ALTC LSES Environmental Scan

1. **Institution**

   Victoria University

2. **Contact Person (and contact details)**

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3. **Name of Program/Initiative**

   Team teaching literacy and learning skills in HE

   3.1 URL:
   3.2 Start Date/Duration: the model started in HE at VU in 2011 and has continued into 2012

4. **Brief outline of program**

Team teaching has been an approach employed within the VE/FE sector as a means of addressing language, literacy and / or numeracy issues in a contextualised manner within timetabled classes for a number of years. In 2011 we began trialling a similar model in HE.

The HE program is collaboratively structured so that the language and learning tutor works with the discipline tutor to identify areas of student need based on an evaluation of the literacy demands of the subject (course participation and assessment) and the discourses of the disciplinary field. An initial group of students are identified as potentially 'at risk' by the course coordinator and streamed into the tutorial group, however due to individual timetabling requirements the tutorials have always run with mixed cohorts of learners. Tutorials are co-delivered by the tutors, with each tutor taking the lead on different activities. While the primary purpose of tutorial activity may shift between 'content' and 'literacy' development, activities are always embedded in the unit's content and are designed to facilitate a deeper engagement with unit materials, resources and concepts.

 The literacy content aims to develop a broad range of academic skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening, critical thinking and presenting, however the program operates by explicitly foregrounding a particular skill (such as reading or writing) each semester with the express aim of building students' skills over time. Aside from the advantages of having more than one teacher within the classroom and the integration of content and skill development, the program also models the practices of participating in a learning community and allows for exchanges of pedagogy between tutors.

One example of collaborative team-teaching currently being undertaken is an ongoing developmental project in Social Work. This project has been a three-way collaboration supported by the School of Social Sciences and Psychology's Social Work unit, and VU College's School of Language and Learning and LLN Strategy units. A Social Work lecturer, a Language and Learning lecturer and an LLN Strategy educational

developer have worked together to plan, deliver and reflect on integrating academic literacies within the course syllabus. This semester the work has focused on a deep engagement with the course readings. The approach aligns with Lea and Street's (1998, 1999, 2004, 2006) academic literacies model and has the express aim of helping students unpack the reading requirements of Social Work and of assisting students in the sometimes challenging task of deep critical engagement with the readings. Tutorials are extended by one hour in order to address the tension between the amount of 'content' able to be covered each week and the time devoted to literacy development. Additional support and teacher time in the form of individual consultations is also offered to students needing further support.

Lea, M & Street, B 1998, Student writing in higher education: An academic literacies approach, *Studies in Higher Education,* vol 23, pp157-172.

Lea, M & Street, B 1999, Writing as academic literacies: Understanding textual practices in higher education, in C Candlin & Hyland K (eds) *Writing : Texts, processes and practices*, Longman London*.*

Lea, M 2004, Academic Literacies: a pedagogy for course design, *Studies in Higher Education,* vol 29, no 6.

Lea, M & Street, B 2006, The academic literacies model, *Theory into Practice,* vol 45, no.4, pp368-377.

5. **Purpose/Aims**

    To develop specific academic skills for an identified cohort of students in a structured contextualised program.

    To assist the transition of students who may be less prepared for university level studies.

    To increase students' sense of efficacy and 'learner identity' by participation in a learning community that models a commitment to lifelong learning.

6. **Breadth of program** Team teaching can occur at any level, but the focus at VU has initially been at a subject level where the aim is to utilise the approach within subjects that are significant transition points for students.

7. **Category   (please select all that apply and provide explanation where necessary)**

Category	Y?	Explanation
Policy	N	
Curriculum	Y	A structured language and learning skills program co-delivered within the tutorial space of an established unit of study's curriculum
Program	Y	
Other (please specify)		

8. **Resources (optional – we are trying to determine what sort of resourcing is necessary to make the initiative work)**
   8.1 **Start up budget:**
   8.2 **Ongoing budget:**

9. **Outcomes**
   9.1 **Uptake:** VU in second semester 2012 will have 4-6 subjects wherein team teaching is taking place
   9.2 **Evaluation(s) conducted to date - Informal or formal) – and details of findings**: Initial evaluations have focused on:
   > 1.The student experience with students reporting a high degree of satisfaction, confidence in their ability to access resources, complete assessments and a better understanding of what is required of them.
   > 2.Discipline tutors have reported better overall structure, articulation of argument and use of academic evidence in student writing, as well as a deeper and more focused engagement with course materials (in particular with independent readings and the ability to identify an author's main argument).   More formal evaluations including a paper and evaluation of data collected to date is currently being undertaken.
   > 3. Teaching staff have informally reported a greater sense of satisfaction with models that allow time for staff to collaborate on development and reflection of the teaching program.
   9.3 **Evidence of success**: Aside from preliminary and informal evidence above, including the self-reporting of student satisfaction and efficacy, there has been an uptake in students accessing timely help not only within the team taught tutorial, but also in subsequent semesters. The team teaching program is to be extended to further subject areas in semester 2 2012.

   9.4 **Evaluation(s) planned (and dates for this/these):** As above – end 2012
   9.5 **Major challenges:**
   > 1.Time and budget- the teaching team need substantial amounts of time regularly allocated to meet, reflect and plan.
   > 2. Evaluating program's success- retention? efficacy? Grades of cohort? The program is not an 'instant fix' and results may manifest in variety of ways across time.
   > 3. Developing trust and rapport within the teaching team, particularly in terms of shared conceptual foundations.
   > 4.Addressing student resistance to additional time demands and the perception that they may have been singled out for help.
   9.6 **Other (Please specify):**

10. **Publications/Reports (including links to those publicly available)**

O'Maley, P. Grace, M., Daddow, A., Egan, R., Fox, J., Noble, C., Ridley, C., Testa, D. (2011) Blurring the Boundaries: A collaborative Approach to Language and learning Support for Social work students, Paper presented at the *Multiculturalism: Perspectives from Australia, Canada and China conference, Sydney University.*