THE ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES ACADEMIC STAFF REQUIRE TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THEIR FIRST YEAR OF UNIVERSITY STUDY

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify effective teaching practices that will assist international students to achieve better learning outcomes while studying first year architecture at an Australian university. This study identified and described learning problems and sought to find solutions. In particular, it focussed on access to the language of instruction and learning practices presented in three subjects that all students undertake in a first year course of study in architecture.

This naturalist, qualitative case study was informed by studies relating to international students, cultural diversity and internationalism in higher education settings and the literature relating to issues of inclusive curriculum and principles in learning for higher education settings.

Research data was collected through interviews, observation of students and faculty staff in lectures and tutorials, the lecturers’ Quality of Teaching surveys, and the researcher’s survey of students. The analysis of the data was achieved by identifying and coding themes as they emerged in the study. The findings of this study led to recommendations relating to changes in teaching and learning practices. Finally, this study addressed questions relating to effective academic development strategies for lecturers and tutors.

There is a considerable body of research-based literature relating to social and academic needs of international students in Western universities. This research was intended to add to the literature from a teaching and learning perspective.
Declaration of Originality

This thesis does not contain material that has been accepted for any other degree in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by any other person, except where due references have been given in the text.

Signature...........................................................
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Chapter 1: Introduction

This study investigated the learning experiences of first year, international students within three subjects of an architectural course of study. The purpose was to provide direction for future teaching practices of lecturers and tutors, and to identify professional learning strategies which will assist the academic staff to develop a deeper understanding of the attitudes and practices they require for better learning outcomes for international students.

The focus of this research related to identifying teaching moments when all students had access to the learning intentions and processes during a lecture or tutorial, and when access was not evident. As a consequence, a key purpose of this study was to describe, in detail, the real world learning experiences of international students and situate these findings within the context of the lecturers’ and tutors’ learning intentions. Attention was drawn specifically to where there was a lack of congruence between the intended outcome and the actual outcome for international students. For the purpose of clarity, this lack of congruence is referred to as ‘learning problems’ in the analysis of the research.

In determining the learning problems of international students, this study sought to identify and describe assessment activities and practices which affected international students adversely, culturally-embedded attitudes and values in the curriculum, and teaching and learning practices which impacted on international students’ outcomes.

Further, this study sought to suggest solutions to learning issues. It framed the discussion and analysis of the research findings in a way that would identify and describe curriculum content that would address specific student needs, appropriate and specific teaching strategies for lecturers and tutors, as well as designs of academic development for lecturers and tutors relevant to diverse student populations in higher education settings.

Background to the study

In 2006, the Dean of an architecture faculty in a capital city in Australia, initiated an interest that a study be undertaken. Her reason lay in the academic results of the first year students
in the faculty which indicated to her that international students were over-represented in the group who either gained low scores or who failed to complete the first year of study. These results were not public knowledge and the researcher had a verbal description only of the results.

The researcher worked in a senior position as a director of professional development in a school setting, responsible for the development of teaching and learning skills for a large population of teachers in a K-12 school. She also held a teaching role in English as a Second Language in the Senior School, having completed a Masters Degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages in 1998. Additionally, she was qualified to teach English, History and Special Education and had taught in these areas for some years. Given the above, the Dean believed she was qualified to contribute positively to the tertiary field due to her familiarity with effective teaching and learning practices for international students within mainstream environments. This had been an important feature of the researcher’s work as a director of professional development in school settings.

Having established a commitment to carry out a study within the architecture department, three reports published in 2004 and 2005 were of particular interest to the researcher. They highlighted both local and national imperatives for universities (and in one report, the architecture department described in this study) to develop teaching and learning practices more attuned to the needs of students. In a government-funded national report, *The First Year Experience in Australian Universities: Findings from a Decade of National Studies* (Krause, Hartley, James & McInnis, 2005), the findings of significance in this report included the results that international students were less satisfied that their expectations had been met compared to local students. Only half of the first year students surveyed agreed that staff were usually available to discuss their work, and while similarities existed between the experiences of local first year students and international first year students, there was “strong evidence of demographic subgroup differences that warrants close monitoring and further investigation” (Krause *et al.*, 2005: v). Of particular interest in this report were the results that, in terms of comprehending and coping with course requirements, students enrolled in both Health and Architecture courses scored within the “lower mean score” on the
As the report emphasized, “comprehending and coping” describes more than achievement outcomes. It is about “keeping up with academic work demands, coping with the workload, comprehending material and adjusting to a university style of teaching” (Krause et al., 2005: 57).

The two subgroups identified as showing below average scores on the comprehension and coping scale were students from non-English speaking backgrounds and international students. Satisfaction with the quality of teaching and the overall course of study was less likely amongst full-fee paying overseas students and amongst students who spoke a language other than English at home (Krause et al., 2005: 65) but were enrolled as local students.

Other significant information in this report was that both NESB and international students reported less satisfaction with the quality of teaching received in Australian universities compared to local students. 30 per cent of NESB students respondents indicated that the quality of the teaching was not good (Krause et al., 2005: 75) and overall, 46 per cent of international students reported that the university had not lived up to their expectations, compared to 27 per cent of the local students (Krause et al., 2005: 76). Although the specific signs of academic stress were evident for NESB students generally, international students reported a significantly higher level of academic stress relating to comprehension of material, receiving lower grades and discomfort in class participation and workload (Krause et al., 2005: 76).

The national report also indicated that even though the overall trend of all students’ responses over the ten years of the study was towards more positive experiences regarding teaching and learning, the area of helpful feedback was regarded as an area of continuing concern. This was also associated with the students’ comments regarding unavailability of staff for further discussion regarding academic work. The broad perspectives of this national report of students’ experiences in first year university were echoed more dramatically in a report directly relating to the university described in this case study.

In a second report by the Faculty of Education in association with Asialink - Students from
Asia: Issues in Learning and Teaching, 2004, it was noted that in 2004, 40 per cent of students enrolled in architecture were born in Asia (Faculty of Education, 2004: 2). This was a significant percentage because at the time, the number of international students enrolled across the university was only 21 per cent. The projection at the time was that the overall number of international students enrolled at the university would reach 28 per cent by 2007 (Faculty of Education, 2004: 3). This meant that close to one half rather than one third of all students enrolled in the architecture course were international students.

This report identified the key issues relating to teaching and learning as language, teaching, learning, and integration. These themes were identified during a process of consultations with academic staff. Inadequate language proficiency was cited as the most critical issue relating to teaching and learning of Asian students (Faculty of Education, 2004: 3). With respect to teaching, the report relied on a 2002 finding that international students interviewed believed there were expectations with which they were unfamiliar. The issues related to learning were described as plagiarism, approaches to assessment, group/individual work and supervisor relationships (Faculty of Education, 2004: 4). Poor integration between local and international students was also a commonly-cited issue by academics at the university.

Importantly, the report’s findings identified that the most common approach to these issues at the university was to identify the students as the problem and, in that context, academics limited their responses to English language proficiency and learning skills training. This resulted in a focus on transition and remediation and distanced the academic from the problem (Faculty of Education, 2004: 4). Academics who took a broader stance sought to adapt to teaching and learning strategies that reflected the changed student cohort. According to the report, this group identified the teaching as the problem (Faculty of Education, 2004: 4). In these faculties, the focus was on the needs of students. As a result there was a sustained effort to adapt the curriculum and pedagogy to be more inclusive and tailored to meet learning needs.

The report recommended that all faculties undertake staff development on cross-cultural understanding and appropriate pedagogy. It was further recommended that students needed to be consulted “early and regularly” about difficulties encountered and strategies that might
assist them (Faculty of Education, 2004: 8). The report made specific reference to the need for faculties to consider these matters at the time of course design, and that descriptions of actions taken should be included in the Teaching and Learning Management Plans (Faculty of Education, 2004: 8). Such specific directions in this report were of interest to the researcher as the intended outcome of the study was to describe the international students’ experiences, and, importantly, describe the nature and application of academic development models appropriate for academics who sought to improve the educational outcomes of international students.

The third report of interest to the researcher was a review undertaken in 2004 specific to issues of design teaching in the university’s architecture faculty. This report was commissioned to review design teaching in the architecture programs in order to develop a set of recommendations and propose a strategic plan for their implementation. There were four specific tasks contained within the terms of reference, one of which was pedagogy. However, the lens applied to the subject of pedagogy, as outlined in the explanation of the terms of reference, described pedagogy as including hours, subject study points, management of sessional staff, content and differentiation between undergraduate degrees and masters coursework, standards and progress, but not, critically, teaching skills.

In terms of the issues faculty staff found pressing relating to international students, the report found that staff were unsure of the extent to which design curricula needed to adjust to respond to the large percentage of Asian students enrolled (Faculty report, 2004: 8). Student opinion was sought regarding issues in design teaching. It was evident that international students’ views were not sought as issues relating to international students were phrased from local students’ perspectives. In particular, the report noted that some resentment of international students was expressed by local students who felt they were expected to assume responsibility in tutorial situations because of language difficulties (Faculty report, 2004: 9) and a perception of two distinct tiers of students with little interconnection (Faculty report, 2004: 28). Local students appeared to believe that fee-paying students were admitted in inappropriate numbers. The resulting recommendations relating to international students’ learning related mostly to content, mentoring, increasing social interaction and the
establishment of overseas studios in Asia to “assist Asian students to recognise attempts to integrate Asian concerns into the teaching” (Faculty report, 2004: 29). A further recommendation suggested that on a rotating basis, staff members should be given “the responsibility as the liaison person and the organiser of events for international students” (Faculty report, 2004: 29).

With respect to pedagogy overall, the report recommended that more attention be given to methods of assessment and feedback and better “selection, briefing and monitoring of casual staff” (Faculty report, 2004: 25). Monthly meetings between student representatives and program coordinators were also seen as an action that would encourage better communication between students and staff.

The report on design teaching presented recommendations relating to structure, management and content differentiation between undergraduate and postgraduate courses. However, it was important to note that although the report made recommendations regarding the integration of international students, these recommendations did not relate to the adoption of improved teaching expertise. Additionally, the report presented the issues in such a manner to suggest that international students were considered “other”; that is, emphasis was placed on the problems created by the presence of international students. As such, an opportunity was missed to address the issues so clearly outlined in the national report of first year students’ experience, and the Education Faculty’s report on issues in learning and teaching for students from Asia.

The significance of the study

The request by the Dean of Architecture to undertake a study of the teaching and learning environment of first year international students, combined with the evidence of the three reports published in 2004 and 2005 which pointed to the inequities of learning experiences between local and international students, provided the researcher with an intriguing and important subject for a research study.

As the researcher began to read extensively, it became clear that a significant tension
Chapter 1: Introduction

existed in English-speaking tertiary settings nationally and internationally, between those who believed that international students’ English language competency was the central problem in achieving successful student outcomes and those who believed that university teaching was at the heart of the problem. A growing body of research had demonstrated that quality teaching represents the most significant effect size in student learning outcomes in K-12 school settings (Hattie, 2003; Mulford, 2006; Rowe, 2003; Scott & Durham, 2005). The researcher was interested in undertaking a research study that investigated the specific teaching practices occurring in a university setting which would not be considered “quality teaching” practice, and how such practices impacted on international students’ outcomes in particular. International students in their first year of study were often the most vulnerable cohort in university settings, and as such, issues of equity were of interest to the researcher. Additionally, evidence-based research was suggesting that excellent teaching practice for international students was beneficial for all students, and potentially, overall improvement in all students’ experiences was considered a desirable outcome for this study.

The researcher recognised the teaching and learning challenges faced by academics in university settings. A number of factors indicated that teaching and learning challenges for academics were increasingly complex. The growing diversity of the student population and increasingly institutional accountability for teaching and learning were contributing to a growing awareness that the scholarship of teaching and learning needed to be an integral part of academics’ work. The work of Ramsden (2003), Biggs (1993) and others established principles and practices of teaching in higher education settings. The growing international trend towards Certificates in Higher Education Teaching had established university-based centres for developing the teaching and learning skills of university academics. A particular emphasis of this study was to hopefully add to the resources available to lecturers and tutors and further their understandings and skills related to teaching international students through describing effective continuing academic development pathways.

**The setting of the study**

The setting of the case study was within an Australian, metropolitan faculty of architecture. The three subjects chosen for analysis were those that all the students studied in the first
year of a course in architecture: architectural history, building technologies and design. Both lectures and tutorial were observed as and where timetabled at the start of Semester 1.

The participants in the study

The participants in this study were three lecturers, 14 tutors, approximately 135 international students, and, in one form of data collection, the whole student cohort of 300 first year undergraduates. A detailed explanation of the participants is contained in the methodology chapter (Chapter 3).

The lecturers were experienced practitioners and academics in the field of architecture. One of the three lecturers had completed a postgraduate certificate in Higher Education teaching. All had a Western background. The tutors, some of whom had a non-Western background, were either practitioners of architecture working in private firms, or postgraduate students within the architecture department. The international students were a diverse group, but primarily they had lived and studied in cities across South-East and Eastern Asia. There was a significant number of Chinese-speaking students within the international student group. For entry to the course, all international students were required to achieve a score of at least 6.5 in the standard International English Language Test Score (IELTS). The majority of the local students had entered the course after completing the Victorian Certificate of Education. The majority of local students had achieved high results to gain entry to the course, although a small number of local fee-paying students had been accepted for enrolment without reaching the entry score required by non fee-paying students but their scores were still within a high achiever range.

An overview of the literature informing the study

The practices and beliefs enacted by lecturers and tutors in first year courses are critical to all students. While effective teaching and learning practices are highly desirable and a challenge in themselves in a university setting, there is a growing body of literature which suggests that the needs of international students may not be met solely by adopting a generalist approach to learning. In this study, therefore, the significant literature relevant to
the learning issues of international students related to both the general literature of good
teaching and learning in higher education settings and the more particular literature relating
to the specific needs of international students.

As a point of focus from which to begin the exploration of general teaching and learning
literature, Ramsden’s *Properties of Teaching* (2003) provided a broad set of principles which
directed investigation of the literature towards the perspective of the student. This was an
important emphasis as the perspective of the student was the particular focus of this study.

argued that lecturers’ attitudes about learning impacted significantly on student learning.
Moreover, university teachers’ willingness to engage in scholarly knowledge about teaching
and learning was a feature of this literature and linked directly to the more particular
arguments of the literature relating to international students.

“Problematising the student” has been a feature of discussions about tertiary international
students for some time. Leaske (2001) wrote about the necessity for universities to adapt to
international students, highlighting practices by universities which focused on strategies of
gradual adaptation and assimilation by international students, instead of adaption of
universities to the students’ needs. The literature of adaption, however, described by Ballard
and Clanchy (1991), was reflective of a growing trend towards describing the learning needs
of international students in terms of deficits.

A critical shift away from the deficit model conception can be identified in the work of Ryan
(2002) and McInnes (2001) who described a shift in the British and Australian universities
towards a more inclusive approach for diverse student populations. Carroll (2005) iterated
that lecturers and tutors needed to know their own academic and personal cultures rather
than try to know the cultural backgrounds of international students. This perspective was
significant as it influenced a move away from cultural stereotyping towards acceptance of
making the majority culture transparent for all.

Carroll (2005) and Ryan (2005) provided an important framework for this research study
through their persuasive arguments for the development of a culture of explicitness in critical
areas of teaching and learning. In particular, reading, writing, assessment and critical thinking were described as the fields of academic activity requiring most explicit models for international students. Ryan and Hellmundt (2005) described the phenomena of cultural dissonance and detailed the effectiveness of a constructivist approach by activating students’ existing schemata when building new knowledge capacity.

The importance of the tutorial setting as a central vehicle for breaking down ethnocentric views and improving all students’ learning was explored in the work of McLean and Ransom (2005). It was also noted that cross-cultural group work should be a learning opportunity for developing skills in negotiation and communication. Trans-cultural group membership was described as having obvious positive value for future workplace settings (Allen & Clark, 2007), yet Gabb (2006) and others identified the common phenomena in education settings where mainstream students are taught, while minority students become marginalised observers.

The significant literature relating to teaching and learning established a framework for investigation for the researcher to analyse teaching and learning practice from the perspective of international students. In particular, it was important for the researcher to explore the detailed literature of inclusive pedagogy to establish a deeper understanding of the complexities of effective teaching and learning in higher education settings hallmarked by an increasingly diverse student population. Such complexity provided a rationale for the researcher’s contention that universities generally, and lecturers and tutors specifically, underestimate the complexities faced by international students. Rather than viewing the teaching and learning issues facing international students’ needs as merely a matter of mastering English, the researcher wanted to explore the larger pedagogical picture of what constitutes truly effective inclusive pedagogy.

The literature relating to the academic development of teachers in higher education settings provided a framework for the researcher’s final discussion relating to the academic development structures and pathways for improving teaching and learning practice. While there was a clear connection between the literatures of good teaching and learning practice and the field of academic development, it was important to emphasise the scholarly literature
associated with the methodology of academic development.

The tensions that exist around academic development was explored, together with the way these issues relate to the purpose and ownership of academic development and how teaching and learning development sometimes sits awkwardly with management trends and evaluation functions. Gosling (2009), Brew (2007) and others argued that the field of academic development was insufficiently defined and valued within higher education settings and this had led to ongoing tensions between developers, senior management and faculty.

The issues faced by developers in delivering Certificates of Teaching and Learning for Higher Education relating to perceptions by faculty was explored by Green (2009) and Kandlbinder (2009). Their focus was the exploration of developing effective discourse of academic development that would cross Faculty lines.

Finally, the emergence of practitioner-led research in teaching and learning methodology was explored. This approach is connected strongly to a scholarly, collaborative methodology that provides a literature field that engenders a common research discourse around teaching and learning development, and also promotes discipline-specific action research methods situated in context. The work of Brew (2006), Bannan-Ritland (2003), Cobb et al. (2006), Knight (2006), Lobarto (2003), McDonald and Stockley (2003), Sharma (2007), and Trowler and Cooper (2002) was important to the researcher’s own recommendations for academic development strategies for the lecturers and tutors who had participated in this study.

**The structure of the study**

It became evident that it would be important to identify the teaching and learning practices occurring in first year in the architecture department in order to determine whether English language competency was the prime reason international students were underachieving in their first year of study. Ultimately, the study identified quite striking disparities in the quality of teaching within and across three subjects, particularly with respect to tutors. While lecturers remained responsible for the quality of delivery of curriculum in both lectures and tutorials (and therefore, the quality of the pedagogy), the real outcome for students in
general, and international students in particular, was a form of teaching and learning lottery, where the lucky won competent and engaging tutors, and those who drew the short straws were likely to experience inadequately taught tutorial classes. It was believed that the task of this study, ultimately, would be to identify what might be considered “problematic” teaching practices occurring in tutorial settings in particular, and how these practices affected international students specifically.

This chapter (Chapter 1) contains the background, significance and structure of the study. The structure of the study was established to provide the researcher with the opportunity to read widely before beginning data collection processes. The researcher began by interviewing the three lecturers and establishing the lecturers’ perspectives on teaching and learning relating to international students. This data was used to develop the fields of focus for identifying emerging themes in the remaining data collection methods.

Secondly, lectures were observed by the researcher as an observer-participant and coded according to the emerging themes relating to the lecturers’ practice. Similarly, tutorials were observed and coded but with greater emphasis on the students’ responses to the tutors’ actions.

In order to provide further student input to the study, the researcher was given access to the additional student comments contained in the lecturers’ Quality of Teaching surveys. These comments were analysed according to the emerging themes. Finally, the researcher was able to distribute a survey to all first year students which was designed to elicit responses relating to teaching and learning experience in lectures and tutorials. This survey included a sorting function that identified local, local ESL and international student groupings. Students were asked to evaluate their experiences from the perspective of the themes that had emerged earlier in the study. A second function of this general survey was to ascertain overall rates of satisfaction amongst the total student cohort in order establish a majority perspective. This was considered important as the study’s primary focus was on ‘learning problems’ and this could lead to an inaccurate perception regarding the number of students who felt their learning experiences had been poor.
Chapter 2 identifies and discusses the literature of effective teaching and learning in universities and the literature of teaching and learning relating to international students. The principles and practices explored provided the framework for the research focus.

Chapter 3 justifies the methodological approach and explains the theoretic context for the decisions regarding how data was sought, analysed and validated. This chapter presents the theoretic literature which guided the researcher’s decisions when establishing the design and implementation methods of the study.

The analysis and discussion of research data is presented in Chapter 4. Findings of all data collected within each collection process are detailed separately, within a discussion and analysis framework. Finally, Chapter 4 concludes with a synthesis of all analysis which sought to find significant implications for the study as a whole.

In Chapter 5, the researcher returns to the literature to explore the current research regarding continuing academic development in teaching and learning for teachers in higher education settings. This chapter contributes to the focus the researcher took in describing appropriate models of professional learning. A critical aspect of this study was to provide pathways for teaching and learning improvement for academics.

Finally, Chapter 6 provides a number of recommendations for academic development. This is structured as a three-tier proposal, described as Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3. This structure recognises a range of responses that could be adopted by individuals and teams.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

International students face challenging circumstances when engaging with a new educational setting away from home. Some of these difficulties lie in social and personal challenges such as loneliness and homesickness which have an effect on their ability to adapt to a new educational setting. However, this study focused on the academic challenges faced by students. The teaching and learning practices of their teachers, the academic discourse of the reading and writing particular to their discipline and the nature of the assessment tasks were all factors in challenging international students’ sense of identity.

Before coming to Australia, it is likely that the international students experienced success and a sense of connectedness to the values and practices of their learning environments. In a new culturally-determined academic environment, this was not likely to be the case for a period of time, and perhaps, not ever to the degree of their previous experiences in education. Not only is the physical environment foreign territory for international students; beliefs they have held about their ability and resourcefulness are now far less certain, and their identities as successful students who enjoy secure places in the academic world, and therefore have secure futures, are now in question. In the light of these immense challenges, what can higher education settings do to help reduce cultural shock in the first year of study? Helping students to feel connected socially is important, and provision of a structured approach within a university to assist with this is highly desirable. However, this alone is insufficient. Helping students to access support services such as English language assistance is also highly desirable, but again, is insufficient to overcome the challenges faced by international students.

The practices and beliefs enacted by lecturers and tutors are critically important to international students in their first year of study. General good teaching and learning practices in higher education settings is required for all students. However, a strong body of literature suggests that what we understand by general good teaching and learning practice needs further refinement to provide real access to the curricula by international students. In
this chapter, connections will be drawn between the general literature of teaching and learning in higher education settings and the more particular literature of teaching and learning for international students.

The characteristics of good teaching and learning in higher education settings

According to Ramsden, the research findings on good teaching “mirror with singular accuracy” what students say when asked to describe what a good teachers does (2003: 87). Although it is known that the teaching and learning environment is remarkably complex (Huber, 2005; Knight, 2006), it is useful to use the lens of Ramsden (2003) to describe what the research supports as good teaching from a lecturer’s point of view. Throughout this study, the researcher refers to Ramsden’s properties as key indicators of a student-centred approach to teaching:

- A desire to share love of the subject with students
- An ability to make material being taught stimulating and interesting
- Facility for engaging with students at their level of understanding
- A capacity to explain the materials plainly
- Commitment to making it absolutely clear what has to be understood, at what level, and why
- Showing concern and respect for students
- Commitment to encouraging student independence
- An ability to improvise and adapt to new demands
- Using teaching methods and academic tasks that require students to learn thoughtfully, responsibly, and cooperatively
- Using valid assessment methods
- A focus on key concepts, and students’ misunderstandings of them, rather than on covering the ground
Ramsden (2003) noted that the final property of good teaching (a desire to learn from students) was of particular relevance in order to establish the misunderstandings that exist between what is intended to be taught and what is actually learned. This was consistent with the studies of Trigwell and Prosser (1996a), Marton and Saljo (1984) and Samuelowicz and Bain (1992) that focused on the relationship between how teachers teach and how students learn. In particular, this literature noted how students develop beyond surface learning.

Biggs (1999) emphasised that there is some consensus in the literature on the broad picture of good teaching and it relates to two concepts in particular: teacher-focused and student-focused pedagogy. Teacher-focused strategies are transmission methods of teaching where the teacher transfers knowledge to the novice. Student-focused strategies “bring about conceptual change in students’ understanding of the world” (Biggs, 1999: 61). As long ago as 1916, Dewey determined that teachers needed to facilitate experience for students, based on a student’s context (and not the teacher’s context). Marton and Seljo (1976; 1997) established there was a distinction between taking a surface approach to study and a deep approach to study and that these approaches were related to perceptions by the students and not personality characteristics. Bloom’s Taxonomies (1956) contributed significantly to this understanding of how students move from surface understandings to higher order thinking and inherent in the consensus on good teaching is the principle that students require opportunities to act in order to analyse, synthesise and evaluate. Entwistle (1987) further described the features of deep and surface approaches to learning which were reflective of Bloom et al.’s affective taxonomy (Krathwohl, Bloom & Masia, 1973).

The effects of lecturers’ perceptions on good teaching and learning in higher education settings

A study by Nasr, Booth and Gillett (1996) suggested that positive changes in lecturers’
attitudes towards effective teaching practice were significantly related to increases in teaching performance. Nasr et al. (1996) believed that Dunkin (1990) and Candy (1993) reasonably argued that lecturers’ attitudes, beliefs and knowledge are important “and necessary for improving teaching” (Nasr et al., 1996: 1). Lecturers’ attitudes and conceptions about learning and the impact on students’ learning and the need for lecturers’ contextualised development of scholarly knowledge about teaching and learning is further discussed in the literature of Ramsden (2003), Huber (2002), Knight (2006) and Ho (2001).

There is some tension in the literature relating to the best means to develop lecturers’ knowledge about teaching and learning and this is discussed in Chapter 5, where the focus of this study becomes more particular to higher education development for lecturers and tutors.

The literature of good teaching and learning practices for international students

Liddicoat (2003) observed a gap between the policies and rhetoric of internationalisation in Australian universities and the actualisation of an “explicitly educative component aimed at either overseas students or local students” (2003: 4). In particular, he saw a need for an “overarching pedagogy” in particular and for universities to make the rhetoric into reality (2003: 23).

Until quite recently, literature relating to international students’ teaching and learning experiences in Western universities tended to present a deficit model where the responsibility for overcoming learning “shortcomings” lay with the international student. With good intentions, some Western universities presented guides for international students from within a context of assisting students to overcome lack of academic success. Abel (2002) wrote that international students would benefit from adopting specific strategies for being successful in an American university. Two examples of difference given to international students were: American students “will demonstrate a good deal more individual initiative than is expected outside the United States” and “international students may not be accustomed to the competitive environment of many American universities” (Abel, 2002: 14).
Other deficit model literature tended to be less culturally confronting but still focused on identifying problems experienced by international students due to their “otherness”. Biggs, 1997; Mills, 1997 and Cadman, 2000) detailed how the perceived differences between Confucian-based and Western learning systems were seen by many academics as a likely cause for many international students’ lack of critical analysis skills. In response to perceived differences between Confucian and Western learning systems, Perry (1999) suggested that international students must adapt to the university in order to develop their level of thinking. Similarly, Ballard and Clanchy (1991) discussed strategies of gradual adaption and assimilation to new environments for international students.

Egege and Kutieleh (2004), while sympathetic in approach to the difficulties faced by international students, believed assimilation approaches may have focused too explicitly on the differences between learners. They presented the possibility that a “hypersensitivity to perceived differences could become a potential obstacle to understanding and productive interaction” (2004: 76). Additionally, they suggested that focusing on culturally specific differences might lead to identifying some differences as educationally significant when they may not be. Rizvi and Walsh (1998), cited in Grey, supported this view by describing how an “ethic of difference” might be legitimate if there was an accompanying articulation of the interconnectedness that existed between cultures (Grey, 2002: 154). In pursuing such an ethic of difference, however, there was a danger that the identified cultural difference would not be legitimate. As Louie pointed out, Confucianism is not a set of static beliefs across time and cultures and “values and beliefs are held or dropped or lose currency with as much alacrity as other context-based practices” (2005: 18).

Similarly, Gill (2007) wrote that learning differences existed between international and local learning systems to some extent but not to the degree that some Western assumptions might suggest. In the case of Chinese students studying in Britain, Gill (2007) established that Chinese higher education students valued studying in Britain because of the non-conformist and critical approach to learning and this was a reason they chose to study abroad. Conceptually, then, there were congruent, rather than dissonant beliefs between Chinese and Western learners. In a change to the “problematising of international students”
approach, Leask (2001) wrote about the necessity of universities to adapt to international students. She suggested that university teaching academics needed first, to broaden the scope of the subject or discipline to include international content and contact, and second, be informed on international issues, standards and practices in their discipline and professional area.

Robertson, Lane, Jones and Thomas (2000) also argued for the need to focus on the adaptive skills of academic staff as well as those of the international students. In their study, Robertson et al. emphasised that a willingness of an institution to learn about the backgrounds of students from other countries is the first step towards inter-cultural learning and the “strongest antidote to misguided, albeit well-meaning, teaching” (2000: 89).

Although more inclusively positioned compared to deficit models, Leask (2001) and Robertson et al. (2000) relied, to some extent, on an infusion approach, where courses would be internationalised by reference to overseas content, and lecturers would demonstrate cultural inclusivity by having greater professional knowledge of international issues. Such an infusion approach used by universities to “internationalise” their curriculum is seen by De Vita and Case (2003) as commodity-driven, rather than pedagogically-driven, and as such, fails to address the issue of international curriculum reform from a genuinely educational stance. According to them, the infusion approach is based on “dangerous assumptions” and on “ethnocentric pedagogy and content-based knowledge” and as such, is wholly inadequate within a culturally fair and inclusive framework (2003: 394).

Universities in the United Kingdom and Australia can be characterised “by a move from deficit views of individual, non-traditional students, to more inclusive approaches to a diverse range of students” (Ryan, 2002). According to McInnes (2001), equity policies and practices (such as specific curriculum support for international students) tend to define students by their membership of particular populations, whereas the students identify themselves first and foremost as learners in their chosen field.

McInnes (2001) was optimistic that the growing demand for more accurate evaluation of teaching outcomes for diverse populations in universities would result in a more scholarly
research on teaching, learning and assessment in the first year of study. It is this particular inclusive and evidence-based approach to classroom practice which is explored in detail in the following literature.

To summarise, a research-based, explicit pedagogy is required to address the teaching and learning challenges encountered by the diverse populations within universities. Within that context, the literature indicated that good teaching and learning practice needs to include a strong underpinning of knowledge relating to what international students say and do in their first year of study. While being mindful of the previous educational experiences of international students, universities should avoid attaching overly significant paradigms of difference between international students and local students.

**Intercultural competencies in the university classroom**

As Ridley (2000) believed the core concerns of international students related to their confusion about what was expected of them as students and what they expected, in turn, from their tutors and lecturers. He explained that the discourse of academic disciplines in higher education was confusing and mysterious for all students. For international students, the confusion was likely to be greatest “amongst students who do not have the ‘cultural capital’ which was valued in a higher education context” (92). Ridley argued that it is the absence of the new cultural capital that disallowed students to succeed quickly and easily in their new settings. Citing research spanning the years between 1995 and 2002, he noted that significant recent research had emphasised “the alienation that international and non-traditional students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds can feel when trying to make sense of higher education conventions and expectations” (92). Gill was mindful not to assume that initial alienation prohibited international students from learning new cultural competencies. He believed that providing an explicitly sympathetic and helpful environment existed, international students had the ability to adapt to British universities (Gill, 2007).

Louie proposed that for lecturers and tutors, the best method to enact intercultural inclusiveness was through “developing a meta-cultural sensitivity and awareness” (2005: 17). He warned of the dangers inherent in gathering information about other cultures in an
attempt to establish a picture of students’ home learning environments because he believed that meta-cultural sensitivity and awareness were more effectively enacted when teachers learned to manage the diverse cultures in the room rather than “learn” all there is to know about individual cultures. This approach not only assisted the teacher to pursue a constructivist pedagogy, but modelled for all students the skills they would need to develop in order to adapt to rapidly changing cultures, at home and away from home (Louie, 2005).

Carroll (2005) agreed with Louie’s approach (meta-cultural sensitivity) with an acknowledgement that it is inappropriate, as well as logistically improbable, for teachers to attempt to get to know all students’ cultural backgrounds. She recommended that teachers become far more knowledgeable about their own academic cultures and then offer more explicit help to students. By academic cultures, Carroll was referring to “systems of belief, expectations and practices about how to perform academically”. She called this “learning the rules to a new game” (27), emphasising the need for teachers to shift from blaming the student to thinking about how to assist students to adapt and learn new skills to fit their new learning environments.

**Principles and practice of explicitness**

Ridley argued that gaps in expectations between tutors and students often occurred, and tutors could “respond flexibly in teaching and learning situations along a continuum of explicitness” (2004: 93). The continuum of explicitness was an approach that scaffolded assistance according to the needs of the particular students. She described the need for academic staff to be aware of, and have an ability to, “articulate the underpinning epistemologies of a discipline” and “enable access for newcomers” (105). This explicitness implied that tutors and lecturers needed to create opportunities for forms of communication that were flexible and responsive to the range of expectations they had about international students’ learning, whether it related to learning outcomes, assignments, delivering lectures, or participation in tutorial activities.

To achieve a flexible and responsive communication practice, De Vita and Case acknowledged the need for inclusive curriculum and assessment strategies that provided
opportunities for lecturers and tutors “to reflect on, and rethink, not only what we teach but also how we teach” (2003: 394). This is consistent with Webb who argued the need for ways to “normalise international curricula” through instruction practices (2003: 115), and Dunworth and Kirkpatrick, who described this as “mainstreaming” literacy and wrote that universities needed to make explicit public statements about how literacy is taught (2003: 34). As McInnes (2001) pointed out, such directions towards intercultural communication strategies placed pressure on academics to test their “core” teaching and learning values, and in the past, this had led to debate about “standards” (113).

Asking “Who is responsible for the teaching of literacy in tertiary environments?” sparks further debate. As Ferman noted, general language specialists lack discipline-specific skills, and lecturers lack the knowledge and skills of language specialists (2003: 48). This has only become relevant since approaches to teaching cross-cultural literacy have raised the bar of expectation towards discipline-specific literacies. Many academics believe that writing instruction is secondary to their task of teaching content and is best left to the support specialists (Schmitt, 2005). Schmitt believed this could not be justified as it suggested a kind of separation of duty by teachers. This runs counter to what we understand about effective pedagogy, separating writing instruction from context-based, or culture-based writing skill development (Schmitt, 2005).

Dunworth and Kirkpatrick found that academics needed to articulate how much, if at all, they were responsible for developing students’ literacy skills. They found lecturers’ responses ranged from taking no responsibility at all and expecting students to have the necessary discourse skills and knowledge, to lecturers who thought exposure to course literature and assignments was sufficient to address discipline-specific literacy (Dunworth & Kirkpatrick, 2003). It is believed that difficulties still exist for teaching discipline specificity because there is still a view that academic writing in particular involves the transfer of general writing skills rather than the application of discipline-related discourse and purposes ( Zhu, 2004; Ferman, 2003; Dunworth & Kirkpatrick, 2003).

Also consistent with explicitness of practice is the desirability of making explicit the intended knowledge outcome relevant to all students. Leask (2005) posed the question about the
intended purposes of specific areas of study that students undertook at university. In particular, she asked why university staff might want to internationalise their particular course and what internationally-minded outcomes they hoped to achieve. To use an engineering course as an example, this might mean to stress environmental sustainability. She believed that taking a purpose-driven approach assisted lecturers to examine their motives, and therefore to clarify their objectives. She further believed that an emphasis on a universal societal goal (such as sustainability) as a course objective had the power to connect with all students and position international students within a global context. Explicit expression of relevant learning goals was seen to assist with the creation of learner empowerment and learner identity. Cummings referred to positive positioning on “culture, language, identity, intellect and imagination” of students by teachers, rather than, primarily, framing teaching and learning strategies from a learning deficit point of view (2001: 653).

**Explicit teaching and learning practice**

Carroll (2005) detailed specific areas that teachers needed to consider in order to understand areas of most difficulty for students new to a Western culture tertiary environment. In particular, she nominated assessment, academic writing and teacher-student relationships as critical areas of teaching and learning most affecting international students (2005). In exploring the literature of inclusive teaching and learning practice, these areas are a useful lens through which to explore the learning experiences of international students and in the literature review that follows, assessment, academic writing and teacher-student relationships are explored in detail.

**Critical issues in assessment**

MacKinnon and Manathunga argued that Western universities continued to maintain Western templates of knowledge that valued “Western ways of knowing and learning” (2003: 132). They believed that because assessment was a prime driver of student learning, it was critical to evaluate underlying assumptions about forms of assessment. According to them, current assessment distinguished and rewarded certain forms of cultural knowledge and was “constructed using a dominant literacy paradigm” (2003: 133). As illustrated below in Figure...
1, they found that diverse cultural literacies remained isolated from Western universities assessment processes. Their figure below accurately illustrates their view of the marginal position of international students’ life experiences in the mainstream university culture, and how that marginalisation impacted directly on the assessment outcomes of international students.

