Journal of Academic Language & Learning
Vol. 20, No. 1, 2026, I1-I15. ISSN 1835-5196
https://journal.aall.org.au/index.php/jall/article/view/1131

Changing identities: A history of Academic Language and Learning in Australia

Alex Barthel, Annie Bartlett, Kate Chanock and Tim Moore

1. Introduction

ALL in Australia has a history going back at least to the 1970s. While we now collectively refer to the field as Academic Language and Learning (ALL), this is a relatively recent terminology. Behind the adoption of the ALL acronym – which occurred officially in 2005 with the formation of the Association – lies a rich history of development. In the account that follows, we chart this history in relation to three distinct, but closely related strands.

The first has been the gradual expansion of ALL provision across universities – shaped in part by changing government and institutional policies – to become an indispensable activity within Australian higher education. A second strand has been the evolution of thinking and conceptualising of ALL work, leading to the creation of a distinct disciplinary identity for the field. And finally, in parallel with these other strands, has been the increasing professionalisation of our field, a process that has provided a sense of collective unity around our work, and enabled us, as a group, to contribute to – and to influence – national education debates and policy. While the narrative charted here is largely one of development and progress, this history has also had its episodes of discord and disappointment. The field's development and achievements have been a collective effort, but have also been the result of the contribution of a number of individuals, especially in the field's early days. Some of these are given due recognition in the history that follows.

2. The early period

The origins of our field and profession lie in that period of expansion in Australian higher education in the early 1970s, when students from non-traditional backgrounds first gained access to university study on a significant scale. These students, sometimes known as 'the Whitlam students' (after the progressive education policies pursued by the Whitlam Labor government, 1972-1975), included mature age students (often female), 'first in family' students, and some students from second language and migrant backgrounds. In such changes were the beginnings of a shift from a more elite university system – and one where it was left largely to students to find their own way through the challenges of tertiary education – to a more inclusive system, with institutions recognising a greater responsibility for the students they enrolled. The small but growing range of personnel appointed to support these new cohorts in their transition to tertiary study constituted the modest beginnings of the ALL field.

Organisationally, early ALL units and individuals constituted a diverse and disparate group, located in counselling units, language centres, faculties, or (rarely) academic staff development units, and coming from backgrounds in a range of disciplines. Whatever the makeup and location of these centres, they generally found themselves operating at the margins of their institutions, and were not considered part of the core business of the university. When Frederick et al. reported to the University of Melbourne on students' needs in the area of learning skills in 1981, they identified six models of provision in Australia and elsewhere. These included a 'Student Counselling Service'; a 'Specialist Learning Skills Counsellor located in the Counselling service' as at La Trobe, Sydney, Queensland, and Melbourne; a 'Learning Skills Specialist' attached to a Higher Education Research and Teaching Unit, as at Murdoch and Monash; a 'Learning Skills Unit operating autonomously', as at the Australian National University (ANU); a 'Special Services Unit concerned with a particular aspect of language and learning skills' such as English as a second language; and a 'Specialist Tutor/Lecturer within a faculty or department, whose brief is limited to that School,' as at La Trobe (Frederick, Hancock, James, Bowden, & Macmillan, 1981).

Key figures at this early stage included Brigid Ballard (employed 1977-1999) and John Clanchy (1975-1997) at the ANU, Hanne Bock (1979-1990) at La Trobe University, Lorraine Marshall (1975-2014) at Murdoch University, Gordon Taylor (1974-1998) at Monash University, and Carolyn Webb (1974-1995) at the University of Sydney.

The early work and ideas of these staff, now seen as the field's pioneers, were documented in the important publication *Literacy by Degrees* which challenged the notion that the 'writing ability of students in our universities is a mechanical problem "remediable" by the disciplined application of mechanical answers' (Taylor, G., Ballard, B., Beasley, V., Bock, H. K., Clanchy J., & Nightingale, P., 1988). The achievements of some of these early pioneers are documented in an ALL-funded project, *Making histories: oral accounts of the emergence and development of* ALL, led by Percy, James, Al-Mahmood and Beaumont, (2013), and summarised in brief here.

Brigid Ballard and John Clanchy were highly influential scholars in the field of Academic Language and Learning during its formative years in Australia. Their main contributions concerned the teaching of the essay genre (its structure and function) and the teaching of international students. In particular, their work insisted on the need to attend to (inter)cultural aspects of learning over and above surface level grammar teaching, and championed an anthropological approach to ALL work. The audience of their work included students, ALL educators, discipline staff and policy-making bodies (Percy et al., 2013). Just as John Clanchy pioneered Academic Language and Learning at the ANU in 1975, so Lorraine Marshall pioneered at Murdoch University.

