

Editorial

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Acknowledgements

Ngaala kaaditj Wadjuk Nyungar moort, kura wer yeye, keyen kaadak nidja boodja.

We acknowledge the Wadjuk Nyungar nation on whose land in Fremantle WA the 2019 AALL conference was held, and we pay our respects to the Wadjuk Noongar elders, past and present.

We also acknowledge the authors, reviewers and editors who carried on with the work of this special issue in these exceptional times. Thank you for your dedication, generosity, and perseverance.

Welcome to this special conference edition of JALL, which responds to the 2019 conference theme ‘All around the world’, an exploration of international perspectives, research and practice in academic language and learning. Each day of the conference focused on a related sub-theme – all around the world, all around the student, and all around the technology. These themes challenged us to examine our relationship with internationalisation, with technology, and with student success. The keynote speakers invited us to question the cultural assumptions we make about language and learning, to think about how we create and maintain connection in a post-digital world, and consider how we can be educational leaders who foster a culture that focuses on student success.

The papers in this edition present ideas and perspectives explored at the AALL conference but they also respond to the rapid and unforeseen changes of the past year, which have required us to adapt and create new ways of working. The authors reflect on the opportunities as well as the challenges presented by the pandemic, to create more inclusive, collaborative ways of working across cultures. There is a strong focus on students throughout, which is evident in the themes of transition and transformation and the authors’ engagement with the importance of creating and maintaining relatedness, connection and a sense of belonging. In their engagement with these themes, the papers frequently intersect with one another, creating discursive cross-currents and bringing multidimensional perspectives which encourage us to imagine future directions and possibilities in ALL work.

Janette Ryan in her opening paper, ‘Transforming academic cultures: relationships, respect and reciprocity’, asks what would happen if we were to make use of the possibilities for reciprocal learning across cultures. She challenges us to become anthropologists of our own academic cultures by “examining our assumptions and attitudes towards the academic culture we constitute and are constituted by,” and envisions a form of internationalisation in which relationships and interconnections with other academic systems of practice are central.

Johanna Einfalt draws on Ryan’s work, among others, in her examination of the gap between the ideal of transcultural learning and the actual experience of international students in Australia. She proposes a dialogic approach and calls for universities to provide more inclusive experiences and authentic dialogue for students to develop intercultural understanding. Pertinently, she also asks how we can create such interrelational and dialogic experiences in the online space.

Maree Keating, Andrew Rixon and Aron Perenyi also consider the importance of inclusive teaching practices and pedagogies to foster students’ sense of belonging and success. They draw attention to the privileging of cultural and academic capital held by domestic, monocultural students

and emphasise the role of teachers in creating learning environments that enable all students to draw on their cultural and other capital in the learning process.

Steve Johnson, Ilan Zagoria and Kerry Jacobsen examine the role of emotions in international students' engagement and learning and pay close attention to academic power dynamics and discourses that impact on international students' sense of belonging and agency. The authors advocate for a deeper understanding of academic emotions and provide suggestions for practice and research to create inclusive learning environments that develop students' emotional intelligence and resilience.

In his paper on learning support literacy, John Hamilton highlights the role of feedback literacy in enabling students to engage productively with academic support and become independent, self-regulated learners. He makes the case for universities to foster students' development of cultural capital and digital literacy so that students are empowered in their engagement with academic support and are able to take control of their own learning.

Rachel Barber examines the role of academic support from the perspective of ALL practitioners in her paper, in which she addresses the impact on staff of the changing demands of ALL learning advisor services. She sets a clear vision for future ways of working with discipline teaching staff that develop strong collaborative interdisciplinary partnerships and communities of practice.

Raelke Grimmer, Andrew Pollard and Nicola Rolls reflect on the rapid changes in higher education brought about by COVID-19. Their reflection attests to the resilience of learning advisors in navigating the sudden shift to online learning while maintaining a strong focus on the students. In reflecting on their experience of teaching during the pandemic, the authors describe the collaborative nature of their online sessions and the rapport built with their students. While creating significant challenges, it is clear that the pandemic has also provided an opportunity to enhance our knowledge and teaching practice.

Patricia Dooley and Jane Grellier evaluate two programs designed to develop students' academic literacy skills in their first year of tertiary study. In their evaluation of the programs, the authors draw on students' reflections on their learning across their first semester. These reflections are insightful and highlight the value the students place on the personal skills and sense of confidence they have developed alongside their academic skills.

International students' reflections on their learning experience are the focus of Laurel Acton's paper on student transitions. She traces students' transition from a first degree in their home language to an EAP program and then to an Australian university. Her findings indicate significant inconsistencies in educational approaches in these educational environments which make it difficult for students to navigate these transitions and point to the need for more alignment in teaching practices.

In her paper on ALL norms, Bronwyn James reminds us of the "contingent, cultural, constructed and contestable" nature of our field. She draws attention to the multidimensional perspectives of ALL work from within and outside our field. The author invites us to re-examine and question the norms and core beliefs about academic language and learning; by challenging the dominant discourses, she argues, we might change fixed narratives around ALL work.

The final two papers come in tandem and focus on two powerful ideologies that have shaped and continue to shape higher education – humanism and neoliberalism. In the first paper, Anibeth Desierto and Carmela De Maio critique neoliberalism and call for a revival of the humanism of Vygotsky and Freire in higher education. They ask that institutions ensure that students leave the university not only as "job ready", but also as critical thinkers; as caring and democratic citizens who can contribute to not only their own individual progress, but to the progress of society.

In the final paper, Andrew Kelly reflects on his experience of attending Anibeth and Carmela's presentation at the conference. While recognising the popularity of an anti-neoliberal stance, Andrew argues that there are positive as well as negative aspects of neoliberalism in Australian higher education. He also contends that neoliberalism is not the dominant ideology of global higher education, as evidenced by universities' commitment to equity programs and social justice which he argues goes against the principles of neoliberalism.

At the conference last November, we invited delegates to explore new ways of interacting with knowledge and practice; to remain curious and open; to pay at least as much attention to feeling as we do to thinking; to make the invisible more visible; to allow things to unravel without the desire to pull them in – and to slow down, think and listen.

Throughout the three days we sought to engage with thinking and knowledge-creation practices that are inclusive, emotional, embodied, non-hierarchical, creative, collaborative and critical; practices that are predicated on connection, on openness, on curiosity and on care. Within this way of thinking and acting – which has its roots in many sources, including post-structuralist feminist thought, and critical pedagogies – matters of fact matter less, matters of care, matter more. This call is a call for an ethics of care after Nel Noddings and María Puig de la Bellacasa and others. This is not a call to care more, to feel more for others, but to care differently; ethically, critically and intentionally.

We are delighted to bring together this edition of papers, reflections and commentaries that invite us to explore new ways of interacting with knowledge and practice and to envisage what might be possible in ALL work. We encourage readers to think with, discuss, reflect on, and write in response to the ideas in these papers.

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2019 AALL conference conveners and guest editors for this special edition of JALL.