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Running Head: EAL STUDENTS' ACADEMIC LITERACIES

**Investigating First Year Undergraduate EAL Students' Academic
Literacy Experiences**

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Abstract

Australian universities have become places where students from diverse backgrounds and cultures come together to pursue tertiary education. This study contributes to current understandings of how universities have responded to their now diverse student body, and adds insight into curricula and classroom practices which might better accommodate learners who have English as an Additional Language (EAL). While issues surrounding EAL students have been examined and discussed for two decades, Lea and Street (2006), Leask (2013), and Wingate (2015) contend that university pedagogies and practices are yet to adequately cater for students from diverse backgrounds. In particular, disciplinary pedagogies tend to be dominated by assumptions that EAL students' linguistic, cultural, and educational backgrounds are deficits, which limit their capacity to adapt to Australian tertiary learning environments. Accordingly, research which focuses on first year EAL students' academic expectations and experiences is critical so that Australian universities can enhance current pedagogies which guide curricula and classroom practices.

This study employed Lea and Street's (1998) academic literacies approach to examine how first year undergraduate EAL students from a range of educational and cultural backgrounds, and fields of study, mediated their first year at an English-speaking university. The study investigated participants' academic expectations, academic socialisation, and academic literacies, including their experiences constructing new student identities, and engaging with teachers and peers. Such research is important to provide evidence of best practice strategies to support EAL students' literacy and learning, and foster a sense of belonging. This study also examined participants' academic reading, a fundamental aspect of academic literacy which has been under researched (Hill & Meo, 2015; Wingate, 2015). Three research

EAL students' academic literacies

questions guided the study: Research Question 1 investigated participants' expectations of their new learning environment; Research Question 2 examined how the students mediated their academic socialisation; and Research Question 3 investigated what factors enabled and constrained participants' academic literacies.

The primary research method was a multiple case study approach in which eight units of analysis were embedded within the research setting, a university in South East Queensland. The study employed a three phase explanatory qualitative and quantitative research design. A self-administered questionnaire with a convenience sample size of 159 first year EAL students was implemented in Phase I. The questionnaire examined respondents' expectations of academic conventions and skills, academic reading, and engagement with teachers and peers. The survey data were analysed using SPSS software to generate descriptive statistics. The findings informed the qualitative case study inquiry. Phase II was the first stage of the multiple case studies. Eight case study participants were recruited through purposive sampling. Phase II examined participants' academic socialisation experiences. Data was collected through weekly structured interviews, and course document analysis. In Phase III, semi-structured interviews investigated participants' classroom experiences, student identities, and academic relationships with teachers and peers. The case study data were analysed using thematic analysis, which involved an iterative process of reading, rereading, and coding the data into themes related to the issues under investigation.

The multiple sources of data revealed that participants' expectations and experiences were homogenous, despite their diverse backgrounds. This suggests that first year EAL students share similar literacy and learning needs. Participants demonstrated an understanding of disciplinary literacy practices and conventions. They expected to enhance their language, academic, and intercultural

EAL students' academic literacies

communication skills, with the help of course teachers. They believed it was important to feel a sense of belonging in their new academic community, and engage with domestic peers. However, these expectations were largely unfulfilled. The findings also showed that EAL students often underestimate the reality of course reading demands. Nevertheless, participants demonstrated positive student identities by adapting and extending their literacy practices to successfully mediate disciplinary requirements. They read strategically by engaging with academic texts they believed were relevant to their literacy and learning. Participants' academic achievements indicated that their linguistic, cultural, and educational backgrounds did not hinder their capability to engage in their courses and complete assessment tasks. This suggests that the prevailing perception about EAL students' cultural and educational backgrounds being barriers to learning is misguided.

However, the participants' academic literacies were hindered when they encountered classroom learning environments which did not incorporate language and literacy instruction, constructive feedback on assessments, or peer engagement. There was also little evidence that courses applied reading pedagogies. These challenges, in particular the lack of classroom engagement with domestic peers, negatively affected their sense of belonging in their new academic community. The study findings reveal a disparity between EAL students' classroom experiences, and best practice first year and internationalisation strategies recommended in the literature (e.g., Lea & Street, 2006; Leask, 2013; Wingate, 2015). A noteworthy finding is that the teaching practices which help EAL students' communicative confidence and learning require little effort. That is, when teachers show interest, and facilitate cross-cultural classroom interactions, there is a positive impact on students' feelings of belonging. The implication is teachers are in the best position to provide supportive and inclusive classroom learning environments that fulfil

EAL students' academic literacies

students' learning needs. Additionally, it is recommended that disciplinary curricula include a combination of explicit reading pedagogies, embedded literacy and language enhancement strategies, and pedagogical practices that facilitate intercultural communication, and inclusive learning environments.

Statement of Originality

I declare that this work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university and is my own work. To the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made within the thesis itself.

Keri Freeman

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Table of Contents

Abstract	2
Statement of Originality	6
Acknowledgments	7
List of Figures	16
List of Tables	17
Glossary of Terms.....	18
Chapter One - Introduction	22
1.1 Background to the Research	23
1.2 Academic Literacies Framework	29
1.3 Significance of the Study.....	33
1.4 The Research Setting	34
1.5 The Research Design.....	37
1.6 Thesis Overview	38
Chapter Two - Literature Review.....	40
2.1 The Nature of Academic Literacy	41
2.2 Academic Literacies as a Theoretical Framework	45
2.3 Application of the Academic Literacies Framework.....	50
2.4 Academic Reading as a Fundamental Part of Academic Literacy	56
2.5 EAL Students' Academic Contexts	64
2.5.1 University pathways.....	65
2.5.2 English language proficiency.....	67

2.5.3 Expectations of studying at an English-speaking university.	70
2.5.4 Student identity.	74
2.6 Tertiary Learning Environments	77
2.6.1 First year transition.....	77
2.6.2 Internationalisation of the curriculum.....	82
2.6.3 Embedding academic literacies into disciplinary curricula.....	85
2.6.4 Classroom practices.	88
2.7 Summary of Current EAL and Academic Literacies Research Gaps	91
Chapter Three - Research Methodology	95
3.1 Brief Overview of the Study	96
3.2 Theoretical Assumptions.....	98
3.3 The Research Design	101
3.4 Phase I - The Quantitative Survey.....	104
3.4.1 The questionnaire.	106
3.4.2 Survey sampling and implementation.	106
3.4.3 Quantitative data analysis.	108
3.5 Phases II and III - Multiple Embedded Case Studies	110
3.5.1 Participant sampling and recruitment.....	113
3.5.2 The case study protocol.	115
3.5.3 Qualitative data analysis.....	120
3.6 Ethical Considerations	125
3.7 Limitations of the Research Design	127

3.8 Summary	128
Chapter Four - Survey Findings.....	130
4.1 Respondent Profiles.....	130
4.1.1 Demographics.....	130
4.1.2 Fields of study and educational backgrounds.	132
4.1.3 Reasons for studying in Australia.....	133
4.1.4 Summary.	133
4.2 Academic Expectations	134
4.2.1 Academic conventions and skills.	135
4.2.2 Reading habits and expectations.....	137
4.2.3 Engaging with teachers and peers.....	139
4.3 Summary of the Survey Results	141
Chapter Five - Case Study Participant Profiles and Expectations	145
5.1 Participants' Demographics and Academic Profiles	145
5.1.1 Participants' Profiles.....	146
5.2 Summary.....	150
5.3 Expectations of Studying at an English-Speaking University	151
5.3.1 English proficiency.....	151
5.3.2 Disciplinary conventions and skills.....	152
5.3.3 Reading habits and expectations.	156
5.4 Discussion of EAL Students' Academic Expectations.....	158
5.5 Summary.....	164

Chapter Six - Participants' Academic Socialisation Experiences	166
6.1 Literacy Practices of First Year EAL Students.....	166
6.1.1 Trang.....	167
6.1.2 Gabriella.	171
6.1.3 Snow.	175
6.1.4 Jaili.	178
6.1.5 Emily.....	181
6.1.6 Filipe.....	184
6.1.7 Camilla.....	187
6.1.8 Meko.....	191
6.2 Semester 1 Course Results.....	195
6.3 Academic Socialisation Cross-Case Analysis and Discussion	198
6.3.1 English language proficiency and enhancement.	199
6.3.2 Mediating disciplinary skills and course assessments.....	205
6.3.3 Academic reading.	210
6.4 Summary	217
Chapter Seven - Participants' Academic Literacies Experiences	220
7.1 Literacy and Learning	221
7.1.1 The value of new literacy practices.....	222
7.1.2 New approaches to assessment.....	225
7.1.3 Feedback on assessments.....	230
7.1.4 Summary.	233

7.2 Academic Reading Experiences	234
7.3 Engaging with Teachers and NES Peers	238
7.3.1 Engaging with teachers.	240
7.3.2 Engaging with NES peers.	243
7.4 Experiences in the Classroom	250
7.5 Summary.....	261
Chapter Eight - Conclusion	264
8.1 Main Findings	265
8.1.1 Research question 1.	266
8.1.2 Research question 2	268
8.1.3 Research question 3.	271
8.2 Implications for Theory and Practice	273
8.2.1 Implications for theory	274
8.2.2 Implications for practice	276
8.2.3 Recommendations.....	280
8.3 Limitations of the Study	281
8.4 Directions for Further Research	282
Reference List.....	284
Appendices	301
Appendix A - Information sheet for questionnaire participants	301
Appendix B - Questionnaire	303
Appendix C - Information sheet for potential case study participants	307

Appendix D - Case study participant consent form	309
Appendix E - First structured interview schedule	310
Appendix F - Weekly structured interview schedule	313
Appendix G - First semi-structured interview schedule.....	315
Appendix H - Second semi-structured interview schedule	316
Appendix I - Third semi-structured interview schedule.....	318
Appendix J - Fourth semi-structured interview schedule	319
Appendix K - Fifth semi-structured interview schedule.....	320
Appendix L - Transcription conventions	321
Appendix M1 - Readings listed in Trang's course profiles.....	322
Appendix M2 - Readings listed in Gabriella's course profiles.....	323
Appendix M3 - Readings listed in Snow's course profiles.....	324
Appendix M4 - Readings listed in Jaili's course profiles.....	325
Appendix M5 - Readings listed in Emily's course profiles	326
Appendix M6 - Readings listed in Filipe's course profiles	327
Appendix M7 - Readings listed in Camilla's course profiles	328
Appendix M8 - Readings listed in Meko's course profiles	329
Appendix N1 - Trang's reported reading & course profiles	330
Appendix N2 - Gabriella's reported reading & course profiles	332
Appendix N3 - Snow's reported reading & course profiles.....	334
Appendix N4 - Jaili's reported reading & course profiles	336
Appendix N5 - Emily's reported reading & course profiles	338

EAL students' academic literacies

Appendix N6 - Filipe's reported reading & course profiles	339
Appendix N7 - Camilla's reported reading & course profiles	341
Appendix N8 - Meko's reported reading & course profiles	343

List of Figures

<i>Figure 2.1.</i> Academic Literacies Framework (Adapted from Lea & Street, 1998).	46
<i>Figure 3.1.</i> Priority and sequence of the research design.....	103
<i>Figure 3.2.</i> Survey data analysis procedures.	109
<i>Figure 3.3.</i> Qualitative data analysis.	122
<i>Figure 4.1.</i> Respondents' region of origin.....	131
<i>Figure 4.2.</i> Respondents' previous tertiary education.	132
<i>Figure 4.3.</i> Reasons for studying at an Australian University.	133
<i>Figure 4.4.</i> Response frequencies for the importance of academic conventions and skills.....	135
<i>Figure 4.5.</i> Response frequencies for seeking help with academic reading and academic writing.	136
<i>Figure 4.6.</i> Respondents' reading hours in English and their native language per week before the semester and expected number of reading hours required per week for all courses during the semester.	137
<i>Figure 4.7.</i> Response frequencies for importance of engaging with teacher and peers.	139
<i>Figure 4.8.</i> Response frequencies for 'I expect my teachers to tell me what to read' and 'I expect on-on-one time with my teachers.'	140

List of Tables

Table 5.1 <i>Case Study Participants</i>	146
Table 5.2 <i>Summary of Participants' Weekly Reading Habits Prior to Commencing University and Expectations for the Number of Academic Reading Hours</i>	156
Table 6.1 <i>Participants' Semester 1 Results</i>	195
Table 6.2 <i>Reported Hours Reading Academic Texts Weeks 4 to 13, Semester 1</i>	211

Glossary of Terms

The operational definitions used in thesis are provided below.

Academic Contexts - Students' cultural and educational backgrounds, pathways into the university, fields of study, and enrolled courses.

Academic Literacies – The highest level of the academic literacies framework (Lea & Street, 1998). The word 'literacies' instead of 'literacy' highlights the view that there is no one specific literacy practice, and instead, students experience a variety of literacy events across different institutions, disciplines, and cultures (Lea & Street, 1998; Wingate & Tribble, 2012).

Academic Reading – Refers to the texts and genres in tertiary curricula such as textbooks, journal articles, laboratory manuals, and government and industry websites and publications. It involves searching databases and library catalogues for potential sources, skimming and scanning texts to select appropriate sources for specific academic tasks, reading critically and analytically with a clear focus to locate and understand content and arguments, and summarising, synthesising, and paraphrasing sources to prepare written or oral assessments (Wingate, 2015).

Academic Socialisation – The second level of the academic literacies framework. Tertiary students are required to learn a variety of discourses and academic skills relevant to their specific disciplines (Lea & Street, 1998). The need for students to become familiar with disciplinary expectations and conventions, and relevant discourse features and genres, is also known in literacy research as *disciplinary literacies* (Nesi & Gardner, 2012; Wingate, 2015). For the purposes of this thesis, the term academic socialisation is used to encompass disciplinary literacy.

Course Profile – Official and public document which provides information regarding course learning objectives and outcomes, course content and assessments, course readings, and hyperlinks to online institutional and disciplinary policies and student support services.

EAL students' academic literacies

Direct Entry Program – University entry pathway courses for prospective students who have not achieved university entry requirements. The courses prepare students for university studies. To receive an offer for enrolment, students need to successfully complete the program. The Direct Entry Program referred to in this study is a 10 week course offered by the English Language Institute at the university where the research took place.

Domestic Students – Students who are Australian or New Zealand citizens or Australian permanent resident or humanitarian visa holders.

English as an Additional Language (EAL) – Students who have English as an Additional Language. A variety of terms are used in the literature for students whose first language is not English, including non-native English speaker (NNES), being from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds (NESB), having English as a Second Language (ESL), second language students (L2), and bilingual and multilingual students. EAL provides a broader definition which acknowledges that international students come from diverse educational and cultural backgrounds, they may speak more than two languages, and some learn English when they are children while others start learning English a few years prior to entering university. In using the term EAL, this study is in line with other researchers in the field (e.g., Dunworth, 2013; Fenton-Smith, Humphreys, Walkinshaw, Michael, & Lobo, 2015).

English Language Enhancement Courses – 10-credit point Language and Communication courses offered by the university where the research took place. The courses are aligned with four academic groups across the university: Business and Commerce; Health; Sciences; and Arts and Social Sciences. The courses are a degree requirement for first year EAL students with an overall IELTS score below 7.0 or any macro-skill sub-scores below 6.5, and students who enter their degree via a non-language test pathway.

English Language Entry Requirements – The minimum English proficiency test results set by institutions for admission into undergraduate and postgraduate studies.

EAL students' academic literacies

English Language Proficiency – The ability of students to use English to communicate meaning in spoken and written contexts while completing tertiary studies.

English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) – These courses provide English language tuition and prepare international students for further study within Australia. An initial English language or bridging course is often the first point of contact for international students and acts as a pathway to other education institutions (Chaney, 2013). In this study, the specific ELICOS course undertaken by a number of case study participants was a 10 week Direct Entry program offered by the university's English Language Institute.

Native English Speakers (NES) – Staff and students who have English as their first language.

Non-native English Speakers (NNES) – Staff and students who do not have English as their first language.

One-on-one English language support – In the university research setting for this study, EAL students are offered one free 45 minute individual consultations per week with an English language instructor. The consultations provide English language and academic skill support.

Study Abroad – A university entry pathway for international students to undertake a program of study at a university in a different country to their home university.

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) – An international standardised test to measure the English language competency of non-native English language speakers who want to enrol in tertiary education in an English-speaking country.

The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) -An international standardised test of English language proficiency for non-native English language speakers.

EAL students' academic literacies

University Entry Pathways – Pathway options available for prospective students to enrol in a university degree.

Vocational Education and Training (VET) – A section of Australia's higher education sector. It includes Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutions and private colleges which offer Certificate and Diploma level skills and training qualifications. Some VET courses provide prospective international and domestic students with a pathway into a university degree.

Chapter One - Introduction

This study explored the academic expectations, academic socialisation, and academic literacies experiences of students with English as an Additional Language (EAL) during their first year at a university in South-East Queensland, Australia. The academic literacies approach developed by Lea and Street (1998) was used as the theoretical framework. Academic socialisation refers to tertiary students' transition into a new learning environment, and their understanding of the academic skills and conventions relevant to specific disciplines. Academic literacies relates to institutional and disciplinary pedagogies and practices that may influence students' literacy and learning experiences, academic identities, and engagement in their new academic community. The following sections introduce the key concepts relevant to this study and provide the background information related to the research context. Next, an outline of the academic literacies framework guiding this study is provided, with more detailed explanations given in Chapter Two (Literature Review). The significance of the research, as well as the research context, aim, and research questions, are also presented.

The aim of this study is to add to current higher education research by investigating first year undergraduate EAL students' academic socialisation and literacies experiences. Increased understanding of the issues surrounding EAL students in Australia is necessary because literacy and learning and positive student identity construction in global learning environments are complex processes influenced by social, cultural and contextual factors. Importantly, for EAL students, transition into a new learning environment means they need to understand, develop, and engage in unfamiliar literacy practices. Insights into factors which influence EAL students' academic socialisation and academic literacy experiences can inform ways to improve pedagogical decisions about curriculum and classroom practices.

1.1 Background to the Research

Interest in international education in Australia gained momentum around 15 to 20 years ago when student mobility began to rise dramatically due to globalisation. Between 2000 and 2011, the number of tertiary students studying outside their home countries doubled (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2013). The majority were non-native English speakers (NNES) seeking qualifications from institutions in English-speaking countries such as Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom (U.K), and the United States (U.S.). In 2015, around 20% of university cohorts in Australia were international students (Australian Government Department of Education and Training [DET], 2016; Productivity Commission, 2015). With the worldwide demand for international education continuing to rise, by 2020 enrolments in Australia have been predicted to be 30 percent higher than current figures (Chaney, 2013).

International education provides both cultural and economic benefits to Australia. Multicultural learning environments can promote cultural understanding and awareness, and prepare students for culturally diverse work settings (DET, 2015a; Chaney, 2013; Productivity Commission, 2015). The Australian Government (DET, 2015a) recently examined the value of international education and concluded that it significantly increased Australian students' cultural capital, and would result in a generation of globally engaged citizens. In addition, international education makes a huge contribution to Australia's economy, contributing \$18.2 billion to export income in 2014-15, a 14.5% increase from the \$15.9 billion recorded in 2013-2014 (DET, 2015b). The latest figures showed industry earnings increased a further 9.4% in 2015-2016, up to \$19.9 billion (DET, 2016). Australia's global education market share is around 6% (Productivity Commission, 2015), and although this

EAL students' academic literacies

seems quite low, many institutions rely on the economic contribution provided by international students. However, in recent years Australian institutions have experienced increased competition from other English-speaking countries, such as the U.S, the U.K, Canada, and New Zealand, as well as emerging competition in Asia. This has prompted the Productivity Commission (2015) to advise education providers that they must respond and evolve according to learners' expectations and needs if Australia is to remain an attractive study destination.

A rapid increase in international students studying in Australia during the early 2000's led to increased scrutiny of international education policies and practices. Much of this attention was based on concerns raised by industry bodies and the media claiming that some EAL graduates were unable to meet industry language and literacy standards (Birrell, 2006; Wingate, 2015). In particular, Birrell (2006) raised doubts regarding the effectiveness of non-language test university entry pathways, in preparing EAL students for the language competency required for tertiary study. Non-language test pathways include course offered by Vocational Education and Training (VET) institutions and English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS). In response to these issues, in 2007 Australian Education International (AEI), a section of DET, commissioned the International Education Association of Australia (IEAA) to examine the knowledge gaps surrounding international education at the tertiary level (AEI, 2007). The IEAA (2016, para. 2) is an industry body which provides teaching and academic professional development to "encourage best practice among education institutions." Universities, industry, government and student bodies, and researchers were invited to take part in the 2007 English Language Competence of International Students Symposium. The topics under review included the effectiveness of university entry

pathways for EAL students, English language proficiency and enhancement, and policies and provision for academic and language support.

There were a number of outcomes from the symposium regarding the non-language test entry pathway programs offered by VET and ELICOS institutions. It was found that although these courses did not require formal English language testing, they provided necessary, flexible, and equitable opportunities for university admission, and were comprehensive in preparing international students for tertiary education in Australia (AEI, 2007). Nevertheless, the symposium participants agreed there needed to be greater understanding about the efficacy of all university entry pathways and thus, the issue remained a research priority. In addition, given the importance of communication skills for graduate employability, English proficiency was identified as a significant issue for all students, not just EAL students, (AEI, 2007). Consequently, the symposium recommended embedding language and literacy support within curricula across the disciplines. Indeed, Jones (2017) has also recently argued that it is misleading to assume there is a dichotomy between domestic and EAL first year students' learning needs, further reiterating the importance of implementing first year transition teaching strategies.

After the 2007 Symposium, government policies and regulatory frameworks were put in place to provide long-term quality assurance. These changes included the establishment of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) in 2011. TEQSA replaced the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA), which had been the government body responsible for auditing the quality of Australian universities between 2000 and 2011. TEQSA now monitors and manages the tertiary sector's regulatory practices, which includes accrediting education providers and conducting ongoing audits to ensure institutions follow the Higher Education Standards Framework legislation (Productivity Commission, 2015). The Australian

Qualifications Framework (AQF) sets out standards for all Australian qualifications, including student pathways, to ensure nationwide consistency and transparency (AQF, 2013; Productivity Commission, 2015).

