Editorial 16.4: Technology-enhanced academic language support (TALS)

John Smith
Griffith University, john.smith@griffith.edu.au

Editorial 16.4: Technology-enhanced academic language support (TALS)

Special Issue Editorial - Technology-enhanced academic language support (TALS)

John Smith
Griffith University, john.smith@griffith.edu.au

Follow this and additional works at: https://ro.uow.edu.au/jutlp

Special Issue Editorial - Technology-enhanced academic language support (TALS)

Welcome to this special issue of the Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice on the topic of technology-enhanced academic language support (TALS).

The academic language abilities of tertiary students have been an area of intense focus for both Australian universities and the Australian federal government for over 10 years. Increasingly, however, universities are turning to digital technologies to enhance or supplement their face-to-face support, and this move away from 'more supported' approaches to 'self-help' and 'self-access' resources brings with it a host of teaching and learning complexities. This issue brings together some of the current work being conducted in this digital learning and teaching space.

The first article is my own editorial in which I provide some background and context for TALS. I am particularly concerned with defining and exploring this rapidly expanding, but poorly demarcated area of learning and teaching.

The second article is from the diverse team of **Anna Podorova, Sarah Irvine, Michael Kilmister, Richard Hewison, Amanda Janssen, Alejandra Speziali, Logan Balavijendran, Megan Kek** and **Maggie McAlinden.** Their work is a mixed-methods study investigating the digital literacy skills and preferences of academic language and learning specialists. While their results are preliminary, they present a useful snapshot of the digital skill sets currently held by today's practitioners. Interestingly, the members of the team themselves are also participants in the study, which adds a reflective dynamic to the piece.

The next two articles are from an international context and discuss the development, implementation and evaluation of university-wide, online academic language programs. Firstly, **Jennifer Boyle, Scott Ramsay** and **Andrew Struan** present their Academic Writing Skills Programme, a compulsory online writing program for first-year students at the University of Glasgow. Their work provides useful insights for designers and developers implementing similar programs. **Fiona Willans, Aluwesi Fonolahi, Ralph Buadromo, Tilisi Bryce, Rajendra Prasad** and **Sandhya Kumari** then discuss the evaluation of online academic literacies support for first-year students at the University of the South Pacific. The university, headquartered in Suva, is co-owned by 12 different countries and has a student body that resides across a vast geographical range. Their experience in developing and evaluating their program would be highly relevant for those working with students studying in remote areas, overseas or by distance.

The final two articles explore technology-enhanced feedback. **Michelle Cavaleri, Satomi Kawaguchi Bruno Di Biase,** and **Clare Power** compare the impact of audio-visual feedback to that of the more traditional written-only feedback, concluding that students were more likely to engage with feedback that was multi-modal. **Lisa Beccaria, Megan Yih Chyn A. Kek,** and **Henk Huijser** examine the effect of just-in-time, online feedback on the writing performance of nursing students, finding that students' writing benefitted from feedback provided by a third-party, online tutoring service.

I would like to acknowledge and thank all of the contributors for their time in bringing this together. Ultimately, this issue is a demonstration of their dedication and hard work. I would also like to thank all of the reviewers, including **Sally Ashton-Hay** and **Rosalie Goldsmith**. Finally, I would like to thank the Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice editorial team for both this opportunity and their effort in maintaining the journal.

Special Issue Editor, John D Smith
Griffith English Language Institute, Griffith University