

Remediating the Remedial: Transforming Academic Language and Learning Practices to Advance Student Equity

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Abstract

This article explores student equity in higher education through the lens of academic language and learning (ALL) and argues that ALL remains a significant barrier to participation and success for students from equity backgrounds. This article aims to provide a critical, equity-focused examination of the discourses evident in the literature that shape contemporary ALL-advising practice. I then draw on data collected in a larger case study into the first-year student experience, to explore how these discourses are evident in ALL advisers' accounts of their practice. Findings indicate that the learning and teaching of ALL continues to be marginalised, despite progress made to embed ALL into core first year units. I argue that remedial models of support continue to disadvantage students from equity backgrounds and ALL advisers need to advocate for a critical space to transform practice that better serves diverse student cohorts.

Keywords: Academic language and learning; student equity; academic literacies; interdisciplinary collaboration.

Introduction

In Australia, government policies have successfully increased higher education access for students from diverse backgrounds (Department of Education, 2025). However, this has led to varying levels of academic language and learning (ALL) preparedness, with ongoing concerns about students' writing and language proficiency (Botha, 2022; Naylor et al., 2018; Wingate, 2015). Student attrition remains high (Department of Education, 2023), particularly in the first year, which is a critical stage for transition support (Kift, 2009, 2023; Kift et al., 2010). Effective transition support includes explicitly teaching foundational ALL capabilities within the first year curriculum and the sociocultural context of disciplines, an approach known as "embedding" (Arkoudis, 2014; Briguglio & Watson, 2014; Dunworth et al., 2013; Lea, 2017; Wingate, 2006, 2019). Characteristics of embedded ALL development include teaching unit-specific literacy demands relevant to the completion of assessment tasks; delivering support within scheduled course teaching; and integrating both disciplinary knowledge and discipline-specific language and literacy practices (Bassett & Macnaught, 2024). Despite efforts to integrate ALL with disciplinary content and successful collaborations between ALL advisers and discipline academics (for examples, see Edwards et al., 2021; Harris & Ashton, 2011; Maldoni, 2018; Thies et al., 2014), tensions remain between remedial support models and those integrating ALL development within disciplinary content, leading to the marginalisation of ALL development and the referral of "deficit" students to learning centres for remediation (Barber, 2020; Bassett & Macnaught, 2024; Benzie et al., 2017; Murray, 2022; Wingate, 2019).

These ongoing tensions, as experienced through my own practice as an ALL adviser, have provided the impetus for a qualitative case study to investigate the role of ALL in the first-year student experience of disciplinary learning. The case study focuses on the ALL experiences of first-year undergraduate Initial Teacher Education (ITE) students at a regional



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Australian university. Drawing on literature and focus group data with ALL advisers collected as part of this larger case study, this article aims to provide a critical, equity-focused analysis of the discourses shaping contemporary ALL-advising practice, as reflected in the ALL advisers' discussions. The preliminary findings suggest that despite efforts to embed ALL into core first-year units, the learning and teaching of ALL continue to be marginalised. Remedial approaches to ALL support persist and risk disadvantaging students from equity backgrounds, highlighting the need for ALL advisers to advocate for critical, transformative spaces that more effectively meet the needs of diverse student cohorts.

Literature Review

The literature review explored conceptualisations of student writing, academic literacy, language, and learning, and how these have informed pedagogical approaches to academic literacy development. Literature was sourced using snowballing methods starting with frequently cited works by Lea and Street (1998) and Wingate (2006), whose research has globally influenced ALL practice. The findings highlight the ongoing structural and pedagogical challenges for ALL advisers in integrating ALL development into disciplinary curricula.

Definitions of academic literacy vary across contexts. Lillis and Scott (2007) describe it as both a broad descriptor of writing activities and a critical field of inquiry with specific ideological and theoretical roots. Wingate (2018) defines it as the ability to communicate competently in an academic discourse community, requiring a range of skills in reading, writing, oral communication, critical thinking, and evaluating sources. These practices occur within specific disciplinary communities, whose norms regulate meaning making and knowledge production (Lea & Street, 2006). The term “academic language and learning” (ALL) encompasses literacy practices, language conventions, and learning strategies unique to higher education and specific disciplines, reflecting the centrality of language in students' development as confident academic participants (Association for Academic Language and Learning, n.d.; Barthel et al., 2021; Percy, 2018; Wingate, 2018). Coming to a definition of academic literacy is valuable as this understanding impacts ALL practice and, therefore, the student experience.