![Diagram](image)

**Fig.1: Why we must internationalise our curricula through assessment.** (MacKinnon and Manathunga, 2003: 135).

According to MacKinnon and Manathunga, four fundamental aspects were needed to ensure development of culturally responsive assessment; “reflective practice in the construction of assessment, the provision of clear assessment guidelines, linked assessment tasks, and a comprehensive understanding of the forms of assessment in Western and non-Western cultures” (2003: 135). Carroll argued that failure to address intercultural issues of assessment often led to the situation where international students found themselves with “poor marks for the first end of term assignment due to misunderstanding assessment procedures” (2005: 32).

MacKinnon and Manathunga (2003) described a more culturally responsive approach to assessment which included particular reference to development of intercultural communication skills and diverse cultural literacies. Compared to Figure 1, Figure 2 below demonstrates their view of the impact of constructing culturally-inclusive curricula and assessment. They believed diverse cultural literacies were central elements for international students and Western students’ learning. Importantly, they believed this model meant the less dominant group did not find itself isolated from the mainstream curricula and
assessment processes.

Fig. 2. Assessment is the nexus where intercultural communication skills are developed within the curricula. (MacKinnon and Manathunga, 2003: 136)

Ferman (2003) described how specific and transparent marking criteria that stated the weighting given to language control was fundamental in assisting international students to meet assessment expectations. Carroll supported this focus when she argued that assessment was so critical to international students that time should be spent both explaining and writing about assessment with students (Carroll, 2005).

According to Hellsten and Prescott (2005), international students used guesswork as a backup tool in deciphering the meaning of curriculum content and delivery. This guesswork in turn led to further misunderstandings in meaning. This occurred across all elements of the learning environment but became more visible through student error during assessment processes. They argued that these misunderstandings were cumulative and believed that, over time, this accumulation would create potential spiralling of student performance. Ferman suggested that assignments should be broken down into segments which “students complete progressively and then receive progressive feedback” (2003: 47). In this way, students would have an opportunity to use feedback to support and inform the next stage of their assignments.

Like Ferman (2003), Naidoo and Jamieson emphasised the crucial role of supportive and meaningful feedback in facilitating international students to reveal their understandings of
learning processes. They explained that providing supportive and meaningful feedback was a highly skilled process and described an example of the “crit” of the student designs in an architecture course. They believed that when students put forward their design solutions, the lecturer or tutor needed to provide detailed and timely feedback on those solutions. The quality of the specificity of spoken and written language was a critical element in effective student learning (2005: 42). Carroll identified critical language use that had a significant effect on students’ ability to take teacher feedback and act positively as a result of teacher comments (2005). She described the kind of written remarks on assignments which were typical of teacher discourse in Western educational settings. Remarks such as “confusing argument” or “no links” suggested that students can decode the question and know the teacher’ preferred behaviour. She claimed it was more productive to provide positive action comments with explicit directions such as:

Put the main idea first then provide examples of how the idea would work in practice, and tell the reader when you move from describing the method to discussing whether it is a good method or not (Carroll, 2005: 33).

A Queensland University of Technology (QUT) project (Worldmarks:13, http://www.olt.qut.edu.au/) that aimed to find ways of assisting university teachers with culturally responsive assessment suggested teachers ask themselves six related questions as part of a reflective process when constructing assessment.

1. What am I assessing in terms of intellectual engagement with content?

2. What am I assessing in terms of generic and discipline-specific skills?

3. Why am I assessing these skills and engagement with content?

4. How am I going to assess these skills and the engagement with content?

5. What resources have I provided that both enable and assist the student to understand the skills and content knowledge they will need to demonstrate to complete this assessment?

6. Given Questions 1 to 5 above, is this question (assignment) answerable?
Drawing on the findings of the QUT project, and in their own research, MacKinnon and Manathunga found that teaching staff generally covered Questions 2 and 4, but unless all six questions were covered, it was not possible that students’ learning was occurring in a culturally responsive environment (2003: 136). They found that staff and student perception about assessment items was often not the same. For example, university staff tended to assume that students would use up-to-date research sourced by themselves and that students would take a research position based on their research and discussion. However, the QUT project found that students (international and local students) thought they were “expected to give an uncritical account of their research, did not think that current research was expected and did not think that they were required to pursue further readings themselves” (2003: 138). The QUT project suggested that providing cross-cultural examples of student work assisted international students to find their own place and sense of belonging within the learning context.

**Reading critically**

The research of Ridley (2004) and Cadman (2000) demonstrated that the skill of reading critically was a deeply embedded, culturally-derived literacy skill in Western universities. It is widely accepted that critical thinking underpins Western academic culture and “the reading of written text is, in a sense, the basis of tertiary study” (McLean & Ransom, 2005: 60). However, critical thinking is a socially constructed, non-overt concept and there is uncertainty about its meaning. It is not always clear and does not have the same meaning for everybody, in every circumstance (Vandermemsbrugghe, 2004).

International students carry the additional learning challenge of determining the cultural meaning of “critical" as well as the challenge of comprehending the richly academic language that is likely to be present in university course readings. Typically, an issue arises associated with the misunderstanding of the concept of scholarly critical evaluation (McLean & Ransom, 2005). Existing definitions of critical thinking can be summarised to include the ability to develop a capacity to reason logically and cohesively and the ability to question and
challenge existing knowledge and the social order (Vandememsbrugghe, 2004). These definitions are further complicated by the contextual differences specific disciplines bring to the concept of critical thinking. While most lecturers and tutors believe critical literacy is of primary importance, few have an idea exactly what it is, how it should be taught, or how it should be assessed (Duron, Limbach & Waugh, 2006).

Whatever type or level of critical thinking, background knowledge is needed to arrive at a common sense understanding of the practice of critical thinking, and this is what international students lack in a Western academic environment (Vandememsbrugghe, 2004). Cultural dissimilarity tends to dictate the level of dissonance in critical thinking practices as it relates quite strongly to a learner’s life history, or self, and there is a natural resistance to reconceptualising challenges to self-concept (Brown, 2008). On the other hand, Kingston and Forland (2008) pointed out that East Asian educational traditions were evolving and becoming more individualistic. Mainland China’s education curriculum reforms are showing signs of non-traditional development, particularly in the area of using individual popular culture heroes as stimulus for engaging content material (Ho, 2006). This is consistent with the global internet activity Chinese youth find motivating and meaningful, whether the source material is South Korean, Japanese or Western in origin (Ho, 2006).

If there is less cultural dissonance than previously expected by Western universities, then international students are not “naturally resistant” but instead, require structured frameworks for access to the rules of the contextualised practices. It is up to institutions to develop their own cultural literacy to become more inter-culturally receptive (Kingston & Forland, 2008). Unfortunately, explicit instruction in reading comprehension (for deeper understanding of texts) is rarely taught at the higher education level (Doolittle, Hicks, Nichols, Triplet & Young, 2006), or if it is, it is more likely contained within general bridging courses or support tutorials outside the core work of the content discipline itself. In order to contextualise the connection between critical reading and critical literacy, lecturers and tutors need to provide opportunities for students to engage in explicit, guided, discipline-specific activity in the upper levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy (Duron, Limbach & Waugh, 2006).

McLean and Ransom made a number of recommendations to lecturers and tutors based on
the explicitness principle and the following suggestions demonstrated a process of progressively incremental tasks designed to guide students towards independent engagement with the learning material. Students should be:

- given short texts in the beginning, with guided questions that elicit the level of analysis desired,
- given a reading list that is both incremental in level of relevance to the area of discussion as well as complexity, provided with a list of key questions to use when reading, given models of effective reading and critical thinking strategies in class by demonstrating them, provided with opportunities in class to critically discuss readings in a group, encouraged to apply theory to practice, and to critically engage the knowledge they carry from their own cultures (2005: 56).

Implementing a critical thinking framework of practice requires a commitment to active, student-centred learning, which, initially, may be “uncomfortable to both students and teachers” (Duron et al., 2006: 162). Faculty members may value intercultural diversity, but acceptance of other approaches to teaching become less attractive when the teaching demands more time, energy and patience. Maintaining a parochial learning environment also establishes a “no-risk” climate for the faculty members and local students. This is more comfortable than the challenging alternative (Otten, 2003: 1).

Duron et al. (2006) designed a five-step model for critical thinking in any discipline that used Bloom’s Taxonomy to structure explicit pedagogical behaviours to help student move from comprehension of materials to evaluation of materials. The model was explicit in describing appropriate actions for faculty members (determine learning objectives, teach through questioning, practise before assessing, review, refine and improve, provide feedback and use assessment for learning). Importantly, the model names the appropriate actions university teachers should adopt to decrease the area of uncertainty about how to teach critical thinking. For Step 1 of this model (determine learning objectives), Duron et al. advised lecturers and tutors to “define behaviours students should exhibit” and “target behaviours in higher order thinking” (161).

Instructional strategies based on modelling and guided practice are consistent with an explicit teaching and learning approach. In a student-centred environment, explicit practice is a shared responsibility between students and teachers. Reciprocal teaching is an
instructional strategy where the teacher first models a set of reading comprehension strategies and then gradually cedes responsibility for these strategies to the students. According to Doolittle et al., reciprocal teaching consists of:

The teaching and learning of specific reading comprehension.

The dialogue between an instructor and students where the instructor models why, when and where to use these reading comprehension strategies.

The appropriating of the role of the instructor by the students, that is, students begin to model the reading comprehension strategies for other students, becoming self-regulated in the use of these strategies (2006: 107).

It is widely believed that the use of strategies and frameworks for critical literacy learning require active learning, and a traditional lecture mode of instruction does not lend itself particularly well to active or shared learning. There is an argument for fundamental change in instructional technique if the result is greater involvement in “dialogue, debate, writing, problem-solving and higher order thinking such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation” (Duron et al., 2006: 165).

Writing critically

International students’ experience with writing in a first or second language can be quite different from most Western-educated students. The act of writing is not universal: rather, it is a skill that is taught over time and specific to context and purpose. Equally important, features of text structure are diverse, both within and across academic disciplines, demonstrating different values and beliefs underlying discursive practices in various discourse communities (Zhu, 2004).

When faculty members fail to make use of student diversity as a resource, or fail to be reflective about the complexity of the academic discourse, students’ work tends to stay monocultural and monodisciplinary (Otten, 2003), reflecting the zone of comfort of the lecturer “where the stress of the unfamiliar is absent from the participants’ experience” (Gabb, 2006: 22). MacKinnon and Manathunga (2003) developed a list of typical
assumptions made frequently about essay writing in Western universities by Western lecturers and tutors (see Appendix 1). In their comprehensive list, they challenged the thinking that presenting and structuring information occurs similarly across cultures. With respect to the structure of essays, for example, they pointed out the Western academics assume that “essay writing in all cultures is linear, unified and contains no superfluous material” and “an essay’s structure in all cultures starts with an indication of the key argument, then provides evidence to support this argument and ends with a restatement of the argument” (139).

In many cultures, writing structure is more like an inverted triangle where you start with a broad picture and then progress to details. Western academic writing “tends to look more like a diamond, where the writer starts with specific information, moves to broader ideas and then returns to a narrow conclusion” (MacKinnon & Manathunga, 2003: 137). Hellsten and Prescott (2005) described the way many Chinese writers avoided explicit argument. Instead, Chinese writers might provide suggestions and surrounding information to allow the readers to draw their own conclusions. Sometimes this traditional Chinese approach is known as a “circular” writing style while other traditions of writing can be digressive (Romance languages), parallel (Middle Eastern languages) and a variable of parallel (Russian and German) (Kaplan, cited in McLean & Ransom, 2005: 57). However, it is not logical to think that all international students write traditionally. It is possible that students bring hybrid writing structures to Western universities. This is relevant to notions of stereotyped beliefs about cultural difference in learning systems discussed earlier in this chapter (Biggs, 1997; Cadman, 2000; Gill, 2007; Kingston & Forland, 2008; Ho, 2006; Mills, 1997). Thus, a flexible and responsive awareness of writing diversity is more useful to lecturers than knowledge about traditional writing structures, as awareness provides an understanding of the complexity of assumptions embedded in the instruction to “write an essay” in higher education environments (MacKinnon & Manathunga, 2003).

**Schemata theory relating to academic writing**

In order for new information to be understood, it has to be connected to individuals’ prior knowledge as a hook, thereby activating existing schemata and connecting students to new
understandings. As Ryan and Hellmundt state:

As learning is individually constructed, socially supported and culturally mediated, learners in unfamiliar cultural and learning environments may have difficulties activating, or ‘hooking’ into, their existing schemas in order to build new knowledge, especially where new information is incongruent. The result can be cognitive dissonance or psychological confusion (2005: 14).

Lecturers and tutors need to understand models of writing, and in particular, they need to adopt a multi-theoretical model that recognises the complexity of high level academic writing (Ferman, 2003). Systematic Functional Linguistics theory which supports a genre-based approach to teaching writing is a methodology that uses the study of genre to explain the various features of text type, and assists students to deconstruct and reconstruct specific writing types until the structure is familiar. A multi-theoretical model uses genre in conjunction with a process approach and a reading-based approach to provide lecturers and tutors with strategies to support international students’ writing development. Ferman believed that a multi-faceted model was of value because each offered a different set of skills because:

- genre-based approaches focus on the analysis of the structural conventions of writing,
- process approaches provide practical procedures,
- reading-based approaches provide both content and exposure to the language of particular disciplines (2003: 42).

She explained that these three different yet complementary approaches were related to schemata theory. Schemata are the mental structures we develop over time which allow us to make sense of new experiences. In other words, we carry a mental scaffolding system that allows us to retain what we know in order to add to what we know if we can make sense of the new experience. Learning is impeded if students’ schema or pre-existing frames of reference are different to their new environment (2003: 45). This is the cognitive dissonance referred to by Ryan and Hellmundt (2005) but, as they pointed out, a student-centred, constructivist approach would begin with the students’ existing schema in order to make sense of new experiences.
McLean and Ransom emphasised that after respect for different cultural competencies, the second most important step for Western lecturers and tutors is to explicitly model what is required from them. Argument, research and supporting evidence are the backbone of university writing (2005: 59), and international students need many opportunities to reflect on the different expectations now asked of them, and how these expectations may be similar or different to their current understanding.

**Focusing on important linguistic features of academic English**

Brown’s British study on the incidence of international students’ study-related stress in first year university found that international students had difficulties with essay structure, academic language, paragraph formation and introducing personal opinion (2007). International and local non-traditional British students described referencing of information as particularly difficult due to a lack of prior experience and unfamiliarity with the Harvard system. Kingston and Forland (2008) found that there was some confusion over aspects of plagiarism for international students but believed this was the case for local students too. Unlike Brown (2007), Kingston and Forland found that the majority of their study participants agreed that “plagiarism was frowned on in their home countries” (2008: 215). This finding was consistent with Gill (2007) and Ho (2006) who emphasised the greater diversity of educational experience of contemporary Chinese students. Kingston and Forland noted that with respect to plagiarism, international students were aware of the problem of plagiarism but were surprised by the “level of punishment attached to it in Western universities”, as in their home countries, there were rarely consequences attached when student plagiarism was identified (2008: 215).

Schmitt pointed out that it can be extremely difficult for students to write from sources and to reference effectively until they have spent considerable time reading within the discipline to understand key concepts, theories, beliefs and contentions. In short, “requiring first year students to write about a new discipline in their own words is distinctly problematic when knowledge of the discipline is anything but their own” (2005: 69).

Part of the issue relating to plagiarism is the belief that well-developed general writing skills
are transferable to any discipline-specific context (Duron, Limbach & Waugh, 2006). Schmitt (2005) illustrated the complexity of academic writing development in her discussion of first year students’ struggle to develop appropriate academic phrasing and citation. The four stages of development of academic writing she named were: repetition, which involves extensive copying without citation; patching, which also involves extensive copying but with appropriate citations; plagiphrasing, in which students blend copied sections, quotations, paraphrases, and their words; and, finally, conventional academic writing (69). Schmitt suggested that these stages were, in fact, a continuum, and extensive practice with clear feedback was a critical part of successful adoption of acceptable conventions (2005).

Language acquisition is most often about appropriating conventional language of the community, rather than developing unique and individually-constructed language of expression. Local students’ attempts at academic writing are often somewhere along the continuum too, but not as obviously so, as international students’ non-conventional use of language “marks them out as non-native speakers” (Schmitt, 2005: 68). From this perspective, it would appear advantageous to develop discipline-specific teaching practice addressing plagiarism for the benefit of both international and local students (Kingston & Forland, 2008).

The role of the university teacher in intercultural learning

International students often cite their relationships with lecturers and tutors as critical to their learning environment. In a study at an American university, Pinheiro identified three major categories relating to the impact of the teacher on learning experiences; “the role of participation by students, the role of the learner’s prior experiences and the role of the teacher” (2001: 6).

In acknowledging the essential role lecturers and tutors play in the learning experience of international students, established course objectives should lead to detailed reflection on the part of university teachers. With respect to teacher-student relationships, it is helpful for lecturers and tutors to identify their own personal knowledge and skills gaps which might affect internationalising their teaching approach (Leask, 2001). Leask provided a detailed
self-questionnaire for lecturers that used a reflective approach about internationalisation at a teacher level. Four examples of statements relating to teacher-student relationships are listed below but do not represent the total list of statements contained in the original self-questionnaire.

I know the cultural profile of student groups I teach.

I make an effort to find out about and understand the cultural background of my students.

I routinely introduce myself and require students to do the same in tutorials and other group settings.

I model appropriate cultural awareness and interpersonal behaviour with all students, in particular in small group settings.

(Leask, 2005: 126)

The writers cited above point to the need for lecturers and tutors to be deeply engaged in the teaching and learning process to achieve successful outcomes for international students. Leask’s self-questionnaire (2005) of teacher characteristics referred directly to the importance of the tutorial setting, and in particular, the role of group work in tutorials as the central learning vehicle for the application of course learning objectives.

The central role of tutorials in student learning

McLean and Ransom argued that university teachers have a responsibility towards fostering cross-cultural interaction and breaking down ethnocentric views and this needed to occur in the construction of cross-cultural group work. In order for this to succeed, students require a clear rationale, based on course objectives, course assessment and post-university outcomes, for working together in groups: “it is crucial that both local and international students perceive the task as mutually beneficial” (2005: 52). However, many students think that course requirements are easier to achieve in a homogenous group, or by working alone, and therefore will seek to avoid diverse groupings for work assignments (Otten, 2003: 21). Therefore, lecturers and tutors are responsible for creating an intercultural classroom climate where skills such as negotiation and communication are valued. The university teacher is
also responsible for “selecting course content and material, designs of classroom settings and activities which take into account the entire didactic interaction of the group work” (Otten, 2003: 20).

In translation to practice, these responsibilities require higher order pedagogical knowledge. In terms of the role of the university teacher, Pinheiro found that students had strong views about what they wanted and what was effective. Students described a set of teacher behaviours they found particularly negative. These included the teacher who:

(a) just assesses who talks and who doesn’t talk, and who just reads students’ papers and gives them a grade

(b) initiates the discussion and asks the students to say more but doesn’t contribute themselves (2001: 7).

Students were most direct when describing the learning leadership role of the teacher. Their preferred conditions of learning included a strong leadership role in the classroom. These preferred behaviours suggest a very strong role for lecturers and tutors in tutorials and in the construction of effective intercultural work groups.

An important part of a university teacher’s role is the facilitation of a socially-constructed tutorial setting in terms of introducing people, giving them permission to interact and guiding their cooperation in working together (Gabb, 2006). A common phenomenon in educational environments exists where teachers “teach to the mainstream students while minority students become marginalised on the periphery of the activity” (Gabb, 2006: 357). One important strategy to overcome this phenomenon is to use the first tutorial session to make explicit the group processes within the context of the subject discipline and to explain that the importance of trans-cultural work groups is connected to professional work place behaviours such as a professional group of architects or engineers. Peer to peer interaction is an effective process for students to focus specifically on learning and reflection when working on real problems. This is an emphasis that underpins various adaptations of action learning in Western and non-Western environments. Group members help others to raise questions, reflect on new understandings and take responsibility for their own learning and to
learn from the experience (Gabb, 2006).

According to Allen and Clarke, a peer to peer approach is a model typical of a work place. The professional practice rationale for trans-cultural group membership is not simply a persuasive tool for encouraging students to participate in diverse groups. The rationale is a real one as trans-cultural groupings have the potential to enhance critical thinking, increase self-confidence and develop communication skills, all of which are highly valued in work place settings (Allen & Clarke, 2007: 64-76). This emphasis on professional behaviour opens the way for trans-cultural learning to take place by decreasing the emphasis on singular completion of an assignment to broader issues of future professional skills development. Lecturers and tutors have an important role to play in negotiating the social conditions of tutorials by supporting shyness and hesitation of international students in particular and clarifying students’ meaning with supportive questions such as “What I understand from this is ... Is this correct?” (Gabb, 2006: 358).

Pinheiro found that students believed positive participation occurred when students and teachers were co-learners and co-decision makers in the learning process. In this way, students felt that teachers and learners constructed knowledge together (2001). Conversely, negative experiences were described as situations where international students were disengaged from the classroom discourse because their experiences and their background were ignored and disconnected from the teaching-learning process. Teachers were described as silent in that they did not engage in the discussion process and rarely negotiated the content and assessment tasks. Often, students described their classroom experiences as “reading articles and saying disconnected things in class” (Pinheiro, 2001: 6). Some negative feelings about tutorials might be related to a lack of understanding about the role of a tutorial. Lecturers and tutors need to explain the traditions of Western tutorials and explain the “value placed on opinion and individual contribution” (Gabb, 2006, 364). Communication between international students and university teachers needs to include “more about the differences in university teaching settings compared to students’ previous learning experiences” (Hellsten & Prescott, 2004: 345). Additionally, the unavailability of part-time staff poses a further problem for international students who interpret waiting to see
tutors or lecturers who are not available as “an obstruction to their progress” (Hellsten & Prescott, 2004: 348). Working through such issues with students by enriching their experiences in tutorial time would decrease the need for follow up meetings with individual students, and therefore create a more satisfying experience for all participants.

Embedding culturally-inclusive processes in tutorials which respect the previous experiences of all students can be positioned to take a central role, or purpose, in group learning. Chang, a lecturer of sociology at a Melbourne university developed a diversity-based group work approach where it was a clear advantage to students in terms of learning and assessment. She explained her design and implementation of a “trans-cultural wisdom bank” in her subject which was a “conceptual metaphor that describes the eliciting, reflecting, pooling and exchange of cross-cultural insights and experiences that affect all humans” (2006: 372). Students are required to construct work groups which are representative of not only national cultures but subcultures found within societies. The construction of each group is included in key criteria in assessment based on the degree of diversity the students can achieve in the arrangement of their groups. Students are encouraged to see themselves as more than representative of ethnically-derived cultures only, and this emphasis on diversity beyond nationality is a deeply positive approach towards breaking through habits of mono-cultural interaction in teaching and learning environments.

Pinheiro concluded that international students’ preferred conditions for learning were very closely related to Knowles’ principles of effective adult learning principles (2001: 12). Knowles’ model of andragogy stressed “mutual trust and respect, cooperation, diversity of views and active roles for all participants” (Pinheiro, 2001: 3). Hall and Kidman also argued that lecturers and tutors needed to develop a successful learning rapport with all students as a priority condition for a successful beginning to university study (2004: 337). When considering these remarks, it is interesting to note that international students’ learning preferences were consistent with a model of andragogical learning (Knowles), and therefore synonymous with espoused Western learning values. Similarly, pedagogical teaching and learning principles relating to differentiation and inclusive practice are Western learning values that are believed to be most benefit international students. The facilitation of learning,
however, is in the interpretation and translation from excellent theory into authentic practice in the classroom.

**Literature review summary**

In summary, this literature review indicated key ideas about teaching and learning a first year of study in a culturally-diverse university setting. Firstly, this review focused on the significance of university teachers’ knowledge and beliefs about effective teaching and learning practice. The environment for all first year students is remarkably complex and is best supported by principles of established research findings about the characteristics of good teaching and learning. In particular, international students need supported opportunities to move from surface understandings to higher order thinking. Perceptions of good teaching and learning principles need to incorporate genuine intercultural beliefs and practices while avoiding overly significant paradigms of difference. This review also highlighted widely-held beliefs about international students’ learning deficits which inappropriately focuses responsibility for learning with students rather than with the learning leadership of lecturers and tutors. Lecturers and tutors need strategies to identify their own knowledge gaps which affect international students’ learning.

Secondly, the critical areas of teaching and learning most affecting international students are assessment, reading and writing critically, and learning relationships within a university setting. The discourse of academic disciplines most affects those who do not have the cultural capital valued by university settings and thus significantly affects assessment outcomes for international students. Lecturers and tutors need to adopt a multi-theoretical model of teaching critical reading and writing skills which recognises the complexity of academic discourse in specific disciplines. With respect to learning relationships, this review described the importance of tutorials in determining the success or failure of international students’ learning experiences in their first year of study. Carefully constructed trans-cultural group work within tutorial settings plays a significant role in reducing the level of international students’ marginalisation in the learning process.

Research-based explicit pedagogy is required to address the teaching and learning
challenges faced by increasingly diverse student populations within universities. However, the literature indicated that international students' preferred conditions for learning are closely related to Western principles of inclusive teaching practice, so in matters of addressing the challenge of diversity, the learning style preference of all students is remarkably similar.
Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to make visible the beliefs, actions and interactions of a selection of lecturers and tutors that might affect international students’ ability to access and participate in the teaching and learning activities within a first year course in architecture. Given the bounded nature of the research subject (the beliefs, interactions and behaviours of a selection of lecturers and tutors of one faculty) the research was best situated within a case study theoretical paradigm.

The research focus lay in gathering data relating to practices and beliefs, and as such, the key participants for the study were the lecturers and tutors. The actions and beliefs of the students were studied as a relative measure in determining whether the stated intentions of the lecturers and tutors were congruent with the students’ interpretation of them. The theoretical framework most appropriate for this purpose was naturalist and generative and was informed by ethnographic principles relating to the collection of richly descriptive data (Freebody, 2003; Robson, 1993). This perspective was supported by the use of several research methods. Although qualitative in approach, this case study was strengthened by the use of quantitative surveys to triangulate the data. This was considered important in establishing overall student perceptions in relation to other data collected and analysed. Miles and Huberman attested that there were three good reasons for resorting to numbers in a qualitative study: “to see rapidly what you have in a bunch of data; to verify a hunch or hypothesis, and to keep yourself analytically honest, protecting against bias” (1994: 253).

A case study approach was adopted to investigate what attitudes and practices the academic staff would require to assist international students to achieve better outcomes. The case studies chosen elicited the necessary “thick descriptions” (Robson, 1993) of the participants’ world that provided the emerging themes to be explored by the researcher. Consistent with a substantive approach (Merriam, 2009), this study was informed and explored through the theories of pedagogy relevant to a higher education setting (Ramsden, 2003; Biggs, 1993; Marton & Seljo, 1997; Huber, 2002; Knight, 2006; Carroll, 2005; Ryan,
A case study approach, informed by naturalist, ethnographic and grounded theories

The distinguishing characteristic of a case study in an educational setting is its focus on attempting to document the story of a “naturalistic experiment in action, the routine moves educators and learners make in a clearly defined discursive, conceptual and professional space” (Freebody, 2003: 82). Stake (2005), similarly, described a case study approach that focused on issues and stories of participants, validated through drawing versions of the stories and issues from a variety of sources. The “bounded” nature of this study (Merriam, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994) related to the inquiry of a particular educational phenomenon: the teaching and learning practices of lecturers and tutors in one faculty of architecture. Thus, a case study approach was the logical theoretic perspective to bring together the necessary descriptive phenomena for the formulation of the multiple perspectives of the participants’ world.

This study was naturalist in approach. The researcher wished to study phenomena as it occurred within the context of the teaching and learning activity in lectures and tutorials. This framework allowed the study to “minimise researcher impact” (Burns, 2000: 397) and supported the researcher’s intention to “document reality as it is naturally” (Freebody, 2003: 56). In describing research from a naturalist perspective, Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that the merit of such a research approach lies in its respect for observing social processes as they occur. This supported the position of the study as it was not possible to predetermine “exactly what should be studied” (Robson, 1993: 60). This study did not have a formal hypothesis established prior to commencement. The investigation relied solely on the emerging data to inform the researcher on the most relevant directions to take methodologically. As such, a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Merriam, 2009), generative and formulative in outcome, provided the researcher with the necessary boundaries within which to undertake her investigation.

The ethnographic emphasis within this naturalist approach related to the tools and
techniques utilised (Merriam, 2009) to describe a “dynamic picture of an interacting group” (Burns, 2000: 393) whereby the beliefs and practices of the participating lecturers and tutors could be described within the wider context of the international students’ world, whose perceptions of what was occurring might agree, or contrast with, the beliefs and practices of the lecturers and tutors.

The critical perspective, or “guided hypothesis” (Burns, 2000: 396) by which this study was informed related to the meaning the researcher and the participants constructed around issues of learning. As such, the researcher’s pursuit of interpretations as experienced by the various participants required as much immersion into the participants’ world as practicable. The naturalistic stance provided the theoretic perspective (Burns, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Freebody, 2003) that enabled the incorporation of ethnographic techniques. These techniques were considered necessary for determining the multiple interpretations expressed by both the participants and the researcher. Robson (1993) described an ethnographic approach as the intention to provide a rich or “thick” description that interprets the experiences of people in the group. The evidence of the participants’ experiences was situated in the micro-environment of thoughts, words and actions within a complex social world and, as such, socially constructed (Burns, 2000; Wenger, 1998). An ethnographic approach is concerned with interpretations of the participants in their socially-connected world. Ethnographic research designs are holistic, naturalist and inclusive of multiple perspectives (Burns, 2000: 396).

Given the dynamic nature of the setting for this study, it was important to incorporate methodologies suited to an inductive, formulative approach guided by emerging questions. A perspective that necessitates research methods that elicit emerging theories to identify themes, issues, relationships and possible solutions presuppose an understanding and commitment to grounded theory. Snape and Spencer described this as a sociological tradition where the researcher is undertaking “identification of analytical categories and the relationships between them” (Ritchie & Lewis, 2004: 12). Grounded theory has its emphasis in theory development generated by the data gathered (Strauss & Corbin, 1994; Flick, 2002; Hatch, 2002).
In this study, the researcher developed emerging theories of what was occurring at a learning moment in that particular data collection. This led to further identification of important data collection processes. Therefore, the research was substantive rather than formal and was referenced in a “specific, everyday-world” (Merriam, 2009: 16). One intention of the study was to recommend strategies, and as such, it was also of a generative nature, consistent with grounded theory. A generative role in research is designed to produce new ideas or a refinement of ideas or solutions, and has the potential to “determine actions that are needed to make programs, policies or services more effective” (Snape & Spencer in Richie & Lewis, 2004).

**Justification for a multi-method qualitative approach**

The intention of this study was to gain understanding of the various perspectives of the participants as they engaged in the formal academic interactions that were part of the everyday world (Merriam, 2009) of the lecturers, tutors and students in this course of study. Within this context, collected data focused on the “what and how” of teaching and learning activity where there appeared to be a potential gap in expectations between students, lecturers and tutors, or where there was a “teaching moment” when expectations appeared to be reached successfully. This involved a complex field of focus which included the lecturers’ structure and delivery of lectures, the tutors’ organisation and practices within a tutorial setting, the students’ observable responses to tasks and assignments, the discourse between all participants, social interactions and the physical environment.

In this study, qualitative methodologies were used, although not exclusively. A student survey designed by the researcher used numerical frequency, and another quantitative survey (the Quality of Teaching survey) contributed to the triangulation of data collection processes. The results of the student survey provided further direction for enquiry and investigation, as well as assisting the researcher to determine the extent to which certain beliefs and practices as expressed by small groups and individuals were representative of the larger group within the student cohort. This use of a quantitative research technique within a qualitative study is validated by Patton (2002), Green and Caracelli (in Tashokkori & Teddlie (2003) and Snape and Spencer (in Richie & Lewis, 2004), who all considered a
multi-method approach as a legitimate form of qualitative enquiry. Importantly, extensive observation and interview data collection processes provided the core descriptions for analysis in this study, which can be described as utilising predominantly qualitative research methodologies that align with a qualitative philosophical stance.

**Trustworthiness**

Issues of trustworthiness within a research study require consideration of ways to enhance reliability and validity of data. According to Freebody (2003: 77), this includes ensuring the clarity and accuracy of the representations of:

- the context of the research,
- the statement of the problem to be investigated,
- the ways the researcher gained access to the data,
- the assumptions of the participants and their understandings on the site about the researcher’s role as a researcher.

Freebody's framework for key areas of research methodology is used below to show the researcher has given due consideration to issues of reliability and validity of her data.

**Context of the research**

The context of the research was clearly defined within a substantiated methodological framework of a bounded focus. The participants were specifically identified within a particularised setting (Strauss & Corbin, 1994; Flick, 2002; Hatch, 2002) and the research purpose clearly provided the researcher with a rich description of the data. This led to a formulative evaluation and recommendations regarding the improvement of teaching and learning practices by lecturers and tutors for the benefit of international students.

**The statement of the problem**

The statement of the problem to be investigated was relevant to the context and constructed with reference to a “specific, everyday-world” (Merriam, 2009: 16). It provided clarity for the
participants and the researcher in determining appropriate research questions.

The ways the researcher gained access to the data

The way in which the researcher gained access to the data was controlled by consideration of internal validity through the use of multiple data-collection procedures (Burns, 2000: 419) and a desire to find ways to achieve convergence of information from the multiple sources of data (Freebody, 2003: 77). The use of triangulation sought to “explain more fully” the complexities of the various standpoints of the participants (Burns, 2000: 419). Peer debriefing was undertaken regularly with the researcher’s supervisor and her colleagues with the intention of making explicit processes and analyses, and to assist in further refinement of the study design. Such peer debriefings “foster credibility” (Robson, 1993: 404). Importantly, disconfirming evidence was brought to the attention of the reader, especially with respect to the limitations of the data collection processes. Johnson and Turner (in Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003), for example, highlight the potential weaknesses of observational data in that the interpretative validity might be low and the observer might unconsciously show selective perception (observer bias).

To counter such weaknesses, the researcher’s “critical presence” in all aspects of design is the defining quality of trustworthy research within a case study framework (Merriam, 2009: 200). Design limitations relating to the researcher’s survey construction and collection, for example, have been described in this study. In choosing participants for this study, an “expedient selection” (Freebody, 2003: 78) was employed to some degree, whereby “people available and appropriate to the inquiry” were asked to participate in the study. The critical presence of the researcher ensured an awareness that the internal validity of relying on an expedient selection process was potentially limiting in reliability (Denzon & Lincoln, 1994), especially relating to external validity.

The assumptions of the participants and their understandings of the researcher’s role on site

All participants were advised of the study’s intentions. Feedback, in the form of written formulative evaluations and spoken discussion, was given to the lecturers as the study progressed, and this provided a form of “member check” to assist with “plausibility” of data
The student cohort was advised of the researcher’s presence when data was collected. They understood that the researcher would watch, ask questions, take notes and request information through distribution of surveys.

The study design

The setting

The study was situated in an architecture faculty within a large, prestigious, Australian metropolitan university. In 2006, there were 3,258 academic staff employed and 34,720 students enrolled at the university. School-leavers beginning a course of study in the architecture faculty in 2006 achieved the median score of 94.3. Of the total student population, 27 per cent were international students from 115 countries.

The participants

The participants in this study were three lecturers, 14 tutors and all the students who enrolled in the three compulsory subjects (Building technologies, History and Design) within the first year course of architecture. It was intended that the focus would be on the international students within the existing groupings of the full cohort. Once Ethics Clearance was granted the three lecturers were chosen because they taught compulsory subjects to the full cohort in the first year of the course. The lecturers were approached by the Teaching and Learning Advisor on behalf of the researcher and gave their consent to be interviewed. The lecturers also welcomed the researcher into lectures and tutorials, and the tutors, also after Ethics Clearance, assisted the researcher by allowing observations of their tutorials. Tutors informally engaged in discussion about activities and students with the researcher during classes. The lecturers also gave the researcher their consent to access their Quality of Teaching survey results and agreed to distribute the researcher’s student survey to students in their subjects.

The lecturers

In this study, the three lecturers are referred to as L1, L2 and L3.
L1 was an experienced lecturer who had taught in both the Interior Design and Architecture courses at an Australian university and was a Director of an architectural firm before moving into her current role in the late 1990s. Her primary research and teaching interest was in the translation of architectural ideas into buildings. In 2006 she was teaching a first year Technologies subject in the undergraduate architecture course. L1 had completed a postgraduate teaching certificate in higher education.

L2 had a Bachelor of Architecture with Honours and a PhD in Architecture. He had worked in architectural practice from 1987 to 1991. He was appointed to a full position at a university overseas, and became Senior Lecturer in 1996 and Deputy Head of School in 1998. He joined the university in which this study was sited in 1999. In 2006, he was a course coordinator and taught a History subject in the first year of the undergraduate architecture course.

