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ALL norms: Using artefacts to navigate 'emic' and 'etic' perspectives

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This special issue asks us to reconsider or re-examine established norms and approaches to academic language and learning (ALL) theory, research, policy and practice. This further provokes the question of what in fact are these established norms? Through examining a number of journal articles, documents and projects that have formed and reflected the academic language and learning field in Australia over the past 10 years, I locate what might be understood as ALL 'core beliefs', but equally I argue that our norms, research, theory, policy and practice have always been multidimensional/multifaceted. I suggest that the challenge for us is not so much to establish, critique and then re-establish our norms, but rather to understand our multidimensionality from our own (emic) perspectives while, at the same time, looking for moments in which we can select from and position our multidimensionality in ways that are 'recognisable' within the dominant 'etic' frames of 'intelligibility' (Butler, 1997, 2004) that constitute the wider discourses impacting our specific institutional contexts. In other words, our challenge is to use our varying theoretical and practical framings to find potential points of leverage to enrich learning and teaching within the constraints that are always part of a constantly changing higher education environment.

Key Words: artefacts, academic language and learning, multidimensionality, emic and etic understandings, norms, resistant categories.

1. Introduction

This special issue asks us to reconsider or re-examine established norms and approaches to academic language and learning (ALL) theory, research, policy and practice, further provoking the question of what in fact are these established norms? Through examining a number of artefacts – journal articles, documents and projects – that have formed and reflected the academic language and learning field in Australia over the past 10 years, I locate what might be understood as ALL 'core beliefs'. Equally, I locate what Lillis and Curry (2015) have termed 'resistant categories' that position language and learning quite differently to the theorised understandings that underpin these core 'beliefs'. The artefacts that I focus on in this paper, I suggest, demonstrate that our norms, research, theory, policy and practice have always been multidimensional/multifaceted. The challenge for us, then, is not so much to establish, critique and then re-establish our norms, but rather to understand our multidimensionality from our own (emic) perspectives while at the same time looking for moments in which we can select from and position our multidimensionality in ways that are 'recognisable' within the dominant 'etic' frames of 'intelligibility' (Butler, 1997, 2004) of our specific institutional contexts. In other words, to use our varying theoretical and

practical framings to find potential points of leverage to enrich learning and teaching within the constraints that are always part of a constantly changing higher education environment.

My contribution here is not a history of ALL in Australia. Much of that work has been eloquently done (see for example, Chanock, 2011a, 2011b; Percy, 2011). Nor are the artefacts I explore an exhaustive selection, as any selection will necessarily exclude something. The selection of artefacts in this paper does, however, showcase some of the multidimensional ways in which ALL work is understood from within the ALL field (emic perspectives) and from outside (etic perspectives). In adopting this dual focus, I explore the question of how ALL educators productively navigate 'etic' understandings of ALL work, embodied for example in contemporary Australian higher education policy and standards documents, and within the multiple positionings of our work in different higher education contexts (for the latter, see for example, Evans, Henderson, & Ashton-Hay, 2019). From a Hallidayan (1994) theorisation, these emic and etic perspectives constitute, in part, the contexts of culture and context of situation in which meanings about academic language and learning – both our own and those of others – are construed. While ALL work has been ongoing in some form since the 1970s in Australia, I concentrate here on artefacts of the Australian ALL context over the last decade (2010-2020) and position myself as an ALL educator, policy developer and researcher.

I begin by interrogating the concept of 'norms'. I then move to the artefacts that reflect our policy, research, and practice interests since, from an organisational perspective, artefacts might be understood to "demonstrate the culture, norms and values of those who are in the organisation as well as all its stakeholders" (Olusoji, Oluwakemi, & Uchechi, 2012, p. 37). I work with these artefacts in order to substantiate my claim that our norms are multidimensional and therefore, in some ways, already providing a number of alternative ways of thinking and doing ALL work that one might hope to discover from a re-examination of norms.

