An institution-wide strategy for ongoing, embedded academic language development: Design, implementation and analysis

Emily Edwards, Rosalie Goldsmith, Caroline Havery and Neil James

Academic Language and Learning, IML, University of Technology Sydney, NSW 2007, Australia

Email: Emily.Edwards-1@uts.edu.au, Rosalie.Goldsmith@uts.edu.au, Caroline.Havery@uts.edu.au, Neil.James@uts.edu.au

Widening participation and the internationalisation of universities have led to initiatives to more explicitly develop academic practices, including language and literacy practices, which students need to successfully undertake their degrees. However, for some students for whom English is an additional language, more support is required. This paper builds on previous literature and presents a university-wide program implemented at a large metropolitan university in Australia that not only incorporates compulsory language screening and follow up language development for identified students, but also includes ongoing explicit assessment of students' academic language within their degree programs. This paper outlines the theoretical underpinnings of this program's design, its implementation and an analysis of the associated factors underpinning both the successes and challenges experienced to date. In doing so, we discuss implications for other universities wishing to implement institution-wide strategies to support students' ongoing academic language development.

Key Words: academic language; English as an additional language (EAL); institution-wide language policy; post enrolment language assessment; discipline-specific language support.

1. Introduction

1.1. Rationale for an institution-wide strategy for ongoing, embedded academic language development

The internationalisation of universities and the widening participation agenda have led to a diversification of the student cohort in higher education, with increasing numbers of students from non-traditional pathways, as well as English as Additional Language (EAL) backgrounds (Murray, 2013). Students from EAL backgrounds include both international students, who travel to a country for the purposes of study but are not residents of that country, and domestic students who speak a language other than English as their first language. Many international students are concentrated in English speaking countries, with Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States accounting for more than 40% of international students in OECD and partner countries (OECD, 2019). In Australia and the United Kingdom, international students made up at least 15% of tertiary students from 2010-2017 (OECD, 2019), with more international students studying at postgraduate than undergraduate level (OECD, 2019). As well as international students, domestic EAL students make up significant numbers of student cohorts in English speaking countries. For example, in Australian universities, 19% of domestic students speak a language other

than English at home (Department of Education Skills and Employment [DESE], 2019). Although international student numbers in Australia (and elsewhere) have decreased due to COVID 19 (Dennis, 2020; DESE, 2020a), to date the majority of prospective international students have deferred enrolment rather than cancelling (DESE, 2020b). The post-COVID future of education remains unclear. However, institutions are keen to retain international students and as borders reopen, international students will continue to play an important role in universities.

A key challenge faced by universities is to ensure that all students can meet the academic language and literacy (ALL) demands of their degree, including sufficient English language proficiency[1] (e.g., O'Loughlin & Arkoudis, 2009; Murray, 2014). Concerns have long been raised that some students, both international and domestic EAL students, are entering universities with levels of English language proficiency that are too low to meet the linguistic demands of their courses (Birrell, 2006; Briguglio, 2014; Murray, 2013; Murray, 2016), which can have a significant impact on how students perform during their studies. A low level of English language proficiency has been linked with issues pertaining to academic integrity, such as plagiarism (Devlin & Gray, 2007), and increased risk of contract cheating (Bretag et al., 2018). Low levels of English language proficiency can also result in poor employment opportunities post-university (Arkoudis et al., 2009), including not being able to meet the language requirements for professional practice (Craven, 2012). Furthermore, students themselves cite language difficulties as one of the key challenges during their degree (Gautam, Lowery, Mays, & Durant, 2016; Heng, 2016). However, language difficulties can be temporary as students become more familiar with new sociocultural contexts (Heng, 2016). Governments have taken action in response to the perceived challenge of low levels of English language proficiency among university students. Universities in English-speaking countries require students to demonstrate their level of English language proficiency, and many higher education institutions have English language policies (e.g., University of Edinburgh, 2018). In Australia, the English Language Standards for Higher Education (ELSHE) were developed in 2010 (Harper, 2013). These standards are used as a reference point for Australian universities to formulate and develop their language policies and support services (a more detailed analysis of English language proficiency policies and practices in Australian universities can be found in Moore & Harrington, 2016). However, implementing these policies can be complex (Hoadley & Hunter, 2018).

In order to address the challenge of students entering university with low levels of academic language, the Academic Language and Learning (ALL) team at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) was tasked by the university's senior management to design and implement an institution-wide academic language development framework. Our framework builds on previous literature on institution-wide strategies, taking into account limitations raised by previous undertakings, and draws on the expertise of both language specialists and disciplinary academics. The framework is novel in that: (1) the academic language screening task is compulsory for all students; (2) the follow up language development program is also compulsory for all students, including consequences for those who do not meet requirements; (3) the framework is both discipline- and subject-specific; and (4) it extends across the degree, building in mechanisms for explicitly assessing students' language within existing discipline assessments. This is one of the few institution-wide strategies to date to achieve these steps. After noting some terminological issues and reviewing the current initiatives that address academic language in Australia, this paper then presents the design, implementation and analysis of the factors underpinning the successes and challenges experienced since the project commenced in 2018. Finally, we analyse some of the reasons for success as well as the challenges experienced to date, before concluding with practical and theoretical implications.

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[1] We discuss the use of the terms used to refer to language proficiency and language development in more detail in Section 1.2.

