13 Learning Specialists Working with Faculty to Embed Development of Academic Literacies in Disciplinary Subjects

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Learning Advisers broadly agree that academic literacies should be taught within discipline courses. Generic instruction is of limited help with varied discourses reflecting the different epistemologies, identities, and politics of academic communities of practice. However, discipline faculty are often reluctant to devote time to skills, or resentful of managerial pressures to do so; and they may be uncertain how to explicate their discourses to students. This chapter reflects on Australian Learning Advisers' efforts to collaborate with faculty over 20 years, to embed development of academic literacies in their subjects. It highlights factors that have encouraged or inhibited this, including changing demands from government and the community; institutional will and individual interest; diminishing resources for teaching; and the trend toward online delivery.

Les spécialistes de Langage Académique et Apprentissage (ALL, acronyme de Academic Language and Learning) des universités australiennes et britanniques considèrent qu'il convient d'enseigner les littératies académie dans le cadre des disciplines car l'étude de discours académiques génériques, hors de leur épistémologie et des identités culturelles propres aux communautés académiques, serait de peu de profit. Cependant, même si les spécialistes disciplinaires ont besoin des spécialistes du langage pour former leurs étudiants à l'écriture académique et même pour comprendre comment les épistémologies disciplinaires formatent les textes, la collaboration ne va pas de soi car certains spécialistes disciplinaires craignent que les questions de contenu pâtissent de l'interven-

tion de spécialistes du langage. Cet article traite des efforts des formateurs australiens pour collaborer avec des enseignants au cours des deux dernières décennies afin de les amener à intégrer dans leurs thématiques le développement des littératies académiques. Il met en évidence les facteurs qui ont favorisé ou contrarié cet effort, notamment l'évolution des demandes adressées aux universités de la part du gouvernement et de la communauté ; la volonté institutionnelle et l'intérêt individuel ; la diminution des ressources accordées à l'enseignement et la tendance à la formation en ligne.

1. Introduction

In Australian universities, there is no general education requirement, and the writing that students do is all for their discipline courses. Unlike the North American context from which much of the theorizing on WAC, CAC, and WID has emanated (see, e.g., Russell, 2001; Russell et al, 2009), there has never been a need in Australia to introduce writing into the disciplines; it is a substantial, and often the only, mode of assessing discipline knowledge. What *is* needed, however, is explicit attention to what writing does—where (in the texts), how (in the language), and why (in the activity systems within which it is located) (see, e.g., Paretti, 2011; Russell, 2001: 281). This kind of attention is what I mean, in this chapter, when I refer to the development of academic writing—not just that students write, but that they are invited to notice how the genres they are reading and writing in their disciplines work. This is not the province of English lecturers, for students do not study composition. Nor do we have any equivalent of WAC or WID programs; we have Academic Developers (a career rather than a part-time responsibility of discipline lecturers as in North America), but these are specialists in curriculum and pedagogy, not in writing. In our context, the people responsible for helping students to develop their academic writing—the position from which I speak—are career professionals who come into the field of Academic Language and Learning (ALL) from a wide range of discipline backgrounds, usually with a degree or other qualification in Applied Linguistics as well, for many of our students come from language backgrounds other than English. This work emerged in Australia, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, from Counselling services which were responsible for "study skills" as well as for students' emotional well-being. These functions soon diverged, and from the 1980s on, ALL developed into a professional community with a national conference, an Association, a journal, and an identity quite distinct from that of Academic

Developers. Apart from (but related to) a gap in salary and status, the salient differences are that ALL practitioners (or "Learning Advisers") work largely with students, and that their core expertise is in language and discourse, while Academic Developers work with faculty and their expertise is in learning theory. Elsewhere, I have traced the divergence of these roles and the ways in which that separation has worked to distance Learning Advisers from discipline faculty (Chanock, 2011). It has not, however, stopped Learning Advisers from seeking to collaborate with faculty. Their job classifications and their locations vary—in academic divisions, or student services, or the library—so that some are more likely than others to interact with lecturers in the disciplines. But whatever their location, most of them believe that their work is most effective if they can collaborate with discipline lecturers to integrate the development of academic writing into their course curricula, and to have them assume, or share with Learning Advisers, the responsibility for teaching it. This chapter looks at the reasons for this approach, drawing on literature from Australia as well as from other regions where similar experience has given rise to congruent approaches (such as the UK, New Zealand, and South Africa); and at what hinders or helps in achieving it.