2. Norms

Norms configure, organise and make intelligible the material and conceptual world. Different norms give rise to different ways of ordering the world, producing particular material arrangements, subject positions and forms of knowledge (Edwards, 2006). What is unintelligible within these arrangements is disturbing. In making a similar point, Ingala (2019) recounts the story of an 18th Century taxidermist in the museum of natural sciences in Madrid whose job it was to assemble a skeleton that did not seem to fit any known creature. The taxidermist, rather than question the existing categories, decided to saw and remodel the bones to fit those of a mule. The moral of this story is, of course, the need to question categories and labels, since norms become naturalised, ahistoric and universal rather than contingent, cultural and constructed. Norms, therefore, are contestable. Ironically, adhering to the norm is never wholly attainable (Butler, 1997).

In relation to ALL norms and approaches, the story of the taxidermist invites us to consider how our own categories and labels fit within, or more radically, perhaps challenge, the dominant framings and policies of our institutions and the broader context of higher education in Australia. In the exploration of policy artefacts that follows, I point to some aspects of the contingent, cultural, constructed and contestable nature of the ALL field. These aspects give rise to moments of tension that become especially visible as incongruent category systems, when viewed from both emic and etic perspectives. These points of tension also provide potential moments of agency since they offer the possibility of understanding "in fine detail, the multi-dimensional meetings of interlocked ideas and materialities" (Buckley, Chapman, Clegg, & Mattos, 2014).

3. Etic and emic perspectives

3.1. Discourses and policy imperatives

The ways in which ALL educators have identified, critiqued and productively engaged with the tensions of incongruent category systems are perhaps most visible in relation to policy. ALL work takes place within the context of an Australian higher education system that has been the site of multiple and competing discourses giving rise to policy interventions that, to use Allan Luke's (2003) words, "have strong narrative chains, 'story grammars' about specific domains of problems and their possible solutions, about material societal and institutional conditions, and about prospective social agents and scenarios of action" (p. 89).

The effects of discursive and policy shifts on the ALL field have been addressed in conceptual and historical analyses of ALL work since its early days in Australia. Among these is Percy (2011), who uses the Foucauldian lens of governmentality to identify some of the wider discourses that continue to govern higher education – specifically social inclusion and employability – the policy imperatives that flow from them, and the positioning of ALL work in relation to these. Further adding to this list are the discourses of standards and quality assurance, marketisation, internationalisation and social inclusion (Chanock, 2011a; Percy, 2019). These discourses are by no means discrete, nor discontinuous (Readings, 1996; Shore & Wright, 2004), but continue to co-exist and impact the contexts and 'intelligibility' of ALL work.

Both Chanock (2011a) and Percy (2019) have pointed out that many of these discursive framings and related policy developments seem to offer ALL educators a place at the table in institutional discussions about how to develop and enact policy. One only has to look, however, at recent publications in the ALL field to know that this place at the table is at best precarious and fleeting. A recent publication by Benzie and Harper (2020), for example, addresses the interest in outsourcing the development of student writing to 'third-party products'– those developed commercially, and external to the disciplines within which students are studying. A number of such products are based on machine learning analysis of texts and are scalable across whole cohorts and disciplines. One example they cite is Grammarly (grammarly.com), a product that claims to provide feedback on grammar, punctuation, vocabulary, and sentence structure, checks for style and tone, and detects plagiarism. Another example, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCS) have global reach, necessitating, as Benzie and Harper argue, "a generic and selective view of what 'good' writing looks like, divorced from the context in which the students are each trying to improve their writing" (p. 640). They further emphasise that "none of these products have been independently and systematically evaluated. Universities are therefore not able to establish a solid, evidence-based understanding of their function and potential value" (p. 634).

3.2. Core beliefs and resistant categories

The 'etic' understanding of language underpinning these types of products is that writing is a generic and transportable 'skill'. These understandings capture what Lillis and Curry (2015) describe as 'resistant foundational categories' in relation to language work; and the 'transparency approach to language and communication' whereby English is understood as a single stable semiotic. As ALL researchers and educators have long pointed out, these 'mis'conceptions about language and language development remain ubiquitous in higher education. They are, of course, tantalisingly seductive 'misconceptions' precisely because they allow for scalable and therefore relatively affordable solutions that can be, and are, called into service in relation to policies and practices coalescing around discourses of internationalisation, English Language proficiency and standards, quality assurance, plagiarism, equity and social inclusion.