Hanne Bock was one of the main influencers and attendees at the inaugural *Study Skills Conference* at the ANU in 1980. Her scholarship was influential in provoking cultural and linguistic understandings of student learning issues beyond deficit models and standard study skills books that characterised literacy issues as emanating from 'within the student'. Hanne sought to enrich the lives of the students and staff during her 11 years at La Trobe through developing innovative and pioneering programs such as the *Peer Leaders Program* and the *Introductory Course* (Academic Program) and camps, affectionately known as the *Ducks and Toads* camps, with her colleague Helene Lewit. She recruited discipline lecturers to teach in these, at once orienting them to her approach and

highlighting for students the importance that the School of Social Sciences gave to academic skills (Percy et al., 2013).

Lorraine Marshall pioneered Academic Language and Learning at Murdoch University in the same year – 1975 – as John Clanchy had at the ANU. Murdoch's *Student Leaning* and ANU's *Study Skills* were the only two fully operational centres in 1975. Lorraine's guiding principle – 'We learn in the context of our learning' (Marshall, 2006) – led to ground-breaking work: developing and teaching ALL within the context of disciplinary courses and establishing *Independent Study Contracts* for students. For this there was no precedent, and no support, but over time her work became part of the core business of Murdoch University: 'Murdoch University incorporates compulsory learning skills units in its first year core courses, with optional units available from then on' (Frederick et al., 1981).

These learning skills units, as described by Lorraine, were based on the assumption, that 'the majority of incoming students require help in developing university work skills', i.e. a developmental rather than a remedial model. These units were closely associated with the concept of an introductory first year and have made it possible for all Murdoch students to have access to learning how to learn in integration with their course content. In 1981 Lorraine and Frances Rowland published a seminal work – *A guide to learning independently.* Now in its 5th edition, it recognises the need for students to understand how to learn independently and develop the skills with which to do so.

Working first in the Higher Education Research Unit at Monash and then in his own small 'Language and Learning Unit' within the university's Arts Faculty, Gordon Taylor had an enormous influence on the emerging field during the 1980s and 90s. This was especially felt in his efforts to lay out some theoretical foundations for the field, ones that have gone on to support and sustain the practices of many ALL professionals since. Rejecting both the narrow grammar-based and skills-based approaches that dominated the field in its early days, Gordon was sure that ALL work needs to be founded on those processes that lie at the heart of university study: 'the creation of meaning and the expression of understanding' (Taylor et al., 1988: p. 2).

For Gordon, this focus on the making of meaning – as opposed to the reproducing of forms or the following of certain prescribed techniques – placed students' language at the centre of the ALL endeavour. In a number of key papers, he demonstrated how, through the careful analysis of students' writing, much could be learnt about their emergent understandings (or misunderstandings) in the particular fields of their study, all providing the basis for a distinctive ALL pedagogy. The ideas Gordon brought to the field were shaped by an array of intellectual traditions, but especially the hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer, and the functional linguistics of MAK Halliday (also Wittgenstein and J.L. Austin). The legacy of Gordon's own thinking is seen as much as anywhere in the name used to denote our field – Language and Learning.

Gordon's ideas are documented in many significant papers. Along with the aforementioned *Literacy by degrees,* also significant is his seminal *Students' writing guide* (1989, and still in print in a 2nd edition), created out of the long-running writing program he ran at Monash. Gordon's contribution to the field has continued far beyond his retirement from Monash in 1998. He was a plenary speaker at the 2012 AALL Key Thinkers symposium. As late as 2019, he presented a memorable keynote address at an AALL symposium devoted to Halliday's work on the occasion of his death.

Carolyn Webb's contributions to the ALL field were also prolific. Carolyn's teaching and research, in combination with her leadership and strategic vision, promoted the expansion and formalisation of ALL services at the University of Sydney and, later, the University of Western Sydney (1996-2006). Over 20 years Carolyn taught and developed ALL student workshops. Her research into learning processes and her work alongside faculties culminated in the influential *Measuring the Academic Skills of University Students* (MASUS) research project. Carolyn's key contributions continue to inform much of the current ALL scholarship (Percy et al., 2013).

The published work of these and other early practitioners is comprehensively summarised, in a two-part piece by Kate Chanock, published in the JALL: *A historical literature review of Australian publications in the field of Academic Language and Learning in the 1980s: Themes, schemes, and schisms: Part one and two* (Chanock 2011).