1.2. A note on terminology

There are a range of terms which refer to English language and literacy practices in higher education, including academic language development (O'Loughlin & Arkoudis, 2009; Hoadley & Hunter, 2018), academic literacies (e.g. Lea & Street, 2006), communication skills (Arkoudis & Harris, 2019), English for Academic Purposes (Fenton-Smith, Humphreys, Walkinshaw, Michael, & Lobo, 2017) and English language proficiency (Harris, 2016). In our work as academic language developers, our understanding of language development in higher education in Australia encapsulates academic language, discipline-specific discourse and professional communication, "against a background of (English) language development" (Hoadley & Hunter, 2018, p. 50). For the purposes of this paper, therefore, the term "academic language development" (hereafter ALD) is preferred for several reasons. Firstly, it emphasises both the developmental nature of language in higher education and highlights the specific focus on the academic context. Secondly, many disciplinary academics are disinclined to see themselves as "teachers of English", or of writing (e.g. Goldsmith & Willey, 2016). In addition, the majority of students, whether English is their first or an additional language, do not regard their English language proficiency as a high priority. This is despite the fact that many students enter university with strong English skills, but still need to develop specific academic language skills (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations [DEEWR], 2009). In addition, the use of the term ALD could encourage students to see the development of their disciplinary language skills as part of their ongoing learning at university.

1.3. Current initiatives to address academic language

Changes in university demographics and the establishment of government policies and guidelines have led to initiatives to develop more explicitly the academic language and literacy practices that students need to successfully undertake their degree (Liddicoat, 2016). Nevertheless, it is for each university to decide how best to do this. The English Language Standards for Higher Education document in Australia, for example, notes that:

> … while there is no single "best" way to develop students' English language proficiency, contextualisation within disciplines and integration of language development across the curriculum seem likely to be effective approaches…including: embedding language development through curriculum design and assessment; workshops or credit-bearing units within a course; "adjunct" workshops or sessions within a course … and targeted individual or group support provided by academic language and learning experts (in Harper 2013, p. 159).

For many years there have been approaches to developing students' ALD, often at a faculty or school level (Calvo et al., 2020; Maldoni & Lear, 2016; Müller, Arbon, & Gregoric, 2015; San Miguel, Townsend, & Waters, 2013). However, many of these programs may not be sustainable without university-wide policies and practices to address language development (Arkoudis & Harris, 2019). In the last decade, scholars have argued for university-wide strategies to address issues of ALD (Arkoudis & Harris, 2019; Dunworth, Drury, Kralik, & Moore, 2014; Fenton-Smith et al., 2017; Harper, 2013; Murray & Nallaya, 2016) as the most appropriate and effective means of supporting the ALD of all students.

1.3.1. Approaches to institution-wide strategies

There have been two main approaches to institution-wide strategies. The first approach embeds ALD into degrees for all students so that alongside content, students learn explicitly how to communicate in their discipline (Briguglio, 2014; Hoadley & Hunter, 2018; Maldoni & Lear, 2018; Murray & Hicks, 2016). This approach is based on increasing evidence from discourse and genre analysis of the significant differences between disciplines both in writing and speaking (Hood, 2010; Lea & Street, 1998, 2006; Wingate, 2006, 2015), and research suggesting

that academic language and literacies are most effectively acquired if developmental opportunities for learners are integrated and embedded within specific disciplinary contexts (Fenton-Smith & Humphreys, 2015). Based on a compilation of previous research on embedding, Arkoudis and Kelly (2016, p. 4) affirm "the literature is unequivocal that high impact student learning occurs when communication skills are integrated within disciplinary learning and assessment". Research into the positive outcomes of embedding academic language has expanded across the tertiary sector and the multiple benefits are well documented (Arkoudis & Doughney, 2014; Briguglio & Watson, 2014; Wingate, 2015). However, the challenges of such an approach have also been noted (Murray & Nallaya, 2016; Wingate, 2006); that is, establishing collaborative relationships with discipline academics and in particular encouraging discipline academics to take responsibility for language (Goldsmith & Willey, 2016; Hunter & Tse, 2013). This can be problematic when students have low levels of ALD. A related challenge is that when degree structures and staff change, these initiatives are not always carried forward (Harris, 2013). Finally, whilst programs that adopt this approach are valuable for students in learning the discourse of their discipline, they may not be enough for students who enter with low levels of academic language. These students are often advised to seek help at university writing centres (Harper, 2013). Unfortunately, students who most need help tend not to seek it (Harris, 2016; Read & von Randow, 2013). Similarly, at UTS, the large metropolitan institution where we work, a comprehensive program to embed academic language and literacy was already in place (Hoadley & Hunter, 2018) but it has not been sufficient to address the needs of all students.

The second type of institution-wide approach attempts to address issues of low ALD. These strategies usually involve a screening task to identify students with low levels of ALD and to provide follow-up language development for that specific cohort. Although many universities have implemented a language screening task, usually referred to as a post enrolment language assessment (PELA), few universities have succeeded in ensuring that all students complete the PELA, nor in establishing a program that adheres to what best helps students learn the language required in their disciplinary area (Arkoudis & Harris, 2019). Some of the challenges associated with PELAs include: lack of completion of the screening task by students (Harris, 2016; Ransom, 2009); difficulty in tracking those students who require additional support (Harris, 2013; Ransom, 2009); student resistance to undertaking language support (Harris, 2013); challenges in communicating the purpose and process of the PELA and follow-up activities (Harris, 2016); and a lack of commitment by disciplinary staff to ensuring that follow-up activities are completed (Arkoudis & Doughney, 2014).

