DEBBIE: So welcome everybody to Pathways stream 1 breakout session. So we've got some pioneers with us today with Anthony and Julie. So thank you for being first rank - you know, starting off for us, which is great. I would like to introduce myself. I am Debbie. And I am the Chair today facilitating this afternoon. And joining me is Caroline. And we are both from the NDCO program. I would like to firstly welcome and thank our sponsors. We have Bradley Reporting, Texthelp, Glean and Deaf Services and the Deaf Society. So please, during the conference, click back to the delegate's page and jump into their sponsor exhibition room. They will be happy to have a chat with you and you can learn a little bit more about what they do. Caroline will also put all those details in the chat box as well. We're being captioned by Bradley Reporting. Thank you. And welcome. You are able to access the captioning in the Zoom tool bar, whether that's on the top or the bottom of your screen. Alternatively, Caroline is also putting in the chat box the alternate link to be able to access that in your browser. And thank you to Paul, our interpreter, who is with us today. We're on a very strict timeframe. So we're going to dive straight into the sessions. And we are certainly in for a treat this afternoon. So you've picked the best stream to join us with. We do really encourage and really want from you and welcome lots of interaction and questions. And we will do our very best to answer as many as we can before the session is out today. So the chat box is the place to be. Please interact, please use, and let's get connected and enjoy Pathways. So let's get into our presentations. It's a great joy to welcome Julie Kiroluch and Anthony Gartner from La Trobe University who are going to step us through their presentation, Teach Me How to Fish Please, what's reasonable about reasonable adjustments, doing with, rather than doing for. Together Anthony and Julie have over two decades working extensively with students with disability. And they're very passionate about ensuring in their daily lives that students really get the best and enjoy the learning experience. And that then they are then well placed and, you know, so they're able to achieve all their career goals. So thank you, Anthony. Thank you, Julie. I'm going to hand over to you now.

ANTHONY: Great. Thanks, Debbie. Our presentation today is called teach me to fish, what's reasonable about reasonable adjustments, doing with, rather than doing for. And we're basing the presentation on a premise that sometimes with the best of intentions we make assumptions about what students are capable of and we inadvertently project and impose limitations on their possibilities. This influences and shapes the stories that script students' lives and resulted actions and outcomes. So it's very - how we understand ourselves is we hear stories that other people tell about us, and we respond to those stories by constructing our own versions and our own internal stories. And sometimes we - as practitioners we make assumptions about what students are capable of, what will work for them, and then sometimes the students take those on as well. So we really want today just to explore that a little bit and use a couple of examples, our total presentation is about 25 minutes now, and we will use some examples to demonstrate our concept, and at this stage it's a concept that we're exploring and then we will be happy to take some questions. So if we can go to the next slide, please. Thanks. So we are going to talk about making assumptions, this is our premise, that we do it in three ways. We have the Disability Standards For Education. They were developed in 2005. They've been reviewed a couple of times. But we can use them to foster a paternalistic culture of service, of doing for, rather than doing with. And we picked up a bit