student and one must have the ability to study. The memorisation of facts is useful for future studies. But a good student is only as good as his ability to prepare and work hard. (STC student)

Conclusions

In conclusion, over recent years, universities and colleges in Victoria have adopted new academic and professional standards. A majority of these students are either mature-age students or students from alternative Year 12 courses, such as the STC course. The STC students in this study were part of a group of mature-age students. They had been prepared and equipped to face the challenges of higher education.

References


Students in the first three years of the University Special Admissions Scheme, by university. Melbourne: University of Melbourne (mimeo).

The STC students in this study were part of a group of mature-age students. They had been prepared and equipped to face the challenges of higher education.

The STC course didn’t... prepare us for the work and exams that we have to face when completing a tertiary course. (STC student)