

Evaluating the impact of drop-in language support for diverse students at an Australian research university

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This paper will discuss a collaborative drop-in model operating at a research university since 2001, where students from all disciplines and levels of study can access English language support tailored to their needs. English language support is an area of increasing importance to the higher education sector in Australia. Drop-in sessions are the primary way that language and literacy skills support is facilitated at the University of Western Australia. Students from all disciplines and levels of study can access advice tailored to their needs. What is unique about this collaborative drop-in service is that it is tailored to the University's broadening model, introduced in 2012, and to the change in student profile. It plays an important role in broadening units with big student cohorts from different disciplines and unit coordinators who don't have time to teach students from increasingly diverse backgrounds how to do their assignments.

The drop-in model is responsive to the rising number of undergraduate and postgraduate students from alternative pathways and diverse cultures, as well as to a degree structure that emphasises generic and transferrable skills (for example, engineering and science students who can produce essays and reflective writing). Across the disciplines, there is a steadily increasing demand for English language support, which is met at daily drop-in sessions in the learning support space by learning advisers who are committed to student learning through empathetic and intuitive teaching.