

UniSA's Approach towards Enhancing Student Experience through the Implementation of a Learning, Language and Literacies (L³) Model

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Abstract

The increasing prevalence of English language in work and professional fields internationally is motivating universities to seek better ways for students to develop their disciplinary English language proficiency through academic studies. Competence in disciplinary English language would enhance student retention, positive academic outcomes and employment opportunities. In response to this, an Australian Government funded initiative produced the *Good Practice Principles*. The University of South Australia (UNiSA) employed the *Good Practice Principles* to review and improve its teaching and learning activities to enhance student experience in the university. A new language and learning model called the L³ (Learning, language and literacies) was implemented university-wide to promote the teaching and learning of disciplinary English language proficiency, academic literacies, and professional communication skills. Language and learning support was tailored to address division specific learning needs. Students self-identified their language and learning needs by completing an online exercise called the English Language Self-Assessment Tool (ELSAT). Provision of support was based on students' ELSAT outcomes. All of these activities were designed and implemented on the basis of enhancing student experience and better learning outcomes.

Keywords

English language proficiency, academic literacy, learning language literacies, divisionally aligned language specialists

Introduction

Given the increasing prevalence of the English language in work and professional fields internationally, many universities are seeking better ways for students to develop their disciplinary English language proficiency (ELP) through academic studies. Competence in disciplinary English language would enhance better student retention, academic success and employment outcomes. This is especially pertinent to contexts where international education contributes significantly to a country's economy. In Australia for instance, international education activities contributed AUD\$16.3 billion to the economy in 2010-2011 (ABS 2011). In 2009, international students accounted for 22 per cent of all students studying in Australian universities (ABS 2011). Successful learning outcomes of these students are important to host institutions as full-paying international students generate a large portion of the income that helps to sustain quality education for all students in a university. The globalisation of education, however, does not come without a price. Key players in higher education testify that there is a decline in disciplinary English language proficiency and academic literacy among students irrespective of their domestic or international status. Low levels of English language proficiency and academic literacy can impact on retention, academic success and employment outcomes. Language proficiency and academic literacy that is deemed to be below an acceptable level for participation in the academic discourse would effect on student experience. It is these factors among others that motivated the University of South Australia (UniSA) to reassess the provision of its language and learning support to all students studying in the University. Although, positive student experience (Kay, Marshall & Norton 2007) and successful student learning outcomes have been high on UniSA's agenda for many years, there has been a push from stakeholders within and outside the University for a more systematic, appropriate and sustainable language development mechanism as of 2008. This resulted in the implementation of a new Learning, Language, Literacies model (L³) in February 2012. This paper discusses the development and challenges experienced during the initial implementation stage of the model. As the L³ model is in its infancy, it has yet to undergo a rigorous evaluation process. The qualitative data presented in this paper are anecdotal

accounts from UniSA students and staff who had experienced language and learning support in the previous model as well as the L³. The quantitative data employed in the discussion have been obtained from the University's Student Administration System (SAS). The paper will begin by discussing the internal and external drivers who were instrumental in advocating for a new model of learning support. The discussion will then focus on the model's conceptualisation. This will be followed by a focus on some of the perceived challenges associated with the early stages of L³'s implementation with reference to the data obtained to date. The discussion will be concluded with implications for student experience and future direction for the model.

Reassessment of Language and Learning Support Provision

Students' inability to cope with course demands due to their low level of English language proficiency and academic literacy is a common grievance in higher education. Murray (2010) claimed that there was an increasing sensitivity in higher education towards the decline in language and literacy skills of students. He suggested that academics were simplifying materials and spending time addressing the English language problems of their students. Although, English language was only one of the many factors that contributed to poor learning outcomes (Arkoudis et al. 2009; Robertson et al. 2000), it is a dominant issue that impacts on retention, academic success and employment outcomes. This contributes significantly on student experience in the university as a whole. One study found that international students were more likely to fail and less likely to get a higher grade besides being unable to contribute effectively in classroom learning activities (Bretag, Horrocks & Smith 2002) because of their English language proficiency. The problem is exacerbated by demands of the workplace. Employers in English-speaking countries were requiring evidence of a high level of English language proficiency from graduates of Non-English Speaking Background (NESB) who were seeking employment (Craven 2010). In a study commissioned by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), it was found that NESB graduates experienced difficulty finding work in their chosen field (Arkoudis et al. 2009). The findings of this study concluded that while ELP was a key factor in influencing access to skilled employment, a graduate's strong profession-specific skills and "well-roundedness" were of equal importance in the workplace. In some instances, students were unable to graduate due to their inability to successfully complete industry placements as part of their degree program specifications. On other occasions, students who had graduated from their degree programs and have opted to live and work in Australia were unable to obtain registration from professional bodies because of their language proficiency. In the last two years, the nursing and teaching professional accreditation or registration bodies had increased their IELTS requirements for registration. It is speculated that other bodies might follow suit.