Since graduating as an architect in 1969, L3 had taught architectural design, theory and history at three universities in Australia. In 2006 he taught architectural design in the first year of the undergraduate architecture course. He also published essays and criticism on architectural design, sculpture, painting and literature.

All three lecturers had Western/European backgrounds.

The tutors

The 14 tutors within the three subjects were primarily practitioners of architecture employed by private firms. Two tutors were postgraduate students of architecture. The tutors’ teaching experience ranged from one year to 20 years. Of the 14 tutors in the study, two were of Chinese background, one was of Indonesian background and 11 were of Western-European background. The tutors referred to in this study are identified as Tutor 1 to Tutor 14 (T1 to T14). The tutors were recruited to the study by the three lecturers. The researcher asked permission of the tutors to observe at the beginning of each tutorial.

The student cohort
In 2006, the first year of the architecture course was undertaken by 300 undergraduate students and 175 of the total cohort were international students. Of the 175 international students, 127 nominated a language other than English as their first language. The largest NESB group spoke Mandarin, Cantonese or another Chinese language (53). There were 10 Indonesian speakers and 10 students who spoke an Indian language. Six students spoke Thai, five spoke Japanese, and five spoke Malay. Of the 48 NESB students remaining, students spoke one of the following: Samoan, Russian, Bengali, Filipino, Khmer, Arabic, Farsi and Hebrew.

Although the international student cohort formed the focus for this study, it emerged that a second group, the local ESL students, was a significant cohort. Local-entry ESL students had studied for varying lengths of time in Australian schools (between two and seven years) and the majority of this cohort spoke a Chinese language as a first language. All the first year students were observed in lectures and tutorials and responded to the faculty’s Quality of Teaching surveys and the researcher’s student survey.

**Methods of data collection**

The data collection methods were consistent with describing, interpreting and analysing the research material within a naturalist paradigm consistent with Freebody (2003) and Lincoln and Guba (1985). The techniques adopted to gather and analyse data relied on principles of grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998: 159) as the emerging themes were generalised in advance but not fixed, and a “constant comparative method” was used to gradually develop a holistic picture through the coding and revisiting of all data as the study progressed. There were three methods of data collection (interviews, observations and surveys) for the five collection processes: interviews, observation of lectures, observations of tutorials, additional student comments in Quality of Teaching questionnaires and the researcher’s student survey. The use of a quantitative tool within a quantitative study was described earlier in this chapter with reference to Patton (2002), Green and Caracelli (in Tashokkori & Teddlie, 2003) and Snape and Spencer (in Richie & Lewis, 2004). As data was collected, it was coded into themes and patterns were identified. The organisation of the five data collection processes is presented in chronological order later in this study. These processes were identified in the
Chapter 3: Methodology

study as:

1. The interviews with the three lecturers
2. The observations of the lectures
3. The observation of lecturers' subjects' tutorials
4. The analysis of the Quality of Teaching surveys (additional student comments only)
5. The researcher's student survey

1. *The interviews with the three lecturers*

The interviews were an important opportunity for the researcher to establish an initial relationship with participating lecturers. In this way, the researcher was able to explain the purpose and goals of the study, describe the research methods and to seek permission to access lectures, tutorials and other modes of information directly relevant to the study. Dialogues, rather than structured or standardised structures, ensured the interview was neither interrogative nor detached and allowed the interviewee to use language natural to them rather than "trying to understand and fit into the concepts of the study" (Burns, 2000: 425).

Interviews were audio-taped for transcription, using questioning protocols consistent with Foddy (1993). Effort was made to lessen misinterpretation by asking participants to be expansive in their response, in their own words, and by prompting participants to think aloud in order to ensure participants completed an idea or concept to a degree with which they were satisfied (Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Flick, 2007).

As informed by Beattie (2004), the lecturers' interviews were semi-structured and undertaken as near as possible to natural discourse because one aim of interviewing was to encourage information that had not been asked for in the interview guide question in order to elicit the lecturers' own beliefs and perception (see below for semi-structured questions). The critical information elicited during the interviews included the lecturers' stories of personal, academic and cultural interaction with students, and the lecturers' responses to
various teaching and social experiences.

The following open-ended questions formed the basis of interviews with the lecturers.

*Interview questions for lecturers*

**Teaching, learning and assessment**

1. Do you think there is a set of desirable pre-requisites for your subject?
2. What are the tasks relating to assessment?
3. What strategies do you believe help international students to get started on your assessment tasks?
4. What have you observed as being a challenging kind of activity for students?
5. Do you feel you get to know your international students as well as your local students?

**Area of subject knowledge or content**

1. Is there knowledge embedded in your subject area? If yes, can you give an example?
2. Do you think your content is internationally inclusive?

**Linguistics and critical literacy (language and understanding)**

The following questions were designed to elicit perceptions about the current teaching conditions and practices relating to language and understanding that operated on a day-to-day basis.

1. What are the opportunities for informal communication between you and your international students?
2. Can you give me examples of how you deal differently with individual students?

3. Can you give me an example of a situation when there was a gap in expectation between yourself and an international student?

4. What are the issues for you relating to international students?

The interview results were organised into emergent themes (see Chapter 4 for discussion of these themes). The emergent themes are contained in full in Appendices 4 to 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecturer</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Record of place and time</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer 1</td>
<td>L1</td>
<td>Lecturer’s office, 17 March, 2006</td>
<td>Appendix 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer 2</td>
<td>L2</td>
<td>Lecturer’s office, 9 March, 2006</td>
<td>Appendix 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer 3</td>
<td>L3</td>
<td>Lecturer’s office, 9 March, 2006</td>
<td>Appendix 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1: Interviews with lecturers*

*The observation of lectures and tutorials*

It was essential to capture the tutors’ and lecturers’ informal descriptions, in context, of what occurred during teaching and learning activities. As such, the researcher observed tutorials and talked with lecturers and tutors during tutorials (see Appendices 6 to 13). These observations contributed to the study because of the researcher’s intention to view the actions of students in relation to lecturers’ and tutors’ objectives, as well as providing the researcher with an opportunity to hear stories by tutors in relation to students, courses, and their own teaching styles. As noted, it is often important in a case study to compare what participants say and what they do (Burns, 2000: 411). This data was recorded while being mindful that other data (interviews and surveys) would act in a supplementary or comparative way in the analysis, reformulation and definition of the hypothetically-led focus.
The researcher observed both the lectures and tutorials of the academics and students involved in the study. With respect to the observation method within this study, the theoretical framework of the researcher was at the lower level of “observer as participant” (Johnson & Turner in Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003: 313; Merriam, 2009) where the researcher spent “a limited amount of time within the group” and “informed the participants they were being observed” (Johnson & Turner in Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003: 313). This theoretic perspective was supported by Robson’s definition of an informal information gathering process connected to an analytic deduction approach involving ‘intertwined observation and analysis” suitable for a generalised, hypothetically-led focus (Robson, 1993: 201). As this study did not have a formal hypothesis established prior to commencement, the generalised focus was consistent with the purpose of ethnological collection processes within a case study (Burns, 2000: 410). The researcher explored the particular content, methodology and language use of the academic staff, and the responses, verbal and non-verbal, of the student cohort with particular emphasis given to international student responses. Within this context, observation field notes focused on data where there appeared to be a potential gap in expectation (lack of congruence) between student and teacher, or when expectations appeared to be reached successfully. This involved the discourse of academic staff and students, the physical teaching materials and learning environments and the students’ observable responses to the learning activities.

Consideration was given to the limitations of the encoding processes of an informal information gathering approach and this was minimised by careful review of the field notes within a short period of time for transcription purposes, and by the researcher remaining mindful of potential researcher bias.

The detailed notes of the observations of the lectures organised according to the emergent themes are contained in Appendices 7 to 10.
Table 2: Observation of lectures

The data that emerged from the observations of tutorials organised according to the emergent themes are described in Chapter 4. The detailed notes of the themes and observations are contained in Appendices 11 to 14.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date, time and length</th>
<th>2 hour tutorial. 23.3.2006. 1pm.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-tutorial briefing</td>
<td>L1 briefed the tutors on the goals, task organisation and assessment procedures. She provided weighing scales and glue guns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial activity</td>
<td>Constructing a bridge from dried spaghetti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial purpose</td>
<td>To understand load-bearing principles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial space</td>
<td>Large studio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student organisation</td>
<td>9 tutorial groups, 16 students per group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutors</td>
<td>9 tutors in total. 8 tutors observed. 4 tutors were engineers and 4 were architects. Tutor abbreviations: tutors are referred to as T1 to T8.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: Observation of Technologies Tutorial (Appendix 11)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date, time and length</th>
<th>12.5.2006. 1pm. 1 hour tutorial.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial activity</td>
<td>Students’ presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial purpose</td>
<td>Students were required to present on the architectural features of a city of their choice. This was an assessment task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial space</td>
<td>Half-classroom size tutorial rooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student organisation</td>
<td>Horse-shoe chair arrangement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutors</td>
<td>Architect, experienced tutor (T9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Observation of History Tutorial 1 (Appendix 12)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date, time and length</th>
<th>12.5.2006. 2pm. 1 hour tutorial.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial activity</td>
<td>Student presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial purpose</td>
<td>Students were required to present on the architectural features of a city of their choice. This was an assessment task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial space</td>
<td>Half-classroom size tutorial rooms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 3: Methodology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student organisation</th>
<th>Horse-shoe chair arrangement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tutors</td>
<td>Architect. Chinese as first language (T10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 5: Observation of History Tutorial 2 (Appendix 13)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date, time and length</th>
<th>24.3.2006. 3pm. 3 hour tutorial.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial activity</td>
<td>Presentations of students’ designs to the tutorial group for feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial purpose</td>
<td>Prepare students for formal presentations for assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial space</td>
<td>Large studio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student organisation</td>
<td>14 tutorial groups, 16 students per group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutors</td>
<td>4 tutors observed in total, all architects (T11 to T14)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 6: Observation of Design Tutorial. (Appendix 14)*

**Overview of the surveys**

The additional comments contained in the three lecturers’ Quality of Teaching surveys and the researcher’s student survey provided the researcher with information about a large group of people while ensuring frank responses supported by an anonymous collection process (Robson, 1993). Additionally, Burns (2000) and Robson (1993) explained that highly structured surveys are effective for standardisation purposes, and if designed clearly, are
suitable for retrieving straightforward information relating to attitudes and beliefs. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, it was important for the researcher to support the research process through triangulation of data, and the surveys provided supplementary information that gave an overall perspective of the student cohort’s beliefs and attitudes. These considerations were important in the decision to include surveys in this case study.

4. The Quality of Teaching surveys’ additional comments

For the purposes of establishing context and the nature of the issues, an evaluation of the three lecturers’ Quality of Teaching surveys (additional student comments only) for Semester 1 was undertaken (Appendices 15, 16, 17). Permission to access the last part of the lecturers’ Quality of Teaching surveys was granted by the participating lecturers, and analysis of the students' further comments at the end of the fixed alternative questions was undertaken and provided to the lecturers. The decision to record and code the students’ further comments from these surveys was valid as the Quality of Teaching surveys were standardised and all three lectures were involved with the same first year cohort of students. The degree of importance attached to these additional comments was moderated by the knowledge that the researcher’s student survey would provide comparative data relating to the numerical significance of each comment. It was important to note that the many students did not fill in the additional comments sections of the Quality of Teaching surveys. There was no control contained in the university’s survey to differentiate the international students’ responses from local students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecturer</th>
<th>Survey taken</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Number of surveys</th>
<th>Surveys with additional comments</th>
<th>Appendix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L1 (Technologies)</td>
<td>End of Semester 1</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>Appendix 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 (History)</td>
<td>End of Semester 1</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>Appendix 16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7: The Quality of Teaching surveys: additional student comments only

5. The researcher’s student survey

The student survey (Appendix 3) was designed by the researcher and distributed to all students present in the lecture theatre at the completion of the subject of Technologies’ lecture series. The collection occurred within the same period as L1’s Quality of Teaching survey. The distribution and collection of the researcher’s student survey was undertaken by faculty administration staff.

The researcher’s student survey contained scale items (Burns, 2000: 573). The student cohort responded to survey questions, grouped thematically, by indicating degrees of agreement of disagreement on a scale of five fixed alternatives. There was opportunity for additional comments. As explained previously, there was perceived value in using a quantitative survey within a qualitative framework. Additionally, the absence of an interviewer or observer decreased the potential influence of the researcher. This was important in establishing the degree to which the target student group’s views (international students) were reflective or not reflective of the majority student group (all students).

Students were asked to complete the surveys before leaving the lecture theatre. Approximately 300 students were present, although this figure was not definitive as some students were absent, possibly due to the end of semester submissions deadline (according to the lecturers). 131 surveys were returned to the researcher.

The instruction for the students was as follows:

This is a survey about your “general” or “overall” academic experiences in this faculty this semester. The survey results will contribute to a doctoral thesis on improving teaching and learning
Student membership identification

Students were asked to nominate if they were:

a. local

b. local with an ESL background

c. international students

Sub-categories of questions

There were 31 questions in the survey (Appendix 2). The questions were grouped within the following themes:

- Staff-Student Relationships
- Teaching Methods
- Assessment
- Writing
- Lectures

Fixed alternative scale items

In response to each question, the students were asked to choose one of five possible answers.

The five possible answers were:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
• Neither agree nor disagree

• Disagree

• Strongly disagree

Returns

Of the 131 returned surveys, 77 students identified themselves as local, 29 students identified themselves as international, and nine students identified themselves as local ESL. 16 surveys were returned without identification of group. For the purposes of validity, the unidentified surveys were not included in the study. Not all surveys studied were filled out with 100 per cent completion. When students omitted answers, the omissions occurred in a random manner.

Numerical calculation of student opinion

Using the Frequency function of Excel, the number of times strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree and strongly disagree categories appeared for each question was calculated for each of the three cohorts (local, local ESL and international students). The number of times respondents replied to each of the fixed alternatives was the only consideration given to the survey's numerical results. There were eight “further comments” included in the survey but they were not included in the analysis because of the lack of statistical significance.

Two examples of the survey’s limitations were that not all participants responded and the fixed alternative of “neither agree nor disagree” gave rise to further questions that could not be asked of the anonymous group. This last factor led to the researcher hypothesising on the reasons for that response that may or may not have been valid.

Data analysis: the process of coding themes into core categories and sub-categories

The approach to developing themes from the data was based on the main objective of identifying patterns (pattern coding) and categories as the study progressed (Miles &
Huberman, 1984). The themes were not known before research began. As Flick (2007: 101) noted, the main activities of categorising is the “search for relevant parts of the data and categorising them with other data and naming and classifying them”.

Different themes emerged in each form of data, and some themes appeared consistently, however, only “core categories” were maintained over time (Robson, 1993: 386). Establishing patterns of themes within and across the data was a significant element in the study, as the “growing preoccupation with analysis in proportion to collection as the study progresses” (Merriam, 2009: 181) became the catalyst for further investigation and reconfiguring the tentative, hypothetically-led focus. This approach was reflective of common ethnographic analytic induction procedures where the strategy is to scan the data to “look for relationships among categories” (Burns, 2000: 413). The emerging themes (and the stories within them) provided the real world examples of the learning gaps between what was intended in the learning environment (by lecturers and tutors) and what was received (by international and local students).

Guided by the literature review emphasis contained in Chapter 2, the overarching core categories were:

- Teaching and Learning
- Linguistics specific to international students

As the study progressed these core categories were reformulated more specifically, according to identified sub-categories. The detailed data are described in Appendices 4 to 18 and analysed in Chapter 4.

*Within the interviews with lecturers, the sub-categories were:*

- Beliefs about learning and teaching practice
- Assessment
- Writing
• Lectures
• Professional Development
• Cohort and pre-requisites
• Relationships

Within the observations of lectures, the sub-categories were:

• Teaching techniques
• Linguistics
• Subject content

Within the observations of tutorials, the sub-categories were:

• Teaching techniques
• Linguistics
• Subject content

Within the Quality of Teaching surveys, the sub-categories were:

• Lectures
• Tutorials
• Assessment
• Subject Content

Within the researcher’s student survey, the sub-categories were:

• Staff-student relationships
Chapter 3: Methodology

- Teaching techniques
- Assessment
- Writing
- Lectures

Summary

This chapter identified the methodological stance (qualitative) and justified the research approach adopted (case study) for this study's research question. Importantly, this chapter explained the critical perspective of the “guided hypothesis” (Burns, 2000: 396) or, the “hypothetically-led focus (Robson, 1993: 201) central to the researcher’s goal to elicit emerging themes about the learning problems experienced by lecturers, tutors and international students. The data collection processes and the framework for analysis were described in detail in order to make clear and replicable the researcher’s intentions and actions.
Chapter 4: Discussion and Analysis of Research Data

Data Collection 1: discussion and analysis of interviews with lecturers

Introduction

As detailed in the methodology chapter, a “guided hypothesis” approach (Burns, 2000) was taken to interview the lecturers. Interviews were semi-structured and the questions were designed to elicit personal views of teaching and learning from the individual lecturer (See Chapter 3 for interview questions). The interviews with lecturers provided the researcher with a picture of learning and teaching issues presented from a lecturer’s perspective, and as such, were an effective starting point for developing an overview of the learning experiences of first year international students (see Appendices 4, 5 to 6).

Themes emerged as significant in the minds of the lecturers. These related to general teaching and learning practice, issues relating to critical literacy, assessment and perceptions relating to the international student cohort. A summary of the lecturers’ responses according to the emerging themes are detailed in the tables preceding each discussion below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecturer</th>
<th>Emergent theme: teaching and learning practice in lectures and tutorials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>Had tried matching second language tutors with international students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Had kept tutorials small by running one less tutorial per semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching and Learning Advisor had improved some tutorial approaches to international students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Surprised by students’ comments about maths content (what was taught not necessarily on exam). Wished she had anticipated this reaction in advance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thought Teaching and Learning Advisor was good academic development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Lecturers' responses about teaching and learning practice

In response to the question, “What have you observed as being a challenging kind of activity for students?” L2 and L3 described feeling burdened by a lack of time to dedicate to addressing students’ academic needs. L2 referred to wanting to structure his lectures more appropriately and re-designing his course to better suit the needs of the students. From

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>L2</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Felt pressured to include more Western history content</td>
<td>Believed lecturers too time poor to construct lectures appropriately for international students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thought his course had not changed enough to meet the needs of current students</td>
<td>Thought the texts needed to include more non-Western material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt constrained by his own historical knowledge, limited published material on Asian cities, burden of crowded curriculum, the needs of local, skilled students, the need to cover classical and gothic traditions</td>
<td>Reflected about lecturers’ inability to keep to key points and lecture theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would like more academic development on lecturing to large groups</td>
<td>Had learned from academic development to look for other means of teaching other than lectures, tutorials and studio work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt online academic development could be helpful for those who didn’t currently attend development sessions (but qualified by saying that those who attended development sessions did not experience the problems that non-attenders did)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>L3</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commented on his own Western bias from a content perspective</td>
<td>Thought casual tutors forced international students to seek out help from lecturers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believed larger tutorial groups contributed to lecturers' challenge to meet student needs</td>
<td>Felt the best academic development was related to knowledge of other cultures, such as overseas study tours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt the Teaching and Learning Advisor’s development seminars were useful especially if the seminar focused on one aspect only</td>
<td>Was not keen on the idea of online academic development because of his limited technology skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 8: Interpretation of lecturers’ comments - teaching and learning practice*
these comments, it could be interpreted that L2 was aware that his lecture content was challenging for international students. Further, L2 expressed concern about what he termed “competing agendas” (L2, 9 March, 2006) between a crowded curriculum and student needs. L3 felt that international students felt challenged by the course work generally and sought assistance regularly, adding that due to the casualisation of tutorial staff, current students were more likely than previous cohorts to seek out his help because their tutors were not available. In order to assist international students specifically, L1 had decreased the number of her subject’s tutorials by one session in order to reduce the size of the tutorial group, indicating that L1 felt international students were challenged, in general, by her subject’s work.

From these comments, it was clear that L1, L2 and L3 were aware of the general difficulties faced by international students but were less inclined to define specific activities within their subjects which posed difficulties for international students. L2 and L3 also expressed a generalised constraint in their teaching to international students’ needs caused by the students’ lack of knowledge of non-Western cultures. L2 and L3 were aligned in their beliefs with Leask (2001) and Robertson, Lane, Jones and Thomas (2000) who recommended that academic staff include international content and become more familiar with the backgrounds of students from other countries. However, De Vita and Case (2003) argued that learning about specific cultures was based on ethnocentric pedagogy and content-based knowledge, rather than evidence-based approaches on how to teach. In particular, they thought that ethnocentric pedagogy in particular can lead to dangerous assumptions about specific ethnic groups which fail to recognise the reality of diversity within and across ethnic groups. Addressing international students’ needs by using the content infusion approach assists in creating relevance of some material for a greater number of students but does not address the greater issue of inclusive instruction practices. L2 was able to reflect that he would like to restructure his lectures to better suit the needs of international students, and, admitted that lecturers sometimes had difficulty keeping to the main points in lectures. These observations demonstrated some awareness of pedagogical reflection of instruction practice.
Lecturers’ responses about critical reading and writing

In response to the researcher’s prompt concerning possible gaps in expectations between the lecturer and the international students relating to English language skills (“Can you give me an example of a situation where there was a gap in expectation between yourself and an international student?”) all three lecturers described the absence of critical academic English skills as highly significant in determining the success or failure by students to complete assessment tasks. L1 stated that the poor English of international students was “overwhelming” (L1, 17 March, 2006), L2 believed that English competency was the “greatest predictor” (L2, 9 March, 2006) of success or failure, and L3 thought critical academic English was “significant” (L3, 9 March, 2006) to the outcomes of international students.

In response to the prompt “What are the issues for you relating to the English competency of
international students?” all three lecturers nominated essay-writing and research skills as the areas of most difficulty for international students. For L1, the issue of critical literacy was also of concern for a group she called “local ESL” (L1, 17 March, 2006). L1 believed there was a significant group of international students entering the course from local secondary settings but who exhibited similar levels of language competency to international students. Moreover, L1 found that many local students who did not have an ESL background had less ability than previous student cohorts to synthesise or summarise written material. L2 described issues relating to copying and poor referencing by international students as evidence of poor literacy and added that mainland Chinese students appeared to have studied specifically for the IELTS test to achieve entry to the university, thus creating a false reading of their English language skills. According to L2, this led to plagiarism due to the pressure of financial constraints experienced by mainland Chinese students. L3 thought “studying in a second language was a very significant challenge” (L3, 9 March, 2006) but believed that the language of architecture itself was “a necessary confusion” (L3, 9 March, 2006) for all first year students.

The overall trend in the lecturers’ responses was to describe the critical literacy skills deficits of international students. The first and second interview prompts allowed for an interpretation which might cause reflection on the role and responsibility of the lecturer within the context of “gap expectations between yourself and an international student” and “issues for you” but none of the lecturers interpreted the prompts from that perspective. This is consistent with the work of Carroll (2005) who suggested that lecturers needed to be more reflective about their own responsibility for the existence of expectation gaps and language issues within academic cultures. Of significant relevance to this point, was the possible unspoken assumption that lecturers should not need to take responsibility for students’ literacy development. As noted by Dunworth and Kirkpatrick (2003), lecturers needed to articulate how much, if at all, they were responsible for developing students' literacy skills. A significant tension existed for L1, L2 and L3 in that although they were certain that literacy skills were the most significant determiner of success or failure in first year, they were not necessarily proactively reflective about the pedagogical role of lecturers in addressing language and literacy issues. As Zhu (2004), Ferman (2003) and Dunworth and Kirkpatrick (2003)
indicated, discipline-specific literacy was a difficulty within university environments as there was still a widely-held view that academic writing in particular involved the transfer of general writing skills rather than the application of discipline-related discourses and purposes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecturer</th>
<th>Emergent theme: assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| L1       | Introduced multiple choice to exams to assist second language learners  
          | Was interested in having a skilled practitioner check for culturally-biased language in exam |
| L2       | Thought students didn’t use the texts well, affecting their assessment  
          | Thought international students were more likely to attempt plagiarism in assessment tasks due to perceived pressure to achieve success |
| L3       | Thought international students sought more feedback than local students  
          | Thought mainland Chinese students placed greater emphasis on grades than local students or the lecturer |

Table 10: Interpretation of lecturers’ comments - assessment

Lecturers’ responses about assessment

In addressing issues of assessment, the lecturers were asked to describe the tasks relating to assessment that their international students found challenging (Chapter 3). L1 remarked that she was concerned about the possible cultural bias of her written exams and was interested in having a skilled linguist assess the language of her exams for the purposes of inclusivity. L1 had also substituted the short answer question format for multiple choice, believing that multiple choice offered international students greater ability to focus on demonstrating their knowledge rather than spending time in expressing their knowledge accurately in English. Both of these reflections indicated awareness by L1 of the misunderstandings that occur when students are working in a second language. L2 was also aware of the difficulties inherent in researching in a second language when he stated that international students made poor use of their texts. Further, he believed that the incidence of
plagiarism amongst first year international students was partially related to inability to access the language of research texts. These concerns with the students’ English language ability centred on the end point of assessment; L1 and L2 focused on what students were not able to do successfully in the assessment tasks at the grading level. Related to this, L3 commented that international students' behaviour indicated an emphasis on the ultimate grades given rather than the learning process. He described how international students sought more feedback than local students about why a particular grade was awarded.

Importantly, there was an absence of commentary by L1, L2 and L3 regarding the measures taken to provide meaningful feedback to international students prior to, and during, assessment tasks. As Carroll (2005) suggested, international students view assessment so critically that time should be spent both explaining and writing about assessment before assessment tasks commence. Ferman (2003) took a formative assessment approach when she suggested that assignments should be broken into segments that students complete progressively in order to receive progressive feedback. Without supportive structures such as these, international students could make assumptions about what is required in the task is very different to what was intended. MacKinnon and Manatunga (2003) found that students believed they were expected to give a non-critical account of their research and did not think they were required to pursue further readings themselves. L1, L2 and L3 viewed assessment as a purely summative activity. Their comments indicated that steps were not taken to use assessment tasks to guide students in their tasks, but as a measuring tool used to evaluate the end product of the assessment task. The confusion experienced by international students was indicated, accurately, by the lecturers’ comments about international students' behaviour. However, there was a lack of awareness by the lecturers concerning helping international students achieve the best possible grades through formative and supportive teaching strategies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecturer</th>
<th>Emergent theme: perceptions of international students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


| L1 | Thought a humanities background most helpful in first year.  
    | Didn’t get to know students as she didn’t tutor students.  
    | Thought international students had more difficulty with other subjects compared to her subject because technologies subject focused on processes rather than original design.  
    | Thought international students had more trouble with open-ended/problem-based tasks compared to local students. |
| L2 | Thought a drawing background would be helpful for first year, and also a maths background (logical thinking).  
    | Believed mainland Chinese students faced greater difficulty than any other international cohort. Thought they had trained to pass IELTS test specifically; therefore not capable of completing course work.  
    | Believed mainland Chinese students were less affluent than Malaysian Chinese students, therefore more prone to plagiarism.  
    | Concerned about mainland Chinese students’ lack of familiarity with world history.  
    | Had no teaching contact through tutorials but was responsible for dealing with cases of plagiarism: felt sympathetic towards cases of isolation and financial pressure.  
    | Knew that over time, international students thrived and would like to see that happen earlier.  
    | Would like more background information about the students to draw conclusions about prior academic experience.  
    | Thought mainland Chinese students at Masters’ level showed strong ability to think independently.  
    | Thought all students tended to disregard their own experience as a reference point for architecture. |
Table 11: Interpretation of lecturers' comments - perceptions of international students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>L3</th>
<th>Thought physics and maths background would help first year students.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Believed mainland Chinese students had less commonality with locals than previous international cohorts, especially Malaysian and Singaporean students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thought adjustment to a new culture was a significant challenge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thought international students faced design challenges because of culturally-derived, poetic analogy experience, leading to a lack of original ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thought all first year students over-relied on logical thinking, and that no first year students were able to demonstrate “fuzzy” (creative) architectural thinking.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lecturers’ responses about their perceptions of international students

L2 and L3 believed that mainland Chinese students were more likely to experience difficulty than other students in first year. L1 spoke in more general terms, using “international” as the descriptive term for the group experiencing most difficulty in first year (L1, 17 March, 2006). These answers were in response to a general question relating to “desirable prerequisites for first year in this course of study”. In the lecturers’ responses relating to desirable prerequisites, it became clear that the lecturers believed the literacy difficulties experienced by mainland Chinese students, and more generally, international students, outweighed all other considerations regarding useful skills. Further, L2 thought mainland Chinese students were disadvantaged because they did not have a world view of history and L3 thought mainland Chinese students were disadvantaged because they were culturally inclined to view design in terms of poetic analogies, or ideograms. L1 believed that international students experienced more difficulty with problem-based learning than local students.

Student populations in universities are becoming more diverse. As a consequence, the needs of a diverse population are becoming more evident to the lecturers. However, a tension exists when universities (and individual lecturers) do not make explicit how subject-specific literacy is taught. Such “mainstreaming of literacy” (Dunworth & Kirkpatrick, 2003;
34) is a direction towards intercultural communication strategies, but as McInnes (2001) noted, such strategies placed pressure on academics to test their core teaching and learning values and tended to lead to debates about diluted standards. Both L1 and L2 voiced concern about international students who had gained entry to the first year of the course either by an inflated IELTS score or via an ESL-supported Year 12 course of study. These comments support McInnes’ view that academics have strong views about the level of teaching in intercultural communication and discipline-specific literacy that might be required by academics.

English competencies aside, each lecturer offered other desirable prerequisites beyond literacy skills. L1 thought a humanities background would be most useful to first year students, L2 thought a drawing and maths background and L3 thought a physics and maths background most useful in the first year course (none of the three lecturers thought a background in their own content area would be most useful). This could suggest that the lecturers were less concerned about the content skills of first year students, perhaps confident that in their own subject areas, these skills would develop over time. It could also suggest the overwhelming significance the lecturers felt about the issue of general English language and literacy skills of international students; it is possible that the challenge of addressing the language issues far outweighed any other skill considerations.

In response to a question regarding what opportunities lecturers had for communication with international students, all three lecturers responded similarly. As none of the lecturers taught tutorials, they rarely got to know any of the students. This raised the issue of distance between lecturers and students and the difficulties involved in learning partnerships where there is little opportunity for relationships to be established. According to Pinheiro (2001) international students cite their relationships with lecturers and tutors as critical to their learning environment. Leask (2005) noted that lecturers and tutors needed to be mutually engaged with students in the teaching and learning process to achieve successful outcomes for international students. In particular, Leask believed that lecturers needed to talk regularly to students about what forms of written information they found most helpful. Consequently, a tension exists for lecturers and students if lecturers do not know their students nor have
opportunities to talk to students about their needs.

Summary

The interviews with lecturers provided the researcher with useful insight into the issues and dilemmas faced by lecturers in relation to international students. There was sympathy, overall, for the difficulties faced by international students and an acknowledgement by the lecturers that they would like to do more to assist. However, the lecturers had some difficulty in describing how they could address the difficulties in terms of pedagogy. This was related to the perception that the most significant issue for international students was a lack of academic English. The lecturers discussed the issue of critical reading and writing skills in terms of student deficits rather than taking a more personally reflective stance that might include how to use strategies to teach international students about critical reading and writing within the context of their subjects. This position was reflective of the tension that exists in many educational settings about who is responsible for the development of reading and writing skills. The interviews revealed that the lecturers did not know their students, did not talk to students about their learning needs and did not engage in progressive feedback with students. The distance that existed between lecturers and students in general meant that they did not engage in the kind of learning relationships that foster reflective and responsive change to the learning needs of students.

Data Collection 2: discussion and analysis of observations of lectures

Introduction

Observation of the lectures given by the three lecturers provided authentic data relating to the teaching and learning environment experienced by the students involved in the study. As detailed in the methodology chapter, the theoretical stance of the researcher was observer as participant, as defined by Tash (2003) where the researcher spends time with the participants who are aware they are being observed. As the observation data was “connected to an analytic deductive approach involving intertwined observation and analysis” (Robson, 1993: 201), the researcher focused on the observable teaching and learning
practices of the participants. The resulting data was analysed by identifying the emerging themes consistent with the overall purpose of capturing the lecturers' teaching discourse and instructional materials within the lecture environment. In particular, in extracting and coding data, the researcher focused on the data that might illuminate a potential difference in the various expectations of the study's participants (the lecturers, the tutors and the international students). Consequently, only data relating to potential learning problems has been included in the final reduction of data for this analysis. The researcher acknowledges that all the lectures observed were delivered by highly skilled practitioners and there was extensive evidence of effective learning occurring within that context. For the purposes of this study, however, a focused view of potential learning problems was analysed.

In the discussion and analysis of lectures across the three subjects (building technologies, architectural history and design), the three emerging themes were (a) teaching and learning practice, (b) linguistics and (c) content. Data was extracted and organised within these themes.

