

DEVELOPING COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN A DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC CONTEXT

Neela Griffiths

Presenting Author: Neela Griffiths (neela.griffiths@uts.edu.au)

Academic Language and Learning Group, Institute of Interactive Media and Learning, University of Technology Sydney, Ultimo NSW 2007, Australia

KEYWORDS: communication skills, embedding academic language and literacy, cross-disciplinary collaboration

ABSTRACT

A consequence of the internationalisation of universities and the implementation of widening participation policies is an increasingly diverse student population. Higher education institutions in Australia are implementing English language and transition pedagogy policies, and recognising that for successful transition all students need to be acculturated into academic literacy conventions at tertiary level. Traditionally, academic literacy teaching was generic and skills-based, offering a decontextualized, add-on approach taught by Academic Language and Learning (ALL) developers situated in central units. First year students deemed 'at-risk' were directed towards these units for a quick fix. Research has shown the drawbacks of this model and precipitated a movement towards one which is contextualised and discipline specific. This paper will present examples of how an ALL developer has worked collaboratively with discipline academics, integrating academic language and literacy into content subjects across degree programs in the Faculty of Science at a metropolitan Australian university. These partnerships have enabled disciplinary experts to become co-participants in the process, resulting in a more sustainable way of working. Examples of practice will include: team teaching; assessment task design; marking moderation; and the provision of assignment-targeted workshops. The paper will also address some of the successes and challenges of this embedded approach.

Proceedings of the Australian Conference on Science and Mathematics Education, Australian National University, Sept 19th to Sept 21st, 2013, page 28, ISBN Number 978-0-9871834-2-2.