



The Library, forgotten keepers of student data: providing opportunities for targeted student support through data driven relationships.

Key Words

Study Smart, academic literacy, collaboration, data, student retention,

Abstract

The Western Sydney University Library's guiding service principle is 'no wrong door'. A student can access any of the services that the Library offers through any pathway. In 2016 the Library created a new Academic Literacies team, which has provided a unique opportunity to expand the existing information literacy support to include support for other critical academic literacies (Murray & Nallaya, 2016). Most importantly, the Library collects data from all points across its services. By aggregating data from across Library services, Library staff are now able to identify specific units that need particular literacy support (Mandinach, 2012). Equipped with current student and unit level data, Library staff are now able to engage with Schools more meaningfully and are working to embed content directly into units. This is enabling the Library to deliver targeted and effective outcomes to all students enrolled in these units (Gunn, Hearne & Sibthorpe, 2011), not only those individual students who have sought help. The Library's methods of data collection and analysis (Palmer, Holt & Bray, 2008) offer innovative insights into student needs and behaviour that have wider implications across the University. This has provided opportunities for further stakeholder engagement with key university services to provide university-wide academic literacy support. The Library has been trialling a process of data-driven quality support to students across a range of services (Dietz-Uhler & Hurn, 2013). Utilising a hub-and-spoke model, the Library supports schools through strong relationships with academic and professional colleagues and has the capacity to leverage its resources to deliver quality-learning outcomes for students. This service is now being enhanced and expanded through further literacy to further strengthen and complement the University's 'Securing Success 2020, Strategic Plan' theme of 'A distinctively student-centred University' (Western Sydney University, 2015). By taking this approach the Library has been able to translate quantitative data into a quality dataset that has real application for literacy staff, academics, and students. This approach to data has the potential to be adapted at other universities at both small and large scales and from new or historical data sets for increased academic literacy outcomes.

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