Fenton-Smith et al. (2017) discussed the implementation and associated challenges of an institution-wide program aimed at addressing low ALD. Their program adopted a strategy of identifying students in need of further language development by focusing on students who had to complete the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) as part of entry requirements. Students below a specific cut off score were required to enrol in a compulsory credit-bearing subject focusing on academic language. Whilst this program is underpinned by sound theoretical foundations and is successful in implementing language development to many students who most need it, there are several limitations. Firstly, the program does not cater for students who enter university with low levels of academic language but who are not required to complete a pre-entry language test for various reasons; for example, students who completed high school in the country of study or entered university via an alternative pathway. A second limitation is that the program encompasses broad fields such as social sciences, rather than focusing on specific disciplines such as Education or Health. Fenton-Smith et al. (2017, p. 466) note this limitation themselves: "In an ideal world … it may be more pedagogically effective to focus at the narrowest and most discipline-specific level. But the pragmatic reality is that the higher the degree of specificity, the greater the administrative complexity and financial outlay". Thirdly, the program is short (one semester long) and does not consider the developmental nature of language learning over time (Wingate & Tribble, 2012). Finally, not all degree courses have first year spaces to

implement elective subjects. Degree courses that are more professionally focused may only introduce electives in later years and it can be difficult to persuade faculties to change their whole program to accommodate a credit-bearing subject.

In summary, there is no easy way to provide language development support across a university, and there is clearly no one-size-fits-all model. However, at UTS we have designed and implemented an institution-wide academic language development framework that we believe is fit for purpose, effective and potentially adaptable to other university contexts. The remainder of the paper outlines the key elements of the framework, focusing on its design, implementation and analysis. We begin with the design, where we introduce the institutional context, the rationale for designing the ALD framework, and the sociocultural perspective on language that informed the framework.

2. Design of the ALD framework

2.1. The context

2.1.1. Language support for students at UTS

At UTS, language support is provided by two separate but complementary work units. Professional staff provide student-facing generic language support, while members of the ALL team provide staff-facing support. Each ALL team member supports a specific faculty, and has extensive knowledge of the disciplinary discourses and types of assessment within that faculty.

ALL team members collaborate with faculty colleagues to integrate academic and professional language at curriculum and subject levels, including subject design, assessment task design, co-development of assessment rubrics and team or adjunct teaching. As previously noted, this level of language development is not always sufficient for the more vulnerable students, who are also less likely to seek assistance (Harris, 2016; Read & von Randow, 2013). These students require more robust support: hence the need for an ALD Framework.

2.1.2. Institutional drivers for change

The Australian Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015 requires Australian universities to provide evidence of compliance with standards relating to English language proficiency, as specified in Standard 1.1 (Admission) and 1.3 (Orientation and Progression)[2]. Another driver for change is UTS's *2027 Strategy*, which emphasises "high-quality support [for international students] across all of their academic and non-academic needs, with a particular focus on English language" (UTS, 2020). In response to these drivers and in an endeavour to provide a sustainable, whole of course approach to language support, the ALD Framework was established. The aim of this framework is to develop and implement a university-wide, ongoing approach to embedding academic language, discipline-specific discourse and professional communication in the curriculum. The development of the framework is led by the ALL Team and is implemented in collaboration with the Associate Dean Teaching and Learning from each faculty at the university.

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[2] HES Standard 1.1 (Admission) requires higher education providers to ensure that admitted students have the academic preparation and proficiency in English needed to participate in their intended study.

HES Standard 1.3 (Orientation and Progression) requires higher education providers to have strategies in place to identify students in need of additional support, and to provide support services to help them succeed.

See: https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2015L01639

The framework is guided by the following organisational principles:

1. **Build on what is already in place to ensure the framework is sustainable and scalable.**
   The Framework complements and extends the language development programs and services already in place. Approaches for assessing students, wherever possible, build on existing tasks or subjects.

2. **Partner with faculty and, where possible, students to build capacity and achieve outcomes.** Responsibilities for ALD support and student success are shared by faculties, ALL Team and UTS's senior management, and students. The development and implementation of the Framework requires a collaborative approach.

These overarching principles are complemented by our theoretical understanding of ALD, which we explain in the next section.

2.2. A sociocultural perspective on language

The ALD framework as a whole is underpinned by discourse and genre theories that promote the embedding of discipline-specific academic language into the curriculum, as outlined in previous sections (e.g., Arkoudis & Kelly, 2016). In terms of our understanding of language development, the framework and its associated language development tutorials and materials are also grounded in sociocultural theories of language learning, in line with current approaches in the fields of Second Language Acquisition and Language Teaching and Learning (Douglas Fir Group, 2016; Hulstijn et al., 2014; Lantolf, 2000). A sociocultural perspective views language learning as an ongoing and dynamic process that is shaped by the unity of cognition and emotion, embedded in and mediated by the socio-historical contexts of language use (Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Swain, 2019). It provides ways of discussing beliefs about the writing that academics and students do and can provide an opportunity for academics to make those beliefs more visible or more explicit. This perspective affords a holistic and multidimensional approach to supporting second language learners directly within the immediate contexts of their particular university subjects, so that their learning is fully contextualised (Benzie, 2010).

