
***Costs and Benefits: English for Academic Purposes Instruction
in Canadian Universities¹***

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Background

With the increase in the number of English second language (L2) international or new immigrant students at universities across English-speaking countries, research has increasingly begun to focus on these students' academic acculturation to their new learning environments. Indeed, identifying the factors most closely related to academic success and the impact of English for academic purposes (EAP) programs, has significance for the international education community as a whole, for individual institutions of higher learning and, of course, for the students themselves.

In general, the purpose of EAP programs at the university level has been to offer academic and linguistic support to help L2 students who come from a variety different backgrounds adjust to the expectations and academic demands of English-speaking universities. Much of the research in EAP has attempted to discover the strategies and skills these students need to learn in order to participate successfully in their academic classes. Studies have been

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conducted exploring the academic success of L2 students in association with language proficiency, learning strategies, study strategies, demographics and a variety of personal characteristics. One of the on-going problems in this research, however, has been the definition of what we mean by L2 students -- ESL students, non-native English speaking students, new immigrants, refugees, generation 1.5, foreign, or overseas students, as they are referred to in Australia and Britain. Thus, the term *L2 student* can evoke a false image of homogeneity when in actual fact these students are more likely to represent a heterogeneous collection of people from many different countries and cultures – all characterized by unique life histories, goals and interests. In fact, individual variables such as the educational level of a student's family, familiarity with the host country before arrival, type and length of courses studied, reasons for studying, and type of financing may be as important as academic background in these students' success. In Australia, much of the research related to L2 students has focused on what has been generally referred to in that context as the "Asian population", which in itself is comprised of individuals speaking different languages and practicing different customs. Some research has involved only international students; while other studies have concentrated on both international and new immigrant students of various nationalities and age groups.

In addition to recognizing the diversity in the population under study, Matsuda and Jablonski (1998) make the point that students who come from the same ethnic, class and linguistic backgrounds as their professors are actually in a privileged position with regard to their potential for academic success. This advantage may be due to their ability to figure out the teachers' tacit expectations – a skill made much more difficult for those individuals who share neither ethnicity nor class. Thus, the heterogeneity and 'positioning' of the population under investigation must be kept in mind when making generalizations and predictions regarding academic performance, student needs, and recommendations for language support programs. In the current study, the L2 students who are the focus of this research include both international students and immigrants. This research identifies differences in background as a key factor in the analyses of the data reported here.

Predicting Academic Performance

Most efforts to predict academic performance have focused on the relationship between English language proficiency and students' academic achievement as indicated by grade point averages (GPA), faculty opinions, and student perceptions. Research suggests, however, that GPAs vary by academic major (Duran & Weffer, 1992; Johnson, 1988; Light, Xu, & Mossop, 1987), which can

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affect the results of these correlation investigations. Some researchers raise the point that the use of GPA as the sole measure of academic success is misleading, especially for those L2 students whose level of language proficiency is below the minimum entry requirements. The GPA does not take into account course load or the time it takes for L2 students to acquire language skills for academic study. Christopher (1993) believes that GPAs may actually be measuring a student's rate of language acquisition rather than the degree to which course content is being learned. She suggests using a combination of GPA in conjunction with the average accumulated credit per semester. In some studies, credits completed seems to be a stronger predictor of academic achievement, particularly for L2 students (Fox, 2005; Johnson, 1988; Light, Xu and Mossop, 1987). Bers and Smith (1990) concluded that personal factors, such as the seriousness with which L2 students approached their studies, and the number of years studying in the native country were integral to academic performance.

To predict academic performance, researchers have used a number of English proficiency tests, including the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (MTELP), and the Canadian Academic English Language (CAEL) Assessment. Studies examining TOEFL's relationship with students' academic achievement have been problematic and inconclusive (Graham, 1987; May and Bartlett, 1995). James (1992) cites an early study by Heil and Aleamoni (1974) who argue that the TOEFL appears no better nor worse as a predictor of academic success among overseas students than regular admission tests used to predict success among native English speaking American students. Ayers and Quattlebaum (1992) conducted a study to see if TOEFL scores correlated with the academic performance of 67 Asian students enrolled in a masters program in engineering. In effect, it was determined that the TOEFL score was not an effective predictor of achievement as measured by the students' GPA. The only significant predictor was scores obtained on the GREQ – the quantitative section of the GRE that the students wrote prior to admission. Similarly, Light, Xu and Mossop (1987) found that the TOEFL score was not an effective predictor of academic success partly because a number of graduate students in their study were academically successful despite their lower than cut-off scores at admission. One of the research questions in Christopher's (1993) study of 55 L2 students at the University of British Columbia in Canada was to find out if writing test scores (Test of Written English) give a more precise indication of academic language proficiency than do indirect test results (TOEFL or MTELP) in predicting academic success. Her results indicated that the writing test was a better predictor of average accumulated credit per semester than the GPA.

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Language instructors and admissions personnel in Britain regard the IELTS as providing a more reliable measure of a student's proficiency in academic English than the TOEFL (Green, 1995; Macrae, 1997). A considerable amount of correlation research has also been conducted using the IELTS as a measure of language proficiency. For example, using questionnaires and interviews with L2 students, faculty and staff, Cotton and Conrow (1998) investigated the relationship between IELTS and academic outcomes, as well as the extent to which IELTS predicts the kinds of language difficulties international students experience while studying in Australia. Correlations were calculated between the IELTS scores and three measures of academic achievement: GPAs, academic staff ratings of student performance and students' self-ratings of performance. The results revealed no positive correlations overall. No positive correlations were also found between IELTS scores and language difficulties students reported with aspects of their coursework. In a similar study of 113 first-year L2 international students studying business in Australia, Kertsjens and Nery (2000) found a small to medium predictive effect of academic performance for the IELTS score.

In another recent study at an Australian university, Feast (2002) also focused on the impact of English language proficiency as measured by the IELTS, on L2 undergraduate and postgraduate students' GPAs. With a sample of 101 international students primarily of Asian origin, Feast (2002) used a multiple regression analysis with the mean GPA as the dependent variable and IELTS score, age, semester of entry, discipline area of study, home country, gender, and level of study as independent variables. Her results revealed a positive relationship between IELTS scores, level of study, students' country of origin, and major and mean GPA. She concludes that there is a significant and positive, but weak relationship between international students' English language proficiency, as measured by the IELTS, and their GPA, which was used to measure academic performance. In addition to investigating this correlation, Feast also wanted to see whether the current minimum entrance or cut-off score for IELTS (i.e., band 6.0) should be increased in order for international students to have a reasonable chance of success in their studies. It was felt that her recommendations of keeping an overall IELTS score at 6.0 with a Reading and Writing module score set at the minimum of 6.0 for undergraduates, and increasing the overall score to 6.5 with a minimum requirement of 6.0 in Reading and Writing for postgraduates, would not be worth the loss of a high number of international students, who would as a result be denied admission to university. Instead, Feast suggests providing better support systems with extra staffing to assist international students at risk to improve their English communication skills.

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In general, studies on the ability of English language proficiency as determined by the TOEFL or IELTS have had mixed results partly due to small samples sizes that limit generalizability, restrictions in the range of the scores in the samples, and the fact that standardized tests do not take into consideration other factors especially both social and affective learning strategies. Macrae (1997) points out that it is also important to consider test scores within the context of a variety of factors: age, motivation and educational, cultural and first language background and the academic and social environment in which students are entering.

Some researchers have explored whether learning strategies correlated with L2 students' academic performance. In a study of 77 freshman international students during their first six months at an American university, Stoyhoff (1997) wanted to find out if there was a correlation between language proficiency and L2 student learning strategies with academic performance. His research was designed to explore the relationship between the TOEFL and academic achievement, the LASSI (Learning and Study Strategies Inventory) and academic achievement, and any other important student characteristics or strategies not measured by the TOEFL or LASSI. Student academic performance was measured according to GPA, credits earned, and number of course withdrawals. In concordance with the earlier research by Johnson and Light, Xu and Mossop in the 1980s, it was found that although low in magnitude, TOEFL scores correlated significantly with GPA and credits earned. A modest relationship was revealed between motivation, study strategies, such as the ability to keep up with their assignments, test taking techniques and students' academic achievement. Although previous training in learning and studying strategies was not found to be related to academic performance, it was found that students who do receive training have lower anxiety, and are better at reading, listening to lectures, processing information, and taking tests. The determinant factors affecting academic achievement are complex, yet according to Stoyhoff, learning strategies do contribute to international students' academic performance. However, they are not the only factors; there is also the role of social support systems, such as study groups, tutors, friends and mentors, and these all require further investigation.

The relationship between EAP courses and English support in predicting ultimate academic success has also been explored. An early study in a community college setting by Rosberg (1983) sought to determine if ESL classes assist L2 students and increase their likelihood of academic achievement as indicated by their GPA. In his sample of 263 foreign students, over 56% were enrolled in liberal arts courses and the majority were academically successful. His results indicated the higher the TOEFL or Michigan English Proficiency

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Exam (MEPE), the higher the GPA attained. This implies that the level of English language proficiency has an affect on academic progress. No clear patterns emerged concerning the effect of ESL classes upon student academic performance; however, the high attrition rate of 63.6% was of some concern.

Person's more recent study in 2002 of 126 L2 graduate students (the majority from China) enrolled in career and technical education courses as well as other selected programs at Marshall University produced similar results. Using a descriptive/correlational research design, she explored the relationships between quantifiable variables such as GPA (first and last), TOEFL or ESL scores at admission, completion of major, gender and country of origin. With regard to academic performance, career and technology students attained the highest overall GPAs in comparison with other majors, such as journalism and communications. The researcher attributed this finding to the fact that these students were comparably older and may have had previous work experience in the field. Although both the TOEFL-admitted and ESL-admitted students were considered academically prepared for their studies, students who completed ESL classes prior to admission showed low association in the first GPA and negligible association in the last GPA. In fact, the GPA of the TOEFL students began decreasing throughout their studies, which she speculates could have been due to the fact that their coursework became more difficult as time went on. In addition, attrition rates were about the same for both groups of students, with reasons for incompleteness possibly due to visa expirations, financing, family needs and other personal factors. The researcher also felt that culture might have an important role in university-level success, given that the majority of TOEFL students were from China and Japan. She recommended that EAP programs implement classes on American culture and focus more on oral communication.

In addition to the research on L2 international students, there have been several studies focusing on other factors that might contribute to the academic success of L2 refugee and immigrant students in higher education. For example, in their study of 57 students enrolled in an academic "bridge" program for refugee/immigrant students at the open admissions college of the University of Minnesota, Boshier and Rowenkamp (1992, 1998) investigated the educational factors contributing to their success or failure in university courses. More specifically, they wanted to see the relationship between English language proficiency as measured by the Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB), educational background in L1 and L2, length of residency in the United States, and academic success as measured by second-year GPA. Results show that the most important predictor of academic success was number of years of schooling in the students' native country and the objective test score on

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the MELAB. The authors concluded that students who have experienced interruption in their education and completed high school in the United States are at a disadvantage, at least at the beginning of their studies. They risk having limited academic language proficiency and content knowledge acquisition. Indeed, it is commonly felt that well-developed academic skills in a student's native language are essential to the development of academic skills in the L2 (Cummins, 1996). Although Boshier and Rowenkamp found a positive relationship between student grades and scores on the MELAB, Patkowski (1991) found only weak correlations between L2 immigrant college students' ultimate academic success and English proficiency tests.

Subsequent research in which Patkowski and colleagues (1997) compared selected course marks (e.g. accounting, business) of L2 students and native English speaking students at 10 City University of New York (CUNY) campuses found very few major differences. Crisostomo & Dee's (2001) sample of 1,854 L2 immigrant students concurred with the Boshier and Rowenkamp research in that they found that students who had lived in the United States for ten years or longer tended to have lower GPAs than students with foreign high school credentials. This result suggests that interrupting students' native language acquisition may in turn inhibit English language acquisition and consequently constrain academic achievement. However, it is unclear whether the lower GPAs are the results of the home environment, lack of native language instruction, lack of expectation on the part of teachers, or special education needs confused with lack of communicative English abilities. Their study also showed that academic major was an indicator of academic success for these students. For instance, students who were undecided on a major had significantly lower first semester GPAs. There was also a positive correlation with end of second year GPAs for students enrolled in non-math programs. In terms of placement test prediction, the researchers concluded that measuring academic English proficiency through the university system's standardized entrance exams contributes very little to predicting academic success for L2 immigrant students.

Taken together the research above has indicated that a combination of language acquisition variables, such as length of time in the United States and high school type, and college experience variables provides a more accurate prediction of L2 academic performance than socio-demographic data (i.e., gender, ethnicity, parental education) and standardized language test scores. Although some research suggests that the TOEFL and IELTS may correlate modestly with academic credits earned (Johnson, 1988; Light, Xu, & Mossop, 1987) and subsequent success, there are too many socio-cultural and psychological factors, such as the amount of extra English language tuition,

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motivation and maturity, cultural adjustment, educational background, field of study, family pressures, and so on affecting academic outcomes that the validity of these studies comes under question (Alderson, Clapham & Wall, 1995; Cotton & Conrow, 1998; Boyer & Sedlacek, 1988; Graham, 1987; Johnson, 1988; Kerstjens & Nery, 2000; Solaiman, 1995). As a result, there has been a renewed call for more longitudinal research, which takes into account the complex interaction of such factors over time.

Two examples of such longitudinal studies are provided by Fox (2004; 2005). In her 2004 study, Fox examined the relationship between language proficiency scores on the CAEL Assessment, performance in EAP courses, and performance in university courses over time. In this study she analysed CAEL test scores in relation to the academic success of three groups of students, 1) identified by EAP teachers as misplaced (n=29); 2) drawn from the CAEL database to match key variables in the EAP teachers' sample (n=27) but not identified as misplaced; and, 3) a random sample of test-takers drawn from a single administration of the test (n=81). Fox tracked these groups of students over two years of university study and found that listening comprehension had been undervalued in both the test and the classroom/curriculum. She highlights the role teachers can play in identifying students at risk early in a course and argues on the basis of her findings for early intervention at the beginning of an EAP course to support teacher-identified students at risk. In her 2005 study of L2 learners who were admitted to university on the basis of time spent in English-medium secondary schools (i.e., "language residency requirements"), Fox argued again for timely intervention tied to on-going assessment and targeted language support for students at risk. At present, *timely intervention* or targeted and strategic support for individual students on a case by case basis is not a model of language support that is typically provided to L2 students. There is some evidence in the literature, however, that this may be a most efficient and effective approach to academic language development.

An overview of research relating to EAP instruction is provided in the section below. These instructional approaches draw on curricular models that are typical of present EAP practice.

EAP Instruction: Preparing Students for the Academy

Generally speaking, the primary goal of EAP instruction is to help L2 students fulfill the requirements of their academic studies so that they can succeed in both university and professional settings (Hyon, 1996). According to Flowerdew and Peacock (2001), "The teaching and learning of EAP presents its own unique challenges, problems, opportunities, failings and successes..." (p. 177).

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Traditionally, EAP course and curriculum designers have documented the needs of L2 students in academia for the purpose of understanding and describing the particular requirements of academic work. EAP instruction has focused on increasing the capabilities of L2 students to more effectively manage that work by focusing on the development of academic skills and strategies, highlighted by teachers during the learning process. In general, this emphasis on academic skills and strategies has separated EAP teaching from general-purpose ESL instruction.

EAP courses have taken a number of forms. For example, *stand alone* EAP courses build academic and linguistic competence for L2 students who are deemed not yet ready for university programs. These courses are often thematic and draw L2 students from varied linguistic and academic backgrounds. The themes are chosen for general appeal across a wide range of academic interests (e.g., biology, sociology, ecology, psychology, etc.) and focus on the development of generic academic skills and strategies such as effective note taking, scanning or skimming, writing summaries, etc. In some instances, students with higher levels of academic language proficiency have been allowed to register in one or more courses within their specific discipline or program, while simultaneously studying within the general-focused EAP course. Such programs may describe a process of *conditional* or *gradual admission* and require students to successfully complete their EAP courses (or successfully pass a proficiency test) in order to gain full admission to their academic programs.

Adjunct, linked or bridging courses are offered to students, all of whom are enrolled within the same discipline. The students are simultaneously enrolled in one or more university courses within their discipline and EAP. The EAP component is usually directly related to the students' academic needs in the discipline-specific course and supports the acquisition of specific academic subject matter. Typically, language instruction within an adjunct, linked or bridging course is matched to the assignments, activities and discourse of the content courses. Thus, the EAP program maintains a close, collaborative relationship with various academic departments (see Blakely, 1997; Cadman, 2000; Cargill, 1996; Kinnell, 1990; Haas, Smoke & Hernandez, 1991 for research on linked courses) In recent years, a number of researchers have applied both quantitative and qualitative methodologies in order to better understand the academic language needs of L2 students, the challenges that they face in their courses, and the impact of institutional responses (Bool & Luford, 1999; Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001; Jordan, 1997). Some of this research is summarized below.

Historical Trends and Needs Analysis

Benesch (2001) examines the growth and development of EAP programs in relation to the political, economic and ideological motives behind course initiatives and pedagogy. She takes us back to the years when EAP focused mainly on teaching lexical items and grammar, which involved describing the features of technical and scientific language and the types of texts students might encounter in their courses of study. Analysis of register progressed to rhetorical and discourse analysis, in which the focus turned to paragraphs and their rhetorical functions. Beginning in the 1980s and continuing to the present time, more attention has been given to study skills and strategies and finding out what specific communication skills students need to develop in order to become more successful in their courses. With this knowledge, curriculum developers could focus on syllabus design and materials development in accordance with student needs and perceptions of difficulties. By recognizing the specific communicative and academic language difficulties faced by L2 students in their respective programs of study, EAP curriculum could be adapted to specifically address those needs (Benesch, 1996; Johns & Price-Machado, 2001). Instructional approaches such as content-based instruction (CBI) and language for specific purposes (LSP) assume that meeting student needs is both motivating and attainable (Valentine & Repath-Martos, 1997). Research has been primarily conducted according to what Benesch (2001) refers to as *target situation analyses*. These analyses involve broad surveys assessing both academic and non-academic needs (Blue, 1990; Burke & Wyatt-Smith, 1996; Deressa & Beavers, 1988; Sun, 1987), analyses of writing assignments, exam questions, and course requirements (Bridgeman & Carlson, 1983; Horowitz, 1986) and the language and behavioral demands of learning situations, such as the questioning process during lectures (McKenna, 1987). What follows is a sample of various research studies that have taken place in the North American, Australian and British university context. Some of these studies distinguish between international students and immigrants, while others do not. Several studies have focused on faculty and student perceptions of academic language difficulties, factors that contribute most to student learning in EAP programs and recommendations for curriculum reform. Despite this extensive research, questions regarding what the content of EAP courses should be: language, genre, subject matter content, ideological and political issues, critical thinking tasks, or some combination of these, is still under question (Casanave, 2002).

Faculty Perceptions

Faculty beliefs, attitudes and practices present valuable information on L2 student behavior in their discipline-specific courses, which in turn, can influence the direction and content of EAP courses (Braine, 1995; Bridgeman & Carlson, 1983; Casanave & Hubbard, 1992; Ferris & Tagg, 1996; Johns, 1981; Trice, 2001; Zamel, 1998). For example, based on the results of a faculty survey and analysis of writing assignments and tests at one university, Horowitz (1986) proposed that EAP exercises should simulate university writing tasks in a practical way. He suggested EAP courses include summary writing and reactions to readings, annotated bibliographies and research projects. Johns (1981) also recommended that EAP courses teach more of the skills that L2 students will actually need in their courses. In her study, faculty ranked reading and listening skills highest in importance and therefore she recommended EAP classes emphasize listening and note-taking in the curriculum. Montgomery and Pearsall (1999) in the UK concur that it would be useful to build up a bank of responses from professors in different departments outlining what they consider to be important in written assignments. Ideally comments would be divided into undergraduate and graduate student expectations. With this knowledge EAP instructors could plan curriculum designed to encourage students to analyze the culture and discourse community of their respective fields. The intention is to increase students' awareness of the writing conventions, topic choices and types of descriptions and analyses they are going to have to produce in their mainstream courses.

