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Western Sydney

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Student Learning Unit

BIENNIAL REPORT

2007/2008

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Unit Highlights

2007 and 2008 marked a time of considerable reorganisation for the Student Learning Unit as the changes brought about by the DRG review were implemented. Most notably the Unit moved from the Student Support Services area to the portfolio of the PVC Learning and Teaching, and was centrally located at Kingswood campus.

Despite the considerable physical disruption, the Student Learning Unit was able to adapt its existing Strategic Plan 2006-2008 to the Unit's redefined mission and meet key performance targets in the areas of first year experience, transition and maths and academic literacy development.

Highlights for the 2007 and 2008 period have included:

- 7,023 student attendances at the UniStep and Academic Preparation transition programs, and the Mathematics and Academic Literacy workshop programs.
- Major contributions to embedded academic literacy development through involvement in a number of Learning Guide projects and presentations at College and School meetings, culminating in the publication of the resource booklet *Preparing students for learning through written assessment: A toolkit for Learning Guides*.
- Major contribution to the development and teaching of the new maths unit Mathematical Reasoning.
- Successful introduction and expansion of the Peer Assisted Study Session (PASS) program. This program expanded from five units in Autumn 2007 to fifteen units in Spring 2008. Student leader Husam Al Jabi (Business and Commerce student) won a national award for "Outstanding new leader" in 2008.
- Successful adaptation and coordination of the online orientation program *Postgraduate Essentials: Strategies for a successful start to your research degree*.
- ALTC citation for "Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning" awarded to SLU Academic Literacy lecturer Dr Claire Aitchison for work in developing research writing groups.
- ALTC citation for "Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning" to SLU Mathematics lecturers in collaboration with lecturers from the School of Nursing and Midwifery for programs in drug calculations in nursing.
- A substantial number of scholarly presentations and publications, many in collaboration with colleagues from Colleges and from other institutions.

Janice Catterall
Head, Student Learning Unit

Overview

The Student Learning Unit (SLU) consists of a small group of academics who work with each of the Colleges to develop student learning across UWS in academic literacy, mathematics and learning skills. Its services include:

- Collaborative teaching partnerships with Colleges and Schools
- The PASS program
- Transition programs
- Workshop programs
- Online resource development

To inform their practice, SLU staff members are committed to developing their theoretical knowledge and making evidence-based decisions through institutional research and professional development.

Goals

To enhance students' academic achievement through the development of academic literacy, mathematics and learning skills, the goals of the Student Learning Unit are to:

- i. Develop a range of courses that contribute to improved student outcomes, including performance, progression, retention and satisfaction, as identified in the UWS Learning and Teaching Action Plan (LTAP) 2006 – 2008.
- ii. Provide quality teaching experiences that address academic language, mathematics and learning needs of a diverse range of students.
- iii. Research the interface between the learning needs of UWS students and the appropriate pedagogies.
- iv. Contribute to UWS policy development in areas related to learning and teaching, transition and retention.
- v. Promote the Unit's services, outcomes, achievements and research.

SLU Staffing & Activities

The Student Learning Unit comprises 13 staff that equate to 12 full-time equivalents (FTEs). Eight (including Head) specialise in academic literacy, three (or two FTEs) in mathematics, and two in administration. This structure is depicted in **Figure 1** (on next page), which represents the organisation, position and staffing of the Student Learning Unit as of 2008.

The work of the unit is divided into three main areas:

1. Collaborative engagement with College programs (4.2 FTEs, including Head)
2. Direct delivery to students (4.8 FTEs)
3. Institutional research & development (1 FTE).

A detailed account of this work can be found in the subsequent sections of the report.

The Learning and Teaching section (page 7) presents the Student Learning Unit's collaborative and direct delivery programs.

The Scholarly Involvements section (page 45) contains selected community engagement projects and contributions to the language and learning community; and a list of awards, publications and presentations that SLU staff have either attained or contributed to. These represent the research into issues that affect learning and teaching in higher education – an important role that SLU performs in the academy.

Organisational Chart



Figure 1: The Student Learning Unit – 2008

Learning & Teaching

In 2007 and 2008, the Student Learning Unit was involved in a number of learning and teaching partnerships with Colleges and Schools, as well as delivery direct to students in the form of enabling and workshop programs, and online resource developments. Highlights from such work are presented in the following sections.

Collaborative Teaching Partnerships

The Student Learning Unit has been engaged in a wide variety of collaborative teaching partnerships with College and School staff. These collaborations are viewed as best practice in the field of academic language and learning development in higher education because they allow student writing to be developed in the context of particular disciplines.

Formal evaluations completed by collaborative partners in a number of units have been overwhelmingly positive about SLU's contribution to student learning in this mode. It is clear from these evaluations that SLU staff were seen to offer the specialised professional expertise that lecturing staff expected to receive from the centralised Student Learning Unit. Typical models of collaborative delivery are:

- Networked
- Transformative
- Consultative.

"SLU input was invaluable. SLU assisted us to more clearly identify the problems that we had observed; to conceptualise them as academic literacy problems helped us to develop strategies for implementation – which we have done . . ."

Head of Program, School of Social Sciences

Networked Collaborations

Networked collaborations involve Student Learning Unit staff, in response to requests from College / School staff, to produce subject-specific resources and teaching activities, which are delivered either in adjunct mode as a series of workshops, or in timetabled lecture or tutorial mode. These resources often focused on mathematics or academic literacies relating to particular assessment tasks.

First year Nursing Numeracy Program 2007 / 2008

This award winning collaborative program between the Student Learning Unit and the School of Nursing aims to improve student nurses' competency in nursing numeracy and medication calculations in the first year of a Bachelor of Nursing program using teaching and learning strategies such as:

- diagnostic testing
- online numeracy resources
- numeracy development workshops
- clinical facilitator numeracy training
- research.

Nursing students use this program to increase their competency in the application of the metric system, fractions, ratios, proportions and decimals to medication calculations.

DIAGNOSTIC TESTING OF NUMERACY

In 2007, an online version of the numeracy diagnostic test was used for the first time to assess first year Nursing students' numeracy levels. This test has been incorporated into the first year unit Nursing for Health and Wellbeing (400745). After its initial run, a revised online version of higher reliability was developed for 2008. A summary of the test results follow:

- Relating to nursing students scoring higher than 77% in the tests, in 2007, 66% of students (n = 540) did so; while in 2008, the number of students (n = 629) to attain this result increased to 85%.

- In 2008, 17% of students reported that they found this basic test either challenging or very challenging.
- The 2008 test revealed that 16% of students had a mathematics background of School Certificate Mathematics, and 29% had a background of HSC General Mathematics.
- The 2008 test also revealed that 42% of students had not studied any mathematics for at least four years, and that 19% of these had not studied mathematics for at least eight years.
- After completing their test in 2008, 28% (or 177 students) stated that they expected to attend the Winter workshops.

These figures demonstrate the need for many students to refresh and deepen their numeracy skills, and so validate the importance of having such a program.

ONLINE NUMERACY RESOURCES

In 2007 and 2008, self-directed online numeracy resources, developed collaboratively by SLU and Nursing lecturers, were available to Nursing students via the UWS website for the first year unit Nursing for Health and Wellbeing (400745).

NUMERACY FOR NURSES WORKSHOP

The Numeracy for Nurses Winter Workshop program aims to develop the numeracy skills required for calculating drug dosages and intravenous drip rates required in the Bachelor of Nursing course units. These workshops include a review of mathematical topics such as decimals, fractions, weight and volume, metric units and conversions, and solutions to problems relating to drug dosage calculations.

In July 2007 and 2008, this voluntary attendance three-day program ran on all four Nursing campuses – Penrith, Parramatta, Bankstown and Campbelltown. Students who performed below 77% in the online diagnostic test were advised to use this program to develop the numeracy skills required for studying medication calculations taught in the first year unit Nursing and Health Breakdown (400749). These numeracy skills and concepts are developed through a range of learning activities strongly grounded in a clinical context.

Student attendances at the Numeracy workshops were higher in 2007 than those in 2008 (see **Table 1** for a breakdown of these figures). The reasons for this significant drop in numbers in 2008 are not clear. Despite the drop in attendances, the value of this program is evi-

dent by its high ratings and by the significant improvements which students can make. For example:

- In 2007, 85% of students (n = 73) judged the three-day workshops to be useful or very useful.
- In 2008, at the end of the three-day workshops, 60% of students (n = 34) judged that they had made significant progress or were now competent in eight different numerical skills areas – none had judged themselves competent at the start of the workshops.

CLINICAL FACILITATORS

In 2007 and 2008, SLU lecturers were invited by the School of Nursing to provide input to approximately 50 clinical facilitators on ways to facilitate the development of the nursing numeracy skills of its students while they were on clinical placement.

RESEARCH

Ethics approved research into this collaborative program commenced in 2008 in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the collaborative programs' teaching, learning, and assessment strategies. Processing of the research data was still under way at end of 2008.

Table 1: Nursing Numeracy workshop attendances 2007 / 2008

	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	
	2007	2008
NURSING NUMERACY WORKSHOPS		
Numeracy for Medical Surgical Nursing 1 (400753)	-	66
Numeracy for Nurses Winter Workshop	131	56
Numeracy for Nursing and Health Breakdown (400749)	104	139
Total Workshop Attendances	235	261

Note: The dash symbol in the above table indicates that the respective workshop was not offered in that particular year.

Subject-specific Academic Literacy Workshops

In response to requests from College / School staff, 2007 and 2008 saw a range of subject-specific academic literacy workshops being developed for and taught in postgraduate and undergraduate courses. **Table 2** presents a selection of such workshops delivered in adjunct mode; that is, workshops that are additional to timetabled lectures or tutorials.

Table 2: Academic literacy workshops delivered in adjunct mode

COURSE	WORKSHOPS IN ADJUNCT MODE
POSTGRADUATE COURSES	
Graduate Certificate in Research Studies Masters (Honours) PhD	SLU staff designed and facilitated numerous workshops that contributed to the College of Business's research training program.
Master of Public Health	<p>In an ongoing partnership between the SLU and lecturers from Master of Public Health, a series of five 3-hour academic literacy workshops were developed to help prepare these mostly international students for their postgraduate writing. The series was made up of the following workshops:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Overview of academic writing + Forms of assessment 2. Reading effectively & critically + Referencing 1 (compiling a reference list) 3. Development of critical thinking + Review of essay structure 4. Academic argument and evidence + Referencing 2 (paraphrasing and in-text citation) 5. Language of academic writing
Master of Teaching (Primary)	<p>SLU designed a series of two 3-hour language workshops to develop selected international students' knowledge and understanding of English grammar; in particular, those grammatical elements identified from an analysis of their written work as being weak. The series consisted of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Basic Structure of Clauses and Sentences, which included parts of speech and clause types 2. Review of Clause Types + Time and Aspect + Active & Passive Voice, Modality and Article Usage.

