

Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Programme (HEPPP)

2015 National Priorities Pool FINAL REPORT

Language and Literacy Skills for Post First Year Students: Pilot Program

January 2016 to March 2017

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In accordance with the Conditions of Grant, you must submit to the Department a **Final Report** (Clause 6.1 of Part A) and an **Acquittal Report** (clause 6.4 of Part A).

To meet this obligation, please submit:

- the completed **Final Report** template, in Word and PDF
- the completed and signed **Declaration** form, in PDF
- the completed **Acquittal Report** template, in Excel and PDF.

All documents must be submitted to equity@education.gov.au by 31 January 2017.

If you require additional guidance or clarification, please contact us at equity@education.gov.au.

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1. PROJECT SUMMARY (Conditions of Grant, clause 2.2(a)-(e) of Part A)

Objectives

Table 1: Project objectives

IDENTIFIED OBJECTIVE	EXTENT TO WHICH THE OBJECTIVE WAS MET
<p>Aid retention and progress of low socio-economic (SES), post first-year students through the development and implementation of a concurrently taught language and literacy programme</p>	<p>Official retention figures will only be available after census date 2017 (as per official definition of retention of VU). At that date, the retention data will be accessed re figures of retention in Community Development – pilot program 2 figure.</p> <p>Program Pilot 2. The unit we focused on for this program was ASA 2025 Transnational Social Movement. For this unit we got a 100 % pass rate excluding late submissions due to special considerations and students who had not withdrawn formally. These students also passed other subjects as well. (It should be noted that their ASD lecturers were also embedded in some of them).</p>
<p>Develop a re-usable algorithm for analysing student results to identify appropriate interventions</p>	<p>The algorithm identified for analysing student results: data search of all students who had enrolled in semester 1, 2015, who have failed 50% or more of study load in second semester 2015. For example, in pilot program 2 we focused on Community Development course where we noted that there are more first in family, EAL background and low SES students.</p>
<p>Explore various ways to reach PFY students to encourage them to come to workshops</p>	<p>We have explored ways to reach potential PFY to encourage them to come to workshops via distribution of a workshop flyer:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) email both student and private 2) SMS text, and 3) direct referral via Student Services and College. 4) for pilot program 2, we trained successful PFY students from pilot program 1 to phone directly students who had failed at the moment of maximum motivation two days after their exam results. <p>Also in December 2014, we contacted students re pilot program 3 via 4) VU FaceBook.</p> <p>We also had links to our PFY program instituted in the</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5) AskVU intranet. 6) Lecturer referral from first year units. 7) Students who have to meet student services/ student counsellors of ASD to write up their Academic Action plan are also advised to attend the workshops.

IDENTIFIED OBJECTIVE	EXTENT TO WHICH THE OBJECTIVE WAS MET
	<p>8) referrals from college first year champions (some first subjects are done by students in their second year of enrolment).</p> <p>The most sustainable way to reach students is a direct referral from a college lecturer who frames our workshops almost as a condition of probation for that college. "If you wish to continue, you need to attend these workshops". In this way the potential academic support is viewed by the probation student as not merely a possible service but one that must be followed up and in addition, is viewed by the College to be important. (When students get their probation letter, they misinterpret the services as optional even though the letter is not written this way). This type of referral assists the students to get over hurdle of embarrassment etc. as they feel they have no choice but to attend.</p> <p>8) In pilot program 3, we are thinking of targeting probation students in Business College i.e. doing a search for PFY students in two first core units. [They will be repeating the first year units.</p>
<p>Identify and provide concurrent support for a second year unit targeted for high level of EAL and FIF students to increase equality of opportunity in higher education</p>	<p>In pilot program 2, the Community Development course was targeted via one Unit: ASA 2025 Transnational Social Movements. Academic support was embedded into the unit's classes via workshops on writing assessments and example assignments provided and discussed. This was supplemented by one-to-one writing feedback in person or online as appropriate.</p> <p>This was by far the most successful PFY intervention with a 100 % pass rate excluding students who had been given special consideration. Also</p> <p>Having the Academic support lecturer in the class room in almost every lecture and tutorial meant that students felt comfortable to ask for help informally. This is recognised in the literature as the best way to encourage help seeking i.e. maximising multiple informal opportunities for students to ask for assistance.</p>

