NON-ENGLISH-SPEAKING INTERNATIONAL (NESI)
STUDENTS’ TERTIARY LEARNING STRATEGIES
IN RELATION TO ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES
(with particular focus on Chinese background students studying at the
University of Tasmania)

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Education
of the University of Tasmania at Launceston
in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of
Bachelor of Teaching (Honours)

October, 2008
DECLARATION

I certify that this Dissertation contains no material which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by the University or any other institution, except by way of background information and duly acknowledged in the Dissertation, and to the best of the candidate's knowledge and belief no material previously published or written by another person except where due acknowledgement is made in the text of the Dissertation.

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ABSTRACT

With increasing numbers of Non English Speaking International (NESI) students travelling abroad to pursue higher education in a native English speaking learning environment, it is becoming increasingly important to examine the strategies they use to support their academic studies.

This study aimed to discover what learning strategies are used by Chinese background students studying at the University of Tasmania (UTAS) to cope with their new academic environment. A random sample of 50 Chinese background students and four academic staff at UTAS was used. The data gathering consisted of a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. A combination of both quantitative and qualitative approaches was utilised to analyse the data.

The findings confirmed that English ability was essential for NESI students’ study and their ability in this area significantly influenced their learning and academic achievements at UTAS. A number of recommendations have been made in relation to this study to assist NESI students enrolled in Australian university courses. The findings from this study have the potential to assist current and future NESI students and higher education providers in identifying effective and appropriate learning strategies to enhance academic achievements.
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<td>Academic Learning and Language</td>
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<td>EFL</td>
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<td>EFTSL</td>
<td>Equivalent Full-time Student Load</td>
</tr>
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<td>ESL</td>
<td>English as a second language</td>
</tr>
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<td>DEST</td>
<td>Department of Education, Science and Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>NESI</td>
<td>Non-English-speaking international</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
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<td>QP</td>
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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

English has become an important international language due to the effects of rapid globalisation. Consequently, increasing numbers of Non-English Speaking International (hereafter referred to as NESI) students are travelling abroad to pursue higher education in a native English speaking learning environment. NESI students experience a number of problems adjusting to the expectations of a new academic environment in a different country. In order to successfully complete their respective courses, NESI students have had to develop a range of learning strategies. This study investigated the learning strategies used by NESI students in order to better inform and assist future students considering undertaking study abroad, and to provide information for higher education providers to more effectively meet the learning needs of this growing demographic.

This chapter provides a background to the study, describes the research aim and research questions in addition to explaining the significance of the research, before presenting an overview of each chapter.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 Context

Australian universities have experienced a steady increase in the enrolment of international students in recent years (Handa & Power, 2005; Nowak, Weiland, &
Brown, 1997; Parr, Bradley, & Bingi 1992). In 2005, the Australian Federal Government’s Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) (as cited in Handa & Power, 2005) reported that 24.2% of the student population in Australian universities was international. Due to Australia’s proximity to Asian countries, the majority of international students at Australian universities and institutes are from Asian countries such as China, Malaysia, and Singapore. In 2007, over 80% of Australian overseas students were from Asian countries (OECD, 2007), with most of these students having a Chinese background (Barron & Arcodia, 2002; Yao, 2004).

NESI students experience a range of learning issues and problems when they encounter a western educational environment markedly different from their own educational system. After the initial excitement of studying in another country recedes, the reality of trying to complete higher education studies in a new language may begin to feel insurmountable. Many students experience frustration; some may even fail subjects and discontinue their studies. Levy, Osborn and Plunkett (2003, p. 2) indicated that “a significant number of international students do not engage with their specific course, often failing two or more units in their first semester or year of study”. According to Verma (1995, p. 5), when English is not their native language, “a majority of students find difficulty in catching up with the lecturers/tutors accent, fail to understand examples from an Australian context, and feel incompetent in expressing themselves in an appropriate language”. Consequently, the problems which NESI students have in relation to listening, speaking, reading and writing in English can negatively influence their academic performance. This perception is
supported by Samuelowicz (1987) who indicated that both staff and students at the University of Queensland in Australia ranked NESI students’ English language proficiency as the most important issue in achieving academically.

This study has revealed that the majority of NESI students struggle to overcome language obstacles. However, Church (1982) revealed that the vast majority of overseas students do successfully adjust to their new environment and they learn the rules and the skills that allow them to cope. In fact, many overseas students have successfully graduated from the university and more often “outperform their Western counterparts” (Barron & Arcodia, 2002, p. 16). According to the data provided by the University of Tasmania Planning and Development Unit in 2008 (see Appendix A: Tables 1 & 2), international full-time onshore students at the University of Tasmania (UTAS) completed their university degree by an average rate of 24.26% from 2001 to 2007. This was higher than domestic students who had an average completion rate of 20.11% (see Appendix A: Tables 3 & 4). In fact, international students’ completion rate was significantly higher than that of domestic students from 2005 to 2007, by an average of 24.77% compared to an average of 18.77% (see Appendix A: Tables 2 & 4). The findings from this study confirmed that NESI students were indeed successfully implementing learning strategies to succeed despite a range of obstacles, including language difficulties.
1.2.2 Researcher Reflexivity

I have a personal interest in this research as I am a Chinese background NESI student. I left my home in 2004 and began studying at the University of Tasmania (UTAS) in pursuit of an overseas qualification. I can clearly remember my first semester at UTAS. I did not know how to read the Faculty time-table and did not realise the importance of reading and understanding the unit outline for each subject. At this stage, I did not know how to write an academic essay in the way which is expected in a Western university culture. I never experienced writing academic essays in my country since my major was in Music Education which did not require written assignments.

As a result of my inability to read the timetable, I missed two music theory lessons until one of my classmates asked me why I did not attend the class. I answered, “I did not know I had class.” I also missed one music methodology lesson because the lesson had changed to another day due to a public holiday. When I asked the teacher why we had the class on the other day and I was not informed, she answered, “It is all in the unit outline.” I felt particularly lost and alone when some teachers did not seem willing to help. Finally, I failed my final piano performance in the first semester after I had practised daily for 11 hours at a time. I cried a lot from despair and frustration during my first year studying at UTAS. As a reflective practitioner, I decided to learn from my experience and consequently felt that this study would be of enormous benefit to other NESI students who have decided to study at UTAS.
1.3 The Research Aim and Research Questions

This study aimed to discover what learning strategies Chinese background students studying at UTAS are using and have used to cope with the English language in a new academic environment. This study pursued the following four questions in order to achieve this main aim:

1. What are NESI students’ views on the significance of English skills in their learning and academic achievement? (The focus was on the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English.)

2. What learning strategies are being used or have been used by NESI students in terms of using English to achieve academically? (The focus was on the coping strategies used during the latest ten years by NESI students related to the difficulties of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English.)

3. What are NESI students’ views on the role of UTAS in assisting them with their studies in relation to English learning? (The focus was on academic assistance from the university and its academic staff.)

4. What are the views of academic staff regarding NESI students’ language abilities? (The focus was on the academics’ perceptions of NESI students’ listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities in English.)

The findings from this study have the potential to assist current and future NESI students and higher education providers in identifying effective and appropriate learning strategies in order to maximise academic potential.
1.4 The Significance of the Research

The study is significant for Australian universities, and current and future NESI students studying at these universities. Australian universities need to take into account the experiences and personal views of NESI students in order to examine any deficiencies in their teaching strategies for this specific group of students. This will enhance the quality of their academic services in order to attract more NESI students. International students contribute in a number of ways to Australian society. Banks (as cited in Healy, 2008) pointed out that highly skilled migrants were in short supply but in great demand worldwide, and if they could be retained by Australia, they would help replenish rapidly ageing academic ranks. According to Professor Forbes (as cited in Healy, 2008, p. 26), Universities Australia’s International Spokesman, “Highly skilled migrants may not have native standard English, but they have much to contribute and will go on to become very successful and go on to stay and to do postdoctoral work which will help rejuvenate our workforce”. He claimed that universities had to offer extra English language support to many of these students. Chapman, O’Donoghue and Hewison (2003) revealed that in recent times, the Federal Government had reduced its contribution to the higher education sector. They indicated that:

Australian universities have necessarily become more entrepreneurial in their approach to seeking stable, and preferably increasing, sources of revenue. Little wonder, then, that increasing the numbers of international students has been seen as a priority for these institutions. (p. 4)
There is no doubt that international students in institutions of higher education in English-speaking countries make valuable educational and economic contributions. Andrade (2006, p. 131) claimed that “for these benefits to continue, universities must become more knowledgeable about the adjustment issues these students face and implement appropriate support services”. Therefore, an investigation of academic support for NESI students would be beneficial if Australian universities are seeking to increase enrolments by international students. This study was conducted at UTAS and provided the university with a clearer understanding of how Chinese background students cope with their academic learning. The value of this investigation into Chinese NESI students is to add to existing information available on approaches they utilise to enhance their skills in English to succeed academically. This study will therefore inform and enhance the learning and teaching of NESI students on a multicultural campus of an Australian university.

This study is also significant for current and future NESI students studying at Australian universities. This study seeks to examine what learning strategies NESI students have been using in order to pass assignments and examinations, and how more advanced students obtain better results. An awareness of these learning strategies will help both struggling and advanced NESI students with their academic studies at Australian universities.

The study is limited due to its inability to precisely and accurately represent all the
features of the target population (Charles, 1998). The findings are therefore not
generalisable as the experiences of Chinese background students studying at other
universities around the world are affected by a myriad of factors and will not be
uniform. Many strategies used by NESI students in the past may also not be
appropriate to be used in the future, perhaps due to factors such as the development
of new technologies.

1.5 An Overview of the Content of Each Chapter

Chapter One – Introduction provides a background to the study; the research aim
and research questions; the significance of the research; and an overview of the
content of each chapter.

Chapter Two – Literature Review explores the difficulties and adjustments of
NESI students to studying overseas and the learning strategies students use to
achieve academically.

Chapter Three – Methodology provides an overview of the methodology for this
research, including information about the research tools, the participants and
sampling techniques, data collection, data analysis, validity and reliability, and
ethical considerations.

Chapter Four – Findings provides an overview of the demographic information
derived from the questionnaires and interviews, and a comparison between the
demographic and learning strategy variables. This chapter also describes the findings in relation to the research questions.

**Chapter Five – Discussion** of the findings occurs in this study through examining the research questions in detail. This data analysis also involves discussion of issues generated from the data and whether these are validated or refuted in existing literature related to this topic.

**Chapter Six – Recommendations** makes a number of important suggestions for both NESI students and Australian universities to implement in order to achieve academic success.

**Chapter Seven – Conclusion** highlights the findings that further confirmed the views in the existing literature and makes several recommendations for further research.

**1.6 Summary**

This chapter provided a background to the study, the research aim and research questions, in addition to highlighting the significance of the research. This chapter also provided an overview of each chapter to give the reader a general outline of the research undertaken to investigate NESI students learning strategies in a new academic environment.
CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This literature review will explore the following two issues: the difficulties and adjustments faced by NESI students studying overseas and the learning strategies they use to achieve academically. The review of literature related to NESI students studying overseas will focus on these students’ difficulties and problems associated with culture, academic learning, living and psychology, and the adjustments required to live and study overseas. The literature will also review studies which define and describe a range of learning strategies and the effectiveness of using learning strategies to achieve academically.

2.2 The Difficulties and Adjustments faced by NESI Students Studying Overseas

With increasing numbers of NESI students travelling abroad to pursue higher education in a native English learning environment, many researchers have realised the importance of examining how NESI students have adjusted to their new environment. This section of the literature review will focus on NESI students’ difficulties and problems related to culture, academic learning, psychology, in addition to the adjustments they have had to make in living and studying overseas.

2.2.1 NESI Students’ Difficulties and Problems in Adjusting to a Different Culture

According to Spencer-Oatey and Xiong (2006), a number of studies have attempted to identify the difficulties and problems experienced by NESI students in a new academic
context. The earliest literature cited in Oberg (1960) was concerned with “culture shock”, which he described as the dismay, confusion, and withdrawal that occurs in response to encountering a foreign culture and environment. As Oberg (1960, p. 177) stated, “Culture shock is precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse”. In the intervening years, the major contributor to culture shock, such as lack of prior knowledge about the host society, has been an ongoing issue. Therefore, later researchers, such as Henderson, Milhouse, and Cao (1993), persisted in emphasising this problem.