COURSE	WORKSHOPS IN ADJUNCT MODE
POSTGRADUATE COURSES (CONTINUED)	
Master of Teaching (Secondary)	<p>In an ongoing collaboration between lecturers from the SLU and the School of Education, a series of workshops were developed for the course's mostly international students. These seminars, which provided time for discussion, exploration of text, and opportunities for practice, focussed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advanced reading strategies ▪ Referencing ▪ Features of critical discussion
Bachelor of Nursing (Graduate Entry)	<p>Using the collaboratively developed resource booklet <i>Reading and Writing at University</i>, a series of workshops were delivered to these postgraduate Nursing students to develop their understanding of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preparation for university study ▪ The structure of the assignment ▪ The structure of argument.

"The supporting lectures and workbook led to a 5% improvement in student results compared to the previous year.

Very well planned and facilitated sessions, [which are] available online prior to lectures so students can download and follow up later."

Lecturer, School of Nursing and Midwifery

In 2007 and 2008, networked collaborations with UWS School staff also saw SLU lecturers develop academic literacy resources and teaching activities that related to a particular unit's assessment task/s. These resources were delivered by SLU staff as guest lecturers in timetabled lecture/s or tutorial/s. A selection of such academic literacy workshops is listed in **Table 3**.

Table 3: Academic Literacy workshops delivered in timetabled lecture mode

COURSE	WORKSHOPS IN TIMETABLED LECTURE MODE
POSTGRADUATE COURSES	
Master of Business	Commencing a Literature Review Critical thinking
Master of Public Health	Writing a Media Release Interpreting Lecturer Feedback
Master of Science	Academic Writing
UNDERGRADUATE COURSES	
Bachelor of Arts	Writing and Communication
Bachelor of Business	Writing a Case Study
Bachelor of Nursing	Essay Writing Academic Writing
Bachelor of Tourism	Critical thinking Referencing

Transformative Collaborations

With transformative collaborations, the Student Learning Unit works closely with College staff to redevelop the program curriculum to enhance the teaching of academic literacy. This often involves mapping an entire program, revising assessment practices to align with learning objectives, and developing explicit academic literacies throughout the program. Such collaborations are represented in the following case studies:

- Mathematical Reasoning
- Multiliteracies
- Business Academic Skills.

Mathematical Reasoning

In 2008, the Mathematical Reasoning unit was developed. This was due to increasing evidence that inadequate levels of Mathematics may be contributing to lower student satisfaction, retention and progression in first year at UWS. The unit evolved through a Learning and Teaching Project collaboration between the mathematics staff of the Student Learning Unit and academic staff from the School of Computing and Mathematics. These staff devised and implemented an appropriate teaching and learning framework that targets student achievement of the unit's defined outcomes.

Mathematical Reasoning is designed to provide new students with an opportunity to acquire mathematical skills that they do not have but are assumed by the courses in which they are enrolled. In addition to the mathematical content of the unit, students are exposed to strategies that will help them to learn to study mathematics effectively and to lessen their anxiety about mathematics.

In 2008, Mathematical Reasoning was offered to new students enrolling in the Bachelor of Business course. Student enrolment into this unit was linked to two other Business units – Statistics for Business and Introduction to Economic Methods. That is, those students who did not score 70% or more in an online Basic Maths Skills Test were enrolled in Mathematical Reasoning instead of Statistics for Business or Introduction to Economic Methods.

In its inaugural year, Mathematical Reasoning was taught at Blacktown, Campbelltown and Parramatta campuses in both Autumn and Spring Sessions to approximately 200 students.

From their evaluations of the Spring Session's unit (n = 61 students, 53% response rate) and on a Likert scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), students on average rated the unit at 4.0 or at 3.9 on such factors as:

- Learning design
- Learning resources
- Assessment activities
- Assessment feedback
- Workload.

All of these ratings were above the average university ratings, indicating that the unit's design and implementation were of a high standard.

Multiliteracies Learning Guide

In 2008, a collaborative project between staff from the Student Learning Unit, Teaching Development Unit, and the School of Education resulted in a comprehensive Learning Guide being developed for a Bachelor of Early Childhood Studies (Child and Family) core unit – Multiliteracies.

As part of this development process, which had a particular emphasis on making learning and assessment requirements explicit to students and on developing academic literacy, the previous assessment guidelines were jointly analysed and then rewritten, once the skills required to complete each assessment task had been identified. These skills were then integrated into discussions during lectures and tutorial activities.

To make assessment tasks explicit to students, the Learning Guide included a flow chart that provided a visual overview of the steps required to complete a particular task.

And to tackle the development of academic literacy, the Guide explicitly addressed such learning processes as:

- Question analysis
- Reading and note making methods
- Planning, drafting and proofreading
- Online learning

It also included annotated example texts that showed:

- Critical thinking
- Essay stages
- Reflective writing

These texts also helped to scaffold students' understanding of the particular assessment requirements.

Student feedback about the clarity of the Learning Guide relating to their first assessment task was positive:

"The need to develop useful clearly written documents for the 2008 cohort of students was a priority area for the Early Childhood staff. To achieve this objective, time was taken to work collaboratively with the Student Learning Unit and the Teaching Development Unit.

The results have been rewarding in that student feedback has identified the usefulness and clarity of documents prepared. The reading proforma, which assisted students in analysing and paraphrasing important points from their readings, was appreciated by students . . ."

Lecturer, School of Education

Business Academic Skills

Business Academic Skills (BAS), a core first-year unit currently within the School of Marketing was launched in Autumn 2008. Its aim, primarily, was to develop first year Business and Commerce students' skills in communication and ethics. On completion of the unit, these students would be able to write the different kinds of communications required in business and at university, apply ethical practices in both these contexts, and know about the communication issues that can arise in businesses that span different cultures and countries.

For Session 1, the unit's delivery was principally online. Its only face-to-face provision was from a Student Learning Unit lecturer, who in weeks seven to fourteen was available for BAS student drop-in sessions to discuss assignment or academic skills issues these students were experiencing.

In response to student dissatisfaction with the unit for this Autumn Session – in particular issues relating to assessment practices and mode of delivery – the Student Learning Unit was invited to provide their expertise in the redevelopment of the unit. In a close collaboration between the BAS unit coordinator and an SLU literacy lecturer, Spring 2008 saw stage one of the program's redesign emerge.

Based on relevant educational research and theory, the program curriculum was redeveloped to support student learning by "making clear to students what they are expected to learn and how they will be assessed."¹ This involved such changes as:

- Aligning assessment tasks to meet the unit's learning objectives

- Aligning program topic to meet unit outcomes relating to ethics and cross-cultural communication issues with businesses trading internationally
- Rewriting assessment tasks to be consistent with formative and summative assessment criteria
- Developing a series of face-to-face tutorials tailored to meet the academic writing and assessment needs of students identified through an ungraded diagnostic writing task
- Aligning tutorial sequence and content to support assessment tasks. The six two-hour tutorials covered the following topics:
 1. Analysing the Assignment Question, Reading Efficiently & Critically, and Notetaking
 2. Compiling a Reference List, and Writing Annotated Bibliographies
 3. Writing as a Process, and Planning Academic Essays
 4. Writing Academic Essays
 5. Developing Critical Thinking, and Incorporating Evidence
 6. Writing in an Academic Style
- Co-editing (with BAS team) the text book *Business Academic Skills* to make its content more relevant to the unit and to an Australian academic and business context
- Selecting relevant modules for the online component of unit – *mywritinglab*, especially the grammar modules (to enhance students' engagement with the tutorial content of, for example, Academic Writing Style)

¹ Unit Outline and Learning Guides Policy: Section 3 – Policy Statement, Clause 12

- Developing marking criteria that aimed to make what is being assessed explicit to both tutors and students (for tutors this explicitness extended to instruction on providing appropriate feedback and standardising the marking process)
- Creating teaching materials that:
 - ▶ are relevant for a business subject in an Australian university context
 - ▶ allow more opportunities for students to practise academic writing
 - ▶ aim to support students to successfully complete their assessment tasks.

Table 4 presents the Spring 2008 Sessions' average ratings given by BAS students for criteria relating to assessment clarity and learning resource development. It also indicates the percentage of improvement over the Autumn 2008 Session. This formal evaluation, which was based on a five-point rating scale of 1 (Strongly Disagrees) to 5 (Strongly Agrees), revealed that these students mostly Agreed or Strongly Agreed with the evaluation statements.

Accordingly, the initial redevelopment of the program curriculum represents a successful collaboration between the SLU and BAS to extend the University's capacity to support all first year Business and Commerce students.

Table 4: BAS student evaluations of the unit and level of improvement over previous Session

EVALUATION STATEMENTS	SPRING 2008 N = 361 (39%)	% OF IMPROVEMENT OVER AUTUMN
The learning activities in this unit have helped my learning	3.6	33%
All assessment tasks in this unit had clear guidelines	3.7	37%
The learning resources provided in this unit helped me to engage in learning	3.5	40%

"This unit helps students to improve their writing skills.

Assessments were well planned and you knew what to do, what was expected and required of you."

Business Academic Skills student

Consultative Collaborations

In consultative collaborations, SLU staff work closely with staff in Colleges, Schools or other central units to consult on design and implementation, and evaluate strategies and resources for improving student tertiary learning skills in academic literacy or mathematics. The long term aim in such collaborations is to build the capacity of the collaborative partner.

In 2007 / 2008, most requests were related to Learning Guides and embedded writing development.

Strategic Initiatives in Learning and Teaching

Between 2007 and 2008, the Student Learning Unit contributed expertise to key learning and teaching projects within the 'Student Experience' focus area of the UWS *Making the difference strategy 2007-2009*. In response to student dissatisfaction with the clarity of assessment requirements (a sector-wide issue), the Office of PVC Learning & Teaching initiated projects to develop and implement new policies for criteria and standards-based assessment (MTD 10) and unit-specific Learning Guides (MTD 18). The resulting policies aimed to enhance the student learning experience at program level by requiring unit materials to include elements that "mak[e] clear to students what they are expected to learn and how they will be assessed."²

To support Schools in implementing these elements in 100 level units for Autumn 2008, specialist staff from the central units (SLU, TDU, and Library) worked collaboratively with College Learning & Teaching Fellows on a variety of University fora, professional development sessions, and assessment renewal projects.