2. Academic Literacies Are Discipline Literacies

There are both practical and intellectual reasons for integrating writing development. Learning Advisers can reach more students if they do not have to rely on students seeking them out for consultations or workshops, which many are reluctant to do because they are embarrassed or they do not have the time. More important is that students are more motivated to work on their writing if it is integral to achieving in their disciplines (e.g., Baik & Greig, 2009). Durkin and Main (2002), for example, have documented a comparison between a program of generic study skills workshops that attracted not a single student; a peer mentoring program based on work for the disciplines that attracted 80% of the student cohort; and discipline-based workshops that 87% of the cohort chose to attend. However, it is not just convenient to teach academic literacies in the context of the disciplines; it is essential because they are *the literacies of* the disciplines (for discussions of this in Australia and the UK, see, e.g., Baik & Greig, 2009; Gibbs, 2009; Gimenez, 2011; Hyland, 2000; Jones, 2009a and 2009b; Lea & Street, 1998; Mitchell, 2010; Monroe, 2003; Skillen, 2006; Star & Hammer, 2008; Wingate, 2006, 2007; Wingate, Andon & Cogo, 2011). As Paretti (2013: 96), in the US, puts it, "Learning the literacy practices of a discipline involves not simply mastering the mechanics of language (e.g. vocabulary, syntax), but also understanding

the social practices of the discipline, including what constitutes knowledge, how it is created, and how meaning is socially constructed." Generic versions of "academic discourse" taught outside the disciplines are of limited help to students faced with varied discourses that reflect the different epistemologies, identities, and politics of academic communities of practice, much of which goes so deep that it is rarely made explicit to students (Baik & Greig, 2009; Bazerman, 1981; Durkin & Main, 2002; Jones, 2009a and 2009b; Russell 2001: 287). Indeed, while discipline scholars are "native speakers" of their discourses, they may need help from language specialists to make these visible to their students (Elton, 2010; see also Jacobs, 2005; Wingate, Andon, & Cogo, 2011).

For example, scientists have learned to avoid first person pronouns and to use passive verbs (Halliday, 1989), and to present their findings separately from their discussion of what the findings mean. These practices are all linguistic reflections of the ethos of objectivity that goes very deep in their culture of enquiry (Gilbert & Mulkay, 1984). But they are unlikely to show their students how that ethos is reflected in their written discourse. Conversely, anthropologists may use first person pronouns and narrative text structure in accordance with the discipline's requirement that ethnographers must be self-reflexive about their subjectivity and their research practices; but they may not think of these discourse patterns as encoding ethical and epistemological values. For students who carry around the unexamined rule "never say 'I' in an essay" (Chanock, 1997), these language practices are simply contradictory and some conclude that (as they have put it to me), "my anthropology teacher is interested in my opinions, but my psychology teacher isn't."

Many scholars have remarked upon the tacit nature of disciplinary expertise, whereby "the writing, genres, and expectations of their disciplines have become second nature to faculty" (Russell, 2001: 287; cf. Elton, 2010). It was highlighted in Lea and Street's (1998) seminal article propounding an "academic literacies" approach to supporting students' learning about academic discourses, based on research which "provide[s] evidence for differences between staff and students' understanding of the writing process at levels of epistemology, authority and contestation over knowledge rather than at the level of technical skill, surface linguistic competence and cultural assimilation" (160). Not only were staff understandings different, but they were unhelpfully vague; for example, staff commonly considered "structure" and "argument" to be of key importance, and could recognize these when they saw them, but could not describe what they meant, and were not aware that their meaning varied across disciplines (Lea & Street, 1998: 162-163). Lea and Street give an example of a student whose ways of constructing structure and argument were the same in writing for history and for anthropology; but whereas these

ways were praised by his history lecturer, the anthropology lecturer called his essay "incoherent" and referred him to an "essay-writing clinic"! (1998: 166). Jacobs (2005) thinks it necessary, in view of such problems, to "problematize" the privileging of "insider" knowledge of disciplinary discourses: "Such 'insiders' or experts have a tacit knowledge and understanding of the workings of discourse within their disciplines which remains unarticulated as they model appropriate disciplinary practices and discourse patterns for their apprentice students in the classroom" (477).

