One campus’s experience of implementing national academic literacy embedding initiatives in Health Sciences at Australian Catholic University

Academic Skills Unit (ASU)

St Patrick’s, Melbourne

Presented by Mark Eggins
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# Session overview

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Key Embedding Concepts

• Students require a range of academic literacy competencies. These skills are best acquired if embedded within their own disciplinary concepts (Hunter & Tse, 2013).

• Embedding requires collaboration between stakeholders including students, discipline academics and AALL staff (Baik & Greg, 2009).
Briguglio embedding model (summary)

1. Student **self-access** materials (generic or unit/task specific)

2. ALL staff in central, campus or faculty-based centres (**generic classes & 1 on 1 appointments**)

3. ALL staff **collaboration** with discipline academics (guest lectures/tutorials, materials and assessment development, credit language units)

4. Language development **fully integrated** in subjects

Ref: Briguglio (2012)
Briguglio model (some questions)

• Are self-access materials least desirable and is full integration of academic literacy support most desirable?

• Does this model reflect a possible role for peer learning?

• Should collaboration be seen as:
  – between ALL staff and academics only?
  – fixed in ALL commitment?
  – co-developing scaffolding for students and/or skills development for academics by AAL staff?
Institutional Background: ACU

• Multi-campuses across several states
• National focus thus linked by technology (video conferencing, lecture broadcasts)
• 30,000 + students (VIC 10,000 + = 33%) in 2014
• Importance of embedding reflected in several recent documents including:
  – ACU English Language Policy (2014)
ACU English Language Policy (excerpts)

• English language proficiency integrated into curriculum design and assessment.
• Course design includes language proficiency required of graduates in the discipline for workplace practicums and employment.
• Course approval and review assesses how English language proficiency is articulated in course design.

Ref: ACU (2014)
ACU Learning and Teaching Framework 2014 – 2017 ‘Learning for Life’ (excerpt)

• Hallmark One (Guarantee the distinctiveness of the ACU Graduate):
Ensure that ACU’s graduate attributes are embedded in the curriculum, with course design evidencing the teaching and assessment of academic and information literacy and numeracy.

Ref: ACU (2014)
ASU embedding context

• **Planning and production** of embedded academic literacy programs at ACU typically developed **nationally**

• **Presentation locally** (all campuses)
  – more consistent and equitable
  – obviates need to ‘re-invent the wheel’
Discipline Background: Health Sciences

- Represented on all campuses
- One of the largest HS faculties in Australia
- 12,838 students (42%) = largest cohort of ACU
- Produced the most Australian nursing graduates (past five years)
- A variety of pathways including TAFE
- Supervised field and clinical experience
- Professional accreditation

Ref: ACU (2015)
Health Sciences (con’t)

• Six national Schools:
  1. School of Allied Health (includes Speech Pathology and Occupational Therapy)
  2. School of Exercise Science
  3. School of Nursing, Midwifery and Paramedicine
  4. School of Physiotherapy
  5. School of Psychology
  6. School of Science
Discipline Background: HS Assessments

- ‘Holistic’ approach:
  - all aspects of the person considered
  - alternative treatment modalities covered where relevant

- Evidence Based Practice:
  - ‘evidence’ includes
    1. case studies (text or video)
    2. ‘practice’ and clinical experiences
    3. the literature (theories/models)
  - practice (current or future)

- Linked tasks (Task A sets up Task B)

- Tasks acculturate students into the discipline (‘culture’)
  including:
  - genres (i.e. essays, reports, portfolios, reflections and annotated bibliographies)
  - assumptions & vocabulary
ASU approach to embedding

• Collaborative (team based):
  1. initial meeting (academics and ASU reps for each campus)
  2. follow up meetings (ASU only)
  3. final meeting (all)

• Use of (annotated) exemplars
• Peer work activities
• Integration of online resources (LEO)
ASU approach to embedding (con’t)

• Different formats including:
  – team teaching in a lecture
  – team teaching (one in a lecture) other campuses receive broadcast
  – develop material for tutorials (team or academic presents)
  – advise academics on presentation of previously developed material
  – out of semester session for identified ‘at risk’ students
  – identified ‘at risk’ students referred to consultations
  – online resources linked to subject LEO pages
Some Challenges

