### Language and literacies with equity

Literature Review

There is a small body of work that explicitly links equity with language and literacies (often packaged under the unhelpfully reductive ‘skills’ label; see Lea & Street, 1998; Lillis, 2001; Wingate, 2006 for critique of this description of language). However, disconnections between home/school and academic language and literacies (henceforth ALL), which create challenging conditions for participation and success, are a common finding throughout the literature that examines student experience, transitions and pathways. However, despite what some see as the centrality of language and literacies to the core work of the academy (Lea, 2013; Baker & Irwin, 2015), there is comparably lesser attention paid to these concerns in the context of equity when compared to other areas (such as access and aspirations) This is likely to be connected in part at least to policy orientations and funding priorities, although attention has been paid to the challenges that result from poor teaching and assessment practices, which – it could be argued – are intertwined with assumptions about language and literacies. Indeed, as Klinger & Murray (2012) contend, issues connected with students’ (lack of) language are generally ‘symptomatic’ of broader issues relating to views of acculturation, particularly for students who arrive with “a significantly greater shortfall in the kind of cultural capital successful study in this environment demands” (p.40).

There are two broad themes that run through this body of literature: a focus on academic discourses and literacies for native English speaking students (NES), and a focus on language proficiency for students who come from language backgrounds other than English (LBOTE). Discussions on the latter theme tend to examine equity and domestic LBOTE students rather than international students; however, Simon Marginson (2011) has raised the question about whether equity agendas should be extended to international students (also see Ziguras, 2016). Given that international students now constitute almost a quarter of enrolments in Australian higher education, there is a compelling argument (as with other unofficial equity groups, such as students from refugee backgrounds, students from out of home care, and first in family students.

There is relatively little attention paid explicitly to challenges experienced as a result of language and literacies with relation to NES students – in terms of a student’s proficiency and in the context of staff communication and assessment of learning. However, there are a small number of papers that specifically address the challenges that NES students – from equity groups in particular – face. Some of this literature uses the language of ‘academic discourse’, rather than specifically naming language and literacies (Devlin, 2011, Devlin & O’Shea, 2012; McKay & Devlin, 2014); however, despite this conflation of what are essentially different but related phenomena, they denote a connection with language and literacies, even if these are not made explicit. For instance, in examining the impact of academic discourses on low SES students’ experiences of studying in higher education, McKay & Devlin (2014) draw on the idea that ALL need to be ‘demystified’ (see Lillis, 2001), because without explicit unpacking of academic discourses and practices, they risk being excluded from the knowledge community. Clearly, this argument can be extended to all student groups who are traditionally under-represented in university, and could also be extended to all students who start university studies; as Murray (2013) succinctly captures it, “few if any students, whether native speakers or NESB, domestic or international, will come adequately equipped with the specific set of academic literacy practices they require for their particular degree” (p.303; see also Briguglio, 2011). Writing about the challenges of introducing a Post-Enrolment Language Assessment (PELA) at the University of South Australia, Murray (2013) makes the case for embedding academic literacies into the curriculum, based on notion that

“…subject lecturers can reasonably be expected to have an implicit knowledge of the academic literacies and communication skills [of their discipline]… many will require professional development by English language and communication specialists to help them articulate and acquire a good understanding of [what they] demonstrate unconsciously on a daily basis, along with the associated pedagogies for their delivery” (p.304).

The call for embedding such supports – based on the assumption that all students could benefit from unpacking tacit assumptions about what constitutes ‘good’ disciplinary writing – is commonplace in ALL-focused literature (Wingate, 2006; Baik & Greig, 2009; Klinger & Murray, 2012; Briguglio & Watson, 2014; Murray & Nallaya, 2014; Stirling & Rossetto, 2015). However, embedding as a whole-of-institution effort (as described in Murray 2013) is likely to be both challenging and a long-term project, requiring significant cultural change. Stirling & Rossetto (2015) describe one attempt to embed supportive technologies and strategies (not solely restricted to ALL) in a transition program at the University of Wollongong. Their discussion works from metaphor of the palimpsest so as to “think through the complex layering between subjective responses of students to the demands of academic writing and the (con)textual product” (drawing on Yancey, 2004; p.16). Stirling & Rossetto argue that to judge students by the conventions around reading and writing imposed by the academy, “places important differences and the politics of identity inherent in diversity and social inclusion under erasure” (p.17), which can have significant impacts on students’ learning. Stirling & Rossetto contend that there are core tensions between teachers, equity students and ALL, arguing that the competing agendas of equity, widening participation, quality teaching and neoliberalism lead all agents (subject lecturers, equity students and ALL teachers) to “become entangled”, thus limiting the possibilities for the cultural change that is necessary to foreground more holistic and inclusive pedagogies.