Lea and Street's (1998) influential typology outlines three approaches to student writing development: study skills, academic socialisation, and academic literacies. While the study skills approach focuses on surface-level competencies like grammar and structure, it has been critiqued for treating writing as a set of decontextualised techniques (Lea & Street, 1998; Wingate, 2006). The academic socialisation approach assumes students can be inducted into academic culture by adopting its norms, yet it often overlooks the tacit nature of those expectations and the complexities of disciplinary discourse (Lea & Street, 1998; Lillis et al., 2016). In contrast, the academic literacies approach, rooted in New Literacy Studies (NLS), views literacy as multiple, socially situated practices shaped by power, identity, and context (Gee, 1996; Lea & Street, 1998; Lillis & Scott, 2007). It offers a critical, inclusive framework that challenges the normative assumptions of the other two models and calls for more equitable and contextually responsive pedagogies. In the context of widening participation, ALL development is an equity issue compounded by a “study skills” approach to developing student writing that is often coupled with deficit views of students and remedial models of ALL teaching that separate ALL from disciplinary contexts (Lea & Street, 1998; Lillis et al., 2016; Wingate, 2006). The literature consistently shows that integrating content and language curricula is essential to contextualise ALL development, reflect diverse disciplinary practices and share responsibility for ALL development (Arkoudis et al., 2018; Lea & Street, 1998; Percy, 2014; Wingate, 2018). Thus, interdisciplinary collaboration between language and discipline specialists through the embedding of ALL into mainstream curricula has been a key focus for Australasian ALL advisers for the last two decades (Arkoudis et al., 2018; Barber, 2020; Bassett & Macnaught, 2024; Briguglio & Watson, 2014; Edwards et al., 2021; Harris & Ashton, 2011; Macnaught et al., 2024; Maldoni, 2018; Maldoni & Lear, 2016; McWilliams & Allan, 2014; Thies et al., 2014). Bassett and Macnaught (2024) argue that embedded approaches offer an opportunity to shift “ideological goals from mere aspiration to practical implementation” (p. 2). However, a persistent challenge for ALL advisers is implementing an embedded academic literacies pedagogy that is curriculum-integrated, developmental, and strengths-based (Bassett & Macnaught, 2024; Benzie et al., 2017; Botha, 2022; Kift, 2023; Macnaught et al., 2024). While transformative pedagogical approaches to ALL development use constructivist, experiential, and situated principles, institutional structures and practices often marginalise ALL development, relegating it to the periphery of learning and teaching and resulting in “bolt-on” resources using behaviourist pedagogical approaches (Barber, 2020; Benzie et al., 2017; Lillis et al., 2016; Percy, 2018; Wingate, 2006). This disconnect between ideological intent and institutional practice highlights the need for ongoing research and critical reflection on ALL practice, in order to better understand the persistence of this gap and identify meaningful ways to bridge it. In the context of widening participation and reducing inequity, bridging this gap is imperative to prevent further disadvantage for students from diverse backgrounds. These issues are central to the current study, which aims to critically explore ALL advisers' accounts of their practice in the context of embedding ALL into first-year units at a regional Australian university.

Methods

This article provides a preliminary analysis of focus group data collected in a larger qualitative case study investigating the nature and role of ALL in supporting first-year ITE students' experience of disciplinary learning at a regional Australian university (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Stake, 1995). At this university, ALL services are managed centrally and include generic orientation programs and resources, individual consultations, and embedded workshops, predominantly delivered online via video conferencing software (Cleary et al., 2017). The university's Embedding Foundation Academic Skills program integrates the teaching of discipline and assessment specific literacies within the scheduled class time of core units, in the first-year of undergraduate degrees. Within this context, the case study is delimited by three core theoretical first-year ITE units (Education as a Profession, Responding to Diversity and Inclusion, and Indigenous Studies and Learning), all of which have between three and six hours of embedded ALL workshops delivered in class by ALL advisers. Topics covered by ALL advisers include analysing assessment tasks, reading and note-taking, paragraph and genre-specific writing, ethical use of generative artificial intelligence, and referencing.

The guiding research questions for the case study are:

What aspects of disciplinary learning do students struggle with in their first year?

How do different approaches to ALL development support the first-year students' experience of disciplinary learning?

What opportunities are there to enhance the first-year students' experience of disciplinary learning?

