

**The Learning Centre
Annual Report 2005**



Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN LEARNING CENTRE SERVICES AT UNSW IN 2005	3
THE LEARNING CENTRE'S OPERATIONAL GOALS 2005	4
1. INTRODUCTION	5
2. STAFF	6
3. CENTRALLY-BASED LANGUAGE, COMMUNICATION AND ACADEMIC SKILLS SUPPORT	8
3.1 Writing Consultations	8
3.2 Academic Skills Workshops	13
4. FACULTIES	16
4.1 Enabling Skills Pilot Program	16
4.2 Arts & Social Sciences	18
4.3 Social Work: Social Development program	19
4.4 Built Environment	20
4.5 College of Fine Arts	20
4.6 Commerce and Economics	20
4.7 Engineering	21
4.8 Law	25
4.9 Medicine	25
4.10 Science	27
5. PRE-SESSIONAL AND PREPARATORY PROGRAMS	29
5.1 University Orientation and Study Skills (UOSS)	29
5.2 Academic Preparation Program (APP)	29
5.3 Commerce and Economics Preparatory Program (CEPP)	29
5.4 Indigenous Pre-Law Program	29
5.5 Preparatory Medical Program	30
5.6 Preparatory Social Work Program	30
6. LEARNING CENTRE WEB AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT	31
7. SESSIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT	33
8. PARTICIPATION IN INITIATIVES OF THE DIVISION OF THE PRO-VICE-CHANCELLOR (EDUCATION & QUALITY IMPROVEMENT)	34
8.1 First Year Experience Initiatives	34
8.2 Foundations in University Learning and Teaching (FULT)	34
8.3 Learning and Teaching Awards	34
8.4 The Sessional Staff Development Project	35
8.5 Graduate Certificate in Higher Education	35
8.6 UNSW Compendium of Good Practice in Learning and Teaching	35
9. PAPERS PUBLISHED	36

10. CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS BY LEARNING CENTRE STAFF	36
11. CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNIVERSITY, THE PROFESSION AND THE COMMUNITY	38
11.1 Courses and Careers Day.....	38
11.2 Info Day	38
11.3 International House	38
11.4 International Student Services	38
11.5 Orientation.....	38
11.6 Membership of University Committees and Working Groups.....	39
11.7 Nura Gili.....	39
11.8 NSW Learning Centres' Interest Group Meeting.....	40
11.9 Organisation and Staff Development Services—Learning Alliance	40
11.10 Postgraduate Supervision Workshop.....	40
11.11 Reading Skills Workshop	40
11.12 Shalom College.....	40
12. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEARNING CENTRE STAFF	41
13. VISITORS TO THE LEARNING CENTRE.....	42
14. APPENDIX A: EXAMPLES OF ENABLING SKILLS DIAGNOSTIC FEEDBACK CRITERIA	43
14.1 Diagnostic Feedback Sheet from Psychology.....	43
14.2 Example of Diagnostic Feedback Sheet from Accounting	44

Executive Summary of Student Participation in Learning Centre Services at UNSW in 2005

Language and academic skills support to enrolled students is provided by The Learning Centre via face-to-face teaching and via online academic skills resources. Face-to-face support is:

- Centrally-located
- Faculty-based

A total of 1167 students made use of the centrally-located services at least once in 2005. The total number of attendances was 2045, indicating that many students accessed support on more than one occasion. A more detailed analysis of the student demographics and support accessed is provided in Section 3.

From the available data, the total number of students accessing skills support delivered through the Faculties and Schools on at least one occasion was 3518 (see Section 4).

In addition, skills support was delivered through a number of pre-sessional and preparatory programs to a total of 371 students (see Section 5).

Several thousand students also accessed learning resources through the free brochures available to all students in print or via The Learning Centre website www.lc.unsw.edu.au (see Section 6).

In 2005, the total number of UNSW (excluding ADFA) enrolled students at 31 March was 40, 643. The 4685 enrolled students who accessed Learning Centre non-online support on at least one occasion represented 11.5% of this total.

The Learning Centre's Operational Goals 2005

1. Maintain and develop academic skills programs and learning resources, both generic and subject-specific, which address students' language, communication and study skills at undergraduate and postgraduate levels at UNSW.
2. Pilot early diagnostic assessment of commencing students' academic literacy in three undergraduate and three postgraduate courses. Collaborate with faculty staff to develop diagnostic contextualised instruments; train markers; provide feedback to students. Develop strategies with lecturers concerned to support students identified as 'at risk'.
3. Actively participate in Divisional initiatives to improve the student learning experience and extend Learning Centre impact.
4. Complete and launch the Plagiarism and Academic Integrity website as part of UNSW strategy to deter plagiarism.

1. Introduction

The Learning Centre continued to focus on its core activities of supporting students' development of their academic language, learning and communication skills. In the *Report on the UNSW Student Experience Survey 2005*, which had a 46% response rate, a random sample of 6148 students were asked to rate the quality of The Learning Centre services and resources. Of those undergraduate students for whom this question was applicable, 82% rated The Learning Centre's services very highly or highly. Similarly, 84% of postgraduate coursework students who knew of, or who had used the Centre's services and resources, rated them either very high, or highly.

Support was delivered both in the Centre itself, through individual consultation and through the workshop program (Section 3), and through the Faculties (Section 4). Visits to The Learning Centre website showed a substantial increase during 2005, particularly to the academic skills resource pages (Section 6). The interactive Plagiarism and Academic Integrity online resource was launched at the beginning of the year. All course outlines must link to the resource and all commencing students are taken through it when they complete an online information literacy tutorial known as *ELISE*. Through increased collaborative activity in the Division of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Quality Improvement) (Section 8), Centre staff were able to continue to extend the outreach and impact of the Centre. The Enabling Skills Pilot Project was a new, large-scale initiative to provide early diagnostic academic literacy feedback to commencing students that The Learning Centre and course-coordinators in six Schools trialled in Session One (Section 4.1). The Learning Centre continued to provide tutor training on request with approximately 80 tutors having the opportunity to participate in a four-hour workshop on facilitating learning (Section 7). The Learning Centre also played an active role in the development of the university-wide Sessional Teaching Staff Strategic Action Plan. Similarly, The Learning Centre continued to participate actively in providing a range of student support services at key points in the student experience such as orientation and induction (see Section 11 in particular).

Learning Centre staff participated in a number of conferences and professional development activities over the year and the Centre hosted a number of international visitors who were keen to understand the Centre's approach to support provision.