There is a more intense focus in this literature that specifically relates to ALL on the experiences, needs and proficiencies of LBOTE students. Partly, this focus is a result of the debate around ‘slipping standards’, which have been levelled at the expansion of higher education to both ‘non-traditional’ and international/ LBOTE students. In her 2011 paper, Carmela Briguglio (2011) responds to the suggestion that raising English pre-entry requisites will help universities to ‘raise their standards’. She argues that rather than making entry more difficult for students (often for the most lucrative students in Australian higher education), which would provide “only a temporary panacea that hides important related issues” (p.317), universities need to engage in an ontological shift because “academics are looking at [English language] from old perspectives instead of seeing it with new eyes” (p.326). She takes issue with the notion of developing interventions in the name of equity, arguing that universities need to “move beyond the rhetoric of ‘equity’ and ‘access’ towards an internationalised curriculum for *all* students” (p.322), which would place language, literacies and interculturality at the centre of teaching and learning.

Cocks & Stokes (2013) also attend to the ‘wicked problem’ of language, but focus their attention to the other end of the spectrum, and explore the issues that occur when there are no entry requirements for a program of study. Taking the Foundation Studies enabling program at the University of South Australia as their case study, Cocks & Stokes discuss the challenges that students with low proficiency in Academic English have (specifically LBOTE) face with participating and succeeding in the program, which is itself designed to prepare students for the rigours of undergraduate study. In this context, authors make the argument that “minimal entry requirements for access… may encourage those with low English language proficiency to develop unrealistic expectations of undergraduate success” (p.32). Similar arguments are made in Baker & Irwin’s (2015) audit of enabling programs across Australia, noting that ‘open access’ (in the form of no entry prerequisites) can be as disabling as it is enabling, depending on the student’s confidence with and command of the language of instruction.

Similarly, Pitman, Koshy & Philimore (2015) note that domestic LBOTE students do not qualitatively differ from their international (in terms of visa status) counterparts in terms of performing/ controlling for selection into courses, which thus suggests “that literacy rather than cultural conditioning was a greater issue” (p.613). Daddow, Moraitis & Carr’s (2013) research offers similar findings; their description of efforts to embed academic language and criticality into two TAFE Diploma courses, which have many LBOTE students, suggests that students’ access and participation in the program is constrained by proficiency with academic and disciplinary discourses and literacies. These challenges at the TAFE level make transitioning into undergraduate studies – particularly directly into Year 2 – highly challenging. Their methodological and pedagogical approach sought to resist a deficit approach, and instead positioned students as ‘emerging participants in a new discourse’ (p.484) by making the writing practices of the discipline (community services and social work) explicit. They found that despite it requiring effort and time on the part of both disciplinary teachers and ALL experts, students responded enthusiastically to the initiative, and grades of assessed work suggest that it achieved its goals to increase participation and engagement with disciplinary knowledges. Testa & Egan’s (2014) research into the experiences of undergraduate LBOTE students (both domestic and international) suggests that beyond the challenges that English can pose, other barriers included “a lack of familiarity with local knowledge and values, a lack of grounding in Western conceptual frameworks and unfamiliarity with academic discourse” (p.234). Moreover, despite meeting the English Language proficiency requirements of their degree, Testa & Egan’s participants reported that they had difficulties with the English used in lectures, readings and in assessment requirements. These challenges are arguably the result of two compounding factors: the “traditional, individualistic teaching and learning pedagogy taught exclusively through the lens of a Western paradigm” (p.240) and the content of the curriculum, which often rests of assumptions of local knowledge, colloquial language and culturally-specific metaphors, fails to recognise multiple ways of learning and thus expects the students to adapt, or finds them deficient. Testa & Egan (2014) argues that the cultural and linguistic assumptions made by curriculum designers and teachers need to be unpacked and examined through the lens of LBOTE students. They propose that such actions could facilitate the kind of cultural change needed to recognise the centrality of ALL and generate more inclusive pedagogies; by focusing on LBOTE students, it would “challenge curriculum designers and lecturers to integrate [LBOTE] perspectives and experiences into the curriculum, thus providing alternative voices in the understanding and application of theories and practice” (p.240)

**References**

Baker, S. & Irwin, E. (2015). *A national audit of academic literacies provision in enabling courses in Australian Higher Education (HE)*, Association for Academic Language and Learning. Retrieved from http://www.aall.org.au/sites/default/files/Baker-Irwin\_AALL-report-final\_project\_2014-2-1.pdf

Briguglio, C. (2011). Quality and the English language question: is there really an issue in Australian universities? *Quality in Higher Education*, 17(3): 317-329.

Cocks, T. & Stokes, J. (2013). Policy into practice: a case study of widening participation in Australian higher education, *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning,* 15(1): 22-38.

Devlin, M. (2011). Bridging socio-cultural incongruity: conceptualizing the success of students from low socio-economic status backgrounds in Australian higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 38(6): 939-949.

Devlin, M. & O’Shea, H. (2012). Effective university teaching: views of Australian university students from low socio-economic status backgrounds, *Teaching in Higher Education,* 17(4): 385-397.

Klinger, C. & Murray, N. (2012). Tensions in higher education: widening participation, student diversity and the challenge of academic language/ literacy. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, 14(1), 27-44.