SLU contributions to this campaign have focused on building staff capacity to design assessment tasks and Learning Guides that facilitate students' acquisition of tertiary academic literacy and learning skills. They include:

- i. Presentations at College and School Learning and Teaching events, such as:
 - College of Arts and College of Business Learning & Teaching Forum *Improving practices in academic literacy: Assessment and Learning Guides*
 - College of Health and Science Assessment Workshop *Learning Guides and academic literacy*
 - College of Health and Science Forum for the Assessment Renewal Taskforce and the First Year Experience Group *The student perspective on academic writing*
 - School of Law Learning and Teaching Retreat *Learning Guides: What are they? What can they do? What do they look like?*

² Unit Outline and Learning Guides Policy: Section 3 – Policy Statement, Clause 12

- ii. Collaborative development of academic literacy learning activities, resources and/or assessment tasks for Learning Guides in 100 level units with large, academically diverse cohorts, such as:
- Learning Guides for the units:
 - ▶ Accounting for Information Managers
 - ▶ Multiliteracies
 - ▶ Professional Skills for Science
 - Curriculum development for the units:
 - ▶ Business Academic Skills
 - ▶ Microbiology 1
- iii. Student Learning Unit's *Preparing students for learning through written assessment: A toolkit for Learning Guides*.

This resource booklet and its online counterpart (available in PDF format from the Office of PVC Learning & Teaching website) demonstrate how Learning Guides can be used to support students in achieving the standard of learning and writing expected in higher education. Examples cover student-

friendly explanations of learning expectations, the use of annotated models to improve student academic writing, and methods of referring students to academic literacy and numeracy resources, and workshops.

These materials have been drawn from sample Learning Guides and related authentic teaching resources to guide staff in addressing particular mandatory content areas listed in the Unit Outline and Learning Guides Policy.

This capacity building approach aligns strongly with leading international practice in student learning development, particularly in relation to tertiary academic literacy. For large cohorts especially, the mainstream course curriculum is increasingly recognised as the most effective space in which to develop student control over the scholarly processes and communication practices of different academic disciplines.

"I would like to thank you for sending me a hard copy of *Preparing students for learning through written assessment: A toolkit for Learning Guides*, prepared by your SLU.

This is sure to be a useful resource to have on hand, and I will encourage some of my colleagues to utilise the electronic copy available on the UWS website."

Head of (Core) Program, Bachelor of Business and Commerce

Consultation with the Unit Introduction to Psychology of Health

Before 2008, writing in the unit Introduction to Psychology of Health was theoretically being developed through an assessment regime of two short essays. However, owing to the numerous uncollected marked first assignments, students were not engaging with feedback intended to improve their writing.

The Student Learning Unit was then invited to work with the unit coordinator to resolve this issue. Accordingly, the assessment tasks were redesigned – a mark was awarded in the second essay for responding to feedback given in the first; and, as part of a 'feedforward' Learning and Teaching Action Plan project, casual tutors were engaged in discussions about how to improve feedback comments related to language and writing.

Yes, the 'intervention' has had a positive effect. Consultation with SLU was in two main areas:

After consultations with SLU staff, the unit coordinator:

- Ensured that the marking rubric was explained in tutorials
- Introduced 'feedforward' philosophies into the marking, and reduced the 'critical' and ambiguous comments (including ticks and question marks); tutors were trained and supported in this.
- Included 'reflection on feedback' as an assessment criterion for Essay 2.

Although the unit has yet to be formally evaluated, the lecturer and tutoring staff have reported noticeable improvements in:

- Student engagement and learning
- The return rate for Assignment 1 – approximately 90%

1. Overall design of assessments and preparation for assignment writing and particularly in encouraging students to collect assignment 1 and take account of feedback for assignment.
2. Working in conjunction with the 'feedforward' LTAP project . . .to develop effective feedback . . .

Unit Coordinator, Introduction to Psychology of Health

The PASS Program

Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) is a student-centred learning program that can be offered by all Schools to support student learning. The program, which is conducted collaboratively between the Student Learning Unit and a School, runs in units that students tend to find challenging. SLU is responsible for the coordination of the overall PASS program, and the training and monitoring of PASS facilitators.

Students who have successfully completed a unit in which PASS is running are trained as PASS facilitators. These facilitators provide academic and social support in one-hour, non-compulsory study sessions that are run weekly throughout the semester for students currently enrolled in the unit.

PASS is open to all students studying in the unit who want to improve their understanding of course material and their academic performance. The PASS facilitator creates a collaborative learning environment in which students work together to address both study strategies and understanding and consolidation of course content. Although the PASS facilitator guides the session, the group can determine its weekly focus. In other words, the role of the facilitator is that of being responsive to the needs of the group. Attendance at PASS does not replace tutorials or lectures, but rather it supplements them by providing the opportunity for students to review, consolidate and clarify the course content.

UWS Student Wins PASS Prize

Business and Commerce student Husam Al Jabi recently won a National Outstanding New Leader award for his work as a Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) facilitator. Husam was one of only two facilitators who received the award.

“Husam deserved the award because he has shown an impressive and comprehensive understanding of the role of PASS facilitator, which he has fulfilled with commitment, responsibility and imagination,” says PASS Co-ordinator Clare Power.

“He has also initiated a student working party which will explore ways of promoting PASS across UWS.”

PASS, a program coordinated by the Student Learning Unit, aims to support students by providing a collaborative learning environment facilitated by students for students, which focuses on ‘learning how to learn’ in their discipline areas.

“I enjoy it because it allows me to help students, especially those who are struggling or stressed out,” says Husam, who facilitates the subject Introduction to Business Law, “and at the end of semester when you look back, you see a difference in how students have improved.”

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CAMPUSLife
20 July 2009

Supporting UWS Strategic Directions

The PASS program has become a significant engagement and progression strategy at a number of Australian universities. Research has shown that participation in the program contributes to both student retention and success rates. In the UWS context, the PASS program is an important initiative that clearly supports two of the UWS strategic goals by:

- i. providing a high quality, student-centred experience at UWS to improve student success and graduation rates
- ii. ensuring that UWS students 'learn to learn' and graduate with the ability to participate actively and responsibly in a changing world.

These two goals, therefore, are in complete alignment with the aims of the PASS program, which include:

- improving student outcomes in units which are perceived as difficult by students
- enabling collaborative learning, which focuses on students 'learning how to learn' in their discipline areas, and which is facilitated by students for students.

Table 5 shows the average marks that students attained in three units facilitated by PASS. In each case, the percentages were higher when students attended PASS than when they did not.

Table 5: Average marks attained in units offering PASS

UNIT	ATTENDED NO SESSIONS	ATTENDED 1 (OR MORE) SESSION/S	ATTENDED 3 (OR MORE) SESSIONS
AUTUMN 2007			
Diversity & Difference	57%	-	65%
AUTUMN 2008			
Design Science	48%	63%	67%
Multiliteracies	44%	52%	65%

A Learning and Teaching Action Plan Initiative

PASS was introduced for the first time at UWS in 2007 as a Learning and Teaching Action Plan (LTAP) initiative. Prior to this, peer mentoring – a variant of Supplemental Instruction upon which PASS is based – ran at UWS for over 10 years. In the peer mentoring model, usually only five sessions were held over a semester, and in first semester, the focus was more on acculturation than on addressing content strategies.

In Autumn 2007, the PASS program was trialled in five units to explore whether a sustained approach of weekly sessions across the semester offered students more support and opportunities for success. By Spring 2008, it had expanded to 15 units across the six UWS campuses (see **Table 6** for a list of these units), and in that same year, shifted from being funded entirely from LTAP funding to a 50 / 50 shared cost with Schools. In 2009, it is anticipated that facilitators' wages will be paid entirely by Schools.

Table 6: The increase of PASS in units during 2007 / 2008

COLLEGE	UNITS – AUTUMN 2007	UNITS – SPRING 2008
UNDERGRADUATE		
Arts	Diversity and Difference	Composition Craft and Theory 2 Digital Musics 2: Studio and Soundscape Diversity and Difference
Business	Organisational Behaviour	Accounting Information for Managers Corporate Accounting Systems Introduction to Business Law Principles of Economics
Health & Science	Chemistry 1 Design Science Mathematics for Engineers 1	Chemistry 2 Electrical Fundamentals Fundamentals of Mechanics Mathematics for Engineers 1 Mathematics for Engineers 2 Statistics for Business

Postgraduate Essentials

In 2008, the Student Learning Unit coordinated a team of specialists from the Office of Research Services, Library and Teaching Development Unit to adapt and facilitate a new online transition program for delivery to all commencing higher degree research (HDR) candidates through UWS. Licensed from the University of Melbourne's School of Graduate Research, this self-paced program – *Postgraduate Essentials: Strategies for a successful start to your research degree* – demystifies the crucial early stages of candidature. With the support of specialist university advisers from the project team, candidates work through a series of interactive modules that cover settling in, project planning, supervision, literature searching, writing a literature review, preparing for Confirmation of Candidature and research ethics.

Ongoing Program Refinements

An important component of the SLU coordination of *Postgraduate Essentials* has been the ongoing refinement of program learning design to balance the needs of commencing candidates and institutional partners. For example, while the original program was designed for voluntary participation with time-released delivery of modules, the UWS version has been implemented as a requirement of Confirmation to address in part an AUQA recommendation to improve flexible support for HDR candidates.

Evaluation of the Autumn 2008 pilot indicated that time-released delivery was too rigid for

this purpose, and so module access and online tasks were redesigned for self-paced delivery from Spring 2008. This modification contributed to a significant increase in candidate satisfaction (see Table 7), which is expected to continue with the Autumn 2009 cohort. Moreover, these changes were coupled with a simplified participant tracking mechanism that minimises the administrative burden for both the SLU and the primary institutional client, the Office of Research Services.

Table 7 shows the percentage of responding HDR candidates who, in Autumn and Spring 2008, agreed or strongly agreed with statements about the value of completing *Postgraduate Essentials*.

Table 7: HDR candidates responding to statements about *Postgraduate Essentials*

EVALUATION STATEMENTS	AUTUMN 2008 COHORT N = 62 (50% OF TOTAL)	SPRING 2008 COHORT N = 30 (60% OF TOTAL)
The program content was relevant to me.	66%	97%
Topics were covered in sufficient depth.	79%	93%
The program helped me to identify resources and skills required to successfully complete my research degree.	67%	98%
The program increased my understanding of the expectations and stages of a research degree.	81%	97%
Overall the program met my expectations.	62%	86%

Recognition for Program Development

The SLU-led implementation of *Postgraduate Essentials* at UWS represents a successful collaboration between central units to extend the University's capacity to support all commencing HDR candidates. This success has been recognised by the original program developers from the Melbourne Graduate School of Research (see Around UWS article on next page), and has resulted in strong collegial links, involvement in a cross-institutional

user network, and discount rates on future licensing agreements. It has also been recognised by the UWS Research Studies Committee, who have requested that SLU coordinate the implementation of a new six module follow-up program, *Postgraduate Essentials: Completion and beyond*, in 2009.

