

ALTC LSES Environmental Scan

1. **Institution** Victoria University, Melbourne

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

Dr Gill Best

3. **Name of Program/Initiative** : The Writing Space

3.1 URL: <http://snap.vu.edu.au/students-supporting-students-sssl/writing-space>

3.1.1 Start Date/Duration: April 2011

4. **Brief outline of program**

The Writing Space, a student peer learning writing centre for students at Victoria University, began in April 2011 as a pilot program at the Footscray Park Campus and was extended to St Albans Campus in 2012. The program provides a drop-in writing consultation service in the Footscray Park Learning Commons for students interested in discussing their assignments and improving their academic writing. Ten Student Writing Mentors are currently employed within the Writing Spaces. Support and development of the Writing Mentors is provided by staff in the School of Language and Learning. The Writing Space is an additional form of learning support provided by the school.

5. **Purpose/Aims**

The Writing Space provides another layer of support to assist students with their academic writing, the difference being that the mentors are students not professional staff. The rationale is that for some students, seeing a student rather than a staff member might be more attractive to some students who might be unwilling to seek help from professional staff. In addition, the Writing Mentors gain significant experience in employment on campus which directly relates to their interest and skills in writing development.

6. **Breadth of program** There is now a Writing Space at two large campuses, Footscray Park and St Albans. There are no restrictions in terms of who can access this support as long as they are enrolled student of the university.

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

Category	Y?	Explanation
Policy		
Curriculum		
Program	Y	It is a program that is not connected to a specific course or subject.
Other (please specify)		

8. **Resources** (optional – we are trying to determine what sort of resourcing is necessary to make the initiative work)

Start up budget: The budget pays the Student Writing Mentors. We currently have 5 mentors at Footscray Park and five mentors at St Albans. The Writing Spaces are open Monday - Wednesday, 2 pm to 6 pm, Thursdays and Fridays 12-4. The budget varies depending on how many mentors and how many hours they work. \$16,636.09 is the cost for ten mentors working 14 weeks for 4 hours a week each.

9. **Outcomes**

9.1 **Uptake:** Our late starting pilot study attracted 259 students to the Writing Space at Footscray Park in 2011.

9.2 **Evaluation(s) conducted to date - Informal or formal) – and details of findings:**

<http://www.snap.vu.edu.au/staff/students-supporting-students-learning-sssl/sssl-documents/evaluation-reports>

9.3 **Evidence of success:** as above

9.4 **Evaluation(s) planned (and dates for this/these):** as above

9.5 **Major challenges:** Gaining an ongoing budget. Supporting the mentors' development.

9.6 **Other (Please specify):**

10. **Publications/Reports (including links to those publically available)** as above