McKay, J. & Devlin, M. (2014). ‘Uni has a different language… to the real world’: demystifying academic culture and discourse for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, *Higher Education Research & Development,* 33(5): 949-961.

Marginson, S. (2011). Equity, status and freedom: A note on higher education. *Cambridge Journal of Education,* 41(1): 23-36.

Murray, N. (2013). Widening participation and English language proficiency: a convergence with implications for assessment practices in higher education, *Studies in Higher Education*, 38(2): 299-311.

Pitman, T.; Koshy, P.; & Phillimore, J. (2015). Does accelerating access to higher education lower its quality? The Australian experience. *Higher Education Research & Development,* 34(3): 609-623.

Stirling, J. & Rossetto, C. (2015). “Are we there yet?”: Making sense of transition in higher education, *Student Success,* 6(2): 9-20.

Testa, D. & Egan, R. (2014). Finding voice: the higher education experiences of students from diverse backgrounds, *Teaching in Higher Education,* 19(3): 229-241.

**Supporting literature**

Baik, C. & Greig, J. (2009). Improving the academic outcomes of undergraduate ESL students: the case for discipline-based academic skills programs, *Higher Education Research & Development,* 28(4): 401-416.

Bailey, R. & Garner, M. (2010). Is the feedback in higher education assessment worth the paper it is written on? Teachers’ reflections on their practices, *Teaching in Higher Education*, 15 (2): 187-198

Briguglio, C. & Watson, S. (2014). Embedding English language across the curriculum in higher education: A continuum of development support, *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 37(1): 67-74.

Lea, M. (2013). ‘Academic literacies in the digital university: integrating individual accounts with network practice’. In Goodfellow, R. & Lea. M. (Eds). *Literacy in the Digital University: Critical perspectives on learning, scholarship, and technology.* Abingdon: Routledge, pp.137-148.

Lea, M. & Street, B. (1998). Student writing in higher education: An academic literacies approach, *Studies in Higher Education*, 23 (2): 157-172.

Lillis, T. (2001). *Student Writing: Access, Regulation*, Desire, London: Routledge.

Lillis, T. (2003). Student Writing as ‘Academic Literacies’: Drawing on Bakhtin to Move from Critique to Design, *Language and Education*, 17 (3): 192-207.

Murray, N. & Nallaya, S. (2014). Embedding academic literacies in university programme curricula: a case study, *Studies in Higher Education*, 41(7): 1296-1312.

Wingate, U. (2006). Doing away with ‘study skills’, *Teaching in Higher Education,* 11 (4): 457-469.