on this in Tom's presentation earlier, where we take on an assumption that we have to do everything for the student and just give it to them on a platter rather than actually helping them working out how they might do some aspects of that for themselves and, in fact, be more empowered by doing that. Sometimes we make decisions on the student's behalf as to what they need to be successful. We have conversations with them. We listen to documents provided by their treating health professionals, but we also have some assumptions that sit there underneath all of those things. And sometimes we inadvertently project our own limiting expectations and beliefs upon students. We don't often do that consciously but sometimes it happens, and today we want to explore that a bit. So if we could go to the next slide, please. We started looking at research. There's not a lot of research in Australia on tertiary level students. There's probably more on primary level students. And so we turn to that - or secondary students, rather. We turn to the work of Ben Whitburn who we will actually hear from later in the conference. Ben did some research on secondary students and there were a couple of key things that he found. Firstly, that the students felt that there was a lack of consultation with them. There wasn't a lot of listening to student voices. And secondly, young people believe that educational staff frequently, though perhaps inadvertently, left them with diminished access to classroom pedagogy, instructions and resources, consequently they regularly had an awkward position of dependence imposed upon them. And it's the dependence that we're really worried about. Where we've got students who are relying on the university to do everything for them, my question has always been what happens for that student when they finish their degree? Who is going to do all of those things for them if the student isn't equipped with that skill and knowledge? So if we could go to the next slide, please, Debbie. Ben also talked about a heavy versus a light approach. And the actions of support personnel that were both facilitative, light and inhibitive, heavy, to the young people's inclusion in the school. So we wanted to look at our own - and you will see an image here of a feather floating, and also of a person starting to lift some very heavy weights. We wanted to see whether our interventions were heavy or light and how students responded to that. So the next slide, please. We looked at other researchers, and they stress the importance of listening to student voices. Now, we all know this stuff. We all listen to student voices. But I wonder sometimes how we hear them. And the research has said it's really important that disability services shift from a focus of care and concern to one focused on empowerment and human rights. And I suspect that our service model has its origins in the 19th century in a very much a welfare-based model of the deserving poor. As a social worker I learnt a lot about that in my time, in the sense that you really have to earn the help that you get because you have to be deserving of it, and then you should be very grateful afterwards once you've received it. So we really want to question this notion of the deserving poor and the idea that disability services are a welfare concern to one where it's about empowerment and human rights. Next slide, please, Debbie. So one of the things that was in our mind was the idea of note-takers. To be honest, for the last 10 years I've wondered about the purpose of notetakers and the value of them. And there are times, yes, I won't dispute there are times when they're very, very important to students but there are other times when they're provided to students when perhaps there are alternatives. So we can see - and perhaps, Julie, I will hand over to you about this one, about the notetakers.

