The Impact of Online 24/7 Study Help

Findings and discussion into student satisfaction, confidence, and academic performance, as well as supporting critical academic integrity goals.
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The critical challenge to make study help both fair and measurable

Improving the student experience is a complex and nuanced issue, but one of the most critical for continued success of the university system and each student’s life chances.

The strongest study support solution is a traditional one. Formative feedback has long been known to improve student outcomes (Gjerde et al. 2017; Owen, 2016). However, while personalized, formative study help is known to increase a student’s confidence and performance, it has often been impossible to deliver at scale, 24/7, on demand to all students, inhibited by time and geographical constraints.

Where personalized help has been delivered without scalable, flexible online access, it has traditionally been underutilized. The students who recognize that they need assistance have access to on-campus support centres, and those with the time and confidence to ask for help are the minority most likely to benefit from this traditional model. Nevertheless, the capacity of professional academic support centres is often limited and staff expertise and time too valuable to warrant spending time answering low-level, repetitive, own-pace student questions related to basic literacy and other core skills help required 24/7, 365 days a year.

With the success of widening participation and international enrollment trends, universities around the world are even more determined to ensure both the quality and utilization of personalized, at-scale, study support for measurable outcomes.


Online is the standard

Universities are now required to provide equitable, targeted academic support to students to ensure they have the resources they need for success.

As part of the Higher Education Standards (HES) framework, support needs to be available regardless of a student’s participation mode.

In parallel, online course delivery has opened up opportunities for non-traditional learners to enter higher education. This has led to a number of challenges around providing support in academic literacy using models of support that have not evolved to meet diverse student needs.

Students also expect just-in-time, on-demand assistance when they need and want it, with minimal tolerance for delays.

Digital delivery opens up new opportunities for university evidence of outcomes, return on investment, and for driving engagement with existing study support services.

“The reality is that learning has never been limited to class time. Universities are just starting to realize that. We’re recognizing that learning happens 24/7.

Most of the really useful learning that students do, they don’t do in our lectures, they do it outside of the lectures. The notion of 24/7 learning support is a reality – it’s increasingly demanded of us.”

Professor Simon Barrie
Pro Vice-Chancellor Learning Transformation,
Western Sydney University at the Studiosity Partner Symposium, 2017
Tier Zero support ensures immediate, equitable care

‘Tier Zero’ relates to support available at scale, to all students and serves common issues, and core academic skills development.

It is designed to provide every student with first-line, personalized, efficient, and cost-effective help. It is ‘first line’ because it is complementary to on campus support and can act as a ‘flagging’ process that indicates whether a student may be at risk. This enables specialized academic support staff, within an institution, to be alerted that the student may benefit from additional support and facilitates the development of tailored support plans (namely, ‘Tier One’ support), based on the institutions existing support infrastructure.

**Tier Zero: The ‘Studiosity’ service; Prevention, Scale**
- Scaled, online delivery, normalizes help-seeking, creates ownership by the student before it escalates
- Does not replace resources in other tiers
- Self-serve, students formulate their own core-skills question

**Tier One: Universal curriculum delivery and progression**
- The university’s qualified lecturers and teachers

**Tier Two: Targeted small groups**
- The university’s qualified lecturers and teachers; perhaps with additional expert educators

**Tier Three: Intensive, individual attention**
- Students may be at risk or facing other circumstances; often delivered one to one, on site, face to face
What is Studiosity?

Studiosity is Tier Zero study support and academic integrity. It is online, on-demand study help, available anywhere, that offers students help from a real person, always a subject-area specialist. Help includes a range of core skills and subjects, extending universities' services to meet students' demands.

There are two core services inside Studiosity to serve students' different needs:

24/7 Writing Feedback
Subject Specialists will read through students' drafts and provide formative feedback around English writing, by identifying common errors and highlighting areas that the student can think about further and improve on their own.

24/7 Connect Live
An on-demand, one-to-one service that provides core subject support. Students formulate their own questions, then work through it live and online with one of Studiosity’s Subject Specialists using chat, collaborative whiteboards, and file sharing.

Studiosity services give students the confidence they need to succeed in their courses. Data insights from service users also show that 92.35% of users feel more confident about their study and their ability to complete assignments.

