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Title: The Impact of an Online Writing Programme in Increasing Writing Self-efficacy in International Students

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Abstract

Numbers of international students in western universities is increasing each year, bringing a number of benefits to host institutions, local economy. International students also benefit from studying abroad.

Many students face transitional issues when starting university. However International students face a range of transitional problems additional to those faced by local students, including isolation, adjusting to a new academic culture, possible language problems and sometimes feeling a lack in appropriate academic skills.

Research has shown that international students require specifically designed supports in a range of media that are available when and where the students need them as opposed to generic supports offered to all students.

Essay writing is a common means of both in-course and examination based assessment in universities especially for Arts and Social Sciences subjects and also to a lesser extent for the Health Sciences and Sciences. International students often struggle to understand the requirements for essay writing in a new academic environment which can lead to stress and poor grades.

This research explored the impact of an online writing programme in increasing writing self-efficacy in international students because as Bandura (1994) found, increased self-confidence leads to increased performance and achievement and measurement of skill development would have been beyond the scope of this research.

This study found that the online essay writing programme increased the confidence of the participants and corroborated previous research regarding the difficulties international students have with generic academic supports. The conclusion therefore was that a specifically designed online programme could be useful in helping international students adjust to a new academic culture and feel more confident about their abilities.

Key words – international students, academic study, confidence, transition, supports, technology, essay writing