Recent studies which examined NESI students’ difficulties and problems has revealed that culture shock is one of the most important contributors to NESI students’ difficulties and problems in undertaking studies in a foreign country (Campbell & Li, 2007; Xiao & Petraki, 2007). Xiao and Petraki (2007) considered culture shock to be a major reason for communication difficulties; Campbell and Li (2007, para. 1) stated that NESI students’ challenges arose from cultural differences such as, “language difficulties and intercultural communication barriers, unfamiliar patterns of classroom interactions, lack of knowledge of academic norms and conventions, inadequate learning support, difficulties in making friends with domestic students, and lack of a sense of belonging”. According to Xiao and Petraki’s study (2007), Chinese students ascribed the difficulties when interacting with students from other countries to a lack of knowledge of intercultural communication, cultural shock and differences in nonverbal communication.
2.2.2 NESI Students’ Difficulties and Problems in Academic Learning

NESI students also experienced a range of learning difficulties and problems when they encountered a western educational environment markedly different from their own educational system. A survey of international students by Verma (1995) indicated that 78.4% of students faced difficulties in their courses, which included course content, delivery of the course content (different style of teaching) and essay writing. This finding was also supported by Levy, Osborn, and Plunkett (2003) who found that a significant number of international students demonstrated poor performance levels and even subject failures in their first semester or year of study. Makepeace’s study (1989) indicated that the failure rate for international students attending courses in the United Kingdom was higher than that of local students. More specifically, Davies (2007, p. 19) claimed that “Asian students are not adequately prepared for tertiary study in Australia and [that] they fail to engage at a variety of levels with the requirements of academic study”.

The literature also revealed that some NESI students believed that their lack of English competence had hindered their full participation in tutorials, classroom discussions, and interactions with academic staff at university (Barker, Child, Gallois, Jones, & Callan, 1991; Robertson, Line, Jones, & Thomas, 2000). This perception was also supported by Felix and Lawson (1994, p. 67), who stated that “poor English and poor argument or analysis [are] inextricably linked”. Burns (1991) reported that NESI students felt incompetent in a range of study skills and strategies, such as time management, revision and examination skills. Crano and Crano (1993) noted that
problems associated with language and culture shock placed significantly more strain on NESI students than difficulties in other areas.

However, many researchers held different views from those already stated. Ballard (1987) and Samuelowicz (1987) argued that, rather than only English deficiencies, the difficulties that NESI students had in academic learning were also attributed to their learning styles and poor analytical skills. Brown (2008) revealed that NESI students’ stress related to academic tasks was caused by “academic cultural differences, particularly in regard to critical evaluation and participation in discussion in class, [as well as] language ability”. Critical thinking skills were viewed by Davies (2000) as being central to academic success in English-speaking countries. Felix and Lawson (1994) noted that NESI students’ critical thinking skills, rather than writing, were usually their single greatest fear. Davies (2007, p. 19) explained that the reasons for NESI students’ learning difficulties and problems might be culturally and socially based because “Asian students rote learn, are generally non-participatory, are unwilling to mix with local students, lack critical skills and are unwilling (or unable) to adjust their learning styles”.

Although different views were held by researchers, most appeared to agree that competence in English was a predictor of academic success and greater satisfaction with an overseas tertiary experience (Barker, Child, Gallios, Jones, & Callen, 1991; Church, 1982; Wintergerst, DeCapua, & Verna, 2003; Ying & Liese, 1991). Ying (2003) pointed out that English writing skills were particularly necessary for
successful completion of written assignments, and essential for academic achievement.

2.2.3 NESI Students’ Psychological Difficulties and Problems

Besides linguistic proficiency in English, Zwingman and Gunn (1983) reported case studies of individuals with severe psychological disturbances triggered by what they termed uprooting. Psychological problems reported amongst researchers (Klineberg & Hull, 1979; Minas, 1994; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 2000; Ying, 2003) included depression, anxiety, loneliness, isolation, withdrawal, and dissatisfaction with the host country. The survey of overseas students conducted by Sandhu and Asrabadi in 1994 (as cited in Neill & Proeve, 2000, p. 216) indicated that the major acculturative stressors included “discrimination, homesickness, and stress due to change (culture shock)”. Major (2005, p. 84) revealed that NESI students needed to “be prepared socioculturally and emotionally to deal with a multitude of non-linguistic factors in order to succeed academically in an unfamiliar educational environment”.

Many researchers have attempted to examine the reasons which have resulted in NESI students’ psychological difficulties and problems, and have made suggestions to overcome these. According to Spencer-Oatey and Xiong (2006), most NESI students, especially during the initial stage of studying abroad, might experience psychological difficulties, due to a range of factors such as: the first time living away from home; living in a different country without traditional social networks; sharing accommodation with strangers; learning how to cook for the first time; dealing with
financial pressures and debt and discovering what is expected of them at university. There would thus be a number of acculturative stressors which if not dealt with successfully could result in psychological problems. The existing literature (Barker, Child, Gallois, Jones, & Callan, 1991; Levy, Osborn, & Plunkett, 2003; Mills, 1997; Mullins, Quintrell, & Hancock, 1995; Robertson, Line, Jones, & Thomas, 2000; Volet & Ang, 1998) revealed that the failure to develop relationships with local students often resulted in loneliness and isolation, which compounded feelings of homesickness and alienation, and consequently impacted negatively on academic adjustment and performance. Researchers (Adelman, 1988; Boyer & Sedlacek, 1988; Church, 1982; Westwood & Barker, 1990) suggested that NESI students who developed social relationships with native English speakers were more likely to enhance their academic achievement and the quality of their overseas experience.

2.2.4 NESI Students’ Adjustments of Living and Studying Overseas

A number of researchers have proposed different models of adjustment for NESI students, e.g., cultural, psychological, and sociocultural adjustment (Bennett, 1986; Berry, 1990; Black & Stephens, 1989; Chen & Ju, 2005; Kim, 2001; Spencer-Oatey & Xiong, 2006; Ward, 1996). Spencer-Oatey and Xiong (2006, p. 1) found:

The majority of students had few psychological or sociocultural adjustment difficulties. Nevertheless, social interaction with non-Chinese was consistently identified as problematic and this, as well as difficulties in adjusting to daily life, were very highly correlated with psychological stress. End-of-course grade point average was found to be negatively correlated
with the psychological stress experienced near the beginning of the academic year.

These researchers appeared to concentrate on evaluating whether NESI students experienced cultural or psychological difficulties and problems and whether these difficulties and problems negatively influenced their academic achievements. However, they did not examine how NESI students adjusted academically.

Only a few researchers have examined how NESI students effectively adjust to living and studying overseas. For instance, according to a study of 63 South-East Asian and 63 Australian students in two Australian secondary colleges investigated by Neill and Proeve (2000, p. 216), “South-East Asian students reported greater use of reference to others [as a] coping style than Australian students” for dealing with the stress in their lives. Clarke (1993) identified many general coping strategies used by a random sample of 64 overseas students on the Launceston campus of UTAS in 1992. They were: English language improvement, time management, study methods, using university facilities, teaching methods, class participation, note taking, and doing research. This research is important due to its context, however, the findings are now fifteen years old and do not take into account factors such as globalisation and technology which have impacted significantly on NESI students overseas academic experiences.

Some researchers have found that NESI students have adjusted very well to their
overseas tertiary experience. Myles and Cheng (2003) revealed that many of the students they interviewed seemed well adapted to university life despite the fact that they had not made an intentional effort to communicate with native English speaking students. These students seemed to have learned about their host culture mostly through a network of students with similar cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Spencer-Oatey and Xiong (2006) also reported that the majority of the respondents did not experience undue psychological stress, although a minority reported symptoms of minor depression, and found little difficulty in adjusting socially and culturally in their daily lives.

On the contrary, some researchers have identified a number of difficulties faced by NESI students, and have made valuable suggestions for them to effectively adapt to their new environment. Holmes (2005) found that Chinese background students often experienced difficulties in intercultural communication. Major (2005, p. 85) also noted that “Asian students may have difficulty adjusting to Western dialogical practices in class, such as questioning, criticising, refuting, arguing, debating, and persuading”. These were viewed as key factors for academic achievement in English-speaking Western countries by Adamson (1993) and Gee (1990). Wan, Chapman and Biggs (1992) noted that NESI students’ experiences of demand and the ability to cope varied according to the following four factors: the cultural distance between the student’s home and host cultures; role competencies (including English language skills, academic skills, and knowledge of the host country); the student’s social support network; and personal characteristics (including demographics and field of study).
Andrade (2006), Major (2005), and Ying (2003) agreed that English language proficiency and culture were the main contributors to NESI students’ adjustment challenges. Andrade (2006) postulated that the academic achievement of NESI students was affected by English proficiency, academic skills, and educational background. Major (2005) proposed that the adjustment to university culture was far more demanding than just displaying linguistic proficiency. She made three suggestions for institutional intervention: remediation or sociocultural adjustment, extended orientation to the academic culture, and cross-cultural awareness amongst faculty. Based on the study of NESI students in the United States, Ying (2003) revealed that greater knowledge about the host country facilitated both NESI students’ academic performance, and their overall enjoyment of their overseas experience. She then suggested that social relationships with local people and a strong support network, such as post-arrival orientation programs which involved English speakers, should be applied to enhance the quality of NESI students’ experience of overseas study.

2.2.5 A Review of Factors Affecting NESI Students’ Difficulties, Problems and Adjustments

In this review, it was revealed that some researchers have found that NESI students encounter a range of difficulties and problems in adjusting to differences in culture, academic expectations and lack of support structures which may result in psychological problems. However, other researchers have reported that NESI students experience overall enjoyment and satisfaction of their overseas experience (Campbell
& Li, 2007; Trice & Yoo, 2007). There was also evidence to suggest that some NESI students consistently succeeded in higher education and in some cases outperformed native English speakers (Barron & Arcodia, 2002; Biggs, 1999; Burns, 1991; Church, 1982; UTAS Planning & Development Unit, 2008; Ying, 2003). Sayersa and Franklinb (2008) also found that high achieving NESI students were able to meet the requirements of their new educational environment and at the same time maintain a high-achievement orientation throughout their academic study.

Although the findings vary somewhat, all of the studies appeared to correctly reflect the experiences of NESI students. This is confirmed by the fact that NESI students faced particular challenges and adjustments in the process of transition to a western university. According to Sayers and Franklin (2008), these students not only had to cope with the transition to another language and culture, but also had to deal with the need to change habitual ways of thinking, studying and learning to suit the demands of a foreign education system. It is also true that these students felt satisfied when they finally succeeded academically through their outstanding performance after a long period of adjustment.

However, Ying (2003) argued that students could be succeeding academically without otherwise benefiting or enjoying their overseas experience. This was supported by Ying, Lee, Tsai, Hung, Lin, and Wan (2000) who revealed that there was no association between academic success and a subjective sense of enjoyment experienced by Asian American college students attending a prestigious American
According to McKinlay, Pattison, and Gross (1996), most NESI students probably went through three stages described by Lysgaard (1955) as the *U curve hypothesis*. This included the initial honeymoon stage when travelling to a new country; the following and more difficult stage of “feeling bad”; and finally the successful stage of graduation. This view was also supported by data collected from Taiwanese students in the United States. Ying and Liese (1991; 1994) found that Taiwanese students in this study experienced academic difficulty during the initial stages of enrolment in their studies, but overall had adjusted and achieved very well.

### 2.3 The Learning Strategies Students Use to Achieve Academically

Learning strategies make an important contribution to effective learning (Griffiths, 2006). Oxford (2003, p. 274) pointed out that “[second language] learning strategies can help learners improve their own perception, reception, storage, retention, and retrieval of language information”. Macaro (2001, p. 43) acknowledged that the identification of learning strategies was important for both teachers and learners, particularly in the context of language learning. He stated:

> Learners will learn better if they are helped to identify the strategies they use, if they come into contact with other possible strategies and if ways of deploying them in combination are suggested. Teachers need to know the strategies that their learners are using in order to better understand some of the problems they may be encountering with their language learning and in order to be able to adapt their teaching styles and materials to the learners’ needs.
Considering the significance of learning strategies on students’ learning, a number of researchers have investigated learning strategies from the perspectives of both second language learning (Macaro, 2001; Oxford, 2003; Wenden & Rubin, 1987) and psychology (Dornyei, 2001; Gardner, 1985; Lukmani, 1972; Williams & Burden, 1997; Zimmerman & Martinez-Pon, 1986). These researchers have focused on studying learning strategies from numerous viewpoints. Some studies explored a broad range of strategies (Chamot, Barnhardt, El-Dinary, & Robbins, 1999; Weinstein & Mayer, 1983), while others narrowed their focus to particular areas, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing strategies (Macaro, 2001; Paribakht, 1985; Vandergrift, 1999). Some studies identified the strategies used by good and poor language learners (Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, & Todesco, 1976; Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975), while others discussed the terminology or elaborated the taxonomies of language learning strategies (Oxford, 1990; Wenden & Rubin, 1987).