In contrast, are the 'emic' understandings of academic language and learning development held by ALL educators. These understandings are not homogenous, and do not come from a single theoretical home, as demonstrated by Part 1 and Part 2 of the papers generated from the two day

symposium, *Key thinkers, key theories: The contribution of theory to academic language and learning practice*. In common, however, is an understanding that textual practices are shaped by disciplinary norms and knowledge building practices. As Chanock (2011b) notes:

> "**The consistent emphasis … for educators in Australia has been on integrating the understanding and teaching of writing within the context of the particular discipline**" (Emerson & Clerehan, 2009, p. 169). Similarly, Moore and Hough (2005) have characterised the idea that **skills cannot be learnt apart from content as perhaps "the closest thing we have to a core belief in the field"**. If, as we see from the Proceedings of the 1982 conference, this is not a recent but a foundational belief, why has it had to struggle so hard to be institutionalised? (p. A64, emphasis added)

Indeed, the interviews conducted for the Association of Academic Language and Learning (AALL) funded project, *Making histories: Oral Accounts of the emergence and development of ALL* (Percy, James, AL-Mahmoud, & Beaumont, 2013) remind us that from the very early days, ALL educators have taken the position that language and learning needs to occur within the context of the disciplines:

> I think our definition of ourselves and our work comes back to this whole business of the focus upon the nature of the context and …, I suppose, if you've got to give it a name, its epistemology… (John Clanchy, cited in Percy et al., 2013)

Interpreting the policy agendas related to quality assurance and internationalisation and so on through this contextualised understanding of language has not been and, in most cases, is still not something that is readily graspable or 'intelligible' within the institutions within which we work. It does not lend itself easily to quick fix or scalable, generic and 'off the shelf' solutions such as those examined by Benzie and Harper (2019).

A further core belief can be understood as a corollary of the first: that learning and teaching are inseparable. This belief is in evidence in the early work of a number of ALL educators, as demonstrated in this interview extract from *Making histories: Oral Accounts of the emergence and development of ALL*:

> … taking up the job at UWS Hawkesbury was really exciting because I could **bring those 2 things [learning and teaching] together in a way that I wasn't aware at the time was being done anywhere else in the country**. And they were, they were really exciting years actually [1996-2006 as Inaugural Head of the Teaching and Learning Unit at the University of Western Sydney], even though I'd have to also say they weren't easy, because it was a constant process of trying to engage other people in sharing that understanding. And that included both the staff of the university outside the unit, but also the staff within the unit. **I think people struggled to understand how you could marry those 2 elements, because it was just such a view that teaching and learning were separate, that staff and students had to be dealt with in different domains**. And I just never, never really subscribed to that view. (Carolyn Webb, cited in Percy et al., 2013, emphasis added)

This same belief underpins much of ALL curriculum embedded work, (see for example, Benzie, Price, & Smith, 2017; Maldoni & Lear, 2016). Embedded work for the most part is based on theorised accounts of language and learning development – especially academic literacies theory (Lillis, 2003) and/or systemic functional linguistics (Halliday, 1994). While perhaps acknowledged more widely across higher education institutions than it was 30 years ago, this attention to the notion of the inseparability of teaching AND learning evidenced in the work of some prominent higher educational theorists (Edwards, 2006) is still not deeply rooted in higher education,

especially in relation to what is understood by the wider university to be the core business of ALL educators.

Two highly influential documents in Australian higher education are *The Australian Qualifications Framework* (AQF) (Department of Education, Skills and Employment, 2013a) – the policy for regulated qualifications in the Australian education and training system; and the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Framework* (TEQSA) – a product of Australia's independent national quality assurance and regulatory agency for higher education. Both documents are indicative of the ongoing discourses of quality assurance and standards, and in various parts speak, at least indirectly, to ALL work and interests.