The issues highlighted above have serious consequences for UniSA, with 15 per cent of its total student enrolment of 36, 000 comprised of international students. The need to address low levels of English language proficiency became more pertinent when supported by findings from various studies that found English language proficiency impacted on student retention, academic success and employment outcomes (Arkoudis et al. 2009; Bretag, Horrocks & Smith 2002; Robertson et al. 2000). Concurrently, there was also awareness among the different stakeholders in UniSA that the Tertiary Education Quality Standards (TEQSA) which had replaced the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) would instigate a framework for monitoring standards more broadly within higher education and other tertiary education institutions. AUQA's cycle two audit of UniSA stated,

AUQA affirms UniSA's recognition that English language proficiency for students is a significant and immediate issue that needs to be addressed, and supports timely conclusion of the current discussion about the implementation of the English language proficiency project, including the testing of student proficiency and where required the provision of additional support and guidance for students. (Wright 2011, p.3)

Another important driver that motivated the need for a new language and learning model was a report published by DEEWR (2009) titled *Good Practice Principles for English language Competence for International Students*. The report described what good practice was and suggested how universities could adapt these statements to suit their own needs. The various discussions about the need to address students' low levels of English language proficiency and academic literacy that transpired from 2008 within and outside the University resulted in the formation of an English Language Advisory group in 2010. The group drafted a paper detailing the conceptualisation of an English Language Proficiency (ELP) model. This document was endorsed by the Senior Management Group and Teaching and Learning Committee (Wright 2011). In March 2011, UniSA's academic board accepted an approach to support ELP based on seven principles listed below.

- 1) Any comprehensive approach to ELP needs to account for general academic and professional proficiencies.
- 2) UniSA will use a post-enrolment language assessment (PELA) to identify students in need of general proficiency provision.

- 3) Those students identified via PELA as ‘at risk’ will have access to all provision, including exclusive access to individual consultations and personalised, language focused assignment feedback.
- 4) Wherever possible, resources will be discipline-specific in order to ensure relevance and maximise student engagement and thus learning.
- 5) Those interventions constituting English language provision need to be sustainable and systematic while allowing for a degree of local flexibility in responding to specific local circumstances.
- 6) Academic literacy and professional communication skills should be embedded in the curriculum and taught by academic faculty to all students.
- 7) Students who wish to receive IELTS tuition will be referred to external providers and will fund any such tuition themselves.

What these principles highlighted was that the provision of language and learning support needs to be structured in a systematic manner. The process would first constitute a clear conceptualisation of ELP. An instrument would then be needed to identify students who were most ‘at risk’. Finally, a realistic, meaningful and cost-effective model would have to be implemented to support these students’ language and learning outcomes. The provision of language and learning support in UniSA underwent change in February 2012. Various mechanisms were put into place for the successful implementation of the L³ model. The following sections discuss this model in detail.

Conceptualisation of ELP and its Theoretical Framework

The design of the L³ model was guided by blended learning theory. Published literature identify that although blended learning can take on many forms, it was usually characterised by its flexibility and support in the provision of learning resources, addressing diverse learning needs and styles as well as juxtaposing face-to-face contact with e-learning. Scholars express various definitions for blended learning. A fusion of definitions from published literature classified this strategy as a combination of technologies, locations, and pedagogical approaches that unfold in a virtual as well as physical environment (Graham 2006; Mason & Rennie 2006; Littlejohn & Pegler 2006). The conceptual framework for the L³ model is illustrated in Figure 1.