Studies in learning strategies can be classified into two basic types: descriptive studies (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990) and intervention studies (Griffiths, 2006; Magogwe & Oliver, 2007). According to Macaro (2001, p. 27), studies of learning strategies can be further classified into two distinct categories: the descriptive strategy, which is “centred on individual learners” and the methodologically prescriptive strategy, which is “aimed at whole classes”. For this literature review, studies of learning strategies were examined through the following four categories: studies designed to define learning strategies, studies designed to classify learning strategies, studies
investigating strategy applications with specific tasks, and studies intended to validate the effectiveness of learning strategies on students’ academic achievements.

2.3.1 Studies Designed to Define Learning Strategies

In the previous studies, the concept of learning strategies and what accounts for a learning strategy have been discussed. Wenden and Rubin (1987, p. 19) defined learning strategies as “any sets of operations, steps, plans, [and] routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval, and use of information”. O’Malley and Chamot (1990, p. 1) defined learning strategies as “special ways of processing information that enhance comprehension, learning, or retention of information”. According to Scarcella and Oxford (1992, p. 63), learning strategies are “special actions, behaviours, steps, techniques [or thoughts] – such as seeking out conversation partners, or giving oneself encouragement to tackle a difficult language task – used by students to enhance their own learning”. Richards and Platt (1992, p. 209) stated that learning strategies are “intentional behaviour and thoughts used by learners during learning so as to better help them understand, learn, or remember new information”.

Faerch and Kasper (1983, p. 67) stressed that “a learning strategy is an attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language”. According to Stern (1992, p. 261), “the concept of [a] learning strategy is dependent on the assumption that learners consciously engage in activities to achieve certain goals and learning strategies can be regarded as broadly conceived intentional directions and learning techniques”. Although learning strategies were defined differently in the
reviewed literature, all of the definitions have covered two issues about their use: why students used learning strategies and what actions they took when using learning strategies. These two issues justified the reason for undertaking this study due to the evidence that NESI students potentially face learning difficulties and problems at overseas universities.

2.3.2 Studies Designed to Classify Learning Strategies

In this section, the way various researchers have categorised learning strategies will be examined. These researchers include Wenden and Rubin (1987), Oxford (1990; 2003), O’Malley and Chamot (1990), McDonough (1995), Weinstein and Mayer (1986), and Stern (1992).

According to Wenden and Rubin (1987), there are three types of strategies used by learners that contribute directly or indirectly to language learning (see Flow Chart 2.1). These are: learning strategies, communication strategies, and social strategies. They also sub-classified learning strategies into two types: cognitive learning strategies and meta-cognitive learning strategies. Cognitive learning strategies included clarification/verification, guessing/inductive inferencing, deductive reasoning, practice, and memorisation monitoring. Meta-cognitive learning strategies involved various processes including planning, prioritising, setting goals, and self-management.
Flow Chart 2.1:

Strategies classified by Wenden and Rubin (1987)

- Learning strategies
- Communication strategies
- Social strategies

Cognitive learning strategies
- Clarification/Verification
- Guessing/Inductive inferencing
- Deductive reasoning
- Practice
- Memorisation monitoring

Meta-cognitive learning strategies
- Planning
- Prioritising
- Setting goals
- Self-management
Oxford (1990, p. 17; 2003) classified learning strategies as direct and indirect strategies (see Flow Chart 2.2). Each category comprised three subcategories. Direct strategies consisted of memory, cognition, and compensation strategies. Indirect strategies were those that “support and manage language learning without necessarily involving the target language directly”. They consisted of meta-cognitive, affective, and social strategies.

**Flow Chart 2.2:**

```
Learning strategies classified by Oxford (1990; 2003)

- Direct strategies
  - Memory
  - Cognition strategies
  - Compensation strategies

- Indirect strategies
  - Meta-cognitive strategies
  - Affective strategies
  - Social strategies
```
O’Malley and Chamot (1990) classified learning strategies into four categories: cognitive, meta-cognitive, social, and affective (see Flow Chart 2.3). Repetition, resourcing, translation, grouping, note-taking, deduction, recombination, imagery, auditory representation, key word, contextualisation, elaboration, transfer, and inferencing were among the most important cognitive strategies. Arranging, planning, and evaluating one’s learning were examples of a meta-cognitive strategy. One type of social strategy could be demonstrated by asking questions and cooperating with others. The strategy of lowering one’s anxiety and encouraging oneself was categorised as an affective strategy.

Flow Chart 2.3:
McDonough (1995) examined learning strategies through the categories of choices, compensation and plans which enabled the development of skills and processes (see Flow Chart 2.4).

Flow Chart 2.4: Learning strategies classified by McDonough (1995)

- Choices
- Compensation
- Plans
Weinstein and Mayer (1986) summarised the major categories of general learning strategies as rehearsal strategies, elaboration strategies, organisational strategies, comprehension monitoring strategies, and affective strategies (see Flow Chart 2.5).

Flow Chart 2.5:

**General learning strategies classified by Weinstein and Mayer (1986)**

- Rehearsal strategies
- Elaboration strategies
- Organisational strategies
- Comprehension monitoring strategies
- Affective strategies
Stern (1992) divided language learning strategies into five categories: management and planning strategies, cognitive strategies, communicative/experiential strategies, interpersonal strategies, and affective strategies (see Flow Chart 2.6).

**Flow Chart 2.6:**

- Management and planning strategies
- Cognitive strategies
- Communicative/Experiential strategies
- Interpersonal strategies
- Affective strategies

Classifying learning strategies has the potential to enable teachers and learners to better understand the concept and the application of learning strategies. Consequently, the teacher may feel more confident in implementing the appropriate learning strategies for the learner, and the learner may also be able to adopt effective strategies according to their needs. However, the investigation undertaken of these learning strategies in relation to the study did not provide clear and direct guidance in relation to students’ specific learning problems.
2.3.3 Studies Investigating Strategy Applications with Specific Tasks

Lessard-Clouston (1997, p. 8) suggested that “studies to be done on language learning strategies and strategy training should move beyond descriptive taxonomies of language learning strategies” and attempted to seek solutions to specific tasks. There has been extensive research on strategy applications with specific tasks, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.

Field (1998) proposed various types of micro-listening exercises, which could be employed as part of listening training or used diagnostically in response to evidence of breakdowns of understanding. Vandergrift (1999) provided a framework for incorporating explicit strategy instruction into second language classes, and some concrete activities for developing listening strategies. O’Malley, Chamot, and Kupper (1989) indicated that the mental processes students used in listening comprehension paralleled three theoretically-derived phases of the comprehension process: perceptual processing, parsing, and utilisation. They also identified three predominant strategies which differentiated effective from ineffective listeners: self-monitoring, elaboration, and inferencing.

Paribakht (1985) found a positive relationship between speakers’ proficiency levels in the target language and their use of communication strategies. O’Malley and Chamot (1990) also found elaboration to be a frequently used strategy for listening, reading, writing, and grammatical activities. Harmon (2002) recommended the strategy of utilising peer dialogue to help struggling readers. Macaro (2001) also provided many
specific strategies and activities used in English as a second language (ESL), which included learning the skills of listening, reading, and writing.

These researchers appeared to focus on investigating effective learning strategies to improve the skills of ESL learning, however, they did not examine how these strategies could assist NESI students with their academic studies.

**2.3.4 Studies Intended to Validate the Effectiveness of Learning Strategies on Students’ Academic Purposes**

Many researchers have examined the influence that learning strategies have on students’ academic achievements. Both Martin and Ramsden (1987), and Van Rossum and Schenk (1984) revealed a positive relationship between students’ conceptions of learning strategies and their learning outcomes. Mullins (1992) reported a positive association between proficiency in learning English as a foreign language (EFL) and the use of compensation strategies (compensating for missing knowledge) and meta-cognitive strategies (organising and self-evaluating learning). Lessard-Clouston (1997, p. 3) also stated that “language learning strategies contribute to the development of students’ communicative competence”. Wen and Johnson (1997, p. 40) stated in relation to their research findings that “strategies are the only variables that [have] direct effects on English achievement”. The findings of Ross, Salisbury-Glennon, Guarino, Reed, and Marshall (2003, p. 206) demonstrated “statistically positive relationships between the learning context and the cognitive strategies used by the learners, the cognitive complexity of the assessment and the
cognitive strategies used by the learners, and the cognitive strategies used by the learners and academic performance”.

The importance to academic achievement of self-regulation in learning was examined by a number of researchers (Bandura & Schunk, 1981; Spates & Kanfer, 1977; Wang, 1983; Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1990). Zimmerman and Martinez-Pons (1986) found a substantial correlation between students’ self-reported strategy use and their academic achievement. High achievers displayed significantly greater use of 13 of the 14 strategies. These strategies were: self-evaluation, organisation and transformation, goal setting and planning, information seeking, record keeping and self-monitoring, environmental structuring, giving self-consequences, rehearsing and memorising, seeking social assistance (from peers, teachers, or other adults), and reviewing (notes, books, or tests). Further studies by Zimmerman and Martinez-Pons (1988; 1990) confirmed this relationship between strategy use and academic achievement, and also demonstrated the link between students’ perceptions of both verbal and mathematical efficacy and the use of self-regulated strategies.

These studies have focused on the validation of the effectiveness of learning strategies on students’ academic achievement. However, it seems that the learning strategies suggested in these studies are not closely related to students’ English abilities such as how to achieve academically in relation to the difficulties of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English.
2.4 Summary

In this review of over fifty articles, papers and books, it appears that most of the research has emphasised the use of learning strategies to improve the learning of ESL or EFL students, rather than the use of learning strategies to facilitate NESI students’ academic achievement. Only one text written by Cox and Hill (2004) looked specifically at English skills, including the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, for academic purposes by solving some anticipated problems in a range of discourses relevant to academic contexts. However, this text only included limited information related to learning strategies.

Peacock and Ho (2003, p. 183) revealed that “not enough research has investigated strategy use (particularly individual strategy use) across different academic disciplines”, and suggested that “there is an urgent need for further research in this area because of the very large number of English for Academic Purpose students in English-medium universities around the world”. Saville-Troike (1984, p. 217) also claimed that researchers in ESL seemed to have forgotten that “teaching English is not an end in itself but only a means to an end”. He suggested that the critical outcome of teaching students should be how well educators equip them to succeed in school, and this should also concern researchers who should look beyond how well students learn English.

Although numerous studies have examined NESI students’ adjustments to learning in relation to culture and language, as well as their academic, financial and psychological
difficulties and problems of learning in a western educational setting; it appears that these studies focused on validating whether NESI students experience difficulties, or the reasons for their difficulties. Very few studies examined NESI students’ learning strategies in English to enhance their academic achievements. Therefore, this study has examined tertiary students’ learning strategies in relation to using English to achieve academically and has also provided additional information to this field.
CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology for this study, including information about the research tools, the participants and sampling techniques, data collection, data analysis, validity and reliability, and ethical considerations.

3.2 Methodology Overview

Methodology refers to the choices the researcher makes about the study, and how they will gather and analyse the data (Silverman, 2001). In social research, methodology can be broadly divided into two methods: qualitative and quantitative (Silverman, 2001). Both of these methodological methods have positive and negative aspects. As Burns (1994) noted, the quantitative method is underpinned by precision and control, and usually based on numerical data; however the richer connection that could be obtained from human subjects might not be evident. The qualitative method can enable the researcher to gain an insider’s view of the field through close association with both participants and activities within the setting. However, Burns (1994, p. 14) also revealed that qualitative methods could be subjective and it was therefore difficult “to apply conventional standards of reliability and validity”.