A sociocultural perspective also pays particular attention to affective aspects of learning (Douglas Fir Group, 2016; Prior, 2019; Ross, 2015). As Lantolf and Swain (2019, p. 529) explain, Vygotskian sociocultural theory contends that cognition and emotion are equally important and, in fact, inseparable aspects of the learning process:

> Emotions are integral to thinking because they impact key components of the educative process, including attention, concentration, cooperation, memory, reasoning, and commitment. Vygotsky insists that education that focuses on the mind to the detriment of the emotional component of one's personality cannot be successful.

With this cognition-affect unity in mind, we focused on the need to incorporate within our ALD design the interlinked constructs of second language self-confidence (Edwards & Roger, 2015), academic identities (Bond, 2019; Choi, 2019; Darvin & Norton, 2015), motivation (Dooey, Oliver & Rochecouste, 2012) and autonomy (Rochecouste & Oliver, 2014) so an important aspect of our ALD initiative is introducing students to a range of tools that will promote ongoing language learning, autonomy and sustained motivation. Recent research has shown links between the genre-oriented approach to academic writing and English language students' motivation for and engagement in writing (Han & Hiver, 2018; Yu, Jiang & Zhou, 2020), providing further support for the use of discourse and genre theories underpinning our ALD framework.

In summary, the sociocultural theoretical perspective outlined above provided us with the principles for ALD design shown in Table 1. In making these principles explicit, our approach differs from most other embedding language initiatives, which tend not to focus on the affective aspects of language development.

Table 1. Principles for design of language development tutorials.

Academic language development:

1   is part of lifelong learning, and we need to help students sustain their motivation for language development;

2   is most successful when embedded within the discipline, subject and assessment-specific discourse and genres of students' degree programs;

3   can be promoted by building language self-confidence, academic identities and a sense of community;

4   can be supported by introducing students to tools for autonomous language learning, such as goal-setting activities and ways of accessing institutional support services.

3. Implementation of the ALD Framework

3.1. The stages of the ALD Framework

Figure 1 illustrates the four main stages of the framework, which are described in more detail below.

Stage 1: Screening
- OPELA or written diagnostic to assess language level.
- Compulsory completion in orientation week or week 1.
- Students graded: Basic, Intermediate or Good.
- Students with Basic grade referred for compulsory discipline-based follow-up language development support.

Stage 2: Follow-up language development
- Language Development Tutorials weeks 3 to 12.
- (Students who cannot attend face-to-face tutorials complete alternative form either in block mode or online).

Stage 3: Milestone task one
- Milestone 1 tasks/subjects to assess language level.
- Incorporated into assessment task or subject.
- Students graded: Unsatisfactory, Needs Development or Satisfactory.
- Students with Unsatisfactory language level referred to additional follow-up language development support.

Stage 4: Further milestone tasks or subjects
- Milestone 2 and 3 tasks/subjects to assess language level.
- Incorporated into further assessment tasks or subjects over degree program.
- Students graded: Unsatisfactory, Needs Development or Satisfactory.
- Students with Unsatisfactory language level referred to additional follow-up language development support.
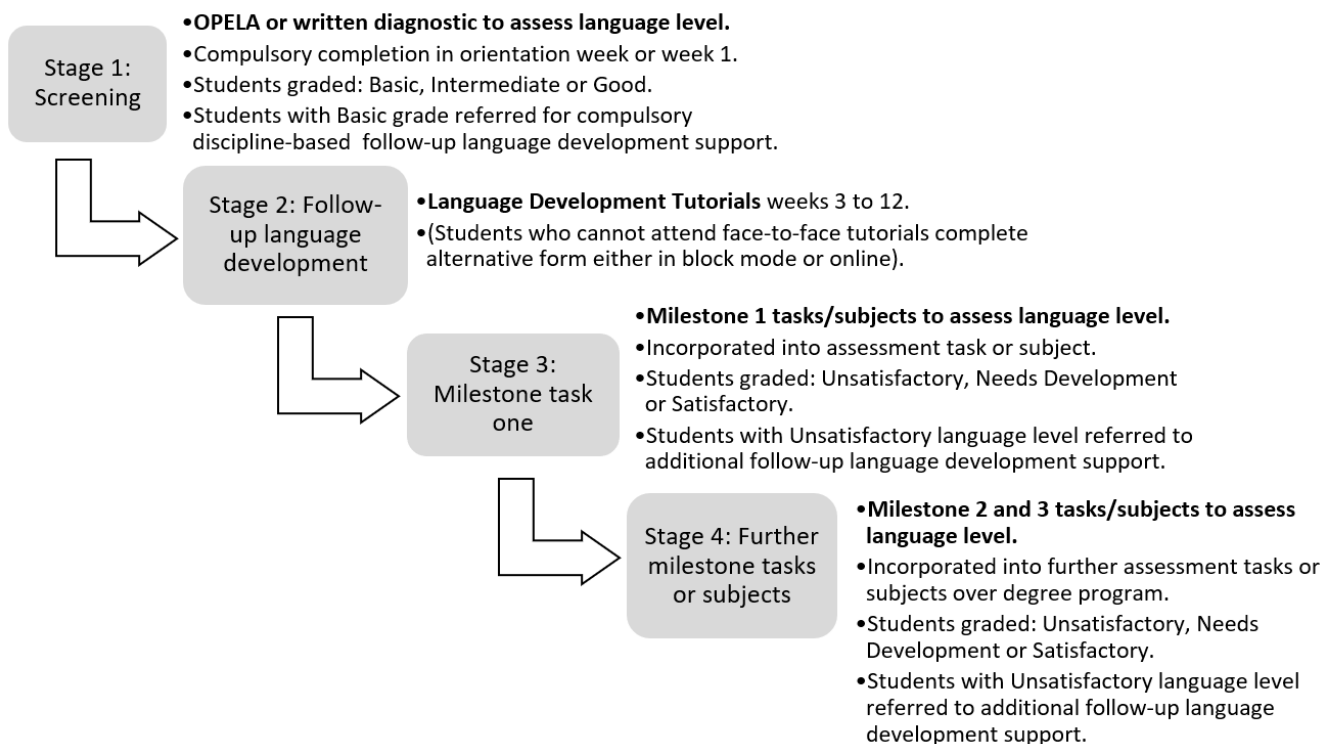
Figure 1. Academic Language Development Framework: Language level assessment and follow-up support.