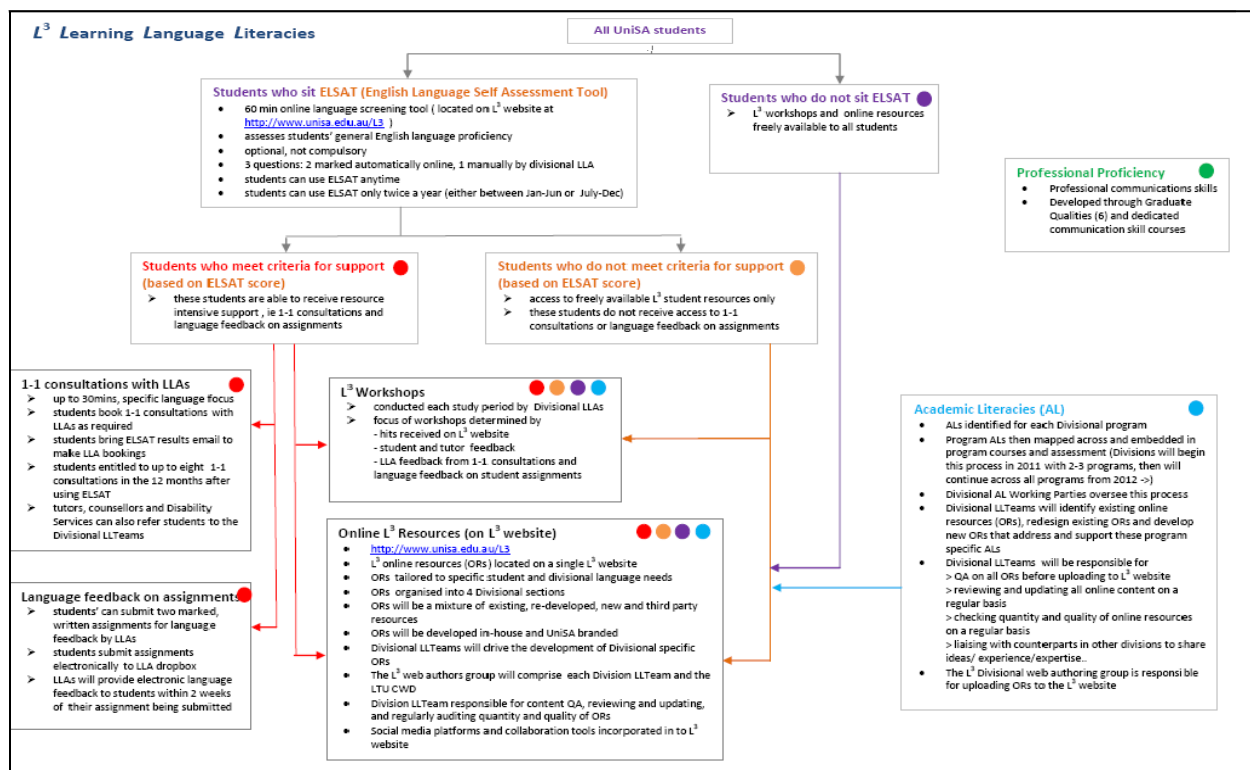


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of L³ Model

In the L³ model, students can choose to access learning resources either from an online environment or through face-to-face consultations. All learning resources were designed to cater for diverse learning needs and strategies. These resources were multimodal in nature. Language and learning support was provided through face-to-face contact and e-learning environments. Both the L³ website and Learnonline (the e-learning environment) course portal facilitated this. All of the activities in the L³ model were designed to enhance student experience in the University. Provision of language and learning support in the L³ model illustrated in Figure 1 is guided by three important concepts, namely, 1) General proficiency; 2) Academic literacy; and 3) Professional communication skills. Key stakeholders in UniSA were aware that for the model to succeed, it was essential to define 'proficiency'. The discussions with the academic community in UniSA resulted in a clear distinction between general proficiency, academic literacy and professional communication skills. General proficiency in the L³ was defined as the general communicative competence in the English language which would enable a student to express and understand meaning accurately, fluently and appropriately, according to context. Academic literacy encompassed the conversancy in the specialised vocabularies, concepts and knowledge associated with particular disciplines and with their distinct patterns of meaning-making activity as well as ways of contesting meaning. Professional communication skills would refer to a range of skills and abilities that bear on communicative performance in professional settings.

