

Investigating the Impact of a Three-Way Collaborative Support Model on the Student Experience at the University of the Sunshine Coast.

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Johanna has experience as an educator since 1998 in a variety of teaching institutions, both in Australia and overseas. After completing her Masters in English and in Teaching, she taught in Sydney for several years before moving to Queensland to teach in the Communication Faculty at the Southbank Institute of Technology. In 2004, she took a position as an Academic Skills Adviser at USC. In 2010, she was offered the opportunity to teach Academic English at one of USC's partner institutions in Germany, Hochschule Fulda.

In addition to performing the adviser role, Johanna remains a registered teacher and has taught in a variety of subject areas at USC including Academic Skills, Writing, Literacies in Education and Innovation.

Johanna's postgraduate studies have focused on teaching English language and communication skills. This area of specialism, coupled with diverse experience gained overseas, has led to an interest in issues related to international students and students from non-English speaking backgrounds.

She is currently developing and delivering academic skill support programs to international students at USC and is investigating ways to maximise the learning outcomes and the successful transition of culturally and linguistically diverse students. In 2010, she spent 12 weeks in Germany undertaking research into the academic transition experience of returned International Study Abroad students

Students experience assessment as a cohesive whole, but typically receive support in an atomistic way. Librarians assist with finding relevant references, academics teach and support content and Academic Skills Advisors facilitate the use of academic writing. Support for academic and information literacies are often perceived as sitting outside the faculty and, as a result, can be dislocated from each other in terms of content, development, delivery and student engagement. Discourse about the student journey at university highlight the importance of a more holistic approach to course delivery, involving both academics and support staff. At the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC), a small regional university on South-East Queensland, a collaborative support model has been operating in the Business Faculty since 2008 and more recently, due to positive recognition provided by users, it has been replicated in other faculty schools. In the first stage of this model, the Academic Skills Advisor and Librarian team-teach combined embedded skills presentations during lectures, which are contextualised to an assessment task. In the second stage of the model, a collaborative consultative service is offered where students can gain one-on-one assessment support provided by a Librarian, an Academic Skills Adviser and a number of academics assembled in the one location. Early findings from this model have been explored in earlier papers (Einfalt & Turley, 2009, 2009a). An exploration of current literature indicates that a range of models exist which offer student support by tying the support of literacies to the area of study. However, little has been reported on the collaboration between student services, library and course co-ordinators and the idea of providing this three-way support in a common space seems to be a unique approach. The collaborative consultative support concept involves an informal, shared drop-in space where students can gain feedback and support from a range of staff to generate ideas, see samples, ask questions and compare work with other peers at different stages of the assessment process. This range of support has recently been extended from literacy and content support to include support for well-being, careers guidance and guidance from student mentors. Information gathered from focus groups, surveys, and interviews conducted since 2009 will describe the benefits and limitations of this model from the student perspective. Findings suggest that this model has influence on the student experience by: raising awareness about the process required for researching and writing; promoting peer to peer learning and connections; fostering self-learning and management skills and building confidence by providing support that suits a diverse range of students. In addition to supporting students, the feedback on this model suggests that it also offers valuable professional development benefits and opportunities for the staff members involved. Using group discussion and feedback, this presentation will explore the applicability of this model in a broader context. Participants will gain insight to the model as showcased at the USC and consider the potential for implementing such a model into other contexts, with the aim to further enhance student support and engagement.