In their analysis of questionnaire data from faculty at six engineering schools, Jenkins, Jordan and Weiland (1993) sought to determine the kinds of writing experiences and skills graduate students had acquired at the end of their studies. The data revealed that with the exception of thesis-related work, graduate students did not do a great deal of writing in their engineering programs, suggesting that there is a wide gap between writing demands during their studies and what may be required of them in the workplace. With regard to L2 students, the data showed that 21 % of the faculty expected less in terms of overall writing capability from L2 students. This belief may be driven by the fact that faculty assume (and most often falsely so) L2 students will return home after graduation and have no need for English writing skills. Jenkins et. al. also point out that the L2 students who benefited most from the writing courses were those who communicated the most with native English speakers. The researchers state that a frequent complaint from engineering faculty is that marks in the EAP writing courses do not reflect the student's ability to write competent technical English. Similar findings from Snow and Brinton (1988) prompt them

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to recommend that discipline-specific writing be emphasized for students engaged in technical fields of study.

Trice (2001) recognizes the limitations of questionnaire responses and chose instead to conduct her faculty survey using case study/interview data. She involved four departments (i.e., public health, architecture, mechanical engineering and materials science) in her research in order to investigate faculty members' attitudes toward L2 international graduate students. She found that most professors indicated an awareness of academic and/or personal issues that international students face. English language difficulties, especially in writing, were mentioned more often than any other problem. Language difficulties were cited as the primary reason for the lack of interaction between local and international students in their respective programs. It was also noted that language skills actually deteriorate once L2 students begin their studies because they associate almost exclusively with their own ethnic and linguistic group outside of class. Comments were also made with regard to difficulties international students have adjusting to American culture, and dealing with finances, family and so forth. Despite the benefits that the students bring to their departments in terms of their international perspectives and intellect, the challenges to discipline specific faculty included the following: spending extra time with students; finding a better language proficiency measure than the TOEFL score upon admission; and dealing with the ineffectiveness of research groups due to segregation of L2 students and their lack of communication with local students, especially in labs. Divergent views across departments were sometimes presented because of disciplinary differences. For example, in the technical areas, classes did not include a cultural component and there were very few class discussions and group activities. On the other hand, in other departments international students had more opportunity to contribute to discussions and offer different perspectives. Based on these findings, it was suggested that faculty draw on campus resources to support their teaching of international students, and become more aware of the services (e.g. EAP language support) provided for students on campus. (See Snow's, 1997, discussion of Project LEAP at California State University – a faculty development project designed to assist professors in integrating language and content instruction for L2 students within their mainstream academic courses). They advised faculty to:

- include more group work in their classes and to arrange students in a way that encourages more cultural mixing and less segregation;
- include more opportunities for presentations;

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- assign office space in a way that encourages relationship building; and
- provide more informal small group social activities.

Interestingly enough, Al-Sharideh and Goe's (1998) study on the personal adjustment of international students suggests that programs should be designed to establish strong ties among small groups of students consisting of a combination of both international students from a similar cultural backgrounds and (in the case of this study) local American students. According to their telephone survey of 226 international students representing 67 countries, they claim that in order to facilitate the adjustment process and promote self-esteem, students need to balance their co-cultural friendships with those with local students.

In response to much of the research based primarily on the perceived problems and "deficiencies" of Asian students, Chalmers and Volet (1997) present a critique of the research outlining common misconceptions held by university staff about these students. They conducted a series of interviews with international students during their first semester of study, which afforded these learners the opportunity to elaborate on their difficulties and approaches to learning. What they heard or discovered challenged many of the accepted views of student behaviors. For one thing, many of the students reported that they really wanted to learn and become more educated; they did not want to be stereotyped as students who just want to rote learn and get a degree. Studies have shown that rote learning and memorization can be an effective strategy because it reduces the memory load, especially for students studying in a second or third language. In this way, they can pay more attention to content and ideas than to decoding the language (Kember & Gow, 1990). Chalmers and Volet argue that the use of memorization strategies should not be seen as a deficiency in learning; it would be more productive to explore the relationship between memorization and understanding. Rote learning is not just a matter of mindlessly reproducing information and surface learning; it is also a means of achieving deep understanding (see also, Biggs, 1996). The researchers also challenged the view that some students are passive learners who do not contribute to class discussions. The fact that students are quiet in tutorials does not mean that they are mentally passive. Chalmers and Volet (1997) argue that it is important to take the following into account when working with international students:

- L2 students' beliefs of what is culturally appropriate when communicating with people of different status and other students;
- the time it takes for L2 students to adjust to different accents, and style of speech used in academic and social settings; and

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- the L2 students' feelings of being ignored and intimidated by native English speaking students.

Although all the students interviewed had formed informal study groups and networks with other students of their own nationality, they also expressed interest in meeting Australian students and developing friendships. From their perspective, this was hard to do because of their living arrangements with other international students and the limited number of scheduled tutorials. And finally, the results showed that all students were aware of the fact that they would be expected to develop study and learning strategies, such as note-taking, writing essays, identifying the main idea and use the library effectively. Research has shown that many students have the ability to identify and strategically adjust to the conditions in which they study in order to achieve their learning goals (Chalmers, 1994; Volet & Renshaw, 1995).

Being aware of these required adjustments does not always translate into the actions they have to take, however. In fact, L2 students often do not take advantage of the learning skills and language courses that are available due to time management issues and sometimes, financial constraints. According to Chalmers and Volet (1997), they are no different from local students in this respect. The results of another comparative study at a university in New South Wales, Australia comparing the learning styles of Asian international and Australian students suggests that, these groups do not differ in their overall approaches to learning (Ramburuth & McCormick, 2001). Morita (2000) concurs, suggesting that there is a need to re-examine the way researchers take for granted the dichotomy between L2 and native English speaking students. Both face challenges, albeit somewhat different challenges, in acquiring academic discourse, developing effective time management behavior and study skills.

Student Perceptions

Surveys have involved perceptions of students as they rank-order the importance of language, academic and social skills (Philips, 1990; Xu, 1991). In research undertaken at a Canadian university, Sun (1987) found that all academic skills, especially writing and oral communication were important to both Chinese graduate students and visiting scholars. The need for language skills that support social interaction and communication was emphasized as well. In a more recent Canadian survey, Berman and Cheng (2001) administered a needs assessment questionnaire to L2 undergraduate and graduate students as well as native English speaking students for comparison purposes. They analysed data provided by 53 L2 undergraduates, and 60 L2 graduate students. The

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questionnaire was designed to explore students' perceptions of the use of English in their academic studies, in addition to the impact of their own language difficulties (if any) on their GPA. Results indicated that the most difficult language skills for L2 students as a whole were academic oral communication (e.g., giving presentations, participating in class discussions) and writing (e.g., examinations, essays, reports). In a subsequent study involving the rating of language skills, L2 graduate students also reported more difficulties with writing and speaking than any of the other skills (Cheng, Myles & Curtis, 2004). The relationship between GPA and language proficiency, as defined by a TOEFL score, was not significant among L2 undergraduates; however, language proficiency did appear important in determining the relative academic success of L2 graduate students (as discussed above, see the section *Predicting Academic Performance*). Their GPAs were also significantly lower than those of native English speaking graduate students. It was recommended that L2 graduate students receive EAP instruction, particularly in speaking and writing, after admission into their program.

In addition to survey data, more comprehensive needs assessments have surfaced at various tertiary institutions in order to present a fuller picture of the challenges L2 students have been facing in their studies. There are several studies of overseas L2 students at Australian universities that recognize the need to consider both the academic and non-academic or cultural demands faced by L2 students and the very real interplay between these demands (Ballard, 1987, 1989; Ballard & Clanchy, 1984, 1997; Burns, 1991; Samuelowicz, 1987). Some of these studies have been replicated in Britain with similar results (Blue, 1990; McNamara & Harris, 1997). Such research takes a holistic approach that has the potential to provide richer profiles and a greater understanding of the needs and experiences of these students. Indeed, studies of social rules having to do with, for example, respect for authority, and individual differences related to the individualism-collectivism dimension (see Triandis, 1994, for a discussion of *idiocentric* and *allocentric* people and *in-group* norms) suggest that difficulties faced by L2 students may be due more to their misunderstanding of rules that apply in specific social or academic situations and less to language proficiency per se (Ballard, 1996; Barker, et al., 1991).

ESL teachers Bradley and Bradley (1984), conducted an extensive study of 50 Asian students (i.e., Thai, Indonesian and Malaysian students) at an Australian university analyzing the students' spoken English, educational difficulties and cultural problems using questionnaires, interviews (recorded, transcribed and analyzed for syntactic problems, aspects of English morphology, coherence, cohesion and other linguistic variables), and classroom observations. A teacher, tutor or lecturer nominated by each student was interviewed as well.

The researchers also used a control group of native English speaking Australian students, who responded to the questionnaires, in order to ascertain cultural and educational differences between the two groups of students. According to the researchers, the findings indicate that many of the difficulties Asian students have are not due to language problems, nor to general differences in cultural background. They are the result of their educational background, which in turn affects the following: their relationship to teachers, their attitude to the course material (which is learned through memorization of texts and lecture notes), their participation in group discussions (fear of being wrong and losing face), their writing (inexperience with essay writing and critique), and so forth. Based on the outcomes of this study, it was recommended that EAP programs focus on both language and study skills. In terms of language, Bradley and Bradley argue that more attention should be paid to all levels of English structure – not learning rules per se, but learning how to specifically use all forms of language to communicate in the Australian educational context. In addition, graded self-instructional material for specific types of problems should be made available to students for use in their own time. As in an ESP course, they suggest that resources should be oriented towards discipline-specific subject areas so that students can build vocabulary and skills required for their specific interests. With regard to study skills, the researchers suggest an official handbook be made available outlining administrative procedures and cultural differences students may encounter, making skill expectations explicit, what Giltrow (2002) might refer to as *meta-genre*: “the most conspicuous candidates for *meta-genre* are guidelines: a kind of pre-emptive feedback, guidelines are written regulations for the production of a genre, ruling out some kinds of expression, endorsing others” (p. 190). Bradley and Bradley also recommend that a study skills orientation should be included in all EAP courses.

Many of the findings of the Bradley and Bradley (1984) study have been corroborated by the results of several subsequent investigations into language and acculturation difficulties of L2 students in Western universities. As a follow-up to their research in Australia, Samuelowicz (1987) conducted a much-cited Australian study in which she administered a questionnaire to faculty and L2 students in order to compare respective perceptions of learning problems. She received responses from 145 academic staff representing 50 departments, the majority from the Faculty of Science and the Faculty of Arts, and 136 overseas students. The results indicated that for both faculty and L2 students, ‘English language difficulties’ were ranked as ‘very important’ or ‘important.’ Other problems mentioned were approaches to learning, specifically those related to excessive memorization strategies, and the lack of problem solving and analytical skill development. For graduate students, there was

concern about their need for more supervision and direction in comparison with Australian students, and lack of adequate background in their fields of study. For those students in professional courses, such as occupational therapy, there was mention of difficulties communicating with clients due to different cultural values and norms of behavior. In short, L2 students were characterized as learners who: favour rote learning, lack critical thinking and analytical skills, and do not adapt well to the new learning context. Similar findings were reported by Makepeace (1989) and Cammish (1997) in the UK, who listed the following as problems requiring attention: English language proficiency, inability to effectively use facilities such as the library and computers, lack of participation in seminars, lack of academic self-discipline, under-developed coping strategies (particularly in regard to managing work load), ineffective lecture comprehension, misunderstanding of exam expectations and inappropriate test-taking strategies and techniques. It was recommended that L2 students have academic orientation during their first university semester, and the opportunity to have daily contact with native English speakers in order to acquire conversational English, including common colloquialisms and slang.

Some studies focused on the academic and social problems of both local English-speaking students and international students in order to compare how these groups acculturate to the university setting (Barker, Child, Gallois, Jones & Callan, 1991; Burns, 1991; Ramsey, Barker & Jones, 1999). In order to compare Australian and Asian students, Barker and colleagues at the University of Queensland (1991) conducted two studies focusing on student perceptions of a range of social and academic situations, coping strategies and behaviors. In the first study, two groups of Australian students participated – one group from an urban setting (N=105) and the other from a rural setting (N=112). It was anticipated that like Asian students (N=105), the students from the rural areas would be less familiar with the urban university environment. The students completed two questionnaires – the *Social Situations Questionnaire*, in which they indicated the degree of difficulty they experienced in 40 different social situations, and the *Coping Response Index*, in which they rated their coping strategies across 32 different situations. The second study focused on academic situations and how students would behave in different situations, such as what they would do if they did not understand a lecture or were unhappy with a grade. Results showed that Australians who were new to the urban environment shared many of the same social difficulties experienced by the Asian students, such as making new friends. The researchers classified problems of adjustment into two categories – cultural influences or sojourner problems. Different views of social situations between Asian and Australian students were primarily due to cultural differences (e.g. taking the initiative in conversations, dealing with angry

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people); while both Asian and rural Australian students point to sojourner effects as the reasons for their problems, which were greater than those of urban Australians (e.g. shopping, using public transport). In academic situations, participation in tutorial discussions emerged as the most difficult adjustment for Asian students, and the sole situation in which they differed significantly from Australians (both rural and urban). Although they were aware of expected behavior in tutorials and other academic situations, they cited inadequate English as the primary factor affecting their full participation in academic life, which is consistent with the Bradley and Bradley (1984) and Samuelowicz (1987) studies. Over half of the 133 L2 students in Burns' (1991) study of the psychosocial problems of undergraduate students in Australia rated themselves as being less than competent in using English effectively. In fact, compared to local students, the L2 students rated themselves significantly less competent in almost all academic skills, such as the ability to express ideas clearly. In order to improve their performance, L2 students invested an enormous amount of time in their academic work applying strategies, for example, to improve their comprehension of a lecture, namely, by: reading the textbook beforehand; following up on lecture notes in the library; tape recording the lecture and repeatedly listening to it; asking for help from the lecturer and other international students, etc. (Ramsey et. al., 1999).

With a focus on language and cultural adaptation, Blue (1990) conducted research at a British university in order to explore L2 students' attitudes towards continued language learning and the value of pre-sessional and in-sessional EAP courses. A questionnaire was administered to a variety of undergraduate, graduate and summer students from different countries. Responses indicated that the most effective language support was provided by the pre-sessional course, which helped first and foremost to improve their everyday listening comprehension, followed by improved writing, speaking, listening for academic purposes and study skills. James (1992) also found that a pre-sessional English language course helped with socialization in a U.S. university, but had little effect on emotional adjustment in the cross-cultural classroom. James reported that the in-sessional course was not as helpful, partly because students had so many other demands placed on their time that they could not give enough effort to the course during the academic year. It was also suggested that language classes were more useful for developing skills, while individual self-directed learning was suitable for improving reading strategies and learning languages through reading. When asked about their ability to cope with the language demands of various activities by the middle of the academic year, students expressed the most confidence in their ability to understand textbooks and journals, followed by lecture comprehension. They generally felt

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less confident about participating in seminars and writing academic texts. Again, this study supported the view that writing should be the major focus for in-session courses and individual support during the year.

Some researchers believe that the needs analysis literature ignores the cultural complexities of the academic and social environments of universities, and therefore makes the false assumption that needs of L2 students differ from those of local students. Todd (1997) asserts that there is likely a whole range of attitude-to-knowledge beliefs within the country, the institutions and between the institutions and disciplines. He argues that academic problems are often difficult to unravel. Students (whether native or non-native) are simultaneously required to make several complex transitions, from undergraduate student to graduate student, from one academic culture to another, and for many international and new immigrant students, from being a professional worker to becoming a student. This complexity is illustrated in much of the case study research, which is summarized in the section which follows below.

Case Studies

While surveys and questionnaires offer EAP important information about rating the importance of language skills and the generic difficulties faced by L2 students, they are limited in their ability to understand situated processes and resources students use to communicate and cope with the demands of their courses. According to Johns (1997) and Benesch (2001), it is difficult to generalize outcomes from target situation analyses because courses and professors have their own idiosyncrasies, which make it difficult to predict the demands students will face in academic courses. Another form of needs assessments called *present situation analysis*, has become more common as a compliment to large scale surveys. Through either a mix of qualitative and quantitative approaches or a solely qualitative or ethnographic approaches, applied over a period of time and incorporating observations, in depth interviews and the examination of written documents, this type of research takes into account situated and idiosyncratic learning *in situ* and the complexity and specificity of communication.

Broad research studies based on large-scale sampling techniques have drawn on cognitive and psycholinguistic paradigms of learning. The shift to the case study approach, on the other hand, places much more emphasis on doing research on situated literacy. Both mainstream and L2 studies have emphasized the development of situated literacy as a process of socialization into the ways of being, perceiving and acting which are particular to each academic discipline. Indeed, case studies of L2 new immigrant and/or international students have

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revealed useful information about how these students accomplish academic tasks in their content courses. Although these tasks consist of reading, note-taking, studying for tests, taking tests, writing papers, using reference tools and participating in class, most of the studies have focused on writing and how students use language for understanding and constructing knowledge.

Studies include short research projects focusing on particular classes and students (see Cargill, 1996; Hubbard, 1994 for math students) or longitudinal studies of one or more students enrolled in regular academic programs. Several case studies have taken place at universities in the United States and unlike the primarily Asian students in the Australian research, these cases have included a variety of college or university students from different countries, with both new immigrant and international student participants.

In their study of the oral communication needs of engineering graduate students at the University of Michigan, Imber and Parker (1999) wanted to gain a qualitative idea of L2 students' experiences in the program, their oral fluency needs, and what they perceived as the greatest gaps in their English. All the students felt there was,

a specific kind of fluency gap, namely, the need for a more comprehensive type of competence which can best be described as fluency in the socio-professional discourse register ... the blend of professional and social register elements such as the co-mingling of social and professional collocations and idioms used when "chit-chatting" within a professional setting, the kind of semi-formal shop-talk that goes on in study groups, informal committee meetings, or the interchange between a speaker and an audience member (p. 76).

Despite the fact that in reality, there is very little group work in their classes, and the students for the most part only communicate with individuals from their own linguistic and cultural backgrounds, respondents continually emphasized the need for ESL classes containing instructional materials and activities that would improve their ability in socio-professional discourse (see Boswood, 1993 for a critical view of culture and respect for cultural and personal identities in professional communication).

In a small-scale study involving observations of graduate seminars, Thornton (1999) looked at factors affecting the degree of participation in mixed-group seminar activities. She conducted interviews with both instructors and students and administered questionnaires to 47 students (21 native English speakers and 25 L2 speakers). She identified six significant factors that influenced L2 seminar participation in this context: age, gender, language level

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and/or *native speakerness*, group size, cultural considerations (i.e., of appropriate and inappropriate behavior) and communication apprehension. Interestingly, few references were made to the role of language proficiency played in determining the degree of participation. Native English-speaking males tended to dominate, especially as the size of the group increased. With regard to student perceptions of their own performance, 15 of the 21 native English speakers felt comfortable with their level of participation; while only 8 L2 males felt the same way. Thornton found that because of the pressure to speak, some L2 students were employing strategies, such as rehearsing contributions and “speaking to fill the silence.” A large number of students of all nationalities expressed degrees of shyness as the reason for not participating. However, L2 students reported experiencing significantly higher levels of anxiety for both pair and group discussions. Both groups of students were equally apprehensive and anxious about presenting papers.

