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Editorial
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Welcome to this special issue of the Journal of Academic Language and Learning consisting of 17 refereed papers from the *Twelfth Biennial Conference of the Association for Academic Language and Learning* held at the University of Wollongong on the 25–27 November, 2015. The conference theme was 'Critical Intersections' and was proposed as a deliberate incitement to explore knowledge and practice across traditional boundaries to consider how ALL educators continue to make an important intellectual contribution to the sector in the current environment where universities are compelled to do more with less and the restructuring of ALL work appears to be a continuous process.

In developing this theme, we were interested in exploring not just the concepts that currently dominate thinking about higher education, but to critically examine their inter-relationships and to consider what kinds of new spaces for conceptual and empirical work might emerge out of this kind of examination. Among our three excellent keynote speakers, including Associate Professor Cath Ellis from UNSW and Dr Kate Bowles from UOW, we were fortunate to have attracted Emeritus Professor Ronald Barnett from University College London, whose paper 'Glimpsing the ecological university' (Barnett, 2011) inspired the theme of this conference. Although the focus of our thinking may not be so broad as to think about the purpose of the university itself, Professor Barnett's work provides the kinds of questions, analyses, metaphors and concepts that form a very useful toolbox for thinking about the facts, values and future of our work as a profession.

In this particular paper, Professor Barnett suggested that the general task for 'working out a social hope for the university' as we would wish to do for ALL work, involves not simply having 'an eye on the empirical conditions of the age', but also to 'have an eye on the conceptual landscape', and that one 'fruitful tack might lie in putting together pairs of concepts and then working through their interconnections insofar as they bear on the university' [or in our case ALL work] (p.446).

This conference pulled together pairs of concepts that have implications for how we imagine and enact ALL work in its ecological relationship with the university – language and learning, digital and literacy, transition and the first year experience, HDR writing and supervision, assessment and professional development, and numeracy and literacy. Too often these concepts that govern how we think about higher education practice are corralled into separate fields of research or programs of practice and isolated from the kinds of connections that allow new forms of research and practice to emerge. In critically exploring their connections during the conference, our hope was that we might begin to discover different possibilities for imagining ALL work and its intellectual contribution to higher education.

Exploring the intersection between transition and the first year experience in this issue, **Power and Hibbert** challenge the hegemonic view of transition as one of 'adaptation' to the higher education learning environment using the lens of critical pedagogy. They describe and advocate the use of a pedagogy that legitimises students' ways of knowing and is aligned with Bowles' call (final plenary session of the conference) to create institutional spaces within which students can own and generate their own identities and dispositions in higher education contexts. In a similarly critical vein, **Delly** challenges the assumption of an unproblematic intersection between transition and the first year experience using the work of Bourdieu to investigate the transition experiences of VET transfer students. **Hamilton** and **Ashton-Hay, Wignell and Evans** explore English language development from more traditionally-aligned conceptions of transition but from different perspectives. **Hamilton** looks at the teaching perspective and proposes a structured and tailored use of writing models that begins in first year but extends beyond, extending the time for transition beyond first year. **Ashton-Hay, Wignell and Evans** look at the

students' perspectives. They capture international students' voices during their initial institutional interactions and on this basis challenge some of the assumptions underpinning institutional responses in this area.

Exploring the intersection between numeracy and literacy, **Boreland** explores the intersection between English language proficiency and quantitative literacy and its implications for curriculum design, teaching and learning practices and approaches to learning support, while **Wilkins** is more broadly concerned with the link between socially accepted negativity towards mathematics, the lack of confidence many students demonstrate when taking on non-specialist mathematics subjects, and the marginalised nature of numeracy in discussions about literacy at the university level.

Exploring the intersection between language and learning, **Korammanil** is concerned with the invisible intersection between the EALD needs of Indigenous students and the ELP agenda in higher education. Also, concerned with Indigenous language and knowledge, **Harvey, Russell-Mundine and Hoving's** paper examines the intersection between ALL knowledge and practice and cultural competence specialists when working with discipline staff on embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and perspectives into the curriculum. **Podorova's** paper describes an approach to the intersection of language and learning at the subject level, through coordinated assignment feedback processes involving both ALL practitioners and faculty staff. **Goldsmith and Willey** also focus on faculty staff, reporting on an investigation into their views of the intersection between writing and subject knowledge. **Vered** takes the opposite perspective on this intersection by proposing an approach to the development of subject discourse that relies on the inextricability of writing and thinking. Finally, **Johnson** argues for a conception of language that takes an ecological-semiotic perspective and allows for the development of the students' growth as both users and interpreters of signs.

Exploring the intersection between assessment and professional development, **Janssen and Rowen** are concerned with the intersection between students' experience of assessment and their access of student learning services as a result of the misalignment between the purpose, meaning and alignment of assessment tasks. They propose and describe a dual framework for assisting discipline specialists to reflect on, evaluate and better articulate their assessment design which, when used in conjunction with ALL educators, serves the double-purpose of professionally developing staff while providing the opportunity to scaffold students' understanding of their assessment tasks within the context of the classroom. **Henderson-Brooks** examines the actual and potential use of Grademark in Turnitin for providing feedback on student writing. She advocates for greater collaboration between ALL educators and discipline staff to create meaningful comment banks in Grademark to ensure the feedback addresses higher order language issues that can improve the most important aspects of student writing. **Yoo** explores the intersection between ALL knowledge and disciplinary teaching and assessment practices using an autoethnographic approach from the perspective of a practitioner who 'straddles both worlds'.

Finally, exploring the intersection between digital and literacy, **Silvey, Snowball and Do** examine the use of the commercial text-matching software (Turnitin) and students' academic literacy development as provided by a central ALL unit. They argue that it 'is possible to establish a positive and constructive connection between software such as Turnitin and students' development of writing', and demonstrate how a literacy approach to using Turnitin can support students' understanding and development of citation practices and authorial voice. **Cavaleri and Dianati** explore the intersection between grammar support and online grammar checking tools. They argue that their preliminary findings suggest that these tools can save time and resources while promoting students' self-efficacy and self-directed learning.

Alisa Percy and Joanne Dearlove
University of Wollongong

Acknowledgements

References

Barnett, R. (2011). Glimpsing the ecological university. *Oxford Review of Education, 37*(4), 439-455.