“A one stop drop-in shop”: a collaborative support model to enhance student skill development and experience.

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Critical Intersections: the 12th Biennial Conference of the Association for Academic Language and Learning,
University of Wollongong
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The three-way collaborative model

- Integrate team-taught skills presentations into course delivery
- Provide consultation advice from a range of skill and content experts in one location
- Raise students’ awareness about the research and writing process
- Build self-management skills through guided feedback
Survey Findings
Student respondents (n = 651) reported significant improvement in all questions * Using the $p < 0.001$ Wilcoxon Test for statistical significance.
Collaborative drop-ins provide a space where students can:

- Gain advice from content experts, a skill adviser and/or a librarian
- Compare and contrast with other students and offer feedback
- Ask questions about support materials
- Generate ideas and determine if they are ‘on the right track’
- Connect with peers at different stages of the assessment writing process
What happens during the drop-ins?

The mentor greeter welcomes students and places them into groups near other students attending for the same subject.

- Greeter ensures that the students have ‘signed in’.

- The large long table layout allows students to listen in on discussions.

- Course code signs help to group students, particularly if the mentor is busy.
Drop-in ebbs and flows around the students
Focus groups & online surveys (n = 282) 2010 – 2014

- ANOVA dataset 2009-2011

Assessment results for the core course COR 110 (56% users)

Students who had attended BUiDi - mean  76 (DN)

Students who had NOT attended - mean  65 (CR)

- 25% had not used any other form of support or teacher consultation

- 40% male attendance (36:66 at USC)
What students say:

• “Affirmation that you are not alone”... [that people can have] “common problems and feelings” but different approaches, knowledge and strategies”

• “to gain insight and information from peers and tutors/lecturers. I like the open forum discussion and meeting people who are interested in getting the most out of their academic experience”

• “a place where you could ask specific questions and listen to others questions or just hang around and eavesdrop which has promoted some of the best learning”

• “I think it is very helpful to be around other students, because they may ask questions that you hadn’t thought of. Also, discussing ideas in a small group can really help you get a better understanding of them”.

• “PASSdi is a very good idea for students and staff to get to know one another outside of class and lectures, eases teacher/student tension”

(Online surveys 2010-2014)
Drop-in Models at QUT

Peer Assisted Models

SWAHPS
SOCIAL WORK AND HUMAN SERVICES PEER SUPPORT

STIMulate

Faculty-based Models:
Unit-specific drop-ins

Connections for Learning Program
QUT
Queensland University of Technology
CRICOS No. 00213J

Academic Café for Faculty of Education students

ALLS
Emerging Tensions & Limitations

- Role of the student/peer mentor?
- Role of the ALL?
- Role of the academic?
- Quality control
- Space
- Training
- Sustainability
- Resourcing/Funding
- Promotion

1st year, Bachelor of Social Work student (TAFE-entry) 2015 testimonial

SWAHPS is needed to help with social work students as they have done the assignments and help with amazing support that is invaluable within this setting and being able to talk to someone who got the struggle. The guys that run it have helped immensely when I thought I couldn't handle the course load.
Lessons Learned

• Importance of Faculty/Unit/Academic buy-in
• Promotion within delivery/Bb/website/social media
• Pass-on practice
• Members need to value the holistic philosophy
• Management of the space
• Create a predictable comfortable and ‘safe’ environment
• Pro-active engagement of students
For designing and driving a sustained assessment support model built on collaborative partnerships: paving the way for student growth in skills, independence and peer-to-peer learning.

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