

English language perplexity: Articulating the tensions in the DEEWR “Good Practice Principles”

Rowena Harper, Sue Prentice and Kate Wilson

University of Canberra

Abstract

In 2009, the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) released the report “Good practice principles for English language proficiency for international students in Australian universities.” Offering guidelines for developing students’ English language proficiency, the report is also set to act as a benchmarking document for Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) quality audits. Since its release, universities have been investigating its potential implications. One important article—Murray (2010), published in the inaugural issue of this journal—discusses several problems inherent in the report in order to recommend an approach to implementing the guidelines. This paper extends and challenges his critique by focussing on three important points of tension in the report: the group of students it discusses, its definition of English language proficiency and its conflicting discourses of inclusion and exclusion. The aim here is to offer universities points for discussion as they translate this complex report into practice.

Please cite this article as:

Harper, R., Prentice, S. & Wilson, K. (2011). English language perplexity: Articulating the tensions in the DEEWR “Good Practice Principles”. *The International Journal of the First Year in Higher Education*, 2(1). 36–48. doi: 10.5204/intjfyhe.v2i1.51

This article has been peer reviewed and accepted for publication in *Int J FYHE*. Please see the Editorial Policies under the ‘About’ section of the Journal website for further information.

© Copyright of articles is retained by author/s. As an open access journal, articles are free to use, with proper attribution, in educational and other non-commercial settings. ISSN: 1838-2959

Background and introduction

The report entitled *Good practice principles for English language proficiency for international students in Australian universities* (Australian Universities Quality Agency [AUQA], 2009) was commissioned by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) in late 2007 in response to growing concerns about the English language proficiency of international students, and particularly of international graduates of Australian universities. Simmering disquiet amongst academics had been brought to a head by a paper by Birrell (2006) concerning the English standards of overseas students on exiting their courses. Based on immigration statistics, Birrell revealed that around a third of overseas students who had been granted permanent residency (PR) visas in 2005-2006 had not reached the level of 6.0 on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) when tested for their PR application. He pointed out that 6.0 is the minimum level required for the Department of Immigration and Citizenship to issue a student visa in the first place, and posited several explanations for this apparent inconsistency, including the following:

- a. Students' English proficiency had deteriorated while at university, or
- b. These students had been admitted to universities via alternative pathways not requiring IELTS entry scores, such as attending high school in Australia, Vocational Education and Training courses, English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students or foundation programs (p. 62).

Birrell thereby implied that universities were not conforming to the requirement under the Education Services for Overseas Students Act to ensure that international students' English language proficiency is appropriate for their course of study. Further, he suggested that, to compensate for students' poor English language skills, universities were lowering their expectations of students' English competence, especially in disciplines such as Accounting and IT, where, he claimed, students were not required to write essays. He suggested that some students passed their assignments by getting others to write them, especially in group assessment, and complained that universities did not mandate supplementary courses for "deficient" students or set formal English tests (p. 63).

Birrell's provocative paper was closely followed in the same journal by an article by Bretag (2007), which suggested that a further reason for international students completing their courses without adequate English was plagiarism. Bretag interviewed 14 academics from 10 Australian universities and found that all were concerned about their students' level of English and the pressure to overlook inadequate language skills and cases of plagiarism. Both the Birrell and the Bretag papers received extensive media coverage, throwing an uncomfortable spotlight on university practice. Apparently in response to the concerns of Birrell (2006), Bretag (2007), Birrell and Healy (2008) and others, DEEWR commissioned a set of Good Practice Principles (GPPs) concerning the English language proficiency of international students. This commission was taken up by a Steering Committee put together by AUQA and culminated in the 2009 report.