Four lectures were observed just after commencement of first semester in the first year of study. This was considered important timing as it was the students' first experience of university. L1's lecture included a short presentation by a guest lecturer for some of the lecture time. For the purposes of this analysis, L1's guest was not included in the summary data, but the resulting pedagogical implications are discussed in context, as there are implications for lecturers working with their guests to help them present their material appropriately. The researcher observed two lectures by L2, one of which included a guest lecturer some of the time. This session presented no discernible learning problems for international students and so is not included in the final reduction of data for analysis in the lecture analysis table. One lecture by L3 was observed. (Observation details of all of the lectures are detailed in Appendices 7 to 10). Explanation of the lecture settings and participants are described in the methodology chapter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecturer</th>
<th>Data relating to the theme of teaching and learning practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

```
| L1 | Absence of repetition of main points and main concepts by lecturer.  
|    | Absence of scaffolded material reflecting difference between main points and concepts and explanatory detail relating to worked examples by lecturer.  
|    | Lecturer addressed inappropriate student talk. |
| L2 | Students’ attention had not been sought prior to beginning.  
|    | Lecture title and purpose not stated in introduction.  
|    | Relevance of shift to 13th century history not clear to students.  
|    | No reference to lecture notes availability learning management system.  
|    | Absence of repetition of main points and main concepts.  
|    | Student talk not addressed.  
|    | No task assigned for duration of lecture. |
| L3 | Students’ attention had not been sought prior to beginning.  
|    | Lecture title and purpose not stated in introduction.  
|    | Key instruction to students dependent on presence of explicit cues, which were absent.  
|    | Presentation of design slides not consistent in order of information delivered.  
|    | Absence of repetition of main points and main concepts.  
|    | No links made between designs.  
|    | Key instruction words from introduction revisited during lecture not explained.  
|    | Purpose and title of lecture revealed towards end of lecture but relevance to key instructions not explained.  
|    | Original teaching points not returned to after asides.  
|    | Student talk not addressed.  
|    | No task assigned for duration of lecture. |

**Table 12: Interpretation of observed lecturer actions and content - teaching and learning practice**
Lecturers’ outcomes relating to teaching and learning practice

The lecturers’ approaches to general teaching and learning practice reflected misunderstandings about how to establish conditions for learning. While acknowledging the difficult teaching and learning challenges of the lecture format for creating a student-centred learning experience, it was clear that the lecturers predominantly presented a transmission style of teaching. While lectures do most commonly lead to a transmission style of learning as outlined by Biggs (1999), some properties of good general teaching are possible within a lecture setting. In analysing general teaching and learning practices, Ramsden’s “Properties of Good Teaching” findings (2003), as described in Chapter 2, are used as a means of discussing fundamental teaching requirements in a lecture setting.

With respect to student engagement as outlined by Ramsden (2003), L2 and L3 did not establish control of the teaching and learning environment at the commencement of the lecture. It was observed that students were still settling and chatting when both lecturers began their introductory remarks. Further to issues relating to student engagement, L2 and L3 did not state the title and purpose of the lecture during the introductory period. Consequently, students were not ready to engage in the critical introductory period of the lecture, nor were they given the opportunity to know what understandings should be expected by the end of the lecture. Issues of engagement persisted intermittently throughout the lectures as inappropriate student-to-student chatter was a feature of all lectures observed. Although L1 intervened to quieten students on two occasions on behalf of the guest lecturer, neither the guest lecturer nor L2 or L3 did so. Additionally, L2 and L3 did not assign a task for students to undertake during the course of the lecture. Active engagement of students was not sought by L2 and L3 in the form of a specific instruction task. A specific instruction for students to participate in some active form is consistent with Ramsden’s finding that lecturers need to engage students at their level of understanding (2003).

Ramsden found that lecturers needed to focus on key concepts, and students’ misunderstandings of them, rather than on covering certain content (2003). With respect to
this finding, L1’s guest, L2 and L3 did not emphasise main points and concepts nor return to main points and concepts throughout the lectures. This observation is significant, as Ramsden argued that the lecturer’s role is one of responsibility to make clear at all times the purpose and focus of the learning material. Further, L1’s guest lecturer, L2 and L3 did not differentiate between the core knowledge the students should gain and explanatory detail, thereby limiting the students’ ability to determine what constituted core knowledge. This occurred when L1’s guest lecturer presented extensive mathematical equations associated with the lecture topic. After students became talkative and restless, L1 acknowledged the confusion and disengagement by the students by returning to the lectern to assert that students did not need to know how to do all equations demonstrated and also reiterating the definition of terms relating to the topic. A lecture containing maths content leads to further questions about how to connect to students’ prior knowledge when students bring such diverse maths experience to the subject. Ramsden’s finding (2003) that lecturers need to engage students at their level of understanding presents a serious challenge for mathematical material delivered in a lecture setting.

L2 presented a richly informative lecture on features of gothic architecture and its origins and included descriptively detailed knowledge relating to political allegiances of the medieval period. However, in doing so, he did not explain how the threads of his information supported the main point of his presentation and this was likely to be the reason the students became talkative and restless. L3 presented many slides accompanied by critiques but drew no links between the designs presented.

Direct strategies relating to structuring teaching material to reflect main teaching points followed by detailed examples is reflective of Ramsden’s goal to focus on key concepts in a lecture (2003). This learning problem is linked, also, to the importance of explaining ideas and concepts clearly. Ramsden argued for the need to explain materials plainly, but L1’s guest lecturer, L2 and L3 did not make clear the connections and relevance of elements contained in the lectures, nor present the material in a form accessible to beginning students, further reducing the students’ ability to extract sense and meaning. As Ridley (2004) argued, the discourse of academic disciplines in higher education is confusing and
mysterious for all students.

In analysing the teaching and learning practices of the lectures through Ramsden’s lens of Properties of Good Teaching (2003), it was possible to establish that all students were confronted with learning problems in the lecture setting. International students, as part of the whole cohort, experienced these problems along with their local peers. However, international students were further disadvantaged in the lecture setting when issues of linguistics and choice of content were analysed. Although all students were disadvantaged by the new academic discourse, international students were more significantly affected. Ridley pointed out, it is they who do not have the “cultural capital” to begin to process information in the new learning environment (Ridley, 2004: 92).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecturer</th>
<th>Data relating to the theme of linguistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>Speech pattern reflected a very quick speaking speed by L1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Verbal and written explanation of key technical terms and questions not explained by L1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2</td>
<td>Speech patterns contained ‘wait’ markers not related to sentence structure confusing to second language speakers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Verbal and written explanation of key technical terms and questions not explained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unpredictable intonation in sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complex, culturally-specific vocabulary not explained nor edited</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 4: Discussion and Analysis of Research Data

Table 13: Interpretation of observed lecturer actions and lecture content - linguistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>L3</th>
<th>Speech patterns contained “wait” markers not related to sentence structure confusing to second language speakers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Verbal and written explanation of key technical terms and questions not explained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unpredictable intonation in sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complex, culturally-specific vocabulary not explained nor edited</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lecturers’ outcomes relating to linguistics

According to Hellsten and Prescott (2005) international students use guesswork as a backup tool in deciphering the meaning of curriculum content and delivery. Over time, inaccurate guesses lead to a spiralling of performance. International students benefit significantly by careful explanation of key terms at the time of use. In analysing the lectures from a linguistic perspective, it was clear that L1’s guest, L2 and L3 used terms specific to their academic subject area that needed definition and explanation in order to avoid inaccurate guesswork leading to poor outcomes.

L1’s guest lecturer presented mathematical material relating to the composition of forces (Statics and Dynamics). While the key words were presented visually, they were not explained either verbally or in writing. L2 named the spaces of a gothic cathedral; “nave”, “choir”, “transet”, “clergy”, “the crossing”, “vault”, “ribs” (L2, 17 March, 2006) but did not explain them verbally, write them, or provide written plain English to explain the terms. L3 displayed four key terms at the start of his lecture; “natural”, “subjective”, “social”, “transient” (7 March, 2006); suggesting the meaning of these four words would become clear as the lecture progressed. However, he did not return to the four key words. The significance of these omissions relates to comprehension of meaning. However, for international students, these omissions have greater effects when lecturers fail to assist students to add to their existing schema in order to make sense of their new experiences. As Ferman (2003) and Ryan and Hellmundt (2005) argued, learning is impeded if students’ pre-existing frames of
reference are different to their new environment and this leads to cognitive dissonance. International students’ frames of reference, if measured on a continuum, are significantly different to local students in the new conditions for learning operating in this particular higher education setting. However, it is also true that different frames of reference exist within the international student cohort (Louie, 2005; Carroll, 2005) and thus only an inclusive and explicit pedagogical approach will help students to adapt to their new learning conditions.

Related to the problem of definition of key words and terms, was the use of culturally-specific vocabulary and phrasing, which in turn, was related to very complex concepts being presented. L2’s lecture contained phrasing such as “God’s transcendence in church-heaven on Earth” (L2, 17 March, 2006). Although this language was relevant to the topic, for second-language learners the meaning is inaccessible as no literal translation of the vocabulary would offer accurate interpretation. L3’s language was rich, expressive, figurative and abstract in nature. Examples of specific vocabulary included “form”, “texture”, “surface”, “qualities”, “iconic junctions of material”, “deformation”, “surface impression”, “undulations”, “nobbly space”, “chomp off”, “knotty thing”, “curvy thing”, “so-called solid bits”, and “polychromy” (L2, 17 March, 2006). While many of these words will become part of a student’s lexicon over time, second language learners find the frequency of use of intensely figurative and abstract language at this early stage an overwhelming challenge. L3 used culturally-specific references such as “You walk in shadow unless you are an Englishman walking in the midday sun” and “The walls are all out of sheets, panels, copperplate; philosophical graffiti” (L3, 7 March, 2006). While amusing and clever, the use of such language engages linguistically-talented first language speakers. However, the reverse outcome is to alienate and distance students who are not linguistically talented or for whom English is a second language.

Carroll noted (2005), that lecturers should avoid blaming students for not bringing particular linguistic skills to the academic setting, but rather, they need to assist students to adapt and learn new linguistic skills. In this instance, some reflection on the frequency and complexity of vocabulary and cultural references included in the early stages of a course would demonstrate appropriate strategies for a more inclusive teaching and learning practice.
Carroll recommended that teachers become far more knowledgeable about their own academic cultures in order to identify academic practices which exclude international students from their new learning environment (2005).

In analysing lectures from a linguistic perspective, it was also clear that at times, lecturers’ speech patterns proved challenging for second language learners. This effect, it is acknowledged by the researcher, is the most difficult for lecturers to address. However, it is consistent with the recommendations of Ridley (2004), Louie (2005) and Carroll (2005) to focus academics’ awareness of this phenomenon in order to assist them to modify and adjust their delivery of lectures to international students. L1’s guest lecturer spoke very quickly. This feature of spoken language relates to the time required by international students to process information. L2 and L3 demonstrated unpredictable speech patterns relating to sentence structure. L2 created pauses by inserting “wait” markers such as “ah”, “umm” and “er” and repeating words such as “by” a number of times as he collected his thoughts. He demonstrated a style of sentence construction where the subject of the sentence might follow a phrase that established time and place but did not follow formal English sentence construction norms. For example, “Now these buildings, one of the things I wanted to talk about ...” (L2, 17 March, 2006). L2’s intonation was sometimes unusual in that his tone would rise at the end of a sentence but fall at the end of a phrase. At times, L2’s speech would lose volume towards the end of a sentence, making the point of the sentence lost to the audience. L3, too, tended to start a sentence loudly and then decrease volume at the end of a sentence, and his speech contained many pauses not related to commas or full stops.

Adding to the complexity of this phenomenon was the observation that L2 did not always use predictable speech patterns. In contrast to L2’s second lecture observed by the researcher, L2’s first lecture was delivered in clear and precise language. More research would be necessary to establish a cause and effect relationship, but it was interesting to note that L2’s first lecture was well-structured, with clear scaffolding relating to the main point of the lecture and the supporting examples to illustrate the main point. It is possible that lecturers’ speech patterns are affected by the quality of their own lecture designs and materials. Thus,
attention to Ramsden’s Properties of Good Teaching (2003), or similar, could see improvement in the verbal skills of lecturers, thereby specifically benefiting international students. In order to help international students to adapt to the varied challenges of new language in a new environment, lecturers need to be aware of their own language use as it is perceived from an international student’s perspective. As Ridley (2004) noted, an absence of lecturers’ awareness regarding discourse leads to the alienation of international and non-traditional students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecturer</th>
<th>Data relating to the theme of content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>Pure maths not accessible for some students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2</td>
<td>Christian content relating to religious and cultural history contained assumed knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L3</td>
<td>Christian content relating to religious and cultural history contained assumed knowledge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 14: Interpretation of observed lecturer actions and lecture content - content*

**Lecturers’ outcomes relating to content**

MacKinnon and Manathunga (2003) argued that Western universities continue to maintain Western templates of knowledge due to acceptance of existing dominant cultural and community literacies. As such, university teachers (like all teachers) are not always aware of embedded cultural knowledge contained in lectures. Three of the four lectures observed in this study related to socially-constructed material (history and interpretation of architectural design).

Within this context, both L2 and L3 assumed embedded student knowledge relating to religion and culture. The explicit and implicit references to Christianity and European culture were extensive. The students without a background of Judean-Christian tradition had little opportunity to access meaning. L2’s historical lecture contained a strong Christian content.
As he described it, he was lecturing on the “Godly East” (L2, 17 March, 2006), meaning Jerusalem. There were many references to Mary such as the “cult of Mary”, “mother of God”, “mother of Christ” as well as the content relating to the relationship of Christ to the royal families of 13th century Europe (L2, 17 March, 2006). L3’s material included design work from the Museum of Art in Canberra, references to psychologists and scientists (Wandt, Wolfgang and Newton), Greek columns and Chernikov’s early career in Constructivist architecture. While including material particular to the dominant culture is not necessarily cause for concern (as it could be a means of providing important dominant cultural knowledge to students from the non-dominant cultures), it is significant that L2 and L3 did not provide explanations of the references nor guide students to resources that would help to describe the relevance of the references. There is no alternative solution for developing historical and culturally-derived knowledge in students other than scaffolding levels of information to differentiate instruction according to what students know. Providing international students with opportunities to pre-read short pieces of text relating to the background of material is one form of differentiation. This would be a culturally responsive way to address the intercultural misunderstandings referred to by MacKinnon and Manathunga (2003).

Summary

The three lecturers in this study demonstrated a passion and knowledge about their subjects that was appreciated and valued by most students. It is important to acknowledge this overall satisfaction by students as the researcher’s focus related to perceived problems only, and as such, might create the misunderstanding that problems outweighed successes. Within that context, the researcher identified a number of areas for possible development to assist international students to engage more successfully with lectures. In particular, lecturers did not always gain control of the learning environment at the commencement of lectures, nor intervene when student behaviour was not conducive to listening. At times, main points and concepts were not returned to in the course of a lecture and this sometimes led to the loss of the thread, or purpose, of the lecture.

There was evidence that some lecture content was of a particularly unfamiliar nature to
many students and this highlighted the challenge for lecturers to connect with students’ prior knowledge. Additionally, international students were affected by embedded cultural knowledge contained within lectures; in particular, there were consistent references which required a historical, religious and cultural background not necessarily shared by all students. The inaccessibility of new academic discourse for first year students was highlighted in some of the complex and abstract language of the disciplines – not often supported by explicit explanation. The issue of spoken English and the challenges facing international students in adapting to the speech patterns of lecturers early in the academic year were also apparent in the ways lecturers sometimes were unaware of their unpredictable speech patterns.

Data Collection 3: discussion and analysis of tutorial observations

Introduction

The tutorials observed in this study involved a range of tasks and purposes across the three subjects. The emphasis of this analysis was to investigate the teaching and learning approaches of the tutors within each subject and across the subjects, with particular emphasis given to outcomes for international students within the tutorial setting. The analysis of the tutorials became especially significant as the study progressed. It became clear through student feedback in surveys (also analysed in this chapter) that the students considered the tutorials to be core teaching and learning time.

Remaining consistent to this study’s methodological approach, data collected through observation of tutorials was recorded and coded to themes. Tutors were observed across five tutorial sessions from the three subjects involved in the study. All of L1’s tutorials and L3’s tutorials were held simultaneously in one large space, only semi-separated from each other. This meant the researcher was able to observe most tutors in L1’s subject and L3’s subject. Not all tutors were included in data collection, as the researcher selected particular tutors who worked with either a mix of local students and international students, or tutors who worked solely with international students. In total, 14 tutors were observed; T1 to T8 taught in L1’s subject, T9 and T10 taught in L2’s subject and T11 to T14 taught in L3’s
subject. *(Note: T1 represents Tutor 1, T2 represents Tutor 2 and so on).*

The results of the coding of data are summarised in Table 15 below and focus on the researcher’s commentary on observed tutor actions and verbal responses related to the tutorial content and teaching purpose. *(See Appendices 11 to 14 for detailed data).* To remain consistent with the coding procedures of the study, only the observed actions and responses considered problematic for learning were included in the final coding process. In contrast to the emergence of discernible separate themes of teaching and learning, linguistics and content in the observations of lectures, coding relating to themes for tutorials resulted in a single theme of teaching and learning. Issues relating to linguistics and content were not identified as problematic within the practical course activities observed in all tutorials. However, a significant number of issues relating to the theme of teaching and learning were identified, and the implications for international students as a result of the general teaching and learning problems were significant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tutor and subject</th>
<th>Observed tutor actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L1: T5, T6, T7, T8</td>
<td>Limited engagement with student groups at the beginning of practical classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1: T5, T6, T7</td>
<td>Did not know the names of students nor country of origin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1: T5</td>
<td>Did not conduct “getting to know you” activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1: T8,T9</td>
<td>Did not work with student groups while task proceeded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1:T5, T6</td>
<td>Bi-lingual tutors not consistent in second language use with students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1:T5,T6,T7; L2:T10</td>
<td>Students confused with task and did not complete tasks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 15: Interpretation of observed tutor actions and responses in the studio.

Observed teaching and learning actions and responses

The data relating to tutors’ actions and verbal responses in tutorials in this study indicated significant differences in outcomes for student learning and these outcomes were dependent on which tutor a student was assigned. Although 14 tutors were observed, only eight tutors’ actions and verbal responses impacted negatively on student learning. The outcomes for the students in the tutorials of T5, T6, T7, T8 and T10 were less successful than other tutorial groups, although students in the tutorials of T7 and T8 were more successful than students in the tutorials of T5, T6 and T10. The factors determining the causes for the least successful tutorial group outcomes proved cumulative in nature and are detailed below under the relevant headings referenced to Ramsden’s Properties of Good Teaching (2003). In order to clarify why some tutorials were less successful than others, some reference to good practice was included in the analysis of tutorials. In this study’s analysis of the lectures, only problematic features were discussed, with good practice recommendations contained in the concluding chapter.
For the purposes of discussing the ways in which students were negatively affected by tutors, Ramsden’s Properties of Good Teaching (2003) was used as a benchmark to analyse the learning problems that emerged during tutorials. This provided a particularly clear lens through which to analyse the data as it focused on the relationship between how teachers teach and how students learn. In order to establish the misunderstandings that existed between what was intended to be taught and what was actually learned (Trigger & Prosser, 1996a), Ramsden’s lens (see italicised headings below) articulates basic tenet for identifying why misunderstandings occur.

“Teachers should have a facility for engaging with students at their level of understanding” (Ramsden, 2003: 86)

It was observed that T5, T6, T7, T8 and T10 did not spend time at the commencement of the tutorial establishing the intention and purpose of the tasks to the group, nor did they offer any introductory remarks that were encouraging in tone. T5 and T6 began to work with the practical materials themselves and some students slowly began to investigate the materials and read through the task sheet individually. T7 and T8 drew students’ attention to the requirements of the task but this was very brief and did not cover suggestions or draw questions of clarification from students. Throughout the tutorial session, T7 and T8 did not participate with the students’ practical work but sat apart, marking student journals. Additionally, T7 did not participate in testing the students’ constructions at the completion of the tutorial. One result of the tutors’ lack of preparatory work with students was that students showed confusion with tasks. T5’s group and T6’s group took a long time to begin and did not complete their task. The groups of T7 and T8 did complete their task but did not have success with their designs (poor load bearing models).

T10’s group was delivering individual research presentations. Although T10 asked if the previous lecture was helpful, he was unable to answer students’ questions about the content of the exam to come. Although students expressed anxiety about the difficulty in capturing verbally-delivered information for the purposes of an exam, the tutor did not respond and did not offer to follow up their query with the lecturer. T10 moved on to the first student’s
presentation without further comment.

In contrast, T1, T2, T3 and T4 worked with each team within their tutorial groups from the beginning of the task. All four tutors emphasised the key concept of load-bearing before the students progressed too far with a design. A feature of the student behaviour engendered by T1, T2, T3 and T4 was their enthusiastic discussion. These tutors participated, guided or observed according to need and were able to engage comfortably with all the students for the duration of the tutorial.

From a student's perspective, the lack of discourse and physical involvement by T5, T6, T7, T8 and T10 indicated that the traditional role of teacher as guide was not a feature of the learning conditions they were experiencing. From a teaching and learning perspective, it was evident to the observer that the students needed guidance, particularly at the outset of the tutorial, and they continued to need an expert’s input at critical points throughout the task. This was consistent with Pinheiro’s observation that students believed they had experienced positive participation in tutorials when students and teachers were co-learners and co-decision makers in the learning process (2001). When this teaching and learning process was not present, Pinheiro argued, students felt “disconnected and ignored” (2001: 6).

“Showing concern and respect for students” (Ramsden, 2003: 86)

A particular issue relating to rapport-building between tutors and students arose for international and local students in T5’s and T6’s tutorials. T5 spoke English and Indonesian and T6 spoke English and Chinese. T5 had a number of Indonesian-speaking students in both her tutorial groups but did not speak Indonesian to them. She explained that she didn’t want to give the Indonesian students any advantage by speaking Indonesian. T6 had a number of Chinese-speaking students in her tutorials and spoke Chinese to them. She believed she was given the Chinese-speaking students in order to speak Chinese with them. The tutors appeared to be unclear about the L1’s motives for forming the tutorial groups on the basis of languages spoken, and consequently were not consistent in their language approach to international students.

T5 indicated that she did not do the “getting to know you” activity at the beginning of the
course and indicated that she did not know the names of her students or the home countries of her international students. T6 had learned the names of her Chinese students but not the names of her local students.

Within the context of Ramsden’s (2003) Properties of Good Teaching, and in this case, “showing concern and respect for students”, the tutors’ failure to know students’ names and cultural profiles indicated a lack of awareness of the importance of establishing good teacher-student relationships. Leask supported Ramsden’s broad principle concerning concern and respect. In her self-questionnaire for lecturers and tutors (Leask, 2005: 126) relating to preparedness for teaching an international curriculum, she emphasized that lecturers and tutors needed to know the cultural background of their students and their names. She also stressed the importance of modelling appropriate interpersonal behaviour with all students, especially within small group settings. Further, McLean and Ransom (2005) found that university teachers had a responsibility towards cross-cultural interaction and the breaking down of ethnocentric views, and this was best achieved in small group tutorials. The absence of interpersonal communication between students and tutors as demonstrated by limited knowledge about the students was a feature of the tutorials given by T5 and T6, T7 and T8.

T7, also, did not know his students’ names or cultural backgrounds. He was a more experienced tutor than T5, T6 and T10. When asked if knowing the students’ names and backgrounds would help with his role as tutor T7 replied that it was unnecessary because “Knowing cultural background is irrelevant as you are teaching to industry standards and they either reach it or not” (T7, 24 March, 2006).

Although T7 was the only tutor to describe his role in such terms, there was evidence that T5, T6 and T8 and T10 also felt it was unnecessary to get to know students personally. This, in conjunction with these tutors’ lack of engagement and absence of inclusive teaching practice, could suggest an attitude that international students were alone responsible for adapting to a new learning environment. Such an attitude would present an obstacle to any curriculum initiative that proposed a shared responsibility for a transitional approach for new students in their first year of study. In not engaging with students personally, the tutors also
missed an opportunity to encourage students to ask questions and seek clarification. Failure to show concern for students leads to a disconnection between tutors and students and results in a learning environment where all communication is limited. Such a situation for international students, already confronted with an unfamiliar setting and academic English challenges, would contribute to significantly poor learning conditions.

“Commitment to making it clear what has to be understood, at what level and why” (Ramsden, 2003: 86)

Some tutors demonstrated that they were not aware of the importance of showing students how to prepare a presentation. Other tutors’ actions showed they were not aware of how to participate in student presentations or, how to engage other students in the process of listening to student presentations. The absence of support processes for presenting students, and the tutors’ inability to include the group of students during presentations is elaborated in the paragraphs below.

All of the students in T10’s tutorial were international. In contrast to T9, T10 had not sought a tutorial room with internet access and DVD player with monitor. As students were required to show images for their presentations on the architectural features of a city, this was a major problem. Although there was an overhead projector in the room, one student was not aware of the need for specific transparencies and attempted to show his drawings on the projector with paper. He drew his map on the whiteboard and significant time was lost as he did so. He also indicated that he would have liked to show his city via an internet map but was unable to do so as the room was not connected to the internet. Another student did have a map on the required transparency but did not know how to focus the image and when no one offered to assist, she gave up her attempt. The student then drew a simple map on the whiteboard which took some time. She also set up a laptop and loaded an image to show the group. This was done without a data projector and the images could not be seen by the majority of the group. This particular sequence of events took twenty minutes.

Both students read their material. Both students’ delivery styles indicated that the material they were reading was taken from a text. One student made this clear by stumbling over
words and apologising with the explanation that she didn’t know the meaning of the words. Further, both students had compiled information about the history of the cities but not the architectural history of the cities, thereby missing the point of the presentation. One of the students was so confused by the task that she described the irrelevant cost of tickets to events during festivals, and which dates were related to religious holidays.

In contrast to this tutorial, T9’s students presented visual material efficiently via a slideshow on DVD. The two students who presented demonstrated they had understood the purpose of the task and had remained relevant to the task criteria. The difference in teaching style between T9 and T10 was evident in that T9 had sought a suitable room for the students’ presentations and the students had understood how to use the technology. T9 also invited students to ask questions of the presenting students which led to general discussion and clarification amongst the students and the tutor regarding the focus of the task: architectural features. T10 had not sought a suitable room for the presentation of visual material or taught the students how to use the available technology (the overhead projector). Class discussion was absent from T10’s tutorial group. T10 did not invite questions from the student audience, remark on the relevancy of the students’ material or use the material to make a teaching point.

T10’s approach to his tutorial demonstrated a lack of knowledge about quite basic teaching and learning procedures. As there was no feedback of any of the student presentations, the students could not draw on any direct or indirect model on how to proceed, and T10 did not change what he was doing in order to improve what was occurring. This lack of response to the learning conditions was also evident, at times, in other tutorials and relates to what Ramsden called the importance of improvising and adapting to new demands (2003). Additionally, Ramsden’s Properties of Good Teaching also emphasized the importance of learning from students about the effects of teaching. From these perspectives, it was clear that some tutors were not able to observe student behaviour critically and adjust their approaches appropriately.

T9 and T13 were able to provide direction, commentary and discussion prompts, and as such, were creating a positive environment for most of their students. However, they did not
encourage participation by all students. Of the 14 students present in T9’s tutorial, 11 were listening to the student presentations. Of the three students not listening, two were international students. The local student was catching up on his journal-writing and both international students had their heads down on their tables, looking away from the presentation. One of these students had earlier advised the tutor she was not ready to do her presentation due that day.

T13 had arranged his tutorial group so that students who wanted to participate in listening to presentations could do so at the front of the room and those who wanted to work on their folios could do so at the back of the room. Three students elected to work on their folios. However, two other students sat in the space between the presenting group and the folio group not involved in either activity. All five were international students. T13 faced the presenting student but had his back to the rest of the tutorial group. This arrangement made his comments difficult to hear and the rest of the “participating” group were physically cut off from the discussion between the tutor and the presenting student. Over time, some students gave up trying to listen to the tutor’s comments and chatted. Two international students sat together neither listening nor chatting. The disengagement by the majority of students, including all of the international students, was the significant feature of T13’s tutorial.

Neither T9 nor T13 sought to change the disengaged students’ circumstances, either through altering the physical arrangement of the space or by engaging the students in conversation. All but one of the most affected students was international. Ramsden’s Properties (a) regarding the need to adapt a teaching approach to suit demand and (b) learning from students in order to learn about the effects of teaching are of particular relevance in these circumstances (2003).

During the students’ presentations across all tutorials observed, seven of the 14 tutors provided useful feedback to the presenting student and the student audiences. T11, for example, took time at the beginning of the tutorial to make suggestions about maximising the presentation of their work, checked their understanding through questioning and offered to help students individually. He elicited questions and observations from the group during the students’ presentations and persisted with questions when it was clear that a core
understanding was not established. T11 intervened with one student’s presentation to make a suggestion to the student’s approach and this ensured the presentation was more effective in its structure. T12 organised his group in a circle without tables. This small space was effective as the absence of tables reduced the distance between students and created an inclusive circle for discussion. All members of the group, including the tutor and presenting student were active participants in discussing and commenting on the learning material. T1, T2, T3, T4, T11 and T12 were encouraging in their comments while providing constructive commentary to assist the students to identify possible design errors. This was achieved by a form of Socratic questioning of individual students where the purpose was for the students to recognise for themselves areas for improvement. In contrast to this approach, T14 was direct in her criticism of student work. In commenting on one international student’s design, she said, “I don’t like it. It is like a doll’s house” (Tutor 14, Design tutorial, 24 May, 2006).

Naidoo and Jamieson (2005) commented on the crucial role of supportive and meaningful feedback in helping international students to understand what is required. They argued that quality feedback was a highly skilled process that required careful choice of language and timeliness in order to assist students. Six of the tutors observed (T1, T2, T3, T4, T11, T12) demonstrated supportive and specific feedback about students’ presentations skilfully and effectively. However, it was also true that eight of the tutors did not demonstrate an ability to provide supportive and meaningful feedback to students. Of these eight tutors, three tutors did not engage in conversation at all and four engaged in conversation with only some of the students. One of the eight tutors (T14) provided negative feedback but did not facilitate discussion.

Summary

The data resulting from the observation of tutorials was of particular significance to this study because it demonstrated the degree of difference in teaching expertise between tutors within each subject area. In using Ramsden’s Properties of Good Teaching (2003) to comment on the tutors’ effectiveness, it was possible to establish that some tutors were highly skilled in engaging and supporting all students’ learning while others were poorly skilled. The highly skilled tutors showed, in particular, a desire to respond to the students’ needs and thus met
the students’ expectations. The less skilled tutors, however, did not show a desire to respond to students’ needs. Of all teaching and learning practices observed, this had the greatest negative impact on the learning opportunities for international students. In failing to respond to the students’ needs, some tutors caused many international students to be physically isolated in the teaching space, present irrelevant and poorly conceived projects, and not participate in learning conversations in order to clarify the learning misunderstandings.

Data Collection 4: discussion and analysis of additional student comments in Quality of Teaching surveys

Introduction

Quality of Teaching surveys were distributed at the end of the students’ first semester of study and the researcher was given permission by the three lecturers in this study to analyse the additional comments contained in the surveys (Appendices 15, 16, 17). An explanation of the purpose and validity of including an analysis of this data was included in the methodology chapter and the use of surveys within a qualitative study was established with reference to Patton (2002). It is important to note that of the 160 surveys returned, 115 contained additional student comments. It was not possible to differentiate between local students’ surveys and international students’ surveys. However, some students prefaced their comments by identifying themselves as “ESL” students.

In analysing the additional student comments in the Quality of Teaching surveys of L1, L2 and L3, student comments were coded into three categories. These were (a) lectures, (b) tutorials and (c) assessment. The coding relating to assessment was also tied strongly to feedback regarding tutors; consequently, it was accurate to describe the Quality of Teaching surveys’ additional comments by students to be more strongly focused on tutors and tutorials than on lectures and lecturers. All comments have been included in this analysis in order to ensure representative reporting of outcomes. In analysing the students’ additional comments, both similarities and differences between subjects were identified. Additionally, the researcher included comments that reflect positive feedback as well as negative
feedback. Although the focus for this study was on the learning problems faced by international students (and potentially, all students), it was important to include specific positive student comments that countered specific negative feedback in order to evaluate why there were different student responses to the same learning conditions.

In analysing the additional student comments in the Quality of Teaching surveys, the researcher took care not to make assumptions about specific causes for particular student comments, as secondary data in this form cannot provide the context and background required to draw conclusions about what some students reported occurred and what the learning outcomes were as a result of what occurred. Instead, the researcher has coded the students’ comments according to themes and analysed the significance of the comments in conjunction with all other research data in this study.

**Student comments relating to lectures**

Some students were critical of issues relating to organisation of lecture times and the use of technology support programs and systems.

Four of L1’s students disliked attending two lectures in succession.

*Comment 1:* Holding two lectures together left no time to consolidate the lecture material

*Comment 2:* Holding two lectures didn’t allow for information processing

*Comment 3:* Holding two lectures together with one voice only and uninteresting material made it hard to focus.

*Comment 14:* Students would have preferred the subject lectures to be divided into two sections with the construction lectures given in the first six weeks and the lectures on materials given in the second six weeks

The comments above were consistent with issues relating to difficulty in accessing material. Key words and phrases such “no time to consolidate”, “didn’t allow for information processing” and “hard to focus” indicated these students were not able to orientate what was being presented with the information contained in the previous lecture. For these students, the back-to-back lectures in a two hour format contributed to their difficulty in understanding
the lecture material.

Some of L1’s students commented on inefficient use of PowerPoint presentations because they perceived that time in lectures could be better spent.

Comment 13: Lecturer was inefficient
Comment 15: Lectures just followed the PowerPoint slides in the materials lectures
Comment 16: Reading of PowerPoint slides was a waste of time as reading can be done at home
Comment 17: Reading through the modules in lectures is a waste of time
Comment 18: Lecturers should not read through the modules in lectures as these can be read at home

Additionally, one student felt the use of self-paced learning software was not used appropriately and one felt the use of interactive platforms was positive.

Comment 10: There was too much self-learning from software
Comment 21: The interactive structures were very useful and interesting

In contrast to Comments 10, 13, and 15 to 18, other students provided positive feedback on aspects of L1’s teaching practice.

Comment 19: Good handouts and organisation from lecturer
Comment 20: It was basically a good course
Comment 22: The site visits were good
Comment 23: The assignments were interesting

Comments relating to organisational issues were less frequent for L2 and related to the use of the Learning Management System. These comments were in the form of suggestions for further improvement in the use of the Learning Management System.

Comment 12: It would be helpful to have lecture recordings on the Learning Management System for exam revision as note-taking during lectures was difficult
Comment 13: Would be handy to have copies of slides and photos in lectures online

Some students in L2’s lectures appreciated what was available on the Learning Management System.
Comment 14: Learning Management System announcements were pretty helpful

Comment 15: Learning Management System was very useful

One comment from L3’s surveys indicated a preference for additional use of the Learning Management System.

Comment 9: Making more lecture notes ( contents of slides) online would be helpful for students

L3’s survey included one comment relating specifically to organisation.

Comment 7: The course was disorganised

Overall, in terms of organisation of lecture times and use of technologies, students’ comments were more critical of L1’s unusual scheduling and perceived “waste of time” in her use of PowerPoint slides during a lecture than they were of other lecturers’ organisation and use of technologies. However, comments related to these two aspects of organisation were less frequent for all three lecturers compared to comments relating to content difficulty, connection to tutorials and connection to assessment tasks for all lecturers.

Some students identified learning problems with the way lecturers structured their lectures. For all three lecturers, key descriptors in the students’ comments were “confusing”, “need more connection”, “relevance” and “demanding”. There was a correlation between L1’s maths-based material and the number of additional comments relating to confusion about lecture material. Some students saw this as a problem related to teaching methodology.

Comment 4: Lectures needed to be more sequential

Comment 5: Lectures needed to be more connected

Comment 6: Lecture material seemed to be muddled and incomplete and was hard to follow

Comment 7: Lecturers used different methods to work things out which was confusing

Comment 8: Information in lectures was too hard to understand

Comment 9: Students needed more step-by-step explanations

Comment 11: Students needed more help outside lectures and tutorials

Comment 12: Lectures were too fast

Comment 24: The lecturer explained maths too fast and then said we didn’t need to know it
Many of the comments about L1’s teaching referred specifically to the way maths concepts were taught, the need to increase the explanation and depth of the maths exercises and the need to explain the purpose of the maths exercises covered in the lectures. Comments 24 to 30 reflected dissatisfaction with the selection and the teaching methods of maths concepts. The learning of maths concepts is dependent on prior knowledge. Consequently, it is logical that more students would comment on their inability to understand the lecture material compared to other subjects, as in the opinion of the researcher, awareness of not understanding is much higher in maths contexts than in other academic contexts. However, confusion relating to subject material was not confined to L1’s subject.

Confusion regarding the portfolio requirement in L2’s subject was similar to L1’s students’ confusion with maths material. Some students found the portfolio element of the subject difficult. Students with little drawing background were concerned about putting pencil to paper while others were unclear about the purpose and value of maintaining a drawing portfolio in a history class.

Comment 8: I found the portfolios hard to start as a planning student with little drawing instruction

Comment 9: The portfolio has been too demanding in what it asked for and I felt it was quite difficult to attempt, particularly the analytical drawing

Comment 10: I do not understand the concept of the folio in a history class. I honestly think the folio is a waste of time. Folios are for art classes.

Comment 11: Can’t see the point of the folio
In L3’s subject, there was one comment specifically related to difficulty of lecture material.

Comment 10: The subject was very confusing

While additional comments relating to the portfolio requirements for L2’s subject drew negative feedback, there were seven positive comments relating to the content and delivery of L2’s lectures. Interestingly, L2 drew as many positive comments as negative comments.

Comment 1: The lectures were fantastic
Comment 2: Planning lectures were great
Comment 3: Lectures on planning were very interesting
Comment 4: All up, pretty good subject, especially the lecturer