**Equity and Higher Education Annotated Bibliography Series**

**Academic Language & Literacies/ Equity in Higher Education**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
| Daddow, A.; Moraitis, P.; & Carr, A. (2013). [Non-traditional students in tertiary education: inter-disciplinary collaboration in curriculum and pedagogy in community services education in Australia](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13603116.2012.685765), *International Journal of Inclusive Education,* 17(5), 480–489.AUS*Keywords: higher education; inclusive education; curriculum and instruction* | **Context:** Inclusive education and cross-discipline curriculum and pedagogy and language (drawing on critical literacy and community of practice). Set in post-Bradley educational policyscape = increase participation in higher education. Paper particularly focused on low SES and CALD students and is set in dual-sector university (VIC). Inclusive education = inscribed in higher education policy in Australia (see participation targets post-Bradley). Community Development and Social Work = high numbers of low SES and NESB students**Aim:** To describe efforts to integrate language and ‘academic skills’ into community services diploma. Initiative “aspires to not only support students’ entry into the new academic terrain, but to enable students to adopt a critical stance to the discourses in which they are learning to participate” (p.480). To develop a curriculum and pedagogy “that built independent academic reading and writing skills for non-traditional students which gave them greater access to privileged disciplinary knowledge” (p.483).**Theoretical frame:** Funds of knowledge = design of pedagogy/ curriculum: “to harness this intersection between the familiar world of the non-traditional student and the unfamiliar world of academia and disciplinary knowledge in which they are entering, to create a clear framework to support this transition” (p.481). Draw on notion of discourse communities – allowing authors to reframe ‘problems in student writing’ as issues of identity. Draws on critical pedagogy to unpack the teaching of a critical stance**Methodology:** **Findings:** Access and participation = constrained by proficiency with academic and disciplinary discourses and literacies (‘independent academic reading and writing skills’). Students often pass at diploma level because of adjunct support/language programs but they “do not necessarily have sufﬁcient independent written language skills to function well in the workplace or in Higher Education” (p.482), and disciplinary knowledge = questionable (connects with Wheelahan’s argument about stratification of VET/ HE knowledge and distillation of disciplinary knowledge in pursuit of ‘competency’. Describes collaborative venture between discipline teachers and language experts. Working from theoretical vehicle of discourse community, positioned students not as deficient but as ‘emerging participants in a new discourse’ (p.484) by making writing practices of community services/ social work explicit (draws on Rai, 2004). Team taught (language teacher focused on disciplinary reading and writing/ discipline content taught by discipline teacher). Imported an academic research unit into diploma to teach ‘academic skills’ (co-delivered by English teacher).Feedback (anecdotal) = enthusiastic. Grades on assessments suggest that this implementation of language/discipline = successful**Core argument:** Need to recognise how practices and discourses = often experienced as dissonance by non-traditional students. Case study of successful embedding of critical language awareness into mainstream/disciplinary VET program (with transition implicit) |
| Duckworth, V. & Brzeski, A. (2015). [Literacy, learning and identity: challenging the neo-liberal agenda through literacies, everyday practices and empowerment](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13596748.2015.993861), *Research in Post-Compulsory Education,* 20(1), 1–16.UKKeywords: *literacy, practices, identity, learning, empowerment* | **Context:** Learning in two Further Education colleges in (northwest) UK – examining how learners are positioned depending on literacies they bring from home. Reports on adult literacy strategy ‘Skills for Life’ (result of ‘The Moser Report, 1999) – responding to perceived crisis [my word] with adults’ functional literacy – people from disadvantaged communities = identified as needing help [remedial model]. SfL = instrumental (rather than critical pedagogy) and based on quantifiable end-tests, “thus tending to be driven by qualification targets, which were strongly influenced by funding implications” (p.2),**Aim:** To investigate the literacy practices of 8 FE students across home and classroom domains – to see how reading, writing and identity from home lives can be drawn upon in students’ learning (drawing on two different research projects). Feminist perspective drawn on (Duckworth).**Theoretical frame:** Views learning as social-cultural activity/ takes New Literacy Studies (NLS) approach: literacies = social practices. Also considers multimodality and technologies (e.g. divisions between students and teachers’ use, capabilities and perceptions of technology) and identities in relation to literacies + funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 2005)**Methodology:** Ethnographic framework. Two FE colleges (one largely monocultural/ one multi-ethnic) as case studies. Duckworth = participant observer; Brzeski = classroom teacher. Detailed case studies offered of Luis (young, Portuguese (ESL), living alone) and Joanne (single mum, low level literacy)**Findings:** Case studies of both students suggest that “the curriculum often did not meet their needs” (p.12)**Core argument:** Critical pedagogy/ critical views of literacy/ NLS = important for challenging ‘pre-set curriculum literacies driven by a neoliberal agenda’ (p.1). Students need a range of literacies to be valued, recognised and utilised to support their range of identities in addition to student identity (p.13). |
