



## Essay writing support for Art History students:

### Key Words

A discussion and evaluation of an online resource.

### Abstract

This presentation examines an online, essay writing support resource that uses a scaffolded approach to support and to improve Art History students' essay writing skills (Vygotsky 1986). The resource was requested because of an identified need amongst this cohort for greatly improved academic essay writing skills. Although assignment preparation and writing resources already exist, visual design students were not accessing them as these students tend to relate best to resources that are targeted to their discipline and more immediately relevant to the assessment tasks they do (Lea & Street 1998). The resource needed to be in a self-paced, online format that students could access as self-instructional learning at any time, as well as being suitable to incorporate into face to face teaching. In particular it needed to be relevant to some of the common assessment tasks that students studying in art and design disciplines might encounter for essay writing (Lillis & Turner 2010). Working directly with the lecturers and tutors of this cohort allowed us to target the resource to the learning needs of the students and the assessment demands of the program. This targeted learning resource will be used as a template for other, discipline-specific learning resources. It is currently being reviewed to assess whether and what sort of induction would be useful for efficient dissemination and effective use of the resource by that cohort, including: • how students find/found out about the resource • how many students accessed the resource and used it to improve their essay writing techniques • whether and how use of the resource improved students' performance? \_\_\_\_\_ Belinda Bold and Sharyn Meade are Learning Advisors, Curriculum Services in the Study and Learning Centre at RMIT, working directly with both teaching staff and students to support learning within specific discipline contexts. Belinda and Sharyn have worked extensively within the Higher Education and Vocational Education contexts, both in teaching, face to face and online support and developing online learning materials to support students from disciplines at various levels.

### References

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