Comment 5: Lectures were thoroughly enjoyable and the content was stimulating. The planning lectures were helpful to relate to cities
Comment 6: Brasilia topic was very interesting
Comment 7: Thoroughly enjoyed the subject

Of greater significance was the number of comments about the perceived irrelevance of L3’s lectures to the material presented in tutorials and assignments, while at the same time, the number of students’ comments indicating that interest in L3’s lectures was very high.

Comment 1: L3 was a very interesting lecturer but I needed to see examples of previous students’ work as a way to know how to get started.
Comment 2: Lectures could be more relevant to tutorials and in exercises and assessment.
Comment 3: Lectures were irrelevant to our marks and score for this subject so they were not helpful for our assignments. They were interesting lectures but totally irrelevant.
Comment 4: The readings and lectures, although interesting, often seemed irrelevant to the actual assignments.

Some students, despite being engaged and stimulated by L3’s material, felt the need for the material to link more directly with the tutorial assignments and assessment tasks. Thus, students differentiated between “interesting” and “useful” and sought greater cohesion and connection from the lecturer in relation to their course work.
Two students did not draw a distinction between “interesting” and “useful”.

Comment 5: Overall, it was kind of fun.
Comment 6: I liked L3’s lectures. He’s good.

While L1’s students did not make direct reference to language issues, some students in the subjects of L2 and L3 referred to difficulties in understanding what was said in lectures. It is probable that the following comments were made by students whose first language was not English.

With reference to L2, two surveys reported the following:

Comment 16: Talk slowly. Put more detailed notes online. Make more detailed slides with content lecture.
Comment 17: The subject is particularly hard for ESL students. Too much work to do and the exam is too hard for us.

L3 received the following:

Comment 8: It was very hard to understand what L3 was talking about during the lectures.

The lecture material in the subjects of L2 and L3 was highly linguistic and culturally-specific and while this may have contributed to the degree of interest reported overall in most students’ comments, there was a corresponding down-side. International students found the key concepts, terminology, examples and explanatory detail contained in the subjects of L2 and L3 outside their own experiences, and consequently, beyond their ability to comprehend.

**Student comments relating to tutorials**

The emerging issues for the students concerning tutorials related to firstly, teaching and learning skills, and secondly, assessment practices undertaken by tutors. For the purposes of analysis, tutors’ teaching and learning skills and tutors’ assessment practices have been coded separately and appear in two sections in this analysis.

In each of the surveys containing student additional comments, there was a consistency in responses about the varying teaching skills of the tutors, the need for connections between
tutorial and lecture material, and a preference for a focus on teaching and learning activities in tutorials relevant to assignments.

Some student comments indicated that they were affected by a lack of connection between lectures and tutorials. The comments by students for two of the three lecturers’ subject tutorials stressed concern about the lack of a cohesive, logical structure to link the lectures and tutorials.

In L1’s tutorials, students referred directly to an absence of connection between lectures and tutorials.

Comment 1: The tutorials should explain what you didn’t understand from the lectures
Comment 2: There needs to be more revision of lecture material in tutorials
Comment 3: The tutorial work doesn’t seem relevant to the lectures

Similarly, four students in L2’s subject believed that tutorials needed to be more relevant to the core course material and less dependent on student presentations.

Comment 9: Tutorials need to be more informative (too many student presentations)
Comment 10: The tutorials spend too much time doing presentations
Comment 11: I don’t think spending so many tutorials on the presentations is an efficient use of small group learning. The tutorials for each subject prove very important. However, listening to many sometimes ill-prepared presentations is a waste of precious time
Comment 12: Tutorials would be better if we discussed issues relevant to course content

Two students felt that at times there was inadequate planning of tutorials and this impacted on their ability to use their tutorial time productively.

In L1’s subject, one comment reflected dissatisfaction with a lack of purpose in the tutorials.

Comment 5: The tutorials need to be more focused

In L2’s subject, one comment referred to the overall organisation of the subject’s content and its impact on tutorials.

Comment 14: Tutes needed to explain what to do at the beginning to have a full semester to work on the
folio, rather than changing everything completely when it is decided what was actually wanted a couple of weeks before the due date.

Overwhelmingly, additional student comments regarding tutorials related to dissatisfaction with the tutors’ ability to teach effectively.

In L1’s subject, the following comments refer to tutors who did not follow a tutorial plan.

Comment 4: The tutor did only one hour instead of two hours. The tutors should be helping us. Tutors need more teaching skills. We should have the same tutor for the semester

Comment 6: The tutor gets side-tracked every time and nothing is achieved in the two hours.

In L2’s subject, there was an emphasis on what students would have preferred in tutorials.

Comment 13: I would have appreciated help with the essay, folio and exam in the tutorials. We didn’t get any help with these

Comment 15: The tutor did not give any feedback with any of the assignments

In L3’s subject, all comments relating to tutorials were related to perceptions about specific tutors’ teaching skills.

Comment 17: There was inadequate and inconsistent feedback from the tutor

Comment 18: There was too much variance between instructions/critiques given by the tutors

Comment 19: Tutorials varied in instructions. It was very confusing to know what was needed to be up to date week to week

Two comments by students in L3’s subject felt strongly about a tutor’s ability to provide a supportive learning environment. As first year students tentatively engaging in new and abstract concepts, the attitude and approach of the tutor was critical in developing students’ skills relating to design ideas and knowledge, or conversely, not developing students’ skills if the tutor was not able to elicit and shape student comments positively.

Comment 20: Change the tutor! He was not very encouraging and this affected our enthusiasm in a negative way.

Comment 21: The tutor does not know how to give constructive criticism. Students were almost afraid to present ideas for fear he would shoot you down in flames. The nature of the subject is so abstract, we needed direction and explanation of what was expected of us. I felt my creativity was stumped.
Although it is probable that comments already presented in relation to tutorials were written by some international students, there were some comments included in L1’s subject and L2’s subject where students identified themselves as ESL students specifically. Their responses related to language challenges and a desire for the tutor to address students’ particular needs.

In L1’s subject, the ESL students referred to problems in understanding what was required of them and problems with following discussion in tutorials.

Comment 7: The teachers should pay more attention to the language difficulties of the overseas’ students

Comment 8: We learn everything on our own. It is really hard to keep up to date. I can’t understand what we discuss in class

In L2’s subject, one ESL student reported feeling unsupported by the tutor in what was perceived as a particularly challenging subject for international students.

Comment 16: The History tutorial was not useful at all. It was a waste of time. It is not an easy subject for ESL students. Although the Language and Learning Support Unit provided a tutorial for us, we needed a more efficient tutorial.

Some student comments were very positive about individual tutors and demonstrated the validity of other students’ assertions that there was considerable difference in teaching skills between tutors within the same subject. There were six positive comments relating to specific tutors in both L1’s subject and L3’s subject.

The tutes were good
The tutor D was good
The tutorials were helpful in clearing up issues
I had a stimulating tutor
Tutorials were helpful and tutor gave great feedback
My tutor was great!

Students’ additional comments in the Quality of Teaching surveys relating to tutorials were consistent in identifying perceived, significant variance in tutors’ teaching and learning skills
within, and, across subjects. Given the emphasis students place on the role of tutors during their first year of study, it is likely that inconsistency in the quality of the teaching and learning skills of tutors had a significant effect on international students’ learning experiences.

**Student comments relating to tutors’ assessment practices**

The majority of additional comments relating to assessment focused on the perception that there was considerable difference in how tutors assessed assignments. These differences included the relative “harsh” or “soft” marking students received for assignments according to which tutor marked it, and, how effective and useful their assignment feedback was depending on which tutor marked it. There was also a significant number of responses relating to the lack of clarity and course organisation regarding assignments. These comments have been included in this discussion of tutors’ practices, as, although lecturers were responsible for the design and timing of assignments, the tutors were responsible for managing the distribution of assignments, the teaching related to the assignments and the assessment of assignments. It should be noted therefore, that although tutors were not responsible for content and organisation of assessment tasks, they were perceived by students as their teachers, and as such, students directed their comments about assessment towards tutors.

In L1’s subject six comments were critical of the tutors’ practice regarding the marking of assignments. Comments 1 to 6 demonstrated the importance of specific published criteria and the development of the tutors’ skills in assessing work according to criteria.

- **Comment 1: The tutors marked harshly**
- **Comment 2: The tutors were inconsistent with marking standards**
- **Comment 3: The marking was not consistent amongst tutors**
- **Comment 4: The marking on the postcards activity by some tutors was harsh compared to others**
- **Comment 5: The tutorials and journal assessments were not very unclear and not consistent between tutors**

Some student in L1’s subject believed that assessment tasks would achieve better results if
the assignments were explained more thoroughly and more time was spent in tutorials explaining tasks so that students could keep up with the work. When the assessment tasks were not clear for the students, there was also a belief that there were too many assignments.

Comment 7: Tutes didn’t focus on assignments, causing stress
Comment 8: There were too many assignments at once
Comment 9: The assignments were not explained well
Comment 10: No clear direction with assignments

Similarly, two of L3’s students commented on the need for clarity in the wording and explanation of assignments.

Comment 1: Assignments needed to be explained and worded more clearly
Comment 2: The requirements for the field assignment were vague

Comment 6 below from L1’s subject and Comments 1 to 4 from L2’s subject related to the absence of constructive feedback indicating that students would have benefited from formative assessment practices (even if the assessment was summative in nature). Feedback from assessors which included clear instructional comments for further improvement would have been received positively by these students. It would have assisted them to understand what they knew, and what they needed to do in the future to develop their skills.

Comment 6: It was not encouraging to get a “satisfactory” with no comments (L1’s subject)

L2’s subject:

Comment 1: It would be more helpful to get essays back more quickly
Comment 2: We needed results in first semester assignments more quickly to know about our progress
Comment 3: We needed feedback for essay writing before our final essays were due
Comment 4: Guidance for folios should have been provided more consistently throughout. This would have prevented the rush to complete the folio as information became available in the last two weeks.

There was also uncertainty for some students in L2’s subject regarding the end of semester
exam. Comments 5 and 6 indicated that students found exam revision was difficult because the number of topics tested and the design of the exam.

**Comment 5:** The exam was too hard! (Too many topics tested and it was impossible to study for). Perhaps it would have been better to get tested on one or two cities.

**Comment 6:** We were very uncertain of exam expectations. There were too many drawings. The division of the marks for each test component didn’t seem correct.

Positive comments in relation to assessment were limited to one comment and this related to the helpfulness of the online support materials offered in L1’s subject.

**Comment 7:** The LMS and audio online materials were well organised. Please keep up with it as it helped with organising and revising for exams.

Students’ additional comments in the Quality of Teaching surveys relating to assessment were concerned with issues of clarity in relation to their assignments in all three subjects. Further, in one subject there was a particular focus on a perceived disparity in the approach to marking standards and in another subject, students focused on the need for timely and useful feedback, particularly in relation to essays.

**Summary**

The comments of all students who responded to the additional comments section of the Quality of Teaching surveys were of relevance to international students as the type of concerns raised were those that were more likely to have impact on students new to a cultural environment and operating in a second language. With respect to student comments relating to lectures, there was a significant response relating to relevance of some content; in particular, students found the maths’ content in L1’s subject confusing. In L2’s subject, the folio created concern for some students, as did some lectures’ relevance to tutorial and assignment content. There was a significant response by students in relation to tutors’ performance. Across the subjects, students reported dissatisfaction with the tutors’ teaching skills which had affected the clarity of instruction, discussion and student engagement. Similarly, some students commented on the perceived disparity in assessment marking between tutors within and across subjects. Further, some students would have welcomed
more timely feedback on essays as well as guidance regarding other assignments.

**Data Collection 5: analysis and discussion of the researcher's student survey**

**Introduction**

The use of a quantitative tool within a qualitative study was established earlier in the methodology chapter with reference to Patton (2002), Green and Caracelli (in Tashokkori & Teddlie, 2003) and Snape and Spencer (in Richie & Lewis, 2004). The researcher’s student survey in this study was undertaken to determine overall trends in beliefs and attitudes of all students regarding their experience of first year in this course of study. This was considered valuable within the context of a qualitative study as the numerical perspective would provide another and wider view. Only the frequency of responses on a five-point scale (ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree) were analysed for the five categories of questions (staff-student relationships, teaching methods, assessment, writing and lectures). In this survey, frequency, as a term, relates to the percentage of each group responding to a particular answer to a question rather than the total number of responses for each group. This approach was taken to allow for the difference in size of each group.

Students were asked to identify themselves as one of the following groups; (a) local, (b) local ESL or (c) international. Of the 300 surveys distributed, 131 were returned. 77 were marked local and 29 were marked international (satisfying a proportional representation of the overall number of local and international students enrolled in this course). Nine were marked local ESL and 16 were not marked. For the purposes of this study, the unmarked surveys were not included. (See Appendices 3 and 18 for survey questions and data results).

The frequency results for each of the five categories of questions were then analysed to reflect the values of “positive”, “sometimes positive and sometimes negative” and “negative”. This was undertaken to allow the researcher to discuss the results in terms of relative trends, and as such, the following tables represent analysis and not frequency results (See Appendix 18 for frequency results). Where there was a numerical result only slightly greater in one territory compared to the next territory, an arrow was used to indicate the close result.
Staff-student relationships

Note: Abbreviations:

Pos = positive, S’times pos, S’times neg= sometimes positive and sometimes negative, Neg=negative

Local = local students, Loc ESL= Local ESL students entering university from Victorian secondary schools, but with less than 7 years of academic English, Inter= International students

→ = result very close to corresponding territory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Pos</th>
<th>S’times pos, S’times neg</th>
<th>Neg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The tutors know my educational background</td>
<td>Loc ESL</td>
<td></td>
<td>Inter; Local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The tutor makes an effort to get to know me</td>
<td>Local; Loc ESL; Inter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The tutors try to include all students in discussion</td>
<td>Local; Loc ESL</td>
<td></td>
<td>Inter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The tutors are interested in discussing examples from other countries</td>
<td>Local; Inter</td>
<td></td>
<td>Loc ESL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The tutors understand what students need to help them learn</td>
<td>Loc ESL; Inter</td>
<td></td>
<td>Local</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16: Represents trends by each group in response to questions about staff-student relationships

Overall, it was important to note that most students did not respond frequently to clearly positive or clearly negative to these questions relating to tutorials, but rather, most often they indicated that their experiences varied between sometimes positive and sometimes negative. All three student groups responded similarly to Question 3, which indicated that all students’ experiences of tutors’ attempts to get to know them varied between subjects, but,
all students’ responses to Question 1 indicated that local and international students were less certain that tutors knew their educational backgrounds.

Responses that appeared more positively positioned related to tutors’ attempts to include all students in discussion and the tutors’ knowledge of what help students needed to learn, although more international students indicated that their experiences varied across subjects in terms of inclusion in discussion, and more local students indicated that their experiences varied across subjects in terms of tutors’ knowledge of what help students needed to learn.

**Teaching Methods**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Pos</th>
<th>S'times pos, S'times neg</th>
<th>Neg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The tutorials were well-organised</td>
<td>Local; Loc ESL, Inter→</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The tutorials are clear about the learning goal of each tutorial</td>
<td>Loc ESL; Inter</td>
<td>←Local</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The tutors use visual aids</td>
<td>Local; Loc ESL; Inter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The tutors use language I can understand</td>
<td>Local; Loc ESL; Inter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The tutors explain complex ideas</td>
<td>Local; Loc ESL; Inter→</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The study materials I am given include definitions of difficult words</td>
<td>Inter; Loc ESL→</td>
<td>←Local</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 4: Discussion and Analysis of Research Data

The tutorials are relevant to the assignments students need to do

| Local; Loc ESL; Inter |

When working in small groups in tutorials or practical work, students are given clear guidelines for participation

| Local; Loc ESL; Inter |

Table 17: Represents trends by each group in response to questions about teaching methods

Overall, most students in the three groups responded more positively than negatively in response to all questions, with the exception of local students who responded more negatively than positively to the question regarding the explanation of difficult words in study materials. However, there were nearly as many “sometimes positive and sometimes negative” responses by local students in response to this question. International and Local ESL students responded more positively to this question but they, too, registered nearly as many “sometimes positive and sometimes negative” responses to this question.

The question regarding the relevancy of tutorials to assignments drew a very high frequency in the positive territory from all three groups. Local students were less certain about the clarity of learning goals for each tutorial.

Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Pos</th>
<th>S’times pos, S’times neg</th>
<th>Neg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students are given useful feedback about their progress</td>
<td>Loc ESL; Inter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are given some choice about assessment tasks</td>
<td>— Loc ESL</td>
<td>Local; Inter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 4: Discussion and Analysis of Research Data

Instructions for carrying out assessment tasks are clear | Inter; Loc ESL→ | Local
---|---|---
Criteria for assessment tasks are clear | Loc ESL; Local→ | ← Inter
Tutors use tutorial time to assist students with assessment tasks | Loc ESL; Local; Inter |
Students are given examples of completed assessment tasks as a guide | Loc ESL; Local; Inter→ |

*Table 18: Represents trends by each group in response to questions about assessment*

In terms of rate of frequency, there was a much higher rate of “sometimes positive and sometimes negative” responses by all students for Question 20 regarding instructions for exam revision compared to any other question under the assessment category, with the exception of Question 16, regarding instructions for carrying out assessment tasks, which registered the highest number of “sometimes positive and sometimes negative” responses. But unlike Question 20, those respondents were mostly from the Local group.

The majority of students indicated that tutors used tutorial time to assist with assessment tasks (Question 18). Given the results for Question 16 and 20, time spent on assessment tasks in tutorials is perceived differently by students to time spent in tutorials clarifying instructions for assessment tasks and exam preparation.

**Writing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Pos</th>
<th>S’times pos, S’times neg</th>
<th>Neg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Page 112
Students are taught essay-writing in their first year subjects  

Students are taught how to cite references in their first year subjects  

Students are taught to research information in their first year subjects  

Students are taught to write without copying from other writers  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students are taught essay-writing in their first year subjects</th>
<th>Inter →</th>
<th>Local; Loc ESL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students are taught how to cite references in their first year subjects</td>
<td>Local; Loc ESL</td>
<td>← Inter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are taught to research information in their first year subjects</td>
<td>Local →; Loc ESL</td>
<td>← Inter →</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are taught to write without copying from other writers</td>
<td>Inter; ← Loc ESL</td>
<td>Local</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 19: Represents trends by each group in response to questions about writing

Local students answered “strongly disagree” and “disagree” more frequently to Question 21 regarding being taught different types of essay-writing skills than for any other question in this survey. International students’ responses were distributed across both “negative” and “sometimes positive and sometimes negative” values. In contrast to their responses for Question 21, local students responded with a high degree of “positive” frequency to Question 22 regarding learning to cite references. International students, however, registered an almost even frequency across the continuum.

Local students’ responses for Question 23 regarding being taught to cite references were unusual in that their “negative responses” were only marginally fewer than their “positive” and “sometimes positive and sometimes negative” responses. International students’ responses were evenly distributed across all three values.

All three groups responded “negatively” or “sometimes positive and sometimes negative” to the question relating to being taught not to copy.

Lectures
Chapter 4: Discussion and Analysis of Research Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Pos</th>
<th>S'times pos, S'times neg</th>
<th>Neg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecturers provided written outlines of their lectures</td>
<td>Local; Loc</td>
<td></td>
<td>Inter ESL;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students can access a recording and/or transcript of the lecture</td>
<td></td>
<td>←Local; Loc ESL;</td>
<td>Inter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturers speak clearly</td>
<td>Local; Loc</td>
<td></td>
<td>Inter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturers use visual materials effectively</td>
<td>Local; Loc</td>
<td></td>
<td>Inter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturers explain difficult words and ideas</td>
<td>Local; Loc</td>
<td></td>
<td>Inter→</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lectures were linked to tutorials</td>
<td>Local; Loc</td>
<td></td>
<td>Inter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall, courses/subjects were well-designed</td>
<td>Local; Loc</td>
<td></td>
<td>Inter→</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 20: Represents trends by each group in response to questions about lectures

Overall, most responses from all three groups were positive with respect to lectures. Only two questions drew almost as many responses from “positive” and “sometimes positive and sometimes negative” values and these related to lectures explaining difficult ideas and words, and significantly, whether courses were well-designed overall.
Summary of the researcher’s student survey analysis

The results of the researcher’s student survey were of a more positive than negative nature. More students in all three groups expressed satisfaction rather than dissatisfaction in their responses to the majority of questions posed. This trend was supported in the final question’s responses regarding overall satisfaction with the course of study. There was a less but significant number of times students indicated they were “sometimes positive and sometimes negative” in relation to all questions. From this perspective, it was useful to identify possible patterns of concern relating to learning for international students, but also, useful in considering the whole student cohort.

The survey themes of staff-student relationships and writing drew the most “negative” range of responses, indicating that these areas were of the most concern to students. In particular, the questions relating to the tutors’ knowledge about individual students’ backgrounds and the tutors’ attempts to get to know students were consistently grouped outside the “positive” territory. Similarly, the majority of each group’s responses relating to learning how to write different types of essays and learning how to cite references were also outside the “positive” territory.

With respect to assessment, the most significant area of concern cited by students in all three groups was the quality of the feedback. No group’s responses were featured more in “positive” territory than other territories in relation to their beliefs about receiving useful feedback about their progress.

While student responses to questions about teaching methods were positioned more positively than negatively, it was also the section that most frequently registered a close second category (“sometimes positive and sometimes negative”) in the majority of questions. This indicated that almost half of students in each category believed that the teaching skills cited were inconsistently applied across their subjects’ tutors.

In terms of responses relating specifically to international students, the area of writing drew more responses that indicated different perceptions from international students compared to the rest of the cohort than any other area. International students were more likely to believe
that some tutors and lecturers taught writing skills and some did not, and more likely to be negative regarding the teaching of research skills. International students were also more likely to vary in their responses to whether assessment criteria were well-explained. Local and Local ESL students were more likely than international students to believe that they were taught how to reference and research material. Additionally, international students were more likely to register variation in responses to the question regarding tutors' attempts to include all students in discussion.

Finally, it was significant that most students viewed the lectures in a positive light. Only two questions drew almost as many “negative” responses as the “positive” response and these related to whether lecturers explained difficult words and ideas, and whether overall, the course was well-designed.

**Conclusion**

This study sought to identify teaching and learning practices affecting international students’ academic outcomes. In choosing to interview lecturers, observe lectures and tutorials and interpret student surveys, the researcher was able to view the academic environment from a number of perspectives. It was clear that some research outcomes were present across all data collection methods results.

It is important to emphasise that the majority of students expressed satisfaction with their course and the problems associated with learning explored in this study need to be contextualised within that majority perspective. However, the majority of students surveyed also indicated they placed great importance on effective learning relationships with tutors compared with their relationships with lecturers. Consequently, this study’s research findings relating to the teaching and learning skills of tutors are particularly important.

In coding results from each data collection process, consistent themes emerged in the research. Issues relating to differences in the quality of tutors’ teaching skills within and across subjects featured in the information gained from the observation of tutorials, the additional student comments in Quality of Teaching surveys, and the researcher’s student
survey. Concerns about the coherence of instructions and information relating to assessment were also evident in the findings of these three data collection processes.

Issues relating to academic writing were represented strongly across four of the five research processes. In the interviews with lecturers, there was concern about international students’ inadequate level of writing skills. Another factor common in the observation of tutorials was that many tutors did not assist students to develop an understanding of what the task required. Student feedback from both surveys indicated that some students thought they were not being prepared appropriately for their new academic environment, particularly in the area of written work.

In re-framing the results from the perspective of what each set of research results could indicate specifically, it was possible to identify more detailed issues affecting the learning experiences of international students in their first year of study. Lecturers, although sympathetic to the challenges faced by international students, did not demonstrate explicit strategies for addressing international students’ learning needs. Although there was an awareness of the increasing diversity of students enrolling in the course, there was not a corresponding pedagogical framework of teaching and learning methodologies for lecturers to use to assist students to develop their academic skills in a new learning environment. In particular, lecturers were not able to get to know students, nor meet with students to discuss their learning in order to establish a shared understanding of learning intention and learning needs. Lecturers also indicated that developing all students' thinking skills was highly desirable but they were unsure of teaching strategies suitable to that purpose. Lecturers were more aware of the potential content issues international students’ faced and would have liked to include more culturally-inclusive material in their lectures. However, the lecturers felt burdened by competing priorities in their daily work responsibilities and found it difficult to dedicate time to develop more appropriate resources for international students. In response to the need to develop international students’ reading and writing skills, lecturers did not see themselves as responsible for teaching subject-specific discourse or academic protocols related to writing.

In observing lectures, the researcher was able to identify teaching and learning elements
which illustrated the accuracy of the lecturers’ interview responses. Sometimes, lecturers were not able to deliver content material inclusive of international students’ educational and cultural experiences. At times, lecturers’ written and spoken discourse was confusing for second language learners. Similarly, lecturers were not always successful in establishing learning intentions of lectures and did not provide coherent explanation of what needed to be learned.

In observing tutorials and analysing the additional comments in the Quality of Teaching surveys and the researcher’s student survey, it became apparent that the role of the tutor was considered critical by all students. A significant outcome of this study was the degree of difference in the quality of teaching skills between tutors within and across subjects. Some tutors were observed not engaging with the practical aspects of the studio activities, not providing assistance with explaining the learning purpose of assessment tasks or not guiding students towards appropriate processes to complete assessment tasks successfully. Some tutors were not able to coordinate activities and discussion to include international students, or provide useful and timely feedback to assist students to progress successfully with tasks.

It was possible to link the teaching behaviours of the tutors to students’ comments about their learning experiences. The analysis of the tutorial observations were confirmed by students’ comments in the additional student comments in the Quality of Teaching surveys where the analysis indicated the majority of comments related to concern about the quality of teaching skills of some tutors. In the researcher’s student survey, there was a corresponding emphasis by students on the need for greater consistency in quality teaching skills within the tutor group.

While the majority of outcomes of this study were consistent with the research of Ramsden (2003), Carroll (2005), Ryan (2005), Gill (2007) Leask (2005) and others discussed in the literature review chapter, the findings relating to the significance of tutor impact on international students’ experiences were not anticipated by the researcher prior to the commencement of this research. The implications of this finding for further research are evident, and, more immediately, there is a critical need for the university to focus specifically on developing policy and practice for improving the learning experiences of international
students within tutorials by making a serious effort to systematically improve tutors’ teaching and learning skills.
Chapter 5: Academic Development in Higher Education Settings

Introduction

Given the findings of the previous chapter, the researcher believed it important to investigate the current thinking related to the professional learning of academics teaching in undergraduate courses. Further, this chapter establishes the theoretic basis for the researcher’s recommendations in the final chapter of this study.

In Chapter 2, this study discussed the literature relating to teaching and learning in higher education settings. The principles and practices of effective pedagogy relating to the general student population and to international students in particular, provided the framework for this study’s research and analysis. While acknowledging there is a strong connection between the two fields, in this chapter the literature of continuous professional learning for academics in higher education settings is discussed. This chapter explores the scholarly literature associated with academic learning and matters relating to the ongoing tensions that exist in the structure and delivery of academic development within university settings.

The development and coordination of academic development research and practice within universities is a subject of considerable debate in the higher education community. University faculties take a number of pathways to develop their academic staff’s teaching skills, but most commonly, individual academics access teaching and learning development through a teaching and learning advisor attached to the faculty, or through accessing individual workshops or certificate-level courses facilitated by the university’s academic development centre. As a specific field of study and practice in itself, academic development is a relatively new addition to university environments, first emerging 35 years ago when certificates in higher education teaching were introduced. Since then, academic development has moved to include a range of resources, services, functions and initiatives. An academic development unit might report to a number of managers, whose responsibilities might lie within a quality assurance accountability framework or a teaching and learning
framework. Management relating to both areas has tended to change quite dramatically over short periods of time, depending on the priorities of the management structure at the time. Academic developers often also deliver to students requiring learning support services.

The identity, purpose and main field of operation for academic developers in most universities remains uncertain, and many are also struggling to prove their relevance in order to increase their professional profiles. This has tended to impact on the development of scholarly research into the most effective methods of providing academic staff with professional development in teaching and learning. Academic developers are experiencing the increasing tensions associated with the growing diversity of the student population, and the greater reliance on sessional teaching staff. These issues and concerns are critically important to the overall discussion of how lecturers and tutors learn to develop their own beliefs and practices in relation to their international students.

**Tensions in the field of academic development**

The growth in the establishment of higher education certificates in teaching and learning has indicated that universities, generally, have developed policies that suggest a preference for a formal means of developing academics’ teaching skills. However, as the discussion below indicates, tensions exist in the content and delivery of higher education certificates and the poor participation rates by lecturers would indicate certificate courses are less than effective. Further, issues relating to the complex nature of effective new learning for adults (in this instance, lecturers) in an intellectual organisation present additional tensions and bring into question the current effectiveness of higher education certificates in bringing about positive change in teaching practice. The purpose of the following discussion is to explore the complexities that exist between academics and academic developers, and, importantly, the complexities between academics, academic developers and organisational policy and practices. These underlying complexities are made visible by focusing on the issues surrounding higher education certificates in teaching and learning.

Larger Australian universities have well-established academic development centres, and paradoxically, it is the establishment of such centres that has helped to create tensions
within and across faculties with respect to academic development in teaching and learning. Competing methods of conducting professional learning and the institutional role played by academic development centres are areas of contention within universities. Gosling (2009) noted that centres have recently shifted to a more organisational development model, and the emphasis on individual participant development has declined. Although not necessarily an undesirable approach in itself, this shift has had an effect on relationships between developers and academics, as a shift to organisational development has included a gradual involvement by centres in quality assurance processes, the implementation of government initiatives connected to funding, and an alignment with national and institutional policies which has resulted in a loss of “critical autonomy” (2009: 11) so important to collegial relationships within university settings. Gosling described this changed role as strategic, in that academic development centres have become “mediators between institutional policy makers and teaching departments” (2009: 11).

Grant (2008) and Lee and McWilliam (2008) explored the personal and professional impact of tensions on developers themselves within the field of academic development. Grant described how academic developers work in “zones marked by uncertainty and ambiguity” (2008: 42) where their identity is ill-defined within a culture of shifting priorities. Professional identity is also linked strongly to the perceptions of developers held by discipline academics. Lee and McWilliam identified conflicting propositions about the professional relationships between developers and discipline academics:

We are your teachers but we are your colleagues, we are responsible for improving quality of teaching and learning and you are responsible for improving the quality of teaching and learning, we are central to teaching and learning and we are marginal to teaching and learning, we are above you and we are below you, we are your coaches and we are your servants, we are academics and we are service providers (2008: 70).

**Issues in organisational learning and personal capital**

Such uncertainty and ambiguity arising from shifting institutional policies and personal perceptions about the professional relationships between developers and discipline academics contribute significantly to decisions about how professional learning can be
Chapter 5: Academic Development in Higher Education Settings

placed in order to do the work of professional enhancement. Knight (2006) discussed similar questions surrounding quality of teaching, and the methodologies and structures universities use to support it. He argued that although there has been evidence that the field has evolved sufficiently to see the emergence of dedicated, evidence-based pedagogic practice institutes such as the Carrick Institute in Australia (now known as the Australian Teaching and Learning Council), and the development of a body of research around the scholarship of learning and teaching, the uncertainty about the speciality of academic development can be seen in studies that show the work of well-regarded academic development centres was not based on “principled views of professional formation” (Knight, 2006: 30). This uncertainty about both structure and content of academic development is compounded further by the lack of a research base in what he calls the “fundamentals” in the scholarly literature (2006: 30). These fundamentals include research into the nature of practice-based learning and research into the area of change relating to thinking and practice. Knight connected this uncertainty, in part, to the notion of implicit and explicit knowledge, or as he expressed it, “professional knowings” (2006: 31).

The definition of “knowings” is important to understanding the complexity of providing adult learners with metacognitive development. As Knight pointed out, the professional learning that is being fostered is not just professional knowledge, but something more extensive and tacit in nature. Plural in nature, knowings are the individual and social understandings that exist in both generic and situated environments, and are not fixed in number or state, but rather, they are the “professional formation, developed through formal and non-formal processes” (2006: 31) that provide learners with the intellectual responses required for new learning. This complex area can be better understood by explaining what it is not; good learning does not depend on learning a fixed body of knowledge or a set of cognitive skills. According to Marzano (1998), cited by Knight, good learning, in order of importance, depends on “self-system, metacognition, cognition and knowledge” (Knight, 2006: 31). Within this framework, Knight argued that the activity system that operates in professional environments is more a social and distributed field and people bring many different forms of knowing to the particular field of teaching in higher education settings and this can be considered “capital”. Increasingly, the environment becomes more complex as people cross
Chapter 5: Academic Development in Higher Education Settings

a number of fields and activity systems. Knight noted that this can be a problem when academics have to decide where to accumulate their capital, as capital valued in teaching systems or capital valued in administrative or research systems are not pieces of the same activity system. As Brew (2007) pointed out, in some universities, there is pressure for discipline academics to undertake pedagogical research but there is, at the same time, pressure to undertake research in the discipline. Thus, academic developers may well be attempting to provide professional learning for discipline academics in ways that firstly, don’t match issues of capital, and secondly, don’t reflect what is known in the literature about the critical nature non-formal processes play in the way people learn.

If professional learning comes, primarily, from the non-formal process of professional practice, then the concept of delivering a student-centred approach to teaching through a teacher-centred mechanism such as a postgraduate certificate is not likely to provide the conditions for learning nor the active model for continuing learning that are desired to effect change.

Key problems between academics and academic developers

In a study undertaken to establish the key problems experienced by academic developers teaching postgraduate certificates in higher education (Kandlbinder & Pesata, 2009), course coordinators reported that participants struggled to come to terms with a new discipline (education), some participants had difficulty in seeing the complexity entailed in the key concepts and some participants had trouble perceiving the relevance of the key concepts to teaching practice. Their study also identified a range of interpretations of what constituted key concepts in the certificate course by academic developers, and determined therefore, that the scholarly field of higher education teaching and learning had “yet to settle on the substantive set of concepts needed by all university teachers” (2009: 29). These research outcomes echoed the concerns of Knight (2006) regarding the weak scholarly foundation in the literature relating to learning and teaching in higher education settings, and also the observation by Gosling (2009), whose study revealed that only “one in five managers of academic learning centres believed it was their responsibility to carry out research themselves” (2009: 14). In Green’s study (2009) about academics’ perceptions of the
language of teaching and learning, six linguistic barriers for lecturers were identified; specialist vocabulary, passive constructions, pronouns, figurative language, derivations, and poor editorial standards. It could be argued that within a generic setting, the key concepts of teaching and learning are not understood due to a lack of contextual meaning, thus, the valuable concepts contained in the literature are lost.

The personal identity uncertainties for academic developers expressed by Grant (2008) and Lee and McWilliam (2008) earlier in this chapter have a clear relevance with respect to issues surrounding higher education certificates in learning and teaching. Trowler and Cooper suggested that as discipline academics and academic developers bring with them deeply embedded assumptions and practices that are likely to be incongruent, “trouble” is inevitable (2002: 213). Importantly, professional identities are at issue for discipline academics when “returning to the classroom”. Their normal status within the system is no longer one of power and therefore, dignity, and such is the strength of this perception that Trowler and Cooper cited examples of discipline academics who participated in certificate courses but who wanted the fact kept secret for fear that they would be perceived as poor teachers or that their interest in discipline research was weak (and therefore they were turning to teaching instead).

Trowler and Cooper (2002) also highlighted incongruities relating to fundamental beliefs about student-learning between academic developers and discipline academics, which became transparent within a certificate course environment. Some discipline academics held the belief that learning autonomously was a pre-requisite for entry to university and therefore they were not open to the concept that explicit instruction was a helpful learning structure for students. New teaching methods, especially those relating to assessment, were an area of conflicting assumptions for the two groups. It was reported that some academics believed that the more formative, student-centred approaches advocated by developers belonged comfortably within the Social Sciences but not, in particular, within the disciplines of Science and Management (2002: 230). Interestingly, some academics believed there was a defined body of knowledge about teaching and learning and Trowler and Cooper reported that these academics felt that developers were withholding information in favour of a “discovery”
approach which they found patronising. This study also highlighted the fact that some academics identified the discourse relating to professional practice “mimicked the language of surveillance related to performance review” (230). Grant (2007) noted that discipline academics are faced with the same destabilising changes to conditions of work as academic developers, and they are subject to the same doubts about “what counts as real work” (2007: 42). From one perspective, it could be observed that the lack of commonality of experience between academic developers and discipline academics is too great when brought together as educationalists attempting to define their purpose and bring about change in practice. It is understandable that at times, academic developers wish to close that divide, but the desire to transform a lack of commonality into a set of shared values about teaching and learning practice will also falter if the process to achieve it fails to acknowledge the important of self-systems, and the role of community in developing models for shared understanding.

Issues of organisational policy and academic development

Quality assurance models for implementing change in teaching and learning practice often replicate a transmission style of adult learning, and do not acknowledge the importance of “the role of community and the importance of self-systems” (Knight, 2006: 31) in bringing about effective changes in teaching practice in tertiary environments.