Stage 1: Screening

Unlike other institution-wide embedding academic language programs (e.g., Fenton-Smith et al., 2017; Harris, 2013; Ransom, 2009), the ALD framework screens all commencing coursework students, regardless of their language background or any previous English language proficiency assessments. The reasons for universal screening are as follows. Firstly, screening all commencing students is less discriminatory than screening only EAL or international students. Many students who speak English as a first language may still struggle initially with the level of academic

language required of them at university. Secondly, universal screening allows for a broader capture of students than targeted screening and provides the university with a clearer understanding of the academic language levels of all students. The process of the ALD framework relies heavily on the use of an online task to screen all commencing students in an efficient, effective and timely manner. UTS uses a modified version of the Academic English Screening Task (AEST), developed by the University of Melbourne. The AEST has been evaluated as a valid and reliable screening task both by the Language Testing Research Centre at the University of Melbourne (Elder & Knoch, 2009) and by in-house evaluations conducted by data scientists at UTS (UTS internal publication, 2017). UTS uses only the objectively scored components of the AEST, (locally known as the online post enrolment language assessment, or OPELA) which can be completed within 40 minutes; this means that results are available to students immediately. The timeliness of the task and its marking allows stages one and two of the ALD framework to be operationalised so that identified students can commence their language development within the first three weeks of semester.

The OPELA or written diagnostic task[3] is conducted in orientation week or week 1 of first and second semesters in core commencing subjects to capture the largest number of commencing students. There are three possible results: Basic; Intermediate; Good. Students who score in the Basic band are then directed to mandatory follow-up support (stage 2).

Stage 2: Follow up language development

Students whose language level is assessed as Basic are required to attend "Language Development Tutorials" which are aligned to their core subject. These are additional tutorials that are part of the same core discipline subjects in which students completed the OPELA or written diagnostic task. In most faculties, the additional tutorials run for 1.5 hours per week for 10 weeks, from week 3 to week 12 of semester. Students are required to have 80% participation in these tutorials. Students who are unable to attend the language development tutorials due to other commitments, such as work or timetable clashes, are required to attend an alternative form of tutorials in block mode or online over a series of weekends or evenings. The tutorials apply the principles for ALD design outlined in Table 1: they support students' disciplinary learning and academic language development, their learning of effective communication strategies with an emphasis on reading and writing, and they also emphasise active and collaborative learning and taking responsibility for one's own language development through setting specific and individual learning goals. By maintaining small class sizes (10-20 students) and promoting a sense of enjoyment in learning, the tutorials also focus on making students feel included, comfortable, supported and that they belong to a community at UTS, thus addressing the affective dimension of language learning. Tutorial activities and materials are designed by the ALL lecturer who supports that faculty, and are taught by tutors with an English language teaching background.

Stage 3: Milestone task one

All students in the core disciplinary subject complete an existing assessment task which has a written communication component and has been identified as a suitable "milestone task". This task is evaluated against a language framework in addition to subject marking criteria (see Appendix A). The language framework has been developed by the ALL team, and has three levels: Unsatisfactory; Needs Development; Satisfactory. The milestone stage is intended both to evaluate the effectiveness of the language development tutorials for students' language support and to ensure that students who may have missed out on the screening task can still be identified as needing language support. Students not meeting language level expectations set by their faculties

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[3] Some students complete a written diagnostic task rather than the OPELA. This decision is made in some subjects where there are small numbers of students. A written assessment task is also provided as an alternative to OPELA for students registered for accessibility services.

in the first milestone task are then directed to further language development activities. These activities include discipline-specific language development intensive workshops, which run for five days during semester breaks and consultations with the student-facing support service.

Stage 4: Further milestone tasks or subjects

This stage involves further milestone tasks for all students, which are decided on in consultation with the faculties, depending on the length and nature of the degree program: for example, students in a four or five-year degree program might have a milestone 2 subject/task in first semester second year, and milestone 3 subject/task in second semester third year. Milestone subjects, where most or all of the assessment tasks are assessed against the language framework, are the preferred option, but such subjects are not always available. Reasons for the lack of availability of milestone subjects include: no common subjects in a degree program after first or second year; few or no subjects which have an extended piece of writing as part of an assessment task; and subject sequences without pre-requisites, so subjects can be taken in any order.