The AQF identifies levels of attainment (Department of Education, Skills and Employment, 2013b), with each level described in terms of criteria that identify:

> the relative complexity and/or depth of achievement and the autonomy required to demonstrate that achievement … The AQF level summaries are statements of the typical achievement of graduates who have been awarded a qualification at a certain level in the AQF.

All AQF levels are described in terms of knowledge, skills and application of knowledge and skills. Most pertinent to ALL work is the description under skills. The extract below describes the skills expected of a bachelor level graduate (Department of Education, Skills and Employment, 2013b).

> Graduates at this level will have well-developed cognitive, technical and **communication skills** to select and apply methods and technologies to:
> - analyse and evaluate information to complete a range of activities;
> - analyse, generate and transmit solutions to unpredictable and sometimes complex problems;
> - transmit knowledge, skills and ideas to others. [emphasis added]

While the AQF firmly locates communication as a 'skill' – potentially placing it within 'the resistant category' of language as a generic and transferable skill – it is TEQSA's glossary of key terms that provides the most stark reality check for any ALL educators who consider our work to be centrally concerned with language and learning in the context of the disciplines (core belief 1), and concerned with learning AND teaching (core belief 2). Locating ALL work within the category of Support Staff along with IT support, student admissions and so on, ALL educators are described as (TEQSA, 2020):

> A member of staff of a higher education provider **without an academic staff classification** who provides support functions for teaching and/ or research activities. Examples of support functions include: management, **academic learning support, English language support**, student counselling, librarian, IT support, laboratory assistance, technical assistance, general administrative functions, student administration functions such as provision of student advice, student admissions, student enrolments and student graduations. [emphasis added]

3.3. Navigating etic and emic perspectives

Various artefacts, including publications, funded conferences, and national and ALL funded projects, make apparent the determination of ALL educators to navigate and challenge institutional understandings of ALL work, still too frequently expressed as remits to 'fix' students and their individual learning and language deficits. John Clanchy, speaking about his arrival at the Australian National University (ANU) in the 1970s, provides us with a striking early instance:

> I was struggling when I first came to the ANU because when I arrived…I was told that I was running the reading laboratory, and I thought,
>
> What the hell's a reading laboratory?
>
> and there were these reading machines…speed reading was the big go in those years… (John Clanchy, cited in Percy et al., 2013)

Clanchy's words provide a segue into exploring other artefacts that demonstrate the multiple ways in which ALL has employed theorised accounts of language and learning practice to make inroads into university and disciplinary cultures, various discursive and policy agendas and their interpretation and implementation. These inroads occur within the microcosm of individual institutions as well as in the macro, broader national contexts. I begin with projects that relate to national contexts, as it is here that emic and etic understandings meet in interesting ways.

Figure 1 below is the frontpage of a fellowship report produced by the fellowship holder, Carmela Briguglio (2014), for an Australian Government Office of Learning and Teaching funded project report.

Figure 1. Working in the third space: promoting interdisciplinary collaboration to embed English language development into the disciplines (Briguglio, 2014).

The report's executive summary indicates that:

> This national teaching fellowship aimed to examine ways of embedding English language development into teaching and learning activities in the disciplines. The focus of the fellowship was to increase academic capacity by designing materials, and implementing professional development activities. It was envisaged that these materials and activities would raise academics' awareness of linguistic and educational issues, as well as provide them with skills to more easily include embedding strategies into their teaching and learning activity. The aim was also to examine current interaction between discipline and language specialists, and to design a model that would best promote successful collaboration in this area. (Briguglio, 2014, p. 5)

What is immediately apparent is that the executive summary and the title of the report, *Working in the third space: promoting interdisciplinary collaboration to embed English language development into the disciplines*, encapsulate ALL core belief 1 – the contextualised understanding of language; and 2 – the conjoining of learning AND teaching, as key business for ALL educators.