2. Staff

Director

Sue Starfield, BA MA PhD *Wits*, LèsL MèsL DEA DPFE *Paris III*

Learning Advisers

Linda Burnett, BA *Adel.*, M.LITT.*UNE* (part-time)

Ian Collinson, BA(Hons), PhD *UNSW* (part-time, temporary)

Dominic Fitzsimmons, BALLB (Hons) PhD *UNSW* (part-time)

Gwyn Jones, BA *WLU* , BEd *Tor*, MAEdAdmin CertTESOL *UNSW*

Pam Mort, BA DipProfArtStud. *City Art Institute*, GradDipEd *Nepean C.A.E.*, MA *Syd.*

Lyn Hallion, BA DipEd MEd Cert TESOL *UNSW* (part-time, on unpaid leave)

Maria Zueva, DipHEd *Thames Valley*, GradDip *Otago*, DipTESOL MA *Victoria*

Administrative Officers

Valerie Caulcutt (Finance and Admin)

Coralie Venus, BA(Hons) *UNSW*, Dip T. (Prim) *S.Aust* (Workshops and Resource Centre)

Reception

Lagi Puni

Publications and Web Officer

Tracey-Lee Downey, Design Cert *Syd I.T.*, BA(Hons) *UNSW*

University Orientation and Study Skills Tutors

Gwyn Jones (Coordinator)

Lisa Holloway

Lester Adorjany

Monica Kerretts-Makau

Linda Burnett

Warwick Shapcott

Ian Collinson

Shivaun Weybury

Dominic Fitzsimmons

Maria Zueva

Academic Preparation Program Tutors

Pamela Mort (Coordinator)	Dominic Fitzsimmons
Linda Burnett	Gwyn Jones
Ian Collinson	Monica Kerretts-Makau
Tracey-Lee Downey	Maria Zueva

Peer Writing Assistants

Lester Adorjany	Tricia Daly
Martin de Groot	Brooke Dinning
Susan French	Jesse Goyette
Keren Hammerschlag	Monica Kerretts-Makau
Gerald Mutungi	John Odongo
Geoff Quick	David Rajaratnam
Jamie Roberts	Warwick Shapcott
Becky Shepherd	Shivaun Weybury
Lauren Willis	Sarah Wise

Law Peer Tutors

Aileen Hui Har Teo	Sean Bluett
Timothy Bye	Cameron Stuart Grant
Caroline Joo	Chris Hartley
Chun-Chi Hung	Karl Chong
Eugene Quah	Frances Foster-Thorpe
Jessica Kim	Yumin Liu
Stuart Fu Chian Loh	Tanya Samantha Wong
Victoria Tan	Zhe Rebecca Zhang

3. Centrally-based Language, Communication and Academic Skills Support

The Writing Assistant consultation program, the academic skills workshops and the learning resources available for loan to students comprise the centrally-delivered support provided by The Learning Centre. Support provided directly to the Faculties and Schools is described in Section 4.

3.1 Writing Consultations

Any student may make an appointment to see a Writing Assistant to discuss an assignment on which they are working. Writing Assistants are doctoral students who undergo regular training in The Learning Centre. They offer feedback on the organisation and structure of students' writing but do not proof-read or correct minor grammatical errors. Consultations are offered on both Kensington and CoFA campuses.

A total of 853 consultations took place in 2005. As 473 students registered for a consultation, a number of students obviously returned for a subsequent consultation.

The 2005 survey of students attending individual learning consultations showed that 94% of students found their individual consultation either very helpful or helpful. Student feedback provides insight into their experience of the consultation:

Firstly read through my essay, editing some incorrect or inadequate expressions, correcting grammar problems. They tried to make me think what is wrong and how I can correct them instead of correcting by themselves. It was really helpful and encouraging.[sic].

I described my situation and Sarah quickly got to the nub of the problem, analysed, suggested strategies for content ideas, editing techniques and setting a timetable.

Susan explained what she could and couldn't do, then read through the draft and we discussed what needed improving.

Consultation was really helpful and makes me have confidence to try one more time to write essay. It's essential help, especially for foreign students. Thanks a lot!

3.1.1 Peer Writing Training

Dominic Fitzsimmons co-ordinates the Peer Writing Assistant program, including developing and facilitating induction and ongoing training for new Peer Writing Assistants; monthly skills development seminars for all Writing Assistants; informal consultations with Peer Writing Assistants during semester as well as individual half-hour review and reflection meetings with each at the end of semester.

Table 3.1 shows the total number of student attendances at both individual writing consultations and academic skills workshops and includes student usage of resources in the Centre's resource centre. The attendance totals indicate that many of the students who attend either an individual consultation or a workshop/resource consultation do so on more than one occasion.

Table 3.1 Total number of student attendances at central Learning Centre support

<i>Writing Consultations</i>	<i>Academic Skills Workshops</i>	<i>Resource Usage</i>	<i>Total</i>
853	935	257	2045

Table 3.2 shows attendance by gender (each student considered once only) and indicates that women students seek assistance at double the rate of male students.

Table 3.2 Attendance by gender at central Learning Centre support

	<i>Writing Consultations</i>	<i>Academic Skills Workshops</i>	<i>Resource usage</i>	<i>Total</i>
Female	333	330	106	769
Male	140	194	64	398
Total	473	524	170	1167

Table 3.3 shows attendance (each student considered once only) by English language status and indicates that the majority of the students who seek centralised assistance identified as being from a non-English-speaking background. However, nearly a third of the students stated that they were from an English-speaking background.

Table 3.3 Attendance by English language status at central Learning Centre support

	<i>Writing Consultations</i>	<i>Academic Skills Workshops &</i>	<i>Resource usage</i>	<i>Total</i>
ESB	238	113	23	374
NESB	235	411	147	793
Total	473	524	170	1167

In terms of program level, more undergraduate students made use of writing consultations than did postgraduates, while more postgraduate students accessed central support services overall, including some staff members and visiting fellows (see Table 3.4).

Table 3.4 Attendance by program level at central Learning Centre support

	<i>Writing Consultations</i>	<i>Academic Skills Workshops</i>	<i>Resource Usage</i>	<i>Total</i>
Undergraduate	276	181	46	503
Postgraduate	181	330	117	628
Staff/visiting fellows		13	7	20
Not advised	16			16
Total	473	524	170	1167

Table 3.5 shows attendance by residence status at Learning Centre support. It is noteworthy that while more local undergraduates make use of the Centre's services than international undergraduates, more international postgraduates avail themselves of the services. However, 7% of the total international student body accessed central Learning Centre support at least once as opposed to 1.6% of local students.

Table 3.5 Attendance by residence status at central Learning Centre support

	<i>Writing Consultations</i>	<i>Academic Skills Workshops</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>Total</i>
International Undergraduate	117	104	28	249
Local Undergraduate	159	77	18	254
International Postgraduate	110	211	86	407
Local Postgraduate	71	119	31	221
International Staff/visiting fellows		8	6	14
Local Staff/visiting fellows		5	1	6
Not advised	16			16
Total	473	524	170	1167

Table 3.6 shows student attendance by Faculty at writing consultations. Arts and Social Sciences constitute the largest groupings, possibly reflecting the nature of assessment in the Faculty.