Harvey and Kamvounias (2008) investigated the poor implementation of a management-initiated, centrally-designed template for use by departments to embed their own course learning goals and assessment. The goal of the initiative was “to encourage best practice in teaching and learning and to communicate to students information considered critical according to the Academic Board and other external quality assurance reviews” (35). The researchers found that instead of transforming pedagogical practice, the academics altered the template or entered confusing information “that did not meet the goals of the template and which indicated that the template had not initiated any change in lecturers’ approaches to teaching practice” (37). In contrast, Harvey and Kamvounias compared this outcome to another design intervention, documented by Sumsion and Goodfellow (2004). In the second example, a template was constructed through guided discussion and a series of
consultations, enabling lecturers to discuss the common language as well as the underlying assumptions. According to Harvey and Kamvounias, this led to “a greater sense of ownership amongst lecturers and a more explicit representation of the underlying complexities and variations of terms” (38). This approach to curriculum mapping was considered successful in that the lecturers were able to fulfil the intended purpose, and a well-designed template was produced for use by others in the future. However, there was an irony noted by the researchers. When the next cycle occurred to complete the template and new academics were involved, a surface approach was taken to complete the curriculum template. Although the template had been devised and used successfully by the previous team of lecturers, the current team did not approach the task with the same degree of ownership and attention to the (now explicit) complexities. Without dialogue and reflective thought, all learners are likely to adopt a surface approach to a task. Transmission styles of learning are known not to be effective. Harvey and Kamvounias suggested that quality assurance methods tend to direct academic development towards transmission styles of learning. As Knight noted, there is a difference between quality assurance and quality enhancement (2006).

**Academic development issues relating to sessional teachers**

In her study of part-time teachers in university settings, Anderson noted that in western countries, part-time teachers carry out approximately 40% of all teaching activities in universities (2007). According to the Australian Teaching and Learning Council, this figure could be as high as half of all teaching loads (2008). Knight’s study that included sessional teachers found that there was intrinsic interest in professional learning even when the “situated social practice” afforded full-time teachers was less accessible to part-time teachers (2006: 320). Given sessional teachers are often the ‘face’ of a faculty and have direct teaching contact within tutorials, part-time teachers were often over-looked in institutional policies and systems when it came to professional learning. Anderson found that part-time staff were unable to access development events for all staff and most had received “only last-minute initial briefings about operational teaching arrangements when they commenced their work” (2007: 115). Similarly, the project on the contribution of sessional
staff to Australian universities by the Australian Teaching and Learning Council found that participation in professional development by sessional teachers was atypical (2008: 2).

The learning dilemmas for sessional teachers are many. According to the participants in Anderson’s study, their greatest concerns lay in marking and assessment, teaching international students and dealing with plagiarism (2007: 116). These concerns are compounded by the situation that feedback from students is inconsistently given, unlike the formal survey processes undertaken by lecturers, and was reflective of poor communication between students, part-time staff and permanent staff in general. With respect to the kind of non-formal learning that occurs in situated practice, sessional teachers are unable to develop the collegial relationships in the same way as permanent staff. As Anderson described, work meetings tended to be quickly dealt with and some participants found they were not invited to contribute to discussion on possible course changes (2007: 118).

Knight argued that sessional teachers would benefit from an appraisal process that focused, formatively, on “what she could now that she could not do six months ago” (2006: 332). The professional dialogue resulting from a formative appraisal would be relevant and important to a practitioner, and help to make explicit what may previously have been invisible. Such reflective practices would contribute to developing greater collegiality between part-time and permanent staff, and Knight noted that the identification of implicit knowledge about teaching would be powerful for all if “captured, codified and shared” as an intentional activity (2006: 334).

**Recent thinking about professional learning in higher education settings**

Having explored the literature discussions surrounding the particular difficulties and tensions of academic development in higher education, other literature relating to higher education professional learning offers a pathway forward for undertaking effective academic development in universities. While the researcher acknowledges the importance of certificates, workshops, seminars and conferences in providing important initiation into aspects of some learning for academic staff, the following discussion of academic development approaches identifies two discreet methods of learning not dependent on a
With respect to the particular learning needs of sessional staff, MacDonald (2008) described a professional learning project which sought to (a) improve the student outcomes for first year engineering and computing students in an Australian university, and (b) make sessional teaching more satisfying. This three-year project focused on the creation of structured, reflective practice groups known as “Teaching Communities” (2008: 42). In effect, this project established an action-learning group, where the ongoing interaction between participants created opportunities for new teaching ideas to be shared. Each fortnight, the project leader would facilitate a ninety-minute meeting involving the sessional and permanent staff, teaching fellows in the disciplines who were seconded from senior high schools, a research assistant and an academic developer. Other education experts were present upon invitation. The same agenda was always adhered to: share experiences from recent teaching, discuss big ideas to be taught in upcoming teaching, and collaboratively plan teaching methods (2008: 43). The high school teaching fellows contributed to the Teaching Community discussions, taught directly and produced new teaching resources. The research assistant collected data from tutorials relating to learning outcomes, especially the activities designed to be more student-focused and interactive.

According to MacDonald, clear improvements in student experience and learning outcomes were identified. Surveys revealed that student satisfaction rose strongly. Both sessional and permanent staff reported greater satisfaction and enjoyment of teaching and considered the Teaching Community meetings as “high quality preparation time” (2008: 42). Action learning (as opposed to action-research) was similarly described by Blackwell, Channell and Williams (2001) who reported a dialogue-based form of group-learning for teaching academics. In this instance, the group was structured to cross disciplines. This project was named “Teaching Circles” (2001: 52). Individuals were cross-matched for areas of interest and teaching circle groups were formed with the support of academic developers and senior academic staff. Dialogue within group meetings was the focus of the teaching circles but participants also participated in timely seminars, online discussion and peer observations.

Both examples of action-learning described above demonstrate a simple, yet contextualised...
form of situated learning within practice communities. A more complex and evidence-based form of practice circles is described in the literature of design-based research. Undertaking design experiments (or design-based research) is an evidence-based, methodological response to the issues of academic development within higher education settings. This action-research approach (unlike the action-learning approach previously described) to improving teaching and learning is linked strongly to the methodology of science research, and hence, some teaching academics from the Sciences have suggested it fits well within the values and beliefs of their primary professional activity. This methodological “recognition” could be considered important to Science discipline academics who, in the past, might have felt traditional educational research methodology reflected the discipline approaches of social sciences but not the projection and evaluation research methods of pure sciences.

In terms of effective teaching and learning academic development, research-based professional learning brings together a learning-in-action approach and a constructing-learning-theory approach. Design-based research theory explains why a particular teaching and learning design works, and further, how a design can be adapted for use in the future. It is not a single design-based research method, however, but the principles of this approach identify research methods that link teaching and learning to specific outcomes in specific contexts. This focus on research in specific contexts leads to an iterative process of evaluation and improvement leading to a model for learning. In this respect, design-based research is different to standard evaluations of learning environments. Traditionally, a standard evaluation of a program, for example, is measured against pre-determined criteria, and summative conclusions are drawn on success or failure according to the criteria. Design-based research enquires more deeply into the nature of learning in a complex system (the context) and seeks to look more broadly at constructing learning theory. Unlike pure Science research, however, design-based research draws on a mixed method approach using techniques from other research paradigms. This is an acknowledgement of the complexity within learning environments, where determining causality is unlikely and where all factors influencing outcomes cannot be identified and studied. For academics interested in improving student outcomes through more effective teaching and engaging in research at the same time, design-based research offers a method of academic
Chapter 5: Academic Development in Higher Education Settings

development well-suited to higher education settings.

Cobb et al. described the field of student learning as a “learning ecology” because it is a complex, interacting system of elements (2003: 9). Importantly, design-based research seeks to generate theories of learning in specific contexts which are also pragmatic in nature, in that there is a focus on function, or in other words, a specific project where a team of designers works collaboratively with others to achieve learning improvement. Cobb et al. gave the example of a design experiment where the theoretical goal was to develop a psychological model of how students develop deeper understandings of mathematical ideas, while at the same time, the pragmatic goal was to develop tasks and teaching practices which supported deeper understanding of mathematical ideas (2003: 10).

This focus on particular aspects of learning within a more complex whole is a key feature of design-based learning and facilitates opportunities for introducing innovative practices into learning environments while at the same time, providing a research paradigm capable of both generative and critical reflection in order to scrutinise outcomes. This is achieved by adherence to the principle of testing through iterative processes over time. As Cobb et al. noted, “the theory must do real work” (2003: 10). This research position, according to Cobb et al., Bannan-Ritland (2003) and Lobarto (2003), provides the detailed guidance practitioners need to enact the more general educational theories of learning. In creating a research position that sets out to provide other practitioners with research guidance, Cobb et al. are supported by the work of Sharma and McShane (2007), who determined that there was not an extensive field of literature about how to undertake practitioner research into teaching and learning in order to understand how to enact the more generalised educational theories.

Design-based research (or research experiments) provides a research paradigm that requires a team of participants, including specialists in academic development, curriculum development, assessment, and teaching and learning, plus, a team of participants who are the “enactors”; that is, the practitioners and students within the learning environment. In this way, design-based research activates a natural community of practice within a strongly-constructed research framework focusing on improving an element of teaching and learning
in practice, while making transparent the aspects of educational theory being enacted.

In summary, the forms of academic learning described above reflect a collaborative partnership between permanent and sessional discipline academics, academic developers, other practice experts and research specialists. These communities of practitioners are engaged in learning which is situated, productive and positively-positioned within the academics’ own spheres of operation. Under such academic learning conditions, the learning outcomes for all students is more likely to improve.

As explored in the discussion above, small communities of practice identify their own learning objectives within a proactive framework. Thus, the perception that academics should complete certificates of teaching and learning, or, should attend compulsory seminars, has framed academic learning within an unfortunate paradigm; the need for academic staff to overcome professional deficits in teaching and learning. This perception combined with increasing demands of university work and increasing accountability processes relating to institutions and external funding requirements, has meant that academic development has become an issue of engagement and connectedness. Engaging the minds of university teachers in developing a scholarly approach to teaching and learning will depend on learning models that motivate and enrich shared professional lives. Certificates of teaching and learning, for example, have not provided such enrichment. Until universities come to terms with the complexity of new learning for lecturers and tutors, the ineffectual transmission-style, surface-learning mode of academic development will continue to dominate professional development methodologies. Given the increasing numbers of highly diverse student populations in universities and the learning and teaching problems identified in this study, the need for a more considered approach to improving the teaching skills of lecturers and tutors is overdue. In this respect, moving away from ineffectual models of academic development is reflective of the broader literature of educational learning theories espoused for all learners.
Chapter 6: Academic Development Recommendations

Introduction

One of the defining research findings in this study was the identification of inequality of learning opportunities experienced by many international students compared to the local student population. In the course of observing students go about their everyday course work, it was evident that some students were unable to engage with the learning activities. This was particularly visible during tutorial activities. Additionally, there were other visible teaching and learning practices that excluded many international students and these related to oral and written communication practices in lectures. In responding to the identified teaching and learning needs of international students, the researcher believed that teacher academic development was required. Three professional learning strategies for teaching staff that are presented below in ascending order of depth and complexity.

As a first response to improving learning opportunity for the international students, this chapter addresses basic access to subject knowledge, information and procedure. The teaching skills listed below are identified as a Level 1 response to teaching and learning improvement for international students and are described very simply; they are not intended to be situated within the more holistic principles and practice of effective higher education teaching and learning academic development. These direct teaching strategies are specific practices lecturers and tutors could adopt immediately. Just as lecturers and tutors provide a general feedback sheet to students for the purpose of summarising critically important procedural steps for a successful assignment, the Level 1 teaching skills provided below act as a first order check for lecturers and tutors regarding their language, communication and procedural practices.

For lecturers and tutors who wish to "drill" down further into organisational improvements which impact positively on the accessibility of learning for international students, a Level 2 response to professional learning is then described within the context of a curriculum review. A course's intentions and objectives are developed by careful analysis and renewal processes associated with reviewing the curriculum. A review process also provides a focus
for course developers to create essential procedural and communication scaffolds to assist the diverse student cohort to access the curriculum more effectively.

In response to a more scholarly need to identify and code implicit teaching and learning outcomes, the more complex issues of developing pedagogical understanding or “knowings” (Knight, 2006) are explored in the final section of this chapter. This discussion includes the ways in which lecturers and tutors can pursue professional development to achieve greater understanding of conceptual knowledge about learning through a deeper, more holistic approach which incorporates the complexities of continuous improvement in student-centred learning environments. This research-informed approach towards reflective teaching practice is described as a Level 3 response to academic development.

**Level 1: teaching strategies for lecturers and tutors**

In the course of this study, it became clear that there was a significant link between effective teaching and learning practice for international students and effective teaching and learning practice for local students. When lectures and tutorials were delivered most successfully, all students benefited in their ability to engage with the learning. There was, however, a discernible difference in successful learning between the two groups of students once the quality of the teaching and learning became less successful. In particular, international students were less able to compensate, or “fill the gaps” in the learning process when information material was not understood, the learning intention was unclear, or the process for undertaking a learning activity was not known.

Logically, the strategy most likely to address this inequity of learning opportunity between the two groups is to reduce the gap between effective teaching delivery and less effective teaching delivery. This is consistent with Ridley (2004), McInnes (2001) and Carroll (2005), who argued that explicitness of learning intentions and practices were critical for international students. There are behavioural strategies that lecturers and tutors adopt which are more effective than other strategies, and these can be identified and adopted with the assistance of academic development specialists such as teaching and learning specialists, or by lecturers and tutors responding to the strategies individually. This professional learning
approach is referred to in this study as a first level response (Level 1) because suggested changes in instruction techniques relate to processes and behaviours that can be adopted simply and quickly.

From the observation of lectures and tutorials, the student feedback provided by Quality of Teaching surveys, and the researcher’s student survey, it was clear that the purpose and key concepts of lectures were sometimes lost in the attempt to deliver as much information and content as the time permitted. Lectures were also less effective if the implicit cultural references, area of study vocabulary and lack of structure colluded to outweigh the language and cultural experience of the students themselves. As Webb (2005) and Danworth and Kilpatrick (2003) noted, lecturers and tutors need to normalise teaching practices that are inclusive of diverse backgrounds. Tutorials, in particular, were especially difficult for international students when the tutors did not question or intervene effectively, or model what was required. There were also clear indications that the speaking styles of lecturers and tutors had a significant effect on the learning environment for international students. From observation and analysis of lectures and tutorials, the following improvements were identified and are described as a Level 1 approach to academic development for lecturers and tutors.

**Teaching strategies: lectures**

1. Educate students to expect some interaction, even if minor in nature. Passive behaviour can set in quickly, so create an interactive environment in lectures from the beginning of the year. It is useful to continue some of the students’ previous year’s learning behaviours (Year 12 or equivalent) where they were required to answer questions individually. For a large lecture theatre environment this might take on a “roving” style where the lecturer moves into the aisles and along the front of the seating areas, randomly selecting students to respond to questioning. This is especially useful when the lecturer wants to remind students of previous lectures’ content.

2. Brief guest lecturers regarding the suitability of pace of delivery, wait time, and visual
support through the use of key term definitions.

3. At the start of a session, define and encapsulate the purpose of the lecture and what students should know by the end of it.

4. Stop at strategic points during the lecture and ask for questions, or pose a question which needs a student response.

5. Stop at strategic points during the lecture for recapping of the main points. Repeat the main points, or refer back to the main point. Perhaps ask a student to re-tell the main point you want emphasized.

6. Set up a white-board. Pick individual students to come down to illustrate a point, define a concept, write a question or a large question-mark if the student believes the lecturer’s material has become inaccessible.

7. Include practical demonstrations within lectures as often as possible.

8. Identify key vocabulary and concept words. Provide definitions. Tell students to record the definitions. Experiment with visual glossaries rather than written glossaries.

9. Sign-post the direction of the lecture with linking phrases. Connect frequently with previous information. Write a lecture script which focuses on the main point, examples and connections to previous lectures.

10. Provide a lecture structure that models moving from contention, to main teaching point to examples and evidence. This model demonstrates the appropriate writing structure for research essays.

11. Organise lecture material to move from more accessible content to more abstract content. Avoid starting with abstract content not connected to students’ experience.

12. Every image on a screen should connect conceptually with the previous one. State
Chapter 6: Academic Development Recommendations

the connection.

13. Make sure the lighting is good for slides.

14. Effective visual slides could include simple scaffolding (embedded definitions and explanations).

15. After the first half an hour, be aware that students will need to do something, other than listen (see suggested student tasks above).

16. Be prepared to request the students’ attention during a session. During a session this is sufficient to re-focus lost concentration.

17. Team-lecturing is an ideal strategy for helping students to maintain focus. The crossovers from one lecturer to another, formally and informally, work to stimulate communicative interest in an audience, especially if the lecturers can find a point of difference of opinion or approach.

18. Avoid using too many images. (The detail can be distracting or not relevant to what you want to achieve).

19. Images should match verbal content. Some students will search the screen for content cues while the lecturer is speaking, only to discover they are not there and they have missed the point being made.

20. There will be many Western or European cultural references in Western university-level courses. Give the students a lead on where they can find out more, either in their course lecture notes or other references. Classical and religious references in particular will be difficult for international students. Concise, pre-lecture readings related to classical and religious references are very helpful to international students (and many local students).

21. “Chunk” information into themes. This gives a thematic, sign-posted structure to a lecture which helps students to process information. More “intuitive” styles of
22. Provide lecture notes that contain “gapped” sentences (key words removed) which relate to the main teaching point (for students to fill in as the lecture progresses).

23. Finish with how the lecture connects to next week, or connects to a task. Make this brief. Show disapproval if students start talking or packing up before the lecture is finished.

24. Provide a box for students to submit a question or comment that could be followed up in tutorials.

25. Reflect on how technology can enhance your presentation and interaction with students. A Learning Management System (LMS) provides opportunities for pre-lecture or post-lecture learning, such as follow-up questions, a short homework submission, or, scaffolded material that revises, explains and extends the lecture content.

26. Lecturers need to articulate expectations clearly. Being able to explain these values, beliefs and behaviours in an explicit manner will provide important guidance and structure for international students.

27. Lecturing is a linguistic challenge given the diversity of the audience. While a lecturer’s impact can be enhanced by asides relating to local knowledge and humour, many first-year, international students will miss the meaning of the reference. If this occurs too frequently in a lecture, many students will find it very difficult to follow the main thread of meaning.

28. Be aware that failing to complete sentences is a common linguistic pattern of all speakers. The missing information is usually filled in unconsciously by the local student cohort but this is difficult for international students especially in their first semester of study.

29. Lecturers should use a lapel microphone to allow a walk across to a white board, up
the side of the aisles or close to groups of students. This helps to create a physical presence that keeps students alert.

31. Maintain a steady pace of speech.

32. For a complicated concept, use fewer words (not more). Try to avoid slang that is not explained in context. Try to reduce culturally-exclusive references, such as Jeff’s Shed, the ‘G’, the Bombers and so on, at least for the first semester of study.

33. Be aware of tonal inflection. Australian English is often spoken in a ‘flat’ tone with not much variety in the inflection. Accurate, predictable tonal inflection is very useful for international students as they are cued in by inflection to grammatical structures such as questions, statements, rhetorical questions and phrasing. Similarly, clear pronunciation is helpful. Australian English is often blurry on consonants; words run into each other. Don’t overemphasise words. Just aim for normal conversation speed, using “colour” in the tonal expression, and finishing sentences at the same auditory level as the first part of the sentence. If this is done, speakers tend to pronounce all of their words clearly enough. (The pitch of the voice will go up at the end of phrase where it is expected and down at the end of a statement where it is expected, and up at the end of a question where it is expected and so on.)

34. Be aware of personal language markers. Use of ahh, er, umm, lengthy pauses, stop-start “staccato-ing,” in particular, can contribute to loss of meaning for international students particularly in their first semester of study.

35. Cultural self-awareness and tolerance of a range of student responses are important traits for lecturers and tutors in relating to international students. This attitude is communicated to students and provides a “safe” environment for students to approach lecturers with learning questions. Some international students (and importantly, some local students) will demonstrate perfect student learning behaviours relevant to their previous schooling that do not necessarily match their new learning conditions. These could include:
• respectful silence in lectures and tutorials (teacher regarded as expert)
• not questioning the lecturer (seen as disrespectful)
• requiring explicit instructions (teacher regarded as expert)
• dependent learner (teacher regarded as expert who provides the information)
• requiring compulsory topic assignments (the expectation that there is compulsory knowledge to be learned)
• requiring lecturer to provide “best” theories (teacher regarded as expert)
• learning by listening (the belief that teachers talk, students listen)
• believing rote-learning of key content to be a necessary preliminary stage to thinking and discussing the core knowledge
• giving equal emphasis to a number of points where Western tradition usually requires identification of a main point This is especially relevant to effective research, essay structures and construction of argument.
• expecting that lecturers are authority figures who provide answers
• expecting that lecturers are generally available out of class time
• expecting to do set homework and be tested orally
• copying peer work in peer-tutoring situations.

Teaching strategies: tutorials

There are some particular teaching and learning techniques that are critical to tutorial settings. Although still a Level 1 response to academic development, this study’s findings
indicated that some tutors will need assistance to implement the following behaviours. It is recommended that these techniques are incorporated into academic development programs and department pre-teaching meetings constructed specifically for tutor education.

1. Be prepared to learn students’ names.

2. Conduct relationship-building activities with students at the start of semester.

3. Set learning objectives for each tutorial.

4. Give precise instructions and stick to the planned organisation of the tutorial, especially related to time.

5. Be prepared to engage with the students for the duration of the tutorial.

6. Provide suitable physical resources for student presentations and teach students how to use them.

7. Provide guidance regarding choice of material and task focus in the first phase of an assessment task.

8. Provide some commentary about student material during presentations.

9. Learn appropriate models of questioning and feedback commentary.

10. Learn how to construct the physical environment to be inclusive of all students.

11. Provide students with instructional steps on how to complete assessment tasks.

In summary, the explicit teaching and learning strategies described above as a Level 1 response are consistent with academic development models which include workshops, briefings, and short courses. However, some Level 1 strategies are more complex than others (for example, questioning techniques) and would be enhanced through an academic development model that is more reflective in nature, such as the collaboratively-constructed teaching practice approaches of the “teaching communities” (McDonald, 2008) or “teaching
circles” (Blackwell, Channell & Williams, 2001) described earlier in the literature.

**Level 2: improving student learning through curriculum review**

The second level of response (Level 2) relates to improving the learning experience of international students through improvements to curriculum design. Most significantly, this study identified a number of content issues which affected the international students in particular.

Subject material was a contentious issue for lecturers on a number of fronts. At times, their concern to include extensive subject knowledge which they felt the students needed in order to continue into the next year of the course over-rode all other considerations relating to course content.

Learning-to-learn knowledge in the form of research skills and understanding academic writing in a new context were also difficult curriculum design issues for lecturers, and remained largely unresolved. This was consistent with the findings of Schmitt (2005) and Ferman (2003) who noted that discipline-specific literacy was not a feature of university course content. The tensions that existed between the subject matter issue and the learning-to-learn knowledge had a significant impact on the effectiveness of the assessment tasks to evaluate the level of learning of individual students.

Lastly, curriculum design also includes how information is structured for students, and in this regard, the concept of scaffolding information according to student need was an area that had not been explored to any measurable extent during the process of constructing the course design in the three subjects included in the study. As Ryan and Hellmundt (2005) found, cognitive dissonance or psychological confusion results from a failure to begin with students’ own knowledge, and in undertaking any improvements in the construction of course content, awareness of the importance of scaffolded information should be included to allow students to access the curriculum at a point relevant to their current needs.

Another of this study’s significant research outcome related to the tension that existed between exposing students to content knowledge and information and the desire to teach
students how to think in ways that would contribute to their conceptual development. This area of concern added to the lecturers’ frustration in that, again, they felt a pressure to use a transmission style of teaching to “cover” the content knowledge they felt was essential. Although not stated directly by lecturers, there was evidence of frustration with the issues that surrounded some international students’ poor performance and the need for lecturers to deal with their very basic learning issues, which took significant time. In discussion about the goals of each of the subjects, the lecturers referred frequently to the higher order cognitive thinking development they understood to be essential to the successful progress of all students in the first year course. The lecturers were passionate about this learning goal but were unclear about how the curriculum taught students to think deeply and critically. One lecturer described this as a “necessary confusion” (L3, 9 March, 2006). Duron, Limbach and Waugh (2006) believed that most lecturers considered critical literacy of primary importance but few had an idea of what it is, how it should be taught and how it should be assessed.

In the opinion of the researcher, there is a clear need to acknowledge the complexity of resolving these tensions and this would involve exploring quite personal attitudes towards learning, and indeed, would involve lecturers setting goals for themselves to learn how to think in highly cognitive ways about the nature of critical thinking. Critical thinking is discipline-specific and culturally-specific and as Brown argued, cultural dissonances occur when life experiences are very dissimilar (2008). Further, critical thinking is implicit, socially-constructed and not easily defined (Vandermemsbrugghe, 2004). It is not surprising that the most difficult element to teaching first year students (teaching students to challenge their assumptions, values and beliefs in the course of their studies) requires lecturers to undergo a similar process with respect to challenging assumptions and beliefs about higher order teaching and learning.

Addressing curriculum design from a learner’s perspective is an effective platform for lecturers and tutors to test if congruence exists between what is intended to be learned and what is actually learned (Ramsden, 2003). This is consistent with McKinnon and Manathunga (2008) who found that staff and student perceptions about assessment items were often not the same. Questions about assessment practice, essential subject
understandings and effective organisation of quality of materials and activities raise a number of deeper issues about the possible gap between espoused aims and objectives and the way the curriculum is interpreted by students in reality. Lecturers in this study were aware of course design issues which impacted on students’ ability to achieve success. Some comments related to the changing cohort of students in the previous five years, and the desire to include more international content in the materials and examples explored in the subjects. When discussion with lecturers touched on more pedagogical aspects of curriculum, there was less certainty about how curriculum design could assist with improving student outcomes.

There are key areas of curriculum design in higher education settings which should be considered given the nature of the faculty’s dependence on lectures for large numbers of students, and the reliance on casual tutors (who may have little teaching background) as the face-to-face teachers on whom students rely for specific instruction. Ramsden (2003) and Bigg (1999) argued that a focus on student-focused pedagogy challenged the transmission style of pedagogy prevalent in university teaching. A curriculum review which sets the goal to provide all students, including international students, with greater access to learning materials, discipline-specific subject knowledge and assistance with undertaking assessment tasks, would certainly provide lecturers and tutors with immediate questions about pedagogical beliefs requiring considerable investigation and discussion. Thus, a curriculum review provides a more complex professional learning model for lecturers and tutors than seminars or workshops and has greater capacity to foster improvement in pedagogical understanding. It is the researcher’s opinion that this Level 2 model of professional learning is effective because it benefits students immediately with a renewed course design incorporating direct teaching and learning improvements.

In particular, for the purpose of developing curriculum within a student-focused framework, and to address issues of explicitness as described by Carroll (2005) and Ryan (2006), a subject curriculum review should include:

1. Clear statements of purpose, values and beliefs relating to learning in the subject.
2. Decisions about what is core content.

3. Decisions about what core content needs to change to include a global perspective.

4. Decisions about which core learning skills are essential to the subject.

5. Decisions about which core learning skills will be taught in the subject.

6. A clear understanding of what is being evaluated in assessment tasks.

7. An audit of lectures and tutorials to determine if what is being assessed is being taught.

8. The generation of high quality teaching materials which include a scaffolded approach from which students can access background information, visual and written subject glossaries, extension activities and learning-how-to-learn guides and models.

9. The generation of tutorial guides (an instructional design) for tutors relating to teaching practice in the subject.

The methodology for undertaking curriculum review is critically important. As noted previously, part-time tutors are responsible for almost half of all university teaching (Australian Teaching and Learning Council, 2008) and it is the researcher’s opinion that they are essential participants in the discussion and creation of new curricula. A curriculum review has at its core a set of criteria that defines the field of inquiry and therefore the set of criteria needs to be agreed to by those who will be teaching the curriculum. Often, a curriculum review will result in curriculum templates which provide a shared and useful mapping tool for teaching staff to construct teaching designs. It is important to note that Harvey and Kamvounias (2008) found that a template only worked for those who had devised it. Similarly, if a curriculum review is to act as an effective method of academic development for all teaching staff, it is important for sessional staff to participate in the teaching and learning dialogue that occurs within a review process. Further, the participation of sessional staff would be enhanced by the involvement of academic development specialists who would bring specific knowledge of teaching and learning pedagogy to the
collaborative process.

Level 3: a research-based approach to academic development

While renewing curriculum designs with carefully constructed teaching and learning guidelines will bring immediate improvement in reducing the gap between what is hoped is learned and what is learned, lecturers and tutors need to analyse how they teach for higher order thinking.

In this study, there were a number of references made by the lecturers of the desire for students to “unlearn” preconceived ideas about creativity and design. Lecturers also referred to the skill of “fuzzy thinking” where the goal for students was to reduce their dependence on following prescribed ways of thinking through ideas logically and to move towards greater risk-taking in pursuit of original concepts. At the same time, lecturers noted that logical thinking was a highly valued skill in all subjects and assisted students to understand the principles and practices which underpinned the study of architecture. Additionally, lecturers observed that the learning issues experienced by many students in first year did not exist in later years. This seemed to indicate that some students who could manage mathematics, physics, drawing and research essays as well as demonstrate an ability to think in non-logical, creative ways emerged with the right balance between “fuzzy” and “logical” thinking at some point after the first year of study. The learning issue, however, is the lecturers in this study believed that an insufficient number of students were emerging from the first year of study so equipped. Clearly there are many curriculum issues contained in the discussion of lecturers’ perceptions of critical learning attributes for first year students. However, the most striking element to the lecturers’ beliefs regarding desirable attributes for first year students is how this would affect a lecturer’s views and attitudes towards teaching itself.

Whose role is it to teach how to think deeply or to think in abstract ways in this first year course? How do lecturers teach conceptual development? Do lecturers feel they must spend most of their time teaching content via transmission methods? These are questions about the nature of teaching itself. In order to answer these questions, higher education teachers need access to another level of professional learning which involves ways of developing
higher levels of operation in the teaching of thinking itself. Knowledge about the process of becoming a reflective educator who can focus subjectively on the art and practice of teaching as it is occurring is required. This is a complex approach to academic development but one that has been identified as critical for achieving expert teaching performance. An action-research model of academic development (described in this study as a Level 3 approach) draws together the critical connections between beliefs, scholarly research, reflective practice and teaching performance.

It is important to acknowledge that this approach to professional learning would have greater impact on the quality of teaching improvement than implementing the Level 1 lecture and tutorial strategies outlined above, or undertaking a Level 2 response in the form of a curriculum review. The participants (and their students) of an action-research project benefit directly, but additionally, action-research increases knowledge capital within and beyond the immediate faculty because it has the potential to contribute to the scholarship of teaching and learning.

There is a critical connection between identifying international students’ learning needs as discussed by Carroll and Ryan (2005), McLean and Ransom (2005), Naidoo and Jamison (2005) and Schmitt (2005), and the need to find a more effective means of improving teaching and learning in higher education settings. The provision of access to the curriculum is a first principle condition between those who teach and those who learn. For a comprehensive approach towards that goal, lecturers and tutors in higher education settings require teaching and learning knowledge that underpins the critical decisions about the design and delivery of a course of study. One simple example of this critical connection would be the application of the revised Bloom’s Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) to the research findings of students’ learning experiences contained in this study.

If the revised Bloom’s Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) is an appropriate description of the ascending levels of thinking within the process of learning (in order: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation), then it is probable that international students often fail to thrive academically due to their struggle with the first two levels in the Taxonomy. Further, whilst struggling with accessing the necessary knowledge,
and understanding (comprehension) the meaning, the more advanced skills of metacognition inherent in skills of synthesis and evaluation remain beyond the reach of students studying in a second language. As a result, many international students (and some local students) tend to focus on a surface approach to their studies. This is a type of survival response common to all learners when faced with learner confusion. It is possible to help improve access to the primary needs of comprehension of core knowledge (and these strategies were described in the Level 1 approach to academic development). However, a more comprehensive approach to teaching and learning is required to address all of the revised Taxonomy as described by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001).

According to Ramsden (2003) students need more than “surface” learning if they are going to search for personal meaning by engaging with the material. With this view in mind, his Properties of Good Teaching (see Appendix 19) suggested ways for lecturers to ensure engagement. Importantly, Ramsden believed that what students learn is directly linked to how they go about learning. His sixth and final key principle for effective teaching in higher education settings was to learn from the students in order to establish the “misunderstandings” that exist between what is intended to be taught and what is actually learned. It is this principle that relates so directly to Bloom’s Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001), and to the purpose of this study.

Educators need to become skilled in order to “diagnose” the teaching and learning shortfalls. This is a different focus to being “advised” of the shortfalls and attempting to implement suggested teaching techniques. Ramsden (2003) took a stance that valued a conceptual approach to developing teaching and learning skills over a “skills first” approach. Primarily, his argument was that lecturers needed to know how to approach a teaching problem, and that could only be achieved by a contextualised development of scholarly knowledge about teaching and learning. This is consistent with Huber (2005) and Knight (2006) who agreed that effective teaching is so complex and tacit that an evidence-based approach is needed to measure effective teaching, and thus, a conceptual development approach to professional learning must be implemented if lecturers are to move students beyond surface understandings. Ramsden (2003), Huber (2005) and Knight (2006) were mindful of the need
to do this in a contextualised way. Conceptual development of lecturers needs to occur in situ, where the teaching academics have identified a teaching and learning “problem”. It is important to differentiate between this position towards effective academic development and the purely “concept first” approach of researchers such as Ho (2001) who argued that a conceptual change approach is needed to improve teaching and learning but situated this as a generalised short course designed around four theories of change.

In contrast to the positions of Ramsden (2003), Huber (2005), Knight (2006) and Ho (2001), Eley (2006) argued that teaching and learning improvement should not start with conceptual development as there is no evidence that it works. He suggested that Ho’s Hong Kong study of a staff development program which focused on conceptual change might have appeared successful in creating change in teaching practice due to simply focusing on teaching itself. Eley preferred the option of starting with actual teaching practice as a practical “way in” to improving the quality of learning.

Therefore, it could be argued that the most effective way to improve the quality of learning does not lie in accepting or rejecting any approach. The way forward for lecturers and tutors operating in demanding environments must be achievable, however. It is within this context that the following academic development design is presented.

An action-research approach

In order to avoid a “deficit” model of what needs to improve, it would be desirable to focus on what is done well rather than what is not done well. Deficit models, especially relating to individual educators, tend to be isolating in nature. In order to focus on what is done well, there needs to be a focus on collective efforts of groups of people who may all be bringing different skills and backgrounds to a learning environment but still have the single focus of improving student outcomes. This collective model of professional learning is supported by the research into organisational learning.

The work of Argyris and Schon (1974) has remained profoundly significant over time. They explored the difference between espoused theories and theories in use within organisations
and concluded that there was a difference between what is said to be done and what is observed to be done. Within the literature of organisational learning, Lave and Wenger (1991) first established the phrase “communities of practice” to describe the ways in which people learn in groups and in highly contextualised ways. They established that informal communities of practice exist in all organisations, and were often responsible for inhibiting improvement change due to established, if unstated, cultural practices. Thus, organisations operate in very implicit ways, based on cultural practices enacted over time. Lave and Wenger suggested that the same communities of practice could be activated to drive rather than inhibit change. In practice, what could this look like for the architecture department described in this study? The following scenario is entirely fictitious but is representative of the type of learning questions lecturers ask themselves.

I am a lecturer in design. I know some of my students struggle with their first research assignment because they seek help constantly, show anxiety and their assignment results are poor. I don’t want to spoon feed them but I am not sure how to change things for the better.

This “problem” is one that lecturers are able to observe from the evidence before them. As such, it provides ideal research material for a learning question that is both contextualised and real world in nature. So the “problem”, instead, becomes a learning question. Importantly, this problem is likely to be of interest to other lecturers who may have observed similar responses to specific assignments in their own subjects. Further, there would be a number of other tutors and educational specialists within the organisation who might also be interested in looking at this learning question when applied to the everyday work they carry out. There is potential here for a research group to investigate what is occurring when students demonstrate that there is a problem with an assignment. Should the learning question be a broad one, such as, “What are the educational implications for academic staff when students fail to understand an assignment?” Or, should the learning question be “Is what I am assessing and how I am assessing clearly explained to the students for this assignment?” An action-research model as described by Cobb et al. (2003), Lobarto (2003) and Banan-Ritland (2003) would suggest the second, more explicit question is the more appropriate focus as it offers a defined area of investigation based on teacher and student
actions.

