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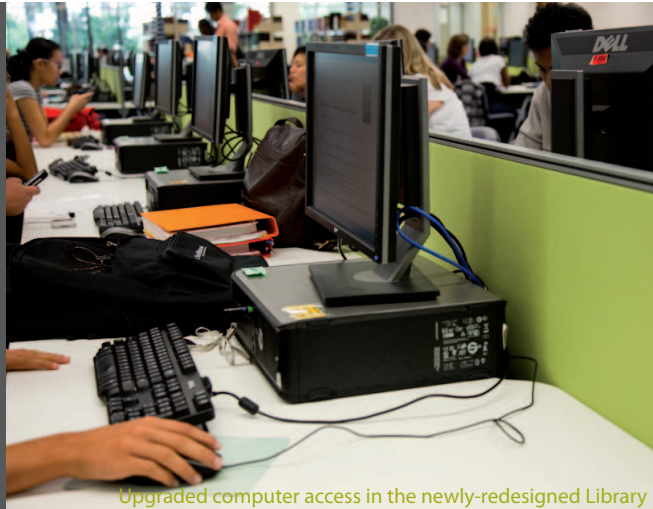
AUSTRALIA'S CAPITAL UNIVERSITY

BLT BULLETIN OF
LEARNING AND
TEACHING

Academic Skills Program Pronunciation Series

The Academic Skills Program has a new workshop series called Speak for Success, focussing on pronunciation and speaking for students from non-English-speaking backgrounds. New ASP academic staff member Dr Peter Copeman has drawn from his extensive theatre background to develop, over several years, his own kinaesthetically-based approach to teaching speech and pronunciation, adapted from voice training techniques for actors. Dr Copeman says that "while the workshops tackle the serious business of improving participants' English speaking accuracy, power and confidence, they're informal, stimulating and fun".

This semester's enrolments have closed, but the ASP plans to run it again in semester 2. What's more, the series can potentially be tailored and embedded for international students in courses that require them to take part in Work Integrated Learning. The ASP will be happy to discuss options with unit or course convenors with students whose speech skills would benefit from development prior to their placements. For further information, please contact Dr Copeman (x2166 or email peter.copeman@canberra.edu.au).



Upgraded computer access in the newly-redesigned Library

April 2010

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Supporting and Enhancing Learning Professor Carole Kayrooz, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)

Our emphasis on learning support continues. In 2009 we implemented a new admissions scheme with new access and credit programs, new admissions pathways and comprehensive learning support programs. Our data shows these have been highly successful. This work has been supported by the Library, the Academic Skills Program and the faculties, particularly their Student Resource Centres and indiscipline support.

This issue features the work of the University's Library and the Academic Skills Program. You may have noticed the recent construction work in the Library, where you will now see students working in an animated way, demonstrating that learning can be a profoundly social experience. This new space is realising the 'learning commons' vision of the 2008 Course and Disciplinary Review Report. The final recommendation in this Report was to adopt a learning commons network in a hub and spokes model. Shortly, we will circulate a draft Learning Support Review

conducted by Amanda Pearce of Victoria University, providing recommendations for comment for the development of learning support across campus.

The Academic Skills Program is largely responsible for the comprehensive learning support strategies phased in from Semester 2, 2008. Our Pathway 2 students are encouraged to complete a Smart Study Passport Program - an extended Orientation to academic, information and social literacies for university success. This year we had 438 students complete "Getting to know UC", 403 complete 'Smart Assignments', 288 complete 'Smart Study at UC' and we also conducted the 'Get Online' series and tours of the Library and Campus. We will analyse the success data for those Pathway 2 students currently undertaking the Peer Assisted Learning Scheme (PALS) and the Indiscipline Support Program in the nine units through which most students pass in first year, and the retention data for 2009 Pathway 2 students. More on this soon.

The New Faces of the Academic Skills Program Dr Rowena Harper, Academic Skills Program

The Academic Skills Program has seen substantial changes to its staff in the last 6 months, with long-time staff members Judy Couchman and Dr Kate Wilson, the former Director, moving on to greener pastures. The new Director, Dr Rowena Harper, has been working in the Academic Skills Program for just over a year, and is looking forward to working more closely with students and staff in her new role. The ASP also welcomes two new lecturers and

learning advisers, Dr Peter Copeman and Emmaline Lear. They each bring a wealth of experience: Peter's eclectic range of teaching, research and professional experience encompasses not only academic skills and English language teaching, but also script-writing, theatre directing, filmmaking, intercultural performance, anthropology and urban planning and design; Emmaline's background is in International Student education and literacy development.