These online programs supplement the very successful face-to-face HDR writing programs offered by the SLU (see page 40).

"I found all modules really helpful. They were well structured and provided useful information and links to useful information. At first I thought this was going to be chore and another hurdle to jump that I didn't need.

Then, as I progressed through the modules I quickly realised their relevance and importance. Even the module on writing a literature review I found really helpful. I say 'even' as I thought I had a pretty good understanding of what was involved in this aspect – how limited and superficial my knowledge was . . ."

UWS HDR candidate

Supporting the Transition to Higher Degree Research

UWS has implemented an award-winning online transition program for commencing higher degree research candidates called Postgraduate Essentials.

This self-paced program aims to demystify the crucial early stages of candidature. Participants work through a series of interactive modules that cover settling in, project planning, supervision, literature searching writing a literature review, preparing for confirmation and research ethics.

Licensed from the University of Melbourne's School of Graduate Research, Postgraduate Essentials was adapted for delivery at UWS by a cross-functional team consisting of staff from the Office of Research Services, Student Learning Unit, UWS Library and E-Learning. Members of this team also serve as specialist advisers during the program, moderating the online discussion

tasks in each module and responding to candidate enquiries.

• • • •

Dr Angela Woods and Dr David Martin from the Melbourne School of Graduate Research recently visited UWS to discuss the implementation of Postgraduate Essentials at the University and the ongoing evolution of the program at University of Melbourne. They demonstrated a new online program entitled Completion and Beyond, which supports the final stages of candidature and planning for professional life after the thesis.

The Research Studies Committee is now exploring the possibility of licensing this follow-up to Postgraduate Essentials to further enhance the higher degree research experience at UWS.

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Direct Delivery to Students

Direct delivery to students in the form of enabling and workshop programs are designed to help students to gain and develop required skills for their academic work. The Student Learning Unit offers a range of these programs to meet the specific needs of particular groups of students and courses, and they include:

- UniStep enabling program
- Academic Preparation program
- Workshop programs

Despite the institutional advantages of collaborative programs, in which the development of writing and numeracy are firmly embedded in the context of the discipline, SLU has slightly more staff involved in direct delivery to students – 4.8 full-time equivalents (FTEs) for direct delivery compared with 4.2 for collaborative partnerships. One reason is that maths support is more appropriately delivered in direct enabling or workshop modes. Another reason is that the University of Western Sydney is committed to the provision of enabling programs. These are an important equity initiative for the university and they deliver a valuable student load critical to equity targets.

UniStep Enabling Program

SLU conducts the UniStep enabling program as part of UWS's commitment to student equity and enabling initiatives. It supports the University's focus on improving retention and reducing attrition rates, specifically in the areas of academic mathematics and literacy.

UniStep Mathematics & Statistics

The UniStep Mathematics and Statistics program is designed to give new and continuing students the opportunity to attain the necessary tertiary level mathematics required for the unit/s of their degree course.

This program especially benefits those students who are concerned about different academic expectations at university compared with those at TAFE or High School, or those who are entering university as mature-aged students.

UNISTEP MATHEMATICS & STATISTICS 2007

The 2007 UniStep Mathematics and Statistics Program, comprising five courses, was conducted over a 17 day period on three campuses:

- Parramatta offered two evening courses – Basic Algebra, and Statistics; each ran for seven nights.
- Campbelltown offered two daytime courses – Basic Algebra, and Advanced Algebra & Trigonometry; each ran for five days.
- Penrith offered two daytime courses. The first, a five-day course in Basic Algebra. The second, a twelve-day course promoted under two names: UniStep Algebra Calculus & Statistics, and UniStep Maths Bridging for Engineering Students. This twelve-day course consisted of two lectures to the whole group in the morning, and two tutorial sessions with the group divided into six classes in the afternoon.

UNISTEP MATHEMATICS & STATISTICS 2008

In 2008, the UniStep Mathematics and Statistics Program was redesigned because the SLU restructure required all staff to operate from Penrith campus. In addition, during the organisation and provision of the course, the unit only had two mathematics staff (or 1.5 full-time equivalents).

Accordingly, UniStep Mathematics and Statistics was only offered at Penrith, and the twelve-day program content was separated into discrete modules – Algebra 1, Algebra 2, Calculus, Statistics, and Trigonometry.

Students could then select those workshops appropriate for their degree, and to facilitate this choice for Engineering students, the UniStep Engineering course included additional modules – Algebra 2, Trigonometry, and Calculus. Each day there was a morning and afternoon session, each consisting of a group lecture followed by tutorial classes.

Attendances for the 2007 and 2008 UniStep Mathematics and Statistics Programs are presented in **Table 8**.

Table 8: UniStep Mathematics & Statistics program attendances 2007 / 2008

	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	
	2007	2008
UNISTEP MATHEMATICS & STATISTICS PROGRAMS		
Advanced Algebra & Trigonometry	30	-
Algebra 1	-	107
Algebra 2	-	85
Algebra, Calculus & Statistics	51	-
Basic Algebra	112	-
Maths Bridging for Engineering Students	123	112
Calculus	-	23
Statistics	81	48
Trigonometry	-	37
Total Workshop Attendances	397	412

Note that:

- The dash symbol in the above table indicates that the respective workshop was not offered in that particular year.
- The 'Total Workshop Attendances' figures do not necessarily reflect the actual number of students, as some would have attended more than one type of workshop; for example, Engineering students may have attended Algebra 1, Statistics, and Maths Bridging for Engineering Students.

UniStep Academic Literacy

The UniStep Academic Literacy program is designed to help students, many of whom are first in family to attend university, have low UAls and / or have articulated from TAFE, to develop the necessary academic skills needed for their university study. The program:

- Allows students the opportunity to develop their language and learning skills.
- Offers students a positive learning experience, which can improve their confidence to undertake their chosen program of study.
- Enables students to gauge their level of preparedness for university study.
- Provides students with an opportunity to develop support networks with peers that will continue beyond the UniStep program.

UNISTEP ACADEMIC LITERACY 2007

In 2007, the UniStep Literacy program ran six classes – four daytime classes, each of which ran for eight days and included 40 hours of instruction, and two evening classes of shorter duration, with only 25 hours of instruction extended over seven days, including a six-hour teaching day on a Saturday in the middle of the program.

These classes, for which students could register online, ran on four campuses:

- Penrith (1 day class)
- Parramatta (1 day + 2 evening classes)
- Bankstown (1 day class)
- Campbelltown (1 day class)

As a result of having participated in the UniStep program, many students have reported academic benefits, as well as the positive social and emotional ones, which included gaining overall confidence:

"I have found the course to be excellent in content. It touched on all areas which were of concern to me as a student commencing studies for the first time in over 20 years.

This course has brought me up to date with many of the basic principles of writing which I thought I had lost over time. The whole course has given me a new confidence to go further and succeed . . ."

UWS student

Despite such positive feedback, 2007 saw the UniStep transition team concerned about:

- Coordinating appropriate timing of promotion and courses
- Having sufficient teaching staff
- Providing equitable programs across six campuses.

Furthermore, the 2007 attendance figures compared less favourably than with those in the previous year. In 2006, a total of 226 students attended nine classes offered on five campuses. Whereas, in 2007, 155 students attended six classes run on four campuses.

A contributing factor for these lower numbers was the introduction of online enrolments. By no longer having direct access to enrolling students, as in previous years, SLU lost a valuable means of promoting its UniStep courses.

To promote future UniStep programs, therefore, SLU's Transition Team plans to send targeted emails / mail to new students.

UNISTEP ACADEMIC LITERACY 2008

In 2008, UniStep was offered in both February and July. In February, nine classes – seven daytime (eight-day program), and two evening (seven-evening + one Saturday program) – ran on four campuses:

- Bankstown (2 day classes)
- Campbelltown (1 day class)
- Parramatta (2 day and 2 evening classes)
- Penrith (2 day classes).

In July, two daytime classes (5-day part-time program) were run on two campuses:

- Bankstown (1 day class)
- Parramatta (1 day class).

UniStep's 2008 program boasted more student attendances than the previous year (see **Table 9** on next page); this was partly due to the program being highlighted in a UWS promotional DVD. However, some concerns about the February and July sessions remained.

These included:

- The inability of promotion to reach target students
- The number of student withdrawals from sessions.

To tackle these issues, the SLU's Transition Team proposes to:

- send a targeted email / mail or SMS to new students and to continuing international students as well
- create a UniStep uWS site from which students can be encouraged to enrol for UniStep courses
- offer a certificate of completion to students who finish the program.

In evaluating the UniStep program, overall, students responded positively – agreed or strongly agreed. Specifically, 92% of the respondents had an overall satisfactory experience as 87% found the course relevant to their study, 97% of the respondents agreed that the activities helped their learning, and that 85% found the resources useful. Moreover, 86% agreed that the unit helped them develop their skills in critical thinking, analysing, problem solving and communicating.

Table 9: UniStep Academic Literacy program attendances 2007 / 2008

	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	
	2007	2008
UNISTEP ACADEMIC LITERACY PROGRAMS		
Day / Evening	155	240
Part-time Day	-	51
Total Workshop Attendances	155	291

Note: The dash symbol in the above table indicates that the respective workshop was not offered in that particular year.

Students Step into University Study

Transition to university study is not an easy time for most first-year students and it can be even more of a challenge if students do not have a family history of university study.

Last February approximately 250 students from four UWS campuses participated in the UWS UniStep (Literacy) program, which is facilitated by the Student Learning Unit. The program is a pre-semester course designed to enable students to make an easier transition to university by simulating a unit of study.

The program focuses on developing the student's academic literacy and study skills which are crucial for their success and retention at university. This in turn

contributes to increasing the student's morale once their preparedness for higher education studies is enhanced.

... The course has been offered for the past few years to first-year students or students who are articulating from TAFE into second year subjects at UWS. A shorter version of this course is being planned for students commencing at UWS in the Spring semester.

A follow up evaluation from the students who participated in the program in 2005 showed that after the first semester, only one of 115 students had withdrawn from university. A benchmarking forum held at UWS in October 2007 saw colleagues from other Australian universities commend the program.

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Academic Preparation Program

Academic Preparation (AcPrep) is a short two-day program offered to new undergraduates who want to receive a broad introduction to university culture and to expectations of assignment writing at UWS. Other AcPrep programs are also available to suit part-time, international, and postgraduate students.

AcPrep programs run at the beginning of each semester and prior to 2008 were jointly coordinated by the Student Learning Unit, and Counselling and Disability Services, with Careers & Cooperative Education entering this collaboration in 2007. After the organisational change in 2008, and SLU's subsequent shift from Student Support Services, the coordination of AcPrep became the responsibility of the Student Learning Unit, with Counselling, Disabilities and Careers staff providing support through guest modules.

