

Vibrant, innovative embedded academic literacy support for nurses

Abstract: The School of Nursing and Midwifery has developed an innovative embedded support program for undergraduate nursing and midwifery students. This program develops academic literacy and professional communication skills of students for study success and clinical placements, equipping them for their role as future healthcare professionals (Glew et al., 2015). The support program has been recognised as a vibrant intervention by the university and in Australian tertiary education (Arkoudis et al., 2014). The program is strategically situated within the School as an adjunct support to the curriculum. Specialised literacy and language trained staff initially appointed on annual contracts were recently employed as continuing Professional Communication Academic Literacy (PCAL) support advisors. PCAL staff collaborate with the School's Academic Literacy Coordinator to embed targeted literacy support for specific units, and provide workshops tailored to meet student literacy needs in structuring writing for essays, reflection and report genres, engaging with discipline specific reading, and developing effective oral communication skills. Support also includes small group and individual face-to-face student appointments. PCAL staff collaborate with tutors in team teaching activities for Clinical Communication Workshops and core nursing units to develop oral communication and academic writing skills. Since 2010, student uptake of the support has increased each year, and by 2014 (January to October), there were 6811 student visits for PCAL support involving 4112 individual consultations and 2769 workshop visits. In 2014, interviews were conducted and transcribed (n = 29 students) revealing student engagement with this support increased confidence in using literacy and English language skills, facilitated study success and improved retention. References Arkoudis, S., Baik, C., Bexley, E., & Doughney, L. (2014). English language proficiency and employability framework: For Australia higher education institutions. Retrieved 19 January, 2015, from http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/research/teaching/docs/ELP_Employability_Framework_Final_Report_181114.pdf Glew, P.J., Dixon, K., Shannon, J., & Salamonson, Y. (2015). Good practice report: The student literacy and language strategies program. Students Transitions Achievement Retention & Success (STARS) Conference, 1 – 4 July 2015, Melbourne, Australia. Retrieved from <http://www.unistars.org/papers/STARS2015/08D.pdf>

Target Audience: School staff

Take home message: Professional Communication Academic Literacy Support - a positive experience empowering students to communicate professionally.