3. Tacit Knowledge

Studies using a range of approaches have identified important differences among discipline and professional discourses that trouble attempts to generalize about academic discourse. For example, from interviews with staff and students at the University of Edinburgh, Anderson and Hounsell (2008: 466) identified "Ways of thinking and practicing in biology," which included "Achieving 'foundational' forms of understanding, including a sound grasp of key terms, concepts and principles, biological structures, functions and processes; and systems and levels of organization" which sharply contrasted with "Ways of thinking and practicing in history," such as "Appreciation of history as socially constructed and contested . . . .; Sensitivity to the 'strangeness of the past'; Ability to view events and issues from different perspectives; [and] Readiness to separate out one's own preconceptions."

While Anderson and Hounsell were investigating what members of particular disciplines believed about the nature of their discipline, Moore (2002) took the very different path of textual analysis to infer differences in three disciplines' views of where knowledge comes from, based upon their practices of attribution. He examined "metaphenomenal clauses" (where a participant states/ claims/ argues/ believes/ etc. a proposition or idea) in textbook chapters from sociology, economics, and physics, and discovered that economics—while ostensibly a social science—was more likely even than physics to treat knowledge as located in the world, rather than constructed in the mind of the observer(s) in an effort to understand what is out there (Moore, 2002: 356). While the chapter from sociology contained 225 metaphenomenal clauses, the chapter from physics had 51, and the one from economics, only 23. Of these, the clauses attributing ideas to "individual scholars" numbered, in sociology, 169; in physics, 17; and in economics, 4. "Schools of thought" were credited with ideas 36 times in sociology, 29 times in physics, but not once in economics. Finally, knowledge was attributed to "generic scholars" (for example, "sociologists/ a physicist/ many researchers/ we") 20 times in sociology, 15

times in physics, and 19 times in economics. Thus, in these textbook chapters, sociology represented knowledge as the product of interpretation of social phenomena by scholars, while physics and, to an even greater degree, economics, bypassed reflection on the status and provenance of knowledge, and presented what they saw as unmediated facts about the world.

Because of the non-trivial differences between disciplines revealed through close examination of their texts and discussions with their practitioners, learning advisers in Australia have advocated since the early 1980s for "integrating the understanding and teaching of writing within the context of the particular discipline" (Emerson & Clerehan, 2009:169). Despite this, not much collaboration has actually occurred until the last few years (for accounts of collaborations in Australia and elsewhere, see e.g. Al-Mahmoud & Gruba, 2007; Brackley & Palmer, 2002; Brooman-Jones, Cunningham, Hanna, & Wilson, 2011; Chanock, Horton, Reedman, & Stephenson, 2012; Evans, Tindale, Cable, & Mead, 2009; Harris & Ashton, 2011; Kazlaukas, Gimel, Thornton, Thomas, & Davis, 2007; Magyar, McAvoy, & Forstner, 2011; Mitchell & Evison, 2006; Murphy & Stewart, 2002; Purser, Skillen, Deane, Donohue, & Peake, 2008; Thies, 2012; Wingate, Andon, & Cogo, 2011; Yucel et al., 2009). To understand why integration developed sluggishly in the decades since 1980, but seems to be gaining traction now, we need to look at the range of factors that have encouraged or inhibited this effort, including the changing demands upon universities from government and the community; institutional will and individual interest; diminishing resources for teaching; and the trend toward online delivery.

4. Obstacles to Collaboration

For a long time, the teaching of academic writing in Australia has been troubled by the same issues of status that have hampered its development elsewhere. Universities considered academic literacy a basic skill and not their responsibility to teach, so the learning advisors charged with this remedial work occupied an often marginal status, and struggled to establish a developmental framework for the teaching and learning of academic writing (Huijser, Kimmins & Gallagher, 2008; Stevenson & Kokkin, 2007). Apart from various limited initiatives documented in Chanock and Burley (1995), rare systemic efforts to establish an integrated approach were made at Murdoch University (Marshall, 1982); at the University of Wollongong (Skillen, Merten, Trivett, & Percy, 1998; Percy & Skillen, 2000), and at the University of Sydney, inspired by ideas from Systemic Functional Linguistics (Jones, Bonnano, & Scouller, 2001). These initiatives were not widely emulated, however, in the curricula

of other universities. Many lecturers thought of academic skills as separate from content knowledge; they did not know how to teach skills, and did not want to take time away from content. (It is possible, too, that early efforts on the part of ALL professionals to communicate with discipline lecturers were hampered by the specialized language of the theory on which many of them drew. Systemic Functional Linguistics, with its "participants" and "processes," "field, mode, and tenor," "nominalization," "congruence," and "grammatical metaphor," is useful for thinking about the workings of discourse, but not for discussing them with lecturers in the disciplines. For a fuller discussion, see Chanock 2011: A76-A78.)