Two-day Program 2007 / 2008

AcPrep's two-day program aims to introduce students to expectations at university, approaches to study and to time management, assignment preparation, academic writing and career information. Although attendances were slightly higher in 2008 compared with those in 2007 – 206 and 181 respectively (see also **Table 10** on next page), both totals were significantly lower than the previous year's – 342.

These lower attendance figures have been attributed to the introduction of online enrolments for the 2007 Autumn Session intake, for whom most of the information about the program was only available online. As such, in 2007 / 2008, the two-day program was only offered at four campuses – Penrith, Parramatta, Bankstown and Campbelltown; in previous years it was offered at five.

The 2007 and 2008 evaluations from students who attended the programs, and who were mostly mature-aged students enrolled in either a Nursing or Arts course, indicated that the most useful aspects were the Writing Assignments, Forms of Assessments, and Time Management modules, followed by the Student Panel and Careers Advice sessions. Other positive responses about the program

included offering attendees the opportunity to make informal contact / network with other new students, and to identify skills that they thought they had developed at AcPrep.

Part-time Program 2007 / 2008

Part-time AcPrep is a much shorter program than the Two-day one. It usually runs for five hours on a Saturday, and introduces new part-time students to such program topics as: Adapting to University, Careers Advice, Time Management, Assignment Preparation, and Exams and Tutorials. In 2007, as in previous years, the part-time program was available on two campuses – Penrith and Parramatta. In 2008, however, it was only offered at Parramatta campus; this was due to insufficient registrations at Penrith.

Despite the small numbers attending the 2007 / 2008 part-time AcPrep programs (see **Table 10** for details), evaluations from these students, who were mostly mature-aged and enrolled in Nursing, Arts or Business courses, indicated that overall they found the sessions useful. They also valued the opportunity to network with other new students, and to learn from more senior students.

Postgraduate Program 2008

In 2008, the SLU coordination of Academic Preparation programs was extended to include one for postgraduate students. Postgraduate AcPrep was held at Parramatta campus, and had 13 attendees, most of whom were enrolled in a Master of Nursing or Master of Public Health course.

The program included sessions on:

- Academic writing
- Careers information
- Study Skills

Whilst ratings for each of the sessions indicated that most students found them useful, the skills students believed they had developed from the program included: preparation for

postgraduate study; acknowledging sources of information; essay writing; time management; and developing techniques for studying, accessing information, dealing with stress, and building confidence.

Conclusion

Even though all Academic Preparation programs – two-day, part-time and postgraduate – experienced lower attendances than in previous years, they did give attending new students the opportunity to enhance their first year experience at UWS.

Table 10: Academic Preparation program attendances 2007 / 2008

	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	
	2007	2008
ACADEMIC PREPARATION COURSES		
Two-day	181	206
Part-time	37	15
International	111	61
Postgraduate	60	13
International Postgraduate	-	37
Total AcPrep Attendances	389	332

Note: The dash symbol in the above table indicates that the respective program was not offered in that particular year.

Workshop programs

The Student Learning Unit offers a broad range of academic literacy, mathematics and post-graduate workshop programs, for which students can self-select via an online registration system to attend. The workshops range from one-hour introductory sessions to full day intensive ones or a series that continues over several weeks of a semester. Exit feedback from those attending SLU workshops consistently shows a high level of student satisfaction.

Academic Literacy Workshops

Academic literacy workshops are designed to help students become more familiar with expectations of writing in higher education, as well as academic genres that UWS students typically encounter during their studies.

Whilst most workshops run during the week, either in the daytime or evening, some take place on Saturday. Typically, these are presented in two-hour timeslots, with Essay Writing

offered for six hours (on Saturday).

2007 saw an increase in student attendance at literacy workshops from the previous year. This was due to a change in the way SLU promoted them – they were packaged as part of the transition to university program and accordingly were included in the program's brochure and general advertising. Attendances at SLU's 2007 / 2008 academic literacy workshops are detailed in **Table11** (on next page).

Table 11: Academic Literacy workshop attendances for 2007 / 2008

NUMBER OF STUDENTS ATTENDING SLU WORKSHOPS				
	2007		2008	
	AUTUMN	SPRING	AUTUMN	SPRING
GENERIC WORKSHOPS				
Essay Writing	217	177	140	96
Referencing	96	135	95	52
Essay Structure	72	164	88	13
Critical Analysis	94	110	52	36
Developing Your Writing	67	61	99	49
Academic Writing Style	86	-	55	66
Assignment Preparation	100	-	54	12
Spoken English	-	-	-	92
Report Writing	5	71	-	-
Tutorial Presentations	33	-	17	6
Dealing with Feedback on Assignments	5	-	-	-
TARGETED WORKSHOPS				
Writing Skills – Accountancy	-	61	-	20
Essay Writing – Arts	-	-	-	37
Developing Your Writing Skills – International Students	3	32	-	-
Developing Your Writing – Nursing	-	15	-	-
Oral Communication – Nursing	-	-	-	31
Total Workshop Attendances	778	826	600	510

Note: The dash symbol in the above table indicates that the respective workshop was not offered in that particular year.

LITERACY WORKSHOPS 2007

In 2007, SLU offered a broad range of workshops on most campuses, including two subject specific ones introduced for the first time in Spring Session of this year. These targeted workshops were requested by the Schools of Nursing and Accountancy.

Although the total attendance for the 2007 workshops was 1,604, this does not necessarily reflect the actual number of students, as some attended more than one type of workshop.

From a telephone survey that SLU undertook to evaluate the usefulness of the 2007 transi-

tion programs and literacy workshops, the 15 students interviewed rated the usefulness of the workshop/s they attended to the assignment writing in their course as very high (4.25 / 4.5).

While most students interviewed said that they were satisfied with workshop content, several indicated that timetabling was a problem, whereby classes were regularly scheduled at the same time every week, and that individual consultation time should be incorporated into all workshops; others made suggestions for new workshops – Researching Skills and Report Writing.

"I really appreciate the classes. In my high school and old university they never taught this stuff and I really struggled with it. These sorts of courses are what I really appreciate about transferring to UWS.

A lot of people don't know what critical analysis is. The workshops clarified this for me and it's made me more confident in believing I can write to a university standard now."

UWS student

LITERACY WORKSHOPS 2008

SLU offered fewer workshops in 2008 than in 2007 – a consequence of the organisational change with its shift in focus and reduction of staff. Furthermore, their availability to students was limited to the four main campuses – Penrith, Parramatta, Bankstown and Campbelltown; at Blacktown campus, workshops were discontinued.

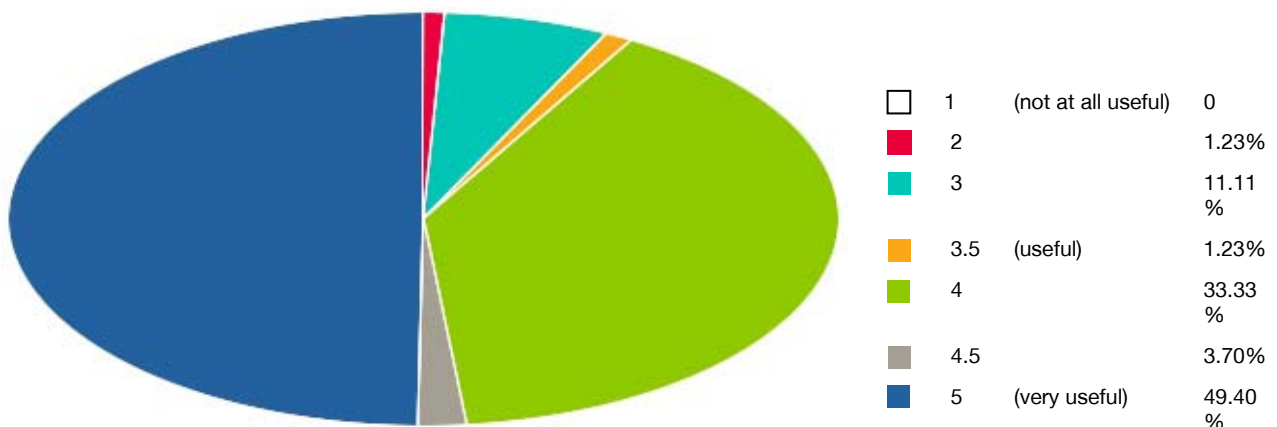
This reduction in workshops reflects the lower student attendance figures of 1,110 compared with those in 2007 (see **Table 11** on page 34).

In Spring Session, while two targeted workshops were developed at the request of the

School of Nursing and the College of Arts, less Accountancy workshops were offered compared with the previous year – in 2008, they ran for two weeks of the semester rather than weekly throughout the semester, as in Spring 2007. This reduction accounts for the drop in student attendances shown in Table 11.

Student evaluations (n = 100) about the usefulness of Essay Writing workshops revealed that, on a Likert scale of 1 – 5 (1: not at all useful; 5: very useful), 86% of respondents rated these workshops at the top end of the scale (4 / 5). **Figure 2** presents these student ratings in more detail.

Figure 2: Student rating for usefulness of Essay Writing workshops



PILOT ACADEMIC LITERACY PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS WITH HUMANITARIAN STATUS

In 2008, SLU conducted a pilot academic literacy program for students with humanitarian status. This program involved initial informal discussions with students to identify their individual academic literacy needs followed by workshop sessions.

Of the 27 students identified as possible candidates for this program, only three students took part. The others who were able to be

eight indicated that they were doing well, and five thought that they might need help at a later time. All, however, expressed their appreciation of SLU taking the initiative to assist them.

The one and a half hour sessions aimed to develop the participating students' essay writing and note taking skills, and exam taking strategies. Feedback from these three students was positive as they felt that had improved their confidence and skills in academic literacy.

contacted, declined for two main reasons –

Mathematics Workshops

Mathematics lecturers at the Student Learning Unit provide regular unit-specific support workshops during Autumn and Spring Sessions across all campuses for students who need to develop their numeracy, algebra, statistics, trigonometry, and calculus skills and concepts.

These workshops aim to develop students' confidence, independence, learning skills, mathematical concepts and understanding in the mathematically based unit they are studying.

apportion more workload to the teaching of the new Mathematical Reasoning unit – a joint collaboration with the School of Computing and Mathematics.

In 2007 / 2008, additional Maths support was provided in thirteen different units (for a detailed list of these units see **Table 12** and the Nursing Numeracy **Table 1**). In most cases, the unit for which students sought additional support was the first mathematics they had encountered at a university level.

"[We were] able to form support groups with fellow students to help each other out."