3. The great expansion

The period of the late 1980s and 1990s saw a significant expansion of our ALL field. This was the outcome of a different era of Labor reform – the Dawkins reforms of the 1ate 1980s – which, among other things, opened the way to the arrival of significant numbers of international students on Australian university campuses. Adopting a more market-driven approach to the sector, these reforms gave rise to a key acronym that began to feature heavily in university policy and discourses at the time – the FFPOS (Full Fee-Paying Overseas Student). Suddenly, universities needed to get organised to properly support these new cohorts, and this led to expanded resourcing of ALL provision – though never sufficient – and the entry of a new generation of professionals into the field. In line with the new cohorts, many of these included educators with backgrounds in TESOL (Teaching English to speakers of other languages). At some universities, where provision had previously been limited to a few practitioners, new dedicated centres were now created, enabling a more co-ordinated provision of services across faculties and departments.

Campuses were fast becoming vibrant, multicultural centres. These developments presented new pedagogical challenges for our field – including the need to grapple with issues of culturally-variable epistemologies and discourses. ALL professionals were also now increasingly called upon by academic staff to assist them in adapting to these new learning environments. Books written by Clanchy and Ballard on the teaching of international students were kept permanently on hand. This period was notable for providing added impetus to one of the field's key missions – to ensure culturally-inclusive approaches to university teaching.

This period was also marked by the emergence of certain tensions between ALL professionals and their university administrations, ones that have continued to play out in some guise to the present. One of these was the perennial issue of resourcing. As FFPOS or international students' programs and enrolments ballooned over the ensuing decade, the resources needed to support these cohorts always seemed to lag significantly behind. A related issue was the ever-shifting entry standards used by administrations in international student programs, especially those related to the setting of English language proficiency levels. The increasing push from some quarters to eschew more objective, external measures of academic readiness (e.g. IELTS, TOEFL English proficiency tests), and to rely on self-styled, in-house methods meant ALL professionals were often trying valiantly to hold some line on policies and procedures. The concerns expressed by practitioners on

this issue were foremost about the potential exploitation of students, but also about the diminishing academic standards that such policies were bound to produce.

A different issue concerned the professional status of ALL personnel. The nature of ALL positions and their classification as *general* or *academic staff* came to be a growing source of contention. Usually for financial reasons, administrations were keen to view ALL positions as essentially non-academic and 'remedial', even though the work of staff was becoming increasingly indistinguishable from some traditional academic roles, taking in different forms of teaching (including teaching for credit), and increasingly forms of research. For some ALL staff, the *general* staff classification was problematic, leaving them without the professional support and entitlements befitting of educational work. At the ANU *Study Skills Unit*, a legal challenge to this status led to the creation of a specialist *professional* category, enabling 'advisers access to some measure of professional development leave, conference leave and travel' (Craswell & Bartlett, 2001).

ALL educators who are classified as *academic staff* are often expected to apply for promotion primarily on terms of research and publications, and, to a lesser extent a significant and important component of their work: teaching. From the late 1980s, lecturer level C positions did exist – at the Universities of Western Sydney, South Australia, Adelaide, Wollongong, Flinders University, and the University of Technology Sydney (Morris, 1999) – but in the main, academic positions were rare. Before 1990, job advertisements for LAS advisors typically described such positions as follows:

> The appointee will be required to teach classes in *study skills and seminar presentation, as well as English as a second language; remedial one-to-one coaching* may also be required (Division of Economics, ANU, 1992, our emphasis).

As Casazza and Silverman (1996) observe: 'The term *remedial* implies a more limited approach toward the student and has primarily described programs that focus on correcting specific skill deficits.' Dislodging the 'remedial' tag has been a long process and one that sadly, in some contexts is an ongoing process.

The resourcing issue too has been a perennial struggle in the face of the ever-shifting priorities of administrations, as well as their endless drive to restructure and reorganise. Such processes have seen the rapid growth of centres, and also in some instances, their sudden and unaccountable demise (Clerehan, 2007). Nevertheless, in line with the ballooning enrolments at institutions, and the increasing diversification of student cohorts, the narrative overall has been one of expansion. In the 2006 iteration of the survey of ALL staff initiated by Alex Barthel in 1998, 264 ALL staff were reported on the annual table of *ALL centres/units in Australian* universities. Of these, 59% were academic and 41% were general staff (Barthel, 2006). By the end of 2015, the number of ALL staff had grown to 461, an increase of 75% over the previous decade. In this later survey, however, it was noted that the percentage of staff with academic status had dropped to 45% (Barthel, 2015), a figure that underpins the ongoing struggle in some parts of the sector for recognition of the fundamental academic role played by ALL advisors.

4. Conceptualising and researching the field

In his reflections on the emerging nature of the field, Taylor suggested that the ALL educator is in need of three fundamental things: 'contact with staff, students to teach, and time to think and write' (cited in Chanock, 2011). This third dimension of the role – the thinking and writing– has seen much productive and creative work over the decades, to

the point where it is fair to say that the field in Australia is now founded on a number of distinctive and broadly accepted principles and approaches.