Table 3.6 Attendance at writing consultations by Faculty (each student once)

<i>Faculty</i>	<i>No of Students</i>	<i>%</i>
AGSM	5	1
Arts and Social Sciences	144	30
Built Environment	42	9
COFA	76	17
Commerce and Economics	61	13
Engineering	44	9
Law	14	3
Medicine	30	6
Science and Technology	49	10
Not Advised	8	2
Total No of Students	473	100

3.2 Academic Skills Workshops

A total of 604 students attended at least one of the academic skills workshops offered by the Learning Centre and /or accessed learning resources. Table 3.7 indicates that the majority of those attending were from Arts and Social Sciences and Commerce and Economics.

Table 3.7 Attendance at academic skills workshops and resource usage by Faculty (each student once)

<i>Faculty</i>	<i>No. of students</i>	<i>%</i>
AGSM	5	1
Arts & Social Sciences	141	23
Built Environment	33	6
COFA	34	6
Commerce & Economics	146	24
Engineering	92	15
Law	34	6
Medicine	43	7
Science	71	12
Other	5	1
Total	604	101*

*25 students were enrolled in combined degrees

Table 3.8 shows overall student attendance in 2005 by each workshop type. There was a total attendance of 935. Some workshops were offered on several occasions, particularly conversation and pronunciation. The overall number of workshop attendances declined slightly in 2005 as The Learning Centre no longer offered Word for Large Documents or PowerPoint for Presentations due to the introduction of ICTAssist, a university-wide support program.

Table 3.8 Attendance at Academic Skills workshops by workshop type

<i>Workshop Type</i>	<i>Total Annual Attendance</i>
Academic Writing for Postgraduate ESL Students	60
Academic Writing: Structure & Organisation	6
Advanced Conversation Practice	13
Advanced Writing Program for PG Research Students	27
Avoiding Plagiarism	24
Conversation Practice	143
Developing Critical Arguments Using Evidence	16
Essay Writing for Undergraduates	46
Evaluating Evidence	3
Foundations of Critical Reading	3
Grammar in Context	66
Grammar Editing	15
Introduction to Critical Thinking	34
Introduction to Critical Thinking: PG	19
Introduction to Critical Thinking: UG	7
Listening and Note-taking	9
Literature Review	62
Managing Postgraduate Reading	6
More Critical Thinking	8
Oral Presentations	23
Oral Presentations: Arts & Humanities	10
Oral Presentations: Science & Engineering	11
Pronunciation	113
Referencing	7
Reflective Writing	4
Report Writing for New Students	9
The Research Process	9

<i>Workshop Type</i>	<i>Total Annual Attendance</i>
Talking about Tutoring	2
Talk, Exchange, Listen & Learn (TELL)	27
Thesis Proposals	31
Thesis Writing for COFA	26
Thesis Writing for Science	11
Writing a Critical Review	39
Writing and Editing Paragraphs	5
Writing Critically	7
Writing for Law	26
Writing for Media and Communication	8
Total	935

4. Faculties

This section reports on academic skills support for both undergraduate and postgraduate coursework and research students delivered via a School or Faculty-based program. As the report indicates, support varies in terms of types of input, intensity and duration, and is a response to a request from the relevant School or Faculty. In 2005, approximately 3518 students accessed Learning Centre support at least once in this way. Section 4.1 outlines the Enabling Skills pilot program that The Learning Centre and several schools trialled in Session One, and highlights the key findings across all pilots. The specific diagnostic assessment tasks and the outcomes of the school-based pilots are described under the respective Faculties. Participation in a diagnostic assessment is included in the total student attendance data.

4.1 Enabling Skills Pilot Program

On August 3 2004, the Academic Board endorsed the recommendations of the discussion paper *Enabling Skills at UNSW*

<http://info.library.unsw.edu.au/skills/enabling.html>

approving in principle and authorising the conduct of trials of the following processes:

- (i) For all commencing UNSW students, early feedback on a written task within the program is to be completed by week 5 or equivalent. This would allow identification of students requiring substantial assistance, as well as areas of particular difficulty for whole classes, so that students can be assisted and difficult areas addressed; and
- (ii) students identified as requiring substantial assistance in academic literacy and academic English-language skills will be allowed to enrol in credit-bearing courses in English and academic literacy.

Strategy 3.3 of Goal 3 Support for Transitions in the *2005-2007 Learning and Teaching Plan* states:

In relation to the Enabling Skills Policy, evaluate a school-based pilot of the implementation of the academic literacy program and the implementation of the University-wide new online information literacy program that will be mandatory for all commencing coursework students from 2005.

4.1.1 The Pilot Projects

The Learning Centre had responsibility for the academic literacy component of the pilot implementation. Six pilot projects were run in Session One—three in undergraduate courses and three postgraduate. By week 5 of Session One, students in the disciplinary areas listed below were asked to complete a written task, contextualised to the specific discipline, and were provided with detailed feedback in relation to a set of core academic literacy criteria, adapted where needed to the disciplinary expectations. The diagnostic tool adopted was the *MASUS (Measuring the Academic Literacy Skills of University Students)* procedure developed at the University of Sydney.

The *MASUS* core areas are:

- use of source material (reading comprehension);
- appropriate structure;
- academic style and grammar.

Each student receives a feedback sheet that outlines their ‘academic literacy profile’ (see examples in Appendix A) in relation to the four criteria, while teachers can access a profile of the academic literacy of the entire cohort and consider appropriate intervention strategies.

It will be evident that the type of pilot program varied from school to school depending on context-specific issues. These pilot projects were made possible by the enthusiasm and collaboration of Learning Centre staff and colleagues in the respective Schools and Faculties, who found time in already full schedules to contribute to the initiatives outlined under the respective schools.

Summary of Key Findings

- All students value the opportunity to receive early feedback as to academic literacy requirements.
- Discipline specialists valued the opportunity to identify and discuss explicit academic literacy criteria with Learning Centre colleagues in the joint development of assessment tasks.
- Reading comprehension and structuring written text present major problems for many students.
- There is a need to explicitly scaffold the development of writing skills in first-year courses and in postgraduate coursework areas, particularly in regard to discipline-specific criteria for all students to some extent, and intensively for ‘at risk’ groupings.

- Fairly short interventions appear to make a difference. ‘At risk’ students, however, may not take up these opportunities which involve what is perceived as additional work.
- A credit-bearing academic skills course contextualised to a specific discipline (PHCM 9100) led to an on-average student improvement of one band on the MASUS scale (see 4.9.3).
- Costs include rater training, payment for marking, tutor time for adjunct workshop programs, materials development, lecturer time, and Learning Centre time.

4.2 Arts & Social Sciences

4.2.1 *Research Writing and Presentation*

ARTS5024 *Research Writing and Presentation* was offered as an optional eight unit of credit course to postgraduate research students in the Faculty. The 28-hour course ran for 12 weeks and was attended by 20 students.

4.2.2 *Support in Nura Gili courses*

The Learning Centre taught skills-based components on the following courses in Session One:

Whiteness: Beyond Colour and Difference (SOCA3210/ATSI3005). A two-hour workshop on Reflective Writing was given to 45 undergraduate students;

Aboriginal Australia: The Pre-Colonial and Colonial Experience (ATSI2001/AUST2004). Two, two-hour lectures on Avoiding Plagiarism and Essay Writing were offered to two groups of 16 undergraduates.