With an action-research approach it is very important that learning questions are defined quite narrowly. This provides a framework that is both achievable for the practitioners, and conducive to scholarly research findings. Importantly, an action-research model is iterative in nature and practical in outcomes. The significant feature of this model is, however, that the inquiry and coding of the emerging evidence is documented. With respect to the fictitious problem described above, a useful next step would be to decide to take a “backward” approach to investigating the question. In all educational settings, it is effective to take the end product (the assignment or the exam) and then analyse the critical points on the continuum (between the end product and the introduction of the task) where there might be a likely mismatch between the learning intention and the learner’s understanding of the intention. This kind of analysis should be undertaken using research methods acceptable to a specific discipline and with the aim to diagnose the curriculum as it is delivered. An action-research model based on this diagnostic approach would provide the platform for finding teaching and learning solutions that are student-centred and measurable. The pathway to significant increases in knowledge capital about effective learning in university settings lies with further investigation beyond one lecturer’s own assignment, into the world of colleagues and further, into a broader, scholarly community of practice.

**Setting the conditions for an action-research approach**

In order to develop a community that generates its own reflective practices, a learning organisation needs to consider how best to support higher order professional learning. An action-research approach is neither a “skills first” method nor a “concepts first” method. Rather, it is an ongoing form of learning situated in real world teaching and learning questions, which draws on a multi-method approach. It is very important to note the significance of the narrow field of focus described in the fictitious learning problem above, as it is drawn from lecturers’ own observations about a teaching and learning dilemma. Embedding academic development into the teaching work of lecturers and tutors ensures that the continuing nature of learning improvement remains relevant and justifiable, and importantly, lecturers can measure the success of their work and achieve satisfaction
through crafting expert curricula. In order to maximise the potential of the action-research approach, universities should view research into teaching and learning as importantly as other research knowledge. To achieve this, action-research needs to be supported by:

- sample curriculum improvement models which guide investigation
- direct involvement by teaching and learning advisors
- interest and participation by department and university leaders
- external expertise for stimulus, such as specialist academic developers
- provision of time
- professional rewards comparable to the research undertaken, and rewarded, in a lecturer’s expertise area
- a publishing arm for research findings of action-research to add to the research literature
- extensive policy development relating to the academic development of sessional tutors

**Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter was to highlight how greater access to the curriculum for first year international students can be improved through academic development. This can be achieved, to some degree, by lecturers and tutors thinking about critical teaching techniques as described in the Level 1 approach to academic development, or the more significant Level 2 approach which presents learning questions for investigation through a guided curriculum review of a subject. Most effective of all approaches for international and local students’ outcomes, is one where the inquiry is socially situated, ongoing, strongly focused and intrinsically relevant. The Level 3 action-research approach is powerful because it brings
these attributes to a real world teaching and learning problem.

When professional learning becomes a shared activity which includes a group of interested colleagues and experts and is documented and shared further with other groups, a vibrant community of practice grows. This is the true meaning of successful learning organisations. Universities are perfectly placed to model best practice for other educational and non-educational organisations. Ultimately, for each small action-research group, answers are found to learning questions. At the same time, each action-research group adds to the scholarship of teaching and learning knowledge. Importantly for students, an action-research approach has the potential to develop evidence-based teaching and learning practice by changing the perceptions of staff about the intellectual rewards of engaging in pedagogical research. Both teachers and learners benefit.
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Language Australia.


Appendix 1

Assumptions about essay-writing

What assumptions do you make about essay writing? (MacKinnon and Manathunga (2003: 139)

That all teaching and learning models include essay writing.

That all students will have previously written an essay, and know how and what elements it should contain, as well as the appropriate presentation format.

That alternate ways of knowing can be reflected and accommodated in essay structure and content.

That the assessment is not only about the content, and analysis, but also about knowing how to write an essay.

That by providing a model of the essay writing process, all students can attempt the assessment because they have a clear idea of what is expected of them.

That assessment in university teaching is only about ideas and content, not about the process of researching and constructing an essay.

That the unit resources and materials provided are accessible to all students and assist students to complete the essay. That these resources are affordable, and value for money.

That language and terminology used in assessment questions is clear and/or defined, and also avoids unidentified culturally specific terms or colloquialisms upon which the entire meaning of the assignment question might hinge, i.e. Body line in OZ.
That students who don’t understand how to write an essay have not grasped the intellectual content of the assessment and/or subject.

That students will submit typed essays, have unlimited access to computer facilities, and have the financial resources to achieve this.

That students have technological literacy.

That a lack of technological or essay writing skill reflects cognitive deficit.

That all cultures are writing orientated not reading orientated cultures. That all text is read from left to right.

That essay writing in all cultures is linear, unified and contains no superfluous material.

That an essay’s structure in all cultures starts with an indication of the key argument, then provides evidence to support this argument and ends with a restatement of the argument.

Appendix 2

Interview questions for lecturers

In the interviews with lecturers, open-ended questions were prepared but the study’s intention was to encourage lecturers to respond discursively to a question, effectively taking control of the direction of the answer. The researcher was interested in the self-generated comments of lecturers once the general area of interest had been introduced to the interview. The questions listed below were the prepared guide questions taken into the interviews with lecturers.

Teaching, learning and assessment

1. Do you think there are a set of desirable pre-requisites for your subject?
2. What are the tasks relating to assessment?
3. What strategies do you believe help international students to get started on your assessment tasks?
4. What have you observed as being a challenging kind of activity for students?
5. Do you feel you get to know your international students as well as your local students?

Area of subject knowledge or content

1. Is there knowledge embedded in your subject area? If yes, can you give an example?
2. Do you think your content is internationally inclusive?

Linguistics and critical literacy

The following questions were designed to elicit perceptions about the current teaching
conditions and practices that operate on a day-to-day basis.

1. What are the opportunities for informal communication between you and your international students?

2. Can you give me examples of how you deal differently with individual students?

3. Can you give me an example of a situation when there was a gap in expectation between yourself and an international student?

4. What are the issues for you relating to international students?
Appendix 3

The researcher's student survey

Staff-Student Relationships

Q1/A  The tutors know my education background
Q2/B  The tutors make an effort to get to know me
Q3/C  The tutors try to include all students in discussion
Q4/D  The tutors are interested in discussing examples from other countries
Q5/E  The tutors understand what students need to help them learn

Teaching Methods

Q6/F  The tutorials are well-organised
Q7/G  The tutors are clear about the learning goal of each tutorial
Q8/H  The tutors use visual teaching aids
Q9/I  The tutors use language students can understand
Q10/J The tutors explain complex ideas
Q11/K The study materials I am given include definitions for difficult words
Q12/L The tutorials are relevant to the assignments students need to do
Q13/M When working in small groups in tutorials or practical work, students are given clear guidelines for participation

Assessment
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q14/N</td>
<td>Students are given useful feedback about their progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q15/O</td>
<td>Students are given some choice about assessment tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q16/P</td>
<td>Instructions for carrying out assessment tasks are clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q17/Q</td>
<td>Criteria for assessment tasks are clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q18/R</td>
<td>Tutors use tutorial time to assist students with assessment tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q19/S</td>
<td>Students are given examples of completed assessment tasks as a guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q20/T</td>
<td>It is clear what students need to revise for exams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Writing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q21/U</td>
<td>Students are taught about different types of essay-writing in their first year subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q22/V</td>
<td>Students are taught how to cite references in their first year subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q23/W</td>
<td>Students are taught how to research information in their first year subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q24/X</td>
<td>Students are taught how to write without copying from other writers’ work in their first year subjects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lectures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q25t/Y</td>
<td>Lecturers provide written outlines of lectures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q26/Z</td>
<td>Students can access an audio recording and/or transcription of the lecture after it is given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q27/AA</td>
<td>Lecturers speak clearly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q28/AB</td>
<td>Lecturers use visual materials effectively</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q29/AC  Lecturers explain difficult ideas and words
Q30/AD  Lectures are linked to tutorials
Q31/AE  Overall, courses/subjects are well-designed
Appendix 4

Data collection process one: Interviews with lecturers

Interview with Lecturer 1 (L1)

Lecturer 1: Technologies

Date: 17 March, 2006

The Cohort and prerequisites

According to L1, students would have an advantage if they had a humanities background rather than a maths background because of the requirements of the research essays. “I think that in some ways if students are brilliant at maths but not so good at essay writing they struggle more because there is such an emphasis on research and then presenting a critique on that research within essay form.”

L1 was also clear about the need to teach the students how to question effectively and any background that has encouraged that skill would be very advantageous. “They have a lot of preconceptions and we need to get rid of those and allow new ideas in.”

L1 was also interested in pursuing investigation into the language skills of local entry of students from a non-English speaking background. Students who enter the first year of the course via the local Victorian Certificate of Education are not assessed for English levels in the same manner as international students. Yet L1 felt that there was a considerable number of students not identified as international students who exhibited the same poor English language skills. L1 recalled a time she was asked to track down six international students who had arrived from overseas in the previous four months. She found that when visiting the tutorial groups, she was unable to identify international students by language markers as other students who indicated they had studied in secondary schools in Victoria also presented with difficulties in speaking, reading and writing in English. “I was staggered how many students came from secondary schools in Australia and I think we always have
dilemmas about English language competency levels and I think that maybe they could have slipped in under the competency level because they haven’t entered from overseas.”

**Relationships with students**

L1 described her relationship with students as not like the tutors – she didn’t get to know the students in a tutorial setting. She described herself as “one layer removed” from the students in her role as coordinator and lecturer. She also noted that because the subject enrolment was so “huge” she was “slightly remote from the students”.

**Teaching and Learning**

L1 was very pleased with the teaching and learning advisor who had been working with tutors for the previous two years. In particular L1 remarked that the direct contact between the teaching and learning advisor and the tutors had provided them with some strategies to work with international students. She also observed that for the first time “we have recognised how important the tutors are, as they were the ‘coalface for many of our subjects and they are underappreciated” (L1, TI, 17 March, 06). L1 further noted that tutors were not currently asked to participate in decision making for course structure and recognition of their importance had been quite valuable. As a result of this contact between the teaching and learning advisor and the tutors, L1 believed that “tutors felt more a part of the staff cohort”.

L1 discussed the recruiting process for tutors and in her subject she decided to have a mix of engineering and architecture tutors. She noted that the tutors worked within the Faculty for reasons other than money (L1 pays the tutors the Engineering Faculty rate of $90 per hour). She believed they may have been prepared to accept comparatively low rates of pay because they saw it as giving back to the profession. She noted that one engineering firm certainly saw it that way.

L1 was able to keep the tutorial sizes small by not having a tutorial in the first and last week. She noted that she had maintained these sizes for the past five years. L1 used the flexibility available to her to structure small groups and saw this as an overall improvement in learning
In response to a question about thinking skills and maths skills, L1 regarded thinking skills more advantageous to first year students than maths skills. She said that, overall, maths was used indirectly across the course because it was a way “to think spatially, three dimensionally and using both sides of the brain…indirectly useful but in terms of content, it is pretty minor”

L1 explained some of the conceptual and language challenges first year students faced when describing a ‘postcard’ task she set as an assessment task early in the students’ first year in her subject. Students were required to critique a model they had constructed during one class and were told to write very little. They were asked to put their visual comment on one side and their written comment on the other side of a postcard. The purpose of the task was to identify key elements in the students’ own models without using written detail. She noted that students found the exercise difficult because, according to L1, current students were effective at gathering information from a range of sources but were less able to identify main points. This was an interesting observation and L1 reflected further that students found synthesis very difficult when asked to summarise concepts in very few words. She noted that the students asked for examples and found it unsettling that she did not have any to show them.

In response to the observation that many students appeared to struggle in their first year, L1 reflected that the subjects in the course were very different to other courses and might require different skills, especially relating to English language skills. In her own engineering subject, L1 observed it might not matter that students had poor English skills because of the nature of the tasks. Additionally, in the Architecture subject, according to L1, the tasks were problem-based and the assignments were open-ended. L1 felt international students might experience greater difficulty coping with the English language. In her subject, L1 planned to shift to one hour lectures so the size of the group could be halved. L1 observed the fact that tutorial groups were all conducted in the same space with over 150 students: “I think when you go up there to a tutorial and see a hundred and fifty students, I imagine it might make
you feel pretty insignificant”.

In response to a question about whether tutors had access to the learning and cultural background of students of the learning of students, L1 indicated this was not the case. She felt the Faculty could better support learning of international students in particular by providing more background information of students to teaching staff. With respect to tutorial activities that might assist students to get to know each other and feel more comfortable when participating in group work, L1 described a learning activity specific to group work that asked the students to prepare a lunchbox. The students bring food to share that tells something about their backgrounds. She highlighted the importance of taking the time to celebrate eating together, as well as introducing the connection between culture and design.

L1 also described an experiment in grouping students in tutorials when she arranged tutorial groups according to language, that is, the Chinese-speaking students were assigned a Chinese-speaking tutor and Indonesian students an Indonesian tutor. L1 thought it was an interesting experiment but was not sure whether it worked or not and had not sought to investigate the effectiveness of the experiment. She noted that the other lecturers said “there must be a cross section of students in tutorials and I tend to agree with that”.

**Assessment**

In response to a question about the restricted nature of learning in a second language and the dilemma in writing a fair examination, L1 was keen to try a strategy of having a linguist review the exam for clarity and fairness. L1 described how she shifted to a multiple choice question format away from short answer for one examination, thinking it might assist the language challenges facing the international students in particular. She had hoped the international students would be more able to demonstrate their knowledge more effectively if they were not required to construct their answers in prose. One of the reasons L1 shifted to a multiple choice approach was an observation she made one year when marking a short answer format examination. She was marking a batch of papers grouped according to the students’ university enrolment numbers and came to “a huge patch of students that were doing really badly and I realised the international students had a group of student numbers
that were really close together so there was this English language difference of skills”. Overall, however, L1 believed that the tasks in her subject were easier for international students compared to the architecture and design subjects which were problem-based and open-ended.

Writing

L1 referred to students finding the synthesis of information very difficult and she observed they experienced difficulty in writing succinctly about key ideas. This was detailed in the teaching and learning paragraph in this analysis of interview, in the discussion of the postcard activity, where students experienced difficulty restricting their ideas to key concepts.

Lectures

L1 referred to the content of her Quality of Teaching surveys when describing some student feedback about the content of some of her lectures. Some students had an issue with L1 detailing a formula during a structured lecture but then telling them they didn’t need to redo or learn them. L1 advised the students that they needed to understand how the formula had outcomes that must be understood with regard to slenderness of columns or bending moments, for example. However, the student feedback indicated criticism of L1 for showing a formula they didn’t need to learn. L1 thought they would be happy they didn’t need to learn the formula and was surprised that she didn’t pick up in advance that the students might react this way. “I thought they'd be really pleased to be told that they didn’t have to learn it. What you need to know is that they exist and this is how we get to here. But it is so obvious – and I didn’t pick it up in advance”.

Academic Development

L1 was very pleased with the Learning and Teaching Advisor’s work with individual tutors. In response to the question “Do you think online professional development in teaching and learning would be useful for lecturers?” L1 was positive about the possibilities but was
unable to expand on this as she needed to conclude the interview.
Appendix 5

Data collection process 1: interviews with lecturers

Interview with Lecturer 2 (L2)

Lecturer 2: History

Date: 9 March, 2006

The cohort and prerequisites

L2 believed that there was a far greater problem with the English skills of current cohort of international students compared to past groups. He commented that it appeared international students were coached to pass the English test to gain entry but that their actual English language skills were less developed than the scores would suggest. He believed this could be one reason for an increase in plagiarism from international students. L2 believed that plagiarism was probably occurring in the local population as well but if the naturally occurring grammatical errors of international students were absent, it was often an indicator of plagiarism. He also believed there was a genuine misunderstanding about paraphrasing and thought first year students needed to be given the benefit of the doubt because they might genuinely not know the protocols of referencing and note-taking. In particular, L2 believed that mainland Chinese students experienced greater difficulty than any other cultural group and therefore were under greater pressure to plagiarise. “They have been trained to pass English language requirements for uni entrance rather than have English and they panic; they’re scared. The fees for mainland Chinese students are a bigger issue than for students from Malaysia and they are less prepared by their high schools”. L2 noted he thought this encouraged the students from mainland China to take bigger risks. As a result of this, L2 felt that the system had created the situation to some degree and “we have to take some responsibility which means including some language development within our programs” L2 noted that there were computer programs than could electronically monitor the students’ assessment tasks for plagiarism but not all students could submit
electronically, so the effectiveness of using such programs was limited.

When questioned about the desirable pre-requisites for first year entry in the Architecture degree, he observed that international students often brought graphic skills that local students did not have. He believed that the international students were more likely to develop advanced drawing skills in high school and he thought that perhaps it was considered a good social skill in ways not experienced by local students. L2 noted that he had a portfolio aspect to his subject and this allowed the international students to experience early success. L2 noted that from his point of view, drawing ability was a desirable prerequisite because “sketching remains a terribly important skill, looking at drawings that other people have done or looking at buildings remains an important skill”.

In terms of other desirable prerequisites, he felt that English was the critical factor and perhaps mathematical ability, although he didn’t necessarily accept that possessing a mathematical ability demonstrated an ability to think spatially. He explained that a mathematical ability is more an ability to think logically. However, he predicted that skills in mathematics and new technologies would become increasingly important in the Architecture degree.

L2 was not in favour of a portfolio selection approach. He had experienced a portfolio selection process at another university and had found it was a kind of ‘sham’ with there being hundreds of portfolios and only two or three days to look seriously at them. He had thought about a multiple method selection regime where some students were selected on academic results, some on portfolio and some on previous experience. Having said that, he was aware of the literature that suggested portfolio selection and academic selection bore very little correlation to final year portfolio standards. He noted that only a weak correlation existed between a physics-maths background on entry and high final year performance.

**Relationships with students**

As part of his role as subject coordinator, L2 met with students who were assessed as making unsatisfactory progress. When students had failed a certain number of subjects they needed to present to a committee. L2 explained that many of the international students told
him terribly sad stories of isolation and were “excessively worried about their parents or financial problems and the impact of their fees on families, and it just starts the general worry, just gets ratcheted up in a big way. Certainly we get the sense that many of the students are terribly isolated from their peers and from their families as well as being isolated from Australian students”. L2 was affected by these personal stories and was mindful that as much practical help as possible should be made available for students. He was also mindful of the student success stories who thrived through that same displacement “and that was the general story of immigration and many people thrive in that situation”. L2 explained that although these problems existed in the first year, you could see international students in Year 5 of the Bachelor of Architecture who had been through the program and “had come to love Melbourne and formed good relationships with Australian peers and it would be great if that was the experience of all international students and not just the ones that survive”. He would like to think that international students could have feelings of satisfaction and belonging earlier.

Teaching and learning

L2 felt that international students would benefit from a “reasonable” entry test and then be given assistance either before they start the course or to study English and general knowledge concurrently. L2 described mainland Chinese students as less familiar with world history than local students or students from Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong. For example, L2 noted that students from China had a poorer grasp of World War II dates. He felt that this lack of world history knowledge impacted negatively on international students’ ability to access architectural concepts contained in the first year course. Additionally, both international and local students questioned the value of learning about the past and from that perspective the subject “was difficult to sell”. L2 reflected that his subject was 10 years old and the composition of the first year cohort had changed and “we probably haven’t done enough to think about the students we have”. He was clear about not patronising students by lowering expectations, but rather, finding “a way to articulate expectations to students and we are not doing that enough”. L2 observed that Master’s level students from mainland China demonstrated a remarkable ability to think deeply. He described it as startling. He
thought that with maturity and first degrees completed, Chinese Master’s level students had a great sense of the future being unbounded in their own country and although their English was not great, it was certainly better than the first year students from China. He observed that the Master’s students from China created some remarkable work. L2 believed that the Masters’ students didn’t suffer the same isolation or fear as the first year students and their English was more advanced, and they had a far greater ability to demonstrate their ideas.

L2 described some of the challenges associated with teaching students to use their own experiences of the world as a point of reference for study. He explained that Australian and New Zealand students tended to think “the real world is Europe and the United States and so tended to discount their own experiences”. This was due in part to the study of international architecture being focused on Japan, Europe and the United States, meaning that and other Nationals tended to think their experiences were not legitimate. He believed that the challenge was to get students to view their own cultural capital seriously and to embrace, rather than disregard, the architectural output of their local cultures in South-East Asia and China.

L2 wished that he had more help with knowing more about the backgrounds and family life of Chinese students. He was conscious that students from South-East Asia had backgrounds more like students from western-type cities than students from China. L2 did not have a sense of where students were from in China. However, in the Master’s of Architecture program, he received extensive files on the backgrounds of the international students as there were only 30 of them. He was aware he became involved quite personally with these students and he knew of the “different places students were from and the difference between students”. From this contact he reflected that students from Shanghai were much more confident, assertive and knowledgeable than students from smaller cities.

**Assessment**

L2 was conscious of the students' lack of confidence in taking their own experiences as valid and they believed that texts were not written for them but for practitioners. Too often, according to L2, students found texts irrelevant, but L2 pointed out that the texts might be
difficult, or badly written, but students must reflect on that. L2 acknowledged that sourcing appropriate texts at first year was difficult as many architecture texts were very expensive and might not have enough international material to suit the international focus of the subject.

Writing

L2 indicated that English skills and the ability to research appropriately without plagiarism were the greatest challenges with respect to student writing. His detailed explanation outlined above in the cohort and discussion of pre-requisites paragraph demonstrated he believed that essay writing presented the most difficult activity for first year international students.

Lectures

In response to a question about awareness of international students while preparing lectures, L2 noted that lecturers did not have a lot of time to construct teaching. Although the content of Asian History had been taken very seriously in the subject, the subject was influenced by L2’s knowledge. Having said that, he was proud of the international content in his lectures. He reflected that he was able to lecture on Hong Kong fairly early on and the students from Hong Kong loved seeing their city. L2 felt constrained, however, by the limited nature of material he could provide to students on Asian cities. He felt that the role of lectures was to focus on conceptual issues, more than they were currently. L2 gave an example of this thematic approach to lecture development. He had constructed a number of lectures on power and architecture and so the subject material covered Versailles and Beijing. He was not sure if the message about the consistent goals of representing power through architecture got across, but he tried to “give some signals”.

L2 found that one of the most challenging aspects of lectures was that they became overburdened with facts and figures and lecturers were probably not conscious enough of bringing students back to the key issues. He described his lectures as overly full and he tried to cut out material so he could reiterate the main issues. At the same time, L2 worried about his local students and was conscious of needing to keep them stimulated and not make
lectures too easy. L2 was also very concerned about what is ‘missed’ in the Architecture program. He knows that students might never hear a lecture on the gothic period if he doesn’t deliver it in his first year history subject. He felt strongly about it and thought that students might not understand what is at stake in not understanding classical and gothic tradition (and an undergraduate degree in Architecture). He felt cultural knowledge was critical to understanding the embedded historical knowledge in architecture and this was true of local students as well as international students.

L2 reflected on the importance of having very good teachers at first year level. As first year is not seen as a ‘prestigious’ place to be teaching, the more senior lecturers tended not to teach at that level. He related, light-heartedly, how “we all fantasize about teaching seminars of 15 bright students’ but reflected that the faculty needed to value first year teaching much more”.

**Academic development**

L2 indicated he would like more advice on classroom practice with respect to larger lecture group practice. He was very happy about a seminar the Teaching and Learning Advisor had organised. The guest lecturer from another university taught first year macro economics, which was a large subject and received “famously high Quality of Teaching surveys”. L2 had heard him before and was very inspired. He did comment that there was a greater level of resourcing available to the guest lecturer, especially in relation to multiple tutorial opportunities for students. He described these as standard tutorials with drop-in tutorials for those who needed them.

L2 noted that the guest lecturer also had an online question and answer system where students could have questions answered within 24 hours. He noted that a very large faculty such as the one he worked in would attract far more enquiries (possibly 1,500), and would be very difficult to resource. L2 had tried answering questions online but found the process ate remarkable amounts of time. He was also conscious of the fact that his faculty needed to pursue the resources that would make this more specific student help possible. He was inspired because of the guest lecturer’s enthusiasm and animation and passion for his
students’ needs, and his resulting work in making better teaching environments happen.

From this professional development opportunity, L2 identified that his faculty needed to look at other modes of teaching other than lecturing, tutorials and studio work. He described this as “alternative modes of interaction” which would be more mediated and immediate, perhaps in the form of email or on demand so students could get answers when they were searching for them.

L2 related a positive professional development seminar on teaching and learning he attended some years ago. He recalled it because the teachers offered some simple skills but in fact, they were very useful to him. If for example, there were 2 lecturers in the room, they should stand at opposite sides of the room so that students felt included in the space between them. L2 also related useful teaching ‘tricks’ that he had heard from other lecturers, that he found very useful, such as design teachers asking students to comment on each other’s work, or look at work upside down, or disregard three quarters of the drawing. These kinds of useful strategies were valued by L2.

In response to a question about the potential value of online seminars or professional development, L2 indicated that an electronic resource might be a useful method of reaching lecturers who tended to not attend voluntary teaching and learning seminars. He noted that lecturers who attended teaching and learning seminars were less likely to have issues with teaching compared to the lecturers who did not attend.

In response to a question about professional development requirements, L2 explained that there was no formal requirement but there was an increasing expectation that faculties should provide professional development for beginning staff and the university promoted the worth of its postgraduate Higher Education Teaching Certificate.
Appendix 6

Data collection process 1: Interview with lecturers

Interview with Lecturer 3 (L3)

Lecturer 3: design

Date: 9 March, 2006

The cohort and prerequisites

L3 noted that “Perhaps the poor progress of international students in their first year compared to local students is due to finding somewhere to live, and not having physics and maths, which is important in the first semester course, and borderline English. Although having physics or maths or Arts background is not helpful as prerequisites for predicting success. Perhaps having some practical experience could be helpful, or having some spatial awareness and good hand-eye coordination. But you can't pre-requisite creativity. Everyone has it. It is acquired through experience and habit. Drawing? Perhaps, but architecture is spatial not visual”.

Due to his personal experience, L3 was conscious of the enormous personal challenges associated with displacement and immigration and studying in a second language. He recognised the physical and emotional survival required in such a shift, especially for the students coming from mainland China. L3 noted that in the last five years there were many more students in larger groups, and the international cohort had changed to represent a much more diverse group. L3 felt that international students from Malaysia and Singapore were more likely to have greater commonality with local students than current mainland Chinese students in first year.

L3 also observed that the ability to have and express ideas is not easily determined with pre-requisite requirement for entry to the Architecture course. He was conscious of the maths and physics content of the first year course, and students with some background in these
areas would experience less difficulty with some elements of first year but a maths and physics background was not necessarily consistent with international students’ previous high school experience. International students’ academic background might have an overdeveloped logical thinking emphasis, but according to L3 this would be true of local first year students as well.

“First year Architecture is confusing because there is such a wide range of backgrounds. This is not necessarily a negative thing. There might be students with no drawing experience or they might have worked in Dad’s architecture office. What is consistent is the lack of ideas about design and the presence of fuzzy thinking”.

L3 identified a general lack of experience in first year students of the ideas and creative thinking associated with architecture. He emphasised that this was not associated with international students in particular, as international students often arrived with global experience and were likely to have been highly mobile. However, L3 had noticed that mainland Chinese students tended to have difficulty with abstraction and tended to create in “poetic analogies or idiograms”, much like Chinese script, which they then had some difficulty with translating to solid design. His provided the following example. If given a brief to design a hospital, many Chinese students would tend to design it like a pill, or if the design brief was a veterinary clinic, Chinese students might design it in the shape of a dog. As a result, the design concept turned out to be an almost literal translation of the word, rather than a solid design that reflected a building with creatively-conceived qualities.

**Teaching and learning**

With respect to learning conditions, L3 noted that with more students in larger groups, students would like to seek out tutors for assistance. However, as many tutors were external practitioners, and employed as sessional tutors, they didn’t have offices on campus. This made access for students problematic.

L3 linked a lack of knowledge of architectural language as an element of necessary confusion for all first year students. The level of confusion caused by subject-specific English was, however, not seen as a negative by L3, but rather, as an element of language
challenge that they could share with local, English-as-first-language students. L3 believed there must be a Western approach embedded in his delivery and knew that he must have a European bias, but he was not entirely sure how or what that might be. He was sure, however, that he tended to reflect his own interests in the examples that he used as material in that he was passionate about Melbourne and Australian culture, had an interest in Japanese culture and was very interested in Chinese gardens. When asked about what might be embedded, L3 referred to content knowledge.

**Assessment**

L3 noted that he didn't observe any difference in student response to assessment. He interpreted the question to mean assessment results.

**Academic development**

L3 found that his trip to Malaysia, financed by the University, was of immense value because he saw Malaysian students’ environment. Gaining familiarity with physical and cultural environments assisted in his use of Malaysian references in learning materials as well as allowing him to establish some rapport by being able to converse about places and experiences close to the students’ own experiences.

L3 found the existing lunchtime seminars on strategies for effective lecturing both interesting and useful, if the seminar focused on one aspect and didn’t try to cover too many topics. L3 noted that he probably wouldn’t respond well to online professional development as learning how to use the technology would take too much time.
Appendix 7

Data collection process 2: Observation of lectures

Observed content of Lecturer 1’s (L1) Technologies lecture

This was a two hour lecture held on 17 March, 2006. The lecture began at 9am.

The purpose of the researcher’s observation was to record and describe the teaching and learning environment, as generated by the lecturer. Three themes emerged from the observations of lectures.

These were:

1. Teaching and learning
2. Linguistics
3. Subject content

In order to record and describe the delivery of the lecture as it occurred, the three themes are coded within the sequence of lecture itself.

Teaching and learning

L1:

- provided an introduction to the lecture prior to the guest speaker’s presentation and began her introduction by reiterating the definition of the purpose of the subject. She spent some time reminding the students to complete the relevant module in the course workbook.

- gave a verbal description of recent student work. This was accompanied by images of the work. L1 ran an effective quiz with students at this time. She also handed out cards that would assist with the quiz that would occur later in the lecture.
• presented PowerPoint images of the various workshops to follow in the subject and explained the assessment process for the workshops.

• recapped the previous lecture content and then advised the students to use their field book to take notes and engage with what the guest was presenting.

**Duration of introduction: 6 minutes.**

**Subject content**

• The overall teaching point of the lecture was stated; ‘Rules apply to structures’.

• The guest’s specific content and teaching point was ‘Composition of Forces (load) and Statics and Dynamics’.

**Linguistics**

The guest:

• presented a PowerPoint slide that posed key questions for the lecture, with key terms listed, but without definitions.

• spoke quite quickly; there was a short amount of time for key points to be processed before he moved to the next point

**Subject content**

The guest:

• presented information on vectors through a series of diagrams on trigonometry.
Duration of guest’s introduction: 10 minutes

Teaching and learning

The guest’s material was extensive and it was accompanied by a considerable number of visual slides backing the verbal explanation.

L1:

- intervened to tell students that help was available with the maths. This was in response to increased student chat during the guest’s presentation which was becoming difficult for the guest.
- returned to the lectern. She gave a short explanation of External and Internal Forces.
- talked about the Mac software available and said she would send a message out on the Learning Management System.
- congratulated the students on their recent model work while showing them images of the models.
- regained the students’ attention and spoke directly to the students about the need for them to concentrate during the lecture.

Duration of L1’s intervention: 10 minutes

From this point for L1 and the guest interwove their presentation but L1 took the major presentation role.

L1:

- reiterated how pleased she was with the innovation of the models in last week’s studio class. There was a pleased response from the students’ facial expressions.
- established a connection through praise. She continued with showing and
commenting on an innovative student model, using positive language.

Linguistics

L1:

- interceded the guest’s presentation with explanation of terms such as ‘lintel’
- used the term ‘rule of thumb’ and then explained the meaning of this figurative language
- explained the guest’s word ‘redundant’

*Duration of paired presentation: 8 minutes*

Teaching and learning

L1 halted the lecture, advising there would be a five minute break prior to the second half of the one hour lecture. She advised the students that they would need to concentrate in order to do the modules.

After the five minute break, L1 warned students again. “Don’t talk during [the guest’s] bit – you must concentrate. You can talk during mine but I’ll be very cross if you talk during [the guest’s] presentation”.

Subject content

The guest proceeded with a PowerPoint series of slides on concurrent and non-concurrent forces, using verbal explanations to accompany diagrammatic information. He explained that the images they were watching were constructed using architectural software.

Teaching and learning

L1 approached chatting students and reprimanded them for not concentrating. She also
approached one student who had the wrong information sheet and assisted him to find the right one.

**Linguistics**

The guest’s presentation used the detailed language of maths and science that might be found in texts. L1 intervened frequently with specific questions such as ‘Why is that so important?’

*Duration of forces presentation: 30 minutes*

**Teaching and learning**

The guest demonstrated the forces/pulley principle with the use of a real pulley. The students appeared focus during the demonstration.

*Duration of pulley demonstration: 10 minutes*

L1 loaded questions for the quiz on the screen. Students had been given cardboard letters (ABCD) at the beginning of the lecture. Students enjoyed the quiz and L1 finished with praise ‘This class is great’.
Appendix 8

Data collection process 2: Observation of lectures

Observed content of Lecturer 2’s (L2) urban planning and development lecture (Lecture 1)

This was a one hour lecture held on 9 March, 2006. The lecture began at 11am.

The purpose of the researcher’s observation was to record and describe the teaching and learning environment, as generated by the lecturer. Three themes emerged from the observations of lectures.

These were:

4. Teaching and learning
5. Linguistics
6. Subject content

In order to record and describe the delivery of the lecture as it occurred, the three themes are coded within the sequence of lecture itself.

Teaching and learning

L2:

- introduced the lecture with verbal housekeeping. He gave clear directions about tutorials at an external site, the posting of tutorial changes, and distributed handouts for the lecture. L2 explained that the lecture notes were available on the Faculty website.

- stated his purpose clearly, which was the importance of planning cities.

  - *Duration of introduction: 5 minutes*
Content

L2:

- began with slides of the Acropolis and gave a brief historical statement about the Acropolis and then talked about the unplanned nature of Sydney. His teaching point about the necessity for planning was emphasised by a slide of a raised highway in a Chinese city with an off ramp that stopped mid-air, going nowhere.

- continued with the theme of planning disasters, showing San Francisco’s underground railway which was well-made but unused.

Teaching and learning

- The visual material of planning disasters was followed by use of graphs where the features of the graphs and the definition of the terms were built into the image of the slide.

Linguistics

L2:

- spoke clearly and connected his spoken words to the visual material he was presenting. He reiterated definitions and explanations relating to urban planning.

Teaching and learning

L2 repeated his main point and connected his examples to the main point.

Linguistics

L2’s next slide was a list of planning jargon. His explanation simplified the terms.
Appendices

L2:

- began an explanation of why the ‘city’ had a negative image. His explanation involved discussion of industrialised England in the 18th century. The images of urban sprawl were Australian and there was one of traffic congestion in Pakistan.

- Detailed a reference to A.B. Paterson’s poem *Clancy of the Overflow*. There was a slide with the verse which began ‘In my wild erratic fancy …’

**Teaching and learning**

L2 attempted to paraphrase the meaning of the verse.

**Content**

- The poem was followed by John Brack’s painting of the suited people on the city streets.

- This image provided a visual backdrop to a discussion of city populations.

- L2 linked the Australian data to world population data regarding rural and city distributions.

**Teaching and learning**

L2:

- created clear visual statements about critical issues facing planners which covered the role of planners and future and public consultation, disputes and political action.

- detailed planning issues in San Francisco which focused the students’ attention as their focus alternated between paying attention to the screen and taking notes.

*Duration of L1’s presentation: 25 minutes*
Content

The guest speaker:

- began his presentation with Brunswick Street which was familiar to students.
- moved to examples in the United States with the development of 19th century garden cities and new town movement towards satellite cities.

Teaching and learning

The guest speaker's presentation was a logical extension of L2’s lecture. The students’ attention remained focused with their eyes up or note-taking. He presented a clear link between planning and architecture in practical terms.

Content

The guest speaker presented:

- British references of the 1950s.
- examples of the United States Redburn and Kentlands planning, Canberra, the Copenhagen finger plan and the United States Radial Corridor plan.
- a slide of the Melbourne finger plan and provided local area master plans.
- slides of Istanbul’s satellite city approach.
- an example of the Roads Plan of Minneapolis.

His visual presentation concluded with images of Singapore, which demonstrated the control features of planning.

Teaching and learning

The guest cued the students to the fact he was closing and said “To finish off then, why is
urban planning unpopular?” This question provided the opportunity to list reasons sequentially on the screen under the heading “Externalities.” Reasons were listed as “effect on others”, “impacts such as pollution, noise, and visual impact”.

**Linguistics**

The guest combined both written and spoken plain English in his summary. Information was presented in a prioritised, dot point manner. Visual images supplemented the content message about ‘Extremities.’

“Not a problem”, “stuff”, “nasty thing”, and “piss off” added to the plain English element of the guest’s presentation.

*Duration of Guest’s presentation: 20 minutes*

**Teaching and learning**

When it was almost time to finish the students became a bit restless. The guest speaker noted this and finished promptly and threw back to L2 who reminded students about tutorials to be held on the field trip.

*Duration of L1’s conclusion: 1 minute*

*The lecture finished at 11.55am.*
Appendix 9