JULIE: Thanks, Anthony. So at La Trobe we decided at the start of the year, or moving into the year that we would rethink what we were doing with notetakers. So we had some big discussions amongst the teams. And as Anthony said, there were advantages to having notetakers. They provide equal participation, the student can listen and participate in the class rather than worrying about taking their own notes, and usually the way the system is set up they can get those notes straight away. On the next slide, though, there are some disadvantages. So you've got to have notetakers available, you've got to train your notetakers. The notetakers need to fit with the student, so the style of their notes needs to be a good fit. A student may miss essential information because it's not captured by the notetaker. So the notetaker and the student may have different ideas about what's essential. Despite one of the advantages being the student is freed up to be more engaged in the class, the fact that they're not taking their own notes might mean that they're actually less engaged. A lot of students don't want other people to know that they're being supported, and so they might not be comfortable with having somebody else in their session, and academics can have issues with having people in their session. So we've got some examples of things that have happened at La Trobe where students have sort of met up in secret corners of the university to exchange notes or notes were dropped off at the admin office for collection but often not collected, even though they were taken. But the best example was where a notetaker ended up participating in a class because he didn't want to out himself as being a notetaker and embarrass the student and get in trouble with the lecturer. So there's a lot of potential issues with having notetakers. So if you have a look at the next slide, what we've done this year is think about transitioning students to using technology rather than notetakers. So as I said, we had to talk about it as a team and we had to talk about it with students. And I'm just wondering who you might think might have been the greatest challenge to win over. And it was the accessibility advisers. We had lots of doubts. And I will say "we" because I was one of the biggest doubters. So on the next slide, some of our objections as a team when we were talking about this. A student is entitled to notes. So we need to give them notes. Not every student can use the technology. Students are already a bit behind the 8 ball and we're making it harder for them by making them take their own notes. And that could result in a negative impact on their grades. But wait, we had more objections. If we were using universal design properly, we wouldn't even need to be talking about this. And that's absolutely true but the fact is we've got a long way to go with getting universal design for learning happening. Using or not providing notetakers is contrary to the principles of the Disability Standards. And it's - some people felt it was a move being driven by budget constraints rather than a concern about what was best for students. And talking about it as something that would develop independent learning and empowerment is just BS spin to cover that financial problem. And, basically, we will be offering an inferior service and our students are going to fail. So we had lots of discussions around these sorts of questions. But we also talked about the benefits. Students will be able to operate independently and not be reliant on others. Students will be more engaged in their learning and, therefore, will be more likely to learn better and retain information. So the act of reading an article but then making your own notes on that article, or listening to a lecture and making your own notes on that lecture will allow you to retain that information better. Most importantly, though, after graduation students are better able to apply for and retain employment because they've got the skills. They can work independently in the workforce as well as at university. So what I want to do now is talk about a couple of case studies where myself and another accessibility adviser took the idea of technology to students that had previously been using notetakers. So case study 1 is one of my students. They came as an education student. And when I first met them, I found out they had a bilateral hearing loss and two cochlear implants. So I decided that they needed notetakers because they needed to watch lectures and not have to put their head down to take notes. So I also decided that if they had to use some sort of software, again, they wouldn't be able to watch the lecturers or the other participants in the classes. And the student was quite happy with that plan. So for the first year and a half that's what happened. This year in July, I talked to them about some alternatives. So Sonocent Glean, which you're going to hear more about throughout the conference, and Otter. And I explained how they all worked and I sent them some details and said have a play, see if anything will help you. I contacted this student a month later and they were using Otter, they were finding Otter fantastic and they said they didn't need notetakers any more. So that was a really good case study where I had made assumptions about what this student had needed. They had gone along with my assumptions. And it was only when I presented them, dare I say it, with alternatives that I didn't think would work, and they did. The next case study is from another student - another accessibility adviser who has been working with a student doing health science medical classification. This student had cerebral palsy which had significant impacts on their fine and gross motor skills. So during their preliminary conversations it was decided that it would take too long to type notes, so the student would need a notetaker. Now, they were encouraged to have a look at Sonocent during their first year at university but they found it too complicated for their own level of skills. So they continued on with a notetaker. But this year in September they were told about Glean. So for those of you who are not familiar with it, Glean is - comes from the same company as Sonocent but it's a simpler approach to using technology to assist with your notetaking. So the student was told about Glean. They were given some training about how to use it. And something that really tipped the balance for them was the accessibility adviser talked to them about the fact that this was something they could take with them and use in their workplace. So the student began a trial of Glean and Otter after having some training. And just over a month later in October they said, "We're fine. This is working really well. We don't need notetakers anymore." So two very different examples, but examples that you would traditionally opt for notetakers. A student with a hearing problem and a student with cerebral palsy. So what were our learnings? First of all, students are capable of and usually happy to embrace technology. Accessibilities, on the other hand, are a bit less so. So they need to be confident in the software. The timing has to be right for students. So that second example that I talked about, as the student progressed through their study, they learnt skills as a result of being a student which meant that when Glean was available they could take that on. So the software needs to match their capabilities and their needs. And it's great now because there are lots of different options. And we need to continue to explore those options, because what we can offer to a student in their first year that might not work for them might be replaced by something else over time. We know how quickly technology is changing. So we need to be continuing to monitor that sphere so that we can keep promoting those things to our students. And training is really highly recommended. Training for the students but also training for accessibility advisers so that we have that confidence. So we need to play with the software ourselves so that we can demonstrate it well. And then we need to give the students time to develop their skills before we - if they've had notetakers before we withdraw those notetakers. And I will hand over to Anthony.