The research design includes primary data collection via focus groups with ALL advisers and ITE unit lecturers, and semi-structured interviews with students enrolled in these units. Ethical clearance was obtained in 2024 from the University's Human Ethics Committee (Project number 0000024908). Thematic analysis of qualitative data is being used to explore the participants' lived experience and how various discourses shape ALL practice (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell & Poth, 2018). For this purpose, discourses are understood as social practices that represent certain ideological positions, and work through language to maintain or disrupt dominant power relations (Fairclough, 2001; Gee, 1996). My research aims to challenge deficit discourses around students' preparedness for university study and explore opportunities to strengthen and transform ALL practices to meet the ideological goals inherent in an academic literacies approach.

Primary data collection in the larger case study included one focus group with four ALL advisers teaching into the first-year ITE units in Term 2, 2024. Focus group prompts were aligned to the research questions of the larger case study: the student experience of disciplinary learning; different approaches to academic language and learning; and visions for enhancing ALL practice. The audio recording of the focus group was transcribed as intelligent verbatim using large language model transcription software and verified by the researcher. Pseudonyms were given to the ALL advisers (Mia, Diana, Ellen, Lucy), and all identifiers were removed to ensure anonymity and confidentiality.

The preliminary analysis of focus group data was informed by the literature review and research questions. A priori thematic analysis was conducted using deductive coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Saldana, 2011). Initial analysis looked for evidence of study skills, academic socialisation, and academic literacies discourses in the ALL advisers accounts to explore which discourses are privileged over others, and to understand the impact of these discourses on contemporary ALL-advising practice. Data was also coded deductively to align with the focus group prompts and research questions of the larger case study: where students struggle; different approaches to ALL teaching; and visions for enhancing ALL practice. Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach to reflexive thematic analysis; an inductive coding process was used to identify emergent themes across the dataset. Themes were developed not only from the frequency of particular ideas, but also the salience and contextual richness with which they were discussed. Themes were refined through an iterative process of coding, comparison, and critical reflection to ensure analytic depth and coherence (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Exploring the data in this way acknowledges the lived experience of ALL advisers enacting the university's embedding ALL program (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Stake, 1995), which helps to build a richer picture of contemporary ALL practice and its impact on the student experience.

Findings

In the focus group, ALL advisers discussed their understanding of ALL; challenges that students face in their learning; challenges that ALL advisers face when embedding ALL, and ALL advisers' visions for developing ALL practice. ALL advisers discussed the challenges that students face, particularly with tacit expectations, identity, and content heavy assessment tasks. ALL advisers referred to the, "particular skills of structure, of vocab, of understanding the task" (Mia) that are required to fulfill assessment expectations yet acknowledged that these expectations are often tacit, negatively impacting students'

wellbeing: “they’re terrified ... they don’t know what to expect” (Diana), “they’re supposed to write all of this stuff in this tiny word count ... get their language right, ... formal language, no contractions ... there’s a sense of overwhelm of all that’s expected” (Ellen). One ALL adviser acknowledged the pressure that students feel to produce “high stakes” assignments that “must meet all of these rules” early in their university experience with “no opportunity to get feedback” (Diana). Furthermore, supporting students to understand the rules was described as challenging as “lecturers all ... teach in different ways, critique in different ways” (Lucy), requiring students to be astute to ensure they are “delivering on exactly what [lecturers] expect” (Lucy). ALL advisers talked about inducting the students into “the academic ways and processes” (Mia) and used the metaphor of a race to describe their roles: “let’s support them in this race that they’ve been given to run” (Diana), to get “[students] across the line” (Lucy) or “[the assessment] over the line” (Ellen). This discussion highlights the pivotal role of ALL advisers in helping students navigate tacit academic expectations and high-pressure assessment environments that can otherwise undermine students’ confidence and wellbeing.

ALL advisers also play a role in supporting students’ developing academic identities. One ALL adviser described the first-year ITE student experience as developing student identity as future teachers through their learning experiences:

... they come in, bubbly, and fresh faced and excited, and they see the end goal, where they’re going to be the fun teacher at the front in the bright, lovely fun dress with all the primary school kiddies. And then they get into it, and they realise just the depth and breadth of what it takes to get an education qualification. And it’s almost like they have a light bulb moment and a newfound appreciation for the profession. (Lucy)

Content-heavy assessments were cited as another area of concern for students. One ALL adviser recounted an experience of supporting a student through a supplementary assessment: “working with the students in that situation ... provided an opportunity to say, look, academia is also about personal formation as much as academic formation, and it’s about being resilient” (Ellen). Both ALL advisers recognised the learning challenge that first-year ITE students face in content heavy units, where students are required to integrate legislative frameworks, policies and standards into their assessments. The ALL advisers describe this as “a whole other new literacy that they have to get across in their academic writing” (Ellen). ALL advisers play a crucial role, therefore, in bridging the gap between institutional demands and students’ developing academic identities, enabling more equitable and supported transitions into university study.