Data collection process 2: Observation of lectures

Observed content of Lecturer 2’s (L2) History lecture (Lecture 2)

This was a one hour lecture held on 17 March, 2006. The lecture began at 11am.

The purpose of the researcher’s observation was to record and describe the teaching and learning environment, as generated by the lecturer. Three themes emerged from the observations of lectures.

These were:

1. Teaching and learning

2. Linguistics

3. Subject content

Teaching and learning

L2:

- introduced the lecture by talking over the general hubbub of students still settling into their seats

- no visual slide to introduce the lecture

- no slide on the purpose of the lecture, which remained a little unclear for some time into the lecture

- showed PowerPoint slides of Melbourne’s St. Patrick’s Cathedral and St. Paul’s Cathedral
Linguistics

L2:

- mentioned the word ‘gothic’ and moved on quickly
- demonstrated a speaking style featuring specific language markers. When constructing sentences, L2 created pauses by inserting typical ‘wait’ markers such as ‘ah’ ‘umm’ and ‘er’, and repeated words such as ‘by’ a number of times before moving to the next word and the next part of the sentence.
- had a style of sentence construction where the subject of the sentence might follow a phrase that established place and time but was not, generally, a traditional sentence construction. For example, ‘Now these buildings, one of the things I wanted to talk about…’ Therefore the phrasing was not always connected in predictable.
- Used intonation that tended to fall away when giving detail and the final part of his sentences were sometimes difficult to discern.

Duration of introduction: 10 minutes

Teaching and learning

By the end of the introduction, the students were quiet and taking notes. They were interested in the history of gothic architecture. It was not possible to find exceptions in student behaviour (quiet and note-taking) at that time.

Content

L2:

began a detailed explanation of the 13th century ruling family of Ilse de France and their relationship with the Catholic Church.
Teaching and learning

The detail continued for some time about the interconnectedness between Church and architecture, and students’ concentration began to fall away.

Linguistics

The more intricate the detail, the more apparent L2’s staccato-like language markers became. Phrasing was stop-start and the intonation was sometimes unpredictable such as rising at the end of a sentence and descending at the end of a phrase.

Content

The lecture content continued to have a strong Christianity content.

L2:

- covered the ‘Godly East’ of Jerusalem and Northern Europe
- didn’t orientate his content geographically
- presented a number of churches on slides which were not accompanied by text.

Linguistics

The level of spoken English was challenging, with phrases such as ‘God’s transcendence in church-heaven on Earth’ and technical terms, such as ‘structural regime.’ There was an atmosphere of language intensity centred on religious and cultural history.

Teaching and learning

L2:

- named architectural spaces of Notre Dame
- walked to the projection screen and pointed to a feature, which took him away from
his microphone

Linguistics

L2:

- named the nave, choir, transett, clergy and the crossing. All of these words referred to specific spaces in the cathedral.

- Used vocabulary which included ‘etherealness’ ‘aesthetic effects’, ‘vault’, and ‘ribs’ – the last, ‘ribs’, also belonged to a very complex concept where vault surfaces met as ‘rib vaulting.’ Students had to catch the words aurally and they were not projected with the images.

- Mentioned a French gothic architect but the name wasn’t written down.

Content

There were many Christian references such as ‘Mary, cult of Mary, mother of God, mother of Christ.’ Knowledge of Christianity was embedded in the presentation.

*Duration of lecture to this point: 45 minutes*

Teaching and learning

After 45 minutes, laughter could be heard from a particular student. L2 continued in competition with the student’s noise. His voice rose and it was evident that he was straining to be heard. The student did not self-discipline and ignored L2’s struggle. Laughter was punctuating his sentences. Eventually, L2 said ‘Someone finds that funny.’

Content

L2 stated (at this point) the purpose of the lecture was to centre on cathedrals and demonstrate their contribution to the coherence of communities in 19th century Europe.
Linguistics

The language of the presentation continued to be rich technically and historically (“Romanesque”, “nave”, “façade”, “Chartres Cathedral glass”).

_Duration to this point: 55 minutes_

Teaching and learning

Students began leaving 5 minutes before L2 finished. This caused disruption as they chatted and lifted seats. L2 continued to talk in competition with the noise and movement.

Content

‘This last image underpins the relationship of Christ to the Royal Family.’ This was the last significant point of L2’s lecture. There was no reference to ‘coherent communities.’

_Lecture concluded at 12pm._
Appendix 10

Data collection process 2: Observation of lectures

Observed content of Lecturer 3’s (L3) Design lecture

This was a one hour lecture held on 7 March, 2006. The lecture began at 1pm.

The purpose of the researcher’s observation was to record and describe the teaching and learning environment, as generated by the lecturer. Three themes emerged from the observations of lectures.

These were:

1. Teaching and learning
2. Linguistics
3. Subject content

Teaching and learning

L3:

- began his lecture with four words written on an overhead (natural, subjective, social, transient). There were no accompanying definitions.

- described the purpose of displaying the words as an ‘experiment’ and he would ‘hint’ at the reason he was displaying the images to follow, and the words displayed could be related to the subject of the image or his commentary

Many students did not hear this introduction as they had not settled for the beginning of the lecture and many students were talking together.

*Duration of introduction: 5 minutes*
L3:

- indicated the lecture was about surface and colour
- talked about an unrelated matter of displaying some models which were on display until that afternoon as the building in which they were housed was about to be demolished
- began his commentary and his PowerPoint presentation
- advised that the images were from the Museum of Art in Canberra after showing four slides

Content

L3 displayed The Garden of Australian Dreams (2000) from the Museum's courtyard. His commentary was a critique of the work.

Linguistics

The language was rich, expressive, figurative and abstract in nature. Examples of the specific vocabulary included: form, texture, surface, qualities, iconic junctions of material, deformation, surface impression, undulations, nobbly space, chomp off, knotty thing, curvy thing, so-called solid bits. An example of linguistic style was ‘You walk in shadow unless you are an Englishman walking in the midday sun’ and ‘The walls are all out of sheets, panels, copperplate, philosophical graffiti.’

Teaching and learning

L3:

- moved to the next slide which was a structure about the Torres Strait
- commented that the building was black and laughed ironically, indicating a link between Torres Straight Islanders and the black building
• realised that he hadn’t meant to show this slide at this point and turned to another slide

• didn’t return to the Torres Strait Island building slide.

L3:

• maintained a solid pace showing images and commentating on each work

• drew no connection between the current slide and the previous slide

Some students were talking and some were listening and observing. There were no students taking notes. There had been no instruction on what students were required to do. Towards the end of the first half of the lecture, L3 indicated that the subject had been ‘surface’ and the second half of the lecture would relate to ‘colour’.

L3:

• presented a slide with the four words he had displayed at the beginning of the lecture (natural, subjective, social, transient).

• explained the meaning of the words

There were three other words on the screen (diversity, difference, personality). There was no explanation or reference to these words.

L3:

• introduced some theory of colour

• displayed a slide called ‘Noah’s Ark’. He made a reference to the biblical story. The relevance to the topic of colour was not clear.

**Duration of lecture so far: 35 minutes**

At 1.35pm, L3 said he ‘had reached the relaxing part of the lecture; scientific explanations.’
There were slides relating to colour solids and the first experimental models in psychology and 3 dimensional models. Although the name of Willhelm Wandt was mentioned there was not direct explanation of the connection between these slides and a specific teaching point.

L3:

- showed his Wolfgang slide on the colour globe
- explained that colour represents how we think about geographic places
- presented another slide of day and night colours (Wolfgang) and Newton’s colour spectrum
- posed his first question: ‘Is colour a perception or wavelength of light?’
- commented that light and matter are part of colour.

**Linguistics**

L3’s speaking style continued to be very fast, as if hurrying to get through the slides. He tended to speak in a punctuated way with many pauses not related to full stops and commas. L3’s speech tended to be clear and loud at the beginning of a sentence and then quiet and difficult to catch at the end of a sentence.

L3 made provided suggestions about using personal experience to investigate colour, such as checking a room for colour at home at different times of the day. He gave some examples of difference in colour relating to light but didn’t quite finish the suggestion and moved to his next point.

It was noticeable that the light in the theatre was too bright for the slides.

L3 showed a slide and said ‘Here is a slide of stained glass at the Art Centre’ then moved to the next slide.

At 1.45pm the presentation became increasingly rushed. Students were demonstrating poor
concentration. Of the four students seated in front of the researcher, one was asleep, one was sorting her handbag, one was taking notes and one was reading a course document. There was increased fidgeting noise in the theatre but no talking.

L3:

showed a classical reference slide on Greek columns. He spent 15 seconds on this slide.

Linguistics

The commentary included quite technical vocabulary such as ‘polychromy.’

Content

The next slide related to Chernikov and L3 referred to Russian Constructivists.

Teaching and learning

L3 explained how colour was systemised by the Constructivists and used the body as an analogy on how we could use colour to illustrate the nervous system, blood system and other anatomical systems. The intention was to explain the Constructivists’ use of colour but the analogy diverted to a commentary on the scientific knowledge of the period and the original teaching point was not returned to.

Towards the end of the lecture, L3 talked about the connection between amount of light and corresponding human moods from happiness to depression. Similarly, L3 referred to synaesthesia (the concept of ‘hearing’ colour). This was mostly lost to the students who were busy packing up and talking. The lecture concluded with a statement about next week’s lecture topic but most students would not have heard it.

Lecture concluded at 2pm.
Appendix 11

Data collection process three: Observation of tutorials

Observed content of Lecturer 1’s tutorial: Technologies tutorial

Date: 24 March, 2006

Tutorial began at 1pm.

Tutor 1 (T1) to Tutor 8 (T8)

Nine tutorial groups in one space

Teaching and learning

The studio was one large space with sectioned areas. Tables, whiteboards and lockers competed for space and order. Banks of lockers acted as section dividers. The ceiling was low which increased the sense of confinement.

T1 was a very experienced tutor and had recently returned from working professionally in Papua New Guinea. He was very active with the students, moving from team to team, emphasising the issues regarding load. There was a connection between this early emphasis and the end success of his teams of students. All bridges constructed by this tutorial group passed the load test.

Linguistics

The researcher observed three or four students who might have been international students but T2 wasn’t sure. However, he believed the majority of his students were local, first language speakers of English. T2 believed that inexpert English was not such an issue in this subject because there was the ability to compensate technically. He explained that about one student per tutorial group failed because of the English issues but then recalled that student numbers dropped from 100 to 70 in the subject by the end of the year.
Teaching and learning

T2 has strong interpersonal skills and knew the students’ names. He interacted in a friendly and familiar manner and made the students laugh. T2 pointed out the three students doing a Commerce and Architecture double degree, which he said was an unusual combination. In his experience he believed that most students came in with a maths background. He has tutored for six years and presently had two tutorial groups. One observation T2 offered was that overseas students were very focused on grade outcomes and it was difficult to get them to focus on the learning itself.

Linguistics

T3 had just finished his own degree. He was aware that there were two layers of students from non-English speaking backgrounds and explained that he had students studying in Australia for the first time as well as students who had been in Australian for at least two years from a South-East Asia background.

Teaching and learning

He did do the ‘get to know you’ activity supplied by Lecturer 1 (L1) for the first tutorial. His students were clearly well-advanced with their bridge.

T4 was a practising engineer. His students achieved excellent load bearing capacity. T4 was recruited by his employer to tutor on a Friday afternoon. His employer also lectured at another institute in design as well as lectured in Architecture at this university.

T5 was an engineer and from Indonesia originally. She had two tutorial groups. I asked T5 if she used a system in arranging her students into work teams for the activity. She explained that the students organised their own groups of four. T5 didn’t do the ‘get to know you’ activity in the first tutorial.

Linguistics

T5 didn’t speak Indonesian to her Indonesian students as she said she would have been
uncomfortable to do so. She felt they might gain an advantage over other students. She did not know the names of her students or their country of origin. She thought there might be 40% from overseas but this seemed an unlikely number when the researcher listened to the accents of the students in her group. T5 pointed to three students she thought were from China but when the researcher spoke to the students they were native speakers of Australian English. She believed that 40% of her other tutorial group were from overseas as well.

T6 had two tutorial groups and was fluent in Mandarin and English. T6 knew the names of her overseas students but not all of her local students. Her tutorial groups were in a very cramped space. There also seemed to be a fair degree of confusion about the task and most of the teams took a long time to get under way.

**Linguistics**

T6 spoke Mandarin to the one third of her tutorial from China. In her second tutorial group, one third of her students were from Indonesia.

**Teaching and learning**

T7 was a very experienced tutor. He was considerably older than all but one other tutor. He sat at a table for the duration of the tutorial, marking journals. I asked him about the journals. He said he made a point of correcting the students’ grammar. He didn’t know the names of his tutorial students nor did he know the country of origin of his students. T7 said this was unnecessary as knowing cultural background was irrelevant as he was teaching to industry standard and they either reached it or not. T7 mentioned that students hadn’t done very well with their journals but attendance was good. T7’s students worked diligently but there was no interactivity between the tutor and the students. When discussing cultural background, T7 said he couldn’t tell the difference between overseas students and local students because ‘there are South-East Asia students in Melbourne already.’ T7 didn’t participate in the load-bearing test at the end of the activity.

T8 was the other older, highly experienced tutor. He also focused on the journals rather than
interact with the students. He did participate, however, in testing the bridges for load-bearing.

The tutorial groups varied in their readiness to load-test their bridges at the end of the tutorial time. Students were told to store their bridges in the studio until the next tutorial.
Appendix 12

Data collection process 3: Observation of tutorials

Observed content of Lecturer 2’s tutorial: first history tutorial

Date: 12 May, 2006

Tutorial began at 1pm.

Tutor 9 (T9)

Task: Present the architectural features of a city of your choice

Teaching and learning

T9 chatted informally with students as they arrived. At 1.05pm, he spoke generally to the tutorial group of 14 students.

T9 clarified absence and non-completion of assessment tasks. He reminded students they needed a doctor’s certificate proving illness if a fail grade was to be avoided. At this point, an international student indicated she wasn’t ready to do her presentation. T9 explained that there would be some penalties for lateness.

There were 14 students present and three students indicated through speech that English was a second language.

T9 called for questions about their current project work (not their presentations).

S1: Can I draw buildings?

T9: Yes.

S1: Can I do an analysis on a building not built yet? Using the plans?
T9: Yes, that is fine

S1: But my drawing skills are not great (He was embarrassed).

T9: Just do your best

(S1 still embarrassed)

S3: Can I draw from photo? (international student)

T9: Yes

S1: How long should I spend on a drawing?

T9: Just do your best

(There was a sense that the project work was creating some anxiety amongst the students and they were looking for clues on what the task required from them).

S4: Should it be bound or be in a loose portfolio?

T9: Not sure

S2: Anyway you like (He had asked the lecturer)

1.15pm.

T9 asked for the first presentation, which was on Prague. S1 was a local student with English as a first language.

S1:

- loaded a DVD for his PowerPoint presentation.
- was well-organised; his images matched his spoken presentation.
- didn’t read from a script but looked occasionally at his notes.
• Presented material that was relevant to the task

• integrated history and design in a meaningful and effective way.

Students were invited by T9 to ask questions as the presentation proceeded. There were intelligent and knowledgeable questions about specific features. For example, ‘Where is the statue of the masked gargoyles?’ ‘What is the Jewish population today?’ This last question was a response to the unusually large Jewish cemetery. This led to an informal discussion on whether ghettos evolved naturally or were constructed.

The student audience was quiet and polite and most were watching carefully. Two students had their heads on the table (including the international student who hadn’t finished preparing her presentation) and one student was writing in his journal.

As S2 set up, another student asked a question about the project work and this resulted in three or four more questions about the process and expected outcome of the project work.

S2’s presentation was on Amsterdam. He was a local student with English as a first language. The presentation began at 1.35pm.

S2:

• had a very engaging presentation style. It sounded very lively following T9’s very relaxed and quiet speaking style.

• used an appropriate PowerPoint presentation and the students listened attentively. focused more on architectural features of Amsterdam than the previous presenter who gave less technical analysis and described fewer design elements. The students were still listening attentively.

• introduced the ‘parapet’

T9 checked the group’s understanding of ‘parapet’ which no one knew except the presenting
student, who then explained it very well. When the student mentioned ‘Hip roof’, T9 checked the students’ understanding again and there was general discussion about this architectural feature. Everyone was engaged except the journal-writing student who was still writing. T9 made occasional pertinent remarks and posed interesting questions throughout the discussion on these architectural features.

Another student asked if functionalism was the same as modernism. T9 responded in detail. As a result, the presenting student became anxious about time. T9 was not aware of the anxiety. At 1.55pm, the student started up again but again, T9 intercepted. The student’s body language was sending a strong message. Eventually, the student was permitted to finish. T9 gave feedback to this student. He said ‘That was a good presentation and you explained the design features very well.’ T9 didn’t give feedback to the first student.

T9 finished by asking if there were any questions about the lectures. But it was time to move to the next tutorial.
Appendix 13

Data collection process three: Observation of tutorials

Observed content of Lecturer 2’s tutorial: second history tutorial

Date: 12 May, 2006

Tutorial began at 2pm.

Tutor 10 (T10)

The purpose of the researcher’s observation was to record and describe the teaching and learning environment, as generated by the tutors and the students. Two themes emerged from the observations of tutorials.

These were:

1. Teaching and learning

2. Linguistics

During the course of the tutorial the researcher observed students and tutors at the task. The tutor observed will be referred to as Tutor 10 (T10). Tutor 10 is an architect whose first language is Chinese.

City in History Tutorial: Students were required to present on the architectural features of a city of their choice. This was an assessment task.

Tutorial date and time: 2pm to 3pm, 12 May 2006.

Teaching and learning

10 students were present and one other arrived very late. It was clear from the students’ speech that most of the group were international students and local ESL students.
T10 asked the students about the last lecture. ‘How was the lecture? Are they helpful?’ There was no response to these questions from the students.

Instead, students asked questions about the exam. They were worried. There were proposed changes to the format the students were aware of but the nature of the changes were not clear to them. T10 was not sure of the answer and said he would check with Coordinating Lecturer (L2).

T10 did clarify that dates and specific architects mentioned in the lectures would be asked for on the exam. The students indicated the degree of difficulty in achieving accuracy as many names were mentioned and some were incidental.

At 2.10pm, T10 asked for the first presentation to begin.

S1 presented on the city of Kyoto. She had a strong Chinese accent and her English was hesitantly constructed when she spoke.

S1:

- drew a simple map of Japan on the whiteboard.
- loaded an image on her laptop and turned the laptop to face the group which proved ineffectual as the students could not make out the image from where they were sitting.
- started by saying she would speak about Kyoto.
- Took some time to set up the overhead projector and eventually her hand drawn map appeared. It was very blurred and she didn't adjust the focus.

It was twenty minutes before she began her presentation. S1 read her material and it sounded as if it came from a text. She used a word she didn’t know and the tutorial group was made aware of it because she said she didn’t know what the word meant. She looked at the tutor who didn’t respond but he did glance at the assessment sheet was displayed
clearly in front of him indicating he was assessing her work therefore would not assist her.

**Linguistics**

S1’s speech contained language markers that indicated a lack of familiarity with the academic language. There was a continued use of ‘architectures’ as a plural form, e.g., ‘different kinds of architectures.’ The student did pronounce Japanese words very expertly.

Ten minutes later Student One started to talk rather than read from her script. She had a slide up on her laptop and this was helping her to explain in her own words. When she reverted to talking about Japanese history, she returned to reading. This student was having difficulty with subject and verb agreement (‘shinto shrine usually have entrance’) and her language was also marked by an absence of specific and non-specific articles such as ‘the’ and ‘a.’

**Teaching and learning**

It was clear that S1 had a number of photocopies for distribution, overhead projector transparencies, images on her laptop and was also keen to draw illustrations on the whiteboard. She spent a long time searching for images on her laptop and she hadn’t organised these into a folder or a PowerPoint slide show. She spent a long time adjusting the size of her images to full size on her screen. S1 was still presenting at 2.45pm, and it was clear that she was focusing on cultural aspects but not design features. For example, she related information such as ‘Tickets are really expensive during religious holidays.’

When Student 1 finished at 2.50pm, T10 asked if anyone knew the origin of the pagoda. The students did know it had a Chinese origin. T10 explained pagoda meant light-weight structure or roof.

T10 asked if there were any questions.

A student asked if there were earthquakes in Kyoto. S1 started to respond but then said she didn’t know.

S2 started his presentation at 2.55pm. He was an international student. His presentation was
on Amsterdam. He began by saying he would have liked to show us where Amsterdam was but there wasn’t an internet connection in the room and so he couldn’t connect to GoogleEarth. This was true. There was no wireless facility and no cable connection in the room.

**Linguistics**

The student then said ‘Here is a map I *drawed.*’ He recognised that his grammar didn’t sound correct and looked towards the tutor. T10 didn’t correct him. In spite of his confusion regarding verb participles, he made an effort to speak clearly.

**Teaching and learning**

S2:

- had drawn a map carefully but inexpertly, in colour pencil, which proved ineffectual for showing to his audience
- attempted to use the overhead projector but didn’t realise that a special transparency was required, and tried to put his paper map on the projector
- drew a gable on the whiteboard. He explained the gable was historically significant to Amsterdam.

The student focused on a waterfront development in Amsterdam and it was clear that he should have started there with his presentation. T10 stopped him from going on as it was very late.

Students needed to go to their next tutorial and S2 had run out of tutorial time. (It was over time by 10 minutes). He had spoken about gables but the rest of his presentation was about the history of Amsterdam and was taken straight from a text. T10 interrupted him and asked about modern Amsterdam.

**Linguistics**
S2 also said ‘architectures’ and made frequent subject/verb agreement errors such as ‘three storey’ instead of ‘three storeys.’ His verbal sentence construction was inexpert; he had difficulty conjugating appropriately and there were occasions when the subject of his sentence was missing.

T10 reminded students to bring their folios in next week so he could look through it. A student asked about an assessment task she didn’t understand. She was confused about the meaning of ‘analytical drawing’ for the project. T10 gave a brief response but the student remained hesitant.
Appendix 14

Data collection process 3: Observation of tutorials

Observed content of combined L3’s design tutorial

Date: 24 March, 2006

Tutorial began at 3pm. Finished at 6pm.

Tutor 10 (T10)

Task: Presentation of designs

The purpose of the researcher’s observation was to record and describe the teaching and learning environment, as generated by the tutors and the students. Two themes emerged from the observations of tutorials.

These were:

1. Teaching and learning

2. Linguistics

Teaching and learning

One tutor, T11, gathered his tutorial group in towards him so he could be heard clearly by all his students.

T11:

- explained what will be required by students in setting up their work displays for assessment next week.
• gave some detail about the practicalities of displaying work, for example, he advised students to put four desks together, one desk per student’s work, and to remember to isolate each student’s work per desk.

• explained that presentation counted towards their assessment. It was evident that students appreciated this as they had indicated their concerns about these details.

• took time to answer all questions patiently and was prepared to go into some detail in his responses, repeating answers to previously asked questions with the same detail.

• had a prepared information sheet from the subject coordinator for the tutors so he checked his responses with the information sheet. He reiterated that the presentation of their work was part of the design and hence, the assessment. For example, he advised what should be presented as a model and what should be presented as photographs.

• checked for their understanding by pausing and asking if that made sense and if there were questions.

• offered to help students individually to decide their best work in order for them to present appropriately.

T11 explained that the rest of the tutorial would be divided into three parts. Firstly, the students would present their designs. Secondly, the group would select three designs for inter-tutorial discussion and finally, they would set up the tables for the assessment display.

S1, a local, English as first language student, started with a drawing. T11 elicited questions and observations from the tutorial group. He had a very relaxed manner and persisted with questions about colour, which was important as the students were not confident about colour in this context. He drew comments and observations from other students and worked to link these with the presenting student. This created an atmosphere of identifying common ground issues amongst the students and the result was the students began to talk more
confidently about colour.

The tutor explained that he chose the next student for presentation at this point because the student worked in monochrome and was a good link to the previous student’s presentation with respect to colour, as well as demonstrating an important rule about colour in design. S2 began to present but before long the tutor suggested a simple structure for this particular presentation which needed a bit of organisation. The student organised his explanation around Element, Colour, and the relationship between the two.

**Teaching and learning – organising the space**

The tutorial groups were closely arranged in the studio space but T11’s group had been arranged away from the next tutorial group and all students and the tutor were seated around a central group of tables so everyone could watch and listen. This was especially important for the international students in the group who were able to access the modelling being done by the local students as well as the tutor’s guidance of the first students’ presentations. This was an important factor, as observation of other tutorial groups indicated that not all students could hear the presenting student and not all students were required to watch and listen around a central group of tables. These alternative group arrangements created quite different outcomes.

Some tutors prepared tutorial space carefully while other tutors were less concerned with arrangement of students. One tutor ensured that there were pinboards for the presenting students to use which allowed a visual focus for the audience and made demonstrating easier for the presenting student, as well as providing visual cues for international students.

Another tutor seated the students in a circle without tables, with the presenter as part of the circle. This created a small space and the tutor was able to partition the space with whiteboards which decreased the noise and distraction of other tutor groups.

Another tutorial group was arranged by the tutor so that students who wanted to listen to the presentation could do so and others could work on their own portfolio at the back of the group. Three of the 10 students present elected to do their own work. The three students
were English as a second language students. There were two other English as a second language students sitting in the space between the presenting audience and the portfolio workers. These girls were not engaged in listening or working or talking. They were just sitting. This particular tutorial group had a large open space from which other tutorial group spaces extended. There was a high noise factor and that could have impacted on the tutor's decision to allow a voluntary participation to the presentations.

One tutor faced the presenting student but had his back to the rest of the tutorial group. This made hearing the tutor's responses very difficult. It also disengaged the students from the process of discussion. As time passed, this tutor's group divided into two distinct groups where one group were in closer proximity and could hear and the other group was no longer trying to listen. This latter group continued to disassemble when two students who had presented, were now chatting between themselves. Another pair of students was sitting quietly but not engaged with the presentations. These two girls were ESL students and like the two students mentioned in the above paragraph, their level of disengagement was striking. It wasn't possible to ascertain if the ESL students were local or international students without interrupting the tutor or approaching the students.

All other tutors arranged their groups so that the audience was as close as possible to a 'front' in order to hear both the presenter and the tutor.

**Teaching and learning**

A number of tutors identified two students to listen carefully to a particular presentation and advised the two students that they would be leading the feedback prior to the tutor's feedback.

Not all of the tutors undertook the explanation of the importance of the display layout for the students' work nor explained the assessment marking system. Similarly, some tutors gave extensive feedback to the presenters and some relied almost exclusively on audience feedback for the presenters. Some tutors encouraged clapping at the completion of the presenters and some did not. Most tutors praised the students' ideas and efforts and a couple did not. Most tutors were encouraging in their feedback, and questioned the students
carefully in passive mode if the designs clearly had major faults. (‘What will the people do with that element?’) This question was in response to a design of a functional space that wasn’t usable). One tutor was much more direct and more inclined to speak subjectively. (‘I don’t like it. It is like a doll’s house.’)

Each tutor’s manner tended to influence the behaviour of the students in each tutorial group audience. The tutor who said she liked or didn’t like a particular design tended to speak more than her student audience as they were less inclined to offer commentary. The tutor who was very constructive and tended to ask the presenter how a particular design element would be used by people, tended to have many voices and discussion occurring in her tutorial. She also tended to move efficiently through the presentations but each presenter received constructive suggestions for the way forward. Her tutor group was cohesive and engaged, and stayed on task at all times.

The student involvement of this tutorial activity helped to create a potentially ideal learning environment. Each tutorial group differed in the degrees to which this potential was utilised. All tutorials finished on time at 6pm.
Appendix 15

Data collection process 5: Quality of Teaching surveys

(additional student comments only)

Lecturer 1 (L1), Subject: Technologies

- Surveys taken at the end of Semester 1, 2006
- Number of students in subject: 300
- Number of surveys returned: 160
- Number of surveys with additional comments: 115

Lectures

- Lectures needed to be more sequential
- Holding two lectures together left no time to consolidate the lecture material
- Holding two lectures didn’t allow for information processing
- Holding two lectures together with one voice only and uninteresting material made it hard to focus
- Lecturer was boring and inefficient
- Lectures were too fast
- Lectures and tutorials needed to be more connected
- The guest lecturers were not respectful of the course coordinator (Lecturer 1)
- Lecturers used different methods to work things out which was confusing
• Information in lectures was too hard to understand

• Lecture material seemed to be muddled and incomplete and was hard to follow

• Would have preferred the subject lectures to be divided into two sections with the construction lectures given in the first six weeks and the lectures on materials given in the second six weeks

• Lectures often just followed the PowerPoint slides in the materials lectures

• Reading of PowerPoint slides a waste of time as I can read it at home

• Reading through the modules in lectures was a waste of time

• Don’t read through the modules in lectures as I can read it myself

• There was a change of lecture time to 9am Friday

• Early Friday lecture time is not good after Thursday uni night entertainment

• Good handouts and organisation from lecturer

• It was basically a good course

• The interactive structures were very useful and interesting

• The site visits were good

• The assignments were quiet (sic) interesting

• I needed more step by step explanations

• There was too much self-learning from software

• I needed more help outside of lectures and tutorials
• My emails were not answered

• Student suggestions were not taken on board

• There was no opportunity to ask for help

Tutorials

• I disliked the tutor

• The teachers should pay more attention to the language difficulties of the overseas students

• The tutorials didn’t focus on assignments, causing stress

• The tutors needed to give consistent advice

• The tutorials should explain what you didn’t understand from the lectures

• The tutor only did one hour instead of two hours – the tutors should be helping us. Tutors need more teaching skill. We should have the same tutor for the semester

• We learn everything on our own. Really hard to be caught (sic) up 2 (sic) date. I can’t understand wat (sic) we discuss in class

• There needs to be more revision of lecture material in tutorials

• The tutorials need to be more focused

• The tutorial work seemed not relevant to lectures

• The tutor gets sidetracked every time and nothing achieved in the two hours

• The tutes were good

• The tutor Dennis was good and nice
• The tutorials were very helpful in clearing up issues

**Assessment**

• It was not clear what the exam would test

• There were too many assignments at once

• The assignments were not explained well

• No clear direction

• The Learning Management System and audio online materials were well organised. Please keep up with it as it helped with organising and revising for exams

• The tutors marked harshly

• The tutors were inconsistent with marking standards

• The marking was not consistent amongst tutors

• The marking on postcards by some tutors was harsh compared to others

• It was not encouraging to get an ‘satisfactory’ with no comments

• The tutorials and journal assessment was very unclear and not consistent between tutors

**Issue specific to maths content in subject**

• The lecturer explained the maths too fast and then said we didn’t need to know it.

• The maths needs to be taught more slowly with opportunity to ask questions in tutes

• I was unclear about what maths concepts and terms to study for the exams

• Maths helps me understand and remember concepts so I would like more explanation
and depth in maths

• The maths was not adequately explained

• We need more exercises to practise the maths

• The maths in the lectures is misleading if not in exam

• Why introduce maths problems if they are not going to be taught?

• I transferred from Engineering and the course material on structure needs more mathematical practice with equations and teaching only most important concepts so there is less material and more thoroughness
Appendix 16

Data collection process 4: Quality of Teaching surveys

(additional student comments only)

Lecturer 2 (L2): Quality of Teaching survey

Subject: History

- Surveys taken at the end of Semester 1, 2006
- Number of students in subject: 210
- Number of surveys returned: 115
- Number of surveys with additional comments: 106

Lectures

- The lectures were fantastic

- Put more detailed lecture notes online. Make more detailed slides with content lecture. Talk slowly

- It would help to have lecture recordings on the Learning Management System for exam revision as note-taking during lectures is often difficult. Would also be handy to have copies of slides and photos displayed in lectures

- Planning lectures were great

- Lectures were thoroughly enjoyable and content stimulating. The planning lectures were helpful to relate to cities

- Lectures on planning very interesting

- All up, pretty good subject, especially lecturer
• The subject is particularly hard for ESL students. Too much work to do and the exam is too hard for us

• This subject needs written notes

• I found the portfolio hard to start as a planning student with little drawing instruction. Otherwise subject was very engaging

• The portfolio has been too demanding in what it asked for and I felt it was quite difficult to attempt, particularly the analytical drawing

• Learning Management System announcements were pretty helpful

• Learning Management System was very useful.

• I do not understand the concept of the folio in a history class. I am currently doing modern history. That subject structure is much more effective in teaching. I have learned a lot more from there then this class. I honestly think the folio is a waste of time. Folios are for art classes.

• Can’t see the point of doing the folio.

• More Australian content would be interesting. Brasilia topic was very interesting

• Thoroughly enjoyed the subject

Tutorials

• Tutorials should be more informative (too many student presentations)

• I would have appreciated help with the essay, folio and exam in the tutorials. We didn’t get any help with these.

• Tutes needed to explain what to do in beginning to have full semester to work on folio. Rather than changing everything completely when found out what actually was
wanted a couple of weeks before due date.

- Tutorials would be better if we discussed issues relevant to course content.

- The tutorial for City in History is not useful at all. It is a waste of time. The good quality of tutor should be concerned (sic) It is not an easy subject for ESL students, although LLSU provides the tutorial for us, we need more efficient tutorial

- Take too much time in tutorial doing presentations. Should spend more time discussing lecture info.

- Tutorials: I don’t think spending so many of the tutorials on the presentations is an efficient use of small-group learning. The tutorials for each subject prove very important, however, listening to many sometimes ill-prepared presentations is a waste of precious time.

- The tutorials were nothing short of a waste of time. Our tutor was boring. There was no feedback with any of the assignments and he had no interest in the topics. Am sure he nearly felt asleep. Generally thought it could have been far better use of time. As a consequence I did not go to the last 4 tutes and won’t be going today. 1/20.

**Assessment**

- More helpful to get essays back more quickly

- Need results in first and second assignments more quickly to know progress

- Exam is too hard! (Too many topics tested and impossible to study for). Maybe better to get tested on one or two cities

- We need feedback for essay writing before our final essay is due

- Very uncertain of exam expectations. Too many drawings. Division of marks for each test component doesn’t seem correct.
• Guidance for folios should have been provided more consistently throughout. This would prevent the rush to complete the folio as information becomes available in the last 2 weeks.
Appendix 17

Data collection process 4: Quality of Teaching surveys

(additional student comments only)

Lecturer 3 (L3): Quality of Teaching survey

Subject: Design

- Surveys taken at the end of Semester 1, 2006
- Number of students in subject: 211
- Number of surveys returned: 97
- Number of surveys with additional comments: 22

Lectures

- L3 was a very interesting lecturer but I needed to see examples of previous students’ work as a way to know how to get started
- Lectures could be more relevant to tutorials and in exercises and assessment
- Lectures were irrelevant to our marks and score for this subjects (sic) so they went (sic) helpful for our assignments. They were very interesting lectures but totally irrelevant
- The readings and lectures, although interesting, often seemed irrelevant to the actual assignments
- It was very hard to understand what L3 was talking about during lectures
- Making more lectures notes (contents of slides) online will (sic) be more helpful for students
• I liked L3’s lectures. He’s good

• Someone needs to change the drafting tables

• This subject was confusing

• We needed better studios

• This subject was too expensive

• The course was too unorganised (sic)

• Overall, it was kinda (sic) fun

Tutorials

• I had a stimulating tutor

• Inadequate, inconsistent feedback from tutor

• The (sic) was too much variance between instruction/critique given by tutors

• Tutorials were very helpful and tutor gave great feedback

• Tutors varied in instructions. It was very confusing what actually expected (sic) to complete week by week

• Change the tutor! Very not encouraging (sic) affects our enthusiasm in a negative way

• My tutor was great!

• Our tutor is totally ignorant and inefficient

• The tutor does not know how to give constructive criticism (sic) Students were almost afraid to present ideas for fear he would only shoot you down in flames. The group
was at a lower level of performance compared to other groups due to the nature of the subject, it being so abstract, we needed direction and clear explanation of what was expected of us. I felt my creativity was stumped due to this inability to teach

**Assessment**

- Box assignment was unrealistic in terms of use of the building. Surface assignment was clear and used context of entry well. The requirements of the 'elements' for the field assignment were vague

- Assignments need to be explained and worded more clearly

- Marks for models biased toward expensive materials, not form and concepts
Appendix 18

Data collection process 5: Researcher’s student survey

Staff/Student relationships

The aggregated responses calculated by frequency were:

The tutors know my education background

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The tutors make an effort to get to know me

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The tutors try to include all students in discussion

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The tutors are interested in discussing examples from other countries

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The tutors understand what students need to help them learn

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Teaching methods (tutorials)

The aggregated responses calculated by frequency were:

The tutorials are well organised

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The tutorials are clear about the learning goal of each tutorial

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The tutors use visual teaching aids

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The tutors use language the students can understand

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The tutors explain complex ideas

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The study materials I am given include definitions for difficult words

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The tutorials are relevant to the assignments students need to do

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When working in small groups in tutorials or practical work, students are given clear guidelines for participation

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Assessment

The aggregated responses calculated by frequency were:

Students are given useful feedback about their progress
### Question 14

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Students are given some choice about assessment tasks

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Instructions for carrying out assessment tasks are clear

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### Criteria for assessment tasks are clear

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### Tutors use tutorial time to assist students with assessment tasks

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### Students are given examples of completed assessment tasks as a guide
### Question 19

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It is clear what students need to revise for exams

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### Writing

The aggregated responses calculated by frequency were:

Students are taught about different types of essay-writing in their first year subjects

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Students are taught how to cite references in their first year subjects

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Students are taught how to research information in their first year subjects

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Students are taught how to write without copying from other writers’ work in their first year subjects

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Lectures

The aggregated responses calculated by frequency were:

Lecturers provide written outlines of lectures

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Students can access an audio recording and/or transcription of the lecture after it is given
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Lecturers speak clearly

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Lecturers use visual materials effectively

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**Lectures are linked to tutorials**

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**Overall, courses/subjects are well-designed**
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**Additional comments by students**

Students were invited to make additional comments if they chose. In total, eight students wrote additional comments. Of these eight students, one student described himself/herself as an international student.

- All my classes were generally well taught except for construction. I did not enjoy (tutor's name) teaching method.

- The house model should be worth more - it takes ages.

- I'm disappointed in the overall quality of teaching at Melbourne Uni as a tertiary institution, particularly for the price paid. I feel many subjects are disorganised causing undue stress on busy students. Many tutorials are useless. Having said that, I had two almost flawless subjects this semester.

- The course is appalling and seems to contain almost no theory, it's all just presentation (ie nice shiny colourful work). Teaching appears to be a very low priority.

- Some subjects, e.g., Global Ecology and Land Materials tutes were good. However, others are pretty poor.

- Would like to know how to write without copying.
• Shaping metropolis needs notes on LMS.

• A lot of the questions I have answered tend to vary between the subjects, being good in some and pretty bad in others.

• I feel the Architecture d'ment is unorganised (International student).
Appendix 19

Ramsden's Properties of Good Teaching (2003: 86)

A desire to share love of the subject with students
An ability to make material being taught stimulating and interesting
Facility for engaging with students at their level of understanding
A capacity to explain the materials plainly
Commitment to making it absolutely clear what has to be understood, at what level, and why
Showing concern and respect for students
Commitment to encouraging student independence
An ability to improvise and adapt to new demands
Using teaching methods and academic tasks that require students to learn thoughtfully, responsibly, and cooperatively
Using valid assessment methods
A focus on key concepts, and students’ misunderstandings of them, rather than on covering the ground
Giving the highest-quality feedback on student work
A desire to learn from students and other sources about the effects of teaching and how it can be improved

The attitudes and practices academics require to improve outcomes for international students
in their first year of university study

Date:
2009

Persistent Link:
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The attitudes and practices academics require to improve outcomes for international students
in their first year of university study