| Klinger, C. & Murray, N. (2012). [Tensions in higher education: widening participation, student diversity and the challenge of academic language/ literacy](https://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/openu/jwpll/2012/00000014/00000001/art00003/supp-data;jsessionid=158csl94pogo.x-ic-live-01), *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, 14(1), 27–44.AUS/UKAnnotation written by Sally BakerKeywords: *Academic language; Academic literacy; diversity.* | **Context:** Explores the widening participation agenda from perspective of increased diversity in student population requiring attention to language and literacy skills [their word], from the position that non-traditional students are often “incorrectly labelled as ‘lacking academic quality’” (abstract). Paper is situated in post-massification context and explores both UK and Australia political/policy evolutions and explores ‘non-traditional’ entrance into higher education (aka enabling in Australian context)..**Aim:** Explores assessment mechanisms for identifying students ‘at risk’ and considers professional development needed to help academic staff understand and intervene. **Methodology:** Discussion**Discussion:** Draws on the ‘lowering standards’ debate: “while diversity and quality are somehow mutually incompatible and one may either sustain quality by limiting diversity, or accommodate diversity at the expense of quality, there are compelling imperatives to do both” (p.31). Unpacks notions of diversity and quality in context of this debateUnpacks academic literacy – part of ‘institutional habitus’ (ref to Thomas, 2002): “it can surely serve to exclude certain groups while maintaining the dominance of others who acquire ‘legitimacy’ by virtue of the degree of fit between what is the product of their family, educational and life experiences and the expectations of higher education institutions” (p.33) and institutions have ‘moral obligation to support non-traditional students. Discusses notion of ‘language proficiency’ as restricted to NESB students – doesn’t include NES students, which is problematic for the diversified student body. Presents Murray’s 3-part deconstruction of ‘proficiency’ (communicative competence, academic literacy, professional communication. ‘Proficiency’ = made up of 4 superordinate categories: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence (p.34)Non-traditional students most likely to require support with ‘academic literacy set’ for disciplines, requiring “supportive interventions designed to better align language usage with the customs and expectations of the academy” (p.36). Authors draw on argument to embed academic language and literacy support within disciplinary areas. Discusses PELA – to whom and how should it be operationalized? Equity argument for not picking on particular student groups: “it is no longer possible to make sensible assumptions about the proficiency of any commencing students, and having regard to principles of equity and the need to avoid discrimination by selecting studentson the basis of educational, geographical and socio-economic origins” (p.37). Universal/mandatory assessment = logistical nightmare – could be made voluntary with incentives (see Murray’s work at UniSA). How = diagnostic test or assessment via an early piece of assessed coursework. Also consider post-PELA support. Draws on Clerehen and Northedge re: moving away from remedial views of language/ literacies and embedding support within disciplines with professional development for staff.**Core argument:** Widening participation is “about changing attitudes and pedagogical practices and approaches that are often deeply entrenched in higher education institutions, where a deficit view of these cohorts predominates and the students who comprise them are stigmatized as a result” (p.39). Issues with language = ‘symptomatic’ of broader issues relating to views of acculturation, particularly for students who arrive with “a significantly greater shortfall in the kind of cultural capital successful study in this environment demands” (p.40) |
| Murray, N. (2013). [Widening participation and English language proficiency: a convergence with implications for assessment practices in higher education](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03075079.2011.580838), *Studies in Higher Education*, 38(2), 299–311.AUSAnnotation written by Sally BakerKeywords: *widening participation, English language proficiency, post-enrolment language assessment, language competence of non-traditional students* | **Context:** Explores interconnections between WP agenda and English language proficiency (assessment and support) in context of diverse student population (as a result of massification). Examines the efficacy and argues for/against the use of post-enrolment English assessments (PELAs). Interconnection between WP & language proficiency = not restricted to NESB, although NESB is often focus. Issues with proficiency prevail despite entry requirements leading to some teachers ‘toning down’ their courses to accommodate linguistically diverse cohort [but this is not often the case; perhaps tutors are toning down marks/grades]. For students, lower than needed proficiency leads to attrition, lack of engagement, stigma, “potential source of real trauma”, reinforcing “latent feelings of a lack of self-efficacy” and can lead to issues getting work after graduating (p.300). Policy context = DEEWR doc ‘Good practice principles for English language proficiency for international students in Australian universities’. English language also aligned with national economic (neoliberal goals) in Bradley Review (p.xi). **However**, English proficiency causes issues for native speakers too (acknowledged in DEEWR doc): Native speakers (inc. domestic LBOTE students) often not asked to demonstrate ‘adequate’ proficiency (p.302): “few if any students, whether native speakers or NESB, domestic or international, will come adequately equipped with the specific set of academic literacy practices they require for their particular degree” (p.303) – makes case for embedding ac lits into curriculum based on notion that “subject lecturers can reasonably be expected to have an implicit knowledge of the academic literacies and communication skills [of their discipline]… many will require professional development by English language and communication specialists to help them articulate and acquire a good understanding of [what they] demonstrate unconsciously on a daily basis, along with the associated pedagogies for their delivery” (p.304). Embedding = acknowledged as likely to be challenging and long-term, requiring cultural change; argument made that if done sensitively and collaboratively, it will reduce need for English language specialists and professional development (as new academics replace old) if embedding/ awareness raising = common place in academic teaching courses.