The symposium findings also advised that institutions needed to take more responsibility for monitoring English language development. This led to another major outcome of the 2007 Symposium, the *Good Practice Principles for English Language Proficiency for International Students in Australian Universities*. The ten principles (hereafter called the Good Practice Principles) were published by AUQA in 2009 and contain broad statements and good practice examples to be integrated across university disciplines. The Good Practice Principles relate to English language enhancement policies, English entry standards, curriculum design and delivery, student transition, and academic interactions. The good practice examples relevant to this study are listed below (AUQA, 2009):

- Integrate discipline-specific language development into curricula design, assessment practices and course delivery;
- Provide discipline-specific academic and learning skills socialisation, which considers language proficiency;
- Demonstrate that the university values the role played by international students in enhancing learning for all students;
- Ensure effective and regular opportunities for academic interaction and cross-cultural discussion within disciplinary learning settings.

The Good Practice Principles draw attention to the important link between language and learning. As Dawson (2011) explains, the principles emphasise that language enhancement requires an ongoing commitment from not only students, but

also institutions and teaching staff. Importantly, the principles have compelled many universities to review their English language policies and strategies (Dunworth, 2013; Humphreys, Haugh, Fenton-Smith, Lobo, Michael, & Walkinshaw, 2012). However, Harper, Prentice, & Wilson (2011) have challenged the practicality of the principles, stating that they are too broad. In addition, they advise that the word *proficiency* implies students are either proficient or not proficient, with nothing in between, when in reality proficiency is difficult to quantify because communication and interactions are socially and contextually situated practices (Harper et al., 2011). Similarly, Humphreys et al. (2012) suggest that determining language proficiency is complex and the concept is debatable.

Consequently, it can be argued that the Good Practice Principles alone are insufficient to resolve the issues related to improving support for EAL students in Australian universities. Moreover, focusing on international students, rather than all first year students, may reinforce a deficit approach towards language and literacy instruction. The deficit approach is the assumption that NNES students' language proficiency and previous educational experiences do not align with disciplinary requirements and literacy practices in English-speaking universities, and thus, are barriers which limit their capacity to adapt to new academic learning environments (Elliot, Reid, & Baumfield, 2016; Gale, Mills, & Cross, 2017; Lea & Street, 1998; Wingate, 2015). According to Gorski (2010, p. 2), the deficit ideology perpetuates inequality through the systemic attribution of stereotypes where "difference—particularly difference from ourselves" is mistaken for *deficit*. In contrast, a more constructive approach would be to view EAL students as individuals who have valuable skills and previous experiences, which can be applied as they transition into their new learning environment and enhance their language and learning skills.

In 2013, a follow-up 'Five Years On' Symposium was held to examine the progress on key issues from the 2007 Symposium. The findings suggested there had been wider recognition across the tertiary industry that language enhancement was relevant for all students. Accordingly, it was recommended that language enhancement strategies be embedded into disciplinary content, and that it was essential for all academic staff to receive training so they could assess, monitor, and assist students' language development (AEI, 2013; Dunworth, 2013). Furthermore, the 2013 Symposium found that despite the 2007 call for more research into university pathways, there was still insufficient evidence regarding the value and complexity of ELICOS and VET pathway courses (AEI, 2013). Nevertheless, Chaney (2013) has suggested pathway programs are essential in preparing students to undertake tertiary study because they are internationally respected and deliver targeted English language instruction. The Productivity Commission (2015) has endorsed that tertiary pathways should remain a key feature of Australia's higher education system because of the variety of options they offer to all students wanting to study at tertiary level.

Increases in international enrolments have required the government and tertiary sector to implement operational guidelines and policies to support Australian universities in their endeavour to deliver high quality education. In spite of this, the pressure on universities to provide learning environments which better reflect the needs of both their diverse student cohorts, and future employers, remains strong. In particular, while the issues surrounding EAL students have been examined and discussed for more than a decade, there are still gaps in current knowledge and practice. One area that demands attention is the factors which support and hinder first year EAL students' literacy and learning experiences. This view is confirmed by Wingate (2015) who contends that despite Australia's changing student body,

university pedagogies and practices are yet to adequately cater for students from diverse backgrounds. Gale et al. (2017) agree that for institutions to transform the inequitable deficit assumptions currently applied to international students, teachers must be equipped with inclusive pedagogies which recognise and value the knowledge and skills of all students.

Accordingly, research which focuses on students' experiences is critical so that Australia can enhance its current tertiary practices and maintain global competitiveness (Chaney, 2013; Dunworth; 2013; Murray & Arkoudis, 2013). One way to examine the issues surrounding students' literacy and learning is through the academic literacies approach introduced by Lea and Street (1998). It was developed to guide researchers in their efforts to demonstrate how institutions can change their narrow skills based view of literacy by taking a wider approach which considers the complexities of language and literacy. The approach has been advocated by numerous scholars (e.g., Crosby, 2010; Harper et al., 2011; Lillis & Scott, 2007; Paxton, 2012; Wingate, 2015) as a suitable framework to explore how EAL students mediate tertiary settings in English-speaking countries. In particular, Wingate (2015) has argued strongly for a complete shift away from the deficit approach and describes Lea and Street's proposal as a seminal piece in guiding the field of academic literacy.

1.2 Academic Literacies Framework

The basis for using the word *literacies* instead of *literacy* is to emphasise that students will experience a variety of literacies across different institutions, disciplines and cultures. The plural form literacies highlights the social and cultural nature of literacy, and reinforces that no one set of literacy practices can be considered superior or more valuable than others (Lea & Street, 1998; Wingate, 2015). To

account for the complexity which underlies literacy and learning, the academic literacies framework encompasses three overlapping models or levels: study skills; academic socialisation; and academic literacies. The study skills model aligns with the deficit view of literacy. It focuses on the surface features of writing, such as grammar and spelling, and assumes that once students can read and write, they can then transfer those basic skills to any context. Researchers such as Lea and Street (1998, 2006), Hyland (2013), and Wingate (2015) assert that study skills should be considered just the starting point of academic literacy because it neglects the contextual factors which influence literacy and learning, and assumes knowledge is transferred, not constructed.

Academic socialisation is the transitional process students undertake when they use the knowledge and literacy skills they already possess to develop new understandings and perspectives in order to participate in and mediate a new learning environment (Lea & Street, 1998). It extends on the study skills model by acknowledging that tertiary students are required to learn a variety of discourses and academic skills relevant to their specific disciplines (Lea & Street, 1998). The third model is academic literacies, which refers to the process of tertiary students learning “new ways of understanding, interpreting and organising knowledge” (Lea & Street, 1998, p. 158). This process involves constructing new student identities by building relationships with teachers and peers. The underpinning belief of the academic literacies approach is that while the study skills and academic socialisation perspectives provide some insight into the nature of learning, they are insufficient to fully understand the epistemological demands of tertiary study (Lea & Street, 1998).

When all three models are considered together the framework draws attention to literacy and learning as multifaceted concepts which are influenced by a range of factors related to students' backgrounds, academic contexts and their learning

environment. All students commence university with goals of enhancing their understandings, knowledge, and skills in their field of study. Paxton and Frith (2014) and Wingate (2015) propose that the emphasis the academic literacies approach places on learning and pedagogy, makes it a useful approach to investigate higher education and curricula across the disciplines.

When Lea and Street (1998) developed the academic literacies framework, their major focus was to investigate university writing practices. At the same time, they encouraged researchers and educators to implement the framework to better understand a range of literacy practices across academic contexts. In the research for this thesis, the approach has been adopted to examine first year EAL students' academic expectations and literacy and learning experiences, with particular focus on academic reading. The focus on reading is in response to recent studies (e.g., Boakye, 2011; Hill & Meo, 2015; Hirvela, 2004; Kelly, 2014) which have indicated that academic reading is an underemphasised aspect of academic literacy research. While the attention academic writing receives from researchers is necessary, it is also important to acknowledge that writing is the end product of a complex process which is highly reliant on academic reading.

Reading instruction is seldom part of institutional support or disciplinary curricula. Wingate (2015) describes this as a major concern due to the significant role reading has in terms of both academic writing and literacy and learning. Hirvela (2004) puts forward a similar view that how tertiary students understand and approach academic reading can be a significant factor for academic success. By focusing on writing alone, institutions and disciplines neglect the critical thinking and academic reading skills required in all fields of study, whereby "information cannot just be received, but must be questioned, compared with information from other sources, used in new conceptual contexts and transformed" as part of the

academic writing process (Wingate, 2015, p. 2). Furthermore, recent studies by Kelly (2014), Hill and Meo (2015), and Boakye and Mai (2016) have found that most first year tertiary students find it difficult to cope with the extensive reading loads required at university. Consequently, the focus on academic reading in this study is premised on reading as a fundamental aspect of both tertiary education and academic literacy. However, to date there have been few empirical investigations into the factors which influence students' reading practices (Hill & Meo, 2015; Kelly, 2014; Wingate, 2015).

The study reported in this thesis employed Lea and Street's (1998) academic literacies framework to examine undergraduate EAL students' academic socialisation and literacies experiences in their first year of study. The research questions guiding the investigation were:

Research Question 1 - What are first year undergraduate EAL students' expectations of their new learning environment?

Research Question 2 – How do first year undergraduate EAL students mediate their academic socialisation in a new learning environment?

Research Question 3 - What factors associated with first year undergraduate EAL students' experiences enable and constrain their academic literacies?

The purpose of the research questions is to provide a comprehensive investigation of first year EAL students' academic experiences. By examining students' expectations when they commence semester 1, and closely following their first year experiences, the study provides insights into EAL students' learning needs

and whether those needs are being met. The research findings help inform ways to improve current pedagogies which guide disciplinary curricula and classroom practices.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The findings from this study contribute to a better understanding of EAL students' expectations and experiences so that improvements can be made to address current gaps in provisions for academic literacy and learning in international education contexts. While academic literacy research has provided valuable empirical evidence related to EAL students studying at Australian universities, researchers continue to express an urgent need to move beyond the deficit ideology that tends to dominant disciplinary pedagogy. Australia's now diverse tertiary student body requires universities to change their curricula and teaching practices to provide more appropriate support for EAL students. According to Leask (2013), studies examining how higher education institutions have adapted their curricula to meet the needs of globally mobile student cohorts are scarce. This has increased the demand for research which provides insights into EAL students' transition into new learning environments.

The research reported in this thesis focused on first year EAL students' academic socialisation and academic literacies in terms of how they mediated course requirements and academic reading, and how they constructed student identities and relationships with teachers and peers. Investigations into students' first year at university are important because it is when students first enter their new learning environment and may encounter many challenges. This study examined how first year EAL students from a range of educational and cultural backgrounds, disciplines, and pathways perceived and responded to those challenges, and engaged in their new

tertiary setting. By using the academic literacies research framework, the study provides evidence of students' experiences of disciplinary pedagogies and classroom practices, and how they might enable and constrain student learning. Such evidence informs the types of changes institutions can make to enhance EAL students' academic socialisation and literacies experiences.

The focus on academic reading was significant because it has added to the academic literacies framework by providing valuable insights into the factors that affect EAL students' academic reading. Studies which examine EAL students' academic reading experiences can facilitate better pedagogies and inform curricula and instruction in a context which to date, has primarily focused on disciplinary writing practices. In addition, investigating EAL students' academic identity construction, and their experiences engaging with teachers and peers, can assist universities to implement best practice strategies which help all students feel valued by their academic community. Gee (2004) contends that feeling valued and supported is essential for learning to occur. Dunworth (2013) explains that acknowledgement by institutions regarding the worth of different cultures, and fostering learning environments where EAL students feel a sense of belonging, can provide students with opportunities for enriching educational experiences.

The findings in this thesis offer insights into strategies for disciplinary pedagogies and classroom practices to better accommodate the learning needs of students from diverse backgrounds. The following section outlines the research setting for the study.

1.4 The Research Setting

The research setting was a university in South-East Queensland, Australia. The data was collected at one of the university's five campuses. A large proportion of

EAL students' academic literacies

the student population across the university's campuses have been international enrolments with 24% in 2012, 21% in 2013 and 20% in 2014. On the campus where the study took place, there were 1,551 commencing international undergraduate students enrolled across the Business, Science, Health, and Arts, Education and Law disciplines. These statistics include students from countries such as Canada and the U.S., as well as students from NNES backgrounds. EAL students seeking to enrol directly into an undergraduate degree must meet the minimum language requirements: an overall International English Language Testing System (IELTS) score of 6.5, with no sub-scores below 6.0 for any of the macro-skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. There are additional entry pathway options for students who do not meet the minimum language requirements. They can complete a ten week ELICOS Direct Entry Course offered by the university's language institute, or a foundation program or Diploma offered by the university's VET pathway college.

In response to the 2007 English Language Proficiency Symposium and using the Good Practice Principles, the university implemented an institution-wide English Language Enhancement Strategy (ELES). Two elements of the university's ELES are relevant to this study. Firstly, the university provides an English language and academic skills support program, which offers EAL students one free 45 minute individual appointment per week with an experienced English language teacher. Secondly, ELES involves compulsory 10-credit point English Language Enhancement Courses (ELEC) for first year international undergraduate students. ELEC is a degree requirement for first year EAL students with an overall IELTS score below 7.0, or any macro-skill sub-scores below 6.5. Students who enter their degree through a non-language test pathway are also required to complete an ELEC as part of their degree. The courses are taught by English language instructors and aim to develop EAL students' oral and written English language skills through embedded instruction,

EAL students' academic literacies

modelling, and constructive written teacher feedback. When the ELEC program began in 2010, it was unique because it was the first time an Australian university had introduced a university-wide compulsory EAL discipline-specific foundational course (Fenton-Smith et al., 2015).

The ELEC program offers *Language and Communication courses* aligned with four academic groups across the university: Business and Commerce, Health, Sciences, and Arts and Social Sciences. Each course is customised to the specific disciplinary requirements of the relevant academic group and delivers English language practice and immersion applicable to students' field of study. More specifically, according to Fenton-Smith et al. (2015), the courses address the Good Practice Principles by enhancing students' communicative competence, developing their understanding of disciplinary expectations and conventions, and increasing their capacity to continue developing their language and learning throughout their degree. Dunworth (2013) has described the ELEC program as an approach which demonstrates the university's commitment to position language development as a core teaching and learning activity.

The university has an overarching internationalisation strategy which states that *internationalisation of the curriculum is a fundamental and on-going process*. The broad goals of the strategy are to support international students' integration into the university community, and to increase recognition of the importance of EAL and domestic graduates' intercultural and linguistic competencies. One component of the strategy is the inclusion of a Graduate Attribute related to internationalisation. The university's Graduate Attributes list six characteristics the university seeks to foster in its graduates. Graduate Attribute 6 states that the university assists students to acquire 'Competence in Culturally Diverse and International Environments.' Graduates are expected to demonstrate this attribute by showing respect and

interacting effectively in culturally and linguistically diverse contexts. The university provides internationalisation strategies and resources for academic staff which recommend curricula and classroom practices to address language barriers in the classroom, and to promote engagement among staff and students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This study examines EAL students' experiences related to the language enhancement and internationalisation strategies implemented by the university. The next section provides an overview of the research design.

1.5 The Research Design

The study used an explanatory embedded qualitative and quantitative research design involving a survey and multiple case studies. The quantitative phase was embedded within the primary case study method in order to inform and support the qualitative inquiry. In Phase I, a sample of 159 first year EAL students completed a questionnaire at the beginning of semester 1, 2014. The questionnaire provided data on respondents' reading habits and expectations, and their expectations of academic conventions and skills, and engagement with teachers and peers. The survey data were analysed using SPSS statistical software. The survey findings were used to respond to Research Question 1, and informed the case study participant selection and research protocols. Phases II and III involved multiple embedded case studies conducted over semesters 1 and 2 in 2014. Structured and semi-structured interviews and document analysis provided detailed insights into participants' academic socialisation experiences and informed a deeper understanding of the issues revealed in the survey findings. The case study data was analysed using thematic analysis. A description of the research design and the rationale for using

both quantitative and qualitative research methods are presented in Chapter Three of this thesis.

1.6 Thesis Overview

This thesis consists of eight chapters. This first chapter provides an overview of the research topic and background, the significance of the study, the research context, and the research aim and questions. It also introduces the academic literacies framework which has been applied for this study. Chapter Two extends on the issues raised in this chapter. It provides further information on the academic literacies approach, its application as a theoretical framework and reviews recent academic literacy research. Moreover, it examines the importance of reading as a fundamental aspect of literacy. Lastly, Chapter Two evaluates relevant previous studies and identifies current research gaps regarding first year EAL students and university and disciplinary approaches to academic literacy. Chapter Three explains the research design, the research methods, and the approaches to data analysis for this study.

Chapter Four presents the survey findings from Phase I of the study. The descriptive analysis helped gain a broad picture of first year EAL students' demographics and academic contexts, and their expectations for their first semester studying in Australia. The survey findings informed the selection of the case study participants, and were also used to answer Research Question 1. Chapters Five, Six and Seven present and discuss the embedded case study findings from Phases II and III, and provide cross-case discussions. Chapter Five introduces the eight case study participants and their expectations for semester 1. It then provides a discussion of the survey findings and the case study findings related to student expectations in

response to Research Question 1: What are first year undergraduate EAL students' expectations of their new learning environment?

Although academic socialisation and academic literacies overlap, and socialisation is an integral component of the academic literacies model, the two concepts are discussed separately, in Chapters Six and Seven, respectively. Chapter Six focuses on the case study participants' academic socialisation and reports the findings from the Phase II structured interviews and document analyses. It also provides a response to Research Question 2: How do first year undergraduate EAL students mediate their academic socialisation in a new learning environment?

Chapter Seven presents the findings for the Phase III semi-structured interviews. Phase III of the study examined participants' academic literacies, and responded to Research Question 3: What factors associated with first year undergraduate EAL students' experiences enable and constrain their academic literacies? The interviews provided further insight into participants' understandings of the literacy practices and classroom experiences they reported in Phase II. Chapter Eight is the conclusion chapter. It draws together the major findings based on the research questions, discusses the theoretical and practical implications of the research findings, and provides recommendations for improvement and directions for future research.

Chapter Two - Literature Review

This chapter reviews the current literature relevant to the research aim to investigate first year undergraduate EAL students' academic socialisation and literacies experiences. It also gives details of the key concepts introduced in the previous chapter and draws attention to issues researchers have suggested require further investigation within the framework of academic socialisation and academic literacies. Current knowledge regarding EAL students' academic expectations and experiences is examined to illuminate contentions and gaps in the literature. The first section presents a brief overview of the complex nature of academic literacy and studies which have shaped academic literacy research. This is followed by a detailed explanation of the academic literacies approach and its application as a theoretical framework in previous studies. The next section examines the importance of reading as a fundamental aspect of literacy and learning and identifies current gaps in the literature regarding EAL students' experiences of tertiary reading.

The review then shifts focus from the theoretical aspects of this study to the two central factors in the research setting: first year EAL students and the learning environment. Previous findings presented in the literature regarding EAL students' academic literacy are examined. The review focuses on studies related to English language proficiency, university entry pathways, EAL students' expectations of studying at an English-speaking university, and student identity. The next section reviews recent studies which have examined aspects of the learning environment under investigation in this study: internationalisation of the curriculum; embedding academic literacies and intercultural communication into disciplinary curricula; and classroom teaching practices. The final section gives a summary of the gaps in current EAL and academic literacies research and describes how the current study can help respond to these gaps.

2.1 The Nature of Academic Literacy

To examine the various issues surrounding how universities address academic literacy, it is important to have a clear understanding of what the term means and why it may be necessary for universities to improve current pedagogical approaches. Academic literacy is a reasonably new field of enquiry which has been informed through literacy research (Hill & Meo, 2015; Lea & Street, 1998; Paxton & Frith, 2014). The traditional interpretation of literacy is that it involves a set of basic autonomous reading and writing skills students learn in order to read and write printed texts (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003; Lea & Street, 1998; Pahl & Roswell, 2005). This traditional view, also called the autonomous or deficit approach, has been challenged in recent decades. The deficit approach is considered outdated and too narrow because it fails to recognise that literacy is highly influenced by social and cultural contexts (Lea & Street, 1998; Street, 2011; Wingate, 2015). Researchers such as Lea and Street (1998), Wingate (2015), and Harper et al. (2011) have questioned the underlying assumption that literacy is purely a technical skill, and have put forward key arguments to emphasise why a deficit approach to literacy instruction is incongruous with today's tertiary contexts.

A major criticism of the deficit view is that it has tended to place Western literacy practices above those of other academic cultures. This has facilitated the perception that students from other educational backgrounds lack the language and learning skills required for tertiary education in English-speaking countries. Lea and Street (1998) have reflected that these deficit assumptions are often implicit within an institution and among teaching staff who make up the dominant cultural group. However, because the dominant group define "what counts as literacy," and impose how literacy is taught and assessed, this may force inequality on those who are not

part of that group (Street, 2011, p. 581). Murphy and Flemming (2010) contend that influential education philosophers, such as Habermas, have also cautioned that because societies are no longer culturally homogenous, universities must facilitate communities of practice that promote mutual recognition, rather than focusing on potential student weaknesses.

Nevertheless, researchers have indicated that the deficit approach continues to be influential in English-speaking universities (e.g., Lea, 2004; Lea & Street, 2006; O'Shea, Lysaght, Roberts, & Harwood, 2015; Parr & Campbell, 2012; Wingate, 2015). Institutions tend to provide remedial writing support outside of disciplinary content, which promotes literacy as a generic skill and perpetuates the belief that only EAL students require academic literacy instruction. Lea and Street (1998), Leask (2013), and Wingate (2015) oppose the deficit approach and advocate that a more relevant conceptualisation of literacy is required. A more appropriate pedagogy would be one which is inclusive of learners from all educational and cultural backgrounds and assists students to enhance the literacy practices and previous knowledge they already have. As such, the concept of literacy has been extended to encompass the notion of academic literacy, which can be defined as the social, cultural and contextual practices students engage in to construct new knowledge and communicate effectively within their field of study (Street, 2005a; Wingate, 2015).

Academic literacy research has continued to strive toward improving tertiary practices to better reflect all students' cultural and educational backgrounds. This was the objective of the New Literacy Studies (NLS) which emerged in the 1980's. The NLS validate that literacy and learning are socially and contextually constructed, and that students' sense of their own identities influences their academic literacy development (Lea & Street, 1998, 2006; Pahl & Roswell, 2005; Street, 2005b). Street (2005a) also observes that an important aspect of the NLS is the emphasis on the

relationship between literacy and language, whereby both are considered social practices which are highly intertwined with learning. Moreover, the NLS assert that native-English speaking (NES) students may face similar challenges to EAL students because the contextual nature of literacy means that tertiary education is often different to secondary schooling (Street, 2005a; Wingate, 2015). With its focus on literacy as a range of complex social practices which change depending on educational and cultural contexts, the NLS provided the theoretical underpinning for Lea and Street's (1998) academic literacies approach.