Project Activities, Milestones and Key Performance Indicators

Table 2: Project activities, milestones and KPIs

TIMEFRAME	PLANNED ACTIVITIES AND MILESTONES	PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND MILESTONES COMPLETED	IDENTIFIED KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS OUTCOME
31 Jan. 2016	1.1 Project team established	Date 29 th February	Project coordinator, Curriculum Developer, Research Officers and Lecturers contracted	One staff member was hired, Eileen Hanrahan and other Academic and support lecturers notified and co-opted as required
	1.2 Identification of students for pilot program	Completed via research assistant's data analysis of high failure rate units	30 post first year students identified against agreed criteria	400 students contacted via email and text. 12 were contacted from college unsatisfactory progress meetings (Business)
	1.3 finalisation of pilot program 1 (model and content)	Feb 2016	Pilot program model and content confirmed by Directors of Learning and Teaching	Presented to Dean of Students
29 Feb 2016	2.1 Enrolment in pilot program 1	11 Feb.	Identified students contacted and enrolment confirmed	Registration list drawn up from student bookings
29 Feb.- 27May	3.1 Deliver pilot 1	25 th Feb 2016	Pilot program 1 delivered on 25 th February:	Introduction to PFY pilot program –success predictors: Counselling time management and avoiding procrastination, Career vision and Self-management planning timetable session. Supplementary staff from Centre for Student Success i.e. counsellor, career educator and SSSL lecturer were involved in the facilitation of workshops.
	3.2 Mid-pilot program 1 evaluation		Focus group evaluation conducted	Student feedback led to re-prioritising of time management and career vision.
27 May 2016 - 25 July 2016	4.1 Post-pilot program 1 evaluation		Focus group conducted	Formal focus group will be conducted in 2017 as Ethics has now been obtained (21/12/2016)
	4.2 review of students' results	FH: date of meeting with Directors of L & T	Students results analysed and presented to Directors of Learning and Teaching	The feedback and their support were noted in the Meetings Minutes.

TIMEFRAME	PLANNED ACTIVITIES AND MILESTONES	PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND MILESTONES COMPLETED	IDENTIFIED KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS OUTCOME
	4.3 Finalisation of pilot program 2 (model and content)	23 July	Modifications based on pilot program 1; evaluations implemented	Modifications implemented.
25 July 2016 - 21 October 2016	5.1 Enrolment in pilot program 2		Identified students contacted and enrolment confirmed	This time we focused on the College of Arts, Community Development Course and those enrolled in semester 1, 2015 and who had failed more than 50% of their enrolment. We also added students from student action plan meetings which occurred with ASD lecturers
Extra activities deemed integral and implemented.	5.2 Training of post first year students who had been successful to contact pilot program 2 students	Thurs 30 th June	Training conducted by Danielle Borlovan under the auspices of Eileen Hanrahan.	Training completed
Extra activities deemed integral and implemented.	5.3 Students rang students who had failed	Wed 6 July Friday 8 July	Students rang all identified students	Phoning by student peers completed
	5.4 Deliver pilot program 2	Tues 13 th July careers Thurs 15 th July Thurs 22 nd July	Second iteration of pilot program conducted	We added an introduction to information literacy sessions (22 nd July); repeated success predictors, self-management; (15 th July) and Career visions 13 th July.
	5.5 Provide embedded support for targeted unit ASA 2025 (Transnational Social Movements)	Semester two: all lectures and tutorials attended by ASD's Eileen Hanrahan, plus 33 individual consultations.	Support to be provided via workshops and one-to-one	Workshops delivered in class, one-to-one sessions in person and online. Of the 33 one to ones, this represented 10 students as a number submitted several drafts.
	5.6 Mid-pilot program 2 conducted		Focus group evaluation conducted	Student feedback indicated need for Information Literacy support for specific assignments. Library staff brought in.

TIMEFRAME	PLANNED ACTIVITIES AND MILESTONES	PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND MILESTONES COMPLETED	IDENTIFIED KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS OUTCOME
21 October 2016 -30 November 2016	6.1 post-pilot program 2 evaluation		Focus group conducted	Formal focus group will be conducted in 2017 as Ethics has now been obtained (21/12/2016)
	6.2 review of students results both PFYs and ASA 2025	30 Nov	Student results analysed and presented to Directors of Teaching and Learning	Findings showed results for pilot program 1 over two semesters.
31 December 2016	7.1 Final report		Final report is submitted to the Department following endorsement by Directors Learning and Teaching	

Highlights and Issues

The post-first year pilot project was very successful in meeting certain aspects of its outcomes, with very positive student feedback for those who continued attend voluntary workshops. Our pilot program focused primarily on the exploration of possible strategies that could encourage students to accessing academic skills self-management development sessions and thus improve their performance. It is important to point out that unlike North American College and university counterparts, Australian universities do not specify mandatory probation academic skills units as a condition of probation, and the uptake of our workshops is the major issue. One of my recommendations is that we might need to consider this successful model as a possible model [see recommendations]. There are three major achievements and one major highlight that we would like to draw to your attention.