Aboriginal Heritage from Diggings to Display (GENX0103) and *Travelling through Time* (GENX0101). Fifteen undergraduates in each of these two courses were given a two-hour lecture on Reading and Avoiding Plagiarism.

4.2.3 *Linguistics*

Honours workshop

A one and a half-hour thesis writing workshop was offered to four Linguistics honours students in Session Two.

Enabling Skills

As part of the Enabling Skills pilot project (see 4.1), 22 postgraduate masters' coursework students in Linguistics took part in a contextualised diagnostic writing assessment task in week three of Session One. Of these, 20 attended a six-hour academic writing skills program staffed by The Learning Centre, and ten wrote the final assessment. This pilot differed from the others in that it was not a whole class activity, but was offered to students on a voluntary basis. It appears that the weaker students did not do the post-test. The post-test results indicated an improvement in the performance of the ten students who took part. Even though these gains were relatively small, they suggest that the intervention did make a difference.

Comments

- The weaker students did not do the re-test, again highlighting the difficulties of voluntary, add-on support.
- It is possible that weaker students did not volunteer for the program at all. Whole cohort assessment is preferable.
- A fairly high percentage of the 22 students who took part in the initial diagnostic assessment were 'at risk' in a number of categories.

4.2.4 Music and Music Education

A two-hour workshop on academic writing was offered to 20 students in the School of Music and Music Education in Session One.

4.3 Social Work: Social Development program

In Semester One, Linda Burnett worked with Dr Eileen Baldry and Dr Eileen Pittaway on a pilot enabling skills program conducted in the *Graduate Programs in International Social Development*. This involved approximately 70 students and had four parts:

- the evaluation of students' English academic writing skills through the design and administration of a diagnostic test (a contextualised writing task).
- the provision of detailed feedback to the students indicating their ratings in the five major criteria categories.
- the collaborative writing and production of the 120-page course manual, *Academic Skills for International Social Development Postgraduate Programs*.

- the provision of follow-up consultations if required.

All students were provided with the course manual, *Academic Skills for International Social Development*, developed by The Learning Centre in consultation with teaching staff, which covered the key skills needed for post-graduate study. One student was referred to The Learning Centre for consultations and a second was referred to workshops.

4.4 Built Environment

4.4.1 *Geography*

A four-hour Geography thesis writing workshop was held for 20 honours students in Session One.

4.4.2 *Landscape Architecture*

Two, two-hour workshops on thesis writing were offered to 12 honours students in Landscape Architecture in Session One

4.5 College of Fine Arts

4.5.1 *Design*

Two, two-hour sessions were run for seven Design honours students in Sessions One and Two. The sessions addressed referencing and avoiding plagiarism; research writing and structuring the first draft. Nine students attended in Session Two.

4.5.2 *CoFA research week*

As part of CoFA research week, two, one and a half-hour workshops on essay writing were run for a total of 16 postgraduate students.

4.6 Commerce and Economics

4.6.1 *Enabling Skills Pilot*

In first-year Accounting (ACCT1501), the first assignment of the year (due in week five) served as the literacy assessment, being marked by both subject tutors and according to academic literacy criteria jointly developed by the course coordinator, the Faculty Education Development

Unit and The Learning Centre. A total of 1,018 student assignments were thus assessed in terms of their academic literacy (95% of the cohort). The areas of greatest concern were use of source material (reading comprehension and avoiding plagiarism) and structure and development of answers (ability to structure a coherent argument and critically evaluate material). Support provided to students included two, four-hour drop-in workshops advertised in the lectures, as well as very detailed feedback via WebCT.

Comments

- The approach adopted (layering the literacy assessment on top of a pre-existing assignment in week five), while yielding valuable data, presented logistical difficulties.
- Alternative ways of integrating explicit teaching of academic literacy skills into first-year course assignments need to be pursued.

4.7 Engineering

4.7.1 *Chemical Engineering and Industrial Chemistry*

In Session One, 16 third-year students in INDC3110 were supported through the preparation of an oral and a written report based on a factory visit. The classes ran for eight weeks and totalled 16 hours. They covered thinking processes, academic conventions, using visuals, speaking skills, report organisation and written academic discourse.

Twenty-one PhD students, enrolled in CEIC8312 *Safety and Communication in the Process Industries*, attended a 28-hour, six unit of credit course in Session Two. The feedback on the course continues to be extremely positive.

4.7.2 *Civil and Environmental Engineering*

CIVEN1021/1721 is run in Summer Session and is also offered as a year-long course running over Session One and Session Two. In the Summer Session, two combined lectures and tutorials on report writing and academic conventions (four hours in total) were offered to the 12 students enrolled. Two, one-hour lectures on report writing and academic conventions were given to 135 students in Session One, and in Session Two, a two-hour interactive lecture on oral presentations was given to the same group of students. Dr Steve Foster, Dr Steve Bonser and Dr Ron Cox co-facilitated the lectures and had input into the design of materials and activities.

In Session One of CIVEN3023 a one-hour lecture on leadership and report writing skills was given to 100 students. Handouts on key aspects of leadership and project management skills, working with groups, and common causes of project problems/conflicts within engineering workplaces were provided. Aspects of report writing were re-visited viz, writing introductions, summaries, paragraphs and using visuals. In Session Two, two lectures (total of three hours) on oral presentation skills, teamwork and conflict resolution were delivered to the 100 students enrolled. Dr Bill Peirson co-facilitated and was very involved in designing the lectures, the materials and the activities for these classes. He reported that the students found these lectures most helpful.

4.7.3 Computer Science and Engineering

A total of 21 PhD Students attended COMP9910 *Research Management and Communication Skills*, a six-units of credit course, for three hours per week over 14 weeks.

4.7.4 Electrical Engineering and Telecommunications

In TELE1010 two, hour-long lectures on report writing and oral presentations were given to 175 first-year students. All students were given the *Guide to Writing and Speaking in the School of EET*—a forty-page book developed by The Learning Centre.

Enabling Skills Pilot

A diagnostic task, 'Writing Task A', was designed to assess students' writing skills. In week three, 173 students enrolled in ELEC/PHTN/TELE1010 were given 40 minutes to complete the task. It included short answer questions and assessed students' ability to analyse and answer questions, to read and select relevant information, and academic writing style and grammar.

Students who received a 0 or 1 in any category were invited to attend a series of four, two-hour workshops on writing skills. These writing workshops were offered during the Easter break (between week four and five of Session One). To encourage students to attend, they were offered a bonus mark (n=1) towards the final mark for Writing Task A if they attended at least four hours of workshops. A total of 16 students attended, with 12 students attending four hours of workshops, two students attending six hours of workshops and two students attending eight hours of workshops.