The fellowship can be understood as a response to a very specific agenda around English language proficiency, located within the broader discourses of quality assurance, standards, internationalisation, and also social inclusion. The learning AND teaching activities that were undertaken as part of the fellowship challenge some of the etic perceptions of ALL work suggested by the TE-QSA and AQF documents discussed earlier. As the report indicates, activities included designing and delivering workshops on embedding English language development into the disciplines; delivering these to discipline academics, ALL educators and mixed audiences in a number of national and international contexts; and presentations nationally and internationally on the fellowship findings. Several models were also analysed for "promoting student language development in teaching and learning in higher education" (Briguglio, 2014, p. 5). In addition, "the literature on Australian case studies, and some European and African experiences aiming to embed English language support, were explored and analysed and fed into the development of a collaborative model" (p. 5).

Another national project funded by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council is the online site, WRiSE – Write Reports in Science and Engineering (Figure 2). Described on the site as "an online learning environment designed to help students develop and improve their report writing skills in science and engineering", the focus is on the variations of a specific genre within the context of various subdisciplines of the broader Science and Engineering disciplines (Core belief 1). While I have labelled this a core 'belief', the label 'belief' is somewhat misleading as this project is firmly rooted in a theorised understanding of language and language learning stemming from systemic functional linguistics (Halliday, 1994) and genre pedagogy (Rose & Martin, 2012).
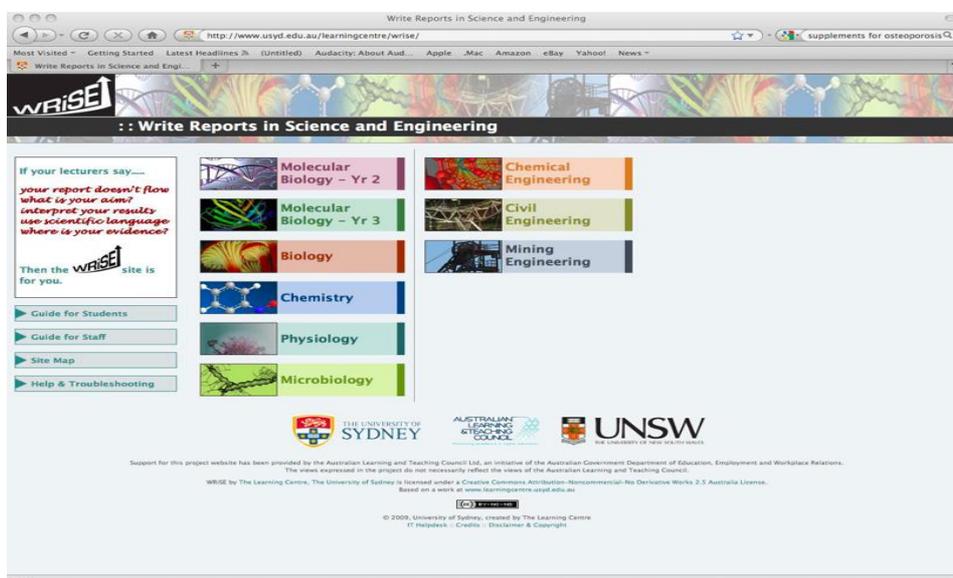

Figure 2. Write Reports in Science and Engineering.

While the terminology 'skills' is evident in the *WRiSe* site, as it is also in the *Working in the third space* fellowship report, both examples, in different ways, promote the understanding of language in context, rather than as a generic and portable 'skill'. *WRiSE*, as a collaborative project undertaken by Learning Centres and discipline staff from the Faculties of Science and Engineering at the University of Sydney and the University of New South Wales, also demonstrates a different

realisation of the conjoining of teaching AND learning (core belief 2) than we see in the *Working in the third space* report.

A third example, demonstrating again the multiple ways in which ALL educators have negotiated discourses and indeed influenced related institutional policy and strategies, is the *Degrees of Proficiency* project. The project, funded by the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching, involved an inter-university team of ALL educators from Curtin University, RMIT, the University of Sydney and Swinburne University (Dunworth, Drury, Kralik, Moore, & Mulligan, 2013). As the project website states, it "provide[s] Australian universities with tools that will assist in the development of an institutional strategy to develop students' English language capabilities" (http://www.degreesofproficiency.aall.org.au).