A combination of the two methods can therefore enable the collection of data from both numerical and descriptive points of view. It may also help to minimise the negative elements of both methodological methods and enhance the positives at the
same time. This is called the concurrent triangulation approach, which is described as using “two different methods in an attempt to confirm, cross-validate, or corroborate findings within a single study” (Creswell, 2003, p. 217). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2003) and Creswell (2003) claimed that triangulation would result in well-validated and substantiated findings as a number of sources had been used.

Due to the fact that “no single study perfectly fits all of the elements of either a qualitative or quantitative study” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 28), this study utilised both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to gain the strengths of both methodological methods and to potentially offset their respective weaknesses. This study was based on a survey design which, according to Creswell (2003, p. 153), “provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population”. From the results the researcher can make generalisations about the population being studied. The survey design for this study was also cross-sectional “with the data collected at one point in time” (Creswell, 2003, p. 155). The data gathering consisted of a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The first three research questions were examined through the questionnaire, which was the first step in the data collection. This process helped to conceptualise the interview questions to allow for in-depth investigation with the participants. The semi-structured interview further explored the first three research questions and also investigated the fourth research question.
3.3 Research Tools

A questionnaire is a “self-report instrument used for gathering information about variables of interest to an investigator” (Wolf, 1997, p. 422). The questionnaire in this study (see Appendix B) included 43 closed questions and 3 open-ended questions. The questions were designed to assess how Chinese background students self-reported their learning strategies in terms of using English for academic purposes, and their views regarding the significance of English and the role of UTAS in assisting them with their studies.

The closed questions included demographic questions (Part A), such as first language, gender, age, the faculty they were studying in, their length of stay in Australia, their highest qualification completed, their current degree being undertaken and their abilities in relation to listening, speaking, reading and writing in English. In addition, there were subjective questions (Part B) such as “English ability is essential for my study at UTAS”, which were formatted to a Likert scale. The strength of respondents’ feelings for each statement was identified on the following five point abbreviation scale: SDA=Strongly Disagree; DA=Disagree; NS=Not Sure; A=Agree; SA=Strongly Agree. The Likert method, according to Burns (2000), is simple to prepare, entirely founded on empirical opinions, non-judgmental, and contains high validity and reliability. This five-option rating scale would enable the respondent to discriminate their choices more finely, and would also allow the respondent who was undecided a “Not Sure” option unlike a four-option rating scale which does not include this option. However, Burns (2000) noted that the Likert method did not
provide an actual measurement of the informant’s preferred response to a question as
the scoring system does not allow for this. Wiersma and Jurs (2009, p. 204) suggested that “open-ended items allow the individual more freedom of response because certain feelings or information may be revealed that would not be forthcoming with selected-response items”. Therefore, the open-ended questions and a semi-structured interview were also incorporated in the study to collect students’ qualitative responses.

A semi-structured interview is defined by Burns (2000, p. 424) as follows:

Rather than having a specific interview schedule or none at all, an interview guide may be developed for some parts of the study in which without fixed wording or fixed ordering of questions, a direction is given to the interviewee so that the content focuses on the crucial issues of the study.

The semi-structured interview in this study was based on elements mentioned in the questionnaires and was also informed by issues which emerged from the literature review. It involved interviewing eight Chinese background students and four academic staff. The interviews of Chinese background students further explored the first three research questions, while the interviews of academic staff mainly investigated the fourth research question. The questions were similar for each group in order to provide consistency of data gathered to enable patterns to be discerned.

The semi-structured interview collected supplementary and explanatory information
which permitted a deep understanding of students’ learning strategies and the role of UTAS in their learning. The interview questions were prepared and given to the participants in advance in order to give a degree of coherence to the themes and issues chosen in relation to the research objectives and the literature review. The researcher was able to elaborate on or ask follow up questions due to the semi-structured nature of the interview schedule.

### 3.4 Participants and Sampling Techniques

This study recruited fifty (50) Chinese background students who were studying and had studied during the last ten years at UTAS, and four (4) academic staff from different faculties. The students undertook the questionnaire, and eight students for the interview were randomly selected from the pool of participants who agreed to be interviewed either face-to-face or over the telephone. Four academic staff from different faculties were interviewed for this study. Although it is commonly viewed that “large samples provide greater statistical precision and greater statistical power than small samples”, Wiersma and Jurs (2009, pp. 340-341) also argued that increasing sample size does not necessarily attain adequate representation. They stated that “the method of selection and ensuring that [the] selection is from unbiased sources are the important determiners of attaining adequate representation”.

The sample in this study used stratified random sampling which “ensures that the resulting sample will be distributed in the same way as the population in terms of the stratifying criterion” (Bryman, 2004, p. 92). This included previous and current
students with a diversity of different genders, ages, faculties of study, lengths of stay, qualifications, and English abilities. Due to the fact that people differ greatly based on their career, age, gender, learning experiences and environment, the research would portray a biased view if participants were only chosen from one category. Almost all faculties at UTAS were involved. The age of participants ranged from approximately 18 to 45, and their length of stay in Australia ranged from less than 18 months to 10 years. The qualification that participants were pursuing or had already completed covered all of the university degrees at UTAS. The sample in this study had a balance of advanced learners and those that were experiencing difficulties at the beginning stage of their study; therefore, it is possible to say that this study represented to a significant degree the population of Chinese background students studying at UTAS during the latest ten years. This study focussed on NESI students’ learning strategies during the last ten years as this period of time gives a breadth and overview to the data which would not be apparent if a shorter period was chosen.

3.5 Data Collection

Data collection began after the researcher had obtained formal ethics approval (see Appendix C) from the Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network (Reference number: H9931). The following recruitment procedure was undertaken:

1. Contact was made with the appropriate Head of Department/Faculty

2. Contact was made with the lecturers of the targeted faculties
3. Contact was made with the participants through a third party to distribute the consent forms (see Appendix D: Statement of informed consent form) and questionnaire sheets.

Hard copies of questionnaires and details of the study (see Appendix E: Information sheet for questionnaire) were posted to potential participants. The information sheet for the interview (see Appendix F) was distributed to each interviewee to allow him/her to understand the nature of the interview prior to the arranged interview. The interview meeting was made through e-mail and telephone. All the interviews took place within the university, and were audio-taped and transcribed. The specific numbers of participants and the aim of each stage of data collection are listed in Table 3.1.

**PARTICIPANTS AND THE AIM OF EACH STAGE OF DATA COLLECTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages of data collection</th>
<th>Aims of stages of data collection</th>
<th>Participants of stages of data collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A pilot study of questionnaire</td>
<td>To assess the feasibility of the later full-scale study and to identify any logistical problems.</td>
<td>10 Chinese background students from 5 different faculties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Responses to the questionnaire</td>
<td>To identify the responses of students in terms of their learning strategies and views on the significance of English and the role of UTAS in assisting them with their study.</td>
<td>50 Chinese background students from 5 different faculties consisting of 30 females and 20 males.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Interview</td>
<td>To pursue in-depth information about students’ learning strategies to achieve academically and lecturers’ views on the role of UTAS in helping to achieve this aim.</td>
<td>8 from the total 50 student participants and 4 lecturers from different faculties.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3.1*
A pilot study of the questionnaire was conducted prior to the study commencing. Burns (2000) noted that a pilot study was an opportunity to enhance the validity and reliability of the research. It also enabled the researcher to confirm the appropriate research structure and design of the study.

### 3.6 Data Analysis

As Bogdan and Biklen (1992, p. 153) stated, data analysis is “the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials that you accumulate to increase your understanding of them [the participants] and to enable you to present what you have discovered to others”. The data analysis in this study employed both quantitative and qualitative methodological methods and was described in the following sections.

#### 3.6.1 Questionnaire Data Analysis

The closed questions of the questionnaire were divided into two parts. The first section (Part A) sought information regarding the first language of the respondents in addition to their gender, age, faculty of study, length of stay in Australia, highest qualification completed, current degree being undertaken and their abilities in relation to listening, speaking, reading and writing in English. The second section (Part B) consisted of 32 questions related to the first three research questions. The analysis of the questionnaires was aided by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and focused on answering the research questions, as well as
examining the links between independent variables such as age, level of education, language ability, length of living in Tasmania, and dependent variables such as language learning strategies and views towards NESI students’ academic achievement and performances.

The closed questions of the questionnaire were analysed beginning with general descriptive statistics including numbers, percentages, range, tendency, sum, minimum and maximum, and subsequently, moved to the correlations between variables and the answers to the research questions. The data analysis of the open-ended questions was similar to the data analysis of the semi-structured interviews.

3.6.2 Interview Data Analysis

The data from the semi-structured interviews was manually colour coded. The patterns which emerged from the data were subsequently categorised. Constructivist grounded theory was employed as a major interpretive perspective to give voice to the Chinese background students and lecturers and reflect on the interactive nature of both the interviewer and the interviewee in conducting research into complex human issues. According to Charmaz (2003, p. 273):

Constructivist grounded theory recognises that the viewer creates the data and ensuing analysis through interaction with the viewed. Data do not provide a window on reality. Rather, the “discovered” reality arises from the interactive process and its temporal, cultural, and structural contexts.
Researcher and subjects frame that interaction and confer meaning upon it.

The viewer then is part of what is viewed rather than separate from it.

What a viewer sees shapes what he or she will define, measure, and analyse.

Constructivist grounded theory not only seeks to interpret how subjects construct their realities, but also recognises the interactive nature of both data collection and analysis. The interview transcripts of individual interviewees were interpretively analysed to identify students’ views and explanations regarding their learning strategies. To maximise the validity of this research, the researcher provided the participants with transcripts of their interview so that they could check them for accuracy. This also occurred through continual revisiting of the data, particularly in the context of reviewed literature.

**3.7 Validity and Reliability**

According to Wiersma and Jurs (2009, p. 357), “Validity refers to the appropriateness of the interpretation of the results of a test or inventory”. The validity of this study was represented by the sample chosen by a stratified random sampling which represented to a significant degree the population of Chinese background students studying at UTAS during the latest ten years. If the data was collected again under the same rule of participant recruitment, it is likely that the findings would not be markedly different; therefore this study was also considered to be reliable.
All participants, as university students, were aged 18 and over. Schneider and Pressley (1997) noted that by the age of 15, students’ knowledge about their own learning and their ability to give valid answers to questionnaire items had developed considerably. As all of the tertiary students were over 18 years old, it could then be assumed that these students’ self-reports of their learning approaches were realistic.

Another factor which influences the validity of research is the non-response to a questionnaire. Wiersma and Jurs (2005, p. 176) claimed that “the possibility of non-response is a problem with questionnaire studies because non-response may introduce bias into the data”. To avoid this problem, some strategies were applied by the researcher, such as emphasising the importance of the study and expressing appreciation to the participants in the information sheet to the questionnaire, in addition to mailing follow-up letters of a copy of the questionnaire along with a stamped self-addressed envelope.

### 3.8 Ethical considerations

Ethics is the principles and guidelines that help researchers to uphold the things they value (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). According to the National Commission (1979), three essential principles concerning the ethical conduct of research with humans are respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. “These three principles form[ed] the foundation for the conduct of research, including guidelines for obtaining informed consent, respect for privacy and confidentiality, and risk/benefit assessment”
Formal ethics approval was received from the Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network. This study brought no harm to the participants and constituted a minimal risk ethics application. All the participants recruited in this study were mentally and physically healthy independent adults. They were able to independently make a decision as to whether to participate in this study and responded without duress. As participation in the study was voluntary, the participants could decide whether to become involved and subsequently were also advised they could withdraw without any penalty or repercussions. The detail of the study was clearly explained to the participants. Data was not collected or used without the participants’ consent.

There were no sensitive personal or cultural issues included in the research questions. Participants were not offended by the instruments used for data collection. The questions also did not involve participants revealing any aspects which could identify them as individuals. An addressed envelope was provided for return of the questionnaire. A box was placed in the office of the Faculty of Education for those who preferred this method to return the questionnaire. All information was unidentifiable and individuals remained anonymous. Only 12 interviewees (eight students and four staff) were identified by the researcher, however, they were not identifiable in any research output. The completed questionnaires, audiotapes and transcripts have been stored in a secure locked cabinet at the university and will be
destroyed after five years.