Before 1990, language and academic skills advising was mainly characterised by an association with 'study skills' – loosely viewed as the skills of note-taking, time-management and essay writing; and although this does not sit easily with the ALL profession nowadays, it was the basis for the development of more fully-fledged academic and learning skills advising. The texts of this period – e.g., Anderson, Durston and Poole (1970), Wallace (1980), and Packham, McEvedy and Smith (1985) – were the precursors to a more probing and comprehensive view of ALL work.

A pivotal moment in the field's conceptualisation, as noted, was the publication in 1988 of *Literacy by degrees,* a volume that was to become something of a bible for the next generation of ALL professionals (Moore, 2018). As noted, the work provided a powerful challenge to the notion that ALL work was fundamentally 'remedial', and simply a menial adjunct to the 'real work' performed by academics. The book also challenged the prevailing skills view of our work. Here it was reasoned that 'while the tasks of academic writing do demand skills of one kind or another, academic writing is not fundamentally a question of applying skills'. Rather, at heart it is about students grappling with the challenges of expressing meaning and understanding in the particular fields of their study (Taylor *et al*., 1988).

Out of this critique, the volume sought to lay out – but without dogma – a number of principles that should inform ALL work, which can be summarised thus:

- that the fundamental focus of the work needs always to be on the semantic dimensions of students' language use as opposed to formalist ones;
- that patterns of language use (discourse) differ in significant ways across the disciplines; and
- that the development of students' academic language is inseparable from the disciplinary content with which they are dealing.

Such principles laid the foundations for the way many approach our work, including, arguably, its most central tenet – the need for the teaching of academic literacy to be embedded as far as possible within the disciplines.

The importance of the emerging idea of embedding was affirmed at a national conference organised by Kate Chanock at La Trobe University in 1994. The theorising that had occurred in the previous years, with the field's conceptual shift from 'general skills' to 'discipline-based discourses,' was strongly evident in the event's title*: Integrating the teaching of academic discourse into courses in the disciplines.* (At that time the preferred term was 'integrating' rather than 'embedding', with the terms becoming increasingly interchangeable).

The La Trobe conference proved a key moment for the field's development, both for its research and professional trajectories. On the former, Webb and Bonanno (1994), in an important keynote paper, stressed the overwhelming importance of research for the field. Thus, they argued that 'without focused, systematic and sustained exploration of knowledge within the field… the nature of the work [ALL] staff do is unlikely to be viewed as truly academic.' It was also felt that, without the credibility that comes from a strong research base, the possibility of sustained collaboration with the disciplines would always be limited. Also important was to consider in what ways ALL, as an emerging area of academic endeavor, could itself be considered a discipline.

This latter challenge was addressed in an edited collection published the following year: *Academic skills advising: Towards a discipline* (Garner, Chanock & Clerehan,1995). The view taken in this volume was that ALL is fundamentally an inter-discipline, drawing its strength from a number of related fields. The work sought also to position ALL work theoretically, with the referencing of a number of broad paradigms held to have particular relevance to the field's outlooks and practices: Hermeneutics (Taylor, 1995); Communication theory (Garner, 1995); Counselling theory (Chanock, 1995); Composition theory (Vance); Applied Linguistics (Clerehan & Moore); and Second language acquisition (Storch). Among the effects of this syncretic approach was that the ALL field was able to accommodate in its ranks researcher-practitioners from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds, although with different versions of 'language studies' always somehow central. Notwithstanding an additional contribution by Gordon Taylor, the publication of this volume also signaled the passing of the baton to a new generation of practitioners in the country.

The 1994 La Trobe conference, the first of a series that became the biennial ALL conference, was held again in 1996, and then moved to Monash several years later. In 2001, it shifted interstate to Wollongong, a development that marked its coming-of-age as a truly national conference for the expanding ALL community. The platform provided by the biennial conference and its published proceedings led to a plethora of research publications over the ensuing years, with papers showcasing the ever-expanding research interests of scholar-practitioners in our community. These included the diverse nature of cohorts with whom we work (e.g. first year, honours, international, EAL students, PhD students, indigenous students, students with disabilities, etc.); the issues these students face (transition, intercultural issues, relationships with lecturers, academic disadvantage, access and equity); the complexity of ALL needs (e.g. disciplinary language, genres, argumentation, critical inquiry, writer's voice, documenting sources, interpersonal relations); and the practice of ALL work itself (e.g. curriculum embedding; collaboration with academics and other professionals; individual consultations; independent learning; bridging, orientations and inductions; group work; programs-for-credit; dialogic learning; online delivery; program evaluation; and broader administrative and industrial issues), all of which began to shape and articulate ALL work as both a discipline and profession.