The site deliberately employs the terminology, 'English language proficiency', rather than 'language skills', stating that:

> There is no term that captures all concepts and contexts associated with language use in higher education, so this project has used 'English language proficiency' as an umbrella term. It is intended to incorporate concepts such as 'academic literacies' and 'language skills', to include general, academic and professional domains of use, and to apply to all English language users, whatever their first language backgrounds. (http://www.degreesofproficiency.aall.org.au)

In making this switch in terminology, and following through with the same terminology in a number of places in the project site, the project team firmly repositions language as much more than a transferable skill, ties learning AND teaching together, and positions language development as a central concern of universities that is best developed within an institutional wide framework.

Finally, I include the *Critical Discussions about Social Inclusion Forum* as a different sort of example – a more localised initiative driven by a group of ALL educators from the University of Wollongong, the University of Sydney, the University of Technology Sydney, the University of New England and the Australian National University. The Forum attracted over 100 participants from across Australia, a mix of ALL educators, faculty academics, senior executive members, and policy developers and implementors.

The Forum was initially funded via an Association for Academic Language and Learning (AALL) event grant, but later gained additional funding from the Forum host institution, the University of Wollongong, as it became recognised by that University as a strategic priority. In itself, this was a case of ALL educators helping to drive policy interpretation and implementation. The editorial for the special isssue of the Journal of Academic Language and Learning (JALL) *Critical Discussions about Social Inclusion* (McMahon-Coleman, Percy, & James, 2012) that resulted from the Forum, identifies the motivation of the designers as one of critique, not simply compliance:

> As practitioners and academics interested in the new Social Inclusion agenda currently propelling institutions of higher education into action, we devised the Forum as a way of providing the space for those charged with responsibility for enacting the Social Inclusion agenda to talk about what we are doing, have done and want to do. Equally importantly, we wanted the Forum to shift this story telling into a more critical space – a space in which we were not simply repeating or retelling, but thinking, re-thinking and questioning. The critical questions that drove this Forum related to issues of identity and difference and the ways in which policy and practice are grounded in the production and representation of the student as subject of higher education. (p. E1)

Unfortunately, I cannot give the depth and breadth of attention needed here to do justice to any of the four projects I have noted. Nor can I begin to examine a number of other national and more local projects that address academic language in some form, social inclusion, or the quality assurance and English language proficiency issues surrounding academic integrity. The four projects that I have noted, nevertheless, draw attention to some of the multiple ways in which ALL educators have understood our work, and expanded on the ways in which we might be institutionally positioned, and continue to be positioned by higher education documents such as the TEQSA glossary of terms. In other words, in these projects, as in others, ALL educators have worked "tactically to put the discourses of standards and skills [and others] to work" (Percy, 2019, p. 17); addressed and challenged discourses such as skills, and social inclusion; and assisted institutions nationally to develop or rethink policies and strategies related to higher education agendas.