While the GPPs were initially prompted by voices such as Birrell’s, which typify a structuralist approach to language learning, the report also gives voice to a more contemporary post-structuralist paradigm which promotes a contextualised approach to language development. These competing perspectives produce a report that is problematic. One problem is that a number of major tensions sit side by side, unresolved: the first tension relates to the group of students targeted by the GPPs, the second relates to the way in which English language proficiency is defined throughout, and the third is a broader philosophical tension between the inclusion and exclusion of students from increasingly diverse cohorts. A second, perhaps resulting, problem is that the principles provide “general statements” designed to be sufficiently broad to take into account “the diversity of Australian universities” (AQUA, 2009, p. 3). So broad are the principles in fact that only two (Principles 6 and 7) express concrete recommendations for which a plan of action can be clearly envisaged:

Principle 6. Development of English language proficiency is integrated with curriculum design, assessment practices and course delivery through a variety of methods.

Principle 7. Students’ English language development needs are diagnosed early in their studies and addressed, with ongoing opportunities for self-assessment.

Many of the other principles appear to provide little more than common sense or broad “motherhood” statements, for example, Principle 5: “English language proficiency and communication skills are important graduate attributes for all students.”

This paper suggests that the list of 10 GPPs, though reasonable and straightforward at first glance, conceals a range of complexities of which universities should be aware when making decisions about policy development and implementation. Importantly, if universities do not adequately think out the issues involved in the development of English language proficiency, the effects of any hastily-conceived strategy will be felt most acutely in first year. As Sally Kift (2009) rightly points out, first year is a time when students’ sense of connection to their university is highly tenuous and students from non-traditional backgrounds in particular are likely to find the tertiary environment an alienating and daunting one. Any approach to language and literacy development that disregards students’ emotional, psychological and cultural experiences of transition to focus entirely on their linguistic “competencies” is likely to fail. This paper therefore seeks to do two things. Firstly, it builds on a paper by Murray (2010), published in the first issue of this journal, to interrogate the GPPs report and offer an examination that articulates its central tensions in more detail. It does this not to *resolve* the tensions—this should be the task of each university on its own terms—but to provide fuel for each institution’s debate about the nature of English language development in the institution’s own context and the ways in which it can be properly supported. Secondly, it draws on literature on the first year experience to suggest ways of implementing the GPPs that are consistent with transition pedagogy.

The GPPs: Who is being spoken about?

The first layer of tension in the GPPs document, as Murray (2010) rightly pointed out, concerns the group of students who are the focus of concern. Although the title of the document, interpenetrated with the voices of Birrell, Bretag and others like them, focuses on the English language needs of “international students,” the document also refers to other groups of students, such as “students whose first language is not English” (p. 2) and “international students with English as an additional language” (p. 2). To make sense of these subtle inconsistencies, Murray differentiates between English speaking background (ESB) and non-English speaking background (NESB) students, suggesting that one group (NESB) is more likely than the other to be in need of English language proficiency development. He does acknowledge, however, that while ESB students are “by definition, fully proficient in English,” some may speak “dialectal forms not in keeping with academic and professional standards and expectations” and should therefore have access to types of support often considered relevant only for NESB students (p. 61).

Murray’s discussion of the complexities involved in ESB/NESB or international/domestic distinctions, while useful, does not quite go far enough. As Chanock and Cargill (2003) and Wilson (2003) have discussed, these target groups are by no means distinct. International students are drawn from hundreds of different language groups and educational experiences. Many speak English as a first language, or have attended international schools where English was the medium of communication, although they may not hail from “inner circle” English speaking

countries (Crystal, 1997). Students from Nigeria or India, for example, may be unaware of the differences between standard English and the regional varieties of English with which they are familiar. Some international students have had thorough training in academic essay writing in the English speaking tradition, perhaps through English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses in Australia or elsewhere, and may have advantages over their local counterparts when it comes to writing in this genre. Furthermore, the multiple pathways by which international students can be admitted to universities add another layer of complexity to their linguistic preparedness. These pathways include EAP courses, foundation programs, Australian secondary school graduation, articulation from Technical and Further Education or from English-medium courses overseas. The variability of language exposure and training that students have received is vast.