The ALL advisers’ discussions revealed several challenges that they encounter in their roles, related to their positionality within the university. One ALL adviser explained: “it’s an extraordinarily powerful position to be in ... we get to see such a spectrum of students, ... skills and their experiences across a spectrum of disciplines and ... assessment tasks” (Ellen). In response to one such assessment task, the ALL adviser describes “one of the worst assessments I’d ever seen written”, a “tough assessment ... to integrate case study material ... legislation ... colonial history and all of the right literacy around incorporating Indigenous language” (Ellen), yet the ALL adviser felt responsible “to help these students when they are failing” (Ellen). The ALL adviser described the relationship with the Unit Coordinator (UC) as “warm but edgy” yet she “somehow managed to dance around” the UC and rewrote the assessment so that “at least it flowed better” (Ellen). The ALL adviser expressed concern for students who might be doing the unit for the first time in their first term, failing the unit and “having a real beat up on their confidence where ... the assessment tasks are deeply flawed” (Ellen). The ALL adviser rewrote the task instructions and then deconstructed the task to provide a scaffolded structure to follow. These adjustments were “pitched” to the UC: “I’ve had some time to play around with rejigging it ... see what your team thinks” (Ellen). The changes were implemented the following term although the ALL adviser was not made aware of the impact. These examples illustrate the complex and sometimes precarious position of ALL advisers, who must navigate institutional hierarchies and collaborate diplomatically with UCs, while advocating for students and working to mitigate the impact of problematic assessments on student confidence and success.

Several ALL adviser reflections suggested that the ALL adviser role is undervalued and marginalised in the university, with “a sense of being about remedial help with the wider university culture ... a remedial band aid of sorts ... a problem gap stop or a hole filler” (Ellen). One ALL adviser reflects that some lecturers inappropriately refer students to the Academic Learning Centre (ALC) for remedial support: “they’re flicked our way when often ... it’s perhaps more content support that they need, as opposed to ALC support”. From this standpoint, they feel stretched and call for deeper collaboration with UCs to reach more students: “It’s not all of the ALC’s problem to develop and hone and refine those skills with students that ... can also be imparted and delivered within lectures” (Lucy). These reflections from the ALL advisers highlight the marginalisation of the ALL adviser role within the institution and reinforces the need for more collaborative, integrated approaches to student support that recognise academic skills development as a shared responsibility across teaching staff.

When discussing visions for future ALL practice, ALL advisers voiced their desire for more collaboration with UCs, to “be involved in designing ... more thoughtful planning of development of academic literacy skills” (Diana), with ALL advisers

teaching more regularly in units rather than being “ad hoc” (Diana). This extends to the course level to design ALL teaching and development into courses, with assessment tasks that reflect articulated thresholds for academic communication: “all assessment tasks should be audited through [our school] ... for accessibility and readability” (Ellen) which is justified as ALL advisers “see a lot of problems ... we know the breadth of the cohort and where the struggles are” (Ellen). This is seen as a role which would need to be “actually delegated to [ALL advisers] formally” as the “problem is always time” (Diana). ALL advisers also see an opportunity to support the pedagogical practices of UCs and lecturers, both “in terms of assessment design” (Lucy) and “having them build in some of the skill sets intuitively connected to the content” (Lucy). However, these are seen as requiring “extreme changes” (Diana), and the ALL advisers understand that for UCs this is challenging given the amount of content “that they have to share and impart with these students” (Lucy). These comments highlight the ALL advisers’ visions for a more collaborative role in curriculum and assessment design, one that values their ALL expertise and awareness of the cohort’s needs, while also acknowledging the structural and cultural shifts required to make such collaboration possible.