UWS student

During 2007 / 2008, more than 2,300 students attended unit-specific workshops (see attendances figures in **Table 12** on next page, and those for Nursing Numeracy in **Table 1** on page 9). In 2007, approximately 600 students attended at least one of these workshops. In 2008, only 400 students accessed them. This was because fewer workshops were offered to allow the SLU mathematics lecturers to

Furthermore, surveying of students (n = 60) revealed that 59% of students attending workshops had not previously studied mathematics for at least two years, and 40% stated they had previously studied mathematics only at an introductory level, such as HSC General Mathematics. As a result, these students can experience considerable challenges with university mathematics.

Table 12: Mathematics workshop attendances for 2007 / 2008

	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	
	2007	2008
MATHEMATICS WORKSHOPS		
Biomechanics & Kinesiology (400139)	18	13
Concepts of Maths (200189)	1	8
Discrete Maths	-	12
Fundamentals of Mathematics (200191)	294	147
Fundamentals of Mechanics (300463)	12	-
Mathematics for Business (200031)	13	-
Mathematical Reasoning: Examination Review	-	6
Maths for Engineers 1	120	119
Maths for Engineers 2	13	0
STATISTICS WORKSHOPS		
Quantitative Research (400148)	122	69
Quantitative Techniques (200182)	-	31
Statistics for Business (200032) – Day	257	194
Statistics for Business (200032) – Evening	166	4
Statistics for Science	42	5
Statistics for Biometry (200263)	12	-
Statistics for Experimental Design & Analysis	66	-
Statistics: Data Exploration & Summary Statistics	-	11
Statistics: Examination Review	-	12
Statistics: Probability Review	-	14
Statistics: Regression	-	7
Statistics: Review & Introduction to Hypothesis Testing	-	24
Statistics: Sampling Distributions & Estimation	-	16
Statistics: Tests	-	7
Total Workshop Attendances	1,136	699

Note: The dash symbol in the above table indicates that the respective workshop was not offered in that particular year.

Typically, students have reported that what drives them to seek extra support with mathematics is their feelings of frustration and lack of confidence and understanding. By attending support workshops, they often report that such feelings are overcome and replaced with ones of empowerment and success.

When evaluating the quality of the support given by the maths support lecturers, students judge this to be very high (4.5). Also, they believe

increased confidence and performance can be gained by attending workshops (3.5).

These unit-specific support workshops provide students with much needed additional opportunities to study, learn, practice, discuss and review the content of the mathematics they are studying in a particular unit. Moreover they offer many students an important opportunity to overcome their learning problems and succeed in mathematics at university.

"I study more often as I understand most of the concepts and I'm not struggling as much."

UWS student

Postgraduate Workshops

The Student Learning Unit offers students and supervisors support for the development of advanced academic literacy skills and research writing. This support includes online orientation programs and workshops offered to higher degree research (HDR) students by the Office of Research Services (ORS), and workshops within UWS credit courses.

ORS / SLU WORKSHOP PROGRAMS

In 2008, a partnership between the Student Learning Unit and the Office of Research Services contributed to SLU's adaptation, implementation and delivery of the online orientation program *Postgraduate Essentials* (see page 23 for more details).

ORS support also generated the inaugural three-day residential Research Candidate Writing Retreat for doctoral students in the middle and final stages of candidature (see AroundUWS article on next page).

With sponsorship from the ORS, 2007 and 2008 saw the SLU extending its support for postgraduates through more workshop programs across a greater number of campuses. This ongoing support included two writing groups – Thesis Writing Circles (TWC) and Research Writing Circle Continuers (RWCC), which expanded from three groups on two campuses in 2007, to six groups on four campuses in 2008.

"I just wanted to say how I have benefited from attending the TWC and RWCC . . . I feel I have really improved . . .

[M]y supervisor has also commented, in fact, she said it was important for me to continue to attend so I can continue to progress . . ."

UWS HDR candidate

SLU WORKSHOPS WITHIN CREDIT COURSES

In 2008, the Student Learning Unit offered further research writing support to academics and postgraduates, including:

- Nine, three-hour research writing workshops for College of Business academics and research students
- Several workshops and support for a research candidates' writing retreat sponsored by the Centre for Industry and Innovation Studies in the College of Business
- A four-week writing group program for Masters (Honours) students designed to improve honours students' skills in thesis writing.

Inaugural UWS Higher Degree Research Candidature Writing Retreat

UWS recently offered its first three day residential writing retreat for higher degree research candidates to support their doctoral writing.

Sponsored by the Office of Research Services, 23 students attended the retreat at the Hawkesbury Conference Centre, and were welcomed with presentations from Professor Lesley Wilkes, Dean of Research Services and Dr Jane Hobson, Manager, Research Quality, Policy and Planning.

The Student Learning Unit provided the writing expertise for the event. Dr Claire

Aitchison facilitated the retreat, and Marie Fellbaum-Korpi, Roz Martins, Paul Parker and Dai Fei Yang provided immediate and expert feedback on the students' research writing.

... Participant evaluations were overwhelmingly enthusiastic - candidates cited the benefits of the program for productivity and self-confidence having achieved or bettered their writing objectives. Candidates left feeling motivated and inspired to continue their thesis writing.

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Online Resource Development

The Student Learning Unit provides an extensive range of online learning resources to develop students' academic language and learning skills as well as their transition to university. These websites that support student learning include:

IMPROVE YOUR MATHS

Improve Your Maths is an online learning website that provides support in mathematics to suit the diverse needs of students across many UWS degree courses requiring mathematics / statistics. Currently, *Improve your Maths* has more than 300 active pages of mathematical content, including fractions, decimals, statistics, indices, algebra, calculus, trigonometry, and probability.

In 2007, the yearly usage for this website was 1083 user sessions. In 2008, this usage increased markedly to 5301 user sessions, and the average length of time spent on the site by users doubled compared with the previous year.

POSTGRADUATE COURSEWORK: ACADEMIC WRITING SKILLS

Academic Writing Skills for postgraduates contains self-paced learning modules that are designed to help Masters by coursework students with both the transition to postgraduate work, and the development of key academic writing skills required at this level of study. These modules include survival strategies, academic conventions, approaches to academic writing, essay structure, and annotated sample essays.

WRITING IN HEALTH SCIENCES

Writing in Health Sciences is an online learning program that introduces Nursing students to the steps and stages of the essay writing process. The subject specific materials are designed to make the learning experience more relevant for students across the many degree courses in Health Sciences.

APA REFERENCING

APA Referencing is an online workshop that aims to develop students' skills in acknowledging sources using the American Psychological Association (APA) referencing system. Through a series of interactive modules, this website helps students gain basic skills in referencing and strategies to avoid accidental plagiarism.

CRITICAL THINKING

Critical Thinking in Assignment Writing is an online learning resource that explores ways in which students can take a critical approach to their work. It includes self-contained learning modules that aim to develop a student's capacity to work with complex ideas. It also provides a book of selected student assignments considered to be good examples of critical writing by lecturers in a range of disciplines.

Given that student visits to SLU's range of Online Learning sites are significant and regular – as indicated by online registration data – these resources are often updated to maintain relevance for students. Such updates involve modifications to the website design and / or interfaces, such as the embedding of sound and video files to better engage students in certain learning activities.

In 2007 / 2008, four additional websites, largely tailored for specific cohorts of students, were added to this wide range of SLU learning resources, and are listed below.

2007

HIGHER DEGREE
RESEARCH:
RESOURCES FOR
CANDIDATES

Higher Degree Research: Resources for Candidates is a website that is designed to support research higher degree candidates and their supervisors through all stages of candidature. This comprehensive website contains a set of resources that candidates can work through at their own pace; offers information about additional programs available in UWS Research Centres, UWS Research Groups and Schools which candidates are encouraged to make use of; and includes lists of relevant books and links to other websites.

LANGUAGE AND
LEARNING LINKS

Language and Learning Links (L&LL) is a portal with annotated links to a selection of exemplary online academic writing and study skills guides and interactive tutorials, developed by language and learning units around Australia. This valuable online resource has over 100 links to key areas of academic reading and writing, assignment preparation, essay and report writing, literature and critical reviews, postgraduate writing, grammar, oral presentations, and study skills.

Language and Learning Links is also a gateway to SLU's own academic skills guide – *UniStep*. This extensive resource aims to equip students with the necessary skills and strategies required for university study.

Since March 2007, student registrations to this website have amounted to 2,296.

"Many thanks . . . had a good mooch around the [L&LL] site!!!
It's really great – well done!

Have linked it to my post graduate unit and will ensure it gets linked to the [Bachelor of Nursing] sites too - wonderful - will let you have some feedback from the students. . ."

Lecturer, School of Nursing & Midwifery

**EDUCATION
TECHNOLOGY
PREPARATION**

Education Technology Preparation (ETP) is an online learning program that provides new students with an opportunity to become familiar with the IT environment at UWS. This program focuses on developing the basic computer literacy skills students need to participate fully in their courses, such as:

- Accessing information about their units on UWS
- Completing online components of their units
- Using the various facilities and online services / study resources available to them.

**IMPROVE YOUR
NURSING NUMERACY**

Improve Your Nursing Numeracy is a UWS website that provides Nursing students with a range of resources to help them refresh and develop the mathematical skills needed for medical calculations – multiplying, dividing, fractions, decimals and metric measurement. Importantly, these resources allow student nurses to apply these skills in a nursing context; for example, reading scales on syringes.

Scholarly Involvements

In 2007 / 2008, SLU staff were involved in developing community engagement projects, receiving awards and grants, researching and presenting papers at conferences both nationally (Adelaide, Alice Springs, Canberra, Hobart, Melbourne, Perth) and internationally (China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, New Zealand, Tenerife, UK, USA, and Vietnam). These papers, which report on various aspects of learning and teaching, were co-authored by colleagues from UWS (within the unit and / or other departments) as well as those from other institutions. In addition, several staff members have extended their scholarly publications to authoring / co-authoring books or contributing chapters to books.

Community Engagement

Community engagement interactions enrich and expand the learning and discovery functions of the institution while also enhancing community capacity, conditions and opportunities. The work is responsive to community-identified needs and opportunities in ways that are appropriate to the University's mission.

In 2007 / 2008, SLU teaching on community engagement programs was formally requested by various Schools, Centres or Divisional Units to provide a particular need that could best be met by SLU staff expertise. These programs were not limited to just institutional engagement; indeed, they extended to national and international engagement as well.

Research and Doctoral Writing Programs

In 2008, the Student Learning Unit was invited to run workshops on supporting research writing and giving feedback on doctoral writing. These workshops were delivered institutionally at the University of Western Sydney College of Business and UWS supervisor forums; nationally at the University of Newcastle, the University of Western Australia, Murdoch University; and internationally at Hong Kong University,

Coventry University, Open University Milton Keynes, University of Strathclyde and London Metropolitan University.