Nor are domestic students any more homogenous in terms of linguistic capital. Even students from an archetypal monolingual English speaking background have had different language experiences. Some, as Murray does admit, speak “dialects” or non-standard forms of English at home and may have had little experience of formal or academic varieties of English. Others have had extensive training in formal English and arrive at university confident that they know how to write an essay, perhaps not realising how the genres of tertiary education differ in subtle ways from the high school genres to which they are accustomed. Domestic students also include the many NESB students who may, at one extreme, have been in Australia all their lives, attended privileged schools and enjoyed a rich language environment in both their first and second languages. At the other extreme are domestic NESB

students who have arrived in Australia later in their lives, perhaps as adults, and have had little exposure to written, let alone academic, English. Such students include refugees who may have had patchy access to school learning and are still struggling to adapt to the Australian situation.

The issue is further complicated by the so-called “massification” of higher education which is widening even more the spectrum of linguistic capital of students entering Australian tertiary institutions. Following the lead of other western countries, Australia is urging wider access to tertiary study, and in response to recommendations in the Bradley Report (Bradley, Noonan, Nugent & Scales, 2008), universities will be working to attract greater numbers of students from low socio-economic status and non-traditional backgrounds: a target of 40% participation has been set (Bradley et al., 2008). Indeed, the GPPs report recognises this context, making reference to the effect of “widening participation” (AUQA, 2009, p. 2) on students’ language proficiency. In fact, despite the title of the document, only two of the 10 principles themselves refer specifically to “international students.” In its second paragraph, the report actually suggests that the GPPs would benefit “all post-secondary students” (p. 1), not only international university students, and nearly all the examples of good practice explicitly or implicitly target both domestic and international, ESB and NESB students. Emanating from language professionals within the universities, this perspective represents a counter-voice to Birrell’s: a voice which is intimately aware of the actual diversity of the student body.

It is clear then that universities must avoid taking the GPPs on face value as applying only to “international students” or even

students who are not native speakers of English. The increasing diversity of the student population—and each university’s unique student profile—must be carefully considered before deciding which particular groups of students will be embraced by new policies or strategies developed in response to this report, or whether such policies should, in fact, relate to *all* students.

The GPPs: What is being spoken about?

A second layer of tension within the GPPs, and one also identified by Murray (2010), is between its conflicting understandings (both explicit and implicit) of English language proficiency. The term English language “proficiency” in itself suggests a reductionist view of students’ language resources as quantifiable and measurable. As with the term “competence”—which the GPPs identify as synonymous with proficiency (AUQA, 2009, p. 2)—there is a suggestion that students are either proficient or they are not; they are competent or they are not. This static, reified view of language is echoed in the language “deficit” view implied in Principle 7 which uses the pathological analogy that students’ English language needs should be “diagnosed.” It leads to a position which would identify some students as “literacy-needy” (Devereux & Wilson, 2008, p125), and stream them into some kind of remedial support. Such a view suggests that English language proficiency can be easily defined and that there is a threshold level at which students can be clearly identified as being proficient or not.

At the same time, a more nuanced view of language “development” permeates the document, initially via the explicit definition of English language proficiency as “the ability of students to use the English

language to make and communicate meaning in spoken and written contexts while completing their university studies" (AUQA, 2009, p. 1). This definition locates English language proficiency within a communicative paradigm, which has underpinned the teaching of English for Academic Purposes since the 1980s when Canale and Swain's (1980) seminal paper on communicative competence was published. According to this view, it is not enough to know *about* language—to possess an arsenal of grammatical structures and vocabulary as it were. And hence, the GPPs report explicitly goes on to reject "a narrow focus on language as a formal system concerned only with the correct use of grammar and sentence structure" (AUQA, 2009, pp. 1-2). Instead, students need the ability to *use* language to make meaning in particular contexts: the examples given are "writing an academic paper" or "delivering a speech to a professional audience" (p. 1).