3.9 Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the methodology for this study. Through the methodology chosen, a sound understanding of the research aim and research questions was gained. The following chapter will present the findings generated from the data in relation to the study.
4.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the findings generated from the data in relation to the study. An overview of the demographic information derived from the questionnaires and interviews is described, followed by a comparison between the demographic and learning strategy variables. Finally, the chapter will contextualise the findings in relation to the research questions.

4.2 Overview of the Demographic Information

In this research study, all of the 50 questionnaires distributed were completed and returned by the participants resulting in a 100% return rate. All of the 43 closed questions were answered, whilst the three open-ended questions received 36 responses for each question. Eight student interviews and four staff interviews also provided qualitative data in relation to this research. All of the student participants were Chinese-native speakers. One staff interviewee was also a Chinese-native speaker, and the other three staff interviewees were English-native speakers.

The 50 questionnaires included responses from 20 Male (40%) and 30 Female (60%) participants. The age of the participants has been categorised into three specific groups as shown in Table 4.1. The largest cohort in relation to this study was the 25 – 35 year age range (60%). Students in the 35 – 50 year range constituted the smallest percentage of 4%.
NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES OF PARTICIPANTS ACCORDING TO THEIR AGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ages</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Percentages (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17-24 yrs of age</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-35 yrs of age</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-50 yrs of age</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1

Table 4.2 provides information about the participants in relation to the university faculty they had completed or are currently completing their studies in. The majority of participants (80%) were from the Faculty of Business and the Faculty of Science, Engineering & Technology. Both of these faculties were chosen due to the fact that NESI students in these faculties occupied the largest percentage (around 70%) of international students enrolled at UTAS from 2000 to 2007 (see Appendix A: Table 5). Participants from the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Health Science were equal at 8%. The smallest number of students participating in the study (4%) was from the Faculty of Arts.

NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES OF PARTICIPANTS ACCORDING TO THEIR FACULTIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculties</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Percentages (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science, Engineering &amp; Technology</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Science</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>48.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2
Most participants had stayed in Australia from one to four years. Only one participant had stayed for over six years. Five participants had stayed for less than twelve months. These details are shown in Table 4.3.

### NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES OF PARTICIPANTS ACCORDING TO THEIR LENGTHS OF STAY IN AUSTRALIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lengths of stay</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Percentages (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>less than 12 months</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 1 year to 2 years</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 2 years to 4 years</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>46.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 4 years to 6 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 6 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4.3*

Most participants had completed a qualification, such as a Certificate/Diploma, Bachelor, or Masters, and some were still undertaking these studies with one participant completing a Doctoral degree. During the course of this research, 13 participants who had recently finished their programs were not continuing with further study.

Most of the participants felt good or satisfied with their English skills in relation to listening, speaking, reading and writing; although 12 participants (24%) felt they had weak (20%) or very weak (4%) writing skills. The overall number of participants felt that their speaking and writing skills were much weaker than their listening and reading skills. These details are shown in Table 4.4.
HOW PARTICIPANTS VIEWED THEIR SKILLS IN ENGLISH (BY NUMBER)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English skills</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Very weak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the 50 student participants, four males and four females were interviewed by the researcher. They were from the Faculty of Health Science, the Faculty of Education, the Faculty of Business, and the Faculty of Science, Engineering & Technology. The academic staff interviewed consisted of two males and two females. Two of them were from the Faculty of Business, one was from the Faculty of Education and one was from the Faculty of Science, Engineering & Technology.

4.3 The Comparison between Demographic and Learning Strategy Variables

As mentioned in the methodology chapter, the questionnaire was in two parts. Part A sought demographic information about the participants, also known as independent variables, such as first language, gender, age, faculty of study, length of stay in Australia, highest qualification completed, current degree being undertaken and perceived abilities in relation to listening, speaking, reading and writing in English. Part B collected information about learning strategies used by NESI students, also known as dependent variables.
Through the chi-square analysis in SPSS, no statistical significant association was found between the variables in Part A and Part B. Almost all results received a level of significance observed ($p > 0.05$) which suggested that there was “no statistical significant relationship between variables” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 517). Therefore, the results generated from the questionnaires in this study were considered to be independent of the participants’ gender, age, faculty of study, length of stay in Australia, qualifications, and English abilities.

**4.4 Findings in relation to the Research Questions**

This section will report the findings through the following four categories according to the research questions:

1. Students’ views of the significance of English skills in their learning and academic achievement
2. Students’ learning strategies in terms of using English to achieve academically
3. Students’ views on the role of UTAS in assisting their study in relation to English learning
4. Views of academic staff regarding NESI students’ language abilities.

**4.4.1 Students’ Views of the Significance of English Skills in their Learning and Academic Achievement**

It was commonly acknowledged by the participants that English ability was essential for their study and their abilities in English significantly influenced their learning and
academic achievements at UTAS. The skills of reading and writing were recognised to be more important than the skills of listening and speaking in their academic achievements. Apart from English ability, some participants held the view that learning strategies were the most important for their academic achievements. As a result, many learning strategies were adopted to offset the participants’ perceived English deficiency.

4.4.2 Students’ Learning Strategies in terms of Using English to Achieve Academically

In general, the participants preferred learning strategies were: participating in tutorials; working in a quiet place; communicating with their fellow students; using WebCT/MyLo\(^1\) and library resources; sitting in front of the lecturer; using the framework of lecture previews, attending lectures, and review of lecture materials; working hard; and using English constantly.

When giving presentations, participants would prepare for them as fully as possible and orally practise as many times as possible. When writing assignments, participants would search the internet for information, ask questions of their lecturers and fellow students, read extensively and proofread assignments before submission. Before taking a test, participants would prepare for the test as fully as possible, memorise everything that might be covered, and work through the previous year’s

\(^1\) MyLo stands for “My learning online” at UTAS, which means that current students can learn by themselves through accessing their courses on this web site. It had been named WebCT before 2008.
examination paper.

4.4.3 Students’ Views on the Role of UTAS in Assisting their Studies in relation to English Learning

University resources were viewed to be adequate for NESI students’ study and teachers were seen to treat NESI students fairly. However, a number of students chose “NS” (Not Sure) on the questionnaire as to whether: the administration staff in their respective faculties were helpful (50%); the university tried its best to help them (46%); lecturers treated them equally in comparison to local students (38%); and teachers had given them extra help to assist their studies (36%). It was evident that most participants did not perceive that there was extra help, beyond normal expectations, given from the university and staff. Therefore, there appears to be a need for positive and proactive action from university staff at UTAS to further assist NESI students.

According to the data from both questionnaires and interviews, many suggestions were made by the participants for the university to provide this support. They were: providing NESI students with more teachers to proofread assignments; offering more workshops to improve essay writing and referencing; and creating more chances to communicate with lecturers and local students.

4.4.4 Views of Academic Staff regarding NESI Students’ Language Abilities

The four academic staff interviewed in relation to this study had different viewpoints
regarding NESI students’ English abilities based on their experiences with these students in their own faculties. Overall all of the staff interviewees agreed that NESI students had problems with their English ability, although one staff member believed that NESI students’ English skills were not “too bad”. Many helpful actions had been already implemented by the interviewees prior to the commencement of this study. They were: encouraging NESI students to attend lectures and tutorials; encouraging NESI students to be confident and not to worry about making mistakes; taking time to work with NESI students; helping with assignment planning, structuring, and referencing; assisting with the understanding of lecturer feedback on assessment tasks; helping with understanding the requirements of various academic genres; assisting with the delivery of oral presentations; helping with reading efficiently and writing in an academic style; and helping with time management issues.

Many suggestions were also made by the staff interviewees for the university to further support NESI students with their studies. They were: supporting academics to learn Chinese and other languages in order to better communicate with NESI students; providing an editing service which would help NESI students to understand grammatical issues in relation to their writing; helping proofreading NESI students’ reports/essays; providing more opportunities for social interaction with other students; taking an introductory academic program at the university before the beginning of the semester; having an Academic Learning and Language (ALL) Adviser in each faculty; and providing discipline-specific support, particularly at the postgraduate level.
4.5 Summary

This chapter displayed the findings generated from the data in relation to the study. It provided an overview of the demographic information derived from the questionnaires and interviews, and a comparison between the demographic and learning strategy variables. This chapter described the findings in relation to the research questions, and also summarised many learning strategies used by the participants and a number of suggestions for the university to support NESI students with their studies. The next chapter will discuss these findings in relation to the research questions.
CHAPTER 5 – DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will analyse the findings of the previous chapter in relation to the research questions guiding this study. The data analysis will also involve discussion of issues generated from the data and whether these are validated or refuted in existing literature related to this topic. When citing a participant, questionnaire participants will be coded as “QP”, student interviewees as “SI”, and academic staff interviewees as “ASI”.

5.2 What are NESI Students’ Views on the Significance of English Skills in their Learning and Academic Achievement?

According to the responses from 50 questionnaires, almost all participants (94%) revealed that English ability was essential for their study at UTAS. 88% of participants indicated that the level of English ability greatly influenced NESI students’ learning and academic achievement at UTAS. These responses are similar to those found by Samuelowiz (1987) who indicated that both staff and students at the University of Queensland in Australia ranked NESI students’ English language proficiency as the most important issue for their academic success. This response also supports the findings of Barker, Child, Gallois, Jones, and Callan (1991) and Robertson, Line, Jones, and Thomas (2000).

To find out which of the specific skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing
influenced NESI students’ academic achievement, the questionnaire was divided into four sections to extrapolate findings for each one. A large majority of participants (96%) revealed that their academic achievement was greatly influenced by their reading skills. This was followed by writing skills at 90%, listening skills at 84%, and speaking skills at 70%. Even though speaking was viewed as the least important of the four skills, most of the participants (70%) agreed that their speaking skills did greatly influence their academic achievement. The number of participants who perceived that their academic achievement was greatly influenced by their reading and writing skills was larger than the number of participants for listening and speaking skills. This is evident from the questionnaire responses and also supported by the interviews. When students were asked, which English skill they felt was the most important for their academic achievement at UTAS and to explain why, three participants responded with the following statements:

Reading is the most important. This is because through reading textbooks, and lecture slides we can understand our course (SI W).

Reading, because even if you cannot understand lecturers’ speaking at all, there are heaps of resources out there, on the web, in the library or any readable resources. If you have strong reading skills you can catch up in your own time (SI B).

I think writing is very important because the ability of writing directly affects the result of an assignment. Most units have one or more assignments that count for a high percentage of the final result, so it is easy to pass exams if I get high enough marks from assignments (SI Y).
The importance of English writing skills was also supported by Ying (2003) who pointed out that these skills were particularly necessary for successful completion of written assignments, and was essential for academic achievement.

Obviously the majority of participants believed that English ability was essential for their studies at UTAS. Some participants, on the other hand, held different opinions. One participant chose “NS” (Not Sure) and two participants chose “DS” (Disagree).

Although English is the essential skill for study, the most important for studies is the study methods. If you want to get knowledge, there are lots of ways. English ?? Not exactly necessarily to achieve a high level in our studies

(QP A).

This view reflected a similar opinion to Ballard and Samuelowicz (as cited in Barker, Child, Gallois, Jones, & Callan, 1991, p. 83) who stated that “Asian students falsely ascribe a wide range of difficulties at University to language deficiencies” and also suggested that “students’ difficulties may also arise from their learning styles and from poor analytical skills”. This view was also emphasised by Chan (1999) who pointed out that NESI students’ feelings of stress were, in part, brought about by the different approach to learning they have to adopt when studying overseas. The discovery of NESI students’ learning strategies thus appeared very significant for their academic achievement in studying overseas.
5.3 *What Learning Strategies are being used or have been used by NESI Students in terms of Using English to Achieve Academically?*

Many learning strategies in relation to deficiencies in reading, writing, speaking and listening were adopted by NESI students in order to achieve academically. Generally the participants preferred strategies were: participating in tutorials (92%); working in a quiet place (82%); communicating with fellow students (74%); using WebCT/MyLo (66%), and sitting in front of the lecturer (62%). According to the responses to the open-ended questionnaires, the learning strategies frequently mentioned (between 3 – 8 times) were: Using the framework of previews, attending lectures, and reviewing the lectures (8); working hard (5); using English regularly and at least everyday (5); and using WebCT/MyLo and library resources (3).