3.2. Learning from the ALD pilot

In second semester of 2018, the ALD framework was piloted in four faculties. Although completion of OPELA was compulsory in the pilot, there were no consequences for non-completion. Many students did not attempt OPELA and a number of students either did not attend or had minimal attendance at language development tutorials. One of the key take-aways from the pilot was that without compulsory attendance requirements, we could not ensure that those students who most needed the language support would receive it. This lack of compliance highlighted the need for stronger compulsion, which required policy and rule changes at the institutional level. Consultation with UTS senior management and with the Student Administration Unit resulted in the following rules:

- Failure to complete OPELA results in a withheld grade for the discipline subject where OPELA is embedded;
- Failure to attain at least 80% attendance at language development tutorials results in a withheld grade;
- Grades are only released when students make up the missed language screening/development (e.g., by completing alternative forms of language development tutorials in online or intensive mode).

3.3. Key achievements to date

Since the start of the university-wide implementation and evaluation of the ALD framework in 2018, 30,249 students have completed the OPELA or a diagnostic writing task. Across the university, the average proportion of students who receive a "Basic" level and are therefore enrolled in language development tutorials is 15% of the cohort, and this figure is similar each semester. In practical terms, this means there are, on average, 90-100 language development tutorials running across all 8 faculties during each first semester, and 30-50 language development tutorials each second semester, with an average of 15 students enrolled in each tutorial. Between 20 and 30 casual language development tutorial tutors are employed for each iteration. It is clearly an extensive undertaking, with the potential to benefit a consistently high number of incoming students on an ongoing basis.

An initial analysis of the data collected so far shows that, in general, students who attend language development tutorials receive sufficient subject-specific language support to pass the associated first semester subject and achieve the threshold level set by the faculties on the milestone language rubric. However, the university-wide implementation of this rubric has also consistently identified a number of students who have still not reached an adequate level of language for their discipline area after their first semester of study – which is not surprising, given that language, like disciplinary skills, is "developmental and cumulative during the course of study" (Arkoudis & Harris,

2019, p. 4). This cohort includes some students who received "Basic" level on the initial OPELA screening and therefore attended language development tutorials during their first semester. However, it also includes students who were not initially picked up by the OPELA task, confirming the importance of assessing and supporting language development throughout a student's degree program, not just in the first semester (Harris, 2016).

4. Analysis: Key factors supporting the ALD framework

The key factors underpinning the success of the ALD framework so far are: ALL boundary crossing and relationships; logistics of student management; and discipline-specific design. Each factor is analysed in turn below.

4.1. ALL boundary crossing and relationships

One of the key challenges in implementing university wide language frameworks may be resistance from disciplinary academics (e.g., Harris, 2013; Ransom, 2009). Resistance can be caused by the perception that undertaking language support is not within the remit of the disciplinary academic: "they [disciplinary academics] think that English language support should not form part of their teaching and learning practices" (Arkoudis & Doughney, 2014, p. 13,) or that top-down language policy requirements are an imposition, merely increasing academic workload without obvious benefits for staff or students (Ransom, 2009). The ALL team members' roles as "boundary crossers" with their respective faculties and across the institution was vital in helping to address potential resistance from disciplinary academics. Consultation between ALL staff and various levels within the faculties, e.g., Associate Deans Teaching and Learning, faculty teaching and learning committees, program or course coordinators and subject coordinators, is necessary to develop both trust and understanding in implementing a whole of university language development approach.

An important aspect of that boundary crossing was clear and timely communication to all relevant stakeholders regarding the purpose, process and procedures of implementation (Harris, 2016; Ransom, 2009). If strong channels of communication are not in place, there is a high risk of staff and students misunderstanding both the purpose and the process of embedding whole-of-institution language development, and of the initiative ultimately failing in its intended purpose. ALL team members not only have deep knowledge of the disciplinary linguistic practices of their faculties but have also built strong relationships with faculty staff, including with the Associate Deans Teaching and Learning, disciplinary academics and professional staff who work in the faculty. These strong connections with the faculties have provided an appropriate landscape on which to build the ALD framework. Knowledge of how their designated faculty works has allowed the ALL team members to make contact with key faculty staff, and to establish clear, consistent messaging about the intent, implementation and potential positive impact of the framework. In addition, working with specific subjects and with subject coordinators has meant that the ALL team members have knowledge of subject content, assessment tasks and intended learning outcomes. This has facilitated the targeting of appropriate subjects to be involved in the screening and language development tutorials within each faculty.

As an example of their boundary crossing within the broader institutional systems, ALL team members also provide important links between the student-facing language centre (HELPS), faculties at a broad level (e.g., through discussion and planning with Associate Deans Teaching and Learning) and the specific subjects included in the ALD framework. HELPS provides both follow-up and back-up for students who either wish to pursue further language support, or whose time commitments restrict them from participating in the ALD framework activities. For instance, students in language development tutorials are directed to utilise the HELPS workshops and conversation classes as an option for developing their language learning goals. Students who might be feeling particularly isolated can be encouraged to sign up for the conversation buddy program,

where they are partnered with a UTS staff member or student to practise speaking English in an informal context.

4.2. Logistics of student management

In a large-scale undertaking such as the implementation of the ALD framework, skilful management of student logistics is essential. This management depends on in-depth knowledge of existing university support systems. Student logistics for the ALD framework are led by the ALD Project Manager and a support team, who ensure that all aspects of the framework are integrated into existing systems. A major benefit of having a specific team in place to manage the logistics is that it allows the provision of clear, consistent messaging about the purposes and processes of the language development framework. The logistical work conducted by this team spans and connects the different levels of the institutional system: students, the ALL team and various other institutional teams such as IT, timetabling and student services.