Comments

- The diagnostic tool appears appropriate for measuring the cohort's academic literacy level. Voluntary workshops, even with an additional mark bonus, were not an incentive, particularly when offered in the mid-session break. Also this is not a cost effective option due to low attendance and very low levels of student proficiency observed. 'At risk' students require much more substantial intervention.
- Rater training requires time to ensure consistency (four to six hours training, depending on markers' prior experience).

4.7.5 Graduate School of Biomedical Engineering.

In Session Two, a two-hour workshop on presentation skills was offered to 14 PhD students in the Graduate School of Biomedical Engineering.

4.7.6 Graduate School of Engineering

GSOE9405 *Research Management and Communication for Engineers* is a new three unit of credit course offered by the Graduate School of Engineering for students who do not have an equivalent course in their school. Eight PhD students, all of whom were from a non-English speaking background, from the schools of Information Systems and Spatial Information, Mechanical Engineering, and Electrical Engineering and Telecommunications attended the 42-hour course over 14 weeks.

Research Students' Induction Program

Pam Mort had an extensive involvement with the induction program in Sessions One and Two. She co-facilitated workshops on

- literature reviews
- managing research
- working with a supervisor
- ethics issues
- role-plays
- writing a research overview
- oral presentation skills.

Some workshops were compulsory and others were voluntary.

In Session One, the Faculty of Engineering had 87 new research students enrolled. Of those, only 31 students completed the required workshops.

In Session Two, 90 research students enrolled. Of these, only 59 completed the required workshops and gained the three units of credit.

The Session One program covered a total of 20 hours. Topics included:

- what is postgraduate research? (four hours);
- how do I get started on my research? (three hours);
- writing workshops (six hours); and
- feedback on oral presentations and a written task (seven hours).

In Session Two the program was made a three-unit of credit course, GSOE9400, and covered a total of 25.5 hours.

Specific workshops offered through the Graduate School of Engineering

Thesis Writing for Engineering.

Fifteen research students from nine Engineering schools attended this four-week, two-hours per week workshop series. In this workshop, students brought a thesis to critique, as well as drafts of papers and their thesis for peer review. Topics covered included:

- structuring the thesis,
- structures of thesis chapters,
- cohesion and argument in reports and theses,
- academic conventions,
- the writing process and managing writing.

Writing for Publication

A panel of supervisors who have experience as reviewers talked frankly about their experiences and gave advice. This was followed by a workshop on article writing involving peer reviews of abstracts and Q&A of common concerns, followed by critiques of recommended journals/authors. The one-hour panel was followed by two, two-hour workshops. The panel discussion was attended by 30 students and 17 students attended the workshops.

4.7.7 Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering

A 15-minute session in Session One introduced the 100 students in the first-year course to The Learning Centre services and the school resource booklet *In a Nutshell*.

4.7.8 Mining Engineering

In MINE1020, The Learning Centre offered six hours of input on the assignment process, project management, report structure and the writing process, academic conventions and reflective thinking to 30 enrolled students.

Two, one-hour workshops on writing a literature review and on academic discourse and writing conventions were offered to 15 fourth-year students in Session One. The School of Mining Engineering's *Guide to Writing in Engineering* was used, as were past theses for students to review and discuss.

4.7.9 Photovoltaic Engineering

A one-hour lecture on report writing structure, academic conventions and the writing process was given to 45 first-year students in Session Two. A 40-page *Writing and Presentation Guide*, prepared by The Learning Centre, was provided to students by the Centre for Photovoltaic Engineering.

4.8 Law

4.8.1 Law peer tutor program

A Law peer tutors' handbook was introduced this year and was felt by the tutors to be very useful. About ten peer tutors were employed each session. All received initial training, plus monthly ongoing skills development seminars. In addition, Law peer tutors kept a reflective journal and participated in an end-of-semester review.

4.9 Medicine

4.9.1 Poster presentations

Two, one-hour workshops were run for 40 PhD medical students in conjunction with the Medical Illustrations Unit on poster presentations.

4.9.2 School of Medical Sciences

A total of 48 third-year Pathology students attended two lectures on presentation skills, plus follow-up small group workshops. Sixteen group meetings were held with Gwyn Jones, the Learning Adviser involved, as the students prepared for their course presentations.

4.9.3 School of Public Health and Community Medicine

Research Management seminars

Gwyn Jones helped plan and took part in two research management seminars for the School's PhD students:

- 'Thesis Management': a three-hour presentation on proposal writing to 45 PhD students and staff.
- 'Presenting your work': a one and a half-hour long workshop to nine PhD students and staff.

PHCM9100 Academic Skills

This academic skills course, designed for international postgraduate coursework students in the Masters of Community Health and Health Service Management, is a credit-bearing elective taught by The Learning Centre. In Session One, 16 students attended the course while in Session Two, 26 students attended the 14-week, two-hours per week course.

Enabling Skills Pilot

The 16 students completed a contextualised diagnostic assignment in week three and were given feedback on their writing. The course then focussed on developing the students' written academic skills. A re-test was administered to 15 students in week 12.

Post-test results after 10 weeks of the two-hours per week course indicate that only 26% of students continued to have difficulty with reading source material; only 20% were 'at risk' for structure and only one student continued to have difficulty with academic style. No students were assessed as having problems with grammatical correctness. Fourteen of the students showed marked improvement over the 12 weeks, with an average improvement of one band on the MASUS scale.

Comments

- Sustained, credit-bearing intervention delivers improvement.

4.9.4 Undergraduate Medicine Program: Foundations program

Learning Centre staff advised tutors on drawing up assessment criteria for the report writing component of the Foundations program for first-year medical students.

4.10 Science

4.10.1 Aviation 1321

Two, two-hour lectures were given to 75 first-year aviation students on:

- learning styles,
- group work skills,
- report writing,
- oral presentations, and
- academic conventions.

The Learning Centre also participated in co-reviewing the students' group oral presentations for a total of eight hours.

4.10.2 Aviation 2210

Pam Mort collaborated with Leslie Ngatai of the Library and Boyd Falconer from Aviation in a two-hour interactive session that introduced 70 second-year students to library databases and journals, and taught the importance of proper citation/referencing, in particular the APA referencing style.

4.10.3 Biotechnology and Biomolecular Sciences (BABS)

Sixty fourth-year students attended a five-hour workshop on thesis writing.

A total of 95 students from BIOS2011 *Evolutionary and Physiological Ecology* attended a two-hour workshop on exam skills.

4.10.4 Psychology

Enabling Skills Pilot

Over 700 students in PSYC1001 completed an in-class critical writing assessment in week 3. Sixty students, whose scores were in the lowest band, were invited to attend a series of one-hour workshops on writing skills and report writing. Two, hour-long classes were offered on Wednesdays from weeks six to ten (a total of five hours per student). A total of 27 students attended an average of 4.5 out of 5 workshops. The supplementary writing workshops were staffed by a Learning Centre staff member and two Psychology tutors. On completion of the workshops, students were asked to complete a similar assignment as a re-test.

