

Editorial: Introducing the Proceedings of the 17th Biennial Conference of the Association for Academic Language and Learning

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The 17th Biennial AALL Conference, held at James Cook University's Townsville campus in December 2025, invited participants to engage with three interconnected themes: *Connect, Collaborate, Create*. Across keynote sessions, presentations and interactive workshops, these themes highlighted the intellectual and creative work of Academic Language and Learning (ALL) practitioners in a sector shaped by rapid technological development, diverse student cohorts, and increasing institutional change.

Connection was framed as foundational to ALL practice: connection with students to foster belonging and success; with academic colleagues to shape curriculum and assessment; and with each other to sustain professional identity and shared purpose. *Collaboration* emerged as essential to addressing our challenges, particularly those associated with generative artificial intelligence, academic integrity, and inclusive curriculum design. *Creation* provided a platform for delegates to share innovation in responsive pedagogies, digital tools, and frameworks to support student learning and ALL professional identity in our changing higher education landscape.

This Special Issue reflects those conversations through two complementary sections: *Research Articles* and *ALL in Practice*. The research articles present peer-reviewed work that advances scholarship in ALL. The issue opens with Mister and Simelane's proposed professional standards framework, which articulates the expertise and positioning of academic literacy specialists and provides a conceptual anchor for the collection. Salmeron, Howarth and Galligan extend the discussion of frameworks into curriculum-level practice through their academic numeracies model. Campitelli's sector-wide snapshot of individual academic skills advising services offers an evidence-based account of current institutional practice, followed by Edwards et al., who explore disciplinary academics' perspectives on student writing in the age of generative AI. The section concludes with Campitelli's reflection on the continuing value of the human advisor in AI-mediated contexts. Together, these articles move from professional identity and institutional practice to future-facing questions about expertise and technology.

New to this Special Edition is the *ALL in Practice* section. This section recognises many ALL educators are third space professionals who are both scholars and practitioners, and that advances in ALL is expressed through both research and creative pedagogy. This section offers a space for sharing innovative ideas, strategies, activities, and resources, providing a platform for ALL educators to disseminate their initiatives and encourage peers to reflect on, adapt, or trial new approaches in their own contexts. In this inaugural section, Hogan and Bornschlegl reimagine Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) to promote broader participation and inclusion; Hunt and Morgan explore the integration of generative AI to support vocabulary development for international students; and Dumbell, Taylor and Hulcup present a user-centred approach to developing AI literacies. Collectively, these contributions highlight the creativity and collaborative spirit of ALL practitioners.

As conference co-convenors, it was a particular joy to bring colleagues together from across Australia, many reconnecting in person for the first time since the COVID years. The energy at the

venue was a powerful reminder of the value and importance of professional connection. Therefore, we warmly encourage presenters to consider developing their scholarly or practice-based conference presentations for *JALL* across the year. The journal remains open to submissions and in doing so, we aim to continue conversations initiated at the conference and continue to connect, collaborate, and create beyond the event itself.

We thank all contributors, reviewers, and colleagues who contribute to this ongoing scholarly and professional exchange.

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AALL Conference 2025 Co-convenors