The first major step at the start of the implementation process was the integration of the language screening task (OPELA) into UTS's learning management system, which required the ALD Project Manager to have high level IT skills and to liaise extensively with the IT department at UTS. The integration has ensured that students enrolled in participating subjects have access to the task, and upon completion of the OPELA task receive immediate feedback on their result. This feedback provides student with direction and next steps: depending on their OPELA result, information is provided on how to allocate to language development tutorials. The immediate feedback has been successful in directing students to language development tutorials with a minimum of confusion.

Language development tutorials are scheduled using UTS's timetabling system, which gives the students the ability to self-allocate to their subject's language development tutorials, allowing them to choose a time that fits in with their university timetable and competing family and work commitments. Self-allocating to a lecture/tutorial is standard practice at UTS and removes some administrative burden on academic/support staff. However, this does lead to some students allocating themselves to language development tutorials when they have not been identified as needing language support, a problem unique to the ALD framework. Therefore, monitoring student allocation is necessary to avoid language development tutorials falsely reaching capacity.

The compulsory nature of the language development tutorials, which entails 80% attendance, requires the monitoring of student attendance. Using an existing attendance tracking system within the Learning Management System (LMS) ensures that tutors are able to take attendance and students are given the ability to view their attendance in the LMS, which makes the students accountable in ensuring that their attendance requirement is correct and up to date. Failure to attend at least 80% of their language development tutorials means that students fail their subject due to non-completion of prescribed attendance and/or participation requirements, as outlined in UTS Student Rules. Non-compliant students have the opportunity to resolve their grade by completing further language support in the form of intensive summer/winter language support workshops or online language development modules delivered in the following semester.

One of the issues arising from the implementation stage so far is the management of non-compliant students. Initially, it seemed some students did not take the compulsory nature of screening and language development tutorials seriously, as could be seen by a significant proportion of students in first semester 2019 either not completing the OPELA task during the designated time frame, or not attending the language development tutorials when directed to do so. After receiving a withheld grade for non-compliance, the majority of students completed further language support to have their withheld grade removed. Subsequently, the number of non-compliant students has substantially declined; it appears that the vast majority of students now understand the consequences of not complying with the ALD framework requirements.

Another key factor in the logistics for student management is the tracking of student data to see how students are progressing with their ALD throughout their degree programs. Tracking starts with the results of the screening task, and continues with the language levels attained in the first milestone task, the overall performance in the screening subject, and performance in the subsequent milestone tasks 2 and 3. The tracking is conducted through UTS's administrative and learning management systems, and data are reported back to each faculty. As is noted in the following section, tracking data is a critical element in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the ALD framework.

4.3. Discipline-specific design

One of the key factors contributing to the success of the ALD framework is the subject-specific approach taken to materials design, built on evidence that integrating language development with subject content results in better learning for students (Arkoudis & Harris, 2019). The ALL team's ability to connect with and create coherence between the different levels within the institutional system is essential to the development of these materials; their boundary crossing is an enabler of the discipline-specific design. The discipline-specific design itself is conceptualised as being at the core of the ALD initiative: it is through this design that ALL team members are able to connect with and motivate students and faculty staff (especially subject coordinators and tutors). As noted above, each ALL academic has established relations with Faculty academics, as well as knowledge of the disciplinary discourses within the subjects that align with the language development tutorials. The relations mean that ALL team members can easily gain access to subject-specific readings and assessment tasks by being enrolled in disciplinary subject online sites. They can also readily discuss subject content and assessment tasks to tease out academics' often tacit knowledge of requirements.

Key texts are identified in screening subjects, and materials are designed to help students understand and perform the academic practices associated with completing their subjects and associated assessments. For example, language development tutorials have activities to assist students in understanding assessment questions and marking rubrics, selecting appropriate readings, reading and summarising evidence, learning discipline specific terminology, and developing knowledge of relevant genres within the subjects. To date, early analysis of feedback indicates that for students, a focus on assessment tasks is one of the major benefits of the tutorials. Students are understandably motivated by the extra support they receive in preparing for assessments and developing assessment literacy, enabling them to integrate feedback and learning from assessments into their subject learning, in line with assessment for learning theory (Boud, 2014; Boud & Falchikov, 2005).

5. Analysis: Key challenges

As with any university-wide initiative, implementing the ALD framework has not been without its difficulties. There remains a set of persistent challenges that relate to the practical implementation of the framework, which we believe are useful for those wishing to set up a similar system of embedded language screening and development. These challenges are the selection of ALD subjects and measuring outcomes.

5.1. Selection of screening and milestone subjects

Firstly, selecting the initial target subjects for the OPELA screening and language development tutorials follow-up has been challenging in the disciplines that do not have large compulsory core subjects in the first semester, or where such core subjects do not explicitly assess academic literacy. In these cases, the decision process has involved extensive ALL staff consultation with faculties, input from faculty staff and students, and analysis of degree program structures and the academic literacy content of assessment tasks. Even when suitable subjects have been chosen, changing personnel and restructuring of degree programs has made this process rather fragile, as

Arkoudis and Harris (2019) have similarly reported. The same difficulties emerge when moving beyond stage 3 of the framework (see Figure 2): there has been varied success across faculties in selecting subjects for the second milestone task, since in many cases degree programs branch off into multiple routes from the second semester onwards. Consequently, a large number of subjects may need to be involved for the second and subsequent milestones, magnifying the complexity and fragility of the process. The implementation of these stages is still in progress. Once again, the ability of ALL staff to act as nimble boundary-crossers is crucial in addressing this challenge.