In addition to these competing views of English language proficiency (one of a reified threshold language proficiency and the other of language resources as communicative and developmental), further complications can be identified. First, the examples of language use "in context," such as "writing an academic paper," are actually quite de-contextualised in that they imply that these academic activities are the same no matter what the disciplinary context. This shows a generic view of language proficiency—a view common in the practice of EAP courses for international students. Later, however, the document refers to the need for language development to be embedded within the disciplines themselves, demonstrating a rather different understanding of language as highly context-specific, and hinting at the need for students to develop new identities as critical speakers within their

disciplinary contexts. Second, the definition explicitly refers to the English language proficiency required "while completing" university study (AUQA, 2009, p. 1), but the document promptly goes on to discuss "the role of English language ability in employment outcomes and the role of international graduates in meeting skill shortages in the Australian workforce" (p. 2). In other words, the contexts in which students are required to be "proficient," however that may be defined, remain unclear.

Murray (2010) interprets these apparent inconsistencies in the definitions of English language proficiency by identifying three implied constructs, or a "tripartite division of competencies": first, "English language proficiency" which would include generic skills and abilities that are a precursor for contextualised communication (p. 58); second, "academic literacy" which represents the discipline-specific conventions of academic "tribes" (Becher, 1989), and third, "professional communication skills" germane to contexts beyond the university, but which are increasingly demanded within the university context (Dovey, 2006). His view could be represented as in Figure 1. Murray (2010) suggests that English language proficiency is a platform for further language development, representing "an investment in language that can be 'cashed in' in *any* potential context of use" (p. 58). This vertical conception of language development suggests that there exists a threshold level which students must traverse in order to participate in academic or professional literacies.

Approaching the problem from an ESB perspective, Northedge (2003) and Macken-Horarik, Devereux, Trimmingham-Jack and Wilson (2006) also identify three literacy domains required at university,

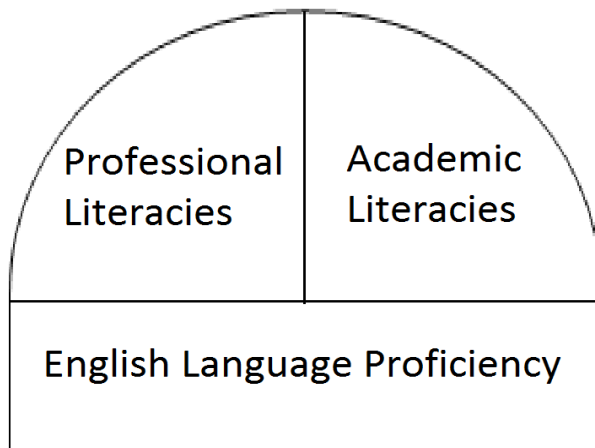


Figure 1 English language proficiency as a precursor for contextualised use

though they differ slightly from Murray's: the academic, the professional and the “everyday” (see Figure 2). For Macken-Horarik et al., each of these literacies represents a raft of cultural resources which students need to develop to be able to exert their voices within particular discourse communities.

Such “vertical” perspectives on students’ language development imply a threshold level of attainment (either in “English language proficiency” or in “everyday literacy”), which raises the question of university entry requirements. It would seem logical to assume that the greater a student’s language proficiency on any given entry test, the greater the likelihood of success at university. However, predictive validity studies of English language tests such as IELTS and Teaching of English as a Foreign Language have not been conclusive in this regard (Cotton & Conrow, 1998; Feast, 2002; Kerstjens & Nery, 2000). In fact, the only sub-skill which has been shown to correlate with

university success is reading (Kerstjens & Nery). Entry scores alone do not guarantee success, which suggests that vertical conceptions of language development do not necessarily explain students’ language development requirements at a university level.