There was a significant difference in marks on the initial critical writing assessment between students identified as most 'at risk' and who were

invited to the workshop (mean score=2), and 'non-workshop' students (mean=4.4) (the second lowest scoring group on the first test). The mean score for target workshop students in the critical writing re-test was 6.3, indicating a significant mean improvement of 4.3. The mean re-test score for non-workshop students was 7.5 which was not significantly different from that of the workshop students.

Comments

- Length of intervention: A fairly small intervention appears to have made a difference to performance for those students who chose to attend (not all 60 assessed as most 'at risk' did so). The intervention involved team-teaching and was offered in session.
- Costs: Rater training/marketing/turn-around time/lecturer time/tutor payment for team teaching in workshops.
- Contextualisation of the academic skills through consultation with psychology coordinating staff was very important for the workshop program.
- Should assessment/interventions be course-based or /faculty-based?
- Which students to target? Weakest or slightly better? Psychology would like to expand the program to the second-lowest band of students.

4.10.5 School of Optometry and Vision Sciences

In Session Two, Linda Burnett worked with the School of Optometry and Vision Sciences Postgraduate Coursework Program to revise the diagnostic test used in 2004, implement it and provide feedback to nine students in the postgraduate course, *Clinical Imaging*. Linda taught two sessions on academic literacy and was available for individual consultations (online or face-to-face) to *Clinical Imaging* students.

5. Pre-Sessional and Preparatory Programs

5.1 University Orientation and Study Skills (UOSS)

The Learning Centre again delivered the UOSS component of the *University Preparation Program*, an access program for prospective mature-age students who do not meet the University's entry requirements. The UOSS course explicitly teaches the academic skills essential for university success and is run each session for 14 weeks. Students are taught in small groups of about 20 and meet weekly for two hours. A total of 160 students enrolled in Session One and 126 students in Session Two.

5.2 Academic Preparation Program (APP)

The Learning Centre again provided the 56-hour *Academic English and Communication Skills* component of the AusAid sponsored *Academic Preparation Program* for international scholarship students. The three-week course, run prior to Session One, was attended by 32 international postgraduate students, while in July, 22 students attended prior to Session Two.

5.3 Commerce and Economics Preparatory Program (CEPP)

The Faculty again requested Learning Centre assistance in developing and teaching the academic skills component of this preparatory program for indigenous students, which was launched in 2004. Eight students attended over several weeks with The Learning Centre contributing 48 hours of teaching.

5.4 Indigenous Pre-Law Program

The Learning Centre, in collaboration with the Faculty of Law, again developed and facilitated the academic study skills component of the pre-law program for 12 indigenous students. Dominic Fitzsimmons taught, either alone or as part of a team, for a total of 54 hours in November.

5.5 Preparatory Medical Program

Five students attended the academic skills component of this program for indigenous students. The program was held at the end of the year and was offered over two weeks for a total of six hours.

5.6 Preparatory Social Work Program

Six students took part in the pre-sessional program for prospective students in 2006. It was held in November over four weeks for a total of 12 hours.

6. Learning Centre Web and Resource Development

During 2005, requests received by The Learning Centre website <http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/> increased significantly. The most popular section of the website remained the online study skills resources. This section received 252,447 requests for pages and downloadable PDF files. Table 6.1 provides a monthly breakdown of page requests per sections of the website, comparing 2005 page request to 2004 figures. A substantial increase in traffic of 42% is indicated. The site registered the least traffic during June and July, the university's mid-year recess period. Many users accessed The Learning Centre website directly, were referred through WebCT, or followed links from other UNSW sites. Many other users accessed the site as a result of search engines, or followed links from other universities.

Table 6.1: Total number of page requests to Learning Centre website: January-December 2004 and 2005

	2004	2005
January	11 109	24 772
February	20 868	38 451
March	42 799	59 849
April	33 789	53 110
May	34 782	50 704
June	25 359	35 291
July	22 973	33 653
August	39 869	45 199
September	33 913	40 066
October	32 798	46 734
November	26 373	35 229
December	19 848	26 797
Total	344 480	489 855

First Steps, <http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/firststeps/>, the new transition to university study resource launched in 2004 is being regularly visited as Table 6.2 shows with peaks at the beginning of each session.

The Centre developed the official UNSW website on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity <http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism/index.html>. This innovative online resource was developed by Ian Collinson and Tracey-Lee Downey, and was launched at the beginning of 2005. All course outlines are required to link to it. In addition, all commencing students are required to complete the online information literacy module, *ELISE*, which takes them through the website and requires them to answer questions on related topics in order to complete the module. Table 6.2 indicates the increased activity on this site over the year.

6.2 Specific areas within The Learning Centre website 2005

	<i>Plagiarism & Academic Integrity</i>	<i>Online resources</i>	<i>First Steps</i>	<i>Using a case study workshop</i>
January	136	13 363	2256	987
February	1164	17 615	6151	1224
March	4813	27 682	4573	1730
April	3181	29 817	1567	1452
May	2287	29 552	1480	1855
June	1585	20 464	1371	1102
July	3135	15 742	1851	926
August	3810	33 573	3110	1445
September	2089	23 202	1243	1466
October	2986	27 536	999	2063
November	2184	19 562	1308	1663
December	1890	12 757	1898	1475
Total	29 260	252 447	27 807	17 338

In 2005, The Learning Centre website was redesigned and restructured for the first time since its initial construction in 1998. The site was redeveloped in order to comply with the UNSW website policy, which outlines standards and guidelines for content, branding and accessibility, and to reflect changes to, and expansion of, the Centre's services and resources. The new Learning Centre website is to be launched at the beginning of 2006.

Writing Guides

The *Report Writing Guide for Mining Engineering Students* by Paul Hagan, School of Mining Engineering, and Pam Mort, The Learning Centre, is now in its fourth edition (ISBN 0733413329). The Schools of Mining at the University of Queensland and Curtin (Western Australian School of Mines) have agreed to use the guide for their mining students to ensure consistency in the students' professional writing development.

A new brochure on writing a critical review was produced and made available to students in print and online formats

(http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/onlib/pdf/critical_review.pdf).

7. Sessional Staff Development

In Session One, a four-hour tutor training workshop was again offered by The Learning Centre for 36 postgraduate Engineering students who were about to commence tutoring.

A similar workshop was offered to seven tutors in the Centre for HIV Epidemiology.

A shorter version of the workshop was run for 12 Psychology tutors.

In Session One, The Learning Centre participated in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Forum on Sessional Staff. Along with the UNSW Learning and Teaching Unit, The Learning Centre co-facilitated three, four-hour workshops for 24 sessional staff in the Faculty.

8. Participation in Initiatives of the Division of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education & Quality Improvement)

The Learning Centre continued to participate actively in divisional initiatives to enhance student learning.

8.1 First Year Experience Initiatives

The Director took part in a number of initiatives that related to enhancing the experience of first-year students and of teachers of large first-year courses.