5.2. Measuring outcomes

Another problematic yet highly important task is measuring the outcomes of the ALD framework implementation. Assessing students' development of academic language in the context of higher education is extremely difficult, complicated by "confounding variables, many of them external to formal instruction" (Fenton-Smith et al., 2017, p. 475). At the same time, providing evidence of the success of the ALD framework is important both to satisfy all stakeholders across the institution, including students, and also to demonstrate (especially to faculty academics) that the project is evidence-based and research-producing (Fenton-Smith et al., 2017). Our approach is to measure outcomes from the multiple lenses of the various participants in the framework – the students, faculty staff, language development tutors and the ALL staff – through a pragmatist research methodology that combines qualitative and quantitative data. In line with other evaluations of university-wide English language initiatives (e.g., Fenton-Smith, Humphreys, & Walkinshaw, 2018), we are tracking and evaluating academic outcomes, student retention, self-directed learning, English language proficiency and academic literacy development through milestone tasks. In addition, we are collecting data to explore student perceptions, the development of students' linguistic self-confidence and academic identities as crucial aspects of ALD (Bond, 2019; Choi, 2019), and staff perceptions of the framework. Our emergent findings also serve to inform the on-going management of our day-to-day operations and the evolution of language development tutorial materials. To date, we have found that those students most in need of language development are now being supported through our framework to succeed in their subjects and to achieve satisfactory levels on milestone tasks. Early analysis of interviews with disciplinary academics who teach the screening subjects, indicates that subject coordinators can see clear improvement in subject assessments completed by the students who attend language development tutorials. Several subject coordinators commented that students have improved writing skills from the feedback they receive from their language development tutors. In addition, we have observed developments in students' abilities to tackle assessment tasks and texts, and improvements in their self-confidence as well as their abilities to set language goals and access university resources (Edwards, Goldsmith, Havery, & Nixon, 2019).

6. Conclusions and future directions

This paper shows how a whole-of-institution framework for embedding academic language has been designed and implemented to support the development of students' disciplinary and professional discourses. We note that this framework differs from other approaches to embedding academic language across the curriculum in that it screens all incoming students regardless of language background, it is both subject-specific and discipline-specific, it focuses on the affective aspects of language development, and it extends across the years of students' degree programs. We have used sociocultural perspectives of language learning in order to design a robust yet flexible framework for the development of students' academic language.

Our analysis of the key reasons for the success of the framework and the key on-going challenges offers implications for ALL staff and institutions looking to implement a similar approach. We have observed that our framework's success to date is largely due to the boundary crossing of ALL team members, who communicate within and across faculties and units of the university to negotiate support for and use of the framework, the skilful management of student logistics and

university systems, and the discipline and subject-specific design of the language development tutorials. At the same time, we are still navigating the challenges, including the selection of further milestone subjects beyond the first semester. We will continue to work on refining the ALD framework, focusing on the continuous need to maintain and encourage further buy-in across the university. Future directions in our research will include effective means of measuring the outcomes of the framework in both the short and the longer term.

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Appendix A. A language framework for assessing English language in written assessments

UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY SYDNEY

	OVERALL	GRAMMATICAL ERRORS	VOCABULARY	STRUCTURE
Level 1 Unsatisfactory	The writing requires effort and concentration to understand. There are some serious errors in grammar and vocabulary that affect clarity of communication. Sentences are incomplete or poorly structured.	- Wrong word order in sentences - Incomplete sentences – often without verbs and with faulty punctuation (*The social determinants of health and the increasing of obesity.*) - Errors in sentence structure may cause occasional confusion - Wrong use of verb tense and form (*obesity is **being** a problem in society; causes of obesity **are included** diet and lack of exercise*)	- Many of the words used do not make sense and the reader has to guess the meaning from the context - Many key terms from the subject have not been used appropriately	-Many of the sentences in the paragraph(s) are not linked together
Level 2 Needs developing	The writing is generally comprehensible. There may be errors in grammar and vocabulary but they do not affect clarity. Sentences and paragraphs are mostly well structured.	- Missing articles (the/a) - Subject/verb agreement problems (*the writer **come** from a nursing background*) - Wrong prepositions (*the carer can develop a greater awareness **to** the patient's condition*) - Wrong verb tense (*a recent event **make** me develop strong feelings about a resident*	- Most of the vocabulary used is appropriate to the assignment - Some words sound strange but the reader can easily work out the meaning	- The sentences in the paragraph(s) mostly flow well and are linked together
Level 3 Satisfactory	The writing is well expressed; it is comprehensible and coherent throughout. There are **very few** grammatical errors and vocabulary is appropriate to the context. The sentences and paragraphs have a logical flow and are clearly linked.	- Any errors (**there are very few**) are of a typographical nature (typos) or are minor grammatical errors e.g. subject/verb agreement and prepositions (see above) - Sentence structure is clear	-Vocabulary is appropriate	- The sentences in the paragraph(s) flow easily and are clearly linked together