In the Learning, Language, Literacies (L³) model, the language and learning team would be responsible for provision of support to enhance students' general proficiency (Wright 2010). Academic staff would work with the language learning team aligned to their divisions to identify associated academic literacies, embed them in course curriculum and teach the literacies during lectures (Curnow & Liddicoat 2008; Wingate, Andown & Cogo 2011). Language and learning specialists would initially support the embedding process by running face-to-face workshops to reinforce the literacies taught to students by academic staff and/or design e-learning resources to enhance the learning process. It was envisioned that ultimately all academic literacies, including professional communication skills, would be taught by academic staff through face-to-face contacts and e-learning environments. The divisionally-aligned language and learning team would further focus on supporting students with their ELP and academic literacies through the design and implementation of workshops, face-to-face consultations and online resources. The next section of this discussion details the various learning support activities implemented in the L³ model and some of the associated challenges.

The Implementation of the L³ and Associated Challenges

The provision of language and learning support in the L³ model was undertaken through various activities. All students in UniSA were required to complete an online post-enrolment language assessment that was named the ELSAT or English language Self Assessment Tool in order to gain face-to-face learning support from a Language and Learning Adviser (LLA). The rationale for this was that it enabled LLAs within each of the four divisions to assess and tailor language and learning support to meet individual needs. Students identified as being 'at risk' through the ELSAT were offered eight face-to-face consultations with a LLA. These students had the additional benefit of having two of their graded assignments assessed for detailed language feedback. All students including those who had been identified as 'not being at risk' had access to English language proficiency and academic literacy workshops run throughout the semester. In addition, all students could access the L³ website and its online resources. Students were taught discipline specific English language proficiency, academic literacies and professional communication skills through the embedding of academic literacies in courses and programs. The following sections discuss these activities in detail.

Post-enrolment Language Assessment (PELA)

The value of post-enrolment language assessment was endorsed by many Australian universities. In a study conducted by Dunworth (2009) it was found that 40 per cent of the universities administered such a test and another 12 were in the process of employing one. A post-enrolment language assessment instrument was obtained from Melbourne University's Language Testing Research Centre. This instrument was named English language Self Assessment Tool (ELSAT). Students were given the option of choosing to complete the ELSAT. The ELSAT was a 60-minute online exercise comprising three sections, namely, Section A - a text completion exercise, Section B - a speed reading exercise and Section C - an argumentative essay. The first two sections were marked electronically. The essay was assessed by the LLAs in each division. It was perceived that the ELSAT was a valid and reliable measure of students' language proficiency and linguistic ability (Murray 2010). The ELSAT would assist divisionally-aligned language and learning teams to gauge students' general proficiency. Students who completed Sections A and B and were in the 0-79 score category were immediately identified as needing extra language and learning support. Students who obtained a total of 80-100 marks for both Sections A and B had their essays assessed to further identify if they were in the 'at-risk' category. If a student had obtained a score of 80-100

and Band 5 or 6 for their essay, they were categorised as not needing extra language and learning support. In both situations, the students were informed of their ELSAT outcome and the types of language and learning support that they were entitled to. The data presented in Table 1 demonstrates that a majority of the students who completed the ELSAT had access to the eight face-to-face consultations with a LLA.

Records indicated that the uptake of the ELSAT in the first few months of implementation was low. Discussion in team meetings highlighted that the language and learning team was concerned about low completion rates. They were anxious that this would impact on face-to-face learning support. LLAs were worried that students were not obtaining the learning support they needed. Both academics and students who had experienced language and learning support in the previous model expressed their dissatisfaction with the ELSAT. One academic claimed ‘You have taken away our right to directly refer students. Who is going to deal with students who are struggling in our courses?’ This academic was referring to the decision made by management that academics will not be able to refer students to the language and learning team as they did in the past. Continuing UniSA students who had experienced hassle-free bookings for face-to-face consultations with LLAs in the past, were equally frazzled as they found the ELSAT to be time consuming and difficult to complete. One Social Work student complained, ‘I do not have the time to do the exercise. It may be easy for you because you designed it but it is very difficult for me’. The student stormed out of a LLA’s office and never returned. This was a student whose records indicated, was struggling in his study program. Another student stated that he told his friends not to complete the exercise as it was not worth their effort. Table 1 presents the statistics for the uptake of ELSAT from February to September 2012.