5. Opportunities for Collaboration in the "Generic/ Graduate Attributes" Movement

When universities came round to encouraging collaboration between learning advisers and discipline lecturers, it was because of the pressures exerted from outside the universities to produce "useful" graduates. At the 2001 Conference of the Association for Academic Language and Learning, Janet Jones (2001) urged her audience to consider how the work of learning advisers would be affected by "a clear convergence of government and employment agendas . . . [promoting] a set of generic attributes deemed essential for successful employment" such as skills in problem solving, team work, and oral and written communication (Hager, Holland, & Becket, 2002; Purser et al., 2008; Skillen, 2006). Auditing of university curricula, assessment, and reporting was introduced to ensure that universities did not just claim to develop these skills, but incorporated them into their courses (de la Harpe & David, 2012).

This pressure on universities from government and employers to give more attention to students' development of "skills" or capabilities has created opportunities for learning advisers to approach discipline teachers who need to incorporate this focus into their subjects but may be uncertain how to do so, and reluctant to give it class time. Learning Advisers can meet with them at the planning stage of constructing their subjects, to suggest how they can use a focus on the discourses embodied in the subject's readings to help their students understand the content more readily. If students are shown explicitly how the argument in an assigned article proceeds via conventional "moves" of contextualizing the topic, problematizing existing scholarship, and establishing a space for new research and/or interpretation, they can learn to recognize what the reading *does* as well as what it *says*; and they can add similar ways of thinking and writing to their repertoires, as their lecturers hope that they will (see Appendix One). This focus on discourse patterns takes only a

few minutes, and doubles rather than diminishes the attention given to the subject's texts. Learning advisers can provide strategies for reading, frames for writing, and examples from subject texts by both scholars and students annotated to highlight salient features of the textual practices they embody (see Appendix Two). Such collaborations may take all sorts of forms, from contributing materials and workshops to the subject, to co-teaching with the discipline lecturers (e.g., Chanock, 2013; Mort & Drury, 2012; Wingate, 2011; Wingate & Dreiss, 2009). The great variety of initiatives discussed in the literature has not settled into anything that could be called a "model," and seems unlikely to do so, as the forms they take depend upon institutional resources and structures, and on rapidly changing technological affordances, as much as on policy. We have accounts of successful systemic, institutionally-sponsored approaches, in which typically ALL staff invest considerable time in learning about the content students are studying (for an early, pioneering one, see Skillen et al., 1998; for more recent initiatives that fit within the framing of developing generic attributes, see Frohman, 2012; Thies et al., 2014). These are demanding of staff time, including, sometimes, the time of discipline staff. At the other end of the collaborative spectrum, we have online materials developed by ALL staff for the use of discipline subjects, which students can—but may not choose to—access (e.g., Chanock, 2013; Mort & Drury, 2012; Thies et al., 2014). If common lessons can be distilled from this varied literature, they are these: collaborations can be initiated with or without institutional sponsorship (for small-scale bottom-up examples, see Harris & Ashton, 2011, or Thies, 2012); and initiatives are likely to be more successful, the more closely ALL and discipline faculty are engaged in collaboration, and the more tightly integrated any learning materials are into the activities of learners within their subject curricula.

It is, of course, difficult to assess the impact of such approaches, with all the complex and interacting influences on students' learning, and without a control group for comparison. (For rare attempts to quantify effects, see Hunter and Tse [2013], who found an average improvement of 9.02 in students' marks on assignments for macroeconomics, following "assignment discussion sessions" [in contrast to an earlier, unassisted, cohorts' experience of receiving lower marks from one assignment to the next]; and Chanock, Horton, Reedman, & Stephenson [2012] below). Nonetheless, I think the ripple effect sometimes reported, by which discipline lecturers within an academic area increasingly seek input from ALL staff over time, is strongly suggestive of the efficacy of such initiatives. For example, Frohman (2012), who shifted her approach from generic teaching to offering Faculty-based support in a Faculty of Health, found that

> As the academic staff became more aware of my role and support I could offer, I was invited to become more involved. I was asked to review the clarity of assessment tasks and criteria sheets, develop workshop materials to scaffold academic literacies, and provide individual interventions for at-risk students. (A56)

Similarly, Harris and Ashton (2011) report that, when they moved from generic workshops to support for a Management subject in their university's Faculty of Business and Law,

> As working relationships with teaching staff developed, the [Learning Adviser's] opinions were sought on a range of issues including the appropriateness of assessment tasks and how best to scaffold them, as well as how to address language-specific problems and reduce plagiarism. The bottom-up approach . . . occurred naturally as academics sought assistance, listened to colleagues discussing the embedding project, and invited the LA into their classes. (A79).