Another significant milestone in the field's developing research effort was the publication in 2007 of the inaugural volume of the *Journal of Academic Language and Learning* (JALL). The creation of a dedicated ALL journal was a long time coming, with the first – and somewhat fraught – efforts going back to the mid-1990s. It was only with the establishment of the newly-formed national association in 2005 that the journal idea was able to be revived, and an administrative structure to be put in place for the idea to come to fruition. Where the conference proceedings had previously been published in an edited volume following each conference, from this point on JALL became the venue for conference issues in addition to its regular volumes of articles. Under its founding editor, David Rowland, the journal has come to enjoy a wide readership – including among many working outside the field. It has also developed a profile beyond Australian shores, with gathering international interest in the distinctive nature of Australian ALL.

Another important driver of research has been the ALL grants scheme, also an outcome of the national association. A notable initiative funded by this scheme, among others, was the two-day symposium held in 2012 – *Key thinkers, key theories: the contribution of theory to ALL practice* led by Tim Moore at Swinburne University. The event was followed up by the publication of a two-volume special issue of JALL (Clerehan, Johnson,

Moore, Morton, Storch & Thompson, 2014). The event and the publication spoke to the growing theoretical sophistication and richness of the field. A key theme at the conference was the importance of grounding ALL work within larger conceptual realms, not only to shape and guide practice, but also to act as a counter to a shallow pragmatism that it was believed was increasingly coming to drive higher education policy, including policy related to ALL.

5. Getting organised – professionalising the field

The other important strand of development has been the professionalisation of the field, already hinted at in the establishment of the national association. The road to this outcome was a gradual and not always straightforward one. Again, the 1994 La Trobe conference was important in setting directions.

The keynote address of Webb and Bonanno at La Trobe had a theme additional to the one about the imperatives of research. This was for our emerging field to get organised. Noting the lack of a recognised professional identity at the time, Webb and Bonanno called for ALL staff to be far more explicit about a range of matters: the field's goals and strategies; its measures of effectiveness; standards of professional practice; and roles and position descriptions of staff. This was all for the purpose of raising the status of ALL work, and importantly to ensure more effective collaboration with subject staff in our institutions.

The inauguration of the ALL conferences was a considerable breakthrough for an emergent profession characterised by marginalisation, isolation and casualisation in relation to the 'mainstream' – be that general or academic staff – and ALL educators who were characterised as suffering from an inherent lack of professional confidence, status and recognition. A number of key developments ensued in the emergence of the ALL profession. The first was the recognition that there was no professional body with which academic skills advisers could identify.

Until this time, recognition of the distinctive work of ALL had been sought under the larger umbrella of the Higher Education Research and Development Association (HERDSA). Early in the 1990s, an effort had been made to establish an ALL Special Interest Group within the Association with the aim of bringing ALL educators together on a state basis, and nationally at the annual HERDSA conference. While this was a positive move, the 'alliance' proved to be short-lived; and the forum sought by ALL professionals under HERDSA was never made available.

This was a minor setback, however, with the call for action from Webb and Bonanno soon bearing fruit. In 1995, ALL professionals from around the country gathered in Bendigo, Victoria for a Working Conference to begin the process of forging a collective professional identity for the field. The event was a lively one. One issue concerned qualifications and whether it was valid to insist on certain entry standards and disciplines for staff entering the field. Some attendees rejected a prescriptive approach, seeing strength in the broad diversity of backgrounds and experience among the growing ranks of ALL around the country. Others however, were sure that academic recognition of our work was crucial, going as far as wanting to designate appropriate disciplines (e.g., educational psychology and linguistics) from which to draw ALL appointees.

Out of the Bendigo Conference came a key document: *The Position of Academic Language and Learning Skills Advisers/Lecturers in Australian Universities 1995-1999* prepared by Erst Carmichael, Margaret Hicks, Ursula McGowan and Anita van der Wahl.

Providing perspectives of advisers from 19 Australian institutions, the *Bendigo statem*ent, as it came to be known, sought to define the role of advisers. It clearly articulated that the work of ALL educators (LAS advisers as they were then still called) was fundamentally academic in nature, and that the role of ALL educators was integral to improving the quality of teaching and learning in tertiary institutions. The publication of the statement constituted the first formal step towards the formation of a coherent and unified professional community.