While university entry standards are a key concern of voices such as Birrell’s, the GPPs report remains fairly circumspect on this issue. Acknowledgement of “entry requirements” in the discussion is made only in subordinate clauses, with the main emphasis being on the development of students’ language resources. For example, it states: “[w]hile attending to university entry requirements, the Steering Committee has emphasised the development of English language proficiency throughout students’ studies” (AUQA, 2009, p. 2). The first principle to address entry requirements (Principle 1) does so obliquely, stating that “Universities are responsible for ensuring that their students are sufficiently competent in the

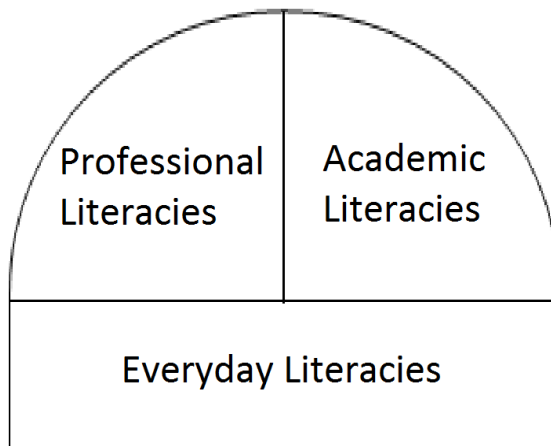


Figure 2 A model of tertiary literacies (Source: Macken-Horarik et al., 2006)

English language to participate effectively in their university studies” (p. 4). It is debateable whether this demands firm admission standards pre-commencement, or rather, as the discussion section of the document suggests, the close monitoring through the entirety of a student’s degree program of their ongoing capacity to meet increasingly challenging language demands. The second principle to address entry requirements (Principle 4) is again oriented towards language development: “Universities ensure that the English language entry pathways they approve for the admission of students enable these students to participate effectively in their studies” (p. 4). Reference to “pathways” and processes of “enabling” suggest that language should be viewed developmentally rather than simply measured for the purpose of judgement at a specific point in time.

The implication that can be drawn from the GPPs, therefore, is that while universities certainly need to screen students’ English

language communication skills before accepting them into academic study, university entry pathways are now so complex that the concept of water-tight gate-keeping mechanisms is unrealistic. Entry levels are a starting point for development rather than an end-point in themselves, and the English language capacities of students from each entry pathway need to be closely monitored and developed to ensure that the pathways are indeed “enabling” (rather than “promising”) success.

The GPPs: Aligning English language development with transition pedagogy

This brings us to a third layer of tension—perhaps the most difficult—within the GPPs report: the conflicting discourses of inclusion and exclusion that speak to us through its pages. In part, this reflects the tension between those who view language as developmental and socially-situated and

those who view language as a quantifiable commodity or product that either you have, or you do not have. But it also emerges from a broader tension between contemporary indicators of quality in the sector: on the one hand, universities remain influenced by research-oriented drivers which prompt institutions to attract high-performing students and focus on “standards”; on the other hand, those same institutions are asked to be inclusive and to increase participation of a greater proportion of the population. Viewed cynically, the tensions in the report seem to reflect an underlying uncertainty about whether the students coming through our doors are “good enough” to fulfil the complex array of hopes the institution has for them.

One part of the strategy for addressing language proficiency is, for an increasing number of universities, to introduce post-entry English language assessments (PELAs) which are often used to diagnose students’ proficiency levels in order to recommend an appropriate level of support or remedial attention. It is useful to consider these from a student perspective: having been offered a place at university, students are surely not unreasonable for assuming that the university deems them to have the capacity to succeed. To then be asked upon entry for further evidence of proficiency and potentially identified as somehow deficient seems to send a mixed message. No doubt, PELAs are useful for helping staff identify the “status” of their students’ English language abilities, but as Thomas (2002) points out, such “methods of teaching, learning and assessment provide sites for interactions between staff, students and their peers, and with institutional structures, and thus have a central role in both changing and reproducing social and cultural inequalities” (p. 433). So if PELAs

are considered part of the strategy for English language development, the increasing diversity of the student population demands that they be carefully framed and implemented as part of a whole-of-university transition initiative that encourages inclusive practices, rather than models in which difference is “problematized” (Thomas, 2002, p. 439).