However, while the "graduate attributes/skills" movement has created opportunities for collaboration with discipline faculty, it does not guarantee them. Faculty often resist the imposition of such requirements by institutional mandate, and do not implement them in their courses (de la Harpe & David, 2012; Green, Hammer, & Star, 2009; Jones, 2009a; Radloff et al., 2008). In a survey of 1064 academic staff across sixteen Australian universities, de la Harpe and David (2012) found considerable gaps between lecturers' belief in the importance of graduate attributes and their actual willingness to teach these. Star and Hammer (2008) have found that many lecturers believe "that they have been employed to teach 'content' rather than graduate skills" (246). Faculty interviewed by Jones (2009a) saw their institution's defined generic attributes as oversimplified and/or overly prescriptive, and as part of a managerialist agenda. "Because [skills] are not framed as part of the disciplinary content but are seen as extraneous they are resisted," says Jones, "despite the fact that higher order skills such as critical thinking, analysis and communication are an integral part of [the discipline]" (2009a: 181). It is not surprising, therefore, that one highly successful collaboration between ALL and discipline staff to teach communication skills in Accounting at Macquarie University (Evans et al., 2009) deliberately eschewed a top-down approach in favor of an "incremental and voluntary approach to change" (600).

If learning advisers wish to develop collaborations that faculty will "own"

with them, they cannot rely on central directives to make faculty cooperate. They must instead show them that they are familiar with their courses, understand the discourses of their disciplines *and find these interesting* (Chanock, 2007a and 2007b), and can show them something about their discourse that they find internally persuasive. Obviously, this requires a considerable investment of time and effort, but it is one that Learning Advisers are already making if they work with students as they draft their discipline assignments; and that work alerts Learning Advisers to the things students find puzzling, and the reasons for their puzzlement, which their lecturers may be glad to have explained. As Jacobs has put it, lecturers appreciate the help, in "unlocking" their tacit knowledge, of a partner from ALL who comes "with an understanding of the problems that marginalized 'non-mainstream' students face; as a novice to the discipline; yet as an equal who is able to question and interact with another colleague" (2005: 481).

6. My Experience of Collaborating with Faculty

My own experience in this role over the last quarter century reflects both the opportunities and the obstacles I have outlined here. One of my ways of learning about the courses my students take is to sit in on early lectures, and in the mid-1990s, I noticed that the lectures in a history subject were structured in the same way as the assigned readings, a structure of argument that was also expected in the students' written assignments (Chanock, 2007a). I approached the lecturer with this observation, wondering whether we could share it with his students, and he found it both novel and interesting. We then addressed it explicitly in subsequent lectures, and from this collaboration I went on to develop a kit that faculty across the humanities and social sciences could use to shed light on the purpose of each week's work in their subject (Chanock, 2004). They could show their students how the questions asked in the subject reflected the culture of enquiry in that discipline; how primary and secondary evidence are used; the structure of argument in discipline texts; practices of use and attribution of sources; and habits of critical thinking. With the backing of the Dean, all first year subject coordinators were asked to talk with me about how the activities in this kit might be suited to their subjects, and to use them as and how they were applicable. Thus, although the ideas came from outside the subjects, those to whom they made sense took ownership of them and used the kit for several years (Chanock, 2010). It required no apparatus for implementation, and cost nothing to teach.