One achievement was the transformations of the students who were involved in the pilot program 1 group i.e. who attended all PFY workshops: initial, mid semester break and exam preparation. Students noted in their feedback that the initial workshops had reset their study habits from the get go. They had learnt to access support, and also to self-manage to an extent. When they noted that they were slipping back into procrastination or perfectionist behaviour, they checked in with ASD lecturer and overcome their blocks. Pilot program 2 did not have as many attendees though two were successful subsequently the figures are too low to be significant.

A second main achievement was the setting up of workshops involving both academic and information literacy within the one session. This works best “just-in-time” i.e. 3-4 weeks before an assignment is due and exercises on clarifying the assessment topic can lead to the articulation of library search terms. It works best in the lecture/tutorial time slot so it is taken by the students to be an integral part of the curriculum. For example, in the second year embedded class ASA 2025 we did this in week three and all students [except two that did not submit due to special consideration) passed their essay. They left the workshop

understanding what was expected but also had located the resources required and learnt a bit more about citation. They also learnt about media data bases and video data bases which were required for their essays on recent social movements. In addition, by the end of the sessions they had accessed individual choices of peer reviewed articles and citation details. They also access library assistance for their second main essay on an individual basis.

A third main achievement also related to collaboration. This achievement involved the setting up of processes where staff from different sections of the recently set up Centre for Student Success worked in collaboration to provide sessions for the PFY pilot program students: ASD, Students Supporting Student Learning (SSSL), Counselling and Careers. Such collaboration assists students to understand the range of services available. Most post first year students had had no idea that all of these resources existed and had hence had only accessed them after the unsatisfactory progress meetings with their colleges.

The main highlight was the success of the 2nd year unit where an ASD lecturer was embedded in all classes. Apart from figures for non-withdrawal and special considerations, all students passed. Some of these students were exactly the type of demographic we wished to target in the Post First Year pilot: low SES, EAL, first in family and non ATAR entry students. We had chosen the Community development for the same reasons. Of the students that were given individual consultation (self-selected and as directed by lecturer) 3 students received a HD, four received a D, three received a C, and 3 a pass. However, it must be taken into account the nature of the unit; students were very inspired by the subject matter. The lecturer, Dr Chris McConville also gave explicit assignment directions in terms of argumentation and this also impacted on their success.

Some Individual Students

- One student received a D for the first time in her course.
- Another student from a refugee, FIF passed all subjects.

Did the project lead to implementable outcomes? What changes will result at your institution/nationally? How is research being translated into practice? Are there activities resulting from this project that will be continued?

The workshops and embedding of ASD in 2nd year are both implementable outcomes. Also the collaboration of library and literacy staff was exemplary and contributed significantly to the success of the second year unit outcome in 2016. The embedding and collaboration is already being planned for replication in 2017 in a first year unit and other second year units.

We would recommend that the embedded model is the most efficient and successful PFY intervention for probation students and also generally for students at risk. Also the North American model of a mandatory Academic Success unit for students on probation and intrusive appears to be standard good practice (Cruise 2002) and is worthy of consideration.

Did you undertake an evaluation of your project?

Yes No

Findings

The below data on the ASD embedded unit shows success of students who did not withdraw formally. In relation to the post first year program the table on Eileen's students is most significant. Some of the students were from the social work course and in 4th year and unsurprisingly did very well. However, some of Eileen's group were at a low level of academic and literacy skills and did very well.

ASA2025: TRANSNATIONAL SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, Semester 2, 2016

Unit coordinator/ Lecturer: Dr Chris McConville

ASD lecturer: Eileen Hanrahan

SETs/ SEUs not yet available for this unit.

Table 3: Semester 2, 2016 grade distribution

GRADE	NO. OF STUDENTS	%
HD	8	21.6%
D	9	24.3%
C	10	27.0%
L	1	2.7%
P	6	16.2%
N	3	8.1%
Grand Total	37	100.0%

Table 4: Eileen's students only Low SES/ EAL/ First In Family/ exchange students

GRADE	NO. OF STUDENTS	%
HD	3	20%
D	3	20%
C	3	20%
P	5	33%
L	1	7%
Grand Total	15	100%

Table 5: Pass Rates for all units taken by ASA2025 students in Sem 2 2016

PASS RATE %	EILEEN'S GROUP	NOT EILEEN'S GROUP
100	11	17
75	1	0
67	0	1
33	0	1
0	0	1

PASS RATE %	EILEEN'S GROUP	NOT EILEEN'S GROUP
LATE	3	2
Grand Total	15	22

= 37 students

Student feedback semester 1.