With the aim of identifying holistic descriptors of how individual students approached their courses, Adamson (1993) documents an American study in which the researchers (graduate students in an applied linguistics course) acted as tutors for 34 L2 university students and 10 L2 college students. They observed these students in classes, interviewed teachers and made copies of student work. He describes the case of a Vietnamese graduate student who despite having several professional degrees from Vietnam, dropped out of a M.A. program in Linguistics due to his inability to change his basic values and consequently cope with the demands of the program. According to the researchers, his greatest problem stemmed from the mismatch between the American style and Vietnamese style of education. He was reluctant to speak in class, fearful of asking teachers questions, and hesitant to express his own opinions, even in writing. For the student in question, “learning new scripts for school was not just an intellectual exercise but a deeply personal matter that went to the heart of his cultural beliefs about how human beings ought to relate to one another” (p. 82). Again, we see the influence of cultural differences in educational practices having a major role in student academic behavior and performance.

In another case study, Adamson (1993) investigated a class of 18 college-level L2 students who joined 35 regular students in a pre-session course in descriptive linguistics, which focused on language acquisition. In addition to the course, the L2 students attended an EAP course that involved the teaching of academic skills (e.g., note-taking, test preparation, oral presentations, essay writing) using linguistic course content material. All written documents, including journals, were collected and analyzed. Evaluation of the EAP course was based on questionnaires, informal discussions and interviews with L2

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students and EAP instructors. Results revealed that L2 students achieved better grades on papers than on exams and in general the papers were just as well written as those of the regular students. (This phenomenon was most likely due to the fact that L2 students had had their papers corrected and commented on by EAP teachers before submission). With regard to the exams, L2 students required more time, were dependent on their notes and tended to copy misinformation from their notes onto the exam. It was found that the exams contained incorrect grammar and vocabulary usage that sometimes obscured the L2 students' ideas. Although they had the tendency to speculate or philosophize from personal experience in their essays, they often did better on the essay compared to multiple-choice exam questions, because during the latter, they could easily come across an unknown word and miss an entire question as a result. It was felt that the linguistics course was too demanding for the students. Despite the demands, however, L2 students were highly motivated and enthusiastic because they enjoyed being in a 'real' course with a linguistics professor and regular American students. Adamson concluded that for L2 students, attending a pre-sessional discipline-specific course is an effective way of learning academic strategies if the students concurrently have a linked EAP course. It is appropriate for students who are not able to pass a regular university course, even on an adjunct basis. The L2 students performed below the level of regular students, but they participated effectively in the course, writing acceptable research papers and contributing to class discussions. The most difficult task for them was the midterm exam.

The benefits of the adjunct or bridging model of EAP instruction for L2 students has been well documented. Students are more motivated to succeed in credit-bearing academic courses. As regular students, they are required to perform academically, yet they have the EAP course to enhance their ability to do so. They also have more opportunity to form relationships with English speaking peers and feel included in university life. With a closer connection to faculty and students in regular courses, EAP faculty can become more familiar with how students in regular courses are expected to perform. This knowledge can, in turn, affect EAP curriculum and course design. Similar to the Adamson (1993) research with his team of graduate students, Iancu (1997) conducted a 3-phase study of L2 students simultaneously enrolled in a US history course and EAP adjunct course. In phase one, 20 students of intermediate to advanced English proficiency attended a course in US history, with the L2 students comprising 1/3rd of the class. Their English skills were found to be too low for the reading and lecture material. In fact, there was a significant mismatch between the history course requirements, L2 students' language abilities and the time allotted for them to develop academic English skills. Due to the need for

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more language and content support, only 35% of the students passed the course. In Phase two, L2 students who were at a more advanced level of English proficiency attended an introductory sociology course in conjunction with EAP writing, reading and grammar courses integrating the regular course content. Although almost all of the L2 students were promoted, they were still highly dependent on EAP instruction for content and language support. The third phase of the research included 3 modifications: content and academic skills from the sociology and history courses were integrated more systematically into the writing and grammar courses; 3 different EAP instructors plus a tutor for content support participated in the program; and a speech course aimed at improving small group discussion capability was introduced. As a result of the increase in targeted EAP support, L2 student and faculty attitudes improved significantly and all the students passed the courses. Finally, phase four continued the process of integrating content from the regular courses into the EAP courses. More attention was placed on the speech course, with the intention of increasing the confidence and ability of the students to participate in small group discussions. The researchers found that participants were most satisfied when several different instructors taught the EAP courses and the students had access to content-based tutoring.

Valentine and Repath-Martos (1997) set out to examine the course relevance assumption, which assumes that by meeting student needs in an EAP course with content-based instruction, students will be more motivated and more successful academically. More specifically, attention to relevance assumes that L2 learners in a given academic setting will have similar academic and linguistic needs. This phenomenon implies that curriculum designers are able to identify those needs and develop appropriate lessons from content material to support them. It also assumes that meeting needs and goals of learners through subject matter instruction will motivate students to learn. Through observations, interviews and questionnaires, the research consisted of two studies of advanced L2 students concurrently enrolled in a degree program at UCLA. In Study One, the students were given three questionnaires at the beginning (N=88), middle (N=76) and end of their EAP course (N=65). During the first and second week of classes, they were asked to state and rate the importance of skill areas for academic success. The final questionnaire and focus-group interviews (N=36), required them to rate the emphasis given in instructional sequence to the same skill areas and the helpfulness of the instruction in meeting their academic language needs. Study Two involved an examination of midterm evaluations, journal entries, weekly observations and in-depth interviews (N=78) to ascertain student needs and reactions to the course in progress. Questionnaire and interview results indicated that the most frequently expressed need was for

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writing instruction and practice, followed by reading and listening comprehension. Speaking and listening were deemed more important to international than to immigrant students in this study. Participant observations and interviews revealed that students had a strong sense of group-orientation in that they enjoyed interacting with each other and being part of groups both in the EAP class and out. With regard to the relationship between relevance and motivation, students reported appreciation for the ability to put study skills, such as note-taking and outlining, to use in their regular courses. Paced and timed readings, in-class essays, paraphrasing, summarizing and other writing practice were also perceived to be motivating. Many students felt that grammar and vocabulary instruction were not given enough emphasis; however, according to the researchers, this “problem may stem from students’ confusion over the form, structure, and goals of a content-based approach to language teaching...for many students, it was difficult to get beyond expectations of a traditional language skills curriculum with an overt grammar component and weekly vocabulary lists” (p. 245). They recommend instructors explain and state the rationale for each classroom activity. It is also important for course topics in instructional activities to be interesting to students as a poor choice can greatly undermine student motivation. It is suggested that curriculum designers have knowledge of students’ general interests, backgrounds and educational goals in order to select material for readings and discussions that will capture student attention. The researchers concluded that content-based instruction that simulates a university course in addition to focusing on authentic academic writing, reading, and study skills can be relevant to student needs and consequently motivating and meaningful.

Longitudinal case studies reveal valuable information in that unlike a short, one-time investigation, they can track a student’s acculturation process over time and focus more attention on learning strategies and behaviors. These narratives are often concerned with the relationship between cultural diversity and the process of academic and professional socialization among individuals from different minority ethnic and linguistic backgrounds (Casanave, 1992, 2002; Johns, 1992; Leki, 1999; Riazi, 1997). In her book, *Writing Games* (2002), Casanave cites and analyzes her own and several other case studies of students from several cultural backgrounds learning the rules and “playing the game” in order to survive in the academic environment. She considers studies that have tried to figure out specifically which strategies and practices students need to learn in order to perform successfully in their academic classes. She points out that those studies that presume a relatively unified and static discourse community can be critiqued for not addressing the actual diversity and differing possibilities for agency in disciplinary discourse practice. She also discusses the

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'transfer' debate about the value of explicit instruction in grammar and writing in EAP classes and the L2 students' ability to transfer aspects of what they learn to discipline-specific content classes. Summarized below are a selection of case studies that explored student acculturation into higher education practices over time.

Benson (1989) conducted an early ethnographic study of a Saudi Arabian graduate student in public administration in order to see how the student managed listening and discussions in one 15-week course of his program. Analyses of research data revealed that the student took notes on what he viewed to be main ideas, but ignored other interactions and teacher anecdotes, which the professor felt offered equally important information. The graduate student also kept silent in class discussions. In light of the fact that listening is an interactive process, Benson recommends EAP courses provide activities that simulate real lectures where L2 students are expected to not only record facts, but also become more aware of the "attitudinal and affective factors that modify course content in various ways" (p. 441). He argues that L2 students have to adjust to the different cultural and intellectual challenges of each course, which may differ from their previous academic experiences. Schneider and Fujishima (1995) report on a Chinese graduate student in the United States who, despite high motivation and academic capability, failed to complete his program. The authors point to the lack of communication between the ESL instructors in the language support program and the faculty in the academic departments from which this particular student was taking courses for the student's ultimate failure.

At the City University of New York (CUNY), Sternglass (1997) spent six years tracking 9 undergraduate students labeled as basic writers. The students were primarily African and Latino, with one Asian and one Anglo. Using ethnographic methods such as observation, conversations with students and examination of written texts, Sternglass was able to see their progress over time in her detailed study. For example, a Latino student told Sternglass that despite the fact that he was becoming a more knowledgeable critic and better able to express himself clearly in writing, he was still frustrated with on-going sentence-level problems, such as the grammatical features of his texts and the correctness of form. On the other hand, a Korean student who was educated in Australia was becoming more adept at padding and stretching out small amounts of information with very little thought in order to fulfill length requirements. He appeared to have no interest or investment in the topics that he wrote about, believing that due to his non-controversial positions, his professors would accept his work with the least amount of evidence he could give. According to Sternglass, the students' development as writers was not inhibited by second language interference patterns. Improvement was made when they put effort and

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commitment into their work and had teachers who provided them with constructive criticism. She makes a strong case for the central role of writing in fostering learning in courses across the curriculum.

Spack's (1997) study of Yuko involved documenting this Japanese student's experiences in 9 undergraduate courses over 3 years. Although the student had a high TOEFL score of 640 upon entering her program, this score did not reflect the degree of acculturation needed to deal with the reading and writing tasks with which she was confronted. The study describes how her cultural background shaped and sometimes impeded her approach to American academic discourse practices. Yuko was aware of her difficulties – the silence she kept in class, her inability to write essays and understand her readings, and her practice of memorizing information, but felt at a loss when it came to acquiring the 'American style' of learning. During her first year of study, she identified her lack of background knowledge and insufficient vocabulary as the two factors impeding her progress. However, it was her survival strategies, such as developing a practice of consulting with professors and teaching assistants, of learning to selectively ignore what she did not know, and writing in a way that involved critique and citing sources in the appropriate fashion, that helped her pass the courses. Spack explains that Yuko's perception of her educational background in Japan and the cross-cultural comparisons she made with educational practices in the United States, influenced the approach she took to literacy development. The key to her survival was learning to read and write strategically and most importantly, figure out what was expected in each class. Spack concludes that understanding academic culture – strategic social and interpretive skills in addition to formal academic and language skills – is at the root of developing academic literacy and achieving success.

A similar case of a graduate student, named Ketmanee, from Thailand studying at Manchester University in the UK reveals some interesting insights into the kinds of learning strategies L2 students will use to achieve their academic goals. EAP instructor Morley (2002) describes how after three years of study, Ketmanee graduated with a doctoral degree in Policy Research in Engineering, Science and Technology despite entering her program with a low TOEFL score of 473. Morley states that even after the 12-week pre-session EAP course, her grammar and pronunciation were still very weak and her vocabulary was limited. She was also not able to attend any of the in-session language support classes because of time constraints. Through interviews with the student and her supervisor, Ketmanee was described as being an extremely hard worker, highly motivated and determined to succeed. She expressed no strong desire to integrate into British society – her main goal language-wise was to achieve enough proficiency for practical purposes. Because she had already

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worked in the government sector in Thailand, she could apply many of her previously acquired reading and research skills to her doctoral fieldwork and her management skills to her own learning. These management skills included, for example, being able to take initiative, set goals and meticulously plan and prioritize.

In her first year, this involved spending less time on assignments and more time on her PhD proposal. In spite of poor oral communication skills, Morley describes her ability to make friends and network with other overseas students who could help her, for example, by showing her models of proposals. Her friends were described as being “indispensable in her language development...not only because they provided opportunities for language practice, but also because they were happy and willing to answer her questions about the language” (p. 137). She wasn’t afraid of making mistakes when speaking, only eager to get her message across. She also developed networks across the university. For instance, when she needed advice about certain techniques for data analysis, she went to academic staff working in other departments for help. She was also very self-directed in finding ways to improve her English. For example, she forced herself to listen to the BBC news and read the *Financial Times* every morning in order to improve listening skills and broaden her vocabulary. After the first 2 months in Britain, she also moved out of her flat she had been sharing with other Thai students to increase her exposure in English.

Ketmanee found that academic writing was the most challenging, especially in her first year. In order to improve and cope with the demands of coursework, “she started to use her readings to look for generic patterns and structures, both linguistic and textual, in academic texts which offered possibilities for recycling in her own writing” (p. 139). In other words, a section of a text was analyzed according to its communicative function(s) and the language used to achieve this. In short, Ketmanee’s ability to take initiative in her own English language development, make friends, network, and utilize psychological techniques (meditation), and compensatory strategies (the utilization of language in source texts) helped her to achieve her academic goals. Morley stresses the importance of academic reading proficiency for L2 graduate students, especially in their field of study, before entering a program. The issue of English language competence in speaking and writing is also addressed, especially for those L2 students who plan on returning to their native countries.

Having conducted extensive research in the writing practices of graduate students, both native English and L2 speakers alike, Prior (1995; 1998; 2001) also argues that learning in academia is a complex process and that communication, especially in writing, must always be understood as a situated,

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literate activity. It “does not stand alone as the discrete act of a writer, but emerges as a confluence of many streams of activity: reading, talking, observing, acting, making, thinking, and feeling as well as transcribing words on paper” (1998, p. xi). From this perspective, students like Yuko in Spack’s research and Ketmanee in Morley’s study, have different ways of coping with the demands of their programs. Prior’s (1998) case studies of two female graduate students, one from Japan and one from Spain, revealed that despite participating in the same academic environment, these two individuals managed their learning in very different ways. Both students were successful academically, yet the student from Japan worked in relative isolation, and participated more in the role of a novice, while the student from Spain was more active, engaging directly with people and resources. What all of these cases have in common is the finding that learning does not evolve as a one-way transmission from a community of specialists to novices. Indeed, individual students interact in different ways with others – professors, TAs and fellow students – as well as with textual resources, in order to gain expertise and knowledge.

An example of the importance of open communication with regard to expectations is illustrated in Belcher’s (1994) study of L2 students’ relationship with their supervisors while writing their dissertations. She found that for the less successful students, it was not language proficiency which posed the problem, but a mismatch between the advisors’ and students’ conceptualizations and notions of research writing goals and research reader expectations. However, no such mismatch was apparent between the most successful dissertation writer and her advisor. In this instance, the advisor participated in her student’s research illustrating the closeness of their relationship. In order to foster skills that increase learning and support understanding, Belcher advocates close advisor/student collaboration on a research project, which would enable L2 graduate students to confidently negotiate and contribute to knowledge in their areas of deepening expertise.

A two-year Canadian study conducted by Raymond and Parks (2002) investigated the manner in which Chinese L2 students’ orientations to reading and writing assignments changed as they moved from an EAP program to their Masters of Business Administration (MBA) courses. It was found that they had to adapt their reading and writing strategies to cope with assignments in the MBA program, which differed from those used in the EAP context. Although learning was the goal in both the EAP and MBA program, the understanding of learning and what counted as learning differed. For example, in the EAP long report, what was considered important pertained to formal language criteria; on the other hand, in the MBA case study analysis, what stood out was content – subject specific theories and concepts. In the MBA program, the students had to

collaborate and negotiate different interpretations of the task. They were also more concerned with marks and correction criteria as set out by the instructor, because their ultimate goal was to pass the course. By drawing on previous knowledge and strengths and using opportunities to interact with classmates within the course setting, the L2 students were generally successful academically, as they moved from EAP to MBA contexts. According to Raymond and Parks, “All educators might better inform themselves as to how a more conscious awareness of language functioning – and other semiotic resources – could be of benefit to their students, especially those who have not appropriated the requisite cultural capital in other social contexts” (p. 173).

Not all case studies focus on academic reading and writing. Morita (2000), Imber and Parker (1999) and Thornton (1999) specifically investigated the oral discourse needs of L2 international students. Morita spent 8 months observing both L2 and native English speaking students enrolled in an oral academic presentations class, as part of their TESL graduate program. She found that students became apprenticed into academic discourse by moment-by-moment negotiating of expertise with instructors and peers, as they prepared their material, observed others and presented their own work. She also observed that both L2 and native English speakers felt insecure and anxious about their knowledge, skills and performances. In spite of language difficulties, many L2 students were just as successful as their native English-speaking peers in participating in discussions and giving presentations. With careful preparation, effective use of visual aids, practice rehearsals, handouts and note-cards as prompts, L2 students were able to present their topics with confidence and clarity. Consistent with Casanave, Spack, Prior, Belcher and others, she argues that “academic discourse socialization is not a predictable, entirely oppressive, unidirectional process of knowledge transmission from expert to novice, but a complex, locally situated process that involves dynamic negotiations of expertise and identity” (p. 304).

Outside of the North American context, several case studies have also taken place at British universities and provide further evidence of the complexity inherent in the L2 academic acculturation process. For example, Harris and Thorp (1999) conducted an ethnographic investigation of first year, hotel and catering diploma students. For several weeks, the researchers attended classes and workshops and arranged interviews with 70 students. In addition to those contacts, 7 students from a variety of ages and cultural and linguistic backgrounds were recruited as informants. According to the researchers, “what was interesting...was not the familiar insider/outside binary constructed around notions of the overseas student/native British student; but the extent to which our informants perceived themselves as on the periphery, as outsiders at

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particular moments based on ... a complex and shifting combination of factors connected with race, gender, class, age, language, culture and history” (p. 8). The researchers related their findings to EAP programs and what those programs need to take into account if their intention is to support L2 student learning. For example, they argue that EAP programs cannot be focused on the teaching of technical skills alone. It is “too simplistic to think that the task of the EAP tutor is simply to help students with their academic writing skills and the language work involved in formulating questions, learning to interrupt and to ask for clarification” (p. 11). Programs have to take into consideration the total surrounding context within which students are studying. This context includes general societal attitudes in Britain toward racial, ethnic and linguistic minority groups, which are likely to be reflected in the behavior of local classmates and professors. For example, L2 students have problems following the pace of lectures and understanding the main ideas as they are presented. But these problems, according to the authors, are exacerbated by additional difficulties they have asking questions. L2 students reported losing track during the lecture and so they could not ask questions at the end because they had not been able to follow along. They were also aware of the impatience of the other native English speaking students and the intimidation of the lecturers of whom they were fearful. Asking a question would “involve an immense act of self-assertion” (p. 11).

The study also revealed that there were different cultural expectations amongst students and staff about roles, social distance, duties, rights and obligations, which seriously affected students’ learning. According to the informants, relationships are hampered when: the lecturer uses humour, informal behavior and language, which are not explained; returns assignments late; and fails to recognize names of students that are ‘difficult’ for the lecturer. When L2 students are not clear about the rationale, form, or expectations of assessment practices, students can also become suspicious, claiming racial and cultural biases. Frustration also surfaces and culminates when instructors assume a deep knowledge of British-Christian traditions with little or no opportunity for harnessing and integrating L2 students’ prior knowledge and experiences. Harris and Thorp point out that there is a need for the following: constructive feedback and sensitive personal support from lecturers; regular access to supervisors; changes in British students attitudes and behavior towards L2 speakers (less insular and more friendly); clear explanation of academic assessment; and finally a re-examination of the ethnocentric British view of the world that dominates some areas of study.

