Integrating learning services for integrated learning

Judith Peacock
Library
Queensland University of Technology

Patrice Meixsell-Draper
Division of Technology, Information and Learning Support
Queensland University of Technology

In 2008, QUT's Division of Technology, Information and Learning Support implemented an integrated model for centralised learning skills support and development. Initially involving a strategic partnership between two departments, this model sees the Library now providing teaching & learning support for academic skills as well as information skills. In this integrated model, Librarians, Academic Skills Advisors and student Peer Advisors provide point-of-need consultation and assistance, undertake learning resource development and provision, and collaborate closely with faculty teaching staff to blend skills development within course curriculum and tasks. This session outlines the major outcomes of the initiative including: implementation of a tiered model for expanded study skills support at Library service points; service and role redefinition; policy and strategic planning; staff development; learning resource aggregation and development; communications and marketing; implementation of a standard university referencing and writing guide; and formulation of academic literacy "standards" to inform ongoing service and development.

In 2008, QUT's Division of Technology, Information and Learning Support implemented an integrated model of service and support for learning skills. In the same year, the Division also undertook the development and implementation of a new introductory standard referencing, citing and writing guide for student, including the establishment of four standard systems of citing and referencing.

Initially involving a strategic partnership between the Library and Teaching and Learning Support Services (TALSS), the integrated literacies model sees the Library assume responsibility for providing centralised teaching & learning support for academic literacy (study skills) as well as information literacy (research skills). In this integrated model, Librarians, Academic Skills Advisors and student Peer Advisors provide point-of-need student consultation and assistance, undertake integrated learning resource development and provision, and collaborate closely with faculty teaching staff to blend skills development within course curriculum and learning experiences.

All services and initiatives reflect strong and intentional alignment with the University's first year experience activities, *FYE Principles*, policy and guidelines to provide an optimum transition for commencing students, and coherent sustainable learning experiences for continuing students. Involving extensive consultation with stakeholders across QUT, this is an initiative that has received extremely positive support from the University and has signalled a fundamental shift in "core" business for the Library.

Specifically, this session outlines the major outcomes of the change management process including:
- implementation of a tiered model for expanded study skills support at Library service points;
- service and role redefinition;
- policy and strategic planning;
- strategic alignment to transition and first year experience;
- communications, marketing and publications;
- staff development;
- learning resource aggregation and development;
- and the formulation of core academic literacy "standards" to inform ongoing service and development.

As part of this initiative, the Division also undertook responsibility for producing a new introductory guide to referencing, citing and writing. Replacing an exisiting print publication, *QUT cite/write* responds to and reflects the changing needs of today's university student. Developed to suit the needs of the first year student, its design reflects enhanced usability, clarity, conformity and access to information about common standards and principles for citing, referencing and writing academically at QUT. The product has attracted full university-wide support from all faculties and service areas, and has aproved extremely popular and widely used by students. It has also been particularly acclaimed as an important resource to support the first year experience.

QUT cite/write is a hybrid resource consisting of:

1. an introductory booklet which introduces the general principles of good practice in referencing, citing and academic writing, which is used in conjunction with

2. print-on-demand style guides for four QUT recommended standard styles of referencing and citing (QUT APA, QUT Harvard, QUT Numbered and QUT Legal); and

3. a supporting website, for access to downloadable versions of the booklet, style and writing guides and a growing collection of additional resources for staff and students.

The redevelopment project was initiated and supported by QUT's Division of Technology, Information and Learning Support and took 12 months from conception to release of the first edition. The content development team drew together the extensive expertise of of librarians, academic skills advisors and language and learning advisors from International Student

Services and International College. Input was sought from stakeholders across the University, and ongoing development responds to user feedback and continuous ongoing evaluation.

Design and production of the print resources as well as website development was coordinated by the Division's Communications Team, in consultation with the content development team, faculty and divisional stakeholders, and the University's publications and web governance units. This team also led the strategic communications and marketing strategies that underpinned the successful implementation of the product, including targetted messaging, to students and faculty, print and electronic display materials and publications, and coordination of multi-purpose media releases via internal news sources.

As well as creating the introductory booklet, substantial effort was directed at creating *standardised* styles of referencing and citing which reflect the core referencing styles represented in practice at QUT. To minimise student confusion and ensure consistency in terms of assessment expectations and grading across disciplines and subjects, styles are reproduced precisely consistent with core style manuals. To address the wide variance of application of the Harvard style in use across the University, particular attention and effort has been applied to recreating the Harvard style as a justifiable and consistently reproduceable style, which now directly aligns with the *Chicago Manual of Style 15th edition*.

The ongoing design, development and implementation of the new resource is supported by the Division's Communications Team. During the redevelopment project and the 2nd revision, this team has undertaken management of all aspects of format design, content layout, look and feel, website design and development, publication and printing coordination, distribution and stock control. The Communications Team also assumes primary responsibility for the management and implementation of an extensive communications strategy for the product which targets students and faculty in multiple ways at various points in the academic calendar.

QUT Library is now the ongoing "business owner" of central academic and information literacy learning services, and *QUT cite|write as part of* the broader integrated literacies portfolio. The session illustrates processes, principles and practices involved in applying this model within the context of a large academic, multi-campus institution, and summarises the strategic and operational processes, managerial strategies, staffing and resourcing issues, and evaluation and reporting methodologies undertaken. It also highlights ongoing initiatives in resource provision and development, and blended/embedded academic/information literacy learning via course, curriculum, assessment and classroom processes.

Session plan:

Presentation (15mins): overview of goals, strategies, outcomes and future initiatives
Discussion | Q&A (15mins): lessons learned and knowledge sharing