Table 1. Divisional ELSAT Uptake

Division	At risk	Not at risk	Total completions
Health Sciences (HSC)	75	3	78
Education, Arts and Social Sciences (EASS)	94	17	111
Business (BUE)	58	0	58
Information Technology, Engineering and Environment (ITEE)	12	0	12

The poor uptake of ELSAT and feedback from academics to the Deans of Teaching and Learning in their divisions resulted in a minor change in the provision of language and learning support. It was decided that all students in UniSA would be entitled to an initial appointment with a LLA. This appointment could be used by students to discuss their learning challenges with LLAs who would direct them to the appropriate resources and encourage them to complete the ELSAT. The students would still have to complete the ELSAT if they required future consultations. This shift in policy was received positively by UniSA community. Another significant challenge associated with the ELSAT specifically and the L³ model more generally was promotion and marketing. There were still instances where both academic staff and students were not aware of the model and its associated activities. Awareness of the L³ model impacted on ELSAT completions and usage of the various resources.

Face-to-Face Consultations

As it was acknowledged that LLAs played a significant role in ‘widening participation, facilitating inclusion and broadening the capacity of local services to support learners with additional needs’ (NATSPEC 2010), this became a significant mechanism in the L³ model. Students who had completed the ELSAT and had been identified as needing extra language and learning support were offered eight 30 minute face-to-face consultations with a LLA. The ELSAT was used as a gate-keeping mechanism to regulate the efficient use of resources. Table 2 presents the profile of UniSA students who sought language and learning support from LLAs between January and September 2012.

Table 2. Profile of Students who Sought Language and Learning Support

Profile	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept
Aus	68	64	204	140	212	125	81	224	10
Intl	43	51	87	104	164	75	60	128	11
ESB	8	11	42	23	76	35	12	54	2
NESB	103	104	251	221	300	165	129	298	19

The data in Table 2 demonstrates that both domestic and international students were seeking language and learning support. It was also evident that students from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB) were using the language and learning services at a greater rate compared to students from English speaking backgrounds (ESB). Existing data on SAS identified that ESB students commonly sought language and learning support to improve on their academic reading and writing skills.

Table 3 presents the statistics for face-to-face consultations undertaken within the four divisions in 2011 and 2012 and primary contact reasons. It must be noted that only significant contact reasons have been listed in the table. There were other reasons for which students saw LLAs such as transitions issues, adjusting to university, etc.

From the available data, it can be observed that face-to-face consultations with LLAs decreased in 2012. It was believed that this was due to the implementation of the ELSAT. One LLA claimed ‘Students would rather not seek learning support than complete the ELSAT’. Alternatively, it was possible that students were obtaining language and learning support they required from the workshops and the online resources on the L³ website. This is evident from the large amount of traffic on the L³ page as evidenced by data presented in Table 5.

Table 3. Total Number of Face-to-Face Consultations and Primary Contact Reasons

Year: 2011 (Jan-Dec)	Primary Contact Reason	Year 2012 (Jan-Sept)
3233	Total contacts	1853
835	Cognitive skills – interpreting tasks, developing structure	365
119	Cognitive skills – developing argument	34
46	Oral communication for study and profession	19
30	Plagiarism issue	18
21	Reading for academic purposes	26
280	Referencing and avoiding plagiarism	137
162	Study strategies – studying a subject	113
586	Written communication –English for academic purposes	452
591	Written communication – grammar and sentence structure	206
41	Exam strategies	23

Marked Assignment Feedback

In addition to face-to-face consultations, students who had been identified as needing language and learning support were also given the opportunity to select any two of their marked assignments to be assessed for detailed language feedback. Students sent their marked assignments electronically to the language learning team and were provided detailed language feedback via email. Feedback did not effect on a student’s grade for the assignment. The feedback comprised grammar aspects, examples of correct usage and links to resources on the L³ website that would reinforce the grammar point. The rationale for offering students this service was that students would be able to integrate the language feedback to their other assignment tasks in future. The uptake for this service was low across the divisions. Data highlighted that approximately 10 students used this service to date. It was inferred from personal communication with the LLAs that this was attributable to students focusing on future assignments rather than those that had been completed and graded. A study has been planned to investigate the reasons influencing students’ low uptake of this service.