Gaining Language Proficiency and Confidence: Developing Effective Strategies to Improve L2 Student Performance

When L2 students are asked to identify some of the learning strategies that they employ to help them manage their coursework and activities, researchers often report that they practice, rehearse and memorize material for oral presentations, or use existing models and structures from textbooks and journal articles to help them in their writing. Researchers have also found that L2 students often prefer to ask their own ethnic group for help (Burns, 1991; Ramsey et. al, 1999). In fact, a peer support network may be a valuable tool for improving L2 students' academic performance. Although it is likely that English language skills will improve over time, depending on exposure, motivation and other factors, students can become frustrated at the fact that their improvement may not be as rapid as they had expected, given the limited time they have to complete their degrees, especially graduate degrees. Through analysis of the results of empirical studies of L2 students in Australia, Ballard (1987; 1989, 1996, 1997) and Ballard and Clanchy (1991) have written extensively on the needs of L2 students and the implications for EAP courses. According to these researchers, careful selection and English language testing are insufficient institutional guarantors of student success. Again, they argue the point that L2 students will always have problems with English but these difficulties are often used by both faculty and students as an excuse for poor academic performance. In their view, additional English courses seldom solve the problem. Improving vocabulary or grammar, or editing essays or thesis chapters does not necessarily lead to higher grades. Although L2 students may have difficulties understanding lectures, asking questions, taking part in class discussions, formal essay writing and selecting appropriate English to express ideas, it is an oversimplification to see problems arising from linguistic difficulties alone. Researchers seem to agree that students and faculty tend to attribute academic and social problems to English proficiency alone, when in fact difficulties are more likely to stem from lack of familiarity with cultural norms or the new university setting (Todd, 1997). Todd also argues that quite often problems occur when students employ study strategies that have worked in their previous academic lives, only to find that they are ineffectual in meeting the academic expectations of students studying in the UK. According to Ballard (1996) students have much deeper issues, such as "adjusting to a new intellectual culture, a new way of thinking and of processing knowledge to meet the expectations inherent in the Anglo educational system" (p. 150). He goes on to argue that L2 students' difficulties, "lie in the disjunction of expectations about the styles of learning that are required [e.g. studying longer and harder does not always correlate with success],

and the excuse of poor language competence merely glosses over these more basic problems [such as, working in a reproductive rather than analytical style]” (p. 155).

She reminds us that overseas students are products of their respective cultures and past social and educational experiences, which may not have prepared them for studying in Western societies. As a result, it is important for educators to recognize different attitudes to knowledge and expectations about student and teacher roles. With the view that,

- 1) a tension exists between the ways in which L2 students are expected to learn in EAP classes, and the ways they must perform in university courses, and
- 2) cultural differences in approaches to academic learning and communication are often at the root of many problems.

Ballard (1996) recommends that EAP programs include both a focus on culturally distinctive learning styles (e.g., the perplexities of plagiarism) as well as the development of academic English competence (i.e., especially speaking and listening, in the first three months of overseas study). Although the tendency is for L2 students to seek help from other, more experienced students who come from the same country (for example, in using the library, computer and lab resources and thesis design), Ballard believes that it is the responsibility of the EAP program and EAP teachers to provide a more systematic and professional strategy for academic development and support. She suggests that the final stage of EAP should be an English for Intellectual Purposes (EIP) course, whereby the main focus is not the structure of the language, but the use of language as a medium for the acquisition and extension of knowledge within a discipline. Further, she recommends that the content be taken directly from within the disciplines that the L2 students will study.

An alternative or complement to an EAP program is what Harding and Kidd (2009) at the Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia refer to as a *self managed learning environment* for L2 international students taking Organizations and Management in a Bachelor of Business degree program. With the assumption that the broader socio-cultural context inhibits L2 academic performance, the researchers embarked on a project that involved 3 phases. First, through individual and group interviews, they asked students about their experiences with the intention of understanding their “hidden needs” and “expressed wants” (p. 4). All students expressed a desire to improve their critical thinking and analytic skills as well as their language skills. Cultural differences and the contrast between educational experiences in their home country and the structure and style of their program in Australia were seen as

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obstacles to full participation and academic success. Of interest were their comments about their relations with local students. For example, several L2 students felt local students perceived them as lazy, unprepared to participate and incompetent.

Phase 2 consisted of the development of curriculum changes in reference to student interview responses and the literature addressing reasons for dependent learning styles and problems of cultural adaptation. The researchers concluded that “a balance is required that acknowledges the issues of identity vulnerability, deep cultural differences, and the differentiation between student and visitor status.” In addition, “the balance must recognize the students’ desires to learn more interdependent ways of learning” (p. 7).

Faculty acknowledged this balance and implemented curriculum changes that would foster a greater understanding and appreciation of cultural differences as a valuable resource, and not as an impediment to learning. Rather than ‘looking after’ or singling out, for example, the participatory problems of international students, faculty agreed to intervene on the basis of understanding “participation as a group problem” (p. 9).

The final phase of the research project involved forums and individual interviews with students and staff to openly discuss and evaluate the effect of the changes that had been implemented. Cultural differences as a factor in managing subject content, language skills, and relationships with local students were the primary themes that emerged from the student interviews. Faculty commented on the usefulness of the forums and that over time, international students became more confident, vibrant and engaged, especially in small group processes. It was felt that international students should not be viewed as a homogeneous group; differences between and within national cultures have to be considered so as not to further marginalize students. As previously mentioned by Chalmers and Volet (1997), the issues for international students should not be seen as exclusive. In fact, they are dynamically inter-related with the local students and faculty. They argue that faculty need to be able to work with difference, symbolic and personal, and develop a variety of strategies applicable to the needs of international students in a variety of situations. In addition, the research findings stress the importance of considering both the student and visitor roles and their impact on the performance of students. According to Harding and Kidd (2000), “these roles must also be considered in relation to roles taken up by others in the [host country’s] socio-cultural context, and in the educational context.” All of these roles “create a complex matrix of dynamic roles that can resist or complement learning” (p. 1).

Research by May and Bartlett (1995) also in Australia, suggests that a focused discipline-specific preparatory academic skills program for both L2 and

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native English-speaking graduate students is the most effective way to support students, because it specifically targets the areas of “unclear expectations and cultural differences”(p.6), which are common concerns of both parties. In arguing for the value of academic skills courses, the authors’ observations over several years suggest that, “students who have most difficulty in meeting post-graduate academic expectations of genre, argument and logic, research and documentation of the research process, have been those international and Australian students, who have missed the preparatory courses” (p. 7). They argue that such courses,

- 1) avoid the “deficit” view of a remedial approach;
- 2) allow closer relationships between graduate students and their supervisors and lecturers which allows for earlier identification of difficulties;
- 3) foster professional skills training throughout their courses of study from preparatory and bridging courses until the final thesis.

The most important advantage, the authors emphasize, is that these courses remove the separation between local and L2 international students and encourage co-operation and an understanding of the common challenges that all students share.

Blakely (1997) reports on another example of a successful initiative that was specifically designed to support interaction between local and L2 international students within the undergraduate program at the University of Rhode Island. The “English Language Fellow Program,” paired specially trained native-English speaking undergraduates with L2 classmates to study the content of courses that both are taking together. The L2 students, in turn, benefited from the opportunity of focusing on language as it is used to communicate and to understand course material. The trained Fellow had the responsibility of organizing and conducting the study sessions. A most important incentive was the fact that the Fellow (who was not considered to be a tutor or a teacher, but a “privileged collaborator in learning”) was paid an hourly wage for attendance and the extra work, the L2 student received an extra unit of credit, in addition to the three units typically awarded for the content course. Evaluations of the program indicated that not only had the program fostered valuable relationships among all students and faculty with whom the Fellows consulted on a regular basis, but also that grades in the content course had improved for both groups.

The Present Study

The section above has provided a review of research regarding factors that affect L2 students' academic acculturation within English-medium universities, and a range of course models, designed to support that acculturation. However, there is little consensus in the literature, and this lack of consensus is reflected in the myriad of English support courses currently offered by Canadian universities. Although these courses are often described as having an *EAP focus*, they differ significantly in purpose, emphasis, and outcomes. One of the key reasons that these courses are as varied as the universities that offer them, is that there is little or no research which specifically investigates the kind of language support which has the greatest impact in supporting L2 students' transition to and engagement with undergraduate study (Berman, 2002), nor is there sufficient information regarding individual student factors that impede or assist academic success. This paper reports on research that used a grounded theory approach (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) in investigating how a selective sample of professors, ESL/EAP teachers, and L2 undergraduates in three Canadian universities accounted for what most directly supported their academic performance. For practical reasons, only the interview data from 28 of the L2 student participants is summarized in this volume of CPALS.

At the conclusion of phase one of the study, individual background factors, social/relational factors and program factors that made a difference in L2 students' transition to and engagement with undergraduate study were identified, and a model of the L2 acculturation process was specified. Only phase one results are reported here. The results of phase two, which consists of a survey of EAP programs currently offered by Canadian universities, using questionnaires (for students and coordinators) that were developed as a result of the model of L2 acculturation that was specified as a result of phase one. Results of the survey will be available early in 2007.

Methodology

Participants and instruments

Phase one participants in this study were L2 students, EAP instructors and discipline-specific professors. Three types of L2 students volunteered:

- undergraduate students who were enrolled in discipline-specific university courses only;
- EAP students who took both EAP and university courses simultaneously (concurrent EAP); and

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- ESL students, who were enrolled in language courses only, but intended to study within the university once they had acquired an adequate level of language proficiency.

In total, there were 37 volunteer interviewees, including 13 undergraduates, 5 EAP students, 10 ESL students, 1 EAP instructor, and 8 discipline-specific professors/instructors. The undergraduate students came from a wide variety of majors. Four of them majored in Engineering, 2 in Economics, 2 in Business, 1 in Finance, 1 in Science and Mathematics, 1 in Biological Science, 1 in Psychology, and 1 in General Arts (hoping to enter Education). Among them, 4 were first-year students, 5 were second-year, 1 was third-year, and 3 were fourth year. Six discipline-specific professors/instructors came from Engineering and the other two came from Engineering communication, with EAP applied language studies background.

A semi-structured interview was conducted with each participant in the winter of 2004. The researchers asked both close-ended and open-ended questions in order to elicit information about the academic acculturation of L2 students (See Appendix I). The interview questions were developed collaboratively by the researchers prior to the interviews. Questions and interview procedures were subject to ethics review at the three universities where the interviews took place. The interviews lasted between 45 minutes and one and a half hours each.

Data collection

In order to recruit participants for this study, announcements were posted in at each of the three universities, in main buildings on campus, such as library and the International Centre. Announcement for EAP instructors were also posted and circulated by teacher e-mail lists. For disciplinary professors/instructors, announcements were posted on the department faculty email lists.

In order to ensure that participants understood the interview questions and the purpose of the study, the questions, the letter of information, and the consent forms were sent to the respondents before the interviews. In exchange for their participation in the interviews, students received feedback on their academic strategies, limited counselling (if requested) and a small honorarium. EAP instructors and professors received on-going feedback on the study's findings and an honorarium. Interviews were conducted in an informal setting and were audio taped with the participants' consent. They were transcribed verbatim and coded.

Analysis

As indicated above, one of the outcomes of this phase of the study was to develop a questionnaire designed to examine the factors influencing the academic acculturation processes of L2 undergraduate students in Canada. The development of the questionnaire used a “pragmatic” (Caracelli and Greene, 1997) and “mixed-method” (Fox, 2001) approach, combining both “bottom up” and “top down” research strategies, namely: 1) an analysis of interview data with L2 undergraduates, their professors, ESL/EAP instructors and students at three Canadian universities, and 2) a review of previous research studies investigating key acculturation factors. Taken together, these two sources of information led to a hypothesized model of academic acculturation for L2 students.

The interview data were collected simultaneously from three Canadian universities and analysed using a grounded theory approach (Strauss and Corbin, 1994) whereby a theory accounting for the transition processes and or academic acculturation of L2 students was generated from analysis of the data collected during the study. Grounded theory is an approach to generate new theory rather than verify existing theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). It is a methodology for “developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analysed” (Strauss and Corbin, 1994, p. 273). In other words, theory is developed from the “bottom up”; grounded in and generated by the data. In this study, raw interview data were analyzed in a “zigzag process” (Cresswell, 1998, p. 57), that is, groups of interviews in the field were collected and then analyzed using an “open coding” approach (Cresswell, 1998, p. 57). More interviews were then collected in the field and analysis repeated to confirm or disconfirm the working categories accounting for the data. This process is known as the constant comparative method. Through this process, the categories of information/factors become *saturated* (Strauss and Corbin, 1994), that is, no further information is provided by additional data. Subsequently, as a triangulating and/or confirmatory strategy, we reviewed the research literature on factors influencing the academic acculturation process. Information derived from the literature provided a source for making confirmation and complementation to the interview data. By asking questions, repeatedly validating the relationships and patterns against data, and referring to prior research to verify and support the findings, several persistent themes emerged, and conclusions were drawn (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Using a combined “bottom up” approach grounded in the analysis of data and a “top down” approach drawn from analysis of the research literature allowed for strength in specification of the questionnaire (Fox, 2001) and the development of a

hypothesized model of academic acculturation. A theory was generated which accounted for the role of EAP support and other factors at play in L2 students' academic acculturation.

At the operational level, "segments" (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997) that consisted of direct quotations from the interview transcripts were first highlighted as supporting data. Then, those data segments were categorized according to an organizing system of "topics" predominantly derived from the data. A series of "topics" that were descriptive names for the subject matter of the segment were collected and compared based on the interview data and literature review. In the next step, several "categories" which represented the meaning of similar topics were identified. Similarities and distinctions between categories were discovered in order to find a "pattern" which showed a relationship among categories. In brief, after constant and persistent work in identifying data segments, naming topics, and grouping data segments into topical categories, a pattern that accounted for the academic acculturation of L2 students finally emerged.

In sum, applying a grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) to the data, recurring patterns and themes across the theoretical samples were identified, along with key transitional events, which provided the theoretical and methodological basis for the survey questionnaire. This analysis allowed for the investigation of the role that EAP support and other factors at play in L2 students' academic acculturation.

Results and Discussion

As a result of the grounded theory analysis, the seven major "categories" were identified:

- Learning and Coping Strategies;
- Other (non-EAP related) Support;
- Academic Motivation;
- Language and Academic Background;
- Personal Information;
- Individual Field of Study;
- EAP and English Support.

Because EAP course support was the focus of this study and much of the interview data referred directly to EAP and English language support, the category of EAP and English support was separated from the category Support – which refers to support that is not related to EAP courses per se.

Reported below are detailed examples from the interview data that led to the identification of these categories.

1) Learning and coping strategies

Early research has shown that study strategies contribute to L2 students' academic performance (Light, Xu, & Mossop, 1987; Johnson, 1988; Stoyhoff, 1997). Analysis of the L2 students' interview data provided confirmation of this. Generally speaking, students indicated that their learning and coping strategies extended not only to the learning of regular academic subjects, but also to the learning of English. They indicated that they were not only learning academically, but also socially.

The students we interviewed seemed to develop their study strategies in learning and testing in accordance with their life experience, specific disciplines, personalities, and perceived academic strengths and weaknesses. Most students had the ability to identify and strategically adjust to the situations in which they studied and lived in order to achieve their learning goals. Overall, the L2 students attributed their academic success to "hard work, effort, and self-motivation" as one 4th year L2 student put it.

They used a variety of strategies for learning and coping with the academic and linguistic demands of their programs. Students invested an enormous amount of time in their academic subjects, using their own survival strategies, such as:

- developing critical/analytic skills and time management skills,
- choosing classes that drew on their strengths and circumvented their weaknesses,
- reading extensively (e.g. selectively reading in relation to course assignments or reading ahead to prepare for up-coming lecture topics),
- seeking support for their writing (e.g. proofreading by native speakers), and
- on-going consultation with whomever they felt comfortable, including professors, teaching assistants, classmates, roommates, and fraternities.

For most L2 students, the key to being successful in undergraduate courses was to figure out what was expected in each class. It was clear that figuring out what was expected was not only class-dependent, but also discipline-specific. In fact, students reported learning strategies that were directly related disciplinary emphases. For example, L2 Science students reported that they paid the most attention to specific facts and ideas emphasized in lectures, assignments and assessments. A number of Science students reported

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that they focused on formulas, graphs, and numbers rather than reading for information or explanations in their textbooks, which would involve decoding words and sentences. This survival strategy was reported by engineering students as well. For example, a male 2nd year Engineering student commented:

For me I just read the notes the prof gave us. It's usually Power-point slides, so just short sentences. You don't really read long sentences. When I am reading the textbook, I just focus on diagrams and tables. So I didn't read text a lot because we, I think basically we work with the numbers.

Another strategy reported by the students was to avoid whenever possible those courses that required extensive language use (discussions, presentations, reading and writing) as English was not their strength. For instance, a female 4th year student majoring in Economics, noted:

For economics, I don't really have a lot of problems because that course requires a lot of math. And I have relatively good math skills, so as long as those are equations, I understand what's going on ...I try not to take courses that require a lot of discussion. And I try not to take any course that requires essays. I am avoiding those.

L2 students reported that they actively sought consultation and support on an on-going basis with professors, teaching assistants, classmates, friends, and members of their own ethnic group. Students generally understood where they could find support and tapped into sources that made them feel the most comfortable and productive. Unlike students in other studies (Burns, 1991; Ramsey et. al, 1999), the L2 students we interviewed did not show a preference for support from their own ethnic group. When they encountered difficulties in their learning, some reported seeking help from professors/teachers and some from teaching assistants, while some preferred their peers. A male, 4th Year Finance student said:

I either email them [professors] or just like, go stop by office hours and bug them, for sure, until I get it. Yeah, they're all nice; they all try really hard to make you understand everything.

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An L2 student in Business compared possible sources of support but reported choosing to ask help from teaching assistants, because she felt they could help her the most:

I will, if I encounter any questions, during my academic, I'll just find my course TA or sometimes probably professor. ... Mostly, I will find the course TA, the most useful to help me pick out the answer. Because they explain really specifically and they do like, because they have previous knowledge on my course material, so that I will, it's more guaranteed to ask them if they're right, because sometimes if I ask my friends in my course, they're sometimes probably wrong. Because they received the wrong concept or the wrong meaning from the language. ... For example, I take math and they're more like helpful to me than the professor, because the professor sometimes, well the TA will lead you to the correct answer, that's why I think it's more useful.

In this study, a number of L2 students also expressed a preference for asking help from their friends and classmates. They reported experiencing significantly higher levels of anxiety and shyness asking help from professors or teaching assistants, often because the students felt they did not have adequate language capability. It seems a peer support network might be a valuable tool for improving L2 students' academic performance. For instance, a 1st year female student who was in General Arts explained how she dealt with academic difficulties:

I never talk to teachers, the professors or teaching assistants...if I have some questions, I just ask my friends, the classmates. Like, when I took the math course, like if I cannot solve the problem and I can just ask my friends to do it, to show me how could he or she solve it and I think it's a good way to learn it and usually the professors are too busy to ask all your questions. And I don't know if it's for everyone, but especially international students, for me I'm a little bit afraid to talk to the professor, because like I have to worry if he can understand me. Maybe it's just because I'm a shy person. I think the problem exists for many other international students.