A user-friendly companion to the desktop Studiosity service, the mobile app lets students record questions to ask later, offers voice to text, lets them receive writing feedback, and use chat to get timely help.
As a complement to core services, educators also choose additional student support and reporting with additional services:

**Citation Assist, enabling academic integrity**

Students already seek help via Studiosity’s popular Writing Feedback service, to receive feedback on their draft writing. The Citation Assist feature leverages these existing moments of positive help-seeking, in order to improve outcomes for awareness and behaviour around academic integrity, and to improve the student experience and satisfaction. Uniquely, each citation text match is accompanied by personal feedback passed to the student via the online Subject Specialists. As a result of using the service, 86% of students indicated they would “make changes to improve my referencing before I hand my work in” and 83% “notice[d] areas I need to rephrase”.

**Student Connect, online peer support, any subject, any time**

Universities are starting to offer Student Connect. Studiosity’s digital peer-assisted study support service amplifies the success of on-campus peer-to-peer programs, to look after more students, more often, and to develop a sense of personal belonging that’s critical to academic success. So when a student needs specific help outside core subject area support - for example courses and content unique to a university - whether PHA100, REG100, or ERG120 - they connect with a peer at their institution, who has done the unit before.

**Early intervention, Academic Writing Evaluation (AWE)**

AWE provides institutions with the opportunity to assess whole cohorts of students, at scale, early in the academic year. Because teaching staff often cannot know their students’ academic writing abilities until after they have submitted their first assignment. Educators can also integrate this data via API into learning analytics systems. The Framework has been developed by Studiosity’s Academic Services team, led by Chief Academic Officer, Professor Judyth Sachs.
Some of our trusted partners:
Studiosity offers a holistic model of support. With an understanding that the subject knowledge and expertise provided by lecturers is irreplaceable, Studiosity seeks to provide basic academic literacy help and feedback, on demand, outside of normal university opening hours.

Unique universities, unique implementation

Studiosity works closely with partner institutions to embed a service that complements existing support infrastructure, and to add value to the university’s own brand. The result is a seamless student experience while helping students become more confident and satisfied with their study choice.

Academic integrity as a priority

Studiosity provides help not answers. Studiosity’s Subject Specialists neither change the quality of students’ work nor proofread it for them. Rather, they help students understand how they can improve their own work and solve problems themselves, giving them the confidence to also apply these skills in future.

All of the support staff are qualified and vetted by Studiosity’s Quality Assurance Team and go through a strenuous application, onboarding, and training process that ensures only the best are taken on board with an assigned mentor who monitors performance and provides ongoing training and development.

“From my perspective as a, first-in-family, low SES student to attend university during the Whitlam years, the passion that’s driven me is around assuring that our students’ success isn’t left to chance. So for me, Studiosity complements very well the suite of initiatives that we usually have within our institutions and is part of a targeted and intentional retention strategy.”

Professor Sally Kift
Former DVC (Academic) at James Cook University; President of the Australian Learning and Teaching Fellows; Adjunct Professor at James Cook University, La Trobe University, Queensland University of Technology
Evidence of successful implementation of Tier Zero support in universities globally, 2016 - 2022

Studies are continually conducted at universities that use Studiosity, to show the impact of the service on academic success:

Macquarie University

- Macquarie University found that students who used Studiosity for over 100 minutes achieved a 0.99 higher average GPA than non-users, 88 per cent of students felt more confident to complete their assignment, and 95% rated the service as relevant and useful. ³

- Crucially, teaching staff were comfortable with the benefits and positive about the service.

  While there was no decrease in teacher workload (they still had to give the same level of feedback to students), marking assignments however was easier as submissions were easier to read.

Western Sydney University

- Western Sydney University found that users of Studiosity self-reported feeling more confident about their studies, which correlated with a 20% variance in grades. ⁴

Swinburne Online

- “On average, students placed in the same performance band at Swinburne University who used Studiosity received 15% higher marks than those who did not.” ⁵

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At James Cook University, students who used Studiosity scored a mean GPA of 4.49, while those who did not seek Studiosity help scored 3.57. This was regardless of gender, ethnicity, OP class or mode of delivery. 6

The use of daytime, on-campus university support resources was not reduced, as 72% of Studiosity users also made use of other institutional academic support resources.