**Aim:** To consider some issues related to the implementation of post-enrolment English tests**Theoretical frame:** Draws on own posited notion (Murray, 2010) of language proficiency as composed of three intersecting but distinct components: proficiency as “a set of generic skills and abilities” (grammar, punctuation, fluency, skills), academic literacy (refs to Lea & Street) and professional communication skills [prosaic, pragmatic features?]. Uses word ‘skills’ a lot**Methodology:** Essay**Core argument:** How to implement PELAs? Need to be cost-efficient and bring required improvements (p.305). Need to think about validity and reliability of assessment design (definition of valid PELA offered on p.307), but also think about the potential reputational risk/ kudos that PELA could bring: English language learners may look on it favourably (if follow-up provision also provided) or less favourably. Poses questions: what should be tested, who should be tested and how should they be tested? Proficiency can be the “only sensible focus” given that academic literacy and professional communication should be taught as part of course. Issues: how to identify who to test? Who are the at-risk groups? Who might slip through the net? If PELA is elective, some ‘at-risk’ students may not be assessed; thus “the only watertight alternative is to test *all* newly enrolled students” (p.306) – but this would be (more) expensive and logistically complicated. Alternative to PELA (as a test) is to use early piece of assessed work as diagnostic (under controlled conditions and within prescribed rubric/ length rules). This would have to be conducted early enough for support needs to be identified and implemented. Who would mark? Faculty staff or English language specialists? Needs broad consultation within institutions: “Only then can institutions feel confident they are meeting their ethical and educational responsibilities to those non-traditional student cohorts whose interests they espouse, and whose successes or failures both during and following their studies will reflect on their graduating universities” (p.309). |
| Murray, N. & Nallaya, S. (2016). [Embedding academic literacies in university programme curricula: a case study,](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03075079.2014.981150?journalCode=cshe20) *Studies in Higher Education*, 41(7), 1296–1312UK/AUSAnnotation written by Sally BakerKeywords: *academic literacies; English language proficiency; cultural capital; curriculum design; teaching strategies; diversity* | **Context:** Increasingly globalised world/ increasingly diverse higher education student body: “This has meant that, for students studying through the medium of English, a proportion have neither the language proficiency necessary to successfully negotiate the demands of their study programmes nor sufficient conversancy in the literacies required to experience successful learning outcomes” (p.1296). Authors also note that more students (need to) work – in context of increased tuition fees etc. – and universities are participating in discourses around employability and graduate outcomes (which get written into mission statements). Student diversity = fewer assumptions can be made about what students can do/ bring with them. Authors argue that responsibility for developing students’ disciplinary academic literacies lies with the institution: “responsibility lies with receiving institutions to provide the necessary opportunities for students to acquire a working understanding of the literacy practices pertinent to their particular disciplines” (p.1297). Authors argue that students/ institutions need to recognize the pluralistic concept of academic literacies put forward by Lea & Street (1998) – contrasting with ‘study skills’ approach (see p.1298).Authors scope literature on study skills, then embedding academic literacies (p.1299-1300).**Aim:** To “describe a holistic, whole-of-institution approach to the development of academic literacies adopted at a university in Australia and which involved the embedding of academic literacies in programme curricula. Indoing so, we detail the process employed in what was widely regarded as a quite ambitious project, along with some of the challenges its implementation presented” (p.1297)**Theoretical frame:** Academic literacies (Lea & Street, 1998)**Methodology:** Reports on trial of embedding academic literacies at UniSA (?) – discusses the cross-division model (Teaching and Learning Committee membership/ representation from each division and programs within them) – had senior executive (DVCA) support – and teams of language experts and disciplinary teachers: “It was important that language tutors collaborated with academic staff to identify the genres relevant to the discipline, how language was used to communicate meaning in those genres, the targeted learning outcomes, and the types of assessment that could measure the extent of any learning” (p.1301).Description of process = p.1302-1304; Challenges = p.1304-1306 (including lack of buy-in from middle managers/ heads of school = limited uptake and investment).**Core argument:** “The case study described here illustrates vividly that, no matter how theoretically well informed it may be and how great the need for it, bringing about curriculum change is invariably a challenging process, particularly where it implies change not merely to the what of teaching but also the how” (p.1306). |