The concept of time emerged from the data from the different perspectives of ALL advisers, UCs and students. For the ALL advisers who are tasked with embedding ALL into first-year units, they are struggling to reduce the ALL teaching into three or four hours of class time across the term. As one ALL adviser states, they only have a “small, embedded window of opportunity to try and tackle some of the main parts to best get [students] across the line” (Lucy). This is also seen as a disadvantage for ALL advisers as they are unable to develop an understanding of the cohort in this short window of time: “we really have to go in with a bit of a feel ... we do go in quite blind” (Ellen). For the “time poor students” (Ellen) who are unaware of the ALL supports available to them, “there needs to be better time when we [ALL advisers] get access to these students” (Ellen). Another ALL adviser suggests having “more time with the students before they start uni ... so that we can upskill so that it’s not so much of a struggle for them” (Mia). One ALL adviser questions how students are expected to “fit in” (Diana) the additional learning of academic skills to adequately complete assessment tasks. This ALL adviser argues that the majority of the allocated “12.5 hours of study time per week per unit” is “taken up with the course content” and therefore poses the question: “when is that learning supposed to take place ... They don’t have time to attend these extra things” (Diana). Limited time availability is revealed here to be a significant barrier for both ALL advisers to teach and connect with students, and for students to effectively engage with ALL development, underscoring the need for more sustained and accessible integration of ALL across the student journey.

In summary, the focus group discussions highlight the challenges faced by both students and ALL advisers. Students struggle with tacit expectations; their developing identity; and content-heavy assessments, while ALL advisers face challenges related to their positionality; perceptions as a remedial service; and having limited influence over assessment design. Time constraints remain a significant barrier for both students and ALL advisers in effectively engaging with ALL development. Nevertheless, there are clear opportunities for enhancing ALL practices to better support student learning, particularly through interdisciplinary collaboration in the embedding space.

Discussion

The purpose for this article was to conduct a preliminary analysis of the ALL adviser focus group data, to explore how discourses of student writing evident in the literature that shape contemporary ALL-advising practice played out in the ALL advisers’ accounts, and to consider how this might impact the student experience. Preliminary findings from the ALL adviser focus group data indicate that students still face significant challenges with tacit academic expectations and content-heavy assessments, while ALL advisers are constrained by their positionality, being perceived as a remedial service, and having limited influence over assessment and learning design. These findings align with previous research on the complexities of developing student writing (Lea & Street, 1998; Lillis et al., 2016; Wingate, 2006) and embedding ALL into disciplinary learning (Bassett & Macnaught 2024; Benzie et al., 2017; Cleary et al., 2017; McWilliams & Allan, 2014; Percy, 2018; Thies et al., 2014), with ALL advisers advocating for more teaching time with students, deeper collaboration with discipline experts, and more recognition and agency in their work. Given the contemporary ALL context and efforts over the past two decades to embed ALL into mainstream curricula, it is crucial to continue learning from empirical research to advance ALL practice and challenge the dominant paradigm of remediating deficit students. In this discussion, I examine how different discourses of student writing appear in ALL advisers’ accounts of their practice. I then explore ALL advisers’ concerns about their legitimacy as educators and their desire for greater involvement in assessment and learning design through deeper collaboration with discipline specialists to support the development of embedded ALL practice.

Discourses of student writing, drawn from Lea and Street’s (1998) typology of approaches to teaching student writing, were evident in the ALL advisers’ accounts in various ways. The focus group data revealed that the ALL advisers oscillate between approaches towards teaching student writing, dependent on their context. They refer to skills that students need to learn, but

they also talk about acculturating students into “academic ways and processes” (Mia). They also describe interactions with students grappling for meaning when confronted with complex content and assessment tasks that challenge their identities as student teachers. ALL advisers elucidate their pedagogical concerns and their need to carefully “dance around” (Ellen) discipline lecturers to clarify assessment tasks. The ALL advisers take up different discursive positions, then, seemingly operating along a continuum of approaches from study skills to academic socialisation to academic literacies, responding to and balancing institutional expectations and constraints with practical demands. However, the ALL advisers’ accounts suggest that they are not satisfied with merely teaching “ad hoc” (Diana) study skills that is more akin to a “soft” form of embedding (Murray, 2022). They recognise that teaching from a study skills orientation limits students’ understanding of literacy conventions, as discussed in Wingate (2015). To mitigate this, ALL advisers expressed their aspirations for deeper collaborations with lecturers to develop richer, more meaningful learning experiences for students. However, their marginalised position and time constraints limit their capacity to engage more deeply with “academic literacies as a heuristic and resource for praxis” (Lillis, 2019, p. 8). The ALL advisers’ reflections highlight their agility as they navigate competing discourses of student writing, while also underscoring their commitment to moving beyond surface-level skills instruction. Despite their expertise and commitment to more transformative, embedded approaches, their accounts point to a lack of agency within institutional structures that continue to marginalise their role and limit their capacity to enact meaningful change.