During the latter part of the 1990s, a number of other initiatives advanced the cause further. One of these was the beginning of formal communication networks, first through the creation of the national *LAS Newsletter*, which was then replaced by the *Unilearn* email discussion, the 1995 brainchild of Peter Ninnes from the University of Western Sydney. John Grierson, an important figure among the second generation of ALL practitioners, took over the administration of *Unilearn* (1997 - 2003) and, with over 500 subscribers, it became a lively forum for the discussion of issues, sharing of research and resources and the publicising of events. Another important initiative was Alex Barthel's (1998) compilation and distribution of an annual table of ALL centres at Australian universities. Reporting on staff numbers, their academic/general staff status and ALL staff-to-student ratios, this data was a key way to track the development of the field across the sector, as well as being a means for staff to advocate for better recognition and resourcing of ALL within their institutions. The compiling of the annual tables continues to this day.

The Bendigo Statement underscored the need for a stronger, more unified national voice and ten years later the 2005 ALL Conference at the ANU proved a watershed moment in the development of the profession, as the foundations were laid for creating a professional association. Alex Barthel initiated and led the establishment of the *Association for Academic Language and Learning* (AALL), to provide an organisational body for the growing community of professionals around Australia who work with academics and university students to enhance their learning and academic English. Alex was elected inaugural president of the new association (2005-2009). A number of dedicated other ALL professionals contributed to the forming of the Association and were pivotal in ensuring its success. These include AALL Honorary Life Members, Siri Barrett-Lennard, Annie Bartlett, Kate Chanock, Tim Moore and David Rowland.

An important effect of now having a national body was that AALL, as a professional grouping, could speak with a collective voice about higher education matters – especially those impacting on our students and their learning. This has involved advocacy and input at a national level, such as AALL's responses to the Bradley *Review of Australian Higher Education* in 2008.

In 2007, the then Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) organised a national symposium to address the issues of international students' levels of English language proficiency. This symposium resulted in a project to develop a set of 10 *Good Practice Principles for English language proficiency for international students in Australian universities* (GPP). These principles focus on international students studying in Australian universities. The project was undertaken by a steering committee convened by the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA). It was a quality enhancement activity for the university sector and reflected the extensive work already being undertaken.

Following extensive consultations with the Australian higher education sector, the DEEWR reconvened the *Good Practice Principles* steering committee in 2010 and asked

it to develop the principles into English standards that would apply to all students in the Australian Higher Education sector. The draft standards were submitted to the DEEWR in July 2010. Alex Barthel represented the AALL on both steering committees.

The inclusion of the *English language standards for Higher Education* (ELSHE) in a global standards framework was essential in the context of developing a national framework for academic standards that would assist the higher education sector in setting up quality systems, in particular, to respond to recent government regulations and initiatives, such as the Knight recommendations and the Bradley Social Inclusion agenda.

The following six ELSHE aimed at providing standards for successful academic study in English in Australian higher education. They applied to all higher education providers operating in Australia:

1. The provider ensures that its students are sufficiently proficient in English to participate effectively in their higher education studies on entry.
2. The provider ensures that prospective and current students are informed about their responsibilities for further developing their English language proficiency during their higher education studies.
3. The provider ensures that resourcing for English language development meets students' needs throughout their studies.
4. The provider actively develops students' English language proficiency during their studies.
5. The provider ensures that students are appropriately proficient in English when they graduate.
6. The provider uses evidence from a variety of sources to monitor and improve its support for the development of students' English language proficiency.

AALL has continued to expand and develop. In 2010, Annie Bartlett finalised the current *AALL Position Statement* which replaces the Bendigo Statement. Bronwyn James and Rowena Harper drove the expansion of international networks, leading to the co-founding of the *International Consortium of Academic Language and Learning Developers* (2009-2014). Further developments have included a dedicated website, a social media presence, bi-annual competitive grants, and regular scholarly and networking events. Through these, the AALL continues to promote quality, diversity, internationalisation and flexibility in language and learning development, locally and globally.

Citation details

Barthel, A., Bartlett, A., Chanock, K., & Moore, T. (2026). Changing identities: A history of Academic Language and Learning in Australia [Updated from 2021 version]. *Journal of Academic Language and Learning, 20*(1), I1-I5. https://journal.aall.org.au/index.php/jall/article/view/1131

Contact: lexybar@gmail.com

*****

Inaugural AALL executive committee (2006)

Office bearers:

Alex Barthel, NSW, Inaugural President and Public Officer

Siri Barrett-Lennard, WA, Vice-President

Jennie Lynch, Vic, Secretary

David Rowland, Qld, Treasurer and Journal editor

Committee members:

ACT, Annie Bartlett, Web manager

ACT, Valli Rao

NSW, Emily Purser

NT, Nicola Rolls

Qld., Lindy Kimmins

SA, Bev Kokkin

SA, Regina Sliuzas

Tas., Marian May

Vic., Judy Maxwell

Vic., Kate Chanock, Journal Co-editor

WA, Carmela Briguglio

Presidents of the Association for Academic Language and Learning (AALL)