| Murray, N. & Hicks, M. (2016). [An institutional approach to English language proficiency,](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0309877X.2014.938261?journalCode=cjfh20) *Journal of Further and Higher Education,* 40(2), 170–187.AUSAnnotation written by Sally BakerKeywords: *academic literacy, English language policy and practice, higher education policy, language proficiency, model of English language provision, post-enrolment English language assessment* | **Context:** Increasing diversification means that HEIs are responding to concerns about language proficiency (see DEEWR Good Practice Principles…). Argues that shifting regulation is forcing HEIs to reconsider positioning and provision of language in institutions, so that they need to “articulate a systematic process for [supporting students adequately] along with a sounds rationale and conceptual framework” (abstract). Also, imperative is connected to employability agenda (p.171) – discusses the additional language requirements that LBOTE students are expected to meet in professions including nursing, teaching and accountancy. Argues that these additional requirements “reflect poorly on their graduating universities by raising questions over the rigour and quality of degree programmes that have allowed them to successfully graduate despite being unable to demonstrate a facility with the language deemed to be sufficient to enter professional practice” (p.171). Educating Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act legislates/ enforces entry requirements. [see <https://internationaleducation.gov.au/Regulatory-Information/Pages/Regulatoryinformation.aspx>] **Aim:** Paper describes attempt to do so in UniSA, based on Murray’s 3-part conceptualisation of English proficiency in university: general proficiency, academic literacy, professional communication (see Murray 2010)**Findings:** Describes conceptual underpinnings and practical implications of embedding English language into disciplines, curriculum and into core subjects so that all students (not just LBOTE) would benefit. Acknowledges that subject tutors = highly unlikely to be able to assess students’ language/literacy needs (even if supported to explicitly unpack understandings of disciplinary lang/lits) = see p.176. Discusses implementation of PELA (in keeping with Principle 7 of Good Practice Principles). UniSA adopted the Academic English Screening Test developed by Uni Melb. Note issues with implementation using Moodle (students don’t know how to save and proceed; think they have finished after finishing one task of three). Students self-elect to do diagnostic and if viewed as ‘at risk’ are offered 8 x 30 min face-to-face support sessions and additional ALL feedback on already-marked assignments (no grade offered). Also credit-bearing and non-credit bearing proficiency courses offered (negotiated with schools/ programme directors). Implementation took 3 years and was driven by language expert and head of CTL [presumably by authors]. Concession had to be made = teething problems with students self-electing to take test + technological issues**Core argument:**Draws on Murray 2010 a lot. Notes security concerns with language assessments: even if biometrics are used to ensure students are really who they claim to be, students still “often train fro tests and in doing so develop effective strategies for obtaining the scores they require for university entry without necessarily developing the kind of substantive, more productive underlying skills that give them the capacity to cope with the language demands of their programmes” (p.177). Notes that students also enter via enabling programs “that use their own in-house measures to assess students’ English language competency – measures that can be highly ambiguous but which are often accepted by receiving institutions that know little of what those scores represent in real terms” (p.177). Also notes that tables of language equivalency (language proficiency) that universities use for admissions purposes have “dubious validity at best” (p.177) |
| Northedge, A. (2003). [Enabling Participation in Academic Discourse,](https://srhe.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1356251032000052429#.XrsqJi-r1QI) *Teaching in Higher Education,* 8(2), 169–180.UKAnnotation written by Sally BakerKeywords: *discourse, specialist knowledge community, access, student-led teaching* | **Context:** UK higher education. Paradigm shift in perception of teachers (from didact to facilitator) = also shifted perceptions of teacher as content/subject expert. Argues that these shifts resulted in teaching becoming subordinate to learning, leading to reduced status for teachers. Author issues warning: “…there are dangers in an uncritical embrace of student-centredness, if it undermines the role of the teacher, and undersells the immense contribution of the academy and academic knowledge” (p.170). Academic discourse = difficult to comprehend because they “work with propositional meanings of a decontextualized and abstract nature” (p.172), which do not align with students’ frames of reference**Aim:** To “consider the intellectual challenges students face in attempting to make sense of a knowledge community’s specialist discourse and the teacher’s role in helping them to tackle these challenges” (p.171).**Theoretical frame:** Nothing specific/ socio-cultural theory**Methodology:** Essay**Findings:** Argues subject teachers have 3 key roles as subject teachers in helping students to enter the discourses of subject: 1) lending capacity to participate in meaning; 2) designing ‘well planned excursions into unfamiliar discursive terrain”; 3) coaching students to speak academic discourse. 1. Understanding and conversation = based on sharing frames of reference and intersubjectivity (Bruner, 1996) – teachers can open up conversations and “sharing in a flow of meaning” (p.173) – socialisation and repeated engagement/ sharing = facilitates students’ acquisition of/ internalisation of frames of reference in (new) knowledge/discourse community. Offers example of how this works in practice in OU module on health.
2. Leading excursions: teachers can ask questions using ‘everyday discourse’ about course materials and introducing new elements: “students internalise [structuring features of the specialist discourse] primarily through participation, rather than from explicit explanation” (p.174). Offers example of how this works in practice in OU module on health – ‘designing a vigorous flow of meaning’ (importance of narrative: plot, storyline): “Because knowing is a dynamic process, located in flows of meaning, learning experiences need also to be constituted as vigorous flows of meaning” (p.177)
3. Coaching students to speak the discourse ‘appropriately’ in writing and speaking. With writing, coaching takes place in form of feedback that poses questions and “gives important clues as to how ideas might be reframed to achieve greater force and clarity within the terms of the discourse” (p.178), ideally on a regular basis. Speaking = classroom discussion and teacher = ‘live model’ of how discourse is spoken