Three scholars, Finnegan (1988), Heath (1983), and Street (1984), were among many researchers who undertook research which provided the basis for the NLS. Their case studies and ethnographic work provided empirical evidence to support a move away from autonomous or deficit literacy pedagogies. During 1960 and 1961, Finnegan (1988) spent twelve months examining the literacy practices of a predominately illiterate tribal society in Sierra Leone. The results showed that the tribe operated effectively through a rich oral literacy consisting of stories, poetry and songs. The community also adapted their language to communicate with other tribes who spoke different languages. Finnegan (1988) concluded that the participants demonstrated complex cognitive skills and the ability to adjust their literacy practices to different contexts. Finnegan's (1988) findings illustrated that the autonomous literacy model failed to grasp the social and cultural aspects of literacy.

Heath (1983) also contested the deficit view of literacy. During a period of ten years, from 1969 to 1978, she investigated family literacy practices in three mid-west U.S neighbourhoods, one white working class, one African-American working class, and one multicultural middle class. The African-American children communicated and learnt from their families through story-telling, which did not comply with formal U.S school practices. Heath's (1983) research drew attention to the need to

place a higher value on culturally diverse literacy practices so that learning was not dependent on whether or not home-based practices aligned with established school pedagogies. According to Moje, Luke, Davies, & Street (2009), Heath's study paved the way for future research to examine the marginalisation of some students based on misplaced assumptions that their literacy practices were inadequate.

In the 1970's, Street (1984) continued Heath and Finnegan's efforts to demonstrate the contextual nature of literacy and the value of diverse literacy practices through extensive ethnographic fieldwork in Iran. Street (1984) reported three contrasting literacy domains within Iran, where religious, formal schooling, and commercial literacy practices differed noticeably based on their specific social contexts. These findings reiterated that the dominant autonomous literacy approach in Western countries was too narrow and in fact, *literacies* was a more appropriate way to describe the way many different literacy practices were used to function in particular contexts.

The *academic literacies* approach was developed by Lea and Street in the late 1990's, both as a way of extending the NLS and in response to industry reports in the United Kingdom that literacy levels in higher education had declined. They disputed the prevailing view that graduate literacy levels were falling because of increasingly diverse tertiary student bodies. Instead, Lea and Street (1998) proposed an alternative view which highlighted the inadequacy of university deficit approaches to literacy and learning. In more recent years, Haugh (2008, p. 2) has also alleged that it was "simplistic stereotyping" when EAL students in particular were seen as the cause of problems related to graduate literacy. As stated above, the academic literacies framework was also founded from the notion that the success or failure of students in higher education contexts needed to be examined with the understanding that literacy involves a range of communicative practices which are influenced by

social, cultural and contextual factors. Therefore, Lea and Street (1998, 2006) recommend that researchers pay more attention to students' perspectives, expectations, and experiences to investigate tertiary literacy practices. Hyland (2013) has taken a similar stance by suggesting that increasing current understanding of students' perceptions of their literacy and learning practices can help find pedagogical solutions to move away from the deficit approach.

2.2 Academic Literacies as a Theoretical Framework

The academic literacies framework is a model which can be used by researchers to gain an understanding of literacy practices in different educational contexts. It takes into account student identity and emphasises that academic literacy is a social practice which requires understanding and meaningful engagement among students and teachers. The framework allows researchers to investigate how learners understand both themselves and the context within which they are operating (Street, 2005b). The academic literacies approach has become an influential research field because current global learning contexts demand an inclusive model which incorporates all aspects of academic literacy (Coffin & Donahue, 2012; Hill & Meo, 2015; Paxton & Frith, 2014; Wingate, 2015). The conceptual model shown in Figure 2.1 illustrates the three overlapping levels of the academic literacies framework which contribute to the learning process. As noted by Lea and Street (1998, p. 158), the levels are “not mutually exclusive...and each model successively encapsulates the other.” The underpinning belief is that while the study skills and socialisation perspectives provide some insight into the nature of learning, they are not sufficient to fully understand the epistemological demands of tertiary study. The academic literacies model moves beyond study skills and socialisation by taking into account

the complex linguistic and learning processes involved in the acquisition of knowledge.

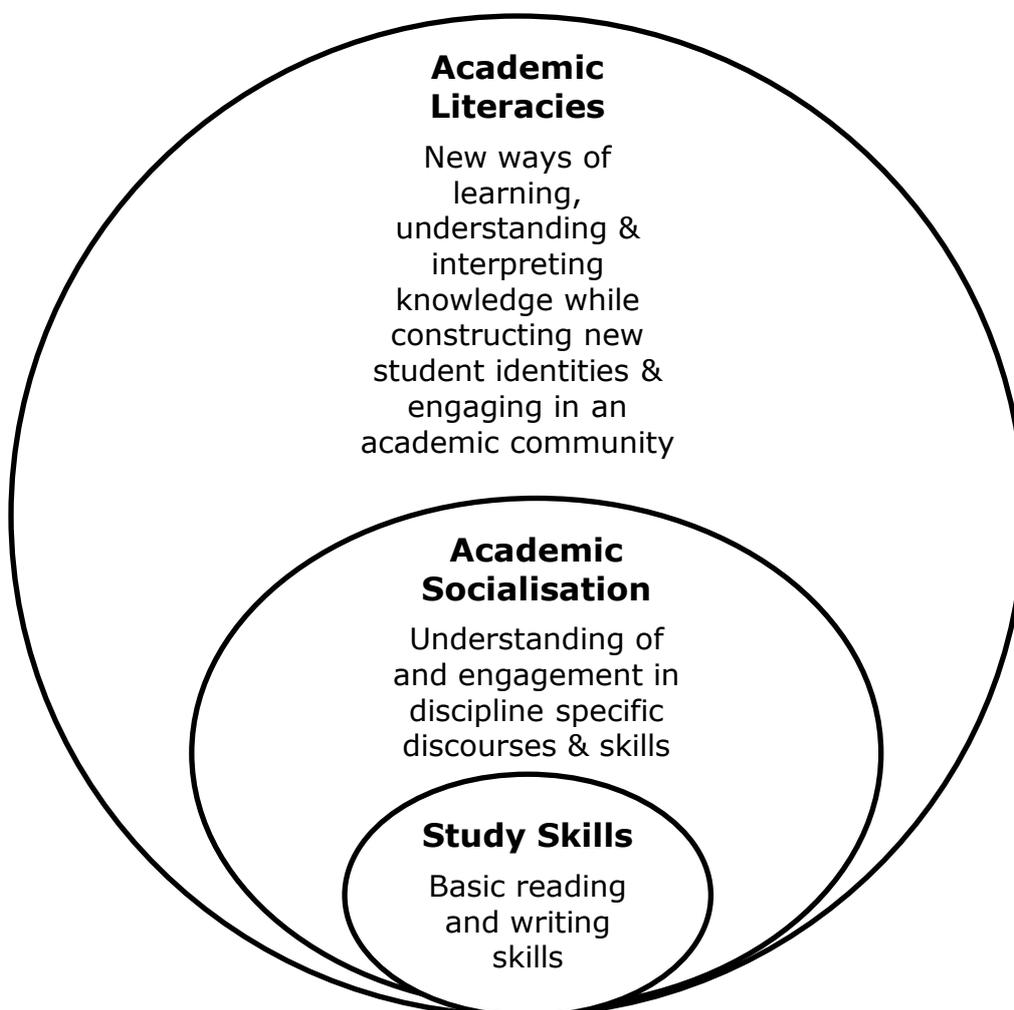


Figure 2.1. Academic Literacies Framework (Adapted from Lea & Street, 1998).

The study skills level of the framework comprises the formal and technical features of reading and writing, such as syntax and spelling. Clearly, the ability to read and write is essential to participate in a course of study, but it cannot be assumed that basic reading and writing skills are sufficient to mediate tertiary education. As Coffin and Donahue (2012) explain, the basis for the academic literacies approach is to encourage institutional change towards teaching and

learning approaches which acknowledge the complexity of university literacy practices. Yet, Lea and Street (1998, 2006) contend that the study skills model is the underlying approach used by universities and researchers to guide curricula and instructional practices. More recently, Street (2013) has reiterated that university tutors continue to use the study skills model when they assess student writing because they focus on the final written product, rather than providing instruction on the whole writing process. Nesi and Gardner (2012) point out that universities cannot assume that first year students have tacit knowledge of tertiary academic conventions. Additionally, language and literacy support tends to be provided outside the disciplines through generic workshops or consultations with language advisors, rather than using the embedded approach advocated by literacy researchers where academic literacies instruction is part of course curricula (AEI, 2013; Chanock, 2010; Hocking & Fieldhouse, 2011; Murray & Nallaya, 2014; Street, 2013; Wingate, 2015). Wingate (2015) adds that this remedial approach fails to adequately address student needs because writing is taught as linear process, not as a multifaceted skill. Street (2013) notes, despite 30 years passing since he and co-author Lea put forward their academic literacies framework, there is still an urgent need for university staff to improve their understanding of literacy and learning.

Academic socialisation refers to the transition students undertake as they mediate a new academic culture and learning environment. It involves students adapting and extending their previous knowledge and educational experiences to acquire new literacy practices relevant to their field of study (Lea & Street, 2006). According to Hitch et al. (2012), the academic practices and skills students would be expected to engage in include academic reading and writing, time management, research skills, note-taking, referencing, and critical thinking. Investigating first year EAL students' socialisation experiences can help gain better understanding of how

they learn and engage with these practices in their new academic context (Lea, 2004). Drury and Charles (2016) assert that many students find university learning challenging, which highlights the importance of “identifying factors which enable students to persist and succeed” (p.A-51). The socialisation process can be complex because it not only involves the students as active participants, but also entails factors related to the institution, curricula, teachers, and peers that can influence students' perceptions and experiences. In addition, university entry pathways, students' educational and cultural backgrounds, and field of study may influence how well and how quickly students become familiar with their new learning environment. Furthermore, the current deficit approach implemented by universities and disciplines means that academic conventions and accepted practices are often implicit and students are expected to already have a firm understanding of disciplinary standards.

The third level of the framework moves beyond the concept of socialisation with the view that successful engagement in a new academic community involves more than simply understanding disciplinary academic conventions and discourses. Academic literacies is concerned with the “the processes involved in acquiring appropriate and effective uses of literacy” and how students make meanings and develop relationships (Lea & Street, 2006, p. 369). By incorporating all three levels of the framework together, academic literacies is positioned as a dynamic and changing complex social practice which is interconnected with language and culture. For first year EAL students, literacy and learning clearly involve added layers of complexity because their first language(s), educational and cultural backgrounds are usually dissimilar to Australian contexts. As Hyland (2013) explains, language and learning are “intrinsically bound up with culture” (p. 56) because cultural values are tied to how people learn and communicate. This indicates an additional benefit of the

academic literacies framework, which is its acknowledgement that learners' prior knowledge and experiences are valuable and should not be treated as deficits (Street, 2005b).

Another important feature of the framework is its emphasis on student identity. In recent years, academic literacies research has reinforced the importance of moving away from the deficit view of literacy because learning is constructed through positive interactions and relationships, and is highly influenced by the way students see themselves, and how they perceive others view them (Moje et al., 2009; Pham & Saltmarsh, 2013; Wingate, 2015). Identity plays a central role in the transition into a new discourse community, and for EAL students in particular, their identities may be challenged in English-speaking contexts if communication is difficult due to linguistic and cultural differences. University disciplines can certainly be defined as discourse communities because they have unique traditions, conventions and values. Lea and Street (1986) and Murphy and Fleming (2010) advise that feelings of belonging and positive student identities involve more than just understanding and engaging in the communicative rules and conventions. There also needs to be mutual recognition of the new members' values and goals.

Further support for the fundamental role communication and identity play in education can be found in Habermas's *Theory of Communicative Action* (see Habermas, 1984, 1987). In short, Habermas's theory upholds that for social equality to be achieved, it is the responsibility of leaders in society, including teachers, to foster mutual understanding and acceptance. Similar to the ideology underpinning the academic literacies framework, the communicative action theory emphasises that dominant linguistic and cultural norms are often implicit, which can make it problematic for new learners to be accepted into an unfamiliar discourse community. Deakin Crick and Joldersma (2007) explicate that Habermas's communicative action

locates educational institutions at the forefront of society, whereby educators have a civic responsibility to provide opportunities for learners to shape their identities through the development of communicative competence and cultural knowledge.

Crosby (2007) reasons that academic literacies is the optimal framework to investigate how students construct new knowledge and their identities because literacy research which does not use a sociocultural approach cannot gain adequate insight into learner perceptions and needs. Harper et al. (2011) also refer to the framework as a useful approach to examine how language and literacy develop and how best to support EAL students as they transition into their new academic community. According to Coffin and Donahue (2012), academic literacies offers a critical framework that not only asks questions about current university practices that constrain learning, but also proposes “principles for a new pedagogic design frame which has the potential to alter current practice as a means of better acknowledging the identities, and meaning making resources of a diverse student body” (p. 68). In this study, the second and third levels of the academic literacies framework are used to underpin an investigation into first year EAL students' process of socialisation and how they acquire the academic literacies they need to successfully mediate and engage in their new learning environment.

2.3 Application of the Academic Literacies Framework

The academic literacies model is considered a useful research framework because it conceptualises academic literacy as a complex social and cultural practice which varies depending on specific academic contexts. Paxton (2012, p. 382) asserts that the academic literacies framework is "recognised internationally as a critical field of inquiry with a specific theoretical and ideological standpoint." Researchers such as Pahl and Roswell (2005), Lillis and Scott (2008), and Wingate (2015) have

EAL students' academic literacies

suggested that it is a valuable research framework because it addresses the inherent link between language, literacy and learning, and takes students' voices into account. Although the framework has been used to investigate various aspects of academic literacy, there is still a lack of research examining EAL students from a range of backgrounds and disciplines (Crosby, 2010; Leask, 2013; Paxton 2012). Such investigations can provide evidence to assist institutions and teachers to implement teaching practices which can cater to students from diverse backgrounds and cultures

Lea and Street (1998) were at the forefront of literacy research which sought to move away from a skills based approach to academic literacy in higher education. They introduced their academic literacies framework in a study undertaken at two universities in the U.K. The study examined institutional approaches to academic literacy, in particular writing, with the purpose of gaining increased understanding of academic staff and students' perceptions of disciplinary literacy practices (Lea & Street, 1998). Data was collected by interviewing 23 teachers and 47 students, and by examining course outlines, instructional academic writing handouts and students' essays and written teacher feedback. The student participants were asked to reflect on disciplinary writing practices, factors they perceived had influenced their writing experiences, and the problems they encountered. The participant teachers outlined their understandings of course writing requirements and their perceptions of the problems students had with writing in the disciplines.

The study found that the students' academic literacies development was hindered due to lack of explicit instruction and feedback on disciplinary practices (Lea & Street, 1998). When the teacher participants described what they considered 'good' writing, they focused on surface issues related to layout, syntax, and grammar. Although the teachers demonstrated a clear conceptual understanding of disciplinary

EAL students' academic literacies

writing practices, they were unable to identify “what underlay a well-argued or well-structured piece of student work” (Lea & Street, 1998, p. 162). This focus on technical skills, rather than explicitly guiding students' acquisition of disciplinary literacy practices encapsulates the problems the deficit approach creates. The researchers also stated that students often did not receive written feedback on assignments, and when feedback was provided students found it difficult to interpret. Lea and Street (1998) advised that for students to construct knowledge and develop their academic literacies, they needed explicit communication, interaction, and feedback from disciplinary teachers. When they concluded their study, Lea and Street (1998) suggested that institutions take a new direction. They recommended that rather than focusing on students' literacy ‘problems’, more emphasis should be placed on understanding the complex processes involved in academic literacies development, and how these processes could be better communicated to students.

Crosby (2007) used the academic literacies framework to examine the literacy experiences of first year students enrolled across different disciplines at a university in the U.S. She identified the academic literacies approach as an appropriate framework for her aim of gaining increased understanding of students' learning processes. Three qualitative case studies were undertaken over a six month period to examine first year student academic socialisation and learning experiences. The participants had migrated to the U.S at a young age, so were not traditional first year EAL students. Data was collected using semi structured interviews, academic literacies logs, course outlines and assignment criteria and participants' written assignments. Crosby (2007) observed that course curricula did not adequately cater to first year students' learning needs.

The main finding revealed in Crosby's (2007) thematic data analysis mirrored Lea and Street's (1998) findings from a decade earlier, that participants' academic

socialisation was not supported due to an absence of explicit literacy instruction. Crosby's (2007) participants perceived that this was because course teachers assumed students were already familiar with disciplinary literacy practices. Participants also reported difficulties understanding discipline-specific lexicon and keeping up with the large volume of assigned course readings. These issues influenced the students' ability to complete course assessment tasks. Based on these findings, Crosby (2007) suggested that curriculum developers and teaching staff often lacked an understanding of student needs. The strategies she put forward to alleviate the problems the participants had encountered included embedding direct literacy and vocabulary instruction within course curricula, and the provision of explicit explanations about the purpose of assigned readings. Crosby (2007) also concluded that teachers were the students' major source of knowledge regarding academic literacies practices. Therefore, she positions professional teacher development as an essential strategy to help resolve issues related to academic literacy development.

In a slightly different study, Hocking and Fieldhouse (2011) integrated academic literacy instruction into a theoretical arts course at a New Zealand university using the central principles of the academic literacies framework to accommodate new learners. The course acknowledged students' prior experiences, explored different genres and reading practices using model texts, made the linguistic processes of disciplinary knowledge construction transparent, and incorporated discussions regarding cultural difference and identity (Hocking & Fieldhouse, 2011). Subsequently, one-on-one interviews and focus groups with the students taking the course revealed they believed it provided them with increased confidence to successfully engage with their academic community. Hocking and

EAL students' academic literacies

Fieldhouse (2011) concluded that their pedagogical approach where academic literacy practices were made visible was positive for student learning.

Paxton and Frith (2014) used the academic literacies framework to examine how curricula literacy practices and texts aligned with the written assessment task in an environmental science course. They interviewed students taking the course and “were somewhat taken aback” (Paxton & Frith, 2014, p.176) to find the students, both NES and NNES, were unable to connect their written assignments with course content. At the same time, the academic staff were unaware the students felt that way and believed the links were clear. These findings can be regarded as verification that curriculum designers not only need to link assessments with embedded literacy activities, but they should also engage in open dialogue with students to ensure there are no gaps in their understanding of learning activities and outcomes.

Wingate (2015) in particular has been a strong contributor to the call for disciplinary curricula to acknowledge the social, cultural and contextual concepts which underpin the academic literacies approach. Wingate (2015) recently investigated the literacy experiences of EAL students studying an Applied Linguistics course in the U.K. to examine participants' understandings of the required literacy practices in their new academic community. Similar to Crosby's (2007) study, Wingate's (2015) participants had completed their secondary education in an English-speaking country, the U.K. in this case. Data was collected using questionnaires, writing diaries completed by eight participants, and interviews conducted with 16 different participants from the same cohort. The course Wingate (2015) examined included embedded literacy instruction in the curriculum, although she noted that this was only in terms of referencing conventions and avoiding plagiarism. Students were also given the opportunity to enhance their understandings and skills through an unassessed formative essay. The essay process

EAL students' academic literacies

included written feedback and a one-on-one follow up discussion with the teacher to unpack the feedback.

The research findings showed the participants had little knowledge of how to write an argumentative essay. Wingate (2015) described this as evidence that if students educated in the U.K had difficulties at the start of the course, it was therefore inappropriate to prejudge students from other backgrounds. Wingate's (2015) findings support the contention that all students need explicit literacy instruction as part of curricula across the disciplines. The study also revealed that participants became de-motivated when written feedback focused on their weaknesses and did not give clear explanations regarding improvements that needed to be made. Wingate (2015) suggested that these results provided further evidence that literacy instruction needed to shift away from the study skills approach and its focus on the technical aspects of writing such as referencing and structure. She insists that current university pedagogies fail to adequately support students' academic development, "particularly at the initial stages of their study" (Wingate, 2015, p. 9).

The common aspect of these studies is they indicate that the academic literacies approach offers researchers a sound foundation from which to examine EAL students' academic literacies (Lillis & Scott, 2007). They have also contributed to a deeper understanding of EAL students' experiences and the factors that influence how they respond to the challenges they face. Most importantly, studies which use the academic literacies framework not only provide evidence to tertiary institutions that there is a need for change, but also demonstrate pedagogical strategies that should be implemented to improve current academic literacies approaches.

2.4 Academic Reading as a Fundamental Part of Academic Literacy

Academic reading has a significant role in literacy and learning at university because it is one of the main ways students gain knowledge of disciplinary discourses, theories, conventions, and practices. To date the field of academic literacy research has primarily focused on writing practices, and this is a weakness which requires urgent attention (Kelly, 2014; Lillis & Scott, 2007; Wingate, 2015). Hill and Meo (2015) agree, stating that previous research has given writing disproportionate consideration, which has led to academic reading being “under-scrutinized and under-theorized” (p. 854). The implication of this gap in current research is that academic reading has become one of the most neglected problems faced by EAL students (Kelly, 2014; Wingate 2015). The importance of reading cannot be overstated. Tertiary students must be active and critical readers so they can understand the inferences and information contained in academic texts and gain a deep understanding of their field of study. Academic reading also encompasses being able to use a variety of academic sources to complete logical and synthesised written and oral assessment tasks (Boakye & Mai, 2016).

Academic reading is more complex than other reading, such as reading for pleasure, and many students need guidance. As Hirvela (2004) explains, reading and writing share similar and complex cognitive processes. This means that when students experience difficulties with writing, the issue can often be related back to academic reading problems. EAL students' academic reading practices and their ability to read and interpret written texts can have a significant impact on their learning, their other academic literacy skills and ultimately their chances of academic success (Boakye & Mai, 2016; Paxton & Frith, 2014). This has led a number of researchers (e.g., Boakye & Mai, 2016; Grabe & Zhang, 2013; Hill & Meo, 2015; Zhao & Hirvela, 2015) to determine a need for systematic and in-depth research

investigating tertiary student reading experiences, and the extent to which personal, cultural, and educational backgrounds influence academic reading perceptions and engagement. Such studies can add to current knowledge regarding students' literacy practices and help enhance reading pedagogy, in particular, academic reading instruction.

