



Let's not 'PASS' the buck: Fostering the PASS-ALL relationship through innovations in pedagogy and practice.

Key Words

PASS, Academic Language and Learning, bridging pedagogy, improving practice

Abstract

The Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) program offers academic support from high-achieving students who have completed the same unit, where traditionally there is high attrition and high fail rates. The underlying goal of the program is to increase student performance and retention (O'Brien, 2016). In contrast Academic Language and Learning (ALL) support, traditionally provides embedded and tailored support to students to improve their understanding and ability across core academic literacy skills for their discipline. The relationship between these two complementary support approaches is often viewed in silos, with the mutual benefits of utilising key pedagogical features of each approach to enhance the other, not considered. Particularly the ability for PASS leaders during a session to facilitate social inclusion and group problem solving to move students toward social interdependence of learning outside of the classroom environment (Bakhtin, 1981). In their role as PASS leaders they act as the model student, facilitating activities of study skills tied to the content of the subject area. As learning facilitators they do not re-teach the content taught by the lecturer, but rather redirect students' questions to allow for the group to solve the problem. This model provides opportunities to assist Academic Language and Learning lecturers in consolidating student understanding and improve academic literacy skills by tailoring both by drawing on each approach's strengths. This paper provides a comparative study using a mixed methods approach to explore the current and potential effectiveness of using both PASS and ALL support programs in complement to improve academic literacy and the student learning experience in a first year psychology unit. Using both qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods, effects of a combined PASS and ALL support approach were measured. That is students perceptions of usefulness were compared to quantitative findings based on a correlation between their achieved success and usage. Results indicate that a tailored and targeted pedagogic approach to getting the most out of both programs collectively can significantly improve student successes and better utilize the two approaches.

References

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