2005 - 2009 Alex Barthel

2009 - 2013 Bronwyn James

2013 - 2017 Rowena Harper

2017 - 2019 Maggie McAlinden

2019 - 2020 Andrea Lynch

2020 - 2021 Siri Barrett-Lennard

2021 - 2023 Rebekah Clarkson

2223 - 2025 Andrew Kelly

LAS, ALL and related conferences

1982 Communication at university: Purpose, process and product
La Trobe University
Convenors: Hanne Bock & June Gassin Meyer

1983 Communication, learning & literacy at tertiary level
University of Queensland
Convenor: Gloria Chan

1984 Language and learning at tertiary level
Deakin University
Convenor: Rosalind Meyer

1985 Learning to learn: Language & study skills in context
University of Adelaide
Convenor: Neil Quintrell

1987 7th Language & Learning Skills Conference: Learning from each other
Proceedings (1990)
Editor: Lorraine Marshall

1994 1st: Integrating the teaching of academic discourse into courses in the disciplines
La Trobe University
Convenor: Kate Chanock

1995 LAS working conference
Bendigo
Convenor: Mark Garner

1996 2nd: What do we learn from teaching one-to-one that informs our work with larger numbers?
La Trobe University
Convenor: Kate Chanock

1997 3rd: Policy and practice of tertiary literacy
Victoria University of Technology
Convenor: Zofia Golebiowski

1998 Teaching communication skills in the disciplines
Monash University of Melbourne
Convenors: Paul Gruba & Joanne Tapper

1999 4th: Language and learning: The learning dimensions of our work
Monash University
Convenors: Glenda Crosling, Tim Moore & Sheila Vance

2000 Sources of Confusion
La Trobe University
Convenor: Kate Chanock

2001 5th: Changing identities
University of Wollongong
Convenor: Alisa Percy

2003 6th: In the future
Flinders University
Convenors: Kate Dellar-Evans & Peter Zeegers

2005 7th: Critiquing and reflecting: LAS profession and practice
Australian National University
Convenor: Annie Bartlett

2007 8th: How do we communicate?
La Trobe University
Convenor: Kate Chanock

2009 9th: Learning together: Crossing boundaries through collaborative practices within and beyond the tertiary context
University of Queensland
Convenors: David Rowland & Janey Saunders

2011 10th: Forging new directions in academic language and learning
University of South Australia
Convenors: Chad Habel & Helen Johnson

2012 Symposium: Key thinkers, key theories: The contribution of theory to academic language and learning practice
Swinburne University of Technology
Convenors: Rosemary Clerehan, Andrew Johnson, Tim Moore, Janne Morton, Neomy Storch and Celia Thompson,

2013 11th: New students, new learning: new challenges
RMIT University
Convenor: Judy Maxwell

2015 12th: Critical intersections
University of Wollongong
Convenors: Joanne Dearlove & Alisa Percy

2017 13th: 21st century academic language and learning: Innovations in practice and partnerships
Deakin University
Convenors: Fiona Henderson & Corinna Ridley

2019 14th: All around the world: An exploration of international perspectives, research and practice in academic language and learning
University of Notre Dame, Fremantle
Convenors: Meriel Griffiths & Maggie McAlinden

2021 15th: Diversity, distance, digitalisation: Inclusive and supportive practices in ALL
Charles Darwin University
Convenors: Raelke Grimmer, Andrew Pollard & Nicola Rolls

2023 16th: Meeting students at the centre: re-thinking our ALL practice.
Flinders University
Convenors: Grace Chipperfield, Kirstin Marks, Michael Lazarou & Lauren Butterworth.

2025 17th: Connect, collaborate, create.
James Cook University
Convenor: Sue Gollagher

*****

References

Anderson, J., Durston, B., & Poole, M. (1970). *Thesis and assignment writing*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Australian National University (1996). *Advertisement: Academic Skills Adviser*. Study Skills Centre, Academic Registrar's Division, November.

Australian National University (2001). Advertisement: Academic Skills Adviser, The Australian, 12 June.

Barthel, A. (2006) *ALL centres/units-Australian universities*. Association for Academic Language & Learning

Barthel, A. (2015) *ALL centres/units-Australian universities*. Association for Academic Language & Learning.