ANTHONY: Thanks, Julie. We're getting some really interesting questions coming through. And I will just pick up on the first one from Tracey. Hi, Tracey, by the way. Who asks, “Can you tell us more about the training you gave to students, who provided the training, how much and cost, etcetera”. So we actually built a partnership with our learning hub at the university. It was strategically useful for both of us to be in partnerships whilst the university was undergoing significant restructure. So the timing was good. But also it was a really great opportunity for the two services to come together. So we worked with one of our colleagues from the learning hub who actually developed some expertise in Otter and Glean, and Sonocent. And was actually then able to spend time teaching the students how to use it, working on the fact that she was a trained teacher. We're accessibility advisers. Different set of skills in many instances. Our colleague Kate did individual and some group training sessions with the students to help give them the confidence to use the software. We're also working on a broader program now to continue to build the skills of all the accessibility advisers so that we're all confident to have conversations with students about the use of assistive technology.

JULIE: I can see another question there, Anthony, about Otter and whether we had a business plan - like a university plan or personal plan. What we've done is encouraged students to start off with the personal plan and where the student has found that it's working well for them but they need more minutes or more chunks of time, then we are reimbursing them for purchasing a business plan.

ANTHONY: Yeah, thanks, Julie.

JULIE: A premium plan, I think it's called. Whatever. Yeah.

ANTHONY: Yeah. And also Debra - Tom has asked an interesting question, “What have you done about the legal IT issues about the product holding data on a server outside the uni?” To be honest I wrote to our IT and our legal people. I didn't get a response from anyone. So I just proceeded. We didn't have time to wait. The need was too great. The students - the benefit was too significant to just wait for IT and legal to do anything so we just proceeded. We gave the students the benefit of the doubt and so far nobody has said anything. So if there are issues, I'm sure that I will hear about them in due course, and I'm sure I'll be responsible and probably hauled over the coals. But I wasn't going to wait. We just had to get it out there. We have a question from – “If and when appropriate in the session could you consider the following scenario and potentially get back to me later via email”. I'm not sure what the scenario is there, Sarah. So if you can give me some more information, Sarah, we're happy to respond to your question. Julie has asked how we got around the privacy issues around recording. Again, what we did was we wrote a - two things. One was a statement for students, a consent form for students explaining the rules around recording, and that they needed to inform their tutor or lecturer and in a group session that they needed to seek permission from the group to record if that was appropriate. We also sent information to all of the academics, which let them know that a student would be recording the session, and we didn't really give academics choice about whether they could say yes or no on that. We just told them that that's what was happening. We've had very little pushback on that. You know, many lectures are already recorded now. The issue really comes up in tutorials, if there is private conversations. And so we advise our academics to make sure that they reminded students that there might be students using recording devices and that they should make sure that their comments related to the classroom. I mean, the reality is that students are recording all the time. They're just not telling anyone. They're using their smart phones and put it on record and in you go. It's not new. It's just that we're making it public in that sense. I'm just looking for any more questions. Yes, so it's lucky we've heard from both legal and IT and it's a quagmire. It can be. But our legal people said it is not illegal to record a private conversation. But that a classroom conversation is not a private conversation. I haven't got that quite right but they were very clear the classroom conversation was not a private conversation so it's not illegal to record it. Sarah has come back with the scenario, a lecturer puts this through to us, “I have just noticed in the unit of competency that I am delivering that includes 2.2 consult widely with and use both electronic and conventional reference material. This is interesting for permaculture because we get all sorts of quirky people, some which prefer to opt out of technology. I have a student currently who won't use computers because of a belief that the airwaves are unhealthy. If I just compile paper handouts that I think the student will find useful and books when I need students to do research, is this a valid case of reasonable adjustments and can I continue using the paper handouts instead?” I think that question needs a little bit more consideration of what we can probably provide here, Sarah. We would be looking at probably working with any students that needed special accommodations there to give them the software that would enable them to do that. But I think - I'm happy to talk to you about that offline because I think that's a big question. We had a student use - we had a student use placement without asking with a patient. Yeah, probably you wouldn't record a conversation with a patient without asking or advising them and seeking their permission. That would not be a good way of using technology. And I'm seeing that we're getting the wind-up here. So are there any other questions that people have? I guess where this was coming from was really a question of how we can empower our students to be independent learners. How we can encourage them to take their own notes but give them ways of doing that, so that they could develop their own professional competence. Because what we want to see is our students being employed at the end of their degree. We want to see them getting jobs and we want to see them being able to sustain those jobs by having the skills that will be needed to make them independent in the workplace. We had a student who was receiving extensive support to prepare their assessment pieces, support in the form of someone else was actually doing the typing for that student. And my question was, when that student graduates, who is going to type for them then? We need to find a way of enabling that student to type for themselves in whatever way that is. So that's our next challenge, is to look for ways that that student can be independent functioning, and, therefore, better equipped to be in the workplace. I will just wrap up the presentation. We have two slides left. The first one was - actually, they're finished now - - -

DEBBIE: They have, sorry, Anthony. We've just run out of time. So I do apologise. I did go through those while you were talking to have a look at the now and also the future slide.

ANTHONY: Yep.

DEBBIE: So I would like to thank Julie and also Anthony for that wonderful presentation. We're all in this occupation because we want to see people succeed, be independent and have the best learning experience and then move on to employment. So I think what you have shown us is definitely going to be assisting in that regard. So thank you very, very much for presenting with us today.