When asked “How do you cope with a different learning environment?” SI B responded:

*Hard work and communication are my solution.*

As for how to use the framework of previews, attending lectures, and reviewing the lectures, many participants described specific procedures they adopted in the open-ended questions. As they noted:

*Study the topic in advance; Bring my questions to the lecture; Do some exercises after lectures; Correct the mistakes I commit in tutorials; Review the topic and fix all the problems (QP X).*

*Preview, having lectures, review and prepare assignment and test in advance*
Try to read through the materials of the lecture or tutorial in advance.

During the class, taking notes selectively according to the parts of materials that have been highlighted before class that is helpful to focus on the key of the course. After class, two hours review is necessary (QP Z).

When giving presentations, almost all participants (94%) noted that they prepared for them as fully as possible. Over three quarters of the participants (76%) revealed that they would practise presentations as many times as possible. When writing assignments, searching the internet for information was ranked as the highest learning strategy used by 94% of participants. This was followed by the strategy of asking questions of lecturers (84%) and fellow students (78%), reading journals (62%) and reading books (60%). The preference for different types of strategies is illustrated in Bar Chart 5.1. Strategies which were frequently indicated in the open-ended questionnaires (between 2 – 17 times) were: doing adequate research including searching internet, reading lecture notes, and tutorial handouts before writing assignments (17); discussing assignments with teachers and fellow students (13); and proofreading assignments (2) before submission.
LEARNING STRATEGIES USED WHEN WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Before taking a test, 80% of participants indicated they would prepare for the test as fully as possible and 78% of participants sought to memorise everything that might be covered. Working on the past year examination paper was strongly suggested as a strategy in the open-ended questionnaires and the student interviews.

*When I took exam, I need to spend more time to practise past exam and tutorial questions, because accounting major needs more exercises to be familiar with the calculation formulation and general concept (SI C).*

*Find past paper and then try to answer all questions. If I cannot answer them, I will go back to lecture notes or text books, etc. (SI A).*

*For exams, I just went through most recent papers and made sure I understood them (SI B).*
5.4 What are NESI Students’ Views on the Role of UTAS in Assisting their Studies in relation to English Learning?

It was acknowledged by 70% of the participants that the resources provided by the university were adequate for their studies. 68% of participants felt that their lecturers treated them fairly. However, a smaller proportion of students (38%) marked “Not Sure” when asked whether their teachers treated them equally to local students. Two participants even disagreed with this statement. When asked “How do you think the University of Tasmania lecturers perceive NESI students?” The responses from the student interviews indicated some concerns:

Most lecturers respect NESI students as well as local students. But some lecturers ignore the needs of NESI students or do not want to talk with us (SI Y).

Some teachers think of us as a disadvantaged population. They are willing to help us. Some teachers underestimate NESI students’ potential. They do not notice that NESI students usually work harder than local students, and try to catch up what have been taught. As a result, some NESI students are very excellent (SI A).

However, just under half of the participants (46%) believed that the university tried its best to help them and the lecturers had given them extra help to assist them in their studies. This is supported by the questionnaire responses and the student interviews:
During my first year study (in Launceston), because of 1st yr uni and limited English, I needed to ask local people to help me with checking grammar and the logical flow of assignments. I went up to the international student office. The international student officer was really helpful. She taught me the skills to understand the assignment requirements, and explained to me how to approach the assignment. I still use the skills that she taught me today (QP B).

I do appreciate the teachers in ELC who have given me a lot of help and helped me overcome communication problems so I can easily find a job in the future (QP C).

I got help from my primary English lecturer and also my Honours supervisor. She helped me in my writing and presentation. Also my Uni supervisor provided good communication between my colleague teacher and me. This helped to complete my school experiences (SI F).

Absolutely. There was an assignment that needed to be done last year; not many students knew how to do it. My tutor held a session for any enquiries from us. It was very helpful to finish this assignment (SI A).

First year I met a very good teacher, she helped us a lot. I could not take notes very well. She then made a copy of her teaching content for me (SI S).

Many participants, on the other hand, indicated they were “Not Sure” about the help from the university (46%) and teachers (36%). Half of the participants (50%) were also uncertain as to whether administration staff in their respective faculties were
helpful to them. Although NESI students were aware that the university had provided student support services, such as English Language Support for International Students (ELISIS), 42% of participants handed in their assignments without having sought assistance. According to the responses from the open-ended questions and interviews:

*I have never used their assistance* (QP D).

*I heard that there is English assistance in the language centre, but haven’t tried that yet* (QP E).

*As a matter of fact, I don’t really make full use of the assistance provided by the university. It is probably because I don’t think I need extra help from others except my speaking skill. But I don’t mean my English is good enough. At least, it is not an efficient way for me to improve my English proficiency from my point of view, except the particular skill of speaking (for it is really hard for us practice it ourselves). I would rather improve it through self-studying* (QP F).

Even though there was the same number of participants (42%) who handed in their assignments with having the grammar checked, they were unsure of the benefits of the assistance provided by the university. According to two student interviewees:

*I normally check them by myself, because I am confident of that. I seldom find somebody to check, e.g. local people or Chinese-English translator* (SI A).

*After finishing assignments, I usually ask my friends who have graduated*
from UTAS to check mistakes of assignments, such as wrong words, and/or incorrect expression (SI Y).

Some participants disagreed (6%) and a small percentage strongly disagreed (2%) that the university tried its best to help them with their study. SI B claimed that his worst memory was the time he undertook a computer course. He stated:

*I felt like I spent $6500 for nothing. I would not choose this course if I had a second chance to choose my courses. I am not saying the lecturer was bad.*

*It’s just that I didn’t learn many useful things from her. Sometimes she just read the book for us, how could that help?*

SI C also complained:

*Compared with the money I paid, I did not learn as much as I should.*

Similar comments were noted by Niven (1987) and Kennedy (1995) who claimed that a criticism faced by western universities was that great emphasis was placed on the initial attracting of international students but that they were ignored after their enrolment. Moon (2003) indicated a high level of student frustration and disappointment regarding the level of support received by NESI students in comparison to the level of fees being paid. The important need for English support services has also been raised by numerous researchers working in this area (Ballard, 1987; Cargil, 1996; Felix & Lawson, 1994; Pe-Pua, 1994; Quintrell & Westwood, 1994; Samuelowicz, 1987).
Although it appears university resources were sufficient, it was apparent from the findings that proactive action in relation to the previously mentioned issues from the university and its staff was not perceived by the majority of NESI students. The suggestions below have been made by the participants for the university to better support NESI students with their studies:

*It will bless international students if the English language center can provide another hand to assist essay writing, and regular English workshops will also do great help* (QP G).

*Before assignment submitting, teachers always ask us to check English grammar by local persons. However, it is not very easy for international students. Although University of Tasmania has provided this kind of support, there are few teachers to do this job. It is difficult to make appointments in time. So, I hope the school can supply more of this kind of chance for international students* (QP H).

*Do tutorials for students in regards to academic writing, references and research techniques* (QP I).

*Provide more chances to communicate with the lecturers and have sufficient chances to take part in the activities of the university* (QP J).

*Organise more activities to let us communicate with local students* (QP K).

5.5 What are the Views of Academic Staff regarding NESI Students’ Language Abilities?
The four academic staff interviewed held different opinions regarding NESI students’ English abilities. ASI A from the Faculty of Business noted that NESI students were “not too bad in reading and writing”, and had “no problem” in communication, “but occasionally communication breakdown”. On the contrary, ASI B from the Faculty of Science, Engineering & Technology stated that “our Chinese students do not understand their lecturers well”, and “their English speaking is poor”, “their writing is okay”, and they “usually do not prefer to read English unless they have to”. ASI C from the Faculty of Education and ASI D from the Faculty of Business respectively recognised that “all students are different” and “there is a wide range” within the cohort of NESI students. On the whole, all staff interviewees agreed that NESI students had problems with their English ability.

All of the staff interviewees had already taken many helpful actions to assist NESI students with their studies in different ways. ASI A focused on encouraging NESI students “to be themselves, to be confident and not worry about making mistakes”. In relation to university support, he suggested that the university could “support academics to learn Chinese and other such languages so that we could better communicate”. ASI B had been encouraging NESI students “to attend lectures and tutorials”. He suggested it would be good if NESI students could obtain help in proofreading their reports/essays. ASI C found it important to take time to work with NESI students. She suggested the university needed to provide an editing service which would help NESI students to “understand the issues about their writing” and to provide “more opportunities for social interaction with other students”.
ASI D had been constantly helping NESI students with a range of issues such as: assignment planning, structuring, and referencing; understanding lecturer feedback on assessments; understanding the requirements of various academic genres; how to give oral presentations; how to read efficiently and write in an academic style, and how to manage time. She suggested that NESI students should take an “Introductory Academic Program at this university before the start of semester”. She also suggested that the university needed to provide an Academic Learning and Language (ALL) Adviser in each faculty and necessary discipline-specific support, in particular, at the postgraduate level.

Faculty-based support and discipline-specific support groups were also suggested by Samuelowicz (1987) who explained that students might not be able to use the general English support program operating at most universities due to time limitations. This is confirmed by the responses from student interviews:

They offered additional English course to us, but I didn’t use because timetable conflicted with my lecture (SI W).

There are a lot of academic terminologies or jargons in nursing study. I appreciate UTAS assistance, but in my major, it is not much help, because not many people have knowledge of nursing (SI A).

Therefore, the faculty-based support and discipline-specific support groups appeared very significant to NESI students’ academic learning. This is important as “there [is]
growing acceptance of the view that, for learning and English language assistance to be effective it need[s] to be located within the Faculty and provided within subject specific contexts” (Ramburuth, 2002, p. 109). Faculty-based support and discipline-specific support groups at universities have been examined by a number of researchers (Cargill, 1996; Johnson, 1997; Ramburuth, 2002), and it is evident that these types of support had not been overtly provided to NESI students by UTAS. Therefore, the establishment of faculty-based and discipline-specific support groups appears to be an urgent priority for UTAS in order to improve its quality of services for and to more effectively help NESI students.

5.6 Summary

This chapter has analysed the data through answering the four research questions guiding this study. The findings generated from the data further confirmed previous research findings in this field and added more information to the research of learning strategies and NESI students’ language abilities and difficulties. Many suggestions have been made by both students and staff for UTAS to better support students. Based on these suggestions, the next chapter will make recommendations to help support NESI students undertaking Australian university courses.
CHAPTER 6 – RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

Based on the responses by Chinese background students in relation to their learning strategies and the feedback about the support of the university from both students and academic staff, this chapter will make recommendations to enhance the experience of NESI students who travel from overseas to enrol in Australian university courses.

6.2 Recommendations to NESI Students

Recommendations to NESI students are linked to the following categories: general learning strategies, learning strategies for giving oral presentations and writing assignments, and learning strategies in preparation for undertaking an examination.

6.2.1 General Learning Strategies

Learning should be viewed as a life-long process; therefore completing a university degree should not be the final goal of study. The following general learning strategies are suggested to NESI students to be used specifically during their university courses; however they are also transferable to other life situations:

1. Working hard: Learning takes time. There are no short cuts to succeed in learning
2. Working in a quiet place: To be effective, learners should avoid distractions
3. Using English constantly and on a daily basis to improve skills in this area: English cannot be learned in isolation and is most effectively learned when
practised with native speakers

4. Taking an Introductory Academic Program at the university before the beginning of the semester to understand how various processes at the university operate

5. Participating in tutorials to better understand the requirements of assignments and tests

6. Sitting in close proximity to the lecturer in order to ensure that material is heard clearly and to increase opportunities to ask questions in order to clarify meaning

7. Using WebCT/MyLo to better understand the course

8. Using library resources to search for information


6.2.2 Learning Strategies for Giving Oral Presentations and Writing Assignments

It is evident through this study that NESI students’ oral English cannot compete with local students. They are therefore normally disadvantaged when giving oral presentations. The suggested learning strategies to help offset this disadvantage include: making the Power Point presentation visually attractive and interesting by using moving pictures and techniques such as slide transition, and custom animation; orally practising presentations as many times as possible; ensuring all handouts and materials are ready; making and maintaining eye-contact with the audience; and using body language to emphasise particular points during the presentation and to
Written assignments account for a fairly large percentage of assessment tasks in most Australian universities. Therefore, the learning strategies which help NESI students complete written assignments are critical to their completing a university degree. The learning strategies to assist NESI students prepare for written assignments are suggested as follows: doing adequate research including searching the internet, reading journals, books, lecture notes, and tutorial handouts; discussing assignments with teachers and fellow students; and proofreading assignments before submission.