• Sourcing exemplars
• Role demarcation
• Academic ‘dependence’
• One ALL member per campus involved
• Development all done ‘virtually’
• Some students’ poor discipline vocabulary
• Closing the 1 on 1 feedback loop
Some possible ‘solutions’

- Student writing database
- Academics’ essay bank
- Hybrid ‘generic’ workshops (discipline specific activities based on a draft/task/rubric/source)
- ‘Collegiate deference’ (roles noted in PP notes)
- Map out embedding over a whole course
- Co-develop more vocabulary resources (including in collocations, idioms)
- Better utilisation of student data (from 1 on 1s, drop ins)
Student Writing Database

• Coded by:
  – year
  – discipline
  – course
  – enrolment year
  – genre
  – subject code
  – version (draft or final)
  – mark

• Whole or excerpts can be used to scaffold skills in planning, structure, style and referencing
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session/ Time</th>
<th>Activity type</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Staff involvement</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Session 4</strong></td>
<td>Discussion &amp; individual practice on paraphrasing</td>
<td>Integrating evidence: (Paraphrasing skills and using evidence</td>
<td>Academic presents briefly on what they look for in how students use evidence</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:40-11:10am</td>
<td></td>
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<td>ASU provides information on paraphrasing skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Session 5</strong></td>
<td>Large group &amp; small group</td>
<td>APA Referencing &amp; exercises</td>
<td>ASU &amp; academic together present common problems:</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:10-11:30am</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Common problems with referencing presentation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Students review their own assignment to identify where they lost referencing marks</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Session 6</strong></td>
<td>Large group</td>
<td>Wrap up</td>
<td>Everybody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30-11:40am</td>
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<td>- Back to the butcher’s paper – what else would you add or change?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Session 7</strong></td>
<td>Individual: students reflect on own assignments</td>
<td>Review first assignment, comments, feedback, learning</td>
<td>Everybody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:40am-12noon</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Goal setting for next assignment</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>12:00 noon</strong></td>
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<td>Finish</td>
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Common mistakes in assignment 1

•Referencing and citation errors
•Lack of a clear structure
•Lack of an introduction or conclusion
•No topic sentences
•Not backing up statements
•Low quality evidence
•Not setting the scene in the introduction
•Grammar and spelling errors
The dramatic symptoms of schizophrenia can be very isolating for sufferers. Heidi describes being teased by schoolmates and says that she knows that people are ‘consciously avoiding’ her in the street when her symptoms are visually manifested. One incident that Heidi recalls is when she suffered a psychotic episode that presented itself as her screaming and running through traffic and nobody came to her aid. Investigation into the effect of social isolation on sufferers of schizophrenia have shown that social isolation can be an aggravating factor in the frequency and severity of instances of psychosis in sufferers (Jiang et al., 2013). Although Heidi does not specifically speak about her relationship with her family, Koujalgi and Patil (2013) found that familial relationships experience significant strain due to the burden of caring for and supporting a relative with a schizophrenic disorder.

- Red: Medical
- Blue: More general
- Green: shows the voice of the writer
- Underlining: Adjectives used to be more specific
- Purple: Inappropriate language for mental health
## Mapping embedding across a course

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Unit</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Delivery</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Year: 1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Semester: 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject code:</strong> Subject name: Week and lecturers:</td>
<td>Annotated Bibliographies</td>
<td>Academic writing, summary</td>
<td>Lecture: Campus based delivery</td>
<td>LEO unit on APA referencing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject code:</strong> Subject name: Week and lecturers:</td>
<td>Critical Appraisals</td>
<td>Academic writing, critical thinking</td>
<td>Lecture: Campus based delivery</td>
<td>Could be tutorial activity next year</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Year: 2</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Semester: 1</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject code:</strong> Subject name: Week and lecturers:</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>Presentation skills</td>
<td>Online resource followed by tutorial activity</td>
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References

Australian Catholic University. (2014). *English Language Policy*. Retrieved from


