

60-Second SoTL

Episode 2 – Increasing Accessibility to Academic Support in Higher Education

(Piano Music)

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Why do higher education students engage with academic support services, and how could these services be made more accessible? That's the focus of this week's **60-second SoTL from Elon University's Center for Engaged Learning**. I'm Jessie Moore.

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(Piano Music)

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In "Increasing Accessibility to Academic Support in Higher Education for Diverse Student Cohorts," published in *Teaching and Learning Inquiry*, SoTL scholars Madeleine Bornschlegl and Nerina Jane Caltabiano explore students' decisions to access – or not access – academic support services.

As part of a larger study, the authors conducted semi-structured interviews with six students at James Cook University in Australia. Although their participant size was small, students reflected a range of ages, degree programs, and ethnicities. The authors also share their interview questions, which could facilitate replicating their study in other institutional and geographic contexts.

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Students in the study accessed a range of peer-to-peer tutoring and mentoring programs, including programs specific to their year of study or their identity, highlighting the need for a range of support services. Some students who didn't seek academic help didn't know about the available services, were trying to navigate restrictions like time limits for specific support programs, or worried about public stigma associated with seeking support.

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Based on the interviews, Bornschlegl and Caltabiano suggest that academic staff should introduce resources in the context of students' studies to raise *awareness* of available and relevant support services. A personalized introduction is less likely to be overlooked than a generic email. Universities can improve *accessibility* by offering multiple modes of academic help seeking services, rather than a one-size-fits-some model. Participants also emphasized the importance of normalizing help seeking in campus culture.

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To learn more follow the link in our show notes to read this open access article.

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(Piano Music)

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Join us next week for another snapshot of recent scholarship of teaching and learning on **60-second SoTL from Elon University's Center for Engaged Learning**, and learn more about the Center at www.CenterForEngagedLearning.org.

02:14

(Piano Music)