The fundamental link between reading and writing means they should be examined and learnt as a whole concept. Reading and writing cannot be seen as separate literacy practices because they are both meaning-making activities, and students must constantly shift from one to the other (Hill & Meo, 2015; Phakiti & Li, 2014; Zhao & Hirvela, 2015). Yet, Boakye (2011) and Wingate (2015) contend that university pedagogies treat reading as a basic skill and teachers are unlikely to implement explicit reading instruction or foster positive attitudes towards reading. Universities tend to offer writing support, but not reading support, as students are assumed to already have the critical reading skills they require. This is a concern because students who find reading academic texts difficult will be unlikely to engage in large amounts of reading, which can negatively affect their academic literacy development (Gee, 2004). Consequently, it is important to explore the nature of the reading demands first year undergraduate EAL students encounter and examine how they perceive and manage this particular component of their studies.

Another issue faced by EAL students is their previous education systems may not have instilled reading as an important part of learning. In addition, the pace at which EAL learners can comfortably read and comprehend the text is often quite slow if their vocabularies are still developing. This illustrates the valuable role instructors can play by explicitly teaching common disciplinary words and reading strategies (Paxton & Frith, 2014). In reality though, it has been suggested that many academic staff believe that encouraging reading compliance, and helping students

develop critical reading skills, are not their responsibilities (Hoeft, 2012; Wingate, 2015). Wingate (2015) advises that this poses a serious problem because students view curricula and classroom practices as representations of the underlying values and beliefs of both the institution and teachers. If reading is implicit, it is possible students will not perceive its value. Gee (2004) proposes that if teachers use explicit modelling and feedback to guide students through the process of unpacking discipline-specific articles, students will not only improve their critical reading but also have a better chance of becoming accepted members of their academic community.

The heavy reading loads tertiary students face can also be challenging (Crosby, 2010; Wingate, 2015). Nevertheless, literacy research provides little advice regarding how much reading time and self-study tertiary students should be expected to undertake. One researcher, Barre (2016), examined this issue for the Centre for Teaching Excellence at William Rice University, a research university in Texas. According to Barre (2016), academic staff and tertiary students are often unaware of realistic reading workloads due to a lack of information about university self-study expectations. She conveys that a reasonable guideline would be that higher education students should spend more time engaged in self-study than they spend in class. This assumption is based on the Carnegie unit. The Carnegie unit was developed by the Carnegie Foundation for Advancement of Teaching (CFAT) in the early 1900's in an effort to standardise American secondary education. The Carnegie unit formalised the number of instructional hours students should undertake to successfully complete a course and has been adopted across America's education system (Bainbridge, 2015).

In terms of tertiary education, based on the Carnegie unit, students would be expected to spend two hours of self-study per week for every hour of class time

(Barre, 2016). In Australia, where courses generally involve three to four hours of class time, this equates to six to eight hours of out of class work per course, and 24 to 36 hours per week for a full-time student taking four courses. Barre (2016) describes this as a realistic amount of time to commit to self-study, but also admits that evidence shows most tertiary students study for just 12 hours per week outside of class time. She suggests course designers put careful thought into allocating reading materials and take into consideration the amount of time students would need to complete course assessments. Barre (2016) also recommends that teachers explicitly communicate to their students the expected amount of reading time required. This supports Hill and Meo's (2015) assertion that when the importance of course readings is not made visible, reading becomes an individual practice which students may or may not engage in. While there have been some previous studies investigating undergraduate reading compliance, research is still required regarding best practice teaching strategies which encourage students to read course materials (Hatteberg & Steffy, 2013; Hoeft, 2012; Roberts & Roberts, 2008).

Although there has been little attention given to tertiary academic reading, there have been a number of recent studies which have shed some light on the issue. For example, Roberts and Roberts (2008) surveyed 40 first year NES undergraduate sociology students at a U.S. university to examine how they approached course reading. The findings revealed that many of the participants, who were described by the researchers as high achieving high school graduates, commenced university with reading skills which were inadequate for tertiary study. The challenges the participants reported were that reading academic texts took a long time, and they often had difficulties understanding discipline-specific vocabulary. Roberts and Roberts (2008) suggested that non-compliance was not a sign that students were lazy, but instead that they used a cost/benefit strategy where if they believed course

texts were not important, they chose not to read them because it would take valuable time which could be utilised to complete assessment tasks.

Based on their findings, Roberts and Roberts (2008) state that reading instruction needs to be part of course assessments if reading compliance, and more importantly reading to learn, is to be achieved. They also insist that teachers must clarify why required texts are relevant, and should give students opportunities to discuss what they read and how it connects to course content. These suggestions align with another study by Sani, Wan Chick, Awg Nik and Raslee (2011). They surveyed 245 undergraduate students to examine their experiences of acquiring reading strategies appropriate for tertiary study. The results suggested that when the students were given a reason to read, it had a positive influence on reading strategy improvement (Sani et al., 2011). Similar to Roberts and Roberts (2008), Sani et al. (2011) advise that it is essential that teachers foster a positive view of the benefits of reading widely and encourage students to read more. In a later study, Hoeft (2012) examined the perceptions of non-reading compliant first year sociology students and asked the participants to suggest strategies that would encourage them to read. The participants preferred for teachers to assign less required reading in the first place, and believed that teachers should continually remind them about the course materials they needed to read. The students also suggested that teachers provide supplementary materials which draw attention to important sections within course texts.

Another issue related to disciplinary reading is the value that curricula developers often place on textbooks as assigned reading materials. Johnson and Kiviniemi (2009) note that although teachers usually presume students have read assigned chapters to prepare for class, this is often not the case. One strategy university courses often utilise to increase student engagement with course

materials, including textbooks, is reading quizzes. Johnson and Kiviniemi (2009) surveyed 159 undergraduate psychology students, mostly NES, to examine if completing weekly multiple choice reading quizzes based on textbook chapters improved their academic performance. They observed that completion of the quizzes had a positive influence on performance when compared to courses which did not have reading quizzes, most likely due to students consistently engaging with the texts (Johnson & Kiviniemi, 2009).

Similar to Johnson and Kiviniemi (2009), Hoeft's (2012) quantitative study also showed a significant increase in reading compliance when assessment marks were allocated for reading quizzes. These results were also supported by a survey undertaken by Hatteberg and Steffy (2013) involving 438 first year sociology students, which found that quizzes were effective in encouraging reading compliance. These studies also concluded that although reading quizzes might increase reading compliance, they were ineffective in terms of learning outcomes because students only needed to understand texts on a surface level, and the only feedback students received was a grade. Roberts and Roberts (2008) put forward a similar view. They stated that the tendency for universities to use multiple choice quizzes did little to promote learning and instead, encouraged students to focus on short-term memorisation of course content. These studies indicate the need for investigations into the use of textbooks and reading quizzes as strategies to increase reading compliance.

More recently, Hill and Meo (2015) and Boakye and Mai (2016) have added to current literature by investigating students' perceptions regarding academic reading instruction. Hill and Meo (2015) investigated the efficacy of an academic reading module in a post-graduate course. The module identified and modelled reading and writing genres and included in-depth discussions of the role of reading in

disciplinary expectations and conventions. The NES and NNES participants indicated that the module provided important clues that they were previously unaware of in terms of the interconnection between reading and writing. They also reported that the explicit instruction had enriched their “understanding of their reasons for doing academic reading” (Hill & Meo, 2015, p. 853). Boakye and Mai (2016) surveyed 325 NES first year sociology students to determine the cognitive and affective factors which made academic reading challenging. The results supported Roberts and Roberts (2008), with three quarters of Boayke and Mai’s (2016) participants also reporting negative attitudes to reading due to challenges related to comprehension, understanding vocabulary, the heavy reading load, and the extensive lengths of the texts. The recommendations from all the studies described above are that universities pay more attention to academic reading by integrating reading instruction into course content, and providing opportunities for critical discussions about course readings in class.

Another area of tertiary reading which has been identified as receiving inadequate attention from researchers is writing using sources. Writing using sources is an essential literacy practice in most disciplinary contexts and plays a fundamental role in the writing process. Previous researchers (e.g., Grabe & Zhang, 2013; Zhao & Hirvela, 2015) have identified that reading to write can be challenging for many students if they have not had opportunities to practise synthesising academic texts. Zhao and Hirvela (2015) observed two Chinese students’ experiences and found their writing performances varied, even though they shared similar cultural backgrounds. The reason for the difference was that one student had acquired an understanding of the importance of using sources to support his argument more quickly than the other student. The student who received the lower grade perceived course texts as supplementary materials, rather than essential

components of his written text. Grabe and Zhang (2013) and Zhao and Hirvela (2015) have advised that disciplinary teachers need to instruct first year students on strategies for writing from sources to ensure they develop effective reading strategies and understand the processes involved in source based writing. Such instruction would be comparable to Hill and Meo's (2015) academic reading module, in which explicit reading instruction and modelling proved to be effective in helping students understand the strategies required when reading to write.

These studies confirm the significance of academic reading as a core tertiary literacy practice and consequently, the need for reading pedagogies to be embedded within course curricula to increase reading compliance and enhance students' critical reading skills. In addition, the difficulties that both NES and NNES students have in engaging with complex texts indicate that teachers should guide first year students using unpacking and scaffolding strategies. The complexity of reading and writing at university also necessitates literacy processes to be made explicit and modelled, rather than being silent and assumed. Grabe and Zhang (2013) emphasise that teachers and curriculum developers must prioritise raising students' awareness of the importance of reading and providing opportunities for reading skill development. The urgency for these changes to be implemented within the disciplines is highlighted by Wingate (2015, p. 2) who contends that "reading remains largely invisible in higher education pedagogy."

The previous research discussed above indicates the need for further investigations into the use of textbooks and reading quizzes, and best practice strategies to promote reading compliance. Another research gap identified by Boakye (2011), Hill and Meo (2015), Paxton and Frith (2014), and Wingate, (2015) is that much of the literature concerning tertiary academic reading has tended to focus on postgraduate cohorts. Undergraduate studies would be the time when students

should be enhancing their understanding and application of critical reading, and writing using sources. This suggests that more empirical evidence is needed to reveal the factors that influence the reading practices of undergraduate students across different nationalities and fields of study. Such research can help to shift university and disciplinary pedagogy toward incorporating reading as a core and explicit curricula activity

2.5 EAL Students' Academic Contexts

First year EAL students bring with them linguistic, cultural and educational capital gained from previous experiences. Yet, to date, much of the focus on EAL students has placed particular emphasis on these factors as learning constraints. Harper et al. (2011, p. 46) have argued that focusing on EAL students' previous academic contexts seeks to "blame students" for not being adequately prepared for university. Australian universities have also traditionally expected first year students to be autonomous learners who have already developed appropriate levels of language proficiency and acquired the academic literacy skills relevant to their field of study (AEI, 2013; Floyd, 2015; Wingate, 2015). This assumption can make it difficult for many first year students, not just EAL students, to gain acceptance and succeed in a new academic community where disciplinary conventions and literacy practices may be unfamiliar (Gee, 2004; Lea & Street, 1998, 2006; Wingate, 2015). The reality is that many first year students require institutional and teacher support as they work towards becoming independent and engaged members of the academic community. This indicates a contradiction between the implicit assumptions institutions and academic staff may hold regarding first year students' learning needs, and the support they actually require.

EAL students' backgrounds, academic contexts and the way they approach their new learning environment can influence their socialisation, literacy and learning. The next sections discuss the key factors related to EAL student contexts which have been identified in current literature as requiring more research: university entry pathways, English language proficiency, EAL students' expectations of studying at an Australian university, and student identity.

2.5.1 University pathways. EAL students enter university through a range of pathways and their educational backgrounds and previous experiences with English vary. The discussions surrounding entry pathways have identified two aspects of concern. Firstly, EAL students' level of language proficiency and secondly, their ability to engage in institutional and disciplinary conventions such as academic integrity, writing using sources, and adhering to genre specific literacy practices. Australia's 2014 international student data (DET, 2015c) showed that 54% of international students were accepted directly into their higher education institution based on language test results (e.g., IELTS results), one-third came through ELICOS courses, and 7% enrolled from VET courses. As discussed in the previous chapter (see Section 1.1), ELICOS and VET pathways have been criticised because students who successfully pass these courses are not required to undertake formal language testing to ensure their language proficiency meets university requirements (AEI, 2007, 2013; Chaney, 2013; Dyson, 2014; Floyd, 2015). However, Boreland (2016) suggests IELTS scores are not an accurate predictor of EAL students' English language proficiency, or their preparedness for university in Australia. In terms of non-language test pathways, Dyson (2014, A-29) asserts that universities are "largely uninformed about how onshore pathway students actually perceive their preparation."

EAL students' academic literacies

Two recent studies by Dyson (2014) and Floyd (2015) have shed some light on current understandings of university pathways. Dyson (2014) implemented a mixed methods study to investigate whether an ELICOS pathway course had sufficiently prepared a cohort of international postgraduate students. The participants expressed confidence in their academic skills, but lacked the same confidence with their language due to few opportunities to improve speaking fluency. The students also perceived that their academic achievements were restricted due to weaknesses related to academic writing. The study compared 106 of the EAL participants' first semester academic records with the results of the whole cohort (N= 31,814) enrolled in the same courses. Although there were no significant differences between the EAL students' grades and those of their domestic peers, the EAL students demonstrated lower competencies with their writing in terms of grammar and using sources. Dyson (2014) has urged universities to pay particular attention to embedding language support, in particular writing skills, into disciplinary curricula.

Floyd (2015) also examined international student university entry pathways. She recently surveyed EAL students who had enrolled in university via English for Academic Purposes (EAP) pathway courses and English language test scores. Both cohorts had similar pass rates in their first year, even though the language scores at the start of the year for the students who entered via language test results had been notably higher (Floyd, 2015). The EAP pathway students' also demonstrated a higher level of understanding of academic writing, plagiarism, and referencing compared to the language Test pathway students. Floyd's (2015) concluded that the EAP pathway students' prior learning had provided valuable experience which all international students could benefit from.

According to Floyd (2015), the lack of clarity regarding the relationship between EAL student pathways and academic achievement is not surprising. She

reports that although domestic students are assumed to be fluent in English, they also have varying degrees of academic success. Boreland (2016) agrees and advocates that universities pay increased attention to first year support for all students, not just EAL students. Both Dyson (2014) and Floyd (2015) recommend that while further research is required to better understand factors related to university pathways, there is a greater need to focus on the best strategies to support EAL students when they commence university. Similarly, Murray and Nallaya (2014) point out that when students have been accepted into university, it is the institutions responsibility to provide opportunities for them to develop a “working understanding of the literacy practices pertinent to their disciplines” (p. 1297). As illustrated by the studies discussed in this section, EAL student university entry pathways and language proficiency are closely related and complex issues. The next section extends the discussion on EAL students' English language proficiency.

2.5.2 English language proficiency. The findings from the 2007 and 2013 AEI Symposiums suggest that due to the significant links between language, learning and literacy, English language proficiency and enhancement are relevant to all students. The Good Practice Principles emphasise that students and institutions share responsibility for English language enhancement, and that enhancement strategies should be implemented within disciplinary contexts (AEI, 2013; Dunworth, 2013). Furthermore, although English language enhancement is widely acknowledged as EAL students' biggest challenge, there is no agreed definition of proficiency, or classification of the ideal proficiency levels required for successful tertiary study (AEI, 2013). Phakiti, Hirsh, and Woodrow (2013) and Ashton-Hay, Wignell, and Evans (2016) have suggested the recent focus on English language

proficiency is yet to yield sufficient evidence regarding how first year EAL students' language proficiency affects their readiness for tertiary level studies.

Universities stipulate English language entry requirements and, as discussed above, offer alternative pathways, such as successful completion of ELICOS Direct Entry programs, for students who do not meet those prerequisites. Therefore, when students first enter university, it is important to accept their proficiency levels because they have met the language requirements. Humphreys et al. (2012) have advised that universities must acknowledge that English language proficiency is complex and difficult to measure, and when students commence university, the level of their English skills will vary considerably. From the student perspective, Harper et al. (2011, p. 44) suggest that "having been offered a place at university, students are surely not unreasonable for assuming that the university deems them to have the capacity to succeed." Yet, the negative discourse regarding students' language competency, and the provision of language support outside of disciplinary contexts, perpetuates the deficit approach towards EAL students.

There has been little research investigating the issues related to undergraduate EAL students' language proficiency and enhancement. In recent years, the discussion surrounding international education has prompted a number of researchers to address this gap by examining whether EAL students' English proficiency improves when they study at an English-medium university. Storch and Hill (2008) implemented a Diagnostic English Language Assessment (DELA) test and re-test research design to examine 39 postgraduate EAL students' language at the beginning and end of their first semester at an Australian university. The participants had enrolled at the university via a range of available pathways. The study revealed no significant changes in participants' writing scores, except in the

length of their written texts. Vocabulary and grammar showed the least improvement (Storch & Hill, 2008).

Humphreys et al. (2012) measured English enhancement in a study of 51 EAL students who took IELTS tests at the start and end of their first semester. The results revealed that the only improvement was a marginal increase in speaking scores for some students. Participant focus group results indicated students were aware that limited vocabulary and lack of engagement with NES had hindered their improvement. Storch and Hill's (2008) participants also expressed specific reasons why their writing had not improved: lack of teacher feedback on written assignments; not using English language support due to poor time management; low self-confidence due to not making NES friends; and having few opportunities to communicate in class. Of particular significance was that participants assumed they did not need to improve if there was no teacher feedback regarding language issues in their assignments.

Following on from the studies described above, Knoch, Rouhshad, and Storch (2014) and Knoch, Rouhshad, Oon, and Storch (2015) investigated the impact an English-speaking learning environment had on EAL students' writing development. Both studies used the same DELA test-re-test design Storch and Hill (2008) used. Knoch et al. (2014) examined 101 EAL undergraduate students' writing improvement after their first year of university. The participants' entry pathways varied. Knoch et al. (2015) extended the investigation by re-testing and interviewing 31 participants from the first study at the end of their third year. The studies found that only participants' writing fluency had improved. Similar to Storch and Hill's (2008) findings, there were no significant improvements in grammatical or lexical complexity. Many of the participants in both studies stated they had not received feedback on their written work. Knoch et al. (2014) suggested that this lack of

feedback was a reason why the students had shown little improvement in their writing. Moreover, similar to Storch and Hill's (2008) findings, Knoch et al.'s (2015) study showed that when participants had not received teacher feedback for written assessments, they assumed their writing did not need further improvement. Knoch et al. (2015) described their findings as concerning because students would have expected to graduate with effective English writing skills.

These studies indicate that English language enhancement is a complex process which takes time, and requires an ongoing commitment from students themselves, and teaching staff. As attributed by the Good Practice Principles, students need opportunities to enhance their language skills within the disciplines. Therefore, it is necessary for language instruction and feedback to be embedded into disciplinary content. As shown above, of particular importance is the provision of teacher feedback. For example, Knoch et al. (2014) and Knoch et al. (2015) have emphasised the pedagogical implications of their findings, whereby institutions need to develop disciplinary feedback guidelines to ensure students are provided with appropriate literacy and language guidance and support. They also direct universities to ensure that disciplinary staff receive training in order to increase their capacity to provide effective feedback on language.

2.5.3 Expectations of studying at an English-speaking university.

First year students' expectations of tertiary study can influence their course engagement and how quickly they transition into their new learning environment. Previous research (e.g., Baik, Naylor, & Arkoudis, 2015; Crisp et al., 2009; IEAA, 2016; Lobo & Gurney, 2009; Wingate, 2015) has found that EAL students choose to study at an English-speaking university because they believe it can improve their career prospects and prepare them to become global citizens. In terms of their

transition into a new learning environment, these studies have suggested that although EAL students are aware that they need to become independent learners, they also expect institutional and teacher support. Wingate (2015) has instructed that more research investigating first year students' expectations is still required so that institutions and disciplinary staff are compelled to adjust curricula and instruction practices to better accommodate commencing students' needs.

Investigations into EAL students' learning needs is particularly important because previous studies (e.g., Crisp et al., 2009; Krause, Hartley, James, & McInnis, 2005; Baik et al., 2015) have shown that EAL students' expectations prior to commencing university often do not align with their actual experiences.

One study which has provided insights into international students' expectations was conducted by the Centre for the Study of Higher Education in Australia. The longitudinal study involved a series of five First Year Experience surveys, in 1994, 1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014. The findings relating to international students in the three most recent surveys (Baik et al., 2015; James, Krause, & Jennings, 2010; Krause et al., 2005) revealed that although international students believed they were well prepared for their university studies, compared to domestic students, they were more likely to report that their first year expectations were not met. In 2004 (Krause et al., 2005) and 2009 (James et al., 2010), nine institutions took part in the First Year Experience questionnaire, with 2234 and 2422 respondents respectively. In 2014 (Baik et al., 2015), 1739 students from eight of the same institutions participated. While the majority of respondents were domestic students, international students also took part with 185 participating in the 2004 survey, 265 in 2009, and 205 in 2014.

In the 2004 survey findings, international students did not believe they had received the level of attention from teachers they expected, and they were less likely

than domestic students to believe that teaching staff were interested in their progress. In the 2004 survey, Krause et al. (2005) described two of the results as worrying. Firstly, compared to domestic students (56%), fewer international students reported feeling part of a group of students committed to learning (46%). Secondly, only 35% of international students experienced a sense of belonging, compared to 52% of domestic students (Krause et al., 2005). These results improved slightly in the 2009 study. The number of international students who perceived they were part of a group of students committed to learning had risen from 46% in 2005, to 56% in 2009 (James et al., 2010). There was also an increase in the percentage of international students who felt a sense of belonging, up from 35% to 48% (James et al., 2010). The 2009 study concluded that international students actively participated in their studies, and tended to be more engaged in their studies compared to domestic students (James et al., 2010).

In the 2014 survey, international students remained less likely (66%) to be satisfied with their overall learning experiences, compared to 76% of domestic students (Baik et al., 2015). International students were also still more likely to believe that university had not lived up to their expectations. The results for feeling part of a group of students committed to learning increased slightly to 57%, 1% higher than 2009. At the same time, there had been a decrease in the number of students who felt a sense of belonging, with the figure coming back down to 46% (Baik et al., 2015). Baik et al. (2015) stressed that these issues were cause for concern at the discipline level because engagement with peers and feeling part of an academic community have been found to be strong predictors of student retention and achievement. Baik et al. (2015) directed institutions and disciplines toward investing in further research to identify ways to improve peer engagement.