Where applicable, indicate number of the following resulting from this project:

Student contacts	Enter number or N/A
Journal (or other publication) submissions	1
Conference Presentations	1
Websites developed	Preliminary work done on PFY website within Victoria University's Learning Management System. (Website address/es: still being trialled).
Educational or marketing campaigns	Brochure developed for both pilot programs Brochure developed for both pilot programs Pilot program 1 all students that had failed 50 % or more of their enrolment; students from post progress hearings. Pilot program 2, sent to targeted course community Development. Pilot program 3, ditto and in addition VU FaceBook and links to ASD via Ask VU platform.
Community organisations engaged	N/A
Schools engaged	N/A
Parental/family contacts	N/A

Optional - If you included transformational/behavioural change KPIs in your EOI please summarise outcomes here:

<i>E.g. Percentage increase in enrolment</i>	N/A
<i>E.g. Percentage increase in aspiration</i>	N/A

Describe any issues that occurred during the year and any mitigation strategies you implemented.

As outlined above the main issues are systemic i.e. getting the post first year students in and being able to provide them with the necessary assistance. In a situation where accessing this help is not part of the condition of probation it is very difficult to achieve. The best method of mitigating this is to embedded assistance in 2nd year units where students are at risk.

2. OTHER PROJECT MATERIAL (Conditions of Grant, clause 2.2 (b)-(e) of Part A)

[List the titles of any published reports, pamphlets or other documentation produced in the course of the Project and attach them to this Final Report.]

Table 6: Additional materials produced over the course of the project

TYPE	AUTHOR	DATE OF PUBLICATION	PUBLICATION DETAILS
E journal paper: "Mid-semester workshops to support sophomore students on probation."	Fiona Henderson Eileen Hanrahan Janet Jensen Danielle Borlovan	Revised paper invited for resubmission in 2017	E-sources for College Transition http://sc.edu/fye/esource/
E-journal <i>Journal of The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition</i> : a semi-annual refereed journal providing current research on the first college year and other significant student transitions	Fiona Henderson Eileen Hanrahan Janet Jensen Danielle Borlovan	Abstract to be submitted in 2017	
Conference presentation	Eileen Hanrahan Danielle Borlovan And two PFY student mentors	29 September 2016	Victoria University Learning and Teaching Symposium: Good practice and messy problems. Presentation entitled "Reaching out to students at times of crisis".
Pamphlet on workshop	Eileen Hanrahan	15 December 2016	Posted on FaceBook Ask VU ASD link Other units at VU.

3. ACQUITTAL REPORT (Conditions of Grant, clause 6.4(e), clause 6.7-8 of Part A)

Have you fully expended the Grant Funds provided under the Conditions of Grant?

Yes No

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER			
ACQUITTAL OF LANGUAGE & LITERACY SKILLS FOR POST FIRST YEAR			
		Parent Entity (University) Only	
	Notes	2016	2015
Financial assistance received in CASH during the reporting period (total cash received from the Australian Government for the Programs) *		40,846	-
Net accrual adjustments			-
Revenue for the period	3.(a)(A)	40,846	-
Surplus/(Deficit) from previous year		-	-
Total revenue including accrued revenue		40,846	-
Less expenses including accrued expenses		(40,846)	-
Surplus/(Deficit) for reporting period		-	-
* Revenue received for Literacy Skills for 1st year			

If the answer is No, please specify:

- the amount of funds remaining: \$
- the reason for this underspend:

Ensure that the completed Acquittal Report template is signed by an appropriate university officer and attached to this Final Report.

***IMPORTANT NOTICE - Unspent 2015 National Priorities Pool Grant Funds**

- Grant recipients must fully expend these 2015 National Priorities Pool funds in the project period for which the grant is made and report on this expenditure to the Commonwealth, including the amount of any unspent funds.
- If a provider fails to spend the full amount granted it in respect of a year, the unspent funds may be recovered by the Commonwealth.

DECLARATION

I declare that:

- I am authorised by the university to sign this Declaration on its behalf, and
- to the best of my knowledge, the information that I have provided in the **Final Report** and **Acquittal Report** for the HEPPP 2015 National Priorities Pool project *Language and Literacy Skills for Post First Year Students: Pilot Program* is true, correct and accurate in all particulars.