This approach did not, however, survive a change of Dean, attrition of

discipline lecturers, and a new institutional vision promulgated by central management (Design for learning, 2009). The new broom swept clean, and a new approach, centrally mandated, required all core first year subjects to incorporate the university's designated "graduate capabilities." The subjects that I worked with responded by adding parallel tutorials, taught by casual staff, which focused on skills including the subject discourses. Although I designed these tutorials with a colleague, I did not teach them; nor did the subject coordinators unless they wanted to, and some coordinators were much more engaged in this program than others. The results were very good, especially in the subjects where coordinators had collaborated in the planning and teaching (and notably poorer where they had not). As we had no control group, we compared the cohort's results with those of the previous year. Although the current year had many more students with lower university entry scores, the fail rate remained steady overall, while the distribution of passing grades changed in ways that suggested the intervention had been effective. As and Bs rose in 14 out of the 19 groups taught (by up to 17% and 18% in subjects with the most engaged coordinators), while Ds and Fails dropped in 16 out of the 19 groups (by up to 24% and 19% in those subjects). Nonetheless, despite these gains, the program was not sustainable because of the logistical difficulties and high cost of doubling the subject's tutorials (Chanock, Horton, Reedman, & Stephenson, 2012).

The end of the program was not, however, the end of the collaborations that had developed, for, once again, there were lecturers for whom the explicit focus on subject discourses made sense, and who saw the value of integrating this somehow into their teaching. Some have asked me to join in the planning of their subjects; to contribute materials and workshops; and to advise on students' problems, and possible solutions, in a cycle of improvement to the design and teaching of their subject (Chanock, 2013). So, currently, we are in another phase of bottom-up, cost-free collaboration, and this time it has gained further impetus from cuts to staffing (which mean that tutorials have been halved, and something must be found for students to do independently in non-teaching weeks). It was also facilitated by the move to housing subjects online, on a Moodle Learning Management Site, so that I am able to provide activities and resources to students anywhere, any time (Chanock, 2013). I would suggest that bottom-up collaboration, although possibly more ephemeral than systemic programs (Thies, 2012), and certainly less well-resourced, is likely to be more effectively and enthusiastically implemented because it is intellectually persuasive and adapted to the needs that faculty and students themselves experience (e.g., Frohman, 2012; Harris & Ashton, 2011).

7. Current Dilemmas

At the same time, it is worth teasing out of this apparent success some issues that are, and will continue to be, problematic for ALL not only in my university but around Australia. The saying "Be careful what you wish for" comes to mind. Since the 1980s, ALL professionals have campaigned tirelessly both to professionalize their role and to raise its profile in their institutions. Since 1994 they have had a biennial national conference, which, along with the listserv "unilearn" to which colleagues at every university across Australia (and many in New Zealand) subscribed, created and consolidated a professional community. This, in turn, gave rise to a peak body, the Association for Academic Language and Learning (AALL), established in 2005 (http://www.aall.org.au/); its Executive was then able to represent the community's views and interests in national debates on higher education (see, e.g., http://www.aall.org.au/aall-media-contributions). AALL publishes a refereed *Journal of Academic Language and Learning* (http://www.aall.org.au/journal) and its website functions as a clearinghouse for members' publications in the field, including archived conference proceedings, key texts dealing with both theory and practice, and government-funded projects. The Association hosts a members' Forum and publishes a newsletter, and disperses grants to fund research, projects, and cross-institutional events for professional development. Looking further afield, AALL's website houses links to partner associations in the US, UK, Canada, Europe, and New Zealand. All of this is grounds for satisfaction, but not, unfortunately, for complacency. At the same time that the field has grown in numbers, activity, and professional identity, its members have not fared well in several institutions. Units have been restructured and reconstituted with fewer staff, or staff reclassified from "academic" to "general," that is, without support for research (http://www.aall.org.au/australian-all-centres). And, at a time when most Learning Advisers recognize integration and discipline specialization as best practice in their work, ALL units have been centralized into "hubs" under supervisors who are management rather than ALL professionals.

An obvious reason for the limited success of efforts to promote the role of ALL lies in the shrinking support from government for higher education and consequent frequent restructurings by institutions to make precarious budgets stretch further. While universities strive to minimize wastage by retaining students, it is difficult for ALL to demonstrate, still less to quantify, its contribution to retention as its influence on students' confidence, comprehension, motivation and success is only one strand in the students' experience, and the work with individuals that is most effective in retaining struggling

students has been widely curtailed because it is (ostensibly) expensive. Increasingly, it is delegated to peer mentors who are seen as more accessible, if less expert, and certainly cheaper than ALL professionals; the trend towards learning with peers, so long established in the US, has begun to take hold here, while ALL professionals are deployed "strategically" in the service of top-down, whole-of-university attempts to infuse reportable development of graduate attributes into discipline curricula. This "streamlining," centralization and standardization of ALL work is seen as likely to be more efficient than the strategy of diverse solutions to diverse problems that Learning Advisers have often found more efficient simply because it is more effective. In the process, they are distanced from their students, and often from staff as well if they come to regard Learning advisers as working in the service of unpopular, rhetoric-ridden institutional strategies perceived to be of dubious merit.

