

A historical literature review of Australian publications in the field of Academic Language and Learning in the 1980s: Themes, schemes and schisms: Part One

By *Judy Maxwell*

Created 09/19/2011 - 13:29

In Australia, language and academic skills advisers have been responsible for designing and delivering programs to develop tertiary students' academic writing since the early 1980s. Thirty years on, the Association for Academic Language and Learning (AALL) has begun compiling a searchable database of Australian publications in this field. I am engaged in a historical review of this literature, with the aim of orienting readers to the philosophical, pedagogical and professional issues that have occupied ALL practitioners in our region. This article, in two Parts, surveys the literature of the formative decade of the 1980s which shaped a distinctive Australian approach to ALL, with a focus on mediating the epistemologies, purposes, forms and conventions of the disciplines, as revealed in their texts.

Part One traces the development of ALL from its origins, often in counselling services, charged with mediating problems attributed to the expansion of Australian tertiary education by remediating its "non-traditional" students. Part Two looks at the position of ALL practitioners in the wider context of institutional approaches to teaching and learning. Generally, academic developers were tasked with working with lecturers, while ALL advisers worked with students. Differences in the way these groups conceptualised their problems and solutions had implications for both their practice and their position in the institution. ALL practitioners learned from and with individual students and their texts, and drew upon linguistics to develop a specialised discourse about tertiary literacy in which mastery of disciplinary discourses was seen as crucial. In comparison, the academic developers' more accessible and ostensibly universal theory of "deep" or "surface" learning, and the higher status associated with working with lecturers, cemented the influence of this group and further marginalised the role of ALL practitioners.

Key Words: Australian higher education, study skills, equity

Publication Source Information **Author/s:** Chanock, Kate

Year of publication: 2011

Title of Journal, Edited book or Conference and Page numbers: Journal of Academic Language and Learning, Vol. 5, No. 1; pp. A36-A58

ISSN/ISBN: ISSN: 1835-5196

URL or DOI: <http://journal.aall.org.au/index.php/jall/article/view/119>

Contact details **Contactable:** off

Source URL:

<http://aall.org.au/aallpublication/historical-literature-review-australian-publications-field-academic-language-and-lea>