This is not to say, unfortunately, that "ALL is for the best in the best of ALL possible worlds", to reword Voltaire's 18th century satire, Candide. Rather, like Candide, as he experiences the realities and disillusionments of life, we need to attend to the realities of the multiple and, at times, conflicting discursive and institutional agendas that drive higher education in Australia. At the same time, we need to seek out in those agendas those moments of productive friction – spaces which may not easily fit with our theorised understanding of ALL practice. Ironically, it is within these uncomfortable spaces that we may be able to find moments of agency in which we can act tactically, as we can see in the four examples I have described here. This is the type of ALL tactical work that continues to demonstrate ALL's relevance to key higher education agendas and at the same time carries the potential "to raise awareness, change practices, challenge the status quo, and educate others within the academy [while all the time realising that] this work is never done" (Percy, 2019, p. 19).
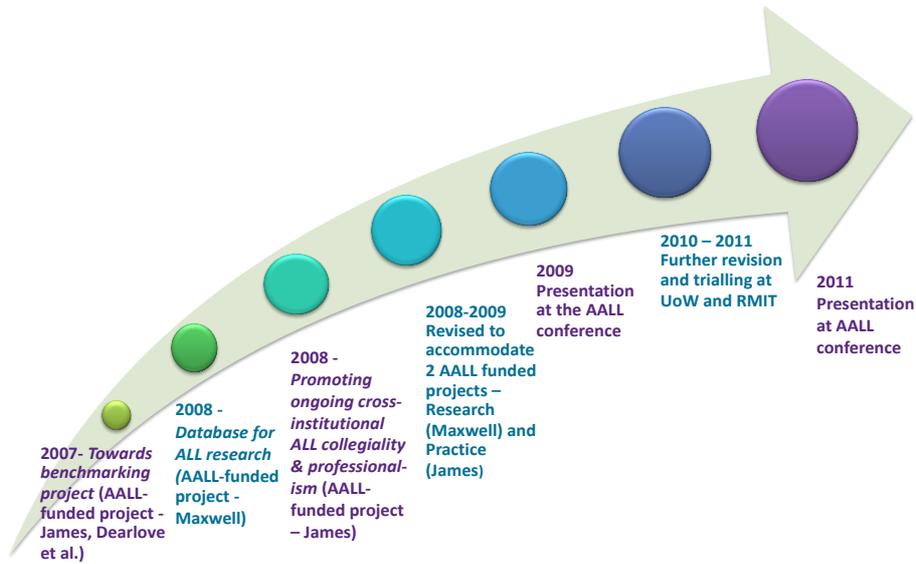
4. Multidimensionality – ALL practices and research

In this last section, I want to draw attention to another quite different artefact that highlights the diversity of practices and research that make up the ALL field and its theoretical framings. This is the ALL database of practice and research project (James & Maxwell, 2012) funded by AALL and originally located at aall.org.au/aalldb. The *Key thinkers, key theories* special issues of JALL (published as Part 1 and Part 2 in 2014) identifies a range of theoretical influences on, and generated from, the work of individual ALL educators. ALL research publications, however, do not only appear in JALL, but are scattered across a number of Australian and international journals.

Partially in response to this scattering of key ALL research, and also in response to the diversity of ALL practices occurring across the sector, the ALL database project was conceived to promote ongoing cross institutional ALL collegiality, professionalism and research. The potential was for the database to inform research collaborations, and the sharing of practice and evaluation. As an amalgamation and extension of two smaller projects – one identifying the practices that make up the ALL field in Australia and the other bringing together into one repository the research that both informed practice and was generated from practice – each project and the combined database project might be understood as examples of 'identity work' (Lee & McWilliam, 2008) for the ALL field.

Figure 3 below shows the database stages of development. Additionally, in 2015 the database was presented at the European Association for Academic Writing (EATAW) (James & Maxwell, 2015) where participants from European, US, and UK universities tested out the category labels with the aim of developing the project internationally.
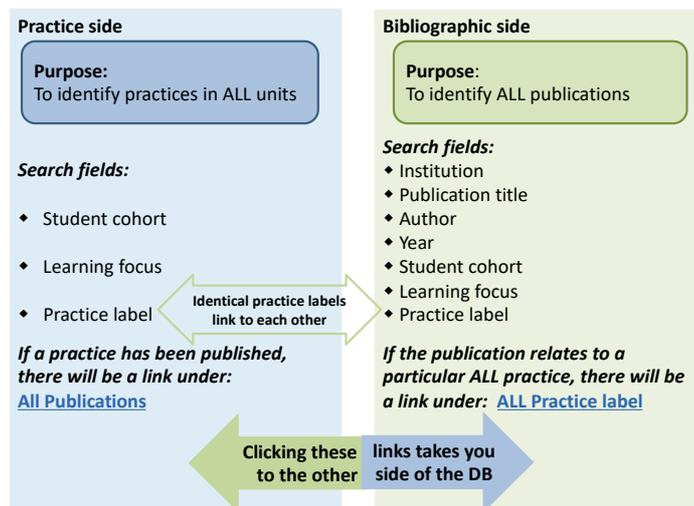
Stages in the development of the database

2007- *Towards benchmarking project* (AALL-funded project - James, Dearlove et al.)