8.2 Foundations in University Learning and Teaching (FULT)

The Foundations of University Learning and Teaching (FULT) program for UNSW teaching staff consists of an intensive five-day workshop and four additional half-day workshops. The FULT program targets teaching staff with little or no experience of teaching in higher education. Sue Starfield again participated in Day One of this week-long course which was offered on five occasions during the year. She was also asked to participate in a half-day workshop on the topic of responding to student diversity.

8.3 Learning and Teaching Awards

The theme of the 2005-06 Learning and Teaching Awards is 'Enhancing Student Engagement in Learning and Teaching'. Each Faculty identified three learning and teaching priority areas for 2005-06, and provided one grant of \$15,000 to projects that apply the theme of student engagement in at least one of these areas. Sue Starfield was invited to be a member of the Faculty of the Built Environment cross-program team looking at 'Understanding the self-directed research process in the graduation year in all undergraduate programs within the Faculty of the Built Environment'.

8.4 The Sessional Staff Development Project

Sessional teachers are all those members of staff not in tenured or permanent positions, including tutors, casual lecturers, demonstrators, clinical tutors, and people external to the university from the professions or industry. A project to support sessional teachers with managing the specific demands of teaching on a casual basis, such as developing effective and supportive relations with other staff, communicating with students, and being informed about important issues and processes, such as school and faculty evaluation and assessment processes, was initiated through the Division in 2004, and located within the Learning and Teaching Unit. A steering committee consisting of the Directors of The Learning Centre, The Learning and Teaching Unit and EDTeC was set up to manage the project and provide oversight of the development of useful and relevant UNSW policies relating to sessional teachers. The steering committee met regularly through the year, and also provided oversight on the development opportunities at school, faculty, and university levels for sessional teachers, such as induction programs, learning and teaching workshops, and online training. Dominic Fitzsimmons participated in initiatives in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (see Section 7).

8.5 Graduate Certificate in Higher Education

Having completed FULT, staff may choose to enrol in the Graduate Certificate in Higher Education. The Director of The Learning Centre co-facilitated the *Student Learning* module with Jan McLean, the course coordinator, in Session One. The Graduate Certificate in University Learning and Teaching is a UNSW program under the auspices of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education & Quality Improvement) and is offered by the School of Public Health and Community Medicine.

8.6 UNSW Compendium of Good Practice in Learning and Teaching

Sue Starfield is a member of the Editorial Board of the UNSW Compendium of Good Practice in Learning and Teaching
http://www.ltu.unsw.edu.au/content/compendium_prac/compendium.cfm?ss=0 .

9. Papers Published

Miriam Giugni & Dominic Fitzsimmons. Notes, sketches and reflections of an early childhood educator learning theory: A rhythm analysis. Education Research Conference, University of Western Sydney, Parramatta Campus, October 2004. Refereed Conference Proceedings. <http://www.uws.edu.au/about/acadorg/caess/archive/se/research/events/andconferences/archives/educationresearchconference2004>

Pam Mort & Dianne Wiley. Inducting our PhD Students: Changing the Research Culture and Improving the Student Experience. Presented at A2E2 Conference, Sydney. Published in the peer-reviewed *Conference proceedings 4th ASEE/Aaa Global Colloquium on Engineering Education*, Radcliff, D & Humphries, J. (Eds.), paper 76.

10. Conference presentations by Learning Centre Staff

Gwyn Jones presented a poster titled *How effective are we?* at the Language and Academic Skills conference at the Australian National University in November.

Dominic Fitzsimmons. *Encountering the Other: Some Reflections on Peer-to-Peer Learning*. Language and Academic Skills NSW/ACT meeting, 25th August.

Dominic Fitzsimmons. *Who chooses who belongs? Lus participarii, governmental belonging and trusting strangers*. Paper for Australian Society of Legal Philosophy conference: Constitutions, Sovereignty and Democracy. University of NSW, 29th April-1st May.

Dominic Fitzsimmons. *Who chooses who belongs?: Tactics and strategies and migrant literature*. Paper presented at the AULLA and FILLM conference, James Cook University, Cairns 15th July-19th July.

Dominic Fitzsimmons. *Adult Education and Early Childhood Education: In these troubling times what can we learn from each other?* Honouring the Child 5 Conference, Centre for Equity and Innovation in Early Childhood, University of Melbourne 17-20th November.

Pam Mort and Dianne Wiley. *Inducting our PhD Students: Changing the Research Culture and Improving the Student Experience* Presented at A2E2 Conference, Sydney.

Pam Mort and Lisa Holloway. *Introductions in PhD engineering theses*. Paper presented at the Association of Tertiary Learning Advisors of Aotearoa/New Zealand (ATLAANZ) Conference, November, Otago University.

Sue Starfield and Louise Ravelli. 'The writing of this thesis was a process that I could not explore with the positivistic detachment of the classical sociologist': Self and structure in 'new humanities' research theses. Paper presented in *Colloquium on critical engagement in multilingual education: Expanding teachers' knowledge base*, AILA 2005, 14th World Congress of Applied Linguistics, Madison, WI. (Fellow presenters: Sarah Benesch (CUNY), Ilona Leki (University of Tennessee), Brian Morgan (York University), Stephanie Vandrick (University of San Francisco).

Sue Starfield was invited to be a member of a panel titled *Directors' Cuts* at the Language and Academic Skills Conference, Australian National University, November.

11. Contribution to the University, the Profession and the Community

11.1 Courses and Careers Day

The Learning Centre participated in Courses and Careers Day in September and gave a talk on managing the transition from school to university.

11.2 Info Day

The Learning Centre staffed an information stall at Info Day in January and gave talks on how to be a successful student.

11.3 International House

A one-hour talk on reading and note-taking was given to 30 first-year students at International House, a university residence.

11.4 International Student Services

Pam Mort was invited to attend a meeting to discuss Learning Centre services and students' issues and questions about research writing. Twelve PhD and master's by research students attended the one and a half-hour session.

11.5 Orientation

The Learning Centre participated in a number of university-wide orientation events in both first and second sessions, including postgraduate research students and postgraduate coursework orientation.

Dominic Fitzsimmons addressed over 200 first-year law students on their orientation day for students.

The Learning Centre took part in a weekend-long orientation session at Narrabeen for new international students and ran a four-hour long academic skills workshop for about 100 students.

The Director took part in the Arts and Social Sciences' induction for new postgraduate research students

11.6 Membership of University Committees and Working Groups

Sue Starfield regularly attended meetings of the Committee on Education and was a member of the Plagiarism Advisory group.

Sue Starfield was a member of the Diversity working group.

Sue Starfield and Dominic Fitzsimmons were members of the Peer Mentoring Steering committee.

Sue Starfield was a member of the Sessional Staff Steering Committee.

Sue Starfield was a member of the First-Year Experience working group.

Sue Starfield was a member of the Student Equity network.

Sue Starfield and Pam Mort participated in the Postgraduate Research Interest Group which became the Graduate Research forum in the course of the year.