The same considerations must be made with regard to the types of support recommended to students identified as “literacy-needy” (Devereux & Wilson, 2008, p125). Regardless of the method of “diagnosis,” the GPPs state that in good practice models, “development of English language proficiency is integrated with curriculum design, assessment practices and course delivery through a variety of methods” (AUQA, 2009, p. 4). When, in conjunction with this, English language proficiency is defined as the ability to use English in a range of *contexts*—as it is in the GPPs document—then English language proficiency development should be construed as a whole-of-university strategy that is fully-contextualised within discipline-based instruction and delivered to all students: as Kift (2008) asserts should be the case for the First Year Experience, English language proficiency should be “everybody’s business.”

For this reason we argue that Murray’s (2010) “tripartite division of competencies” (p. 57) discussed above suggests an approach to English language proficiency that is inconsistent with the GPPs and with transition pedagogy. He suggests that because *all* students are likely to need development in the areas of academic and professional literacies, it is appropriate to embed these aspects in particular into the curriculum. But for those students, ESB or NESB, who are found to have “inadequate levels of

proficiency,” the appropriate response is “a credit-bearing course, and/or ... extra-curricula interventions typically offered by Learning and Teaching units and comprising consultations, workshops and online materials” (p. 61), which most universities have in place already. By dividing English language proficiency into three competencies, Murray thereby allows for an essentially remedial approach to language development that sits *outside* the context of the disciplines and is therefore inadequate on its own to address English language proficiency as it is defined by the GPPs. While the courses and support staff mentioned by Murray are invaluable for providing the explicit scaffolding in English language development that many students need at a university level, Murray’s approach is in danger of advocating business as usual. As he states from the outset, part of the current problem is that “lecturers can feel awkward and confounded by students who struggle with the language, sometimes opting to ignore

them and/or simply directing them to learning advisers in the hope that they will be able to sort them out” (p. 56). It is unclear how Murray’s article goes on to advocate an alternative to this.

To better align approaches to the GPPs with transition pedagogy, we propose that a useful way to re-conceptualise the “English language proficiency” issue is to view the vertical model critiqued above as a de-contextualised one, in which English language is envisaged in a way that removes it from any real-life context of usage. Certainly, basic grammar and vocabulary can be developed that way up to a point, but the development of context-specific literacies requires extended engagement with and scaffolded development in those contexts.

So, reconceptualising Figures 1 and 2, we can see the three domains of literacy as intersecting (Figure 3). All three domains represent “English language,” so all share some common elements. However, each of

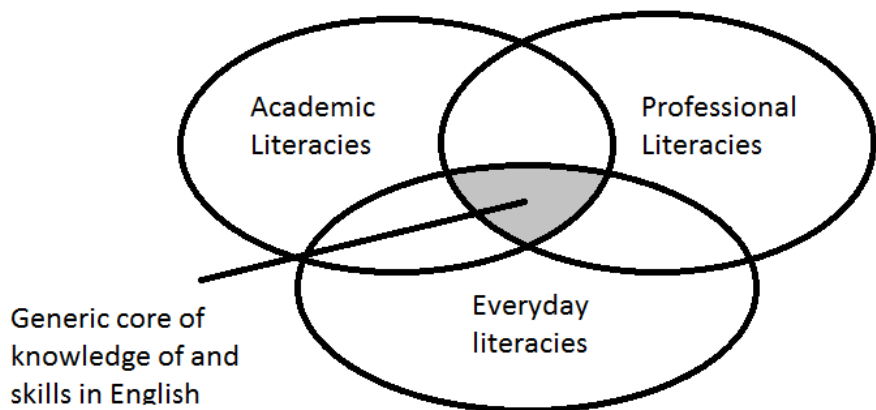


Figure 3 A model of tertiary literacies in three domains of learning in the university teacher training context (adapted from Macken-Horarik et al., 2006)

them—including everyday literacies—has its own grammars, lexicons and genres. From this perspective, students’ language resources develop not vertically as they progress through their studies but, rather, grow outwards from a grammatical core into all domains simultaneously, becoming constantly richer, more diverse, and more refined.