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Group work is often a feature of undergraduate classes, although this varies by academic discipline. In this study, a majority of L2 students felt working with others was “helpful” for academic learning. Some students also reported that they tried to avoid group work with individuals from their own linguistic and cultural backgrounds, a finding which differs from the results reported by Imber and Parker (1999). The L2 students we interviewed across the three universities considered in phase one, explained their strategies in choosing partners outside their own linguistic or cultural groups. They felt they could learn more by listening to others’ views and perspectives, as one male student from China explained:

See it’s really funny when you have group work and this group will come up with like 5 Chinese people. I don’t think it’s wrong, but I don’t think helpful because everyone think in the same way, and they don’t get much practice or learn much.

Perhaps these L2 students are demonstrating an important feature of their academic acculturation by noticing the disadvantages of working in groups with individuals from their own linguistic and cultural backgrounds. They remarked on the importance of interacting with students whose perspectives might differ from their own, and how such differences would encourage more inter-cultural awareness, offer more opportunities for language learning, and lobby against marginalization of their input and perspective. This Chinese L2 student reported:

Because first of all, we’ll end up sitting together and talking in Chinese, which bothers other people. Because I notice that, because if someone sitting there and talking like uh, some other language, I’ll be bothered too, because it’s a lecture. So I tried to jump to some [other] seat making Canadian friends.

Besides employing strategies for their academic learning in classrooms, L2 students also used strategies to cope with acculturation issues outside of classrooms. They consciously or unconsciously used strategies in their social life. One indicator was their net exposure to English, which reflected their learning strategies. In the interviews, L2 students reported various amounts of time using English in school and at home. A majority of L2 students reported using English in school quite often, about 80 to 90% of the time or even more. However, their use of English at home varied considerably from one student to the next. Some indicated that use of English at home was as high as 90% of the

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time, while others reported using English less than 10% of the time they spent at home. The settings in which students reported they frequently used English were: in the class/library, at work, doing homework, talking with professors and TAs, shopping, and with friends/roommates. The settings in which L2 students reported using their L1s were: on the phone with parents, with friends/roommates, in Chinese markets/Chinatown if L2 students were Chinese.

L2 students reported considerable differences in English language use in a few specific settings. For example, some L2 students shared rooms with people who spoke the same language, while some did not. Some chose to communicate in English even if they were speaking with a classmate or friend who spoke the same first language. Some only used their first language with each other even in front of people who spoke other languages. While most ESL students reported using English with their homestay families, one Chinese ESL student reported using Chinese with her homestay family. More differences in language use occurred when students browsed online. One ESL Chinese student remarked, “when I get on the internet I usually read the Chinese website,” while a 4th year L2 student from Russia indicated that “all the other time I am using English. Even on the computer, it’s English most of the time.”

As was reported by Myles and Cheng (2003) in their study of L2 graduate students’ strategies, several students in the current study reported that they deliberately increased their use of English by intentionally seeking out English speakers. These students chose to live with English speakers and/or to socialize with them in English (their second language), rather than with students who shared their first language. They reported that they believed that through increased participation and interaction in English, they increased their potential for English language learning. In other words, they seemed to understand the importance of picking up sustained language input and establishing adequate social and cultural frameworks in the target language. They understood, as a benefit, their performances and processes of negotiation of meaning could be adapted to different circumstances efficiently and appropriately. For example, the following concurrent EAP student from China clearly appreciated the benefits of this choice.

...I think the English environment is very good. Before I live with my friend who speak Chinese and I just read some and really watch the TV in the home, it was Chinese TV and the class speak English maybe in class for maybe one hour each day. But now I come to Ottawa and I live with the landlord always speaking English. So I think that’s very good. ...Very, very big

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difference...I almost couldn't call to the academic office using English, but now I don't have that problem.

L2 students also understood the benefits and consequences of having more exposure to English language and culture by making friends with English-speaking people. Such a decision to integrate with the target society requires determination and a strong will. A female 4th year student from Japan explained what she refers to as "her very strong will":

I have to have a very strong will not to hang out with Japanese people. It is a lot of easier to hang out with Japanese people. But at the same time, you can never find a job, you can never take advantage of going to school in Canada by doing that. So I try to have a strong will, and try to be more sociable, and try to interview with Canadian people more.

Active participation in the target society, may in fact be inhibited and or actively discouraged by members of an L2 students' ethnic, linguistic or cultural group. While this 4th year student from China identified and employed the same strategy as the Japanese student above, he encountered great difficulties and resistance from his own ethnic group in doing so.

Because by doing this [communication with English speakers] I had to isolate myself first from the Chinese group. Not really isolating, but I have to really take a perspective. Because everyone knows it's safer and easier to stay with your own group when you don't speak English, right? And I still find lots of my friends do it. I decided to choose a different thing, and I think I paid a lot for it. Just because it's really hard to start with... I started losing my Chinese friends, not because I don't like them, it just because they don't really understand me, that why sit in the same room, I choose to talk to English, instead of Chinese to them. They also make me feel bad, because if I do speak Chinese lots to them, another 90% of people don't understand what's going on, and I think they took me wrong, some point--not really like just like all of them but some people took me wrong.

Clearly, it is not an easy choice to live in English and to socialize with English-speaking people. In the intercultural adaptation process, L2 students

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have to change behaviors common to their native cultures and accommodate new ways of interacting. However, some L2 students struggle between different social and cultural norms, and some are not able to manage the dynamics of cultural difference and unfamiliarity. Some students intend to make friends with native speakers of English, however, they fail or never make much of a concerted effort to manage the intercultural adaptation process. As one L2 student from China put it,

Currently, I live with other two Chinese students in a three-bedroom apartment. I did try to speak more in English. I lived with some Canadian students for one year, however I didn't feel comfortable. Moreover, I didn't get many chances to talk with them in English. We just talked very simple things. After having stayed for one year, I move back and stay with Chinese students.

It was not clear, of course, how welcoming (or not) the Canadian students were. She did not seek out other English speakers again, however, preferring to stay with her own L1 group instead after this one failed attempt.

Some L2 learners were not able to make accommodations or take initiatives in interaction with members of the target language group. The following L2 student explained that differences in culture and life style were reasons she could not make a change.

I think, just here all of Chinese students. When I go home, I have to talk with my friends in Chinese. If I talk English, she will feel I'm really strange and she'll think you have some problems. You know the Chinese meet in Chinese, we speak Chinese. I think about it, but I want to live with a Canadian roommate, but the way we live is about cultural, very different. I can't live, some, the way... I know some Canadian, they like party. So I didn't like party very much, I like very quiet and its just the way I live. And the Canadian people they live is very different. We can't fit each other very well. So I have to live with the Canadian people...ummm the Chinese people.

In terms of how to improve their English skills, L2 students described a number of diverse strategies. Some were fastidious about mistakes in their speaking, some were not afraid of making mistakes, only eager to get the

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message across, and some were not afraid of asking questions, if they did not understand. Most of the L2 students in the study understood conversation was a two-way interaction. In order to be an effective interlocutor, they recognized the need to be active agents in comprehension, comprehensibility, and participation. For instance,

It's better to speak a lot rather than I care about my grammar first. Now I think because I don't care much about my grammar, it's improving a lot.

I think I can listen, but the important part is that when I don't know what's going on, I ask. I tell people I don't and I ask them to repeat. Because I wasn't doing it before, and I know lots of people don't do it before. It's just like, they'll be like, oh yeah, and they don't even know what's going on. I want to ask them, but I don't think it's fair for both party in the conversation, so I just start ask.

Actually I tell all my friends that- especially my roommate, my roommate is like my English, too- I tell him like anytime I make a mistake, you just point it out to me right there and I try to remember it...I don't know how to put it in words, but when you learn a second language, it's a really hard progress. I don't know you don't want to see you are making mistakes, but often you are. And like, you don't want to make mistakes, but it happen and you don't want to accept that you are making mistakes. But I've learned you have to get over it to, so you can improve yourself, you know, move on and...correct yourself, you know. Yeah that's the way I solve it.

Language does not occur in isolation. It takes place in a sociocultural situation. Therefore, language learning is more than the learning of pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and discourse. Decontextualized linguistic knowledge is insufficient for communication and academic acculturation, and yet this is what most L2 students see as language competence when they first begin to study in an English-medium university. L2 students need to be aware of the social and interactional norms that define the social and cultural network linking language, cultural practices, and knowledge building (Todd, 1997). A few L2 students remarked on the importance of knowing about Canada, its people, and its culture. Taking the initiative in conversations, being willing to

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converse in English with other students, and maintaining friendships with members of the target language group are all important characteristics of students who succeed in adjusting to and working effectively with the new academic culture (Myles & Cheng, 2003). One 2nd year Psychology student explained:

Speaking, I sometimes want communicate with others, yeah, and sometimes you feel alone and don't have friends and like you have to speak up, like...try your best to get close with others. From the beginning it's not very comfortable but and later and later you kind of get the idea what they are thinking about, like...well I think for people who grew up in Canada or in Asia, they have different opinions of stuff. Like, when we face a problem they have different opinion and so, like for me I should understand why they think about it in that way, not in my way. And then once I know that, and then kind of can be very close with them.

A lack of interaction and culture shock can impede L2 students' adaptation. A number of the L2 students we interviewed encountered serious social challenges such as isolation, the inability to make friends with people from other cultures, and a lack of social skills. An ESL student expressed his/her frustration and regret in this way:

The culture, when two months after I come to Canada, I was not really familiar with all the English culture or the Canadian people. Sometimes I just get kind of, I don't know how to deal with others. ... I would say the students who first come to Canada, they need some help to become familiar, to get used to the situation. Also, I hope like the International Centre can offer us some chance to get to know each other, because, to be honest, the foreign students who [here], they just kind of live in a very small group. And because they have no chance to get to know other people, not even Canadians. ...

A 4th year Finance student stated that ESL and EAP courses should provide more explicit information about Canadian culture:

Because especially for us, at the beginning people have a really different thinking. I don't know, we think differently and it's

better if someone could teach someone how to think. Not really teach people how to think, but it's more like teaching how to cope into the culture. ... Yeah, I think it's really helpful for them, if the teacher teach more than English.

2) Support

Strategies were not the only factor that contributed to L2 students' academic acculturation and performance. Support systems also play an important role, according to the L2 participants in the study. They pointed out that support available from, for example, study groups, tutors, friends and mentors were mentioned as important to their academic success. In this study, all of the following were identified as sources of support by the L2 students: roommates/housemates; friends; classmates; professors/instructors; the university's writing center; and other university support. For the purpose of questionnaire construction, we differentiated these sorts of social and academic support from programmatic support such as EAP and English language support (the focus of the study), but obviously all forms of support are allied. Overall, L2 students sought linguistic, academic, and social support from various sources, however, not all support played a positive role in their academic acculturation, as demonstrated in a number of their comments discussed below.

Roommates/housemates

A majority of L2 students shared their living space with other people for financial reasons. They looked for roommates or housemates with whom they felt comfortable. As discussed above, some chose to live with people who spoke other languages and some preferred to live with their compatriots for support. In general, L2 students received many different kinds of support from their roommates/housemates. They indicated that they exchanged in small talk, watched TV or just hung out with their roommates/housemates for companionship and friendship,

Sometimes I with my landlord and watch TV and speak with him. And sometimes my landlord has three children. And they/ two children in University. They very good for me and good to me and good friends. I sometimes speak to them. Sometimes I play with them, we play cards and things.

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At times L2 students asked their roommates/housemates for proofreading and to point out their mistakes in speaking. They also asked for academic advice and undertook assignments together. For instance, a concurrent EAP student noted.

My landlord's son, I got him to check it [the essay] and he just changed maybe 10 words or something. But he just changes some words, but when I was re-doing my essays it was exceptionally different.

Classmates

The relationship of L2 students with their classmates varied from person to person. Some L2 students looked for friendship and academic support from their classmates while some simply maintained relationships with their classmates at a superficial level. Compared with ESL and EAP students, L2 undergraduate students seemed to understand that it was impractical to have a sociable relationship with all of their classmates. They were aware of the impatience of the other, English-speaking students. As one male student majoring in Engineering remarked:

I think we [my classmates and I] get along ok. Mostly just discussing problems, just academic talks.

A 4th year student from Japan described her relationships with classmates as both limited and superficial:

I do not [get along with classmates]. Some people, I have very good, like, non-Japanese friends. But it doesn't mean I can get along with all my classmates. Some people we talk in class, but we never talk outside of class.

In some cases, L2 students were expected to complete their assignments as a group. When they were forced to engage in group work with classmates whom they liked or disliked, upper-year L2 undergraduate students seemed to understand the purpose of such assignments and knew how to handle the situation. For example, a 4th year Business student explained her relationships with classmates in a pragmatic way:

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I think I am ok with it [group work]. Because goals are different too. You know you are forced to work with somebody, you are dependent, and don't necessarily like, because that's just how people are, you like somebody, you don't know the reason, then people are different, some are more responsible, some are less responsible, some are smart, some are not smart, some are lazy, some are not. So you have to deal with those problems.... But I can't say you get along with your team. Either how successful you work and if you don't fight, you are doing well. So I think you don't make friends, you just work with them, you just see how well you did. If you manage to see high mark of teamwork, I think you do pretty well. People don't actually go with each other, association with each other, they don't say hi to each other for frequent time.

However, some L2 undergraduates had difficulty dealing effectively with their classmates in groups. They felt that as part of a linguistic minority without a large representation on campus, their participation demands were largely ignored by the other, L1 English members of groups. Some experienced frustration and felt that they were not sufficiently included in the group work process. For example, the following student from Vietnam expressed frustration and dissatisfaction regarding experiences with group work:

In my group there are three Chinese girls and they just speak Chinese, so I can't understand them. There is only one or two words I can guess the meaning, but most sentences I cannot understand. But I can guess by their gestures and the way they talk and the way they interact I can guess a little meaning. And also they use English in their sentences, just one or two words in their sentences. They try to [include me in group work] but they forget me.

Interestingly, feelings of frustration may occur while working with members of one's own linguistics group as well. A 4th year student from China remarks on his dilemma in balancing his use of English for his friend Giselle with his use of Chinese for the other members of a group:

This semester, I have group [work] with my friend Giselle. She's my best friend or whatever, and then I know there's 2 Chinese people also in the class. So they asked me to join in

group with them, and I think it's totally fine, and my friend said it's fine too. But it comes to the situation that every time this guy, who is also Chinese, he talks to me and my friend, he'll say hi to my friend, and then start talking to me in Chinese.... she'll be like 'hi' and he's talking about some group work situation, but he'll turn to me and start speaking Chinese. So I don't know what to do. So only thing I can do is like, right after he told what's going on, I had to like, turn to Giselle and start to explain to her, 'Okay, this what he said'. And I never find out it really bothered Giselle that much until one day she cried to me. She told me that she feel really isolated and everything. It's just like people kept ignoring her in the group. Yeah, I think...but that guy, I know he knows how to speak English, and I know he's not trying to be rude or mean, just because he's shy and he thinks it's just easier to talk to me [in Chinese].

Frustration with group work due to the unequal influences of students from different linguistic groups was also noted by a Chinese EAP student:

But if I communicate with some other Korean students or Turkey, we do have some problems, we think very different. So when I talk with them, or discuss something with them, I feel I'll ask them opinions, but they didn't ask my...how you say? I feel in Chinese, it's polite, I have to ask their opinion first. Then I can show my opinion. But you know, they just talk their opinions very directly, feel sometimes I feel they are just by themselves. They are, how you say, self...centred. Right, yeah? But maybe I will not think, maybe just they are casual, but now I can understand. Yeah, I just feel in some cultural things it's a little bit difficult for me.

Friends

L2 students indicated that they made friends with all kinds of people, and they received enormous support from their friends. The contexts which these L2 students identified for making friends included classrooms, home or living places, gyms, social activities and so on. One L2 student commented that she made friends by engaging in social activities and found that her new friends shared some features in common with her:

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You see, I think people who are doing a lot of social activities are more open-minded. They have a lot of interest in their life. They have a lot of things to talk. I found, I found the people who are in my social activities are very nice.... My Caucasian friends who get along with me are all have international experience.

While some students reported trying to form relationships with “Canadians” (e.g.: “I had to isolate myself first from the Chinese group...because everyone knows it’s safer and easier to stay with your own group when you don’t speak English, right?”), we noted that many students relied heavily on their compatriots for support. As one Chinese L2 student put it, “I’ve got lots of Chinese friends, and if we meet outside or anywhere, we have to talk Chinese.” Whether this reliance was self-imposed or difficult to avoid was not always clear.

We also observed that a few L2 students explained that making friends was not limited to Canadians or their compatriots. They made friends beyond countries of origin, ethnicity, languages, or cultures. They looked for friends amongst people who were compatible and shared their interests and beliefs. These students as a group exhibited an openness and receptiveness to new situations. For instance, the following L2 student from Russia explained her philosophy in making friends,

I have good friends who speak English, and I have good friends who speak Russian. And I think that in many cases any person would feel more comfortable with the presence of their own culture because they have so much in common. And I mean you don’t choose friend based on their language. But you feel more comfortable with people who speak your own language, who come from the same place in the same school, feel in the same way, read the same books when you were kids ... that kind of stuff really unites people. But most of my friends are native speakers of Russian. But I do have some really good friends who speak English and I think I am very proud of it that I am not restricted to the Russian community. I am open to Canadians. I have good friends from other countries... And it makes a lot of fun, just talk about differences, you know, the culture, the world. A lot of fun.

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Some L2 students made friends based on ethnicity, language, and culture. Moreover, when L2 students were not clear about social and cultural practices in the target society, they often became suspect, claiming racial and cultural biases. At times, casualness and easiness might be interpreted as disrespect. For instance, the following L2 student explained how some L2 students made friends based on biased opinions.

Yeah, one day I thought maybe, just like, you choose to be friends with whoever, because you like them and they like you. And there is a huge group in front of me, like, Canadian people, or me myself or my Chinese friends, so I'm free to choose whoever.... I know I was like one of them, but it's just wrong to judge people like that sometimes. It's just like some, not some, like a lot of students, they don't talk to people and they tend to hold really tight in their group so you see a group of Chinese people sticking together- like every single time in every single class- and they talk in their own language. You go and ask them why don't they talk to people? And they'll be like, "Well they don't talk to me, they're racist" but you don't call someone a racist when you don't even try to talk to them. ... But I think lots of students take a wrong perspective from the very beginning. I shouldn't say all international, but I know lots of Chinese students do, that's why they don't really talk, but you don't really learn English when you don't talk.

While some L2 students indicated that they were able to make friends beyond ethnicity, languages, and cultures, quite a few L2 students felt that they needed extra help in how to make friends and in dealing with "Canadians". Some L2 students reported that they had difficulty taking the initiative in conversations and in maintaining friendships. Frustration culminated for those L2 students who recognized the importance of authentic language input, such as the two students who comment below:

Sometimes I don't know how to communicate with Canadians. I don't know how to make friends with them. I think this is my headache, because if I want to study very well English, and if I want to live in Canada, I have to make some Canadian friends, but all my friends are the Chinese.

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I hope like the International Centre can offer us some chance to get to know each other...because they have no chance to get to know other people, not even Canadians. Like, for me, I'm a Chinese so I don't even have a lot of Japanese or Korean friends because I always spend time with my Chinese friends. So if we even get some chance even to go to volunteer or do some social work, it will be helpful for us. Become more self-confident and we get the knowledge to know how to deal with people, I mean especially Canadians

Compared with undergraduate students, students in pre-university ESL and EAP courses seemed to seek more opportunities to communicate with their classmates, and they generally remarked that they had friendly relationships with their classmates. This friendly relationship with classmates not only seemed to help these students enlarge their perspectives but also enhanced their language and academic learning. For example, they reported:

Some of my classmates help me lots because not all of them are from China. Some come from Korea and some from Japan. And even some people who were from different parts of China, they can give me lots of information that I don't know.