**Core argument:** Teacher has 3 key roles in opening access to specialist discourses: 1) lend capacity to frame meanings in specialist discourse; 2) plan, organise and lead excursions into specialist discourse; 3) help students to speak the discourse competently |
| Priest, A. (2009). [‘I have understanding as well as you’: Supporting the language and learning needs of students from low-socioeconomic status backgrounds](https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/%22I-have-understanding-as-well-as-you%22%3A-Supporting-Priest/5f66905bb6e4af986a9108e61eaf93aa975c7c4d), *Journal of Academic Language & Learning,* 3(2), A70–A81.AUSAnnotation written by Sally BakerKey Words: *low SES students, academic discourse, language and learning* | **Context:** Set against literary backdrop of Jude the Obscure – pushing the point that for low SES/working class (both terms used in this paper), there are still critical disconnects with higher education: “experience a disabling mismatch between their social world and that of academe” (p.A71), particularly with reference to their language and literacies. Scopes efforts to widen participation for low SES students in UK, US and AUS – noting higher level of attrition and critiques of methods of measuring SES. Notes classed/SES-impact on language and literacies: “the better you are at using academic discourse, the more successful you are likely to be at university” (p.A.73). Implicitly recognises brokerage/ mediating role of ALL professionals in terms of students’ home discourses/language v. academic discourse/ language and literacies. Recognises ethics and politics of ALL: “On the one hand, we have an ethical imperative to recognise, validate and, ideally, learn from the literacies these students bring with them…On the other hand, if we do not teach them the dominant discourses of the academy, there is a very good chance the academy will never recognise or acknowledge what they have to offer” (p.A75). **Aim:** **Theoretical frame:** Draws on Bourdieu, Passeron & St Martin (1994) – academic discourses = aligned with cultural privilege. Language = key part of habitus, so that “a person’s language is “the most active and elusive part of the cultural heritage which each individual owes to his background” (p. 9; cited on p.A73). Language =thus power of hegemony. Draws on theories of language use that assert that students have different (home) forms of language (e.g. Black English, Hispanic English), which should be recognised in the academy (see Bruch & Marback, 1997), but “acknowledging this right and instituting it in the classroom are two different things” (p.A74) = accommodation or assimilation [is there a third option??]. Impact = on identities, connection, recognition, voice, performance etc. **Methodology:** Essay**Findings:** Scopes arguments about language and ‘essayist literacy’, drawing on discussions of race and Indigeneity. Discusses strategies such as acknowledging the power of ‘essayist literacy’ – co-negotiating confusion, acknowledging history and power of these ways of knowing and communicating. Draws on Delpit’s argument about code switching (learning to switch between, rather than replace, codes). Young (2004) argues that codes are not exclusive; rather, they can contribute to each other. Discusses Elbow’s (1991) proposition that students initially use home code first to adjust to conventions of academic work (see p.A77). Makes connection between Newman (2003) discussion of ‘borderland’ students (Hispanic/bilingual students) and low SES students. Needs attention beyond punctuation and grammar in feedback: requires conversation about ideas and meaning making. Also, without explicit teaching of grammar, students and teachers lack a metalanguage to understand errors. Notes other work that can be useful (e.g. Gale’s 2009 call for under-represented students’ epistemologies and ontologies should be recognised)**Core argument:** Need to think carefully about how to deal with/ position language and literacies for under-represented (such as low SES) students – need to recognise and valorise knowledges, languages and literacies of all students and to privilege view that they “have knowledge that those institutions can learn from, that their presence can unsettle and ultimately transform higher education in powerful and positive ways” (p.A79). Effective strategies suggested = including students in debates about what counts and in ‘teaching them the questions’. |
| Schneider, B. & Daddow, A. (2016). [Valorising student literacies in social work education: pedagogic possibilities through action research,](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14681366.2016.1233451) *Pedagogy, Culture & Society,* 25(2), 157–170.AUSAnnotation written by Sally BakerKeywords: *Diversity in higher education; socially inclusive**pedagogies; collaborative curriculum development;**code-switching; academic literacies* | **Context:** Diversified higher education means we can no longer make assumptions about students’ literacies/ familiarity with academic literacies. Set in context of massified HE system – social justice concerns for the privilege/ marginalisation of (non-) traditional students because of academic literacies. Scopes literature on literacy as social practice; criticality; code-switching; funds of knowledge. Article examines intervention in Bachelor of Social Work at Deakin. Talks about writing for social work**Aim:** To demonstrate how a revised curriculum for Bachelor of Social Work was able to make codes (home literacies/ academic literacies) explicit, using students’ everyday literacies as a bridge to new knowledge, introduce notion of code-switching between literacies; to illustrate how “diverse students’ literacies can be valorised and harnessed as assets for learning” (abstract).**Theoretical frame:** Literacy as social practice/ academic literacies**Methodology:** Practitioner action research (see Kemmis, 2008 and others); intervention = embedded into two units: Yr2 subject - Social Work Theories (SWT) – and Yr1 – Introduction to Social Work (ISW). 78 students enrolled in SWT; 75 enrolled in ISW. Students =diverse (low/ medium SES, FinF, just less than half born outside of Australia). Data collected via questionnaires, students’ work, focus group interviews. ALL teacher embedded into course team**Findings:** “Our aims to make elite codes explicit, and make educative use of the literacies students already possess, were underpinned by creating a dialogic space in which students’ life-worlds might be expressed, valued and interrogated” (p.6)*Inhabiting a shared ‘space’*: students did not treat any of team differently – ALL person = not conspicuous.Got to know students by adapting Cuseo’s (2011) Student Information Sheet- helpful for identifying students’ funds of knowledge and creating a dialogic classroom.Connecting with students’ lifeworlds: notes Ivanic et al.’s (2009) discussion of permeable boundaries between sociocultural contexts and ‘border literacies’. Authors drew on students’ lifeworlds in reflective writing task (connections between personal biographies and theories/ perspectives underpinning Social Work as discipline). Data suggest that this helped students to identify their own partiality/ bias – however, it also led to worrying trend in students self-identifying deficits. Needs time to do this pedagogic work well and for students’ individual trajectories/ confidence with academic writing across genres to develop.*Code-switching*: used Northedge’s 2005 table of tribal (home) v. academic language/discourse to help unpack codes. Students used meta-language in their conversations (surprising for researchers); however, students struggled to identify ideologically–loaded words or emotive phrasing: “We realised how important it was to allow students time to develop awareness and integrate these new understandings into their existing frames of reference. Raising consciousness about language and moving between literacy practices is complex and perhaps would benefit from ongoing attention and practice beyond two units of study, into other units and practical placements” (p.10).Overall, the design of the programs appears to have enabled students’ competence and confidence “without assimilating them into elite and dominant cultural practices” (p.12) = aka allowing students to make connections between home literacies and academic knowledge, and demonstrate learning.*Constraints*: assessment design is difficult to change (because of university inflexibility); time constraints and workload**Core argument:** Explicit teaching and embedding of academic literacies = complex but valuable |