**6.2.3 Learning Strategies in Preparation for Undertaking an Examination**

Examinations are an important assessment instrument which is often used in Australian universities. The learning strategies which help NESI students with preparing for undertaking an examination are: working on the previous year’s examination paper; trying to memorise everything that might be covered; and preparing as fully as possible.

**6.3 Recommendations to Australian Universities**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made for Australian universities to better support NESI students with their studies. They are: having an Academic Learning and Language (ALL) Adviser in each faculty; providing discipline-specific support; providing NESI students with more teachers to proofread assignments and to help NESI students to understand issues affecting the
clarity of their writing; offering more workshops to improve essay writing and referencing; and increasing opportunities to communicate with lecturers and local students.

6.4 Summary

This chapter has made many recommendations for both NESI students and Australian universities. Recommendations to NESI students will help them to effectively cope with different learning environments and to succeed academically. The recommendations for Australian universities will assist them in providing an even higher quality of academic service in order to attract and retain more NESI students. Given the current economic climate, this is particularly important as Australian university courses are seen to be cheaper than those in other countries (Davies, 2007). In addition, Australia has been experiencing rapid ageing in its academic ranks (as cited in Healy, 2008), therefore there is an urgent need to encourage overseas students to study and hopefully to continue with postdoctoral work which will help rejuvenate the academic workforce in Australia.
CHAPTER 7 – CONCLUSION

This study examined NESI students’ learning strategies and views regarding the significance of their English skills, specifically those associated with listening, speaking, reading and writing, and the role of UTAS in assisting them with their studies. The findings confirmed that English ability was essential for NESI students’ study and their ability in this area significantly influenced their learning and academic achievement at UTAS.

This study thus made many recommendations to NESI students in relation to learning strategies in order to assist them completing their university courses. Many recommendations were also made to Australian universities regarding the support services that might be provided to NESI students with their studies.

This research could be further developed if the following two issues which arose from this study were explored. One is the establishment of both faculty-based support and discipline-specific support groups for NESI students. The facilitators of these groups would necessarily need to take into account a range of nationalities and cultural backgrounds which can directly affect how an NESI student approaches a lecturer and/or relates to others, including students from dissimilar cultural backgrounds.

The other is research to be undertaken in order to reveal the perceptions of academics
in relation to further support NESI students by undertaking the learning of another
language. Considering Australia’s proximity to Asia, a language such as Chinese
would be relevant. However, it would be interesting to see whether academics would
be supportive of this initiative given their heavy workloads. This could also lead to
further research undertaken by the University in order to develop a whole-university
approach to supporting NESI students rather than relying solely on the International
Student Office. Informing lecturers of NESI students and providing information
about their cultural backgrounds would increase awareness of the unique challenges
faced and how this may impact on learning. A faculty-based lecturer who could liaise
with the International Student Office on behalf of NESI students in their faculty
would also be beneficial.

Another recommendation would be to increase the visibility of NESI students in the
eyes of the local students by celebrating international cultural events and providing
greater opportunities for these cohorts to mix both at the university and outside of
this context. Instituting email contact with lecturers and students before arrival would
also create a sense of welcome and the establishment of a relationship which can be
built on after arrival.

An extensive amount of research still needs to be undertaken in order to provide
diverse NESI students with the most effective support in relation to their academic
achievements. This would be a worthwhile goal particularly given the potential and
long term benefits for both NESI students and Australian universities.
REFERENCES


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Niven, A. (1987). Salad days without the dressing? What British higher and further education institutions can do for their overseas students? *Higher Education Quarterly, 41*(2) 144-161.

*Practical Anthropology, 7*, 177-182.


The UTAS Planning & Development Unit (2008, September). Data of EFTSL students’ enrolment at UTAS.


Appendix A: Data provided by the UTAS Planning and Development Unit (September, 2008)

INTERNATIONAL ONSHORE STUDENTS, EQUIVALENT FULL-TIME STUDENT LOAD (EFTSL), ENROLMENT AT CENSUS 2 EACH YEAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>91.81</td>
<td>105.81</td>
<td>124.01</td>
<td>169.06</td>
<td>158.69</td>
<td>162.92</td>
<td>187.41</td>
<td>149.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>136.88</td>
<td>157.25</td>
<td>207.48</td>
<td>245.14</td>
<td>313.83</td>
<td>433.95</td>
<td>588.96</td>
<td>675.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>14.25</td>
<td>15.50</td>
<td>14.53</td>
<td>20.47</td>
<td>25.62</td>
<td>35.88</td>
<td>48.34</td>
<td>43.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Science</td>
<td>75.12</td>
<td>93.48</td>
<td>124.94</td>
<td>157.78</td>
<td>204.93</td>
<td>204.14</td>
<td>230.40</td>
<td>225.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>46.13</td>
<td>31.55</td>
<td>22.03</td>
<td>43.83</td>
<td>45.00</td>
<td>51.50</td>
<td>72.21</td>
<td>65.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Programs</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>5.69</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science, Engineering &amp; Technology</td>
<td>313.48</td>
<td>416.30</td>
<td>435.68</td>
<td>473.34</td>
<td>536.14</td>
<td>615.75</td>
<td>597.64</td>
<td>581.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>677.65</td>
<td>819.89</td>
<td>928.66</td>
<td>1109.60</td>
<td>1284.38</td>
<td>1506.35</td>
<td>1730.65</td>
<td>1744.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1*
## INTERNATIONAL ONSHORE STUDENTS (EFTSL), COMPLETIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>14.00</td>
<td>26.26</td>
<td>36.02</td>
<td>33.61</td>
<td>42.69</td>
<td>59.79</td>
<td>45.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>23.63</td>
<td>34.13</td>
<td>35.50</td>
<td>49.75</td>
<td>75.38</td>
<td>110.50</td>
<td>161.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>7.88</td>
<td>7.99</td>
<td>6.38</td>
<td>14.75</td>
<td>20.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Science</td>
<td>15.38</td>
<td>23.06</td>
<td>16.78</td>
<td>29.26</td>
<td>41.29</td>
<td>23.69</td>
<td>20.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>13.25</td>
<td>7.38</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>23.25</td>
<td>17.50</td>
<td>21.13</td>
<td>26.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science, Engineering &amp; Technology</td>
<td>139.22</td>
<td>134.15</td>
<td>134.25</td>
<td>145.45</td>
<td>200.50</td>
<td>208.64</td>
<td>202.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>209.72</td>
<td>229.48</td>
<td>250.43</td>
<td>289.31</td>
<td>384.23</td>
<td>439.74</td>
<td>478.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Completion rate (average 24.26%)</strong></td>
<td>25.60%</td>
<td>24.71%</td>
<td>22.60%</td>
<td>22.60%</td>
<td>25.50%</td>
<td>25.40%</td>
<td>23.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Completion rate (average 24.77% from 2005 to 2007)</strong></td>
<td>25.50%</td>
<td>25.40%</td>
<td>23.40%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2*
DOMESTIC STUDENTS (EFTSL), ENROLMENT AT CENSUS 2 EACH YEAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>2509.98</td>
<td>2577.69</td>
<td>2718.24</td>
<td>2791.20</td>
<td>2872.43</td>
<td>2664.61</td>
<td>2772.94</td>
<td>2791.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>1258.23</td>
<td>1318.55</td>
<td>1393.95</td>
<td>1410.85</td>
<td>1348.31</td>
<td>1287.58</td>
<td>1273.87</td>
<td>1184.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1239.38</td>
<td>1222.03</td>
<td>1332.75</td>
<td>1363.20</td>
<td>1436.89</td>
<td>1496.92</td>
<td>1545.35</td>
<td>1502.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Science</td>
<td>983.33</td>
<td>1103.46</td>
<td>1197.90</td>
<td>1280.10</td>
<td>1387.07</td>
<td>1382.07</td>
<td>1560.45</td>
<td>1789.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>537.90</td>
<td>502.72</td>
<td>532.13</td>
<td>523.42</td>
<td>549.23</td>
<td>516.85</td>
<td>499.79</td>
<td>486.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Programs</td>
<td>26.00</td>
<td>35.88</td>
<td>147.75</td>
<td>205.31</td>
<td>242.41</td>
<td>298.90</td>
<td>307.33</td>
<td>376.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science, Engineering &amp; Technology</td>
<td>2551.71</td>
<td>2448.87</td>
<td>2568.72</td>
<td>2481.89</td>
<td>2512.71</td>
<td>2348.09</td>
<td>2427.23</td>
<td>2348.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>9106.53</strong></td>
<td><strong>9209.19</strong></td>
<td><strong>9891.44</strong></td>
<td><strong>10055.97</strong></td>
<td><strong>10349.05</strong></td>
<td><strong>9995.02</strong></td>
<td><strong>10386.96</strong></td>
<td><strong>10480.56</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3*
DOMESTIC STUDENTS (EFTSL), COMPLETIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>511.69</td>
<td>502.29</td>
<td>518.79</td>
<td>530.05</td>
<td>462.70</td>
<td>490.77</td>
<td>457.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>297.66</td>
<td>360.74</td>
<td>404.57</td>
<td>399.67</td>
<td>390.46</td>
<td>423.93</td>
<td>419.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Science</td>
<td>275.50</td>
<td>255.84</td>
<td>286.22</td>
<td>315.40</td>
<td>311.64</td>
<td>242.71</td>
<td>228.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>161.38</td>
<td>159.12</td>
<td>161.75</td>
<td>165.63</td>
<td>147.97</td>
<td>116.75</td>
<td>102.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science, Engineering &amp; Technology</td>
<td>514.87</td>
<td>547.98</td>
<td>540.71</td>
<td>537.73</td>
<td>444.08</td>
<td>444.04</td>
<td>431.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1953.35</td>
<td>2037.22</td>
<td>2141.37</td>
<td>2217.86</td>
<td>1987.46</td>
<td>1948.45</td>
<td>1842.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Completion rate (average 20.11%)
- 21.20%
- 20.60%
- 21.30%
- 21.40%
- 19.90%
- 18.80%
- 17.60%

Completion rate (average 18.77% from 2005 to 2007)
- 19.90%
- 18.80%
- 17.60%

Table 4
ENROLMENT OF INTERNATIONAL ONSHORE STUDENTS (EFTSL) IN THE FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND THE FACULTY OF SCIENCE, ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY AT CENSUS 2 EACH YEAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International Onshore Students (EFTSL) in the Faculty of Business and the Faculty of Science, Engineering &amp; Technology</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Numbers</td>
<td>450.36</td>
<td>573.55</td>
<td>643.16</td>
<td>718.48</td>
<td>849.97</td>
<td>1049.7</td>
<td>1186.6</td>
<td>1256.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentages</td>
<td>66.46%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>69.26%</td>
<td>64.75%</td>
<td>66.18%</td>
<td>69.7%</td>
<td>68.56%</td>
<td>72.02%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 5*
Appendix B: Questionnaire to examine Non-English-speaking international (NESI) students’ tertiary learning strategies in relation to English for academic purpose, with a particular focus on Chinese background students studying at the University of Tasmania (UTAS)

Part A: Please highlight only one choice.

2. Gender:  a. Male  b. Female
3. Age:  a. 17-24  b. 25-35  c. 36-50  d. Over 50
4. Academic Faculty
   a. Education
   b. Arts
   c. Science, Engineering & Technology
   d. Health Science
   e. Law
   f. Business
5. Length of Stay in Australia (up to now):
   a. Less than 12 months
   b. Over one year to two years
   c. Over two years to four years
   d. Over four years to six years
   e. Over six years

6. Highest qualification completed
   a. High school
   b. Certificate/Diploma
   c. Bachelor degree
   d. Masters degree
   e. Doctoral degree
   f. Other(s) (please specify) ___

7. Which degree currently doing
   a. Certificate/Diploma
   b. Bachelor degree
   c. Masters degree
   d. Doctoral degree
   e. Other(s) (please specify) _____
   f. None

English ability

8. Listening: (a) Excellent (b) Good (c) Satisfactory (d) Weak (e) Very Weak

9. Speaking: (a) Excellent (b) Good (c) Satisfactory (d) Weak (e) Very Weak

10. Reading: (a) Excellent (b) Good (c) Satisfactory (d) Weak (e) Very Weak

11. Writing: (a) Excellent (b) Good (c) Satisfactory (d) Weak (e) Very Weak
Part B: Please highlight your most appropriate response.