As with the undergraduate students considered here, however, ESL and EAP minority students, who had a small representation within their classes, struggled with language-use problems in communication both in their classrooms and outside them. As a Korean student explained in the following comment about his situation with regard to his classmates:

Sometimes during break time, I already mentioned about it--there are only 2 Korean students, and other students are all Chinese. So during break time they speak Chinese, then I cannot understand the Chinese. I know they just speak each other some different kinds of part-time job or their studying, but I cannot participate their conversation, so in class, uh...during break time that bother to me.

Professors and Instructors

Most L2 undergraduate students found their professors helpful and supportive in their academic study. As one said, "they're all nice, they all try really hard to

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make you understand everything”. However, some students reported difficulty with some individual professors. For example, a 4th year student was happy with most of her professors, but she also encountered some unpleasant experiences:

All the professors, mostly I like all the professors because they are very interested in discussing about economics and economics stuff. Because we have something in common, so we still get along and some professors are really nice. But one professor said [if] you couldn't understand properly, you should drop the course. That's what she said. She was not willing to give any support. I was pretty shocked. I was crying.

Regarding professors' marking practices, L2 students felt some professors showed concern for L2 students and some did not. L2 students generally understood that professors had their own criteria and idiosyncrasies, which might or might not take into consideration that English was not the students' first language. For instance, the following L2 student commented:

So when writing papers, it was Canadians or native speakers think the problem, how to say this better, or you know, I have to make a stylish what do I do, you know that kind of thing. It's normal. But when you are speaking the other language which English isn't first language, that problem becomes alarming because you have no idea. You just want to communicate what you want to say and you don't even think about how to make it nicer or professional. So some professors do understand that and they say that they're gonna to mark primarily on the content of the paper and the material you present. But some professors don't do it. But I had some good and some bad experience too. Because they don't mark you that gives you a mind that you have trouble with English. They mark you just the way you write it.

As was the case in Harris and Thorp's (1999) study, the L2 students we interviewed reported that there were different cultural expectations among students and professors/instructors about roles, social distance, and duties, which affected students' learning. For example, an L2 student from Vietnam noticed casual and informal relationships between professors and students, while formality and distance characterized academic relationships in his home country. The lack of specific etiquette puzzled the student, who was used to more

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formality in his home country. Frustration surfaced and culminated when professors assumed prior knowledge and experiences with little or no opportunity created for L2 students' experiences. Some students expressed the feeling that professors need to be more culturally sensitive. For instance, the following 4th year Economics student remarked,

Because [it's] possible you will never understand what the professors are saying. And in economics, they talk about a lot of pension plans in Canada. International students don't have any background in Canadian public policy. It's pretty tough. And you have to, you have to find those information on your own. About information, like, we have lack of information. And your English skill prevents you from understanding fully in class.

A majority of former and current ESL and EAP students reported positive experiences with their English language instructors. Generally, students favoured those who inspired them and helped them think about the world and about life in addition to teaching English. As one commented, "it's just that I prefer a prof who ends up teaching you how to handle the knowledge... also teach you something else." L2 students expressed a desire to improve their critical thinking², which they suggested should probably be included in the content of EAP courses (Casanave, 2002).

The EAP students that we interviewed in the three universities considered in phase one of the study, also reported some unpleasant experiences with their instructors. In some cases, individual instructors appeared to show a preference for some students, which greatly affected other students' learning. Also, some instructors were reported to have rudely treated their L2 students and that upset the students. One undergraduate student reported,

When I took ESL program, I met many good teachers, but there are one or two teachers are not that nice, especially one, like I failed one time in ESL and that teacher really hurt me a lot because (the teacher said) 'you do not know how to speak English and you do not know how to use English' something like that. At that time I was frustrating for about half a year (crying), really.

² It is unclear how they are defining critical thinking. It may be a concept borrowed from instructors who justified their program on the basis of critical thinking.

Writing Centres and other Institutional Supports

L2 students used school resources and other institutional academic support, such as the writing centres or academic counselling centres, from time to time. However, since L2 students had a myriad of problems with their writing, the practices of the writing centres seemed unsatisfying and ineffective to many of them. For example, a 4th year student complained about the feedback provided by the writing centre which seemed to be focusing on the wrong issues:

You can go to writing center. They see the composition, but they are not particularly looking at grammatical mistakes. So still hard. And who can look at the grammar? Then you have to pay extra money to get a private tutor ...

Some schools and departments had their own academic support systems, such as tutors available on demand or supplementary language courses if students failed language tests. However, whether those practices are helpful and functioning well is under question and research is needed in this area. The following first-year, L2 student who entered the Commerce program described her experiences:

So they think well Business, so they give us a test that looks at how well we can write and form the phrases. So about two thirds of Commerce didn't pass it. So they offered The tutorial that would tell you [about] commas, all kind of things. Then you have to re-do the test. So that was it. Also I received their help as well. I met a tutor a couple of times and she helped with me in my assignments... I think it was a nice time, but I think it was not productive enough because I honestly believe, you know, that they don't do it on the regular basis. So I appreciate her time, but it was not enough for me to get support.

You know you have to meet the requirements of Commerce program, like you fail, if you don't get 65%, so you can't stay in Commerce. You have to go over 65. So that was a challenge for me...So after my first midterm, I spoke to the director of the program when they told me that maybe I should leave now and go to the language school, which I didn't do. Because I felt bad, if I don't survive in Commerce, I will have to go, but can't just,

you know, step back and do it, and before I even know what I am going to face. So if you kick me out, you just kick me out. But I am not going to do it voluntarily. I am not going to just pull it back. So given that, I actually could've known I have been here, you know, step back, yes. Then my mark in my first year, my second year and my mark I have now I've grown a lot. I get variable experience how to survive.

But you know it's all a lot of money and international students pay twice as much, so you can't force them to come and pay because I just think it is not fair for, you know, but at the same time, having some nice programs that can go along with the degree, or you know just something that just support them for the first, maybe two months of school, just be a better decision. Because talk about language, it's a lot of, more different culture, it's different values, different habits, different approaches, you know.

Other Social Support

Besides support systems mentioned above, L2 students also looked for other social supports to help them in their social and academic life. One common source of support that was frequently mentioned by L2 students was to join a club, go to Church or get involved in sports. The following L2 student felt joining a fraternity helped him academically, linguistically, and socially.

That [being in a fraternity] helps me out a lot, like that was one of my reasons why I join in. 'Cause it's really hard for a stranger to have a very large group of friends here, so I went to one of the club booths at the start of the year and joined in. It's still really good, all these people I meet, all these people I talk to. They help me out with my English; they help me out with other stuff. It's really helped me out with my English, yeah.

3) Academic Motivation

Early studies (Light, Xu, & Mossop, 1987; Johnson, 1988) found only a modest relationship between motivation and students' academic achievement. Motivation in this study, however, seemed to play an important role in these L2 students' academic acculturation. The students' reasons for choosing a Canadian

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university included a range of educational and career goals, financial considerations, visa approval considerations, safety, compared to other English speaking countries, and a perceived lack of discrimination in Canada compared to their home or other countries. The L2 students' comments in the section below suggest a number of different motivations for studying in Canada:

Because you know I think in China if I want to find a very good job, I have to learn English, and then I have to show them I have very good English, such as TOEFL score. I must have very high TOEFL score. And you know a lot of foreign people they come to China to do business or you know to do a lot of things. And if I want to do business, I have to communicate with foreign people who speak English. So English is very important for me.

Or,

So if you, for example, have a Russian degree, and then leave and go out to work in Canada, let's say, or the U.S. whatever, you have to prove that you are a specialist. You have to redo an exam. So in order to gain that freedom of choice, we need, I need the education in the university that will be accepted in the world. So I know if I go to the Great Britain, let's say, I have a Bachelor of Commerce from this University, people will know that's a good university and they will accept my degree and I wouldn't have to prove I was a specialist.

I should say like, I'm taking science courses- I like science- and now in this world, the top science papers or the top science- those things- they are all English. My father is a university professor in Physics. He always try to encourage me to study English, to learn some more English, because all the science papers, you must read how the knowledge is...you want to know they're all in English. You must to be able to start, you must know English. My father was very good at English, so that's what he told me when I was a little kid, playing around. So, when I grow up I just believe that I must know some more English to be able to be a scientist. So I came here, and that's a part of the reason, because if you want to see the world, and

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also other countries like France, now I choose Canada as an English speaking country.

It's much cheaper than the other country. And I find Canada is more stable than the other countries. I mean the lifestyle, so I choose Canada as the country I want to study in. I think it's because I study international business as well, and as I know that Canada is a multicultural country, so I choose to spend time in here and study in here. That's why I was in Canada.

I think that is decided [by] my parents and they choose Canada because it is an English speaking country; also compared with America or other countries, it's a little bit easier to get a visa to get in. And my goals...studying here, I want to finish my university in here and I'd like to take Education as my major.

Motivation for taking EAP was largely instrumental in nature, which is not surprising since EAP is fundamentally a route into mainstream university studies. For example,

Because, for sure because, I was enter to the English university and every professor will speak English to the students and I have to do the English assignment every class. So improve my English before I enter the university is very necessary. In my situation for now, that is the only reason I have. Maybe after I enter the university I will have another reason.

Cause I want to go to [university], I want get degree...the first thing would be complete the English course and to have the enough English ability to study in the university. That's my goal.

Family pressure was obviously a motivating factor for some L2 students we interviewed. It seemed in a number of cases that students made decisions to study in Canada unwillingly. Those students did not have long-term plans and they seemed to be studying only for the sake of their parents. Such a phenomenon is worrying:

Well, my parents sent me here and, well I want to improve my English so before I thought well, if I can come to an English

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environment, that would be very helpful. So I came to here to study and my parents want me to finish university here.

In China I had 4 years in university and then, at that time I, after like I really don't want to go to abroad. I think it's strange because I can also take [courses] in China and I don't really want to go to abroad. Then one day my family, my parents phone me, when I was in Beijing, they tell me, like, come home. Then you can go to Canada.... They just made that decision, and I was so surprised, and of course I thought I really didn't want to go.

All of the L2 students interviewed for this study reported that English played an important role in achieving their goals. In the short term, they pointed out that English was a tool for taking classes, finishing assignments, interacting with people, obtaining degrees, and looking for jobs. In the long term, they remarked that English was a tool to get global information and communicate with the world. For example, the L2 students commented:

It is really important, because all of our texts is in English. If I don't know English, I have no idea what it's talking about. And besides, most of the lecture, like also you have multicultural people in the lecture room deal, the prof will speak English fluently whether you are an international student or not.

Well, because English is the most, like important language right now. And, if you don't know English, you cannot find a good job - that's for sure. People think you speak like more fluent English, than they think that you got high education and stuff and a chance for you to get a higher job, like higher position for job--like you get more chances for that.

Overall, L2 students took their learning and education seriously. In general, they wanted to be successful in their courses (by getting high marks), and to obtain degrees. A majority of L2 students thought marks and scores were criteria to evaluate whether they were successful or not, but a few did not think so. When asked the question, "Is being successful academically important to you?", L2 students responded in unique ways:

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Yeah....yeah definitely. Well, when you take courses when you spend money on that, you want it to be good. Why not? (laughs). I don't pay the tuition to fail the course. I pay to pass it. With a better score I'm going to be a Master, when you must have a good score on the, good grade.

Because I'm a student and I just like getting good marks. It make me feel good (laughs) I'm really selfish. Yeah, it's very important. It makes me feel that I work this much and that's how much I've accomplished and that it's worth that whatever I have paid for it.

It is important to understand what you're doing, but I don't think marks show how much you know, or how good you know. Like, I don't believe in marks personally, but I do agree you have to understand, you have to learn what's going on and you have be on top of your stuff. But I'm not really, marks are just ABC but they don't tell you how should you know- especially in our courses, you have to real practical, you have to be able to do stuff with your hands, analyze stuff or like be creative, 'cause I know a lot of people who get A+s, but they have absolutely no sense of creativity. They have nothing of their own- all they did was cram the books and got good marks, right? So being academically successful is one of my goals, but if I don't get A+s or A-s I don't stress out. Like as long as I know myself I understand, I know myself I can deal with it. That's it.

In addition to academic accomplishment, we also noticed that for some L2 students developing social skills and having interactions with other people were equally important. As one said,

When I was in class [being successful academically was important to me]. But maybe now it's not important you know because I think now it's just getting the social skills ...That's right. I am also focusing on the social skills and interactions.

In general these L2 students thought that being successful academically was important, and they most often equated success to high marks. Bers and Smith (1990) concluded that the seriousness with which L2 students approached their studies was integral to academic performance. Although most L2 students

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interviewed for this study indicated that they worked hard to learn new material in their courses, one L2 student communicated a negative attitude towards his academic study, and an awareness that his attitude might impede his academic success.

I think there is only one problem. It's my attitude about studying. I'm just frustrated about how I'm acting. I know what I should do but... I just don't do that.... For my Economics course, I'm not doing so well, 'cause I don't do well. Like, lazy. It's like, for my Calculus course is pretty good. It's like it will be easy, cause most of it I already study in high school in China. So I got no problems with that.

As the student above suggests, some students may experience frustration or tension when they are unable to manage their time effectively and/or apply themselves to learning new concepts within new disciplines. This is the case for students regardless of their language background, however.

4) Language and Academic Background

The L2 students we interviewed reported a wide variety of English language and academic backgrounds. They differed considerably with regard to the amount of exposure they had prior to enrolling in a Canadian university. Some indicated that their only exposure to English was in EFL classes in secondary school. Others indicated that they had completed tertiary level ESL coursework in Canada or another English speaking country.

Students with only EFL background ranged from those who started to learn English in Grade 1 to those that began studying English in high school. They reported that they had attempted to improve their English by participating in both academic and social activities, for example, joining clubs such as the English Corner to practice their English orally, participating in English contests, taking private lessons from teachers out of school, attending private English classes, and participating in exchange programs in Canada and other English speaking countries. Such extra-curricular academic and social activities increased L2 students' interest in English learning. For example, one L2 student recounted the benefits of an exchange program in Australia:

Also I was on exchange in Australia for about five months. Then I went to MacRobertson Girls' High School in Victoria, which I thought gave me a good appreciation about what

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language is and how it was spoken... So I think Australia definitely helped me to, you know, be able to hear some words, [otherwise] I wouldn't be able to do it today if I hadn't been there.

L2 students reported a range of ESL learning experiences as well. Some had attended high school in Canada for a number of months or years and some were attending or had attended ESL or EAP programs prior to the courses they were enrolled in at the time of the study.

The students also differed in their academic backgrounds, with some reporting university-level coursework completed in their home countries and in Canada prior to enrolling in a Canadian university. They explained that experience in tertiary level education contributed to their learning and acculturation in Canadian undergraduate programs, as evidenced in this comment of an L2 student from China:

Because in my first year in China, because that's my first university, I didn't do quite well, but my first year in [this university] is quite better. I think that's partly because I have already known what the university is like.

5) Personal Information

The L2 students we interviewed came from various countries, including China, Hong Kong, Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Iran, and Russia. Most were international or visa students, however, three of the ESL students were landed immigrants. Some had started to learn English as early as age 6 in kindergarten, while others had begun as late as 16, in high school. For a majority of L2 students, English was the only language they spoke besides their first language. The students had been in Canada for a minimum of two months to a maximum of five years. Many respondents were in their early twenties and from relatively affluent backgrounds in their homelands, but by no means "rich" by Canadian standards. In fact, the following 1st year Biological Sciences student could have been speaking for many of the others, whose parents were making significant sacrifices for them to be able to study in Canada:

When you are my parents, working in China, and this is me here and they spend money for my education, that exchange rate or...it's a serious economic pressure for them. So, for that reason I decide to work here as a part time worker to make

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some money to help, you know. But the working, or taking a job and taking five courses together, that's really tired. It's not good. It won't be good for the academic career.

Due to high program costs, many L2 students we interviewed had to work part time to pay for their tuition and living expenses. A 2nd year Engineering student described his life in this way:

I have six [courses] this semester... 30 hours a week I guess. In the classrooms ...I think I mark assignments for 5 hours for math department and 3 hours for physics department. And I work 6, 7 hours a week in the library. That's all my working. That's all my working. ... I am just trying to [support myself] because I am an international student. So tuition is so high. \$18,000. Domestic student is like \$8,000.

Because of financial pressures, some L2 students put themselves at risk by taking as many courses as possible, as this 4th year Finance undergraduate reported:

I'm taking too many courses a year. I'm taking 15 this year and 14 last year. Six this semester and I do spring/summer too, so basically I have no break. ...I just like, I see people who take 3 a semester and they still drop one or two. I know people like that. They're my friends, I have no right to say anything, but I just don't feel like wasting time and wasting my parents money, because it's really not my money. No matter they are rich or not, just like, I don't feel comfortable to do it. So I try to do as much as I can and at the same time I need really academic standing to get my Masters later. That's what become really hard for me.

As is evident in many of the above comments, the students expressed concerned over the time required to complete their program and the overall cost of study to themselves and or their parents.

6) Individual Field of Study

Students interviewed for this study represented a wide number of disciplines, both in terms of the faculties they were currently enrolled in, or, if they had not yet begun undergraduate courses beyond EAP, then the faculty they were

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interested in entering. Disciplinary interests represented in the study included Engineering, Science and Mathematics, Biological Science, Economics, Business, Finance, General Arts (with plans to enrol in Education), and Psychology. Reasons for their choice of discipline varied, including whether the field was language intensive or not, potential financial benefits, and personal interest.

When L2 students started their regular undergraduate programs, they tried to match their English level with the language demands of the field in which they were interested. In fact, whether or not they believed that their English level could meet the demands of a particular program often becomes a more important factor than their personal interest in choosing a major, because they were worried that their lack of English ability might undermine their academic success. For instance, the following student indicates that he was very aware of his English level, when he chose his field. He began by taking courses in science and mathematics, although he did not really care for these fields. However, he was considering switching to the business program even though the field he was really interested in was political science. He felt that his level of English might undermine his academic achievement if he chose Political Science.

It's [math] easy... it's more like universal language. I don't even need too much English skill for it ... It's just numbers. It doesn't mean I like it too much though... she [professor] talk about numbers too I think and plus I at least has some basic words from high school back here. I took math 30 31 and physics 30 so I become easier to me than other like second language people without ESL...Actually I was thinking about political science to begin with but mainly it just kind of unrealistic for me to take it now. Like my English skill not that good... I don't feel that confident to lots of political science courses because I'll do, it's going to be really hard for me and I don't think I can pass it easily... because my English (laughing) is not that good. Ya, I really think that is one of the biggest problems...[As for Business] partially, it will be, but at least I can handle it. Seeing as how it's just several courses. But if it's all like full of English courses and reading stuff like psychology or whatever, it become a really hard for me.

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However, some L2 students did take their personal interests into consideration when they chose their fields of study rather than choosing strategically. For example, the following EAP student is guided by her interest.

Before, I wanted to be an engineer...because my dad is an engineer...but now I would like to help...I want to be a nurse...I like to take care of the old people.

Other L2 students chose their fields of study for financial reasons. A 4th year student explained his choice from the point of view of future financial benefit:

Getting a degree and I can do something to earn money later.
That's why I go for business and finance and accounting.

English language requirements within courses varied both between fields and from course to course within fields. Some fields require high levels of English and some do not. For example, at one university, an Engineering student reported that for him there was, "Not much writing or oral discussion, just lab reports, formulas." On the other hand, a Business student at the same university reported a great deal of language-intensive work, including "[a] presentation, oral reports, essay, [and] group work." English language requirements also varied from course to course within some fields. A student majoring in Economics at the same university commented, "For economics, I don't really have a lot of problems because that course requires a lot of math... In economics, you can take a lot of discussion courses and essay courses... like me, I try to avoid these courses as much as possible."

