



## **A partnership approach for assisting students through a ‘one-stop-shop’**

### **Key Words**

HE partnerships; Embedded learning development; Academic literacies; STEM; Collaborative initiatives

### **Abstract**

The diverse nature of our students, including their preparedness and motivation to study and the increased emphasis on improving retention rates have provided an impetus and a real need for additional developmental support outside the classroom environment. Furthermore, given the diverse approaches to learning and assessment, for example, PBL, blended learning, flipped classes (Partridge, Ponting & McCay 2011; O’Flaherty & Phillips 2015; English & Kitsantas 2013), a range of underpinning skills and knowledge are required of students, the expertise of which may lie with staff in different operational units within the university. For example, although the disciplinary content is developed and implemented through curricula by college-based academics, language and learning literacies are the domain of Academic Language & Learning staff, and information literacies that of Library staff. This paper concerns a partnership between four staff members, in three functional units, i.e., Academic Support & Development Department, Library, and the College of Engineering & Science for assisting students in a ‘one-stop shop’ arrangement. Students can drop-in to the ‘one-stop-shop’ individually or in small groups for support in any or all of the areas of learning, language, library researching, mathematics and engineering fundamentals. These drop-in sessions were initially offered in 2014 for assisting students with learning, language and library research and were subsequently extended to include mathematics, physics and engineering content. The partnership between staff was further strengthened by the introduction this year of on-line support for students in addition to face-to-face support. Although the focus of this initiative was on first year and TAFE articulating students, any year level student including postgraduates seeking assistance with writing and library research have been welcomed at the sessions. This partnership model has validated the importance of supporting different literacies in the context of assisting learning and completing assessment tasks. By supporting students in different literacies the ‘one-stop-shop’ also reflects the Victoria University Tertiary Curriculum Framework (The VU agenda and blueprint for curriculum reform: capabilities for the future 2012) with embedded support that is currently in place in certain units in the college. Being able to provide feedback to discipline academics on specific gaps in students’ understanding of content has been another outcome of this approach. Such feedback was found to be useful in influencing modifications to content and/or delivery in certain engineering units. Feedback from students suggested that the drop-ins have been effective in addressing individual study requirements, as multiple areas may have been addressed at one time. Evaluation of the student feedback questionnaires has indicated that nearly all (95%) of the students surveyed found the assistance ‘very helpful’ (5 on 1 – 5 of Likert scale). Furthermore, the location of drop-ins in an open access and shared area has led to incidental and informal networks with staff in the college. These and other outcomes will be discussed at the presentation.

## References

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