Workshops

A series of academic literacy and assignment specific workshops were run in each of the four divisions in the university. Academic literacies such as interpreting tasks, writing essays, paraphrasing, summarising, oral presentation skills and referencing were taught in workshops outside class time. These workshops attracted an average of six to eight students per session. However, topics such as 'Referencing' were more popular and as many as 15-17 students attended the sessions. Assignment specific workshops were run in collaboration with academics. These types of workshops were run in-courses during class time. Assignment specific workshops that were endorsed by academic staff and run during class time had higher attendance compared to those run outside class time. The workshops were tailored to meet division specific learning needs. The content and examples used in these workshops generally matched assessment tasks in the course. All the workshops were interactive and took on a very hands-on approach. Students who participated in these workshops had the opportunity to practise the different tasks and raise any concerns they had with regard to the literacy that was being taught. Both academic literacy and assignment specific workshops were run throughout the study period in each of the divisions. The workshops were also repeated during semester breaks for students who had missed the opportunity to attend sessions during the study period.

The Division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences began running English language proficiency (ELP) workshops that focused on grammar and language usage in semester two of 2012. This was in response to various concerns expressed by academics in the division who identified that their students' low level of ELP was impacting on learning outcomes. This example demonstrates one of the principles that guide the L³ model, i.e. divisionally aligned language and learning teams collaborating with academic staff to enhance student experience and learning outcomes. Students who had participated in all of these workshops evaluated their usefulness and effectiveness on a Likert-scale of between 4.5 and 5.0 points which was equivalent to very good and excellent. Table 4 presents the statistics of workshops run across the four divisions.

Table 4. Total Number of Academic Literacy and Assignment Specific Workshops

Division	Academic Literacy	Assignment Specific
HSC	33	30
EASS	60	27
BUE	43	20
ITEE	52	34

Data indicated that the total number of academic literacies workshops had increased in the L³ model compared to those run previously. Divisionally run workshops enabled the language and learning team to address local learning needs.

L³ Website

Published literature advocate that the online environment is a useful context for language and learning support. Resources that were developed and uploaded on institutional websites reinforced a student's learning as they progressed through their academic studies (Secker 2011). It was this principle combined with the blended learning theory that directed the design of the L³ splash page. This splash page anchored the four divisions' L³ websites. Figure 2 illustrates the L³ splash page. Students enrolled in the different divisions could access their division's website from this home page to register for workshops, download resources to help them with their assignment tasks and complete the ELSAT. The Widening Participation website, set up to cater for the learning needs of regional and external students as well as those enrolled in UniSA via other pathways, sat alongside the four divisional L³ websites. The development of the L³ divisional websites enabled all division specific resources to sit within a localised environment. Access to resources was more navigable and efficient. Unlike in the previous model where resources sat in various locations and were more generic, the divisional websites provided students with the opportunity to access resources that were tailored to meet their learning needs. Resources in these websites were interactive and multimodal in design and employed examples of texts and tasks related to schools within the divisions. Academics linked the resources to their course Learnonline websites. It was also common for academics to ask LLAs to design specific resources that would facilitate the completion of particular tasks.