In another longitudinal study, Crisp et al. (2009) undertook two first year student expectations surveys at the University of Adelaide, one in 2006 with 979 respondents and one in 2007 with 1774 respondents. Around 20% of participants were international students. Similar to the Centre for the Study of Higher Education, Crisp et al., (2009) reported that international students' experiences were less likely than domestic students to align with their expectations. In addition, both domestic and EAL participants expected teachers to read draft assignments, and perceived they would learn from written feedback. Crisp et al. (2009) also surveyed academic staff regarding written feedback. The survey results showed that the staff thought it was too difficult to change their practices and increase feedback, and they believed students should use other resources to help them improve. Hitch et al. (2012) suggest institutions need to consider this direct contrast between university expectations of independent learning and the common assumption by first year students' that they will receive individual support. Lobo and Gurney (2009) surveyed 157 EAL students to examine their expectations at the beginning of their first semester and also determined most students expected practical and individual assistance from teachers. They concluded that unmet student expectations had serious implications for satisfaction and retention, and recommended professional development to ensure teachers were aware of students' learning needs (Lobo & Gurney, 2009).

These studies have provided useful insights into EAL students' expectations of tertiary study in Australia. In line with Lea and Street's (1998) earlier research, they have also illustrated the gap between student expectations and teachers' understandings of the role academic staff should play in students' literacy and learning. Furthermore, the studies indicate that in the years since the Centre for the Study of Higher Education conducted the 2004 First Year Experience survey, there has been little change in terms of achieving a closer alignment between EAL

students' expectations and their actual experiences. As emphasised by Baik et al. (2015), the implication is that institutions need to increase their focus on understanding and meeting EAL students' expectations and learning needs.

2.5.4 Student identity. Within tertiary education contexts, literacy, language, culture and identity have been acknowledged as inseparable concepts. Despite these important links, there is currently a lack of research investigating issues which influence the student identities of undergraduate EAL students from diverse fields of study and cultural backgrounds (Crosby, 2010; Gargano, 2012; Gu, Patkin, & Kirkpatrick, 2014; Pham & Saltmarsh, 2013; Slaten, Elison, Lee, Yough, & Scalise, 2016). Wingate (2015) reports that most EAL student identity research has focused on postgraduate and Asian cohorts, which has led to gaps in current understandings in terms of first year EAL student experiences.

Gee (2004) defines identity as the way students see themselves, as well as how well they understand the actions they need to perform to be accepted by the other members of their new academic community. For first year tertiary students, this means learning and engaging in the literacy practices and discourses valued by their field of study (Gee, 2004; Gu et al., 2014). Gee (2004) explains that positive student identities can be developed through opportunities for “meaningful and value-laden action, interaction and dialogue” with teachers and peers (p. 48). Haugh (2008, p.1) concurs and describes student identity as a “fluid and hybrid construct that is constituted through discourse.” Consequently, the interactions EAL students have with teachers and peers play an important role in how successful they are in constructing positive identities (Pahl & Roswell, 2005; Wingate, 2015). According to Marginson (2013) and Tobell and Burton (2015), globally mobile students are often

high achievers in their home countries, and as such, the transition into English-speaking universities may challenge their student identities.

There has been limited research investigating undergraduate EAL student identity. A number of recent studies have contributed to fill this gap. In a study by Gargano (2012), undergraduate international students in the U.S. reported a fragmented and ambiguous learning environment due to inaccurate stereotypes about their learning styles based on nationality. Despite these challenges, the participants viewed their interactions with peers as advantageous in learning how to negotiate culturally diverse contexts. Similarly, Pham and Saltmarsh's (2013) study showed that although undergraduate international students studying in Australia believed that their new academic community perceived them as 'others,' they demonstrated student agency and used the skills and knowledge they already possessed to mediate their courses. Marginson (2013) also observed that international students actively developed multiple identities and considered that both positive and negative experiences were opportunities for personal growth.

Both Gargano (2012) and Pham and Saltmarsh (2013) found that their EAL participants' student identities were challenged when they did not feel accepted or understood by their new academic community. The students also demonstrated resilience to achieve their academic goals. The researchers have called on universities to improve curricula designs so that the knowledge and skills EAL students already possess is recognised, rather than exposing students to labels and negative assumptions that are unsuitable in today's global educational context. Wingate (2015) also contends that current deficit pedagogies hinder the opportunities for meaningful interactions because teachers and domestic students often have "insufficient knowledge of students' previous experiences, backgrounds and values" (p. 110) and may pre-judge them based on nationality.

Clearly, identity construction is a multi-layered and complex process within which student agency plays a significant role. Glass Kociolek, Wongtrirat, Lynch, and Cong (2015) propose that identity is also influenced by whether students feel a sense of belonging within their academic community. Glass et al. (2015) describe belonging as a fundamental human need that can be gained through positive interactions with people who show genuine care. Inclusive classroom practices and teachers expressing interest and concern have been found to significantly influence students' feelings of belonging (Baik et al., 2015; Glass et al., 2015; Slaten et al., 2016). A sense of belonging can increase students' participation and capacity to become independent learners, and improve academic achievement, whereas lack of constructive feedback and perceived cultural insensitivity can have long-lasting discouraging affects (Baik, et al., 2015; Glass et al., 2015; Slaten et al., 2016; Yefanova, Montgomery, Woodruff, Johnstone, & Kappler, 2017). As previously discussed (see Section 2.3.3), the longitudinal study undertaken by the Centre for the Study of Higher Education (Baik et al., 2015; James et al., 2010; Krause et al., 2005) found that between 2004 and 2014, less than half of surveyed international students reported a sense of belonging in their academic community.

Elliot et al. (2016) provide a useful analogy to help understand the influence learning environments and academic relationships have on student learning and identity. They compare academic socialisation to nurturing a plant which has been relocated into new soil. If the plant is not only to live, but also flourish, it requires initial care so it can adapt and grow. If commencing students feel supported in their new environment and perceive that they belong, it can help them develop positive identities, which in turn helps them acquire the graduate attributes that both their university and they themselves expect to gain. Yet, although research has confirmed the influence social, cultural, and institutional factors can have on identity

construction, the studies described above also indicate English-speaking universities need to provide more inclusive learning environments.

2.6 Tertiary Learning Environments

The Australian tertiary education sector has implemented numerous policies related to international education in an effort to address how universities cater for their EAL students. These include the 2007 and 2013 Symposiums, the focus by TEQSA on entry pathways and the Good Practice Principles. As discussed in Chapter One (see Section 1.1), in the decade since the focus on international education increased, researchers have continued to urge universities to pay more attention to EAL students' learning needs. This requires cooperation and compliance across all levels of a tertiary institution's learning environment. A whole of institution approach includes internationalisation policies, disciplinary pedagogies, and support and professional development for teaching staff. The following section focuses on previous research into four inter-connecting aspects of the tertiary learning environment relevant to this study: first year transition strategies; internationalisation of the curriculum; embedding academic literacies and intercultural communication into disciplinary curricula; and inclusive classroom practices.

2.6.1 First year transition. The previous sections have discussed the challenges EAL students face when they transition into a new learning environment, and highlighted recommendations from previous studies on how institutions can meet these challenges. Nevertheless, Hitch et al. (2012) have argued that first year tertiary transition strategies often focus on the students changing and adapting, rather than universities changing to respond to students' needs. Harper et al. (2011)

suggest that if institutional policies and practices do not adequately address and support students' academic socialisation, then the first year of study is when negative outcomes can occur. First year is when students shape their understandings and responses to their new learning environment and begin constructing new student identities. Students' identities change as they progress through their studies and consequently, first year learning needs are often different to the subsequent years of study (Lizzio, 2011).

Previous studies (e.g., AEI, 2013; Drury & Charles, 2016; Dunworth, 2013; Gale et al., 2017; Jones, 2017; Harper et al., 2011; Paxton & Frith, 2014; Tobell & Burton, 2015; Wingate, 2015) have found that all students can benefit from institutional and teacher support and inclusive classroom practices as they work towards becoming independent, engaged, and valued members of their academic community. This supports suggestions from researchers (e.g., Chanock, 2010; Leask & Carroll, 2011; Tobell & Burton, 2015; Wingate, 2015; Yan & Sendall, 2016) who have stated that the provision of literacy and learning support outside the disciplines cannot adequately cater for first year students' needs. Consequently, researchers such as Dunworth (2013), Wingate (2015), and Glass et al. (2015) have called for first year transition strategies to be embedded into course curricula to facilitate inclusion and engagement, for example structured opportunities for cross-cultural interactions, literacy and language instruction and modelling, and teacher feedback. Nesi and Gardner (2012, p. 261) also argue that in the current context of increased student mobility "it is unrealistic to expect all or even the majority of students" to understand institutional conventions without explicit instruction. Street (2013), Leask and Bridge (2013), and Wingate (2015) uphold that few institutions have applied such strategies across the disciplines. This has increased the demand for

investigations into higher education learning environments in an effort to promote change.

The university where the current study took place has introduced a university-wide compulsory English enhancement program to assist first year EAL students to transition into the university. As described in Chapter One (see Section 1.1), the program was introduced in response to the Good Practice Principles with the purpose of providing undergraduate Language and Communication courses which include embedded literacy and language instruction related to students' fields of study. Fenton-Smith et al. (2015) point out that that these courses should be considered just one part of a whole institutional and disciplinary approach to first year transition. The university has also developed a range of documents which are provided on the university website. The documents present best practice curricula and classroom strategies academic staff can use to cultivate inclusive learning environments and help students develop intercultural communication skills. This study provided an opportunity to examine EAL students' experiences of the first year transition strategies implemented across the university.

In conjunction with the university's Language and Communication courses, the university's Health Faculty also has a first year transition approach in place. Health disciplinary staff have developed a Five-Senses of Student Success Framework which has focused on incorporating strategies into disciplinary curricula to support commencing students (Lizzio, 2011). To gain further insight into best practice strategies to be included in the Student Success Framework, Wilson, Murphy, Pearson, Wallace, and Reher (2016) recently surveyed 4,386 commencing Health students in week 3 of their first semester. Only 3% of participants were EAL students. Students reported that their main concerns early in their first semester were being accepted by peers, locating institutional and disciplinary resources,

engaging with course assessment items, and balancing their studies with other commitments. This reinforces that not only EAL students, but all students require support during the tertiary transition process. In response to their findings regarding commencing students' needs, Wilson et al. (2016) have called for university-wide curricula interventions. They specified strategic priorities for course curricula in the early weeks of semester: appropriate low stakes assessment tasks and exemplars to model university expectations and standards; specific guidance to prepare for assessment items; constructive feedback as part of the assessment process; clear expectations of time commitments for self-study; explicit prompts for course readings; and structured opportunities for class discussion and peer engagement.

In a similar study, Drury and Charles (2016) surveyed Sydney University students who had successfully completed their first year of study. The aim of their research was to identify the challenges the students had faced, and to ascertain common factors that had enabled their success. Twenty percent of the 321 respondents were EAL students. Drury and Charles' (2016) survey results were comparable to the findings of Wilson et al. (2016), with most of Drury and Charles' (2016) respondents reporting that they had encountered challenges related to learning disciplinary academic skills and balancing university, family, and work commitments. Drury and Charles (2016) also highlighted what they described as a key finding, where teaching staff were "frequently reported as both sources of difficulty and help" (p. 62). Examples respondents cited regarding difficulties related to teaching staff included teachers not showing empathy for the challenges students may face and being too busy to answer students' questions. Drury and Charles (2016) concluded that although it was not surprising that students could have both positive and negative experiences with teaching staff, more importantly this finding emphasised the central role of teachers in facilitating student success.

Ashton-Hay et al. (2016) also recently investigated EAL students' transition into an Australian university. 140 first year undergraduate and postgraduate EAL participants were surveyed and participated in group interviews. The aims of the study were to determine the transition challenges first year students faced, and whether the university had effectively implemented the Good Practice Principles. Participants valued academic skill instruction and support, particularly structuring and presenting written assignments, but had also expected more classroom opportunities to interact with peers. Based on their findings, Ashton-Hay et al. (2016) put forward recommendations that aligned with Wilson et al.'s (2016) research. Both studies have advocated that speaking opportunities be embedded into curricula, and that teachers should provide clearer feedback on what students need to improve. Similar to Fenton-Smith et al. (2015), Ashton-Hay et al. (2016) also concluded that while the university they examined had taken some steps to apply the Good Practice Principles, there needed to be a wider and more integrated and proactive approach to effectively cater for all first year students' learning needs.

Yan and Sendall (2016) also examined EAL students' first year transition in response to observations that U.S. tertiary institutions were unclear regarding how to best support first year international students. The study examined a first year credit-bearing course designed specifically to assist international students socialise into their new college in the U.S. Quantitative and qualitative data was collected from 19 students at the end of the course. Firstly, the findings showed the EAL students' needs were similar to their domestic peers, with both cohorts facing comparable transition challenges, providing further evidence that first year transition has become a university-wide issue. Yan and Sendall's (2016) participants also reported that the socialisation course helped them obtain access to university resources, enhanced their speaking skills, and helped them adjust to American academic

culture. These findings reinforce that the transition concerns revealed by participants in Wilson et al.'s (2015) study can be addressed through first year strategies.

Although the course provided students with transition support, consistent with Fenton-Smith et al. (2015) and Ashton-Hay et al. (2016), Yan and Sendall (2016) concluded that one first semester course was insufficient to solve the transition challenges first year EAL students face.

These studies confirm the importance of students' learning needs being met in the first weeks of the academic socialisation process. First year transition and academic literacies researchers have identified strategies related to curricula design and classroom practices to assist students during this transitional phase of their education. Despite this, the studies discussed above indicate gaps between best practice and students reported experiences. Wilson et al. (2016) describe the first year of university as "one of the most significant transitions in a student's life" (p. 1024). Accordingly, it is essential for researchers and universities to investigate the adoption and efficacy of first year transition strategies across the disciplines. Such studies can provide evidence of best practice and continue the pressure on universities to pay specific attention to academic socialisation strategies.

2.6.2 Internationalisation of the curriculum. Internationalisation of the curriculum is one way that many universities have responded to the increase in student global mobility. According to Leask and Bridge (2013), internationalisation impacts all aspects of an institution's formal curricula and teaching pedagogies because what is taught, and how it is taught, directly influences student learning. Internationalisation involves exposing students to both local and international issues, promoting cultural understanding and enrichment, and assisting graduates to gain the skills required to operate effectively in multicultural environments (Barrie,

2006; Leask, 2013). These concepts are also reflected by the academic literacies framework, whereby “cultural competence and academic literacy are interrelated due to the central role that language plays in the construction of cultural and disciplinary knowledge” (Harvey, Russel-Mundine, & Hoving, 2016, p. A-102). Glass et al. (2015) consider internationalisation to be a tool through which institutions should recognise diversity, and provide inclusive learning spaces. The goals of internationalisation also align with Habermas’s (1984) communicative action theory, which contends that universities should be places where students develop communicative competence and participate in interactions which promote respect for others and allow different perspectives to be shared.

Leask (2013) has been at the forefront of internationalisation research in Australia and has undertaken a number of studies with colleagues. In 2011, Leask and Carroll reported that universities and disciplines have been ineffective in increasing cross-cultural interaction and engagement. After ten years of internationalisation policies and strategies at the University of South Australia, Leask and Carroll, (2011) employed a university wide survey at the institution and found that “neither international nor domestic undergraduate students were satisfied with the quality and quantity of interaction they were having with cultural others inside or outside the classroom”(p. 652). This was deemed to be because, although the institution perceived it had planned and implemented the internationalisation policies, it was left to disciplinary staff to develop classroom strategies which facilitated the development of intercultural skills. Leask and Carroll’s (2011) key message was that hoping for cross-cultural engagement to occur spontaneously was unworkable. Yan and Sendall (2016) reason that it is the responsibility of institutions to educate academic staff on best practice teaching strategies so they can use those practices to help students develop intercultural communication skills.

In a subsequent study, Leask and Bridge (2013) undertook a 12 month research project where they reviewed internationalisation literature and institutional documents, and consulted teaching staff from a range of disciplines across 15 Australian universities. They reported that internationalisation of the curriculum had remained a low priority in higher education, and was still “much debated and diversely interpreted” (Leask & Bridge, 2013, p. 79). Jones and Killick (2013) have also questioned whether universities have effectively implemented internationalisation policies into course curricula due to a lack of examples of “successful curriculum internationalisation initiatives” (p. 166). Leask and Bridge (2013) assert that the challenge hindering internationalisation is that academic staff are often too socialised into their dominant disciplinary paradigms, which restricts their understanding of the changing tertiary context. As mentioned in Section 2.4.1, this is a significant issue considering that first year EAL students are expected to change their approaches to learning, yet institutions have not adequately responded to students' needs (e.g., Ashton-Hay et al., 2016; Hitch et al., 2012; Wilson et al., 2016). Leask and Bridge (2013) recommend that disciplinary curriculum developers must embed teaching activities which equip students with the intercultural skills required for global citizenship.

When Sawir (2013) interviewed 80 academic staff from four disciplines at an Australian university she found the staff believed international students were a valuable educational resource and enriched classroom discussions. In addition, the participants reported that having international students in their classrooms had led them to reflect on, and improve their teaching methods. Nevertheless, Sawir's (2013) teacher participants were concerned that domestic students undervalued the cultural diversity that international students brought to Australian tertiary classrooms. Similar to Leask and Bridge (2013), Sawir (2013) reported that successful

internationalisation required commitment from everyone within the academic community. In a more recent study, Green and Whitsed (2015) have suggested that realising internationalisation at the disciplinary and classroom level continues to be a significant challenge due to contested understandings within institutions regarding the strategies and goals of internationalisation.

Internationalisation of the curriculum is relevant to this study because as De Wit and Leask (2015) note, “internationalisation is not a goal in itself but is a means to enhance the quality of education” (p. 12). As mentioned in Chapter One (see Section 1.4), the university setting for the study reported in this thesis has developed a range of internationalisation strategies, which aim to assist EAL students' academic socialisation and help them develop intercultural and linguistic competencies. By examining EAL students' experiences across university disciplines this study contributes to current discussions related to the efficacy of internationalisation strategies. Leask and Bridge (2013) reported that studies examining internationalisation of the curriculum have been rare, and have mainly focused on one discipline, rather than across disciplines. Therefore, they and other researchers (e.g., Chaney, 2013; Wingate, 2015; Yan & Sendall, 2016) have stressed that further investigations are needed to examine whether the aims of internationalisation are being achieved.

2.6.3 Embedding academic literacies into disciplinary curricula.

The previous chapter and the sections above have presented the arguments put forward in current literature as to why universities should move away from the deficit approach to literacy and learning. The academic literacies and international education researchers discussed in this chapter have provided consensus on ways to achieve this shift, including first year transition strategies, and internationalisation

of the curriculum. Researchers (e.g., Chanock, 2010; Crosby, 2007; Hocking & Fieldhouse, 2011; Leask, 2013; Murray & Nallaya, 2014; Paxton & Frith, 2014; Street, 2013; Wingate, 2015) have also expressed the importance of embedding academic literacies and intercultural communication instruction into disciplinary curricula. Hillege, Catterall, Beale, and Stewart (2014) explain that embedding occurs when literacy and communication skills are developed as part of disciplinary content and course assessments.

In an effort to add to previous research, Hillege et al. (2014) investigated the influence of embedding academic literacies instruction into a core, first year nursing course at an Australian university. Hillege et al. (2014) noted that the course had evolved based on the need to cater for a largely diverse student cohort, and the publication of the Good Practice Principles. The course was designed through collaboration among university staff and was informed by the academic literacies framework, which Hillege et al. (2014) described as a useful pedagogical framework to accommodate the needs of all first year students. 147 students attended the course, including both NNES and NES, after being identified as requiring literacy and language support based on their language test results. The embedded strategies focused on enhancing students' writing skills, and included explicit writing instruction, opportunities for feedback, and guided critical reading practice. At the end of the course, Hillege et al. (2014) examined students' essay results and compared them to students who had taken the same course without the embedded instruction. Students in the embedded tutorial "showed greater improvement in their written communication than those with similar language proficiency" who had attended the non-embedded course (Hillege et al., 2014, p. 686). The participants also reported increased confidence in their writing, which they utilised in their other courses.

Beatty, Collins, and Buckingham (2014) also conducted a case study to examine the effectiveness of embedding contextualised instruction on written and oral communication. The study focused on a first year core Health Science course at a Western Australian university. Similar to Hillege et al.'s (2014) study, Beatty et al. (2014) also identified that the provision of literacy and academic skills support within the course could be achieved through cooperation between disciplinary staff and language and learning advisors. The learning activities focused on "assisting students' transition to university and fostering a sense of belonging" (Beatty et al., 2014, p. 12). Students were encouraged to reflect on their learning styles and how they could improve. Beatty et al. (2014) recommended teachers implement strategies that were consistent with Hillege et al.'s (2014) study, such as incorporating scaffolding, modelling, and feedback into assessments. At the completion of the course, 79.5% of students agreed it had helped them improve their communication and writing skills (Beatty et al., 2014). The researchers described embedding academic socialisation support into first year course curricula as an ideal means to contextualise language and academic skills, while also encouraging students to take responsibility for their own development.

As well as academic literacies, intercultural competence is also fundamental for tertiary students, in particular for their future careers. The Good Practice Principles, described in Chapter One (see Section 1.1) have stipulated that all students need opportunities within disciplinary learning settings to engage in cross-cultural interactions to enhance their intercultural understandings. Leask (2013) advises that the development of intercultural communication skills must be embedded into curricula because students not only need opportunities for cross-cultural interactions, they also need regular teacher feedback on their performance. The university where the current study was undertaken lists intercultural

competence as one of the graduate attributes all students are expected to gain during their degree (see Section 1.4). The university's website states that graduates demonstrate intercultural competence by showing respect and interacting effectively in culturally and linguistically diverse contexts.

According to Moeller and Faltin Osborn (2014), classrooms are appropriate spaces for intercultural interactions because teachers can help guide discussions. They also add that for cross-cultural communication to occur, teachers need to understand how to nurture intercultural relationships, and they need to allocate class time for student discussion (Moeller & Faltin Osborn, 2014). This could be achieved by including opportunities for intercultural communication development into classroom and assessment activities. However, Harvey et al. (2016) have suggested many academic staff do not have sufficient knowledge or skills to facilitate classroom intercultural communication. This emphasises the importance of teacher professional development and internationalising disciplinary curricula, so that desired graduate skills and attributes are embedded into teaching and learning activities.

2.6.4 Classroom practices. Teaching practices used in the classroom reflect the underlying pedagogies within course curricula, but they are also influenced by teachers' understandings of student needs. Literacy and language enhancement, and constructing disciplinary knowledge, can only occur if students gain access to their discourse community. Teachers play a key role in facilitating this access. This aligns with the academic literacies approach, which strongly advocates the responsibility of teachers to provide inclusive learning environments. Habermas (1984) has also recommended that teachers need to assist students to learn the rules and norms of their new discourse community so they can achieve full participation.

