

8 August 2017

Developing 21st Century skills in Research Project students

Students will draw on a wealth of experience at today's (Tuesday 8 August) Research Project Student Expo, hosted by the SACE Board of SA, to develop 21st Century skills that are needed in the modern workplace.

More than 4 000 students from Years 10 and 11 are expected to attend the 2017 Expo at the Ridley Centre, Adelaide Showground, Tuesday 8 August and Wednesday 9 August 2017.

Up to 90 Research Project students (past and present) will showcase their projects, and will be on hand to offer advice and tips on choosing a topic and tackling the compulsory subject.

Introduced in 2011 as part of the 'new SACE', the Research Project gives students the opportunity to study an area of interest in depth. They choose a topic, investigate it, and provide evidence of research skills and analysis to support a research outcome.

SACE Board Chief Executive, Dr Neil McGoran said the Research Project provides a unique opportunity for all students to develop skills essential for learning and living in our rapidly changing world.

"Through the Research Project, students develop their ability to question and plan, to evaluate and make judgements, innovate and solve problems, and make effective decisions.

"These skills are important no matter which path students choose through further study, training and employment," he said.

The subject has also been recognised by South Australian educators as an example of great innovative 21st Century curriculum and assessment practice.

Professor Alan Reid, School of Education at University of South Australia, said that the Research Project allows students to develop flexible and transferable skills in preparation for the world of work, or further study.

"The Research Project helps students to draw on cross-curriculum skills from their schooling career and use them to investigate a research question of interest and significance. It equips them with the kinds of understandings and skills needed to succeed in future studies, the workplace and in the wider community.

"In the changing global economy, the ability to collect and evaluate information, identify what is relevant and important, and apply this knowledge to navigate the wider world, is in high demand," he said.

St Mary's College graduate Alison Burford said the Research Project was "highly relevant" to her future study and career pathways.

Her topic – “To what extent can an Accredited Exercise Physiologist assist in minimising the symptoms of cancer-related fatigue?” – led to some valuable opportunities throughout her studies.

“From about halfway through year 11 I knew I wanted to study Clinical Exercise Physiology at UniSA so this research project topic was not only of personal interest to me but it was a passion. Once I knew this was the career path I wished to pursue, I did some basic research about Exercise Physiologists, what they did, the type of clientele they treat and how the prescription of exercise is of benefit to clinical populations. I came across an article published on the UniSA website which discussed the use of exercise interventions to minimise symptoms of cancer-related fatigue which is how my interest in this particular topic started.

“I had the opportunity to meet with Exercise Physiologists that were practicing in the cancer populations which, three years later is still a small field. It gave me the opportunity to learn about what Exercise Physiologists do and the research behind their evidence based prescription of exercise. Through surveys I was able to seek the opinion of cancer patients and their carers which gave me a unique perspective. I didn’t realise at the time but my research project interview with one Exercise Physiologist in particular would lead to some very valuable opportunities throughout my studies. I kept in contact with him after I graduated from Year 12 and updated him on my acceptance into Clinical Exercise Physiology at UniSA. It was made clear that in my degree I would not start placement until third year and keen to get any experience in the field, I sought out volunteer opportunities. I met this interviewee’s supervisor at a networking event and I have now been volunteering at a rehabilitation centre for two years and was recently offered a paid position. This opportunity has been invaluable in providing a place for me to learn about the industry and also provide support for me throughout my studies.

“Research Project specifically gave me many of the skills I needed to make it through the first six months of university which was a very daunting and challenging transition from school. There were assignments where 50% of the grade was determined by how well you referenced your research and an expectation that you knew how to research and search databases for peer-reviewed literature. Writing reports and an ability to reflect on oneself were also expected skills that I would not have been exposed to if not for Research Project,” Alison Burford said.

The Research Project Student Expo is open to parents, students, and the public from 9am to 3pm on Tuesday 8 August and 9am to 1pm on Wednesday 9 August 2017 at the Ridley Centre, Adelaide Showground.

More information on the Expo is available at [Research Project Student Expo 2017](#).

Attachment: List of exhibiting students (past and present) and their research project topics.

Social media: Live updates from this year’s event - including photos, videos, and highlights from the booths and presentations – will be posted on the SACE Board Twitter and Instagram accounts with the hashtag #RPstudentexpo.