Taking the Library to the Student

Anita Crotty, University Librarian

A library has inherent societal and intellectual value but from a student's perspective, the value of an academic library is often judged by its response to their specific and immediate learning or research needs. As teaching methods have become more student-centred and flexible, academic libraries have changed the way they deliver key services for information access, research skills development, study environments and learner support. For students, learning environments may include a blend of formal, informal and online modes, with assessment tasks requiring a mix of reflection, collaboration and interaction. In addition, access to a vast range of resources may be of limited benefit without adequate guidance and skills to locate and evaluate information relevant to a current learning stage or activity.

The University Library is a valuable resource for students and Library staff have been focusing on presenting that value whenever and wherever a student engages in learning.

Library as a Learning Environment

Despite the proliferation of online resources, students still favour the Library as a study space. Requirements can vary over time – sometimes reflective and quiet, sometimes sociable and interactive, often technology-enabled and within physical or virtual reach of expert assistance. The people counter on the security gate in the Library clicked over half a million times in 2009, confirming the ongoing role of the Library as a provider of a range of study spaces, open long hours and available to everyone.

The BURF-funded Library Learning Commons is in the final stages of fit-out and is already providing a flexible, student-centred space for a collaborative and sociable study experience. Level B has been refurbished with a range of fixed and moveable furniture for group work, increased power outlets for laptop users and a more conducive space for consulting Library staff about research topics. A key feature of the design is the capacity to provide after-hours access to some study space, printing/copying and computers when the staffed Library services and print collections are closed.

Other distinguishing features of the Learning Commons are the reduced visual dominance by library functional requirements, open vistas and increased natural light, welcoming and space-efficient service points, and the roving assistance for IT and information searching provided by student peers. The Commons also includes assistive technologies for students with a disability and a room with a large wall-mounted screen for practicing presentations and collaborative creation of media.

Library as a Content Environment

The Library building houses just over 312,000 physical items but a significant proportion of the Library collection is electronic and not physically present in the building – approximately 32,000 online fulltext journals, online reference databases covering every discipline in the academic program, e-books and specialist datasets.

Academic librarians have accepted that Google is the search engine of

choice for many students and are taking the Library to the students by allowing Google to harvest library bibliographic metadata. A simple change to Google Scholar preferences will display a UC Library link for articles held in the Library's online journal collection and searching the National Library's TROVE service (a meta-index of Australian library collections) provides a click through to the UC Library catalogue record displaying the current availability of a required title.

In another initiative towards taking the Library to wherever the student might be, staff have recently redeveloped the online Subject Guides to provide a dynamic portal to quality resources for each course discipline in the academic program. Subject Guides translate the knowledge and expertise of Library staff into a just-in-time and on-demand view of the information resources and related services within the context of the student's course of study. By using a Subject Guide as a jump-off point, a student can initiate pre-configured searches in the library catalogue, see new titles in their discipline area, view RSS feeds from relevant web-based information services, view Library holdings for their Unit Reading Lists and E-Reserve content, send an email request for research assistance, and click through to Moodle and resources provided by Academic Skills Program. In addition, a tag cloud of more granular subject-area descriptors used in the Guides encourages discovery of resources in related or cross-disciplinary areas.

STAFF PROFILES

Dr. Rowena Harper

Dr Rowena Harper has been working in the Academic Skills Program for just over a year, and recently stepped into the role of Director. Previously, Rowena worked in the Foundation Studies Program at the University of South Australia. Rowena has a PhD in English and a Graduate Certificate in Higher Education from the University of Adelaide, where she also taught in a Humanities and Social Sciences context: in film studies, media and literature. Rowena is looking forward to enhancing Learning Support at UC for students, particularly by working more closely with unit and course convenors to embed incremental generic skill development. She welcomes staff to get in touch if they would like to discuss any aspect of Learning Support.

Anita Crotty

Anita Crotty has been University Librarian since 2004 and previously, from 2001, was the Library Program Manager. In a professional career spanning 30 years in higher education libraries, she has worked in a range of operational and management roles covering academic liaison, information technology management, and collection services. A recurring theme however is planning, project management and organisational development to deliver targeted, client-focused improvements in library and information service delivery. The Library Learning Commons project is the 6th time Anita has been involved in the refurbishment or construction of a library and she hopes to experience the construction of a new library building just one more time at UC before retirement!