2008 - *Database for ALL research* (AALL-funded project - Maxwell)

2008 - *Promoting ongoing cross-institutional ALL collegiality & professionalism* (AALL-funded project – James)

2008-2009 Revised to accommodate 2 AALL funded projects – Research (Maxwell) and Practice (James)

2009 Presentation at the AALL conference

2010 – 2011 Further revision and trialling at UoW and RMIT

2011 Presentation at AALL conference

Figure 3. Stages in the development of the AALL database of Research and Practice (James & Maxwell, 2012).

The combined updateable, relational database housed and linked information about academic language and learning practices taking place in universities across Australia, the cohorts who are taken into account in these practices, and related research that both informs and is generated from these practices. Figure 4 depicts the interlinking architecture of the database.

The two sides to the database

Practice side

Purpose:
To identify practices in ALL units

Search fields:

◆ Student cohort

◆ Learning focus

◆ Practice label

Identical practice labels link to each other

If a practice has been published, there will be a link under:
All Publications

Bibliographic side

Purpose:
To identify ALL publications

Search fields:
◆ Institution
◆ Publication title
◆ Author
◆ Year
◆ Student cohort
◆ Learning focus
◆ Practice label

If the publication relates to a particular ALL practice, there will be a link under: **ALL Practice label**

Clicking these links takes you to the other side of the DB

Figure 4. Database interlinking practice and research architecture.

As Figure 4 shows, the database fields were generated to account for practice focus, particular cohorts, learning focus, and research. The research that generated the database fields involved

desktop research, email surveys, and telephone contacts, and resulted in input from 33 universities across Australia. The fields were further tested out with the ALL community at international, national and regional meetings.

Of interest here are the ways in which the database fields reference the multifaceted aspects of ALL theory, research, practice and policy engagement. These categories, identified within each of the interconnecting database segments: "Practice, Cohort, Learning Focus", are listed in Tables 1-3.

Table 1. Practice categories

Competitive grants and awards	Peer tutoring
Conference hosting	Policy development and governance
Courses/subjects for credit	Resource development
Competitive grants and awards	Retention
Evaluation	Staff and tutor development and support
External body consultancy	Student consultations
Independent and self-directed learning	Testing/needs analysis
Integration/embedding into disciplines	Workshops, lectures and tutorials
Peer mentoring	Other
Research and scholarly activities related to ALL practice	

Table 2. Cohorts

Domestic	Other equity
Foundation	Postgraduate coursework
Honours	Postgraduate research
Indigenous	Students with disability
International	TAFE /VET
Linguistic and cultural diversity	Transition
Low socio-economic status (SES)	Undergraduate
Off-campus/off-shore	Other

Table 3. Learning focus

Active learning	Mathematics/numeracy/statistics
Academic literacy	Note-taking
Clinical/workplace communication	On-line learning
Computing literacy	Oral presentations
Critical thinking, reading and writing	Reading strategies
English language learning	Referencing and plagiarism
Exam preparation and strategies	Reflective practice
Graduate/professional qualities/capabilities	Research
Group/teamwork	Science literacy
Library/information literacy	Time management/goal setting
Listening in lectures and tutorials	Writing for publication
	Other

These emic descriptions of ALL student cohorts, practices, research interests and learning foci tell us that the ALL field is indeed multidimensional and multifaceted.

5. Conclusion

The notion of ALL 'norms' becomes necessarily unstable and contestable in light of the diversity of artefacts examined in this paper. If it is the case that different norms give rise to different ways of ordering the world, producing particular material arrangements, subject positions and forms of knowledge, as I indicated at the beginning of this paper, then our varying theoretical and practical framings provide the conditions for us to act tactically. We are not transfixed by immovable and uniform understandings of ALL work.

The artefacts that I have explored here provide examples of different tactical responses in that each demonstrates ALL's relevance to key higher education agendas. At the same time, each example holds to what may be understood as ALL's two theoretically informed core beliefs about the interconnection of language, learning and context, and the need to consider teaching AND learning together. Working at the intersections of etic and emic perspectives on language and learning provides us with opportunities to address and even challenge discourses such as skills and social inclusion. It is at these moments that it just might be possible to move the conversations and narratives around such discourses in new directions.

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