Generally, L2 students reported that their coursework and exams created a heavy load. Their daily life was overloaded with classes, assignments, and exams. Some students seemed to be burned out by their course work. Here again time and time management emerged as issues for the students in the study. For instance, the following 4th year Business student expressed strong feelings about the stress created by her academic work load:

The pressure, the time pressure officially goes up when you didn't give much time for final exams. People who just finish Thursday have to prepare exam on Friday which means you don't have time. I am not saying I am resting a day or so because usually you have projects at the end of term... right now,

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the most frustrating thing is, well, I think not frustrating, but stressed. A lot of stress, a lot of work to do.

Most L2 students who were also involved in social activities and part-time work lived a very hectic life. A 3rd year Engineering student described the stress he felt as a result of the tension created by the need to balance academic and social activities:

I need more time (laughs). I need more time! I'm telling my roommate sometimes that I wish the day was like 26 hours or 27 so a few hours extra on it. It's just like, I have a really busy life, I have six courses every term--that's like a lot of work. I work part-time too. I'm involved with the fraternity that includes a couple of meetings and social events you have to attend.

The students also commented on the English language proficiency of their instructors which varied from university to university, from major to major, and course to course. Compared with ESL or EAP instructors, who were mostly native speakers and had "perfect English", a number of professors at the tertiary level spoke English as a second language. This phenomenon created difficulties for some L2 students:

There are lots of second language professors now. Like I had 4 second language professors last semester right? And uh some have very heavy accent. And not too good English. So to me it's harder to follow them too.... and some of the professors when they're lecturing are difficult to understand because they're not speaking English as their first language.... yeah French. Because like it's just so different. And uh the professor try to explain in English right? For normal students totally fine. But for me, I can't get it. Because when she said something and then she explain in English, I didn't even know what this mean English so how can I catch French?

However, several felt that different accents were not a problem, particularly in Math-based courses:

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A lot of them [professors] who speak languages other than English, actually, there's no problem. Like probably teaching like Math or courses that are numerical. You don't need abstract description or words or explanations, it's just straightforward.

Surprisingly, having an instructor that spoke English as a second language encouraged some L2 students. For example, a 1st year General Arts student, who hoped to enter Education, found the situation encouraging and stimulating.

Now I take 3 courses and all the teachers are not native--I mean like one is from India, another is a black guy and another lady is French speaking speaker and all their English also have an accent--so it's difficulty for me to understand.... Before I thought this was a big problem, but I saw lots of other examples. Like, lots of my professors, I mean, for psychology or TA are not English native speaker, but they can still be a professor or a TA, so they kind of encouraged me that language is not a problem, if you are sure you can be successful. They also cannot speak very well, but they are very confident and they can explain what they are talking about. Well, they stay in Canada much longer than me, so...before I thought well I cannot do it. I was worry about if I could finish degree, but now I'm kind of 'if they can do that, why can I not do that'.

7) EAP and English Language Support

As the focus of the study was directed at models of EAP instruction and English language support, many comments were elicited from the L2 students regarding English language programs. All L2 students who had gone through ESL, EAP or undergraduate programs noticed their English had improved in comparison with their English proficiency upon arrival. Not only were there improvements in the four skills of speaking, reading, writing, and listening, some L2 students indicated that they had become "comfortable" communicating in English and enjoyed the English language. It is important to be aware of the fact that proper conversation involves more than competency in language alone; actually, comfort level, including understanding cultural norms and nonverbal behaviours, is crucial to successful interaction (Volet & Ang, 1998). The students in the study seemed to recognize this:

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When I came here around a year ago, I learned if I want to talk something I don't need to think about my Chinese and then translate to English. Now, I was talking something when I want to talk. That is the most improved part like into here. Because when I was in China, I would think what's this sentence in Chinese, and translate. But now, I think almost of them I don't need to think about that.

When I first come to Canada, I just can write one paragraph- it's just three sentences or four sentences, that's it. Indeed it took me, it took very long time, because I just learn grammar or a little speaking, but I didn't know how to write an essay. Just writing. So when I first came here, I just write a sentence. I just write one sentence or three sentences, that's it--there's no logic, just that's it. But now, when I compared the first sentences and now essay, yeah now essay is better, much better than the first one.

I think my English is improved and just gave it a fact that in Commence program, there are a lot of different styles and a lot of special words. So I think that improved not just speaking and listening, but writing. Not writing correct words, but writing in a business style. What we had to do, we try memos and business notes. And also from essays, you know we had to do some other courses. So I think it has been improved greatly since the time I've been here. But a lot of work definitely...first of all, the first thing I can hear what you say and I understand every single word, like it's not a mess. It makes a lot of sense. Then the second thing I guess is of course I'm so fluent then even without thinking about it. Like, I am just speaking what I think I should say and make sentences. And of course, the writing skills are better than before, not just that writing, but the business style writing. I think those are. I feel more comfortable with it. I just see it's my second language although it's not. I feel more comfortable with it. I am enjoying the language.

Most of the L2 students we interviewed had received EAP support, and in general, they felt that it was necessary and helpful. Typically such language support developed academic skills, connected L2 students to academic disciplines, provided feedback on their English language development,

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introduced them to recurring academic practice with the academy, etc. They realized that high TOFEL or other standardized test scores did not necessarily mean they would succeed in their regular undergraduate programs. The following L2 student compared his situation with an English requirement with that of his L2 friends':

I think it [the university made the right decision requiring us to take English] very positive to us...Just for my friends he go to do a degree at OU, he just study very very hard but English still not good and taking very slow...My other friend, she, her English not so good and she go to York University and failed courses, So now she just come back to study English.

Some of the L2 students considered in the study did not go through EAP programs. One 4th year student looked back on her undergraduate experience, regretting the initial lack of English support:

If you are lack of some language skills or any other skill, if you are not supportive by any other programs, you have to build language skills. That brings you so much down on the first year, back to the first two years. Then I think it's almost impossible to come back, up. So there is a result you are not ended up as the best student. So you get hard for you to find a job. So you are screwed up. ...But you know it's all a lot of money and international students pay twice as much, so you can't force them to come and pay because I just think it is not fair for, you know, but at the same time, having some nice programs that can go along with the degree, or you know just something that just support them for the first, maybe two months of school, just be a better decision.... So I think that transition when international students, especially people who come here just for school and don't have family here, my friend did. When I did, other people do. It's hard when there's no one around and you have deal with language and stay that you know it's so important for your job.

L2 students generally thought they were in a better position than other students who did not take EAP courses. They indicated that EAP courses improved their English skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening. EAP courses prepared students to enter universities and helped them to deal with disciplinary classes and understand cultural differences in academic learning,

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including how to use library, how to take notes, how to write academic papers, how to quote others' work, how to critique, and how to think independently. EAP courses helped students deal with the language and academic expectations of Canadian universities, such as the questioning process during lectures (McKenna, 1987). EAP courses also identified the level of English required for university and clarified the role English would play their university life. Thus, students had an idea of what universities were like. EAP courses, consequently, helped students get “better grades” and feel “more comfortable speaking English”. For example,

I know people that who took TOEFL or whatever, other exams, and they still passed and went to university. They either already learned how to write in China already, or they just like tried really hard to pass TOEFL here because they find ESL is too hard for them. And I know lots of people like that, they dropped out from ESL and decided to take TOEFL just because it's easier, I have to say. I passed my TOEFL exam, but I still took ESL. But I passed it already, at the time I had ESL 145 but I just decide to take it. I'll say I'm way better off.

Because my friend have similar English skill like me and they entered to the university already and they got lots of problems with the English 101 course and the Economic course, and this course was getting, not really high marks. That is why I choose a different way to study English first, before to enter to the university. Then, when I'm ready to enter to the university, the language won't be the big problem for me to pass the course or get higher marks...[EAP teachers] give us lots of knowledge about how to study in the university, how to take the notes when we listen to the professor's thinking and how to organize our ideas and by writing and by explain to the professor what you want and what you need. My teacher told me if I really cannot follow what the teacher said, I can ask a question and stop them for a while.

In the following excerpt, one student compared his experience in taking language support (advanced-level EAP) during his first year of university study with that of two friends – both of his friends were admitted into first-year Engineering on the basis of language-residency requirements and without additional language support.

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Ok...I was really angry ... angry and disappointed, you know ... when I came to this university. I wanted to study Engineering...well, I had graduated from a high school here – in Ottawa – in English and with good marks. I had my admission to Engineering, but I was only in high school here for two years, so I had to take the CAEL, and then I had to take an English course. I didn't think I needed any more English! But I had a friend ... uh one friend, who was just like me. Instead of staying at this university and taking a test he left. He had good marks and he at another ... uh ... this other university uh .. they let him start his Engineering program without any test or English course. Then there was my other friend who had three years in high school. He was a good student too. He didn't have to take the English test here, and he started his Engineering program right away. Well, now I look back ..er.. I'm just finishing my second year of Engineering, and I'm doing really well. My friend at the other university failed most of his courses. He's really ...well...he's really in trouble, I think. The friend who started his Engineering program right away [because he had three years of high school], he's doing ok...but you know, he's behind me now. He failed so many of his courses in first year, he had to re-take most of them. I guess in the end, I was the lucky one.

It is important to note that this L2 student's views were not commonly expressed by other students, who were interviewed, and who were in the early years of their academic program. However, most of the students who had taken EAP courses expressed appreciation for what they had learned. As suggested above, however, they were more likely to appreciate a required EAP class after they had completed it and were studying in their academic program.

The section below provides an overview of the participants' responses to language support – whether EAP or ESL, including:

- preferred English activities,
- language course emphasis,
- level of English mastery in specific skill areas (e.g., listening, speaking, reading, writing, logic, high-order thinking, vocabulary/terminology),
- preferred forms of feedback from language teachers, and

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- attitudes toward collaborative work in language learning.

Preferred Activities

When asked what kind of English activity helped them the most, the L2 students listed all of the following: reading newspaper/books/materials, taking classes, watching TV, doing presentations, attending social events, work, and talking with the people. For example, the following L2 student described how reading helped her in learning vocabulary and grammar:

By reading I can increase my vocabulary. By reading, I can, for the grammars, when you try to read more, you can feel like, just give you a feeling of how the sentence should be and by that you can know the grammar, if it's correct or not. And by reading, I'll be interesting in those knowledge, too. I just want to know more.

Several L2 students mentioned that the activity that helped them the most was interacting with people. Through interaction, L2 students obtained updated, authentic language input, which greatly enhanced their language comprehension and production. One L2 student put it this way:

Just being with people. Being in the situation. I learn a lot, like a person will learn a lot when it's like when people, like in a situation people will, something happens and people talk about it, so I can... I try to repeat it and kind of go over it again, by myself later on, and remember what word they used or what sentence they used or what kind of reaction they had. Like especially like you know like facial reactions I try to keep in mind.

Besides communicating with people, L2 students also listed participation in social activities and work with other people as not only useful in developing their language capability, but also in helping them grow and expand their perspectives. For instance, the following L2 student mentioned her experience as a volunteer as the most helpful activity.

I think that last summer I was a volunteer in the transition program for the International Center, and um....there's one part that they help out, because I was one of the volunteers, and we

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need to train through a program, and we have like brainstorming activities. People have different ideas and sometimes they come up with new terms that when they explain it, so I can know what it is about.

Preferred Course Emphasis

As for which type of English course helped them most, most of L2 students interviewed for this study singled out courses that developed their writing as the most helpful. Writing courses seemed to have helped these students jump from informal communication in writing to formal, academic English use.

With regard to the mastery of English, the L2 students considered in this study singled out a number of skills or capabilities in which they had achieved mastery. For example, some L2 students indicated that they felt they could express themselves “very well” and did not “feel tense” or “limited” in speaking English. Some felt that they had acquired good communication skills, as they could “have decent conversations and people don’t feel bored”. Some indicated they could “read fast for the main ideas”. Others noted that they had good “testing skills”. A few indicated that they had developed effective essay writing skills. A number, however, commented that they had not mastered English in any area. As one participant put it, “the more I learn, the weaker I feel”.

These students differed as well in the areas in which they felt they needed to improve their English capabilities. All of the following were mentioned as areas in need of improvement: writing, knowledge of specific academic words, general vocabulary, idiomatic expressions and usage, reading, grammar, pronunciation/accent, note-taking, speaking, and presentations.

With regard to the students’ perceptions of their mastery of specific skill areas in English, some represented comments are reported below:

1) Listening

The L2 participants generally reported that they were able to guess meaning from context while listening and to make key connections. Vocabulary, accent, pace, background or domain knowledge, and attention span were all factors that they mentioned as sources of concern in listening. For example, one participant explained:

So well, I don’t know if...and for the movie, well movie, well I can understand a movie, but I cannot understand what is being

said in a song. So I guess maybe, they have some content, you know going on in the movie, so probably I can guess something, but for the some, totally lost. Yeah (laughs). So I think for me if there's some, if I know what's going on, what they basically talk about, the topic, so I could understand, by guessing ...but if I don't know about the topic, I cannot totally understand.

If it's my first language, I wouldn't feel so exhausted every time, when I have like 3 classes in one day. I think, it's just like it happens automatically, I don't even notice it. I'm totally fine to listen to a prof speaking in English and I don't have to translate in my head anymore now, but I'll still be really exhausted after. Yeah, it's just like one time I went to a movie with my friend and like watched two movies with her together and I was like, so exhausted after. But I know if it's like 2 Chinese movie, I won't.

2) Speaking

Regarding speaking, students generally thought they could manage daily conversation, however, academic speaking such as presentations were a problem. Some L2 students felt that they could not speak in an organized way and frequently made grammatical mistakes. Some felt they needed to speak more slowly to be understood, while others felt their strength was that they could speak quickly. Vocabulary, accent, and relevant vocabulary or idiomatic expressions were concerns for some L2 students:

Speaking was my strongest skill and now it's better, of course ... I have learned to speak more slowly you know and people seem better to understand me now. I really like my teacher – uh language teacher's input on that...really.

Some students would have liked to have more corrective feedback from their teachers:

We mainly speak English in groups. Sometimes it's hard though if too many other people speak the same language. The teacher sets things up in class for talking but sometimes I would like [her] to give me more corrections.

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Many students valued the opportunity to improve their speaking. Some related that value to their academic or professional goals:

The hardest part for me is presentation. I shy and even in my own language speaking like that is hard. This is my goal for learning because in my field [i.e. business] this so important to me.

3) Reading

With regard to reading, most L2 students felt they read too slowly. Students felt that reading was “really stressful” when given “around 3 or 4 pages to read in 10 minutes” in classes. Students felt that academic vocabulary and discipline-specific background were obstacles to reading quickly. A student observed:

Reading... my headache. Also if this reading is not about academic thing, maybe I can understand very well, but if it's just about very academic, like psychology or biology, like that, I will, even though they use simple words I don't understand.

Or,

I'm talking about the...maybe vocabulary or like understanding the, cos' sometimes I look at the paragraph or sentence, I know every single word and I should perhaps what does that sentence mean, but I like, I'm totally lost. I have no idea what does that mean. Maybe it's just like understanding the sentences or how they try to tell you the ideas, you know reading is totally different and all this artsy stuff comes in and then you have to--cos' especially if you want to read a novel, you got to understand like how they try to replace the words to make it sound cooler, sound nicer then... it's just how they put the words together, cos' writing is totally different thing, people don't write exactly the way that they speak, so you have to figure out the ways they try to put their ideas together.

4) Writing

L2 students' comments were very mixed regarding writing. Some reported that they could write grammatically, while others described their grammatical control as "horrible". Some felt they had good ideas and content but were challenged with regard to organization. Some reported that they felt constrained by a lack of vocabulary. One student articulately summarized a phenomenon that a number of other participants mentioned, namely the recognition that he could comprehend much more than he could produce:

Writing... I know a long range of words, but I can't recall it when I'm writing it. It's like really hard to recall these specific words or complicated words I've learned. But when I'm reading it, I have no problem--I read a lot and understand it- and I barely see myself going back to the dictionary and like looking up a word, right? But when I'm writing, I can't recall these words--it's just like my writing vocabulary is not as big as my listening or my reading vocabulary.

Moreover, the L2 students commented that their writing courses not only helped them to develop greater English proficiency, but they also prepared them for academic work within their disciplines. In the comment below, one of the L2 students explains how a writing course helped her learn the most:

It [writing] was really difficult for me. 'Cause sometimes like I sit down, I can't do this, I'm not made for this, like, writing in a second language is really hard. It's just about the kind of structure of the ideas, you know, sometimes I notice it myself, like my language, everything is upside down, like the way we try to inform people is totally different from English. And I learned all this stuff, like you have totally forget that and start over and see how they start, how they go the introduction, body and conclusion. You have to learn all this stuff and how to present yourself in essays. It was totally different and I don't know, it was a great experience for me.

Another L2 student commented on differences between English and Chinese in the syntactic and rhetorical organization of written text:

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When I write, use English, sometimes I always transfer the Chinese to English, but you know, I'm not sure. Sometimes I'm confused if it's correct in English and in writing I always think in Chinese way, but you know I don't quite understand, know...the Canadian people they have to write in English, in Chinese we write something like a circle, but here they do also really tell you what they want to say, what they want to write in this sentence, very directly. So sometimes, I'm confused.

5) Vocabulary and Discipline-specific terminology

L2 students we interviewed did not report many language-specific problems in their courses. However, for non-Science majors one language-related problem that was frequently mentioned was vocabulary and idiomatic expression. These L2 students generally understood that each field had its own academic vocabulary and terminology, which differed from vocabulary used in daily conversation. They felt they were at a disadvantage when compared with their L1 classmates in both formal academic and informal or casual situations. As one Biological Sciences student remarked:

Vocabulary--that's the biggest problem. I studied biology and that's (laughs) well that's just you just need to remember everything. That's why most Chinese people, they don't like to study biology here. Those words even the English speaking don't know- the Latin name of the species, genus. But the others, when the instructor starts to talk to them about something, other people seem to know it's something- like a name of an animal or the name of a plant. I just don't have any idea about what it is, but well, just that's the words we don't teach in class. It's kind of common knowledge--you should know that if you grow up here. I know the family, the Chinese name, but not in English.

A Psychology student explained:

Why I hate talking about something about the uh ... academic stuff. Maybe it's because I was limited on the academic vocabulary, so yeah. Like, for specific courses--something like linguistics or psychology, they use very professional words. And if we discuss a problem in the class, we have to use them.

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But sometimes I don't know how to use them. Sometimes, it's hard to pronounce them.

Non-Science L2 students also felt that their academic success was impeded by their lack of academic vocabulary and terminology. For example, a Psychology student commented on difficulty experienced in writing:

I have to think about how to write this and how, what, how to spell this word, right? And if I forget this word I have to think about another word to use instead of this one. I have to worry about if I make any mistake...

He also reported difficulty in responding to multiple-choice examination questions due to problems understanding specific vocabulary words:

And, like for example, multiple choice--the answer are really very tricky, like one or couple words different. So if I don't know the vocabulary, I won't know what the answer is. And I am always easily lost, because I don't know the difference between those two words.

Compared with Science and non-Science students, L2 students in Engineering did not report problems with vocabulary or terminology and academic words to the same degree. The following Engineering student explained:

Well, I really don't have that much problem in my courses. Pretty easy I can go through them. My courses are real technical, there's not that much description, it's just simple English. Most of my courses. A few courses need a little more description, but like I already passed those courses, so I think I have no problem. Like probably teaching like Math or courses that are numerical--you don't need abstract description or words or explanations. It's just straightforward.