This helps to explain why international or NESB students—while “proficient” in the grammatical core—might require more extensive scaffolding at university: they are simultaneously grappling with language development in three domains. It also illustrates why further de-contextualised grammatical instruction up to a higher level of “proficiency” will make little difference to their transition to university—at a certain point, further development is impossible without immersion in the language domain and supported development within the domain of language use: the discipline.

Conclusion

The tensions in the DEEWR GPPs reflect a number of crucial issues in the landscape of contemporary higher education in Australia, and therefore make for a rich document generating fruitful discussion and activity in the sector. The tensions recognise the increasingly diverse and complex nature of our student body and, in the context of the Bradley Report (Bradley et al., 2008), the increasing massification of higher education. For universities, this means practices must also recognise this diversity; just like our students, language is infinitely complex and there is no one-size fits all solution. In developing policies and strategies to implement the GPPs, the diversity and differences in students’ academic and linguistic capital should be normalised as part of the contemporary

environment. Universities should avoid what Kift (2009) might call “deficit approaches that seek to blame students for any ‘preparedness shortfalls’” (p. 15). Others in the transition literature agree with Kift, emphasising in particular the need for students to feel a sense of belonging in their new institution (Krause, 2005; Krause & Coates, 2008; Thomas 2002; Wilcox, Winn & Fyvie-Gauld, 2005). Lea and Street’s (1998) framework for an academic literacies approach remains useful here for conceptualising how this kind of language development can be supported. Authors such as Thompson and Pennycook (2008) argue that this approach gives students the ability to understand and participate in the discourses of academia, which are a form of powerful social capital.

To sum up, we interpret the GPPs to mean four key things:

1. that all students, not just international students, need to develop their language resources for university study and for professional practice;
2. that threshold levels have limited predictive validity, and are not as important as developmental support;
3. that an inclusive approach is needed and therefore, Faculty staff will need to take more responsibility for language development, and
4. that support of Faculty staff, through adequate resourcing and partnerships with language and learning specialists, is essential.

When viewed cynically, the GPPs leave universities to do a lot of work on interpreting the principles and discussing their position on the various tensions

contained within. Without careful thought, there is a danger that universities will produce policies which superficially align with the GPPs, but do not provide sufficient resourcing to undertake the staff development that is crucial to the success of English language development. When viewed more positively, however, the GPPs report will stimulate universities to re-evaluate their language policies, and the ambiguity in the language of the GPPs will allow room for universities to develop inclusive, needs-based, flexible and local language policies and development strategies.