Bartlett, A., & Chanock, K. (Eds.) (2003). *The missing part of the student profile jigsaw: Academic skills advising for Australian tertiary students from non-English speaking backgrounds*. Canberra: ASLC, ANU-Canberra. https://www.aall.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/The-Missing-Part-of-the-Student-Profile-Jigsaw-Academic-skills-advising-for-NESB-students-REDUCED-SIZE.pdf

Carmichael, E., Hicks, M., McGowan, U., & van der Wahl, A. (1999). *The position of academic language and learning skills advisers/lecturers in Australian universities (1995-1999)*. https://aall.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/1Bendigo-statement.pdf

Casazza, M.E., & Silverman, S. L. (1996). *Learning assistance and developmental education: A guide for effective practice.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Chanock, K. (1995). Counselling and academic skills teaching: What person-centred counselling can tell us about person-centred skills teaching. In M. Garner, K. Chanock, & R. Clerehan (Eds.) *Academic Skills advising: Towards a discipline* (pp. 28-37). Melbourne: Victorian Language and Learning Network. https://www.aall.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Academic-skills-advising-towards-a-discipline-REDUCED-SIZE.pdf

Chanock, K. (2011a). A historical literature review of Australian publications in the field of Academic Language and Learning in the 1980s: Themes, schemes, and schisms: part one, *Journal of Academic Language and Learning*, *5*(1), A36-A58. https://journal.aall.org.au/index.php/jall/article/view/119

Chanock, K. (2011b). A historical literature review of Australian publications in the field of Academic Language and Learning in the 1980s: themes, schemes, and schisms: part two, *Journal of Academic Language and Learning*, *5*(1), A59-A87. https://journal.aall.org.au/index.php/jall/article/view/120

Clerehan, R. (2007). 'Language staff lose academic ranking': What's new managerialism got to do with it? *Journal of Academic Language and Learning*, *1*(1), A68-A77. https://journal.aall.org.au/index.php/jall/article/view/32

Clerehan, R., Johnson, A., Moore, T., Morton, J., Storch N and Thompson, C. (2014) Introduction to special issue: Key thinkers, key theories: The contribution of theory to academic language and learning practice (part 1 & part 2). *Journal of Academic Language and Learning*, *8*(1), E1-E3. https://journal.aall.org.au/index.php/jall/article/view/344

Craswell, G., & Bartlett, A. (2001). Changing Identities, LAS Advisers. In *Refereed proceedings of changing identities conference*, University of Wollongong. October, 2002.

Division of Economics, (1992). *Advertisement and further particulars*, 2861/1992. Canberra: Research School of Pacific Studies, The Australian National University, Canberra.

Frederick, J., Hancock, L., James, B., Bowden, J., & Macmillan, C. (1981). *Learning skills: A review of needs and services to university students*. Parkville: Centre for the Study of Higher Education, University of Melbourne.

Garner, M., Chanock, K. & Clerehan, R. (Eds.) (1995). *Academic skills advising: Towards a discipline*. Melbourne: Victorian Language & Learning Network, Monash University. https://www.aall.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Academic-skills-advising-towards-a-discipline-REDUCED-SIZE.pdf

Malkin, C. and Chanock, K. (2018). Academic language and learning (ALL) in Australia: An endangered or evolving species? *Journal of Academic Language and Learning*, *12*(1), A15-A32. https://journal.aall.org.au/index.php/jall/article/view/518

Marshall, L. (2006). *A learning companion*. Sydney: Pearson Longman.

Marshall, L., & Rowland, F. (1981) *A guide to learning independently*. Sydney: Pearson Longman.

Moore, T. (2018). Whither disciplinarity? A retrospective review of 'Literacy by degrees' thirty years on. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*, *41*(2), 240-246. https://www.academia.edu/download/56672832/Moore_Literacy_by_degrees.pdf

Morris, I. (1999). Comparison of study learning skills adviser employment details. Unilearn, 28 September.

Packham, G., McEvedy, M. R., & Smith, P. (1985). *Studying in Australia: Writing assignments.* Melbourne: Thomas Nelson.

Percy, A., James, B., Al-Mahmood, R. and Beaumont, T. (2013). *Making histories: oral accounts of the emergence and development of ALL*, Association for Academic Language and Learning.

Taylor, G., (1989). *A students' writing guide: How to plan and write successful essays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Taylor, G., Ballard, B., Beasley, V., Bock, H. K., Clanchy J., & Nightingale, P. (1988). *Literacy by degrees*. Milton Keynes: Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.

University of Canberra (2001). *Position Description, Academic Skills Program*. Division of Communication and Education

Wallace, M. (1980). *Study skills in English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Webb C., & Bonanno, H. (1994). The roles of language and learning staff: Insights from collaboration with the subject discourses. In Chanock, K. (Ed.) *Integrating the teaching of academic discourse into courses in the disciplines*. *Proceedings of the Conference held at La Trobe University, Bundoora, Victoria, November 21-22*. (pp.126-132). Bundoora: La Trobe University.

*****