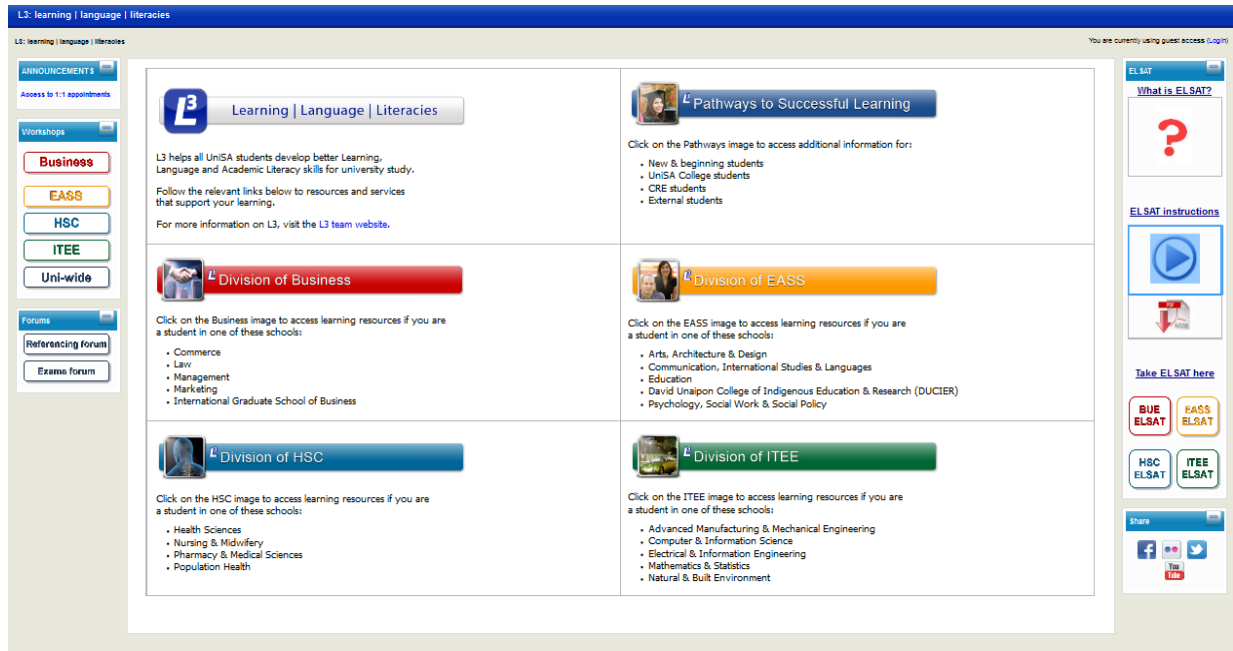


Figure 2. L³ Homepage

Table 5 presents the data on the number of clicks for specific resources in the EASS division from February to September 2012. It should be noted that only some of the resources have been listed to exemplify student use of online resources. There are a range of other resources that have not been included.

Table 5. Student Use of Online Resources

Resource Type	Number of Clicks
Essay writing	3867
Literature review	852
Report writing	802
Case study	414
Critical thinking and writing	1103
Reflective writing	721
Group work skills	128
Reading skills	632
Oral presentation	386
Referencing	695

Embedding of Academic Literacies

Published literature associated with academic literacies commonly specify the difficulties students face when trying to participate in the academic discourse of their discipline. Studies in this field propose that the best way to promote successful learning outcomes is to teach disciplinary literacy and content knowledge simultaneously (Lea 2004; Lillis & Scott 2007). A key principle underpinning the L³ model was the embedding of academic literacies. This was based on the premise that students may not be equipped with the conversancy skills of their disciplines and would benefit from opportunities to develop them. The embedding of academic literacies in UniSA manifested through collaboration of various stakeholders. Academics collaborated with academic developers and the language and learning team to undertake the procedures. Four main standards guided the process, namely, 1) identification of academic literacies that students were expected to have mastered upon completion of their degree programs; 2) mapping of the identified literacies across core courses of degree programs; 3) integration of academic literacies in the redesign of program assessment; and 4) professional development around the pedagogy of imparting those literacies to students within the curriculum. The process of embedding was targeted to unfold in nine new programs (M. Professional Accounting; B. Management; B. Tourism and Event Management; B. Education; B.

Arts; Indigenous Cultures and Society; B. Nutrition and Food Sciences; B. Pharmacy; Civil Aviation; Construction Management) across the four divisions. As no single course would be able to accommodate the integration of all the identified literacies, it was proposed that each course would focus on one or two separate literacies. It was anticipated that the embedding of academic literacies within programs and courses, would enhance student experience and learning outcomes and this would impact on student retention, academic success and employment outcomes (Kift & Moody 2009; Lawrence 2005; Thies 2012).

Data from the different divisions demonstrated that the embedding processes unfolded more positively in some programs compared to others. Academics who were already burdened with workload, perceived the process as being encumbered with more work. In addition, academic staff who were used to particular ways of carrying out their duties were against the idea of changing their style of teaching. There were also some who indicated that they were not comfortable teaching the literacies of their discipline and were more competent at disseminating content knowledge. These reservations were very similar to those found in a study undertaken in the United Kingdom about challenges associated with the embedding of academic literacies in higher education (Clughen & Connell 2012). A general observation from academic staff was that the LLAs ought to take control of this process.