References

- Australian Universities Quality Agency. (2009). *Good Practice Principles for English language proficiency for international students in Australian universities*. Report to the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. Canberra, Australia: Commonwealth of Australia.
- Becher, T. (1989). *Academic tribes and territories*. Milton Keynes, UK: Open University Press.
- Birrell, B. (2006). Implications of low English standards among overseas students at Australian universities. *People and Place*, 14(4), 53-64.
- Birrell, B. & Healy, G. (2008). How are skilled migrants doing? *People and Place*, 16(1), Supplement, 1-19.
- Bradley, D., Noonan, P., Nugent, H. & Scales, B. (2008). *Review of Australian Higher Education. Final report*. Canberra, Australia: Commonwealth of Australia. Available at <http://www.deewr.gov.au/HigherEducation/Review/Pages/ReviewofAustralianHigherEducationFinalReport.aspx>
- Bretag, T. (2007). The emperor's new clothes: Yes, there is a link between English language competence and academic standards. *People and Place*, 15(1), 13-21.
- Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics*, 1(1), 1-47.
- Chanock, K. & Cargill, M. (2003). Who are Australian non-english speaking background (ANESB) students and how do they differ from other students? In A. Bartlett & K. Chanock (Eds.), *The missing part of the student profile jigsaw: Academic skills advising for Australian tertiary students from non-English speaking backgrounds* (pp. 11-22). Canberra: Academic Skills and Learning Centre, Australian National University.
- Cotton, F. & Cronow, F. (1995). An investigation of the predictive validity of IELTS amongst a sample of international students at the University of Tasmania. *IELTS Research, Volume 1*. Sydney, Australia: ELICOS Association.
- Crystal, D. (1997). *English as a global language*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Devereux, L. & Wilson, K. (2008). Scaffolding literacies across the Bachelor of Education program: An argument for a course-wide approach. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 36(2), 121-134.
- Dovey, T. (2006). What purposes, specifically? Rethinking purposes and specificity in the context of the "new vocationalism." *English for Specific Purposes*, 25(4), 387-402.
- Feast, V. (2002). The impact of IELTS scores on performance at university. *International Education Journal*, 3(4), 70-85.
- Kerstjens, M. & Nery, C. (2000). *Predictive validity in the IELTS test: A study of the relationship between IELTS scores and students' subsequent academic performance*. Canberra, Australia: IELTS Australia.
- Kift, S. (2008, June). *The next, great first year challenge: Sustaining, coordinating and embedding coherent institution-wide approaches to enact the FYE as "everybody's business"*. In Proceedings 11th International Pacific Rim First Year in Higher Education Conference, "An Apple for the Learner: Celebrating the First Year Experience," Hobart, Australia.

English language perplexity: Articulating the tensions in the DEEWR "Good Practice Principles"

- Kift, S. (2009). *Articulating a transition pedagogy to scaffold and to enhance the first year student learning experience in Australian higher education: Final Report for ALTC Senior Fellowship Program*. Available at <http://www.altc.edu.au/resource-first-year-learning-experience-kift-2009>
- Krause, K. (2005, November). *Understanding and promoting student engagement in university learning communities*. Keynote address presented as "Engaging students in learning.: Victoria University Annual Learning Matters Symposium. Victoria University, Australia.
- Krause, K., & Coates, H. (2008). Students' engagement in first-year university. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 33(5), 493-505.
- Lea, M. R., & Street, B. V. (1998). Student writing in higher education: An academic literacies approach. *Studies in Higher Education*, 23(2). 182-189.
- Macken-Horarik, M., Devereux, L., Trimmingham-Jack, C. & Wilson, K. (2006). Negotiating the territory of tertiary literacies: A case study of teacher education. *Linguistics and Education*, 17(3), 240-257.
- Murray, N. L. (2010). Conceptualising the English language needs of first year university students. *The International Journal of the First Year in Higher Education*, 1(1), 55-64.
- Northedge, A. (2003). Enabling participation in academic discourse. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 8(2), 169-180.
- Thomas, L. (2002). Student retention in higher education: the role of institutional habitus. *Journal of Educational Policy*, 17(4), 423-442.
- Thompson, C. & Pennycook, A. (2008). Intertextuality in the transcultural contact zone. In R. M. Howard & A. E. Robillard (Eds.), *Pluralizing plagiarism: Identities, contexts, pedagogies* (pp. 124-139). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Wilcox, P., Winn, S. & Fyvie-Gauld, M. (2005). "It was nothing to do with the University, it was just the people": The role of social support in the first-year experience of higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 30(6), 707-722.
- Wilson, K. (2003). Assisting ANESB students to acquire academic language skills. In A. Bartlett & K. Chanock (Eds.), *The missing part of the student profile jigsaw: Academic skills advising for Australian students from non-English speaking backgrounds* (pp. 23-42). Canberra: Academic Skills and Learning Centre, Australian National University.