Assessment and feedback

L2 students generally identified both summative and formative feedback as motivational and helpful in learning. They commented that an overall score or mark on a class assignment or test generally motivated them. They indicated that

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some teachers gave feedback on specific areas that were in need of improvement and wrote specifically about problems with particular words or sentences while some made notes beside mistakes and asked students to self-correct. One L2 student described a positive experience with assessment that supported his learning:

I think my instructor is very helpful, like his idea. He told me not pay more attention about the vocabulary, about the language. Pay more attention about your ideas and what's your thought about the novel, like when we do the writing stuff, so the most important thing is your idea, your support- how you can support your thesis stuff. But not, like add lots of lexical vocabulary, make it sound much better and stuff, but the idea is very poor. In that way you still fail the essay, yeah the essay. Just like, you have to support you have a higher mark. And people pay attention about what you think about not how beautiful your language sounds. That's why it take me lots of time on writing, because I always want to use most difficult language words to say something, but when you look some Canadian writing, they just use normal conversation vocabulary to explain what they think about, but their ideas was excellent, so they still get very high marks. So right now, for me to do some assignment stuff, I just say exactly what I'm thinking about, what's my idea. I don't want to put the article too long or use lots of vocabulary and stuff. Very simple and very directly to say what you are talking about.

On the other hand, some L2 students wished teachers could give more feedback and correct them on their speaking. The students understood, however, that this practice might not be good for everyone. As one student commented,

I think people still, even teachers, not just to me, to most students people tend not to correct their speaking. Maybe because they think it's rude and they tend to understand students and they tend to encourage them to talk more, so they don't correct them. But some of my friends do correct me and I think it's really helpful. But in might make people feel uncomfortable, when someone do it. ... (In EAP courses) I don't think they give enough feedback for that. They do talk to you, and then some people learn how to talk, by listening to other

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talk. I think that's a feedback they can give you, but I don't think they correct you...I wished they'd done that more to me, but maybe to some people it's just not comfortable to.

Collaborative learning

As for working with others, some students preferred to work alone and to learn in traditional ways through lectures delivered by professors or teachers. Most of the students who were interviewed felt that working with others was beneficial. Some could see advantages in both:

The group work is really help for me. In my country's education system, they would like every people's working alone and doing everything by themselves. I think they break the connection between the students. They won't have their own experience to explain, they only follow the stance what the teacher says. In here, working with the group and working with teacher will help lot, because the teacher can tell me what's my weak side and they will tell me some of the culture, some of the problem. And everything that I don't know. Some of my classmates help me lots because not all of them from China, some from Korea and some from Japan, and even some people was from China, from different part of China, they can give me lots of information that I don't know. And group job, let me know. When I was working with group, some people can find my weak side, and they can tell me how should I improve my skill for writing or for reading or for some part. But if I was working alone, I won't get any answers.... Because the professor and teacher was teaching language for a long time and when they have a look about my assignment and my work, they will know what part of problem and how I should improve myself. That is something I can't learn from my friend because they have the same English skill like me.... If the teacher give us several questions and wants us to discuss with something, and after that we will do the writing, and discuss with my classmates can help me to get more background and more information and some idea about how to do my writing.

Regardless of their current knowledge of English, in general the L2 students considered in this study had high expectations regarding their potential.

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They expected they would eventually be able to speak English clearly, fluently, and naturally in both informal and formal contexts. They felt they would increase their reading speed and that they would be able to write effectively in English.

Outcomes of Phase 1: Questionnaire and Model Development

Analysis of the data from the interviews conducted at the three universities participating in phase one of the study resulted in the identification of key factors affecting the academic acculturation process. In total, 77 factors were identified from the literature review and interviews. The factors were colour coded regarding their sources. Below is the list of factors that were identified by source, several factors were combined with another factor.

Factors that appear in 1 of the exploratory research studies (Berman, Cheng, and Fox)	Factors that appear in 2 of the exploratory research studies (Berman, Cheng, and Fox)
Reasons for studying, or Goals About Canada/Canadians About English Must work harder than L1s Must make sacrifices Expectations vs. reality Determination Critical/analytic skills Asking for help Reading ahead Family Writing Centres Study Systems Group work, presentations Working on campus Familiarity with Canada Program costs Need to work Course load Academic support systems English proficiency of instructors Course intensity (hrs/wk) Class size Program cost Admissions requirements EAP or ESP Choices Encouraging English Use	Seriousness/maturity Assignments and studying English proficiency upon arrival Reading/Writing/Listening/Speaking Type/extent of L1 writing experience Integration EAP/University studies Requirements
	Factors that appear in all 3 exploratory research studies (Berman, Cheng, and Fox)
	Attitudes and beliefs About learning Family pressures Time management Other social support Time spent using L1 Time spent using English socially Field of study/Major Factors in choice of field
	Factors that appear in both the literature review and 1 or more of the research studies (Berman, Cheng, and Fox)
Factors that appear in the literature review	Personality Friends L1 vs. L2 issues/choices English Experience in/beyond school Educational level Homestay Age Gender Country of origin Status: Visa/immigrant/refugee Financial issues

Explanation of Factors' Colour Coding

[F#] = Factor Number



Grey [G] = Factor appears in Literature Review



Green [Gn] = Factor appears in all 3 exploratory research studies (Berman, Cheng, Fox)



Purple [P] = Factor appears in 2 of the exploratory research studies (Berman, Cheng, Fox)



Yellow [Y] = Factor appears in 1 of the exploratory research studies (Berman, Cheng, Fox)



Multiple colours = Factor appears in both the Literature Review and 1 or more of the exploratory research studies (Berman, Cheng, Fox)

Categories

As summarized above, we grouped the data from both sources of input, the literature review and the interviews, into seven final “categories”: Learning and Coping Strategies; Support; Academic Motivation; Language and Academic Background; Personal History; Individual Field of Study; EAP and English Support. [For examples of specific phrases that were drawn from the interview transcripts and used as the basis of questionnaire items, see Appendix 2].

Organization of items into the categories

For the questionnaire, factors were grouped in relation to the categories (see below):

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Learning and coping strategies

Academic

Critical/analytic skills (Y)
Time management (Gn)
Assignments and studying (P)
Asking for help (Y)
Reading ahead (Y)
Choices encouraging English use (Y)

Social

Time spent using L1 (Gn)
Time spent in autonomous play (G)
Time spent using English socially (Gn)
Homestay (M)
Working on campus (Y)
Familiarity with Canada (Y)

Supporting systems

Academic

Writing Centres (Y)
Professors/TAs (G)
Study Systems (Y)
Academic support systems (Y)

Social

Friends (M)
L1 vs. L2 issues/choices (M)
Family (Y)
Other social support (Gn)

Personal History

Age (M)
Gender (M)
Country of origin (M)
Status: Visa/immigrant/
refugee (M)
Parents' educational
level (G)
Financial issues (M)
Program costs (Y)
Need to work (Y)

Individual Field of Study

Field of study/
Major (Gn)
Requirements (P)
Course load (Y)
Factors in choice
of field (Gn)
English proficiency
of instructors (Y)

EAP and English Support

English proficiency upon
arrival (P)
Reading/Writing/Listening/
Speaking (P)
Group work, presentations (Y)
Course intensity (hrs/wk) (Y)
Class size (Y)
Program cost (Y)
Admissions requirements (Y)
EAP or ESP (Y)
Integration with academic
studies (P)

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Academic Motivation

Reasons for studying, or Goals (Y)
Seriousness/maturity (P)
Attitudes and beliefs (G)
About Canada/Canadians (Y)
About English (Y)
About learning (Gn)
Must work harder than L1s (Y)
Must make sacrifices (Y)
Expectations vs. reality (Y)
Family pressures (Gn)
Personality (M)
Determination (Y)

Language and Academic Background

Number of years in high school (G)
Previous tertiary-level experience (G)
Type/extent of L1 writing experience (P)
English Experience in/beyond school (M)
Educational level (M)

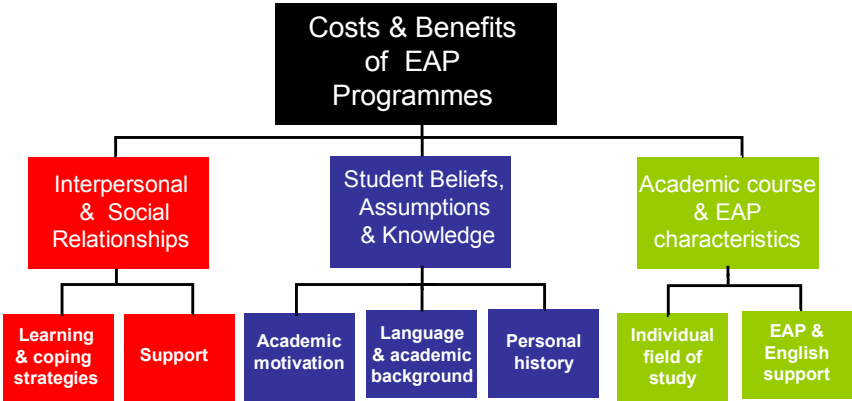
To explain how these categories and factors relate to the questionnaire, here are two example questions: *I am serious about my academic studies*, and *I feel I have to work harder than other students who are native speakers of English*. These questions respectively relate to the *Determination* and *Must work harder than L1s* factors under the *Academic Motivation* category.

Having grouped the interview data into seven categories and taking into account the factors identified in the research literature, we identified three higher-order categories within which the seven categories could be grouped, namely: Interpersonal and Social Relationships; Student Beliefs, Assumptions and Knowledge; and Academic Course and EAP Characteristics (see Diagram 1, below).

By the Spring of 2005, we had developed a draft questionnaire based on these specifications, which has since been distributed to L2 students at all English-medium Canadian universities with language programs. Results of the survey of English programs will be available by Spring 2007.

Diagram 1

Overview of Questionnaire Specifications



Conclusion

Overall, the interviews with 28 L2 students helped us to get an in-depth understanding of the factors that these students perceive are contributing to their transition to and engagement with undergraduate academic study. The semi-structured format of the interviews allowed the students to talk freely and openly about their experiences and perceptions of academic and social life on campuses. Participants were a good mix of male and female students from a variety of countries, studying in different learning situations, with various academic and English backgrounds. Some L2 students studied and lived in relative isolation, while others were actively engaged in the social life of the university.

In general, L2 students felt intense pressure to be successful in what they viewed as a challenging, new academic and cultural community. In addition to enormous language challenges, they encountered academic challenges such as managing heavy workloads and coping with a lack of sufficient academic background in their specialization; social challenges such as isolation, lack of social skills, and a lack of familiarity of culture and social norms; and personal challenges, such as financial pressures and family pressures. The results of phase one of this study suggest that L2 students’ experiences are varied and their academic acculturation depends on a wide variety of external and internal factors.

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To be specific, the results of phase one of this study indicated that L2 students develop their learning and coping strategies not only in relation to the learning of regular academic subjects, but also in relation to the learning of English; not only for academic purposes, but also for social ones. Although L2 students sought linguistic, academic, and social support from various sources including roommates/housemates, friends, classmates, professors/TAs, the university's writing center and other university support, not all of these sources of support played a positive role in their acculturation process. For example, when L2 students draw support from friends or classmates who come from the same countries and speak the same languages, their L2 acculturation process is impeded.

L2 students' spoke of many different reasons for choosing a Canadian university. Their reasons for choosing a disciplinary field were also varied, including the fields' English requirements, financial rewards, personal interest and family pressures. Overall, L2 students took their learning and education seriously, and they wanted to be successful in their courses and obtain degrees.

In terms of English learning, L2 students reported a wide range of exposure to English before coming to Canada. Most of the L2 students we interviewed had received EAP support. They generally reported that they were in a better position than other students, who had not taken EAP courses. They felt that EAP and English support were both necessary and helpful in their process of academic acculturation. In interpreting these results, however, it is important to remember that all of these students had volunteered for this study. Thus, these findings must be interpreted with caution as only the more engaged and confident students would typically volunteer to talk about their learning.

With this caveat in mind, phase one of this study indicates that developing both learning and social skills, making strategic choices regarding academic and social supports that develop English and facilitate the acculturation process, and receiving formal EAP (or ESP) instruction are key factors in the successful academic acculturation of L2 undergraduate students. These interviews suggest that acculturation does not evolve as a one-way transmission from a community of specialists to novices. Rather, successful L2 students actively interact with a variety of other people and resources, developing their own learning and coping strategies. Language learning and academic acculturation are located in this interaction and may for some involve a gradual transformation of their personalities and identities. As one L2 student said, "I think I find my new goal, which is just like...I have changed a lot and...just more tolerant to anything."

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Appendix I

Questions asked by researchers in Semi-Structured Interviews with L2 students

These questions will be covered in all interviews, but conversations will be allowed to develop as a natural and inevitable part of the interview process. These conversations will be tape recorded, transcribed, and returned to the participants for review and verification prior to analysis.

1. What is your first language?
2. What other languages do you speak?
3. How long have you been in Canada?
4. Where and when did you first begin to learn English as a second language?
5. How old are you?
6. How many years have you studied English in total? In High School? In post-secondary contexts?
7. What are three times, settings when you always use English studying at this university?
8. What are three times, settings when you always use your first (or other) languages studying at this university?
9. Are you living alone or with others? What languages do your roommates/housemates speak?
10. At home, what percentage of your time is spent in English?
11. At school, what percentage of your time is spent in English?
12. What are your current educational goals? (i.e., what and why are you studying in Canada)?
13. What role does English play in these goals?
14. What type of English activity seems to help you the most?
15. Of the English courses you have had, which one was the most helpful? Why?
16. What would you like to improve in your use of English to study?
17. What do you feel you have mastered in using English to study?
18. Assess your language skills in terms of reading, writing, listening and speaking. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
19. What sort of language-related problems, if any, do you encounter in your courses/classes?
20. Which skills, if any, are you called upon to use frequently but feel that you have not learned well enough?

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21. Have you ever taken an English course that specifically prepared you to use English for academic purposes (i.e., EAP)?
22. If yes, do you think that you are in a better position than other students you know who did not take a course? Explain.
If no, do you think such a course would have helped you? How?
23. Is there any particular kind of feedback from your teachers or other students that you find very helpful?
24. Do you find that working with others on your course work is helpful? If yes, whom do you prefer to work with? Other students? Teaching Assistants? Teachers/professors? How does it help you?
25. Is being successful academically important to you? Are there any things that frustrate you or stand in your way of being a more successful student?

Appendix II

Comments taken from the interview data that led to the identification of the seven final categories

Below are the phrases or sentences that were developed into questionnaire items.

Learning and coping strategies

Students indicated that their learning and coping strategies extended not only to the learning of regular academic subjects, as in the first three examples below, but also to learning English, as in the fourth point.

- “For me I just read the notes the prof gave us. It’s usually Power-point slides, so just short sentences. You don’t really read long sentences. When I am reading the textbook, I just focus on diagrams and tables. So I didn’t read text a lot...”
- “I try not to take courses that require a lot of discussion. And I try not to take any course that requires essays.”
- “The white people tend to do assignments in the last minute. I am too scared to do my assignments just one day before...”
- “So I try to have a strong will not to hang out with... [people from my country], and try to be more sociable, and try to interview with Canadian people more.”

Supporting systems

All of the following were mentioned by students within the context of support: roommates; friends; classmates; professors; TAs; the university's writing center; and other university support. For the purpose of questionnaire construction, we differentiated these sorts of support from EAP and English language support (the focus of the study), but obviously the latter is allied to the other forms of support.

While some students reported trying to form relationships with "Canadians" (e.g.: "I had to isolate myself first from the Chinese group...because everyone knows it's safer and easier to stay with your own group when you don't speak English, right?"), we noted that many students rely heavily on their compatriots for support. Whether this reliance was self-imposed or difficult to avoid was not always clear:

- "I've got lots of Chinese friends, and if we meet outside of anywhere, we have to talk Chinese".
- "When I talk with classmates, because they are all Chinese... so we just use Chinese."

Academic Motivation

Students' reasons for choosing a Canadian university included various educational and career goals, as well as a perceived lack of discrimination in Canada:

- "The probably reason why I want to study in Canada is that when I was working in ... [my country], I really felt gender discrimination."
- "I really appreciate any opportunities of staying here for a year and gain Canadian working experience."

Motivation for taking EAP was largely instrumental in nature, which is not surprising since EAP is fundamentally a route into mainstream university studies:

- "I have to speak...and be able to communicate with any people and be able to understand the prof in class."
- "So improve my English before I enter the university is very necessary...maybe after I enter university I will have another reason."
- "I don't pay the tuition to fail the course, I pay to pass it... I want to pass it; I want to go on..."

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Language and Academic Background

Respondents' first language was normally Chinese. However, students reported a wide variety of exposure to English, spanning a minimum of foreign high school exposure, up to tertiary level coursework completed in Canada and other English language regions. There was a similar diversity evident in their academic backgrounds, both in terms of university-level coursework completed (or not) in their home countries and in Canada, and their major. Clearly, questions would be needed on the questionnaire to identify these differences.

Personal History

Most respondents were Chinese, in their early twenties, from a relatively affluent background in their homelands, but by no means "rich" by Canadian standards. In fact, the following student could have been speaking for many others whose parents were making significant sacrifices for them to be able to study in Canada:

"When you are my parents, working in China, and this is me here and they spend money for my education...it's a serious economic pressure for them. So, for that reason I decide to work here as a part time worker to make some money to help, you know. But the working, or taking a job and taking five courses together, that's really tire. It's not good. It won't be good for the academic career."

Of course there were students from other countries and with different backgrounds, but young Chinese were the predominant group.

Individual Field of Study

Students represented a wide variety of fields of study, both in terms of the faculties they were currently enrolled in, or, if they had not yet begun undergraduate courses beyond EAP, then the faculty they were interested in entering. Interviewed students were from Engineering, Business, Social Sciences, Humanities, Arts, and Agriculture. Reasons for their choices varied, including financial benefit and personal interest:

- "Getting a degree and can do something earn money later. That's why I go for business and finance and accounting".

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- “Before, I wanted to be an engineer...because my dad is an engineer...but now I would like to help...I want to be a nurse...I like to take care of the old people.”
- “When I first came here I wanted to take drama. Still now I want to take drama [but have decided on] stage management...one of the programs in drama.”

English language requirements within courses varied both between universities and from course to course within universities. For example, at one university a science student reported that for him there was “Not much writing or oral discussion, just lab reports, formulas.” On the other hand, a Social Science student at the same university reported a great deal of English language work, including “[a] presentation, oral reports, essay, [and] group work.”

EAP and English Support

Naturally, as the focus of the study and therefore of many of the interviewers’ questions, a great deal of data referred directly to EAP and English language support:

- “(students who only use the TOEFL score to get into university) got lots of problems to study in the university...and now they out from university and learn to study in the college or somewhere because their English is not high enough and university won’t accept them to study in the university no more”
- “My writing skill have been improved a lot. At least now I know how to write a research paper, how to write an academic essay and uh...how to even write some summary”
- “I know lots of people like that, they dropped out from [EAP] and decided to take TOEFL just because it’s easier, I have to say. I passed my TOEFL exam, but I still took [EAP]....I’ll say I’m way better off”
- “Yeah I’m really...definitely better because I always get better grade on the papers. That’s what [EAP] taught me how to do it.”
- “[EAP teachers] give us lots of knowledge about how to study in the university, how to take the notes when we listen to the professor’s thinking and how to organize our ideas and by writing and by explain to the professor what you want and what you need. My teacher told me if I really cannot follow what the teacher said, I can ask a question and stop them for a while.”
- “...group work is really help for me. In my country’s education system, they would like every people’s working alone and doing everything by themselves. I think they break the connection between the

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students...When I was working with group, some people can find my weak side, and they can tell me how should I improve...”