Yet, it may be difficult for teachers to engage in supportive classroom practices if their perceptions of student identities are based on nationality and the deficit perspective. Winchester (2013) and Wingate (2015) insist that teachers need institutional support to identify and implement classroom strategies which can help EAL students gain legitimacy within their new academic community.

The issue of professional teacher development has been raised in previous studies (e.g., Crosby, 2007; Lea & Street, 1998; Leask & Carroll, 2011; O'Shea et al., 2015; Paxton & Frith, 2014; Yan & Sendall, 2016), and has been described as a problem that institutions must urgently address. Doherty and Singh (2007) have advised that engagement among staff and students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds requires academic staff to develop "a more nuanced understanding of who internationally mobile students are" (p. 18). A study undertaken in the U.K. by Winchester (2013) reinforced this view when the findings showed that teachers could have a positive influence on student identities if they implemented practices which allowed equal participation among all students, and explicitly acknowledged and legitimised learners' intellectual and cultural capital.

Glass et al. (2015) have also emphasised the importance of teachers providing inclusive classrooms and fostering understanding and awareness of cultural differences. In their recent study, they interviewed 31 undergraduate and post-graduate EAL students at three universities in Canada to explore students' classroom interactions with professors. The aim of their research was to determine the "instances of inclusion and exclusion that affected students' sense of belonging" (Glass et al., 2015, p. 356). The participants reported that when teachers took the time to have one-on-one conversations before or after class and showed genuine care and concern for them both academically and personally, it increased their confidence to participate in class and their capacity to become independent learners. On the

other hand, lack of constructive teacher feedback and perceived cultural insensitivity in classroom environments had long-lasting discouraging affects (Glass et al., 2015). This supports Baik et al.'s (2015) research (see Section 2.3.3) which found that EAL students' feelings of belonging in their new academic community influenced their academic achievement.

The positive classroom interactions that Glass et al. (2015) describe reflect the picture that Elliot et al. (2016) paint when they compare academic socialisation to nurturing a relocated plant so it can thrive in its new environment (see Section 2.3.4). Glass et al., (2015) confirm that supportive classroom practices and positive relationships with teachers have a significant influence on participants' sense of belonging and inclusiveness. However, as mentioned above, researchers such as Doherty and Singh (2007), Wingate (2015), and Harvey et al., (2016) have argued that achieving inclusive classroom practices is difficult if course teachers have inadequate knowledge of students' previous experiences, backgrounds and values. Leask (2013, p. 112) has put forward the same view, declaring that "institutions will be rewarded if they provide teaching teams with the time and the resources" they need to implement best practice classroom strategies.

Street (2005a) highlights that researchers should investigate classroom practices because it is important to rethink, redefine, and redesign language and literacy in the classroom to meet the needs and skills of students from diverse backgrounds. As discussed, this would involve institutions paying attention to and improving disciplinary curricula by incorporating internationalisation and first year transition strategies. Enhancing these aspects of disciplinary learning environments, as well as increasing staff training, would help teachers to understand globally mobile students' expectations and learning needs, and enable them to implement inclusive classroom practices suitable for current tertiary contexts.

2.7 Summary of Current EAL and Academic Literacies Research Gaps

This chapter has reviewed the current literature in terms of the complex nature of literacy, the theoretical underpinning of the academic literacies framework, and the challenges EAL students face. The review has also demonstrated that the academic literacies model is appropriate for the current study. The framework takes into account the relationships between students, teachers, and institutions and can assist researchers to investigate how learners understand their own identity and mediate their new academic context. In addition, issues around language proficiency, university entry pathways, and first year EAL student expectations have been discussed. Current academic literacies research has also elucidated the importance of first year students having opportunities for meaningful interactions with teachers and peers to help them develop positive student identities, and feel a sense of belonging in their new academic community. Australia's now diverse tertiary student body requires universities to change the way they support EAL students.

The challenges EAL students encounter in NES learning environments have been well documented. There have also been continued calls from academic literacies researchers urging tertiary institutions to support academic staff by adjusting disciplinary pedagogies to better address students' diverse learning needs. However, studies investigating EAL students' experiences have identified that despite higher education policy adjustments, the recommendations put forward by the 2007 and 2013 Symposiums and the Good Practice Principles, there has yet to be a shift away from the deficit approach. Previous studies (Lea & Street, 1998; Wingate, 2015) have indicated that institutions continue to focus on EAL students' apparent lack of language proficiency and literacy skills, rather than seeing language and academic

EAL students' academic literacies

literacies development as flexible and social practices which can be enhanced through disciplinary pedagogies.

The review of the literature suggests universities need to implement more explicit and supportive literacy and language instruction, in particular for new learners. This could be achieved through first year transition strategies, internationalisation of the curriculum, embedding language and literacy instruction into curricula, and providing inclusive classrooms learning environments. As described above, research has shown that such strategies could improve EAL students' experiences and learning outcomes. This study can provide further insight into whether best practice pedagogies and strategies are being implemented across disciplines, and provide evidence which adds to current knowledge about how university learning environments currently cater for EAL students' literacy and learning needs. Importantly, by investigating EAL students from diverse backgrounds and fields of study, the research findings can illuminate the most critical changes that may be required and provide recommendations on how curricula design and classroom practices might be improved in order to address EAL students' needs.

There are a number of other research gaps addressed by this study. Most previous studies investigating EAL students' academic literacies experiences have focused on writing (Crosby, 2007; Kelly, 2014), which has led to academic reading receiving less attention. This study contributes to current research by examining EAL students reading experiences to determine whether reading pedagogies are incorporated into disciplinary curricula. There is also a lack of multiple case study research in EAL literature, and few previous case study investigations have included participants across a range of disciplines or cultures (Crosby, 2007; Kelly, 2014). In particular, there is currently a dearth of research investigating issues which influence

the student identities of undergraduate EAL students from diverse fields of study and cultural backgrounds (Crosby, 2010; Gargano, 2012; Gu et al., 2014; Pham & Saltmarsh, 2013; Slaten et al., 2016). By investigating multiple units of analysis and purposefully selecting cases from diverse cultures, backgrounds and fields of study, the current study can extend on previous findings.

The research questions considered in this thesis sought to explain EAL students' academic expectations, how participants mediated their first year of study, and the factors which enabled and constrained their academic literacies. By examining students' expectations and their academic socialisation and literacies experiences, the findings provide evidence which adds to current knowledge about how university learning environments might better accommodate EAL students' literacy and learning needs. Research Question 1 investigated first year undergraduate EAL students' expectations of their new learning environment. Understanding students' expectations is necessary for institutions and academic staff to meet students' learning needs. Research Question 2 examined first year undergraduate EAL students' academic socialisation. This phase of the study focused on how factors such as language proficiency, university entry pathways, and approaches to academic reading may have influenced participants' ability to mediate course requirements. It also examined factors related to the learning environment, including first year transition, and internationalisation strategies. Research Question 3 investigated the factors that enabled and constrained first year undergraduate EAL students' academic literacies. This final phase of the study focused on participants' experiences constructing new learner identities and building relationships with teachers and peers.

Chapter Three provides a detailed description of the research approach and research methods used to address the research aim and research questions.

Chapter Three - Research Methodology

This study used a quantitative and qualitative research design to investigate first year EAL students' academic socialisation and academic literacy experiences. The research setting was a university located in South East Queensland. The study took place at one of the university's five campuses during semester 1 and semester 2, 2014. The theoretical framework was guided by the academic literacies approach developed by Lea and Street (1998). The academic literacies framework is founded on the understanding that academic literacy is influenced by social, cultural and institutional contexts (Lea & Street, 1998, 2006). As stated in the previous chapter (see Section 2.1), academic literacies is a critical field of inquiry that focuses on literacy practices in context, draws on qualitative studies undertaken by NLS researchers. Therefore, Lea and Street (1998) propose that academic literacies research be conducted using qualitative research methods to allow researchers to explore students' interpretations of the institutional contexts they encounter.

It was important that the research methods adopted for this study generated data which provided meaningful insights into EAL students' understandings and lived experiences. Accordingly, the research design involved an explanatory qualitative and quantitative research methodology which included a survey questionnaire and multiple embedded case studies (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Yin, 2009, 2012). The explanatory aspect of the study aimed to construct a clear understanding of the research context to address the research questions, rather than generating descriptions only (Creswell, 2012; Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2008). Creswell (2012) argues that although explanatory research has traditionally been associated with quantitative research, in recent years it has become acceptable to use qualitative methods to reach explanatory conclusions. The following sections present an overview of the study, including the research aim

guiding the investigation, and the worldview assumptions underpinning the study. The research design is then explained in detail, and the research questions stated. This is followed by an in-depth description of the three research phases, including the participants and sampling, data collection instruments and processes, and data analysis procedures. The reliability and validity of the research design, ethical considerations, and study limitations are also discussed.

3.1 Brief Overview of the Study

The aim and research questions for the study were:

***Aim:** To investigate first year undergraduate EAL students' academic socialisation and literacies experiences.*

Research Question 1 - What are first year undergraduate EAL students' expectations of their new learning environment?

Research Question 2 - How do first year undergraduate EAL students mediate their academic socialisation in a new learning environment?

Research Question 3 - What factors associated with first year undergraduate EAL students' experiences enable and constrain their academic literacies?

Analysis of the three research questions was informed by the second and third levels of the academic literacies framework; academic socialisation and academic literacies (see Section 2.2 and Figure 2.1). The first level of the academic literacies approach, the study skills model, was not included in the analytical framework

EAL students' academic literacies

because it relates to the surface features of writing, such as grammar and spelling, which were not the focus of this study. Research Questions One and Two were analysed against the academic socialisation level of the framework. Academic socialisation is the transition new learners undertake as they mediate a new learning environment. Research Question One explored participants' expectations of their academic socialisation and the academic literacy practices students would be required to undertake, such as academic reading and writing, critical thinking, disciplinary referencing conventions, critical thinking, and engaging with teachers and peers. Research Question Two investigated participants' experiences and engagement in the disciplinary literacy practices exemplified in the academic socialisation level of the framework. Research Question Three was analysed against the third level of the research framework, academic literacies. Academic literacies moves beyond the concept of socialisation and emphasises that achieving academic success in a new learning environment is influenced by student identity and the communicative practices of literacy and learning. The analysis focused on participants' construction of new student identities through their engagement with teachers and peers and experiences in the classroom.

A multiple case study approach was the primary research method and it involved multiple units of analysis embedded within the research setting where each participant became one case. A quantitative survey was conducted to inform and support the qualitative inquiry. The overall research design consisted of three research phases. Phase I involved a questionnaire which was used to gain a general picture of first year EAL students' backgrounds, and their expectations of studying at an Australian university. A convenience sample of 159 respondents completed the survey in week 2 of semester 1, 2014. Phase II was the first stage of the multiple case studies. Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants. Data collection involved

weekly structured interviews and document analysis. The aim of the structured interviews was to gain detailed insights into participants' literacy and learning experiences as they were happening. The document analysis was conducted to examine if participants' reported literacy practices aligned with the information and expectations provided in course documents. Phase II commenced in week 4 of semester 1, and continued weekly throughout the semester until week 13. Phase III was the second stage of the multiple case studies which used semi-structured interviews to probe more deeply into the issues highlighted in Phase II. The semi-structured interviews commenced in week 7 of semester 1 and continued into week 14 of semester 2 to allow data collection over the participants' entire first year of study. The research design was premised on a set of theoretical assumptions. These are explained in Section 3.2.

3.2 Theoretical Assumptions

According to Creswell (2014) and Greene and Caracelli (2003), when two distinct research methodologies are used in a single study it is recommended that researchers, in particular student researchers, are explicit about their philosophical beliefs regarding the nature of research. Researchers' assumptions about the nature of knowledge, also known as ontology or paradigms, influence and guide their decisions regarding which research methods can gain the most reliable and valid findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). When a researcher's views on how realities are constructed and knowledge is created are made clear, a well-defined rationale can be put forward to support the research design. This study has been designed and undertaken by a researcher with a constructivist worldview and experience in conducting qualitative research.

Social science researchers often employ either a qualitative or quantitative paradigm. The two paradigms are considered distinct from each other due to variances in the role of the researcher, and the methods of inquiry. Creswell (2012) suggests that researchers who believe in the positivist paradigm tend to hold a scientific view of research, which is that reality is objective and knowledge is constructed by systematically measuring the variables under investigation. Positivist researchers implement quantitative data collection using surveys and experiments and conducting statistical analysis. Their studies usually involve large numbers of participants and the researcher plays an independent observer role (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Guthrie, 2010).

In contrast to positivism, constructivist researchers focus on participants' lived experiences based on the belief that reality is subjective, not objective. That is, people attach different meanings to their perceptions and experiences based on their past experiences, as well as social and cultural factors (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Constructivism advocates that people can only be understood if their social and cultural contexts, and the settings they live and work in, are examined (Creswell, 2014). As explained by Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009), constructivist researchers collect qualitative data by observing and interviewing a small number of participants to gain a deep understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. They then construct meanings based on their interpretations of the findings. The view of the researcher for the study reported in this thesis was that qualitative research methods were imperative for the study to achieve its aims. This belief is based on Burton and Bartlett's (2009) argument that examining the views of those involved in educational settings is necessary to explain "the complexities of the educational process and the nature of teaching and learning" (p. 18). In a study investigating students'

perceptions and experiences, a purely positivist approach cannot provide in-depth or valuable evidence to answer the why and how questions (Holliday, 2007).

While there is a fundamental constructivist philosophy underpinning this study, it is also important that researchers' worldview assumptions do not limit the research methods they use. In the past, positivism and constructivism were not mixed because of their methodological differences. However, over the last few decades many scholars have questioned the legitimacy of having to choose between them. Creswell (2012) and Greene and Caracelli (2003) argue that neither paradigm is better than the other. They recommend that researchers accept and engage with the epistemological views of both paradigms because both have significance and value. Although there are differences between the two paradigms, there are similarities as well. Greene and Caracelli (2003) explain that both approaches promote using more than one data collection method to enhance validity and reliability, and minimise bias.

There are a number of advantages when studies combine qualitative and quantitative methods. Using multiple data collection strategies can maximise the strengths and limit the weaknesses of each method. A combination of methods can create a wider research scope to generate a better understanding of a research problem, and help secure evidence which is more reliable than if a single paradigm is used (Creswell, 2012; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Moreover, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) explain that research areas currently dominated by one methodology can benefit from new insights and diverse perspectives if multiple methods are used. In the field of academic literacy, few studies have used both qualitative and quantitative methodologies (Haugh, 2008; Lillis & Scott, 2007; Paxton, 2012). The research reported in this thesis addresses the lack of such studies.

Further explanation of the research design and justification for the selected research methods is presented in the next section.

3.3 The Research Design

The research framework was carefully designed to ensure the research strategies were robust and dependable, and provided relevant data to achieve the intended aim and inform the research questions. When quantitative and qualitative methods are employed within a single study, it is essential that the different methodological elements are recognised and combined appropriately to take advantage of the value of each paradigm (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Greene, 2007). Using two methodological approaches meant that the weighting and timing of each methodology, and how and when the qualitative and quantitative data is collected, analysed, and interpreted, were carefully considered during the design process (Hesse-Biber, 2010). Firstly, in light of the constructivist worldview underpinning this study, more weighting was given to the qualitative case study approach. This design is also underpinned by the understanding that the most common research method in academic literacies research has been in-depth qualitative interviews which aim to provide insights into participants' sociocultural contexts and lived experiences (Coffin & Donahue, 2012). The case studies allowed an in-depth examination of participants' perceptions and experiences within their natural contexts. At the same time, the time-consuming nature of case study research meant that only a small sample of the research population could be included. The depth of the interviews and the rich conversational data compensated for the small number of participants. The survey provided a complementary method to widen the scope of the study, and inform the case study protocols.

In terms of timing, the methods were implemented sequentially. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) explain that timing refers to data analysis and interpretation, rather than data collection alone. With this in mind, the study was designed so that each phase could inform the next. The Phase I survey results informed the Phase II case study recruitment and structured interview questions. The Phase II analysis informed the Phase III semi-structured interview questions. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) advise that the priority and timing of a research study design can be clearly illustrated by presenting the principal method using capital letters (e.g., QUAL or QUANT), showing the complementary method using lower case (e.g., qual or quant), and by indicating a sequential process with arrows. The priority and sequence of this study is demonstrated in Figure 3.1 as quant -> QUAL -> QUAL.

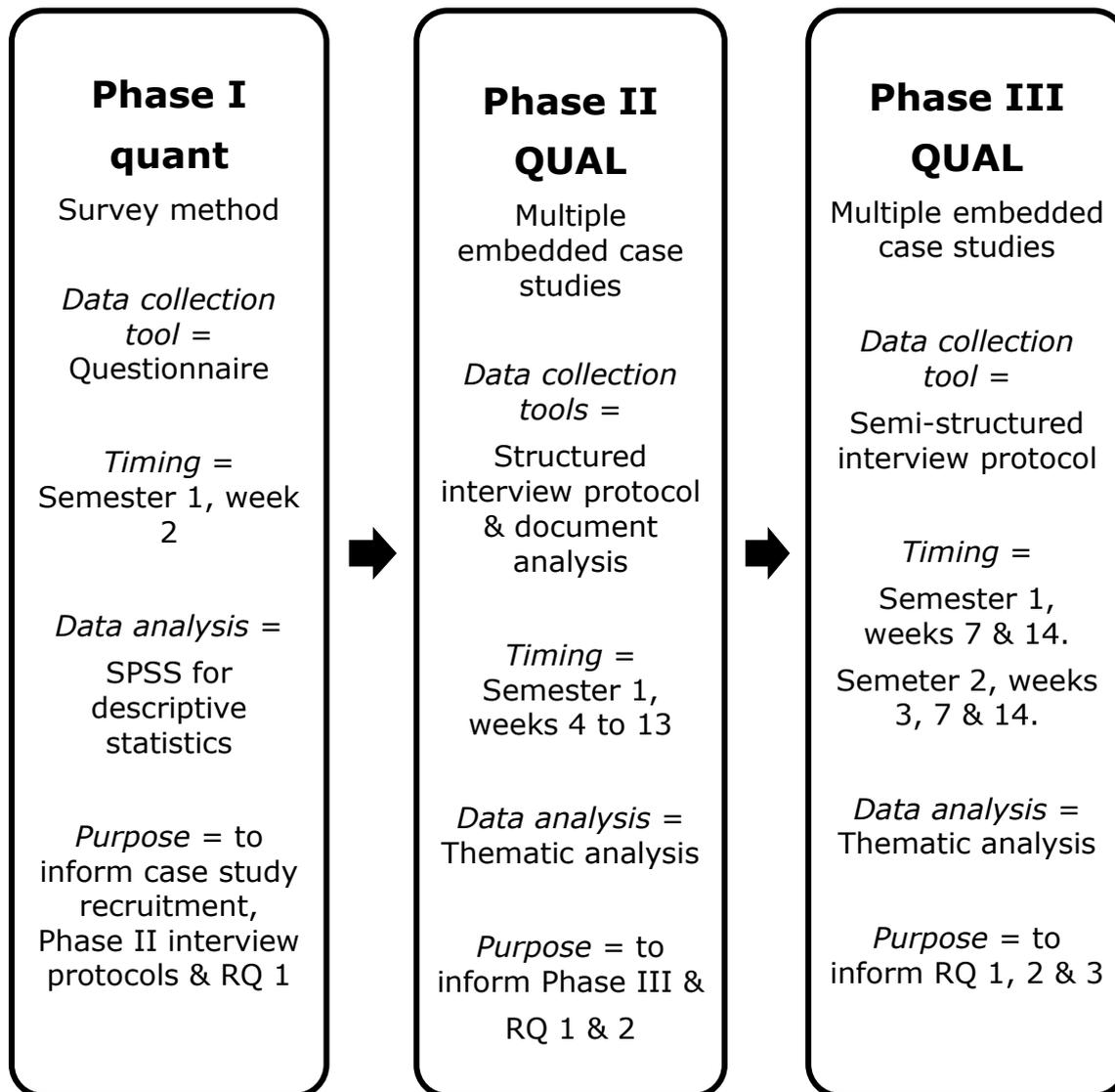


Figure 3.1. Priority and sequence of the research design.

The last consideration in the research design was how and when the quantitative and qualitative methods would be mixed. Creswell and Plano Clark

(2007) and Tashakkori and Teddlie (2009) assert that if the two methodologies are not used together in some way, then it would be pointless to include both quantitative and qualitative methods. In this research, the survey data was collected and analysed in the first week of the study so the respondents' demographic information, and expectations of their new learning environment, could be used for the case study recruitment. The findings from the two research approaches were also integrated to answer Research Question 1. The following sections describe the research methods for each phase of the study: the data collection instruments, the participants, sampling strategies and data analysis procedures.

3.4 Phase I - The Quantitative Survey

Phases I involved developing and implementing a self-administered questionnaire (Appendix B). The first aim of the questionnaire was to gain relevant background information regarding first year EAL students to inform the selection of the case study participants. In addition, the questionnaire examined respondents' academic expectations with the objective of using the results to help formulate the Phase II structured interview protocols, and to respond to Research Question 1. The questionnaire related to the academic socialisation level of the academic literacies framework. The questions focused on respondents' expectations regarding English, academic reading, disciplinary conventions, and engaging with teachers and peers.

Using a well-designed questionnaire within a multi-method research approach can provide a number of advantages. Survey results can be used as an additional source of evidence to enhance research findings, and compared to qualitative methods, surveys generally require less time for data collection and analyses (Creswell, 2014; Gillham, 2006; Schutt, 2006). Although questionnaires provide these advantages, Gillham (2006) and Schutt (2006) stress the importance

of minimising potential negative aspects, such as poor questionnaire design, sampling errors, and low response rates. To address these issues, the instrument design and sampling procedures followed the quantitative research processes recommended by Creswell (2012, 2014), Gillham (2006), and Schutt (2006). In addition, validated questionnaires used in previous studies provided guidance for the questionnaire structure and layout (e.g., Sani et al., 2011; Tercanlioglu, 2004). To increase the possibility of a high response rate, the researcher ensured a “captive audience” (Schutt, 2006, p.262) by distributing the questionnaire when the students were in class. These processes are described in further detail in Section 3.4.2.

The dependability of the questionnaire to measure the intended variables needed to be checked before it could be implemented. Firstly, one of the researcher's supervisors and a statistician reviewed the questionnaire and provided feedback. Both reported that the questionnaire was an appropriate research instrument. To gain further verification regarding reliability, a pilot study was undertaken to assess whether the layout was clear, to check how long the questionnaire took to complete, and to ensure there were no ambiguous questions. Fifteen first year EAL students took part in the pilot study in the first week of semester 1, 2014. Their responses were not included in the study.