Sue Starfield was a member of the Undergraduate Studies Committee.

Sue Starfield and Gwyn Jones were members of the University Preparation Program Management Committee.

Sue Starfield and Tracey-Lee Downey contributed to the ELISE working group.

Tracey-Lee Downey was a member of the Divisional Web Working Group.

Valerie Caulcutt and Coralie Venus were members of the Divisional Level 2/3 Occupational Health and Safety Committee Group.

11.7 Nura Gili

Three hours of essay writing workshops were offered to six students from Nura Gili.

11.7.1 Nura Gili Winter School

Gwyn Jones gave a two-hour lecture on study skills to 120 indigenous high school students attending the mid-year winter school.

Dominic Fitzsimmons gave a one and a half-hour talk on studying law to eight Winter School students.

11.8 NSW Learning Centres' Interest Group Meeting

The Learning Centre hosted a meeting of 30 Learning Advisers from Learning Centres throughout New South Wales at a special interest group meeting in April.

11.9 Organisation and Staff Development Services—Learning Alliance

A three-hour workshop on study skills was run for 18 UNSW staff members studying for a degree and a further workshop on preparing for open book exams was also offered for 14 staff.

11.10 Postgraduate Supervision Workshop

Sue Starfield participated in two workshops on postgraduate supervision for 14 new academics.

11.11 Reading Skills Workshop

In July, Gwyn Jones presented a five-hour workshop on reading skills to 70 primary and secondary teachers employed by the Catholic Board of Education at a Reading Conference hosted by Delany College, Granville, as part of their Professional Development Inservice.

11.12 Shalom College

Dominic Fitzsimmons ran a one and a half-hour tutor training session at Shalom College for seven student tutors.

12. Professional Development Learning Centre Staff

All staff attended mandatory University OH & S training during the year.

Gwyn Jones attended a meeting of the Language and Academic Skills NSW interest group at the University of Wollongong.

Gwyn Jones and Pam Mort attended a workshop run by Professor John Swales of the University of Michigan as part of the International Systemics Functional Conference held in Sydney in July.

Gwyn Jones attended a workshop on critical thinking run by Professor Craig Nelson of the University of Indiana.

Ian Collinson and Dominic Fitzsimmons both enrolled in the UNSW Foundations of University Learning and Teaching (FULT) program designed to introduce university teachers to the practice and theory of learning and teaching at the tertiary level.

Pam Mort represented The Learning Centre at the Research Education Development (RED) Colloquium at the University of Melbourne Graduate School and participated in two days of discussion and activities on research education development programs for higher degree students.

Janet van Randow of the University of Auckland visited The Learning Centre as part of her U21 Fellowship and gave a workshop on the University's Diagnostic English Language Needs Assessment (DELNA).

13. Visitors to The Learning Centre

Zisca Burton, who is the director of the Writing Centre at the University of Miami, visited The Learning Centre in August.

Susan Crozier of the University of Auckland Learning Centre visited The Learning Centre as part of a benchmarking exercise.

Dave Hall, Academic Registrar of the University of Sheffield, visited The Learning Centre in March as part of a Universitas 21 fellowship.

Tony Mitchener, General Manager (S.E Asia), UNSW International had a briefing meeting with The Learning Centre prior to commencing his new role.

Ann Silverman, associate professor of English, from the Community College of Philadelphia, visited The Learning Centre in early August.

Janet van Randow, the manager of DELNA, the University of Auckland's Diagnostic English Language Needs Assessment, visited UNSW on a Universitas 21 fellowship as part of an investigation into the way other institutions carry out post-entry language support. She gave a talk on DELNA to a group of interested UNSW staff in September.

A delegation of five visitors from Tohoku University, Japan, visited The Learning Centre in March.

The Learning Centre hosted a meeting with three members of NASPA, the North American Association of Student Administrators in Higher Education, Alissa Karton of George Mason University, Mary Wardell of Otis College of Art and Design and Wynn Rosser of Texas A&M University.

14. Appendix A: Examples of Enabling Skills diagnostic feedback criteria

14.1 Diagnostic Feedback Sheet from Psychology

14.1.1 Rating Sheet

KEY TO RATING: A = appropriate NA = not appropriate

CRITERIA		
A. Use of source material - information retrieval and processing	A	NA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ understanding of text demonstrated ◆ relevant information integrated into the answer ◆ addresses the question rather than simple restatement TOTAL A's =		
B. Structure and development of answer	A	NA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ appropriate position statement ◆ clear and organised paragraph structure (e.g. topic sentence) ◆ critical evaluation of evidence TOTAL A's =		
C. Control of academic writing	A	NA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ appropriate vocabulary used ◆ generalizations avoided where appropriate ◆ logical flow of ideas TOTAL A's =		
D. Grammatical correctness	A	NA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ accurate sentence structure ◆ correct and consistent use of verbs (tense, subject agreement) ◆ correct use of articles TOTAL A's =		

Marker no: Total A's: ____/12 Grade: G P C

14.2 Example of Diagnostic Feedback Sheet from Accounting

14.2.1 Accounting and Financial Management 1A

Cover Sheet: Feedback on Academic Writing Skills in Media Task

Surname: _____ Given Name: _____

Student Number: _____

CRITERIA		
<i>A. Use of source material – finding and processing information</i>	4	3 2 1
relevant information selected	A	NA
information integrated into the answer		
absence of plagiarism		
<i>B. Structure and development of answer (Q.3)</i>	4	3 2 1
appropriate introductory sentence	A	NA
clear position statement		
clear and organised paragraph structure		
critical evaluation of evidence		
appropriate concluding statement		
<i>C. Control of academic writing</i>	4	3 2 1
appropriate vocabulary	A	NA
generalisations avoided or qualified where necessary		
logical flow of ideas		
<i>D. Grammatical correctness</i>	4	3 2 1
accurate sentence structure	A	NA
correct subject/verb agreement		
consistent and appropriate tense choice		
correct use of articles (use of <i>a / the</i>)		

Rating: _____ (For your feedback only, NOT your assignment grade)

Key to grammar terms:

Subject/verb agreement = singular/plural agreement

e.g. The figures **indicates** that ... (incorrect); The figures **indicate** that...(correct)

Correct tense = time of verb

e.g. The figures **are showed** a decrease in profit. (incorrect); The figures **fall** since 2003. (incorrect)

Key to ratings:

A = appropriate for first year university level

NA = not appropriate for university level

4 = excellent / no problems / accurate / very appropriate

3 = good / minor problems / mainly accurate / largely appropriate

2 = only fair / some problems / often inaccurate / often inappropriate

1 = poor / major problems / inaccurate / inappropriate

What the ratings mean:

Most students will not get a rating of 4 in all four areas of skill assessment. This does not necessarily mean that there is a problem. For instance, a rating of 3 simply means that your writing needs continuing development in that particular area. Ratings of 1 or 2 indicate that you need to focus on strengthening that area. See your subject website for support for academic writing skill development.