Communicating Science Research Writing Program

Due to consistently high participant satisfaction, SLU was again invited in 2007 and 2008 to contribute expertise in English for Academic Purposes to offshore teaching consultancies

by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR). Working with staff from the Centre for Plant and Food Science (CPFS) and Teaching Development Unit (TDU), a series of scientific writing workshops were delivered to 19 partner scientists in Vietnam (Vung Tau in September and October 2007) and 22 in Indonesia (Bogor in August 2008 and Makassar in October 2008). These twelve-day intensive programs assisted the developing world scientists to plan, draft and write an English medium journal article, report, proposal or thesis chapter related to their sponsored research.

Academic Literacy Seminars in China

In 2008, the Student Learning Unit was invited to present academic literacy seminars by a major university in China – the South China Normal University (SCNU). The aim of the seminars – entitled "Academic literacy: Experience of first year overseas students studying in Australia" and "Systemic Functional Linguistics: A focus on research and publications" – is to familiarise these SCNU students with appropriate academic literacy skills required to study at an Australian university. This collaborative project between the SLU and SCNU's School of Foreign Studies will take place in 2009.

Unilearn

Unilearn is an active LISTSERVE (electronic discussion list) which provides support and discussion opportunities to more than 600 teaching staff involved in academic literacy and maths teaching across universities primarily in Australia and New Zealand. The SLU is responsible for managing Unilearn.

During 2007 / 2008, Unilearn was also the platform from which promotion for academic language and learning matters took place, including professional development events, networking opportunities, and information for the Association of Academic Language and Learning (AALL).

Subscribers to Unilearn are not only from Australia and New Zealand, but are also from Canada, South Africa, Zambia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Language and Learning Contributions

In 2007 / 2008, SLU lecturers contributed to a number of language and learning community projects and fora that promote scholarly teaching in a tertiary education setting. A selection of these scholarly contributions is listed on the subsequent pages.

Selected Language and Learning Contributions

EVENT	ROLE
2008	
Association for Academic Language and Learning (AALL) NSW/ACT Professional Development Day – SLU presented <i>Learning Guides at UWS</i> , University of New South Wales, Sydney	Co-Presenters
AALL Discussion Paper on the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations' (DEEWR) <i>Good Practice Principles for English language proficiency for international students in Australian universities</i>	Contributors
Australian National University Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies (RSPAS) Seminars on <i>Definiteness structures</i> and <i>Definiteness and referentiality in interlanguage</i>	Presenter
Coventry University Centre for Academic Writing – SLU presented <i>Supporting the writing of postgraduate students</i> , Coventry	Presenter
Higher Education Research & Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA) Conference on <i>Engaging communities</i> , New Zealand	Presenter
Hong Kong University – SLU presented <i>The development of scholarly writing skills via the pedagogy of writing groups</i> , Hong Kong	Presenter
Intercultural Clinical Communication in Health Professional Education 3 rd Interdisciplinary Symposium on <i>Current practices and future directions</i> , University of Melbourne, Melbourne	Presenter
NSW/ACT AALL Forum on <i>Reflective Practice in Academic Language and Learning</i> , University of Canberra	Presenter
Open University Seminar – SLU presented <i>Pedagogical approaches for the support of doctoral students</i> , Milton Keynes	Presenter
UWS Aboriginal Rural Education Program – SLU presented <i>Learning Guides and learning resources & experiences</i>	Co-Presenters
UWS College of Arts / College of Business Learning & Teaching Forum – SLU presented <i>Improving practices in academic literacy: Assessment and Learning Guides</i> , Parramatta Campus	Presenter
UWS College of Health and Science Assessment Workshop on <i>Learning Guides and academic literacy</i> , Rydges Hotel, Campbelltown	Presenter

EVENT	ROLE
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2008 (continued)

UWS College of Health and Science Teaching Fellows – SLU presented <i>Reflective journals</i>	Presenter
UWS College of Health and Science Forum for the Assessment Renewal Taskforce and First Year Experience Group – SLU presented <i>The student perspective on academic writing</i> , Penrith Campus	Presenter
USW Learning and Teaching Week – SLU presented <i>How writing groups can help doctoral students write better</i> , Parramatta Campus	Presenter
USW Learning and Teaching Week – SLU presented <i>Enhancing students' mathematical thinking skills</i> , Penrith Campus	Presenter
USW Learning and Teaching Week – SLU presented <i>PASS: A peer supported pathway to student success</i> , Penrith Campus	Presenter
UWS Office of Research Services Inaugural Higher Degree Research Candidature Writing Retreat, Hawkesbury Conference Centre	Coordinator and Co-Facilitators
UWS School of Law Learning and Teaching Retreat on <i>Learning Guides: What are they? What can they do? What do they look like?</i> Manly Pacific Hotel	Presenter
UWS School of Natural Sciences Learning and Teaching Retreat – SLU presented <i>Learning Guides to develop student writing</i> , Windsor	Presenter
UWS Teaching Development Unit and Office of Research Services Research Supervisors Forum – SLU presented <i>Giving feedback on research writing</i>	Presenter

2007

AALL Selection Committee for Award of the John Grierson Scholarship	Member
AALL / Student Learning Unit National Forum Day on <i>Transition to uni-iversity programs</i> , Parramatta Campus (see AroundUWS article page 50)	Hosts
Australian National University Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies (RSPAS) Seminars on <i>Types of definiteness</i>	Presenter
Carrick Institute Discipline-Based Development Forum on <i>Trans, multi and inter-disciplinary learning, teaching and curriculum design</i> , Hobart	UWS Representative

EVENT	ROLE
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2007 (continued)

International Education Association of Australia (IEAA) <i>National Symposium English Language Competence of International Students</i> , Sydney	UWS Representative
Murdoch University – SLU lecture on <i>Making writing work for women postgraduates in times of 'fast supervision' and 'hyper-efficient candidature'</i> , Western Australia	Guest Lecturer
University of Newcastle – SLU lecture on <i>You, your supervisor and your writing</i> , Central Coast	Guest Lecturer
University of Technology Sydney – SLU lecture on <i>Writing about data</i>	Guest Lecturer
University of Western Australia – SLU lecture on <i>Supporting supervision for writing: A feedback focussed workshop for supervisors</i> , Perth	Guest Lecturer
UWS College of Arts Conference on <i>Issues surrounding interdisciplinarity, partnership, and engagement</i> , Bankstown Campus	Presenter
UWS Education Committee	Member
UWS Learning and Teaching Action Plan (LTAP) Team Project to investigate the writing experiences of research students in the College of Health Science	Team Member

Student Learning Unit Hosts National Forum Day

Representatives from Australian universities attended a National Forum Day hosted by the UWS Student Learning Unit (SLU) at the Parramatta campus.

The forum was organised to discuss 'Transition to University Programs' which are designed to support students adjusting to university life, and was an opportunity to discuss institutional best practices and the emerging issues and needs of future students.

The transition team, comprising Helen Farrell, Lyn Armstrong, Erst Carmichael, Neera Handa and Clare Power, within the

SLU at UWS had earlier this year investigated best practices associated with transition courses in Australian universities.

This investigation was part of a benchmarking project supported by a grant from the Association of Academic Language and Learning, and the findings were made public at the forum.

It is hoped that the synergies created among participants on the day may establish firmer collaborative working relationships across the university sector, to further enrich the learning experience of beginning university students.

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Awards and Grants

2007 and 2008 saw several Student Learning Unit staff rewarded for their contributions to the language and learning community and successful in their grant applications to promote scholarly teaching in tertiary education.

ALTC Citations

In 2008, lecturers from the Student Learning Unit received two of the seven Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) citations awarded to UWS (see AroundUWS article below). These awards are granted to those who have made a significant contribution to the quality of student learning in a specific area of responsibility over a sustained period.

One citation, entitled "Towards successful thesis writing through the pedagogy of re-

search writing groups," was awarded to a Student Learning Unit literacy lecturer for her work on using pedagogies to develop research writing.

The other, "Bridging the gap: Evidence-based teaching and learning strategies to develop the numeracy skills in undergraduate Nursing students required for demonstrating drug calculation competency," was a team citation awarded to three maths lecturers from SLU and two lecturers from the School of Nursing.

Staff Recognised for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning

Eleven UWS academic staff members have been recognised for 'Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning' in this year's Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) Awards . . .

The award winners are as follows:

Dr Claire Aitchison – Student Learning Unit
For a university-wide program on successful thesis writing through the pedagogy of research writing groups . . .

Mr John Nicholls, Ms Lyn Stewart, Mrs

Roslyn Gillies, Ms Lyn Armstrong and Ms Mary Goldsmith - Student Learning Unit and School of Nursing and Midwifery for Bridging the Gap: Evidence-based teaching and learning strategies to develop the numeracy skills in undergraduate nursing students required for demonstrating drug calculation competency . . .

The ALTC . . . promotes excellence in higher education by recognising, rewarding and supporting outstanding teaching and practice . . .

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Doctoral Thesis Awards

In 2008, SLU lecturer, Dr Claire Aitchison, received recognition for her outstanding doctoral thesis *Mothers and school choice: Effects on the home front* with an Institute for Educational Research (IER), New South Wales Doctoral Thesis Award, and an Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) Special Commendation for Research in Education.

Grant Applications

During 2007 and 2008, Student Learning Unit secured several grant applications for projects that enhanced student learning and promoted scholarly teaching at university. A selection of these successful applications follows.

ALTC GRANT APPLICATION 2008

In 2008, a cross divisional Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) application was submitted for a project entitled "Enhancing the student experience: Transition from Vocational Education & Training (VET) to Higher Education." This project builds on earlier research conducted by two lecturers from SLU in collaboration with two researchers from the former Continuity and Change: Educational Transitions (CCET) research concentration within the School of Education.

UWS STUDENT EQUITY GRANT SCHEME APPLICATIONS 2008

Funding through the UWS Student Equity Grant Scheme was approved for two SLU project proposals – "Supporting the first year student experience: Education Technology Preparation

(ETP) at UWS" and "Pilot postgraduate academic preparation program online."

The ETP project – co-developed by the Student Learning Unit, Teaching Development Unit, Library and Information Technology Services – aimed to develop new students' basic computer skills to participate fully in their course through accessing online information about their units on UWS and completing online components of their units, and to help students to access the various facilities and online services available to them.

The online postgraduate academic preparation program was a collaborative project between staff from the Student Learning Unit, Counselling Services and Careers & Cooperative Education to create a UWS website for new postgraduate students. This site aimed to provide useful information about study skills, academic writing at postgraduate level, and careers.