I understand that:

- The provision of false or misleading information or the making of false or misleading statements to the Commonwealth is a serious offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)*.
- If any actual or potential conflict of interest arises, I must notify the Commonwealth immediately in writing of the facts giving rise to the actual or potential conflict of interest and to take such steps as the Commonwealth may require so as to resolve or otherwise deal with any conflict of interest that may arise.

I agree to publication of the Final Report on the Department of Education and Training website, once accepted by the department.

Title Director Client Services
Name Mr Gordon McRobert
Position *On behalf of*
Chief Executive Officer (Vice-Chancellor)

Signature



Appendix 1

Curriculum for Post First Year Success

Eileen Hanrahan, Victoria University.

In these workshops we are framing Academic Support and Development activities with a focus on the *development of strengths facilitating capability*. At a university level, this implies developing the capability of staff to create and sustain a positive learning environment. For students this implies a focus on developing their capabilities to be self-managing learners.

We will look at the research which provides us with a list of predictors for success i.e. if students do X their likelihood of success will increase. By being here today you have already increased your probability of success. We want you to succeed and will support and challenge you to do so.

Our perspective: we value difference; can't do this without your active engagement, involvement and commitment to follow through; must be a joined up coherent process.

A: PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION ABOUT WHAT MAKES STUDENTS SUCCESSFUL

- Is it to do with purpose of study?
- Successful Planning for assignments and exams?
- Academic research and writing skills?
- Social engagement with university life?

The research literature identifies a clear pattern of predictors of academic success which are consistent with the experiences of educational practitioners. We know that students, on average, are more likely to succeed if they:

1. *Invest time on task* – time spent each week studying is the strongest predictor of academic success i.e. students prepare for lectures, do the prescribed reading for the lecture; write up notes for each class.
2. *Regularly attend class* lectures and tutorials (thus increasing opportunities for learning and meeting other students) is also a strong predictor;
3. *Balance their commitments* (e.g., working on average not more than 15 hours a week in paid employment if studying full time);
4. *Develop a social network*, however modest (e.g., even knowing one other student's name at university offers some protection against dropping out);
5. Have a *clear reason or goal* for attending university (e.g., vocational direction);
6. *Engage with the online environment* which moderates success in contemporary university life
7. Have some measure of *academic self-confidence* (self-efficacy is foundational to success in many aspects of life).

B: PYRAMID DISCUSSION

Think. Which predictor do you consider to be the most important?

Find someone who agrees with you and discuss the reasons why it is the most important.

Then find someone who thinks another predictor is the most important and try to persuade them that you are correct.

C: FOCUSED DISCUSSION (note phrases in bold and ask students what they mean to them personally)

The above predictors can also be reconceptualised as Five Senses of Success (Lizzio, 2006 as cited in Wilson, 2009, 5-7)

- **Sense of capability:** know what is expected of them in the unit, level of commitment,
- **Sense of academic culture:** know what is valued in their college/ discipline. Appreciation of new values.
- **Sense of connectedness:** with other students and with staff and affiliation with VU.
- **Sense of purpose:** can keep going even if there are challenges if have sense of vocation, engagement with discipline, and capacity to set personal goals. Students need to be clear about why they are at university, their choice of degree and relevance to course of study.
- **Sense of resourcefulness:** know how to get help and information, are willing to speak up if they have a problem in a timely manner, and can balance life, work, social activities and study.

And conversely, students may be *more likely to drop out if they:*

- Don't develop a social network at university; don't have strong, supportive relationships with peers
- Don't have a sense of vocational purpose in their degree;
- Don't regularly attend lectures and tutorials (with the exception of a small number of very bright young men);
- Don't have access to, or engage with the online environment;
- Do work more than 25 hours a week if enrolled full time;
- Are the first in their family to attend university (low social capital); [Old fashioned idea if it impacts new identity formation]
- Are a member of a minority or disadvantaged group (e.g., Indigenous, rural, refugee) [Old fashioned idea if it impacts new identity formation]
- Have not taken on a new identity (and emotional commitment) where uni study is seen as a key to longer term employment goals. This process takes some time! (Burke, 2006 as cited in Wannell & Whannell, 2015, 50).
- Have not had opportunities to fine tune their new identity.

D: CREATE

Have students draft a personal "SELF MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST"

E: BUILD sense of purpose for course and normalise experiences of challenges

Maintain engagement through input from staff from Careers, Student Advising and a past student.

F: DEVELOP research skills and information literacy

Structured library exercise relevant to each student's course.

G: RECOGNISE types of assessment

H: UNDERSTAND how marking rubrics can help

I: CRITICAL READING exercise

J: CRITICAL WRITING exercise

K: INDIVIDUAL SESSIONS throughout semester to analyse FEEDBACK being received.