The pilot study respondents took 10 to 15 minutes to complete the questionnaires. This was considered an acceptable time frame, suggesting that the length of the questionnaire was suitable. Based on verbal feedback from the pilot study respondents, one change was made to the written instructions at the start of the questionnaire. The statement ‘academic literacy is everything you do as part of your university courses’ needed clarification, so a slight change was made to ‘academic literacy is everything you do as part of **all** your university courses’ (see Appendix B).

3.4.1 The questionnaire. The questionnaire used closed questions to collect demographics and gather information about respondents' academic expectations. Using closed questions was deemed appropriate to achieve the aims of the survey. Gillham (2006) and Schutt (2006) advise that closed questions are useful because the responses are predetermined, which makes them straightforward for respondents and allows response frequencies to be compared between groups.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first section collected demographic data. The second section used dichotomous (yes/no), single and multiple answer style questions to examine participants' previous tertiary education, reasons for studying in Australia, their English language expectations, current reading habits and academic reading expectations, and the support they expected to improve their academic reading and writing skills. The third section contained 10 declarative statements and respondents were asked to choose one option using a five-point Likert scale. The statements related to expectations of disciplinary conventions, academic skills, and the classroom learning environment.

Guthrie (2010) endorses using Likert scaling in social research questionnaires as a way to measure perceptions and strength of agreement pertaining to social concepts and practices. Most Likert scales use a 5 point scale so respondents are given a neutral point in the middle (Guthrie, 2010). One possible limitation of Likert scales is the assumption that all respondents have interpreted the question in the same way. To address this limitation, the items were worded in a way which reduced the likelihood of ambiguity, based on the results of the pilot study (Creswell, 2012; Gillham, 2006; Schutt, 2006).

3.4.2 Survey sampling and implementation. The respondents for the questionnaire were 159 EAL students who had commenced university in semester 1,

2014. The sampling strategy and survey implementation were planned together to ensure they were suitable for the research setting, made sense logistically, and were the most likely combination to achieve the survey aims. The sampling method selected for the survey was non-probability convenience sampling. Convenience sampling allows researchers to recruit respondents who are easily accessible and available. Bryman (2008) specifies that convenience sampling is acceptable in studies where it is important to minimise time and costs, and when further research is being undertaken. Another advantage of convenience sampling is it can provide a good response rate (Bryman, 2008). In addition, Creswell (2012) suggests using convenience sampling when a study requires a survey sample with specific characteristics. To ensure the sample fit the essential characteristic of students who were in their first semester, the questionnaire asked respondents to answer yes or no to the question 'is this your first semester?' They were also asked to indicate their native language.

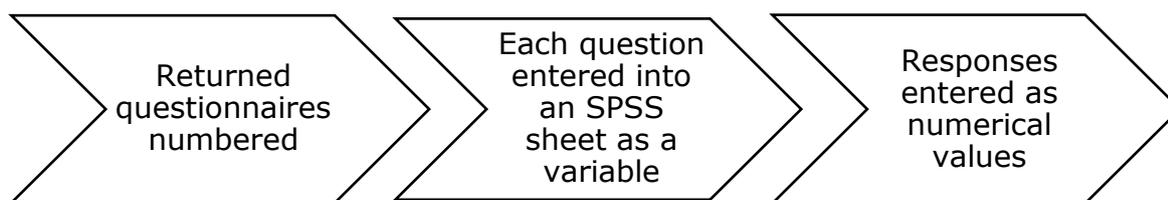
The next step was deciding how and where to conduct the survey using the convenience sampling strategy. Questionnaire surveys can be undertaken in a number of ways: through group administration; or mail outs, as telephone surveys or via email (Guthrie, 2010; Schutt, 2006). The group administration option was the most efficient distribution method for the study reported in this thesis. According to Guthrie (2010) and Schutt, (2006), compared to other options, the time and money costs for group administration are relatively low, and the response rate is usually high. Furthermore, group administration was appropriate because potential disadvantages were minimised. Possible disadvantages can be that respondents may not be all together at the same time, and gaining access to the research site might be difficult (Schutt, 2006). The first potential problem was addressed by conducting the survey during the university's Language and Communication courses. These courses

provided a convenient setting to administer the questionnaires because most of the enrolled students fit the intended respondent profile of first year EAL students. Access to the Language and Communication tutorials was possible because the researcher was a Language and Communication course tutor. None of the researcher's tutorial groups were included in the sample. Gaining permission to distribute the questionnaires involved sending an email to the relevant teaching staff who gave their consent. The survey was implemented at the beginning of each class in week 2, semester 1.

In semester 1, 2014, 336 EAL students were enrolled across the Language and Communication courses at the campus where the study took place. For a research population of 340, "based on the conventional 95 percent level of probability used in social sciences," Guthrie (2010, p. 54) recommends a representative sample size of 181. There were 18 Language and Communication tutorial groups in the sampling frame, each with between 12 and 25 students. A total of 245 questionnaires were distributed, one to each student present. 176 were completed and returned. However, 17 could not be included in the analysis. Five were unusable as the respondents had only completed half the questionnaire, 11 respondents were not in their first semester at the university, and one respondent had listed English as their first language. This left 159 usable copies ($n=159$), giving a response rate of 62%. Although, the number of respondents did not reach Guthrie's (2010) ideal sample size of 181, the results were deemed valuable. Most importantly, the survey data was sufficient to achieve the aims of the quantitative phase of this study, providing information needed for the dominant research phase in this study.

3.4.3 Quantitative data analysis. The survey data was analysed using SPSS statistical software. The data analysis procedures are illustrated in Figure 3.2.

Preparation



Data Analysis

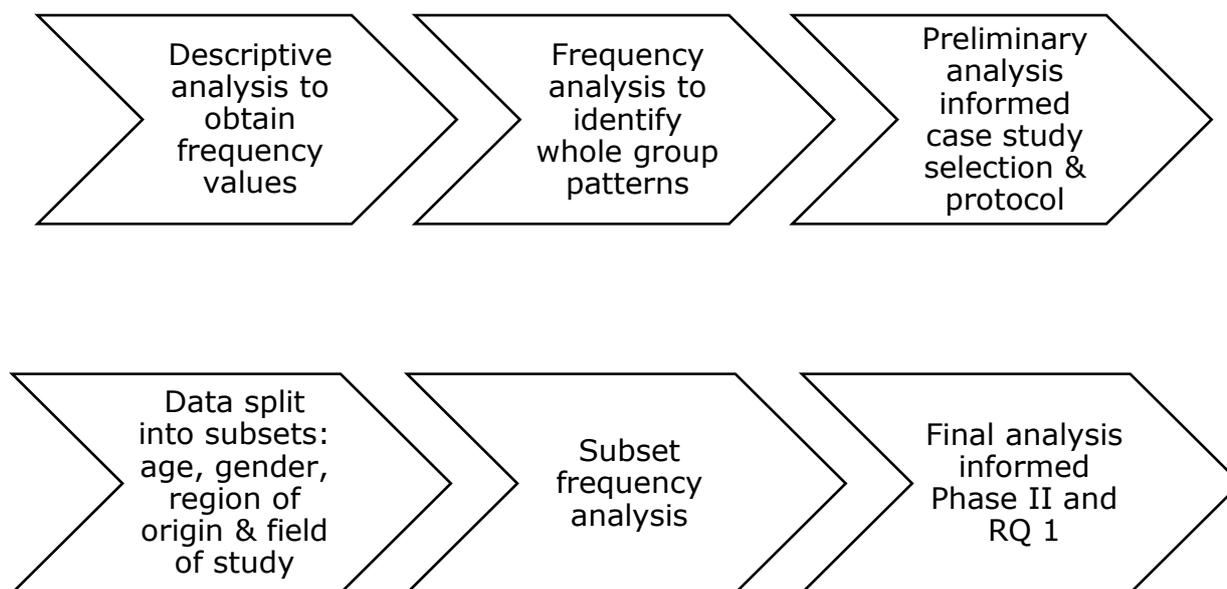


Figure 3.2. Survey data analysis procedures.

The returned questionnaires were numbered (e.g., 01, 02, 03) and the data entered into an SPSS spreadsheet. Each question was treated as a variable and recorded in the variable view. The responses for each question were entered as numerical values under the relevant variable. For example, in the case of gender, each respondent was entered as 1 for female, or 2 for male. The responses for the dichotomous (yes/no) questions, the single and multiple answer questions, and the Likert scale questions were also entered as numerical values.

Descriptive analysis determined the frequency percentages for each variable and the frequency patterns within the whole group data were examined. The whole group data was then analysed according to gender, age, region of origin and field of study. The frequency distributions were analysed to provide insights into whether these factors influenced respondents' expectations. The age ranges were categorised as 17 to 19, 20 to 24, 25 to 29 and over 30. The regions of origin were Asia, South America, Europe and Scandinavia. Grouping respondents according to region, rather than nationality, was necessary to provide subsets which were large enough to gain meaningful data. The disciplines with the highest representation were Business, Engineering and Allied Health.

3.5 Phases II and III - Multiple Embedded Case Studies

Phases II and III were the main phases of the research design and involved multiple embedded explanatory case studies. The purpose of the case studies was to explore the everyday academic perceptions and experiences of first year EAL students, and the factors which may have influenced their academic socialisation and literacies. The case study data was collected using structured and semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Yin (2012) defines case studies as empirical inquiries which use multiple sources of evidence to examine contemporary phenomena within real-life contexts. Case studies have been used for decades as an approach to literacy and educational research (Duff, 2014; Flyvbjerg, 2011). Harland (2014) argues that well designed case studies can contribute valuable knowledge to improve tertiary practices. According to van Lier (2005), case study research is an influential research method in education because it allows researchers to probe deeply into the reality of educational settings. More specifically, explanatory case studies can help uncover how and why a series of events occur by using multiple

sources of evidence to investigate complex social settings and to understand the ways participants' views and perceptions relate to their past and current experiences (Yin, 2009). Explanatory case studies are useful when researchers use existing theoretical frameworks to gain valuable contributions to current knowledge (Duff, 2014; Harland, 2014; Yin, 2009).

Case study units of analysis identify the cases under investigation. As Yin (2009) explains, an embedded case study design means each unit of analysis is examined individually, and is also part of the research setting as a whole. The case results can then be analysed and compared to provide a broader picture of the wider context. In this study, the rationale for using the multiple embedded design was to include first year EAL students from a range of backgrounds, where each case study participant represented one unit of analysis embedded within the research setting. Including students with a variety of backgrounds was important because there has been little research investigating tertiary EAL students from diverse fields of study and cultures (Crosby, 2010). In addition, Yin (2009) advises that including more than just one or two cases in a study can increase the reliability of the findings. The specific selection characteristics for the units of analysis in this research, and how these characteristics were identified, have been described in Section 3.5.1.

While case studies can yield valuable insights regarding the issues under investigation, the disadvantages of case study research should be addressed to strengthen the relevance and transferability of the research findings. For example, case studies can be time consuming because they generate large amounts of data. In addition, researcher bias can influence the accuracy of the evidence, and there is contention as to whether case study findings can be a basis for generalisation (Duff, 2014; Yin, 2009, 2012), albeit generalisation is not necessarily always the intention of the research. For this study, the time consuming nature of case study research was

not a major problem as the case studies were part of a PhD. In terms of minimising researcher bias, it is important that qualitative researchers do not let personal values influence the research findings, and that they do not make assumptions as to what the data may reveal. Nevertheless, Holliday (2007) argues that researcher values should not be viewed in a negative light. She contends that being in the field and developing a positive rapport with participants is in itself essential to understand their experiences. With these points in mind, to maintain researcher objectivity, the process of reflexivity advocated by Yin (2011) was used during the analysis and interpretation processes. Yin (2011) describes reflexivity as the lens through which researchers examine their own values and reflect on how meanings and insights were generated. In this study, the focus of the research was on the participants rather than the researchers' values, and no judgments were expressed by the researcher about any of the participants' views or actions.

The purpose of this study was to gain an in-depth understanding of first year EAL students' experiences across university disciplines. An investigation such as this has not been undertaken before and although the intention was not to generalise, scholars such as Duff (2014), Flyvbjerg (2011) and Yin (2009) confirm that if researchers carefully select representative cases, and use a theoretical framework to establish logical explanations, case study research can often reveal considerations that could apply to similar contexts. A similar view is put forward by van Lier (2005) who explains that as case studies are conducted in practical settings, they can provide *particularisation*, whereby findings can inform similar research settings as long as any contextual differences are considered. Multiple cases and multiple sources over an extended time frame can increase the extent to which logical relationships could apply to similar settings (Creswell, 2014; Duff, 2014; Yin, 2009). Most importantly, case study transferability relies on rigorous and thorough explanations regarding

how and why the cases were selected, how each step of the research process was undertaken, and how the researcher engaged with the data (Duff, 2014; Yin, 2009).

3.5.1 Participant sampling and recruitment. Obtaining units of analysis which would be representative of both the research population and the aims of the study demanded the establishment of clear selection criteria. Purposive sampling, a common non-probability technique used in qualitative research, was used to select the cases to ensure each one adhered to the research requirements. Purposive sampling involves intentionally selecting units of analysis which allow “an in-depth exploration of a central phenomenon” (Creswell, 2012, p. 206). Bryman (2008) recommends purposive sampling for qualitative studies which require strategic case selection, so that each case adheres to the key characteristics needed to answer the research questions. In this study, the central phenomenon was the academic socialisation and academic literacies experiences of first year EAL students. In addition, an important research aim was to investigate the experiences of students from diverse cultural backgrounds, as well as different university pathways, and fields of study. Therefore, purposive sampling was appropriate because convenience or random sampling would not necessarily have achieved the specified unit of analysis. Yin (2009, 2012) refers to purposive sampling as *screening*, and describes it as an essential step in case study research because it is the most likely method to gain data relevant to the research aims.

As well as the preliminary criteria of recruiting first year students from diverse cultural and educational backgrounds, it was important to determine if additional criteria should be included to ensure suitable case selection. This was one of the main purposes of the survey phase of the research design, to inform the case study recruitment process. Immediately after the survey was conducted, the demographic

data was analysed to gain insight into the characteristics of the cohort under investigation. These results were then compared to the university's 2014 EAL student enrolment data to verify the survey had provided a reliable reflection of the research population. Both the survey results and university data are reported in Chapter 4. In brief, the survey results indicated that as well as selecting participants who were in their first semester, and from a range of countries and different university pathways, additional selection criteria related to age and field of study was included to provide a better reflection of the research cohort. The survey results showed the majority of the research population was aged between 20 and 24, and enrolled in Business, Engineering or Health degrees. Therefore, this age group and the three disciplines were added to the unit of analysis selection criteria.

Participant recruitment and screening was conducted in semester 1, week 3. The researcher attended the same ten Language and Communication tutorial groups who had participated in the week 2 survey. These classes were appropriate because the students were likely to fit the specified unit of analysis. The students in each class were asked verbally if they would be willing to discuss taking part in the case study phases of the research. Eighteen students from a range of nationalities and entry pathways showed interest and were screened to ensure they fit the additional specific selection criteria: first year EAL student; aged between 20 and 24; and enrolled in Business, Engineering or Health degrees. Eight of the interested students met the selection criteria and were sent an email to organise times to meet the researcher so they could receive further information about the study. All eight potential participants were emailed because it was possible, and understandable, that once the details of the study were explained, some might have decided that committing to weekly interviews in their first semester would be too onerous. They all replied to the

initial email and agreed to participate. The first interviews were scheduled for week 4.

Each student attended an individual introductory meeting with the researcher and was given an information sheet (see Appendix C) explaining the aims of the study and what would be involved. This information was also provided verbally. The eight students volunteered to participate and signed the informed consent forms (see Appendix D). Detailed descriptions of the eight participants are presented in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.1). A weekly interview time which fit each student's individual schedule was established for the structured interviews. These times were generally in-between their classes. The researcher met each participant at the same place each week at their convenience, either outside one of their lecture theatres or outside the library. The case studies followed a strict research protocol.

3.5.2 The case study protocol. A case study protocol specifies the data collection instruments and implementation procedures. Yin (2009) describes a protocol as a set of systematic actions which the researcher uses to stay focused on the research issues and to ensure the research yields valid and reliable evidence. A strict research protocol is particularly important for multiple case study designs so that each case follows the same explicit field procedures. The protocol for this study incorporated a number of processes to increase the validity of the research: using open questions to elicit in-depth responses; planning interview questions in advance; spending an extended time in the field; following up with participants if there were questions regarding their responses; writing up structured interview notes on the day they were taken; using authentic institutional documents to validate participants' claims regarding course communication; and thoroughly reading and rereading the data.

The research protocol involved three data collection tools: structured interviews; semi-structured interviews; and relevant institutional documents. The structured interviews collected data related to participants' weekly academic practices and experiences and the longer, semi-structured interviews delved more deeply into the themes highlighted in the shorter interview format. The document data was collected from course profiles to examine whether participants' academic practices aligned with course expectations. All collected data was stored and managed using NVivo software. The following sections provide details of the rationale, design, and procedures for each data collection tool.

Structured interviews. The aim of the structured interviews was to gain an insight into participants' academic socialisation and literacy and learning experiences while they were occurring. Also called direct observations or field notes, structured interviews are common in case study research because data is collected in a systematic and standardised way, increasing the reliability of the data collection process (Bryman, 2008; Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2009). A consideration for this phase of the study was developing a weekly data collection tool which would not become a burden for participants. The short, structured interview format was an appropriate way to generate meaningful and timely data, while not taking up too much of the participants' time. In addition, the weekly meetings enabled the researcher to build a rapport with the participants. Furthermore, repeating the same questions each week revealed the literacy practices which participants perceived to be important. The disadvantage of undertaking weekly interviews was the time it took to collect, manage, and analyse the data. This was addressed by using systematic data management and analysis procedures.

Each student participated in eight to ten structured interviews. If a participant was unable to attend due to illness, they emailed the researcher and the interview was rescheduled. Interviews were conducted face-to-face and took about 15 to 20 minutes. The researcher directed the themes using an interview schedule containing nine pre-determined questions (see Appendix F) related to academic practices first year students would be expected to undertake, such as working on and submitting assignments, reading academic texts, and activities related to enhancing academic skills and language proficiency. For example, the weekly schedule included questions which asked students about what they had been doing to complete course assignments, if they had received feedback on submitted assignments, and what they had been reading and why.

Open questions were used to allow the interviews to be guided conversations, with room for follow-up questions when required (Yin, 2009). Participant responses were handwritten by the researcher as field notes during the interviews. The first interviews were held in semester 1, week 4 and began with 12 extra questions (see Appendix E) to collect background information: demographics, previous education, pathway into university in Australia, reasons for studying in Australia, enrolled courses, reading habits before starting university, and how many hours per week the participants expected to spend reading academic materials to successfully pass their courses. Once the background information had been gathered, the week 4 interviews moved on to the nine questions in the weekly interview schedule.

The systematic, weekly data collection began at the start of each week. The interview schedule was created as a Word document template with space for the researcher to handwrite the students' responses, as well as room for extra field notes if required. Before the interviews, a copy of the template was printed for each participant with their pseudonym, the date the interview took place, and a list of the

courses they were enrolled in. Immediately after each interview, the hand written field notes were typed into a new Word document using the blank template. Each structured interview Word document was labelled and saved to the relevant file in NVivo. While this process took time, it was an important step in the research design. Writing up the field notes provided an opportunity to reflect on the students' responses, and informed the Phase III semi-structured interview schedules.

Semi-structured interviews. Each participant took part in five one-on-one semi-structured interviews over two semesters. The aim of the in-depth interviews was to allow further probing regarding issues and themes highlighted in the structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are useful to gain insights into participants' perceptions and actions because the flexible interview style, compared to structured interviews, allows time for deeper examination of the issues under investigation (Creswell, 2014; Richards, 2003; Yin, 2009, 2012). As suggested by Creswell (2012) and Yin (2009), the interview protocols (see Appendices G to K) were pre-prepared prior to each round of interviews so that all participants were asked similar questions, and to ensure the key research concepts were kept in mind. Although the disadvantage of the semi-structured format is the length of time needed to prepare and conduct each set of interviews, and transcribe the data (Creswell, 2014; Schutt, 2006), the rich data obtained was essential to achieve the aims of the study.

The interviews were conducted face-to-face and each one took around thirty to forty minutes. Participants consented to the interviews being audio recorded. The first round of interviews were held in week 7, semester 1, after the survey data had been analysed and the first few weeks of structured interview data were reviewed. The second interviews were held in week 14, the week before examinations began.

EAL students' academic literacies

The next three rounds of interviews took place in semester 2, in weeks 3, 7 and 14. The interview schedules (see Appendices G to K) contained open questions based on issues raised in the literature review and structured interview data. For example, students were asked to provide further details about how they mediated course assignments and readings, their experiences in the classroom and with teachers and peers, and which aspects of their language and literacy they wanted to improve and how this could be achieved. Interview schedule preparation involved listening to the previous recorded interviews and taking notes so that relevant follow up questions could be added where required. For instance, when a number of students discussed experiences related to group assignments, questions related to this issue were added to the interview schedules.

A professional voice recorder Application on the researcher's iPad, Voice Record Pro 7, was used to record the interviews. The MP3 recordings were converted to an MP4 format using the App, and were then labelled with the participants' pseudonyms, the interview number (first, second, third etc.) and the date. Each interview was uploaded to the NVivo 11 software program and then deleted from the iPad. There were 40 semi-structured interviews, five for each of the eight participants. The procedures used to analyse the recorded interview data have been described in Section 3.5.3.

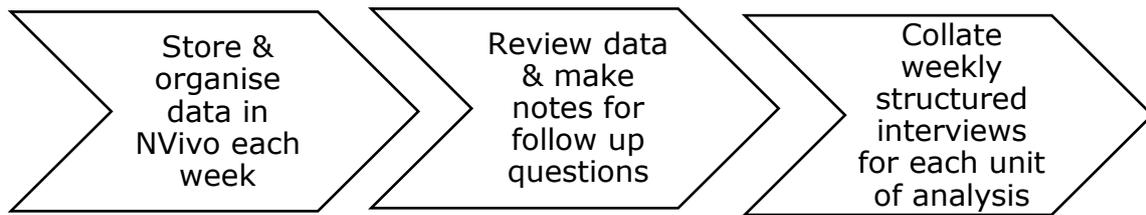
Document analysis. The third data source was institutional documents available on the university website. Documents are useful sources of evidence because they can be accessed at the researchers' convenience, analysed repeatedly and be used to verify data collected from participants (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2009). The documents used in this study were semester 1 course profiles. Course profiles are used by the institution and teaching staff to disseminate course and university policy

information. They provided credible and current data related to the academic practices and events the participants discussed during the interviews. All course profiles follow the same structure: a general course description and introduction; course aims; resources and readings (required and recommended); university learning resources; weekly teaching and learning activities; learning outcomes; and an assessment plan which describes each assessment task including marking criteria, due dates and weightings. The course profiles also state the university's graduate attributes: the skills and competencies valued by the institution which students are expected to develop as they progress through their degrees. The relevant course profiles were downloaded from the university website, converted into word documents, and uploaded to NVivo. They were analysed at the end of semester 1, once all the structured interviews had been completed. The document analysis examined the course readings set out in the profile documents, and whether participants' reported reading practices aligned with course required readings.