AALL FUNDED TRANSITION BENCHMARKING PROJECT 2007

The Student Learning Unit's academic transition team used funding from the Association for Academic Language and Learning (AALL) to benchmark Academic Literacy and Mathematics Transition programs across the Australian university sector. The project had two main aims:

1. To enrich learning and the teaching of transition programs at each of the participating universities
2. To establish firmer collaborative working relationships across the AALL network.

Research Publications

In 2007 / 2008, SLU staff contributed to the language and learning community through their research projects, the papers from which were authored / co-authored by colleagues within the university, as well as those from other institutions. These papers have been published (or submitted for publication) in academic journals and books, or presented at conferences both nationally and internationally. A selection of these publications is listed below and on subsequent pages.

Papers

Refereed papers published or submitted

Aitchison, C. (submitted). Writing groups for doctoral education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 34(8).

Catterall, J. (2008). Beyond the classroom: The effect of institutional factors on scholarly teaching and learning innovations. *Studies in Learning Evaluation, Innovation and Development (SLEID)*, 5(3), 55-66.

Dearlove, J., Farrell, H., Handa, N., & Pastore, C. (2007). The evolution of peer mentoring at the University of Western Sydney. *Journal of Australian & New Zealand Student Services Association*, (29), 21-35.

Fellbaum Korpi, M. (2008). LFG architecture, semantic definiteness structures, and nonverbal syntactic constructions. In M. Butt & T. H. King (Eds.), *Proceedings of the Lexical-Functional Grammar (LFG)08 Conference*. Stanford, California: CSLI Publications.

Handa, N. & Carmichael, E. (2007). What has Shakespeare got to do with sustainability? Educating minds while teaching. *International Journal of Environmental, Cultural, Economic and Social Sustainability*, 3(4), 29-38.

Morris, M., Porter, A., & Griffiths, D. (2007). Using the end to justify the means: Enabling student learning of statistics. *International Journal of Learning*, 13(10), 157-168.

Power, C., Carmichael, E., & Goldsmith R. (2007). Parrot poo on the windscreen: Metaphor in academic skills learning. *Journal of Academic Language and Learning*, 1(1), A18-A32.

Books

Aitchison, C., Kamler, B., & Lee, A. (Eds.). (forthcoming). *Publishing pedagogies for the doctorate and beyond*. London: Routledge.

Gollin, S. M., & Hall, D. R. (2008). *Language for Specific Purposes*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Yang, D. (forthcoming). *Representing experience: The co-articulation of verbiage and image in multimodal text*. London: Equinox Publishing.

Book chapters

Aitchison, C. (forthcoming). Learning together to publish: Writing group pedagogies for doctoral publishing. In C. Aitchison, B. Kamler, & A. Lee. (Eds.), *Publishing Pedagogies for the Doctorate and Beyond*. London: Routledge.

Aitchison, C. (forthcoming). Research writing groups and successful thesis writing. In J. Higgs, D. Horsfall, & S. Grace (Eds.), *Writing Qualitative Research on Practice*. Amsterdam: Sense Publishers.

Aitchison, C., & Lee, A. (forthcoming). Writing in, writing out: Doctoral writing as peer work. In P. Thompson & M. Walker (Eds.), *The Routledge doctoral student's companion: Getting to grips with research in education and the social sciences*. London: Routledge.

Goodyear, P., & Yang, D. F. (2008). Patterns and pattern languages: Supporting understanding and performance in educational design. In L. Lockyer, S. Bennett, S. Agostinho, & B. Harper (Eds.), *Handbook of research on learning design and learning objectives: Issues, applications and technology*. Pennsylvania: IGI Global.

Lee, A., & Aitchison, C. (forthcoming). Working with tensions: writing the dissertation and writing for publication. In T. Hatcher & T. Rocco (Eds.), *Demystifying the Writing and Publishing Process: A guide for emerging scholars*. New York: Jossey-Bass.

Lee, A., & Aitchison, C. (forthcoming). Writing for the doctorate and beyond. In D. Boud & A. Lee (Eds.), *Changing Practices of Doctoral Education* (pp. 147-164). London: Routledge.

Martins, R. (2007). Changing roles and relationships. In J. Scevak & R. Cantwell (Eds.), *The mature-aged students' guide to university study*. Victoria: ACER.

Martins, R., & Anthony, L. (2007). What if they find out I don't really belong here. In J. Scevak & R. Cantwell (Eds.), *The mature-aged students' guide to university study*. Victoria: ACER.

Parker, P. (forthcoming). From rules to judgment: Exploring the plagiarism threshold in academic writing. In A. Stockdell-Geisler, J. Castner Post, T. Morse, R. Ingalls, & M. Donnelly (Eds.), *Examining plagiarism: Critical discussions for students and teachers*. New Jersey: Hampton Press.

Yang, D. F. (forthcoming). Representing experience: The co-articulation of verbiage and image in multimodal text. In E. Ventola & C. Jones (Eds.), *Field, ideation & experiential representation: From language to multimodality*. London: Equinox Publishing.

Yang, D. F., & Goodyear, P. (forthcoming). Design patterns: A connection between systemic functional linguistics and pattern languages. In P. Goodyear & S. Retalis (Eds.), *E-learning, design patterns and pattern languages*. Rotterdam: SensePublishers.

Presentations

Refereed papers presented at conferences

Bohemia, E., Farrell, H., Power, C., & Salter, C. (2007). Embedding literacy skills in design curriculum. In *Proceedings of the ConnectED 2007 International Conference on Design Education*. Sydney: University of New South Wales.

Catterall, J. (2008). Student writing in higher education. Paper presented at the *University of Western Sydney's 2008 Academic Senate on Language / writing support issues*. Sydney: University of Western Sydney.

Fellbaum Korpi, M. (2007). Argument structure and the need for discourse. In *Proceedings of the 1st International Freelinguistics Conference 2007*. Sydney: The University of Sydney.

Fellbaum Korpi, M. (2008). Linearisation: Nexus of definiteness and topic structures. In *Proceedings of the 2nd International Free Linguistics Conference 2008*. Sydney: The University of Sydney.

Handa, N. (2007). Proving, improving and (dis) approving internationalisation of higher education. In *Proceedings of the Australian Association for Research Education (AARE) 2007 International Education Research Conference – Research impacts: Proving or improving?* Perth: University of Notre Dame.

Power, C., & Parker, P. (2007). Engaging firefighters for higher learning: Integrated academic literacy teaching in a postgraduate program for NSW Fire Brigades Inspector candidates. In *Proceedings of the 30th Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA) Annual Conference 2007: Enhancing Higher Education Theory and Scholarship*. Adelaide.

Zammit, K. & Martins, R. (2007). Learning through community service: Assisting others, learning themselves. In *Proceedings of the 4th Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance (AUCEA) National Conference*. Alice Springs.

Papers and other works presented at conferences

Aitchison, C. (2008). How and why research writing groups work: An Australian story. Paper presented at the *3rd International Santa Barbara Conference on Writing Research: Writing research across borders*. Santa Barbara: University of California.

Aitchison, C. (2008). Learning to write by critiquing: Harnessing the pedagogies of writing groups. Paper presented at the *12th Writing Development in Higher Education Conference 2008*. Glasgow: University of Strathclyde.

Aitchison, C., Behrend, M., & Pinder, J. (2007). Enhancing research candidates' written communication using writing circles. Paper presented for a Roundtable discussion at the *Eighth Biennial National Conference of the Association for Academic Language and Learning (AALL): How do we communicate?* Melbourne: LaTrobe University.

Aitchison, C., & Lee, A. (2007). New agendas for doctoral writing. Paper presented at the *Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) 2007 International Educational Research Conference*. Fremantle, Western Australia.

Aitchison, C., & Lee, A. (2007). Writing groups for doctoral students. Workshop presented at the *30th Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA) Annual Conference 2007: Enhancing higher education theory and scholarship*. Adelaide.

Papers and other works presented at conferences (continued)

Blackmore, J., Griffith, A., Aitchison, C., & Andre-Bechely, L. (2007). Families, education and school choice. Paper presented at the *Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) 2007 International Educational Research Conference*. Fremantle, Western Australia.

Brudvik, O., & Yang, D. F. (2007). Digital culture and new learning. Roundtable discussion at the *2007 Communities and Change Research Festival: CoCo Learning Technology Research Symposium*. Sydney: University of Sydney.

Carmichael, E., Smith, A., & Hall Pullin, L. (2008). Snowball effect: Improving international students' communication skills for professional practice. E-Poster presented at the *3rd Intercultural Clinical Communication in Health Professional Education Symposium*. Melbourne: University of Melbourne.

Catterall, J. (2007). Scholarly teaching innovations unravel: Can they be sustained? In *Proceedings from the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning (ISSOTL) 4th Annual Conference: Locating learning: Integrative dimensions of the scholarship of teaching and learning*. Sydney: University of New South Wales.

Farrell, H., Armstrong, L., Carmichael, E., Handa, N., & Power, C. (2007). Benchmarking of university transition programs. Paper presented at the *Eighth Biennial National Conference of the Association for Academic Language and Learning (AALL)*. La Trobe University: Melbourne.

Fellbaum Korpi, M. (2007). The development of definiteness/specificity structures in interlanguage. Paper presented at the *2007 Annual Conference of the Australian Linguistic Society Workshop – Definiteness and Referentiality: Theory and Description*. Adelaide: University of Adelaide.

Handa, N., & Farrell, H. (2007). The painful pleasure of communicating with faculty partners. Roundtable discussion at the *Eighth Biennial National Conference of the Association for Academic Language and Learning (AALL): How do we communicate?* Melbourne: LaTrobe University.

Morris, M. (2007). Alignment: Leading a horse to water and encouraging it to drink. Paper presented at the *2007 Academic Integrity Symposium*. Wollongong: University of Wollongong.

Morris, M., Porter, A., & Griffiths, D. (2007). Signposting learning: Using defined learning outcomes to facilitate alignment of teaching, learning and assessment. Paper presented at the *Re-engineering Assessment Practices 2007 International Online Conference: Assessment Design for Learner Responsibility*. Glasgow: University of Strathclyde.

Parker, P. (2007). Starting out on the 'periphery': Attitudes of young Vietnamese agricultural researchers to the role of English as an International Language of Science. Paper presented at the *First Conference on Publishing and Presenting Research Internationally: Issues for Speakers of English as an Additional Language (PPRI/ISEAL)*. Tenerife.

Ross, P., Aitchison, C., Catterall, J., & Burgin, S. (2008). Research writing in the Sciences: The territory of high emotion. Paper presented at the *31st Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA) Annual Conference 2008: Engaging Communities*. Rotorua, New Zealand.

Yang, D. F. (2007). A pattern-based approach to teacher support. E-Poster presented at the *2007 Communities and Change Research Festival: CoCo Learning Technology Research Symposium*. Sydney: University of Sydney.

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