

Editorial

Volume 7, Number 2, 2013

This special edition of JALL contains 13 papers, all of which were presented at the 11th biennial AALL conference held at RMIT University in Melbourne, 13-15 November 2013.

As the conference title, *New Students, New Learning: New Challenges?* intended to suggest, academic language and learning (ALL) units, researchers and practitioners operate in a complex environment of diversity and change. A major benefit of this is the focus on ALL groups as having a strong contribution to make to the goals of student retention and success. A challenge of this spotlight is for us to take more ownership of the space: to build strong collaborations within and across our tertiary institutions; to tell stories and use data effectively; and to lead the thinking on how best to incorporate and develop the language and multiple literacies that will contribute to students' graduate outcomes.

JALL, of course, has a role to play in this sharing of knowledge and insights and in building the academic credibility of our units. The articles in this edition reflect some of the current concerns of our work: extending reach and access through online delivery; building pathways and collaborations with groups outside our immediate units; responding to [TEQSA's](#) requirements regarding English Language outcomes; and using flexible learning spaces and delivery modes to engage with students where they are.

Perhaps and not surprisingly the over-arching theme of these papers is collaboration. Chanock writes about a collaboration between ALL staff and discipline teachers to teach subject literacies in a blended approach; Hunter and Tse about student perceptions of different embedded writing models; and Kozar and Lum explore factors which may affect group formation and student satisfaction in off-campus, online doctoral writing groups. McDonald, Schneider and Kett highlight the importance of flexibility and reflection in what may often be quite *ad hoc* collaborations; Pourshafie and Brady explore factors that make for successful collaboration after a not-so-successful experience; Kehrwald, Head and Harper weigh the benefits and drawbacks of working in open learning spaces; and Johnson Collett and Kooyam collaborate beyond the immediate university to provide a model for including parents, partners and friends in the transition process.

Transition is another major theme: Ambrose, Bonne, Chanock, Cunnington, Jardine and Muller capture some of the confusion and joy of moving from TAFE to University; Baker, from the UK, explores the affective dimension in students' development of discourses as they transition from school to university; Wijeyewardene, Patterson and Collins explore the success of an online writing module to assist transition for students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds; and Nallaya and Kehrwald evaluate an online, scaffolded academic literacies model to support discipline discourses.

English language is a continuing ALL concern and the topic of PELAs a controversial one. Harper writes about the experience of a university-wide English language model and the impact of a PELA on the work of the ALL unit; while Harris follows the process of developing a workable PELA, culminating in a low-stakes early assessment writing task. These papers are likely to be read with interest by a wide tertiary audience.

It was a privilege to read and in a small way assist the passage of these papers; I felt enriched by my sneak-peek insights into this important body of work. More papers were proposed than have been published here; some will appear fully-fledged in subsequent editions I'm sure. I would like to thank all the authors for their contributions and all the reviewers for their keen work. And of course David Rowland for patience and wisdom.

Alison Brown

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