Directions: Please indicate your most appropriate response by using the following criteria:
SDA= Strongly Disagree; DA= Disagree; NS=Not Sure; A= Agree; SA= Strongly Agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>The learning strategies used by NESI students</th>
<th>Weighted Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>English ability is essential for my study at UTAS.</td>
<td>SDA DA NS A SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>My academic achievement is greatly influenced by my English ability.</td>
<td>SDA DA NS A SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>My academic achievement is greatly influenced by my English listening skill.</td>
<td>SDA DA NS A SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>My academic achievement is greatly influenced by my English speaking skill.</td>
<td>SDA DA NS A SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>My academic achievement is greatly influenced by my English reading skill.</td>
<td>SDA DA NS A SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>My academic achievement is greatly influenced by my English writing skill.</td>
<td>SDA DA NS A SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>I sit in front of the lecturer so that I can understand the lecture better.</td>
<td>SDA DA NS A SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I often ask the teacher questions to enhance my learning.</td>
<td>SDA DA NS A SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>I often communicate with my fellow students to enhance my learning.</td>
<td>SDA DA NS A SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>During tutorials, it is important for me to participate.</td>
<td>SDA DA NS A SA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Directions: Please highlight your most appropriate response by using the following criteria:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SDA= Strongly Disagree;</th>
<th>DA= Disagree;</th>
<th>NS=Not Sure;</th>
<th>A= Agree;</th>
<th>SA= Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22 During tutorials, I tend to talk as little as possible in discussion.</td>
<td>SDA DA NS A SA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 When giving presentations, I prepare as fully as possible.</td>
<td>SDA DA NS A SA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 When giving presentations, I practise as many times as I can.</td>
<td>SDA DA NS A SA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 If I have problems with my assignments, I ask my lecturer.</td>
<td>SDA DA NS A SA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 If I have problems with my assignments, I ask my fellow students.</td>
<td>SDA DA NS A SA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 When I finish my written work, I ask others to check so that I can improve.</td>
<td>SDA DA NS A SA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 When I finish my assignments, I submit them without asking anybody else to check.</td>
<td>SDA DA NS A SA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 When I write my assignments, I try to read as many books as I can.</td>
<td>SDA DA NS A SA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 When I write my assignments, I try to read as many journals as I can.</td>
<td>SDA DA NS A SA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 When I write my assignments, I try to search the internet for information as much as I can.</td>
<td>SDA DA NS A SA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 WebCT (MyLo) is useful for my learning.</td>
<td>SDA DA NS A SA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 Before I take a test, I try to memorize everything that might be covered.</td>
<td>SDA DA NS A SA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 Before I take a test, I try to prepare as fully as possible.</td>
<td>SDA DA NS A SA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 When I study, I prefer to work in a quiet place.</td>
<td>SDA DA NS A SA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 During the semester, I study for more than 8 hours a day.</td>
<td>SDA DA NS A SA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Directions: Please highlight your most appropriate response by using the following criteria:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SDA= Strongly Disagree;</th>
<th>DA= Disagree;</th>
<th>NS=Not Sure;</th>
<th>A= Agree;</th>
<th>SA= Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>During the semester, I study during the weekends to catch up the time lost.</td>
<td>SDA</td>
<td>DA</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Your views on the role of the University of Tasmania in assisting your study in relation to English learning</td>
<td>SDA</td>
<td>DA</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>My teachers give me extra help to assist my studies.</td>
<td>SDA</td>
<td>DA</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Administration staff is helpful to my studies.</td>
<td>SDA</td>
<td>DA</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>My teachers treat me fairly.</td>
<td>SDA</td>
<td>DA</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>My teachers treat me equally to local students.</td>
<td>SDA</td>
<td>DA</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>The university tries its best to help my study.</td>
<td>SDA</td>
<td>DA</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>University resources are adequate for my studies.</td>
<td>SDA</td>
<td>DA</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Open-ended questions:

1. Please write down any comments you would like to make regarding the significance of English competency in your university studies.

2. Please write down any comments you would like to make regarding the types of learning strategies you use to pursue your academic studies.

3. Please write down any comments you would like to make regarding how UTAS can assist you in your language learning.

Thank you for your time

Note: If you are willing to participate in an interview to give us more about your views on learning strategies, please contact us at the following email: rwu@utas.edu.au or phone Ruiting Wu on 04 32 021 209.
Appendix C: Formal ethics approval

MINIMAL RISK ETHICS APPLICATION APPROVAL

18 March 2008

Ms Margaret Baguley
Education
Private Bag 1307
Launceston

Ethics reference: H9931
‘Non-English speaking international (NESI) students’ tertiary learning strategies in relation to English for academic purposes (with a particular focus on Chinese background students studying at Unitas)’. Honours student: Ms Rutting Wu

Dear Ms Baguley,

Acting on a mandate from the Tasmania Social Sciences HREC, the Chair of the committee considered and approved the above project on 17 March 2008.

All committees operating under the Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network are registered and required to comply with the National Statement on the Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans 1999 (NHMRC guidelines).

Therefore, the Chief Investigator’s responsibility is to ensure that:

1) All researchers listed on the application comply with HREC approved application.

2) Modifications to the application do not proceed until approval is obtained in writing from the HREC.

3) The confidentiality and anonymity of all research subjects is maintained at all times, except as required by law.

4) Clause 2.37 of the National Statement states:
   An HREC shall, as a condition of approval of each protocol, require that researchers immediately report anything which might warrant review of ethical approval of the protocol, including:
   a) Serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants;
   b) Proposed changes in the application; and
   c) Unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.

The report must be lodged within 24 hours of the event to the Ethics Executive Officer who will report to the Chairs.

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5) All participants must be provided with the current Information Sheet and Consent form as approved by the Ethics Committee.

6) The Committee is notified if any investigators are added to, or cease involvement with, the project.

7) This study has approval for four years contingent upon annual review. An Annual Report is to be provided on the anniversary date of your approval. Your first report is due [12 months from 'Ethics Committee Approval' date]. You will be sent a courtesy reminder by email closer to this due date.

Clause 2.35 of the National Statement states:
As a minimum an HREC must require at regular periods, at least annually, reports from principal researchers on matters including:
    a) Progress to date or outcome in case of completed research;
    b) Maintenance and security of records;
    c) Compliance with the approved protocol, and
    d) Compliance with any conditions of approval.

8) A Final Report and a copy of the published material, either in full or abstract, must be provided at the end of project.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

[Name]
Ethics Executive Officer

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Appendix D: Statement of informed consent form

**Title of Project:** Non-English-speaking international (NESI) students’ tertiary learning strategies in relation to English for academic purposes, with particular focus on Chinese background students studying at the University of Tasmania

1. I have read and understood the 'Information Sheet' for this study.
2. The nature and possible effects of the study have been explained to me.
3. I understand that the study involves outlining the procedures, their likely duration and general subject focus
4. I understand that participation involves the risk(s) that outlining the risks where relevant and, if relevant, how these risks may be mitigated
5. I understand that all research data will be securely stored on the University of Tasmania premises for five years [or at least five years], and will then be destroyed [or will be destroyed when no longer required].
6. Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.
7. I agree that research data gathered from me for the study may be published provided that I cannot be identified as a participant.
8. I understand that the researchers will maintain my identity confidential and that any information I supply to the researcher(s) will be used only for the purposes of the research.
9. I agree to participate in this investigation and understand that I may withdraw at any time without any effect, and if I wish, may request that any data I have supplied to date be withdrawn from the research.

**Name of Participant:**

**Signature:**

**Date:**

**Statement by Investigator**

☐ I have explained the project & the implications of participation in it to this volunteer and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation

If the Investigator has not had an opportunity to talk to participants prior to them participating, the following must be ticked.

☐ The participant has received the Information Sheet where my details have been provided so participants have the opportunity to contact me prior to consenting to participate in this project.

**Name of Investigator**
Name of investigators: Dr. Margaret Baguley (Supervisor) and Ruiting Wu (Student)

__________________________________________

Signature of investigators: __________________ Date ____________
Appendix E: Information sheet for questionnaire

Locked Bag 1307 Launceston
Tasmania 7250 Australia
Telephone: (03) 63243263
Facsimile (03) 63243048
Margaret.Baguley@utas.edu.au

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

January Date, 2007

Information Sheet for Questionnaire

Request to participate in a study of Non-English-speaking international (NESI) students’ tertiary learning strategies.

Dear Participant,

We would like to invite you to participate in the following research study entitled, ‘Non-English-speaking international (NESI) students’ tertiary learning strategies in relation to English for academic purposes, with particular focus on Chinese background students studying at the University of Tasmania’. This research is being conducted by Ruiting Wu for her Honours dissertation in the Bachelor of Teaching course in the Faculty of Education at the University of Tasmania. Dr. Margaret Baguley and Dr. Thao Le are the supervisors for this project.

This study will examine the significance of learning strategy awareness in a tertiary education context. You are invited to participate in this research by completing a questionnaire. If you agree to participate in the study, you will be requested to spend approximately 10-15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Please note that the
questionnaire does not contain any identifying questions and all information will be unidentifiable and individual identity will be anonymous. An addressed envelope will be provided for return of the questionnaire. In addition, a box will be placed in the office of the Faculty of Education for those who prefer this method to return the questionnaire.

The completed questionnaires will be kept locked in Dr. Margaret Baguley’s office and will be shredded after five years. As with all involvement in research studies, your participation in the study is voluntary. You can decide to participate and subsequently withdraw without any penalty or prejudice. The Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network has given ethical approval for this project (Reference number: H9931). If you have any concerns or complaints about any aspect of the study, you may contact the Executive Officer, Ms Nadia Mahjouri (Tel.03 6226 7479).

Thank you for your participation in the study.

Yours sincerely,

Ruiting Wu (Ting) – Ph: 0432 021 209 - Email: rwu@utas.edu.au
Dr. Margaret Baguley – Ph: 6324 3263 - Email: Margaret.Baguley@utas.edu.au
Dr. Thao Le – Ph: 6324 3696 - Email: T.Le@utas.edu.au
Information Sheet for Interview

Request to participate in a study of Non-English-speaking international (NESI) students’ tertiary learning strategies.

Dear Participant,

We would like to invite you to participate in the following research study entitled, ‘Non-English-speaking international (NESI) students’ tertiary learning strategies in relation to English for academic purposes, with particular focus on Chinese background students studying at the University of Tasmania’. This research is being conducted by Ruiting Wu for her Honours dissertation in the Bachelor of Teaching course in the Faculty of Education at the University of Tasmania. Dr. Margaret Baguley and Dr. Thao Le are the supervisors for this project.

This study will examine the significance of learning strategy awareness in a tertiary education context. You are invited to participate in this research by participating in an interview. If you agree to be involved in the study, you will be requested to spend approximately 30 minutes in an individual interview with Ruiting Wu (Ting). The interview will be audio-recorded to aid the researcher’s accuracy in transcribing the
information for data analysis. Copies of the audio and/or transcription of the
interview may be supplied to you upon request, and you may, if you wish, edit or
modify what you contributed. You will be provided with a guide to the types of
questions you will be asked prior to the interview.

Although the researcher will know your identity, you will not be identifiable in any
research output. Once the study is completed, the audio-tape data will be transcribed
and analysed. The audiotapes and transcripts will be stored in a secure locked cabinet
at the university and will be destroyed after five years.

As with all involvement in research studies, your participation in the study is
voluntary. You can decide to participate and subsequently withdraw without any
penalty or prejudice. The Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network
has given ethical approval for this project (Reference number: H9931). If you have
any concerns or complaints about any aspect of the study, you may contact the
Executive Officer, Ms Nadia Mahjouri (Tel.03 6226 7479).

Thank you for your participation in the study.

Yours sincerely,

Ruiting Wu (Ting) – Ph: 0432 021 209 - Email: rwu@utas.edu.au

Dr. Margaret Baguley – Ph: 6324 3263 - Email: Margaret.Baguley@utas.edu.au

Dr. Thao Le – Ph: 6324 3696 - Email: T.Le@utas.edu.au