



The English language embedding project

Helping students succeed

Project overview

At UTS College, we've developed an innovative approach to embedding English language learning into all diploma programs, reimagining how academic English is taught and valued. This project ensures all students build strong communication, language and literacy skills, critical for success at university and beyond.

Our model has been recognised for its impact, as a finalist in the 2025 NSW International Education Awards for Innovation, showcasing UTS College as a leader in innovative education.



Why it matters

It's widely recognised that effective language support improves student achievement. Supporting students in academic literacy and English language proficiency has become an increasing priority at universities across Australia.

Traditionally, language support has been offered through separate workshops, but the high cost, stigma and the fact that the students who need them the most often don't attend, are just a few of the challenges of providing these workshops.

Our model removes these barriers by integrating language learning directly into diploma subjects, making it inclusive, equitable, and relevant for all students, whether they are international or from Australia.

Objectives

The language embedding project aims to:

- ensure students reach the English proficiency required for university entry by the end of their diploma
- develop academic literacy and communication skills across all programs
- embed language learning throughout the curriculum, not as an add-on
- support students with resources and teachers with training to deliver language-focused learning.





What makes the approach innovative?

The project began with a single redesigned communication subject for all students in Stage 1 of the diploma, focusing on:

- Academic literacy (critical thinking, referencing, text analysis)
- English proficiency (flexible language use across contexts)
- Multiliteracies (interpreting visual and data-based content).



The approach

Use of relevant and engaging texts

As our students are studying a wide range of disciplines, we use texts from their discipline when teaching reading strategies. This keeps learning engaging and relevant.

Flexible resources

Students have different levels of English proficiency, so the course offers a flexible set of resources. Students can choose learning material that matches their needs, creating personalised learning pathways.

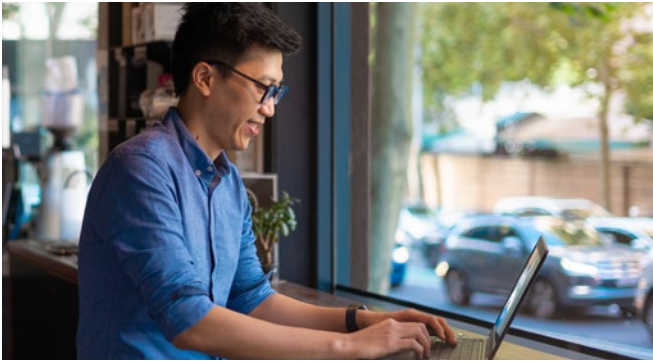
Categorised content

To make choosing easier for students, we've categorised content into essential concepts, further exploration, and language focus. This approach encourages autonomy and sees language learning as a process of exploration and self-discovery.

A reverse curriculum approach

As the project progressed into Stages 2 and 3 of the diploma programs, students often disengage from, or don't fully understand the benefit of, tasks that are not assessed. To address this, we adopted a 'reverse curriculum' approach, outlined below.



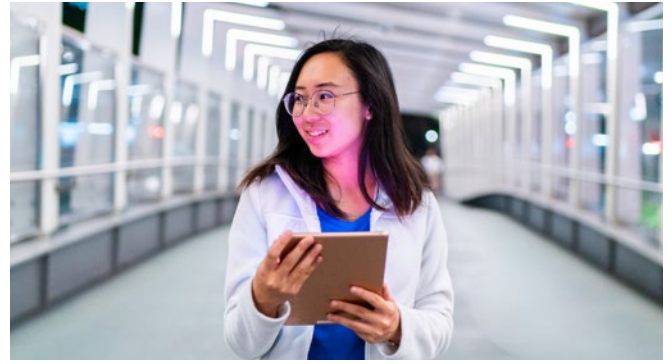


Embedding language learning outcomes into the curriculum

We designed assessments around four fundamental Language Learning Outcomes (LLOs) (conversing, reading, writing and presenting). To emphasise the importance of language learning, these outcomes have been given the same weighting as Subject Learning Outcomes for diploma programs.

Each LLO has clear criteria focused on effective communication, and these criteria stay the same across all three stages of the diploma. This consistency not only shows progression; it helps students become familiar with grade descriptions, so they clearly understand how their work will be assessed.

Supporting activities and resources have also been created to help students succeed. Now, content subjects across every stage of every diploma program include these four LLOs.



Supporting our teachers to support students

Teachers play a vital role in helping the project to succeed and are supported by:

- professional development workshops on the benefits of the project, the outcomes and criteria.
- practical strategies for grading assessments consistently across programs, ensuring fairness and clarity for both teachers and students.





Next steps for the language embedding project

In the final stage of the project, we will:

- expand language-focused activities in tutorials
- co-teach and observe discipline-specific language in use
- provide real-time classroom support for students
- develop AI Agents for students, to provide personalised guidance
- continue teacher training in effective language teaching techniques.

Outcomes and impact

Our approach is getting results:

- in 2020, 50% of UTS College students were assessed at a basic level of English.
- in 2024, after some language learning was embedded, this improved dramatically, with only 16% of students assessed at a basic level of English. This means more students are entering university with the skills they need to succeed.

Contact

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