ALL advisers face significant challenges in establishing their legitimacy as educators within the academy, as ALL advisers report being perceived as a remedial, supplementary service, rather than integral to the core curriculum. This perception results in the continued marginalisation of ALL development, with ALL advisers expected to teach discipline-specific academic literacies for a unit in approximately three hours of teaching time. This inevitably limits the pedagogical practices ALL advisers can employ, perpetuating normative practices that fail to meet the diverse needs of all students. The ALL advisers’ accounts confer that this artificial separation of language and content negatively impacts the student experience, as ALL development is perceived as an additional area of study rather than a fundamental component of learning in a unit. This places an undue burden on students from equity backgrounds who are typically balancing study with work and caregiving responsibilities (Crawford & Emery, 2021; Kahu et al., 2014). Integrating ALL into the core curriculum and providing ALL advisers with the necessary time and institutional support are crucial for enhancing ALL pedagogical practices for student success and fostering a more inclusive educational environment. The cornerstone of this integration is deeper collaboration between the ALL advisers and UCs, particularly around designing assessments and developing an embedded ALL curriculum.

ALL advisers called for greater interdisciplinary collaboration and believe they offer a unique perspective on student learning and experience that could support the lecturers’ academic development. Their perception is supported by the literature (Chanock, 2007; Macnaught et al., 2024; Percy, 2014; Wingate, 2019) and reflects the unnatural separation of language and content teaching that prevails in higher education (Percy, 2014). The ALL advisers expressed their visions for enhanced ALL practice through interdisciplinary collaboration not just at the unit level but also at the course level for curriculum renewal. As Percy (2014) states: “any form of progressive language education in the academy ideally moves beyond working with the student alone to working with staff on teaching and learning issues” (p. 1199). This aligns with Kift’s (2009, 2023) Transition Pedagogy, which advocates for the integration of key staff in curriculum (re)design to support the students’ transition experience. Through institutionally endorsed, interdisciplinary collaboration, ALL advisers would be better positioned to challenge remedial practices, contribute to course and assessment design, and enact a transformative ALL pedagogy that can bridge the gap between ideological goals and practice (Bassett & Macnaught, 2024; Lillis and Scott, 2007). However, this is seen by ALL advisers in this study as “a dream” that “would involve some really extreme changes” (Diana). In the face of such a seemingly insurmountable task, interdisciplinary collaboration should be “enabled structurally and culturally across the whole institution in pursuit of a shared vision” (Kift, 2023, p. 139) in which student success is held as a shared responsibility, thereby facilitating the creation of “a design space” (Tuck, 2012, as cited in Lillis, 2019, p. 8) within which to critically question normative academic writing practices and foster transformative learning environments that enhance student participation in university (Lillis, 2019). This approach offers the opportunity to transform ALL practices and remediate persistent remedial models to advance student equity.

Conclusion

This article provides a critical, equity-focused analysis of the discourses shaping contemporary ALL-advising practice and their impact on the student experience, drawing on focus group data collected as part of a larger qualitative case study investigating the relationship between ALL and disciplinary learning in supporting first-year students. Preliminary findings from the ALL adviser focus group data suggest that students still face significant challenges with tacit academic expectations and content-heavy assessments, despite the presence of an embedded ALL program. Key concerns for ALL advisers include their perceived legitimacy as educators and their limited influence over assessment and learning design due to their perceived role as a remedial service. ALL advisers seek deeper collaboration with discipline specialists to enhance their contribution to

pedagogical development and embedded ALL practices, essential for non-traditional students in the transition years. To address and transform inequities, it is urgent to create critical design spaces in universities that challenge normative practices perpetuating disadvantage. I argue that creating critical spaces for interdisciplinary co-design of ALL development will provide an opportunity for ALL advisers to more effectively challenge remedial framings of their work, contribute meaningfully to course and assessment design, and implement transformative pedagogies that bridge the gap between ideological goals and practice. Recommendations include enhancing collaboration with UCs and allocating more time for embedded work, recognising the importance and complexity of embedding ALL into curricula.

Furthermore, we must strive for deep embedding and gradually hand over ALL responsibilities to discipline academics, supported by clearly articulated pedagogy, to remediate the remedial models of ALL support. While this study is limited by its small sample size from one regional university, the findings support literature and contribute to the growing evidence for transformative institutional practices that enhance the student experience. Future research should focus on developing pedagogical frameworks for ALL development that support interdisciplinary collaboration and articulate ALL practices to discipline experts. In the larger case study of which this article is part, future analysis will examine focus group data collected with discipline academics and interview data with students to triangulate these preliminary findings.

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