Graph 1: Students who sought assistance through Studiosity, have a higher mean GPA than those who did not. Analysis not intended to suggest causation.

Graph 2: Repeat use of Studiosity is correlated with higher GPA achievement, within the same performance bands (Queensland Year 12 OP level).

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In 2017, 2018, and 2019, CQUniversity offered 24/7 student support powered by Studiosity. They measured retention, academic success, and rates of unit failure. The review also included students’ anecdotal feedback compared to academic outcomes.

What were the outcomes? CQUniversity Studiosity users, on average have a 16.45% higher rate of retention than the cohort:

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*Online academic support & student retention: Early signs of a positive correlation at CQUniversity, presented by Chris Veraa, Director of Student Experience at CQUniversity, at the ‘Students First 2019’ Studiosity Symposium*
Academic integrity, every student, everywhere

A 2018 study - with the participation of students across Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom - investigated students’ general attitudes towards plagiarism, to determine impact the Studiosity service can have on their abilities to avoid plagiarism. (Devlin & McKay, 2018)\(^6\)

77% indicated that after using Studiosity they checked their university’s plagiarism policy

Students (n = 1,077) reported that after using Studiosity:

**Feelings:** 73% felt clearer about plagiarism

**Behaviour:** 77% checked their uni’s plagiarism policy

**Attitudes:** 83% were more determined to resist pressure to cheat

**Skills:** 84% improved their academic skills

**Intentions:** 72% intended to be more careful with their referencing

**Awareness:** 84% had greater awareness of the academic skills needed to avoid plagiarism

**Knowledge:** 58% knew more about how to avoid plagiarism in their written work

Complementing expert academic staff and services

Studiosity has become the preferred choice to effectively and ethically provide complementary study help to students, identify at-risk students early, while also supporting university staff and other internal support options.

With the number of Canadian university students constantly rising, it is becoming increasingly difficult for lecturers and other support staff to deliver the core skills help students require.

Yet, in a University of Adelaide study in Australia found that 87% of students believed having “ready access” to lecturers and tutors outside of face-to-face teaching is important to their success.9 Another Australian national student survey showed that 75% of first-year students wanted on-demand access.10 However, lecturers often do not have the capacity in their increasing workloads to provide this amount of help, especially during peak study times, out of hours, weekends, and during mid-semester breaks.

The study support challenge is as much about helping students, as it is ensuring the smooth and effective delivery of other critical university functions, including the best and most efficient use of university expertise.

Additional findings and areas for further study

Fair support for international students

Studiosity’s online, on-demand, anonymous and personalized support means international students can receive the English help they require to inspire confidence, and encourage them to perform to the best of their abilities and alongside more fairly with native-English speaking classmates.

“Great help on this assignment, the feedback will go a long way in improving my writing skills. This has been very helpful in adjusting simple errors in writing that can cost marks. Thank you so much. Appreciate the help.”

1st Year Undergraduate Student, Yorkville University, December 2021

“[Subject Specialist] provided great feedback and went through every single mistake I made.”

1st Year Undergraduate Student, Toronto Metropolitan University, February 2022

“I am very grateful for the comments and feedback. They were extremely useful for me, whose first language is not English. The [Subject Specialist] for this assignment excelled.”

1st Year Undergraduate Student, Toronto Metropolitan University, February 2022

Helping students who start in lower performance bands

Studiosity is correlated with improving GPA scores of students enrolling with a lower and middle high-school attainment. Nine out of 11 courses at James Cook University had mean GPAs below pass - except students who used Studiosity, who were all over the pass line (4.0 GPA).

With increasing numbers of students enrolling, the ability to help students with core skills - who in the past may not have attained university level study - is essential. This is one of the reasons Studiosity is offered to strengthen widening participation programs, as well as to help drive university marketing initiatives, and to reach diverse future students.

Students as consumers - demand for mobile

Students have come to expect the same degree of flexibility in their academic studies as their personal lives. They must be able to access study support at any time, anywhere - which is why Studiosity operates on an on-demand basis and is fully optimized for mobile.
“The future of education will be online, on demand, and mobile. Studiosity is helping to shape this future and indeed leading this future through its on-demand, online, student support services.”

Professor Chris Tisdell
Former Associate Dean (Education)
Faculty of Science at the University of New South Wales Australia
Studiosity Academic Advisory Board Member