In programs where the embedding process unfolded successfully, it was observed that a lot of planning and initiative were required. Regular meetings with the stakeholders were optimal for the process to unfold efficiently. The Associate Deans of Teaching and Learning in divisions played a vital role in driving the agenda. It was pertinent that academics were clear about the literacies of their discipline and the concept of embedding. It was also essential that academics linked academic literacies of their discipline to student learning outcomes and assessment. Templates specifying the process, a multitude of examples and literature exemplifying the process were useful and well-received by academic staff.

Although, the embedding of academic literacies was an important mechanism of the L^3 model, implementation remained at the discretion of academic staff. In this instance, securing compliance from key players within the university was challenge in itself (Bright & von Randow 2004; Ransom 2009). It was observed that an important element to the success of the L^3 model was the development and fostering of relationships with academic staff. It was also evident that academic staff required assurance that there would be continuous support from the language and learning team in the form of resources that would complement classroom teaching of the identified literacies. Programs and courses that had successfully undertaken the embedding process were useful role models in motivating others to embark on similar paths.

Implications for Student Experience in UniSA and Future Direction of the L^3

The initial stages of development and implementation of the L^3 model has proven that it is a complex initiative that demands considerable vision and collaboration from the various stakeholders. A good deal of planning and support infrastructure need to be put into place before a model is fully implemented. In addition, it is vital that all stakeholders (professional and academic staff as well as students) have a clear understanding of the theory, rationale and principles that drive the model. Communication about the model needs to flow to all the stakeholders beginning from its pre-conceptualisation stage. The implementers of the model, i.e. the language and learning team, should have a clear understanding of the model and possess the motivation and drive to promote the model in the best possible manner. The model ought to be promoted as a means of enhancing student experience and better learning outcomes. It was observed that there were anomalies in the pre-implementation stage. These included a lack of communication about the existence of the model, technical glitches associated with the ELSAT and a lack of common understanding among the stakeholders. This could have been overcome if the model and its mechanisms had been trialled before it was fully implemented.

Available data indicate that language and learning support for all students is vital for retention, successful learning outcomes and employability upon graduation. Both ESB and NESB students need to be competent in disciplinary English language, academic literacies and professional communication skills. It is important that a systematic, appropriate and sustainable language and learning model is implemented university-wide to ensure that all students irrespective of their backgrounds have access to support mechanisms to enhance their learning. However, a model's sustainability and effectiveness is dependent on the people who employ it. Various stakeholders in the University need to embrace and promote the L^3 model to their students, collaborate with the language and learning team to improve the provision of services and integrate the different mechanisms in all teaching and learning processes. Although the L^3 model was endorsed by the academic board, there were still academic staff and students who were not aware of its existence. This was impacting on the provision of learning support. Students who most seriously needed the support were clearly being disadvantaged as they were not being directed to the various resources in the L^3 model. Thus this may have had a negative effect on their student experience.

Promotion and marketing of the model has to be undertaken more vigorously. It was important that all stakeholders communicated consistent and positive messages to students and the larger UniSA community. This communication needs to unfold regularly and in diverse forms.

In February 2013, UniSA community would have experienced the L3 model and its mechanisms for a year. The need to evaluate its impact on student experience has become an important agenda for the language and learning team. Based on the feedback from staff and students, the architecture of the L³ splash page and divisional homepages were redesigned in August 2012. It was concluded that the previous pages were not navigable and user-friendly. The ELSAT has also undergone modification so that the instructions were clearer and the tasks were more navigable. The ELSAT processes were also exemplified through an online video. This resulted from the feedback received from students who had attempted the exercise in the past. There are also plans to redesign the ELSAT in the coming year. It has been decided that a university-wide study would be undertaken to evaluate the usability and effectiveness of the L³ website and its online resources. This will commence with a pilot study in November 2012 and a full scale qualitative and quantitative investigation in March 2013. Further to this, each component of the model will be evaluated throughout 2013. Data would be collected using a mixed-method design. Focus group interviews and surveys will be conducted university-wide in the first half of 2013. The sample for the study would comprise professional and academic staff as well as students. Findings from the study would be used to improve the model so that student experience is enhanced through the implementation and use of the various mechanisms.

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