These changes present ALL professionals with various dilemmas. They are generally enthusiastic advocates of peer learning, and have sometimes been responsible for introducing and/or managing peer mentoring programs. They have also moved to adopt technologies and opportunities for creating learning experiences online. However, as trainers or as producers of online curricular or co-curricular materials, they tend to disappear from view, and this is a risk also in their collaborations with discipline faculty. Whereas my collaborations with discipline colleagues, described above, have been mutually rewarding, I am aware that our management's framing of them is in terms of "interventions" to fix "problem" students and then move on. The work is not envisaged as ongoing, organic development but rather as a mechanism for "quality assurance."

It is not clear what the solution to such dilemmas may be. It has always been the case that many managers have not understood ALL work in the sense that they are not attuned to the importance of expertise in language and discourse, but see what Learning Advisers do as "study skills." Learning Advisers have tried to explain their work both locally and nationally, but raising their professional profile does not seem to have protected their industrial underbelly. They could, but probably should not, conclude that it is the anomalous nature of their work that makes them vulnerable; it does, but at the same time, colleagues in the disciplines are also being shed by cash-strapped institutions, and this is not because Vice-Chancellors do not know what historians or anthropologists do, for example, but because they feel they cannot afford so many of these any more. ALL practitioners find themselves in a confusing situation of new opportunities that bring with them new risks to their work and to their role. However, where it is possible to work with

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Appendices

Appendix 1. An abstract from a journal article, annotated to show students the typical structure of "moves"

This comes from the first page of an article by Nel, E., Binns, T., and Motteux, N. (2001). Community-based development, non-governmental organizations and social capital in post-apartheid South Africa. *Geografiska Annaler Series B: Human Geography, 83*(1), 3-13. Like many articles, it has an "abstract" before the article begins, summarizing its purpose and content.

Abstract	"Moves"
Community-based development strategies are gaining in credibility and acceptance in development circles internationally and notably in post-apartheid South Africa. In parallel, the concept of social capital and the role of supportive non-governmental organizations are receiving attention as key catalytic elements in encouraging and assisting community-based initiatives. In this paper, a well-documented initiative, the Hertzog Agricultural Co-operative in Eastern Cape province, is re-examined after the passage of several years to assess the impact of social capital and the involvement of a particular non-governmental organization in ensuring the sustainability and economic survival of the project. While both elements have proved critical to the project's life-cycle, particularly in recent years, concerns over possible dependency and project sustainability exist.	Context of current practice Context of current theory Focus Question (how does a case reflect on key aspects of theory Answer

Appendix 2. Advice on reading a "policy brief," supplied by a Learning Adviser to a politics lecturer to post on his subject website introducing students to a genre they must write for assessment

A policy brief is different from an essay, in a number of ways. All of these stem from the difference in purpose: an essay aims to inform understanding, while a policy brief aims to inform action. In the table below, Kate Chanock (Student Learning) sets out key differences, with a few examples that you will see when you read the sample policy brief that follows.

	An essay	A policy brief	Examples in sample policy brief
Audience:	Does not assume that the reader shares the writer's knowledge of the topic (even when s/he does); people, events, and organisations must be introduced and their roles explained	Assumes that the reader is familiar with the background and the various parties involved, and that only the implications of events need to be explained	Hamas, Kadima, Likud, Netenyahu, Ikhwan Muslimin
Perspective:	Is objective and looks at the situation from all angles	Is biased in favor of, and focusses on, the interests of the writer's government ("we")	Focus on threats and opportunities (within constraints of international opinion and international law)
Structure:	Gives the writer's answer in the introduction; then unpacks into linked, fully developed paragraphs with reasons for that answer	Short, concise paragraphs under prescribed headings	Event; significance; analysis; conclusion with recommendations
Use of sources:	Discusses various scholars' ideas and how they relate to each other	Gives references to sources of information, but does not discuss the sources	footnotes
Language:	Academic vocabulary, some theoretical terms	Everyday language (but not informal)	"Gazan hospitals will not be able to cope"

[The example that followed was titled "Preliminary threat analysis: Israeli incursion into the Gaza Strip (Operation Cast Lead).]"