3.5.3 Qualitative data analysis. The case study data was analysed using a thematic approach. The structured and semi-structured interviews and course documents, and the multiple units of analysis, generated extensive and rich qualitative data which required clear and systematic data management and analysis procedures. These procedures were put in place before the case studies commenced and involved a number of steps. Firstly, a thesis project file was established in the NVivo 11 software program with a folder for each unit of analysis. Each folder comprised of three sub folders, one for each raw data source: the structured interview word document files; the semi-structured interview Mp4 files; and the course profile documents. The structured interview documents were uploaded to the relevant sub folders each week, the semi-structured interview recordings were

uploaded after each interview, and the course profile documents were uploaded at the start of semester 1. Each time new data was added, it was important to review it and make notes so that, where required, follow up questions could be included in the next round of structured and semi-structured interview protocols. The upload and review process continued throughout the data collection period. Figure 3.3 shows the qualitative data analysis procedures.

Preparation



Analysis

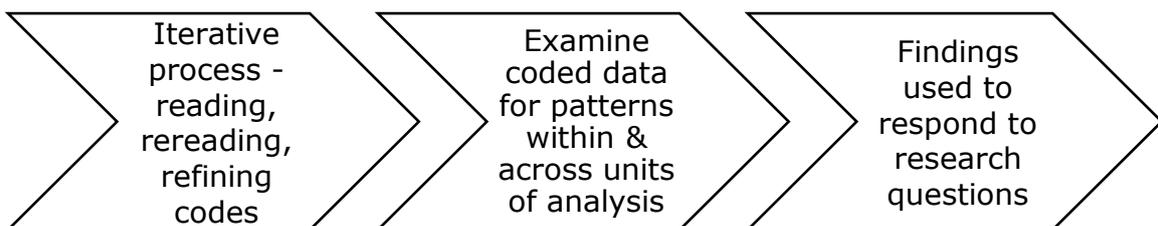
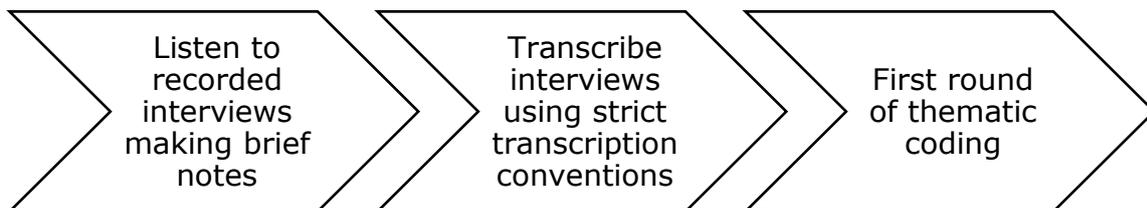
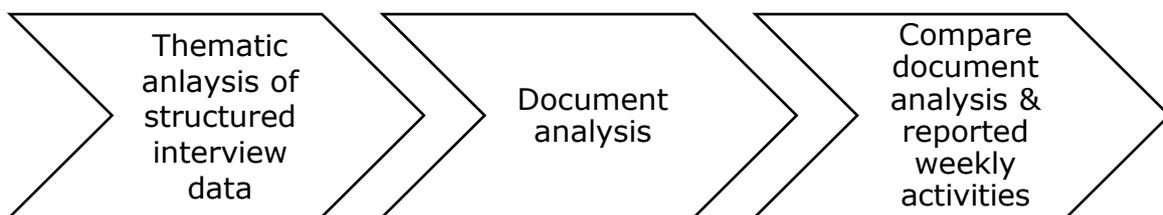


Figure 3.3. Qualitative data analysis.

The case study analysis commenced once the Phase II structured interview data collection was finished. Phase III of the study was still ongoing but it was important to begin the Phase II analysis so the preliminary results could be used to

inform the semi-structured interview protocols. The weekly data for each case was collated to obtain detailed and chronological records related to the structured interview schedule: participants' backgrounds and expectations; what they did to undertake course assessments; what they read and why; if they worked on improving their language and academic skills; and if they had sought help with any aspects of their study. The case records were read and reread to establish emerging themes within each topic under investigation, and to gain a detailed picture of participants' educational contexts, expectations and academic socialisation experiences. The themes were coded and then further analysed to find similarities and differences among the cases. Creswell (2012) advocates thematic coding as an effective way to systematically segment and name sections of qualitative texts to create descriptions and broad themes from the data.

Next, the course profile documents were examined. Information related to course readings was highlighted and compared with participants reported weekly activities. If a participant's literacy practices did not seem to align with the information in the relevant course profile, it was noted and a question was added to their next semi-structured interview schedule. This allowed opportunities to investigate participants' perceptions and understandings of course tasks and the instructions in the course profiles. The Phase II analysis of the structured interview and course document data achieved its aims of providing detailed accounts of participants' academic socialisation experiences and revealing themes and patterns to be further analysed in Phase III.

Analysis of the recorded interview data for the eight units of analysis started during semester 2, 2014, and continued into 2015. The first step involved listening to the interviews several times and making brief non-verbatim notes. This process was useful to highlight sections of the interviews which related to the emergent themes

from the Phase II analysis. The next stage was transcribing the interviews. This process was time-consuming, but worthwhile because it served as a valuable opportunity to understand and interpret the raw data (Holliday, 2007; Lichtman, 2010). Transcription conventions (see Appendix L) were used to produce organised, accurate, and consistent textual data which would capture the natural flow of the recorded discussions (Richards, 2003). The interview transcripts were double checked by the researcher for errors and the coding process has been clearly described. There was room to write further notes to the side of every entry to indicate similarities or differences between the cases, themes or events which had been highlighted in the structured interviews.

The analysis then moved to an iterative process of reading and coding the interview transcripts. The first round of coding focused on labelling the data according to the broad themes already established from the literature and the Phase II analysis. An initial list of codes was compiled and the process was repeated numerous times to revise and refine the codes and to classify them into categories and subcategories related to the issues under investigation: student factors; learning environment factors; academic socialisation; and academic literacies. Specific data relating to individual units of analysis was also coded under the pseudonyms in case cross-referencing was needed at a later date. If a theme arose which did not fit directly into the initial list of codes, a new code was added, for example experiences with group work and perceptions of domestic students. When no new concepts or themes were being found, coding had reached a natural saturation point so no further coding was necessary.

Using Yin's (2009) suggested strategy of applying the study's theoretical framework to analyse and interpret thematic data, the coded data was examined to identify patterns within each case, as well as differences and similarities between the

units of analysis. In addition, the strict case study protocols generated a chain of evidence to cross-reference themes, findings, and results to ensure conclusions were firmly rooted in the data (Yin, 2009). The findings were used to build narratives and explanations regarding each unit of analysis (Yin, 2009) in terms of how or why student and learning environment factors may have influenced participants' expectations and experiences. These explanations were then compared across the eight cases and considered when responding to the research questions.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The ethics of a research project are the standards of research behaviour put in place to ensure the entire study is carried out in a professional manner and with integrity (Creswell, 2014; Henn, Weinstein, & Foard, 2009; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). This involves protecting participants' well-being, seeking their informed consent and guaranteeing confidentiality and privacy regarding their participation and the information they provide. Ethical approval to conduct this study was obtained in February 2014 from the university Research Ethics Committee where the research took place (Protocol Number EDN/06/14/HREC). Informed consent was gained from all participants.

The survey informed consent involved both written and verbal explanations of the purpose of the research, how the data would be used and what participants were being asked to do. The first page of the questionnaire (see Appendix A) explained that participation was voluntary, participants could withdraw at any time, their responses would be anonymous, there were no risks to them, and they would not be penalised in any way should they be unwilling to answer any questions for any reason. Contact details for the researcher, the research supervisors and the University Human Research Ethics Committee were provided. A two minute power

point presentation was also used in the informed consent process in case students were unfamiliar with any of the formal language in the written document. Both the document and the presentation clearly explained that completing the questionnaire confirmed their informed consent to take part in the research.

Case studies require a slightly longer informed consent process because qualitative research participants are asked to share more detailed personal information about themselves and, participation can take up a significant length of time (Babbie, 2010; Creswell, 2012). The ethical process for the case studies in this thesis began in the first meeting in week 3, where potential participants were given an information sheet (see Appendix C) detailing the research aims and data collection process. The information sheet explained that the case studies would consist of 20 minute weekly structured interviews during semester 1, as well as five 30 minute semi-structured interviews held over semesters 1 and 2. Participants were asked for their permission to audio record the semi-structured interviews. The participants' rights and how the researcher would assure their confidentiality were explained both verbally and on the written information sheets. The willing participants signed the informed consent form (see Appendix D).

Protecting participants' confidentiality involved changing their real identities to pseudonyms, as recommended by Creswell (2014) and Henn et al. (2009). Pseudonyms are common in social research, but it is still important to provide transparency when they are allocated (Lahman et al., 2015). For example, if a participant's real name is changed to a pseudonym not related to their ethnicity, it may alter reader's perceptions. To avoid inappropriate pseudonyms, each participant was invited to choose their own. Only Gabriella, Snow and Trang took up this offer. Snow's choice of pseudonym was initially viewed by the researcher as an insensitive name for an African student. When this was raised with him, he found it comical and

was more determined that his pseudonym be 'Snow,' so it was retained at his request. The other students preferred the researcher to allocate their pseudonyms. This was done by selecting common names from their countries of origin. Each student granted their final approval. Pseudonyms were used for the structured interview field notes and these have remained secured in a locked drawer to which only the researcher has access. Electronic data has been password protected and real names were not used to label files.

It was essential to build trust between the researcher and participants in an ethical manner to make sure they were not harmed or disadvantaged in any way (Henn et al., 2009). Bryman (2008) suggests that trust can be gained by building a rapport with each participant and by being explicit about their roles in the study. Holliday (2007) agrees and emphasises it is beneficial for participants to be interested in the researcher so that they want to engage with her. The participants in this study were aware from the start that the researcher was a teacher at the university, although not one of their teachers. While this could have led to unequal relationships, the participants demonstrated they were comfortable in the researcher's presence by being candid about their feelings and willingly sharing their experiences. They indicated that the interview setting was a 'safe place' where they would not be embarrassed if they made a mistake, and appreciated the opportunities to interact with a native speaker who was interested in what they had to say. A high level of trust was quickly gained as the researcher made sure not to put forward any judgements about participants' comments or views.

3.7 Limitations of the Research Design

The rationale for using a research design with quantitative and qualitative research approaches was to reduce the limitations of the study. However, there were

still limitations in regard to the quantitative sampling method and the research time frame. Firstly, the number of survey participants did not quite reach the recommended sample size of 181. Secondly, it was not feasible to use probability sampling. Nevertheless, because the survey respondents' demographics reflected the population under investigation it was considered suitable to use the findings to inform the case studies. The survey sample would have been insufficient had the questionnaire been the main phase of the research design.

The research design involved three phases of data collection and analysis, which left limited time between the survey and the start of the case studies. Still, sufficient preliminary data were generated to be used for the case study selection process. The busy data collection and analysis schedule meant it was not possible for the transcription of the audio recorded data to be checked by a second transcriber. The length of time required for another researcher to provide a second transcription was too costly. Lichtman (2010) contends that it is best practice for researchers to transcribe their own interviews because the researcher is the best equipped person to make sense of data. She states that it is unnecessary for interpretations to be verified by another person because no interpretations are better than another (Lichtman, 2010). It was still important to ensure all recorded data was transcribed accurately and a strict transcription protocol (see Appendix L) was followed. In addition, all verbatim quotes taken from the transcripts and used in the case study reporting were double checked with the audio data for accuracy.

3.8 Summary

This chapter has provided a detailed explanation of the constructive theoretical assumptions underpinning the research design and the rationale for using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The main reason to integrate the

two approaches was to increase the scope of the study and augment the richness of the findings by taking advantage of the strengths of both methods. The chapter also described the explanatory qualitative and quantitative research design, including the data collection instruments, participants, sampling, and data analysis procedures. The ethical considerations were discussed as well as the limitations of the research design. Chapter Four presents the survey findings.

Chapter Four - Survey Findings

A questionnaire (see Appendix B) was used to explore first year EAL students' academic expectations of studying at an English-speaking university. The survey data (N=159) was analysed using SPSS software. Descriptive analysis was completed to generate response frequencies. The first aim of the survey was to gain a broad picture of the population under investigation and use that data to inform the case study recruitment and selection. Two additional objectives were to use the survey results to highlight issues for further investigation in the case study interviews, and to help respond to Research Question 1. The sections below present the profiles of the survey respondents, followed by the results of the descriptive statistical analysis.

4.1 Respondent Profiles

4.1.1 Demographics. The respondents comprised of 59.1% female students and 40.9% male. Their ages ranged between 17 and 46 years old, with 71.7% aged between 20 and 24 years. Respondents were from 22 countries, with 42.1% from China, 13.8% from South Korea and 10.1% from Brazil. The remaining respondents were from a range of different countries including India, Norway, France, Japan, Zimbabwe, Germany and Saudi Arabia.

EAL students' academic literacies

Given the large number of countries represented, respondents were also grouped into subsets according to region of origin. This allowed the survey data to be analysed in terms of whether respondents' cultural backgrounds may have influenced their responses. As shown in Figure 4.1, students from Asia made up the largest group with 73%, followed by South Americans (10.1%), and Europeans (7.5%).

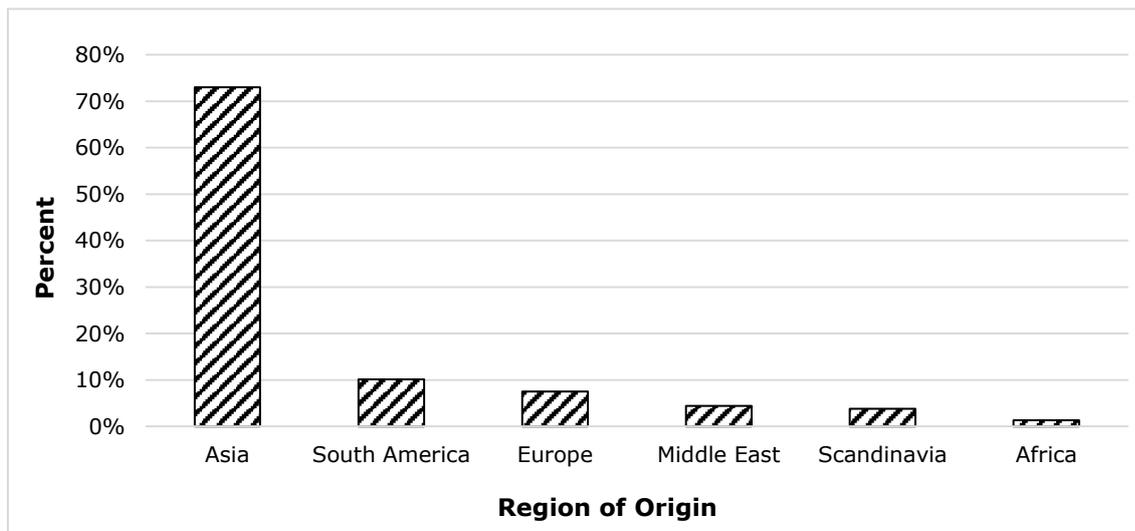


Figure 4.1. Respondents' region of origin.

4.1.2 Fields of study and educational backgrounds. Participants were studying 44 different degrees across the university. The Business School was the most represented with 51.6%, followed by the School of Engineering (13.2%) and the School of Allied Health Sciences (6.9%). 67.3% of respondents had undertaken tertiary study before their first university semester in Australia. Before enrolling in the university, 50.3% of respondents had studied at a university in their home country, 11.3% had attended the university's VET pathway college, 3.1% had studied at a university in the U.S.A and 1.9% had attended a Technical and Further Education (TAFE) college in Australia (see Figure 4.2).

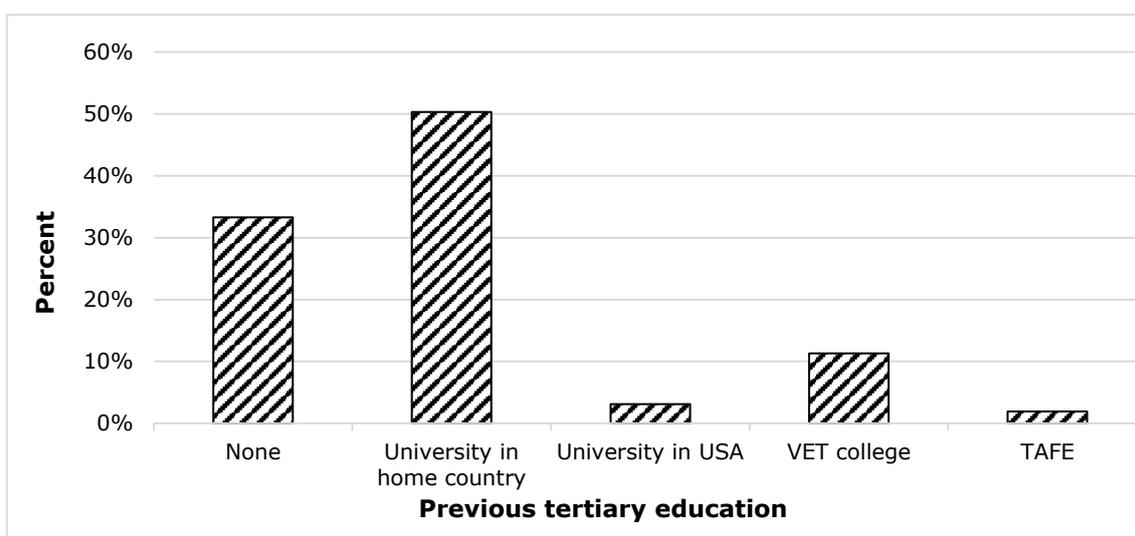


Figure 4.2. Respondents' previous tertiary education.

4.1.3 Reasons for studying in Australia. Respondents could choose as many of the listed options that were applicable to them in regard to their reasons for studying in Australia. Figure 4.3 shows the option with the highest number of responses was to improve their English (64.8%), closely followed by wanting to experience living abroad (56.6%). Improve future job opportunities, world-wide (49.1%) and in their home countries (44.0%), were the next highest options. 6.9% of respondents indicated that one reason they were in Australia to study was because their parents wanted them to study abroad.

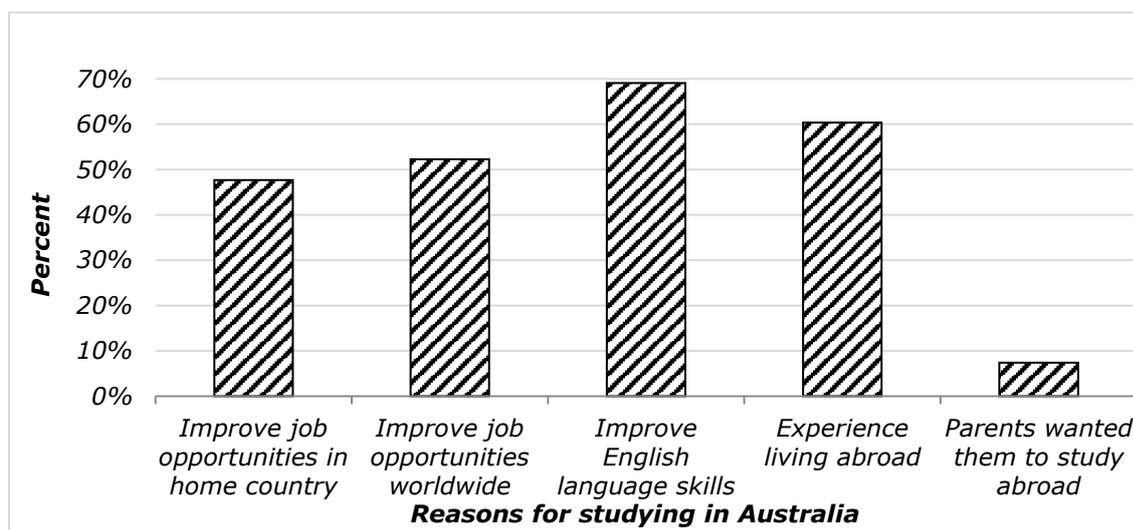


Figure 4.3. Reasons for studying at an Australian University.

Note. Respondents could chose more than one option.

4.1.4 Summary. The first aim of the survey was to build a picture of respondents' demographics and educational backgrounds. The survey results showed the respondents came from diverse cultural backgrounds and were study in a wide range of fields. Two-thirds (59.1%) of respondents were females: almost three-quarters (71.7%) were aged between 20 and 24 years, and almost half (42.1%) were

from China. Around three-quarters (71.7%) of respondents were enrolled in Business, Engineering or Health Science degrees. These results aligned with data provided on the university's statistics portal for the same period for the campus where the research took place. The university's statistics showed that in semester 1, 2014, 55% of commencing international undergraduate students were female, 62.5% were aged between 20 and 24 years, 48.4% were from China, and the schools with the highest number of international enrolments were Business, Science, Engineering and Health.

In addition, the survey analysis revealed that more than two-thirds (66.6%) of respondents had undertaken tertiary study either in their home countries, Australia or the U.S. before enrolling in their first semester at university. More than two-thirds of respondents (64.8%) listed improving their English as a reason to study in Australia.

4.2 Academic Expectations

The survey examined respondents' expectations of studying at an Australian university. The topics under investigation pertained to the academic socialisation level of the academic literacies framework: expectations of academic skills and conventions; reading habits prior to commencing university; the length of time they expected would be required for course readings; and expectations of engaging with teachers and peers. The response frequencies for the whole sample were examined, then regrouped for cross-analysis according to gender, age, region of origin, and the schools the students were enrolled in. This was to examine if there were patterns of similarities or differences among these variables.

4.2.1 Academic conventions and skills. Respondents were asked to indicate their expectations regarding academic conventions and skills (see Figure 4.4) using a five-point Likert scale: Not Important (1); Slightly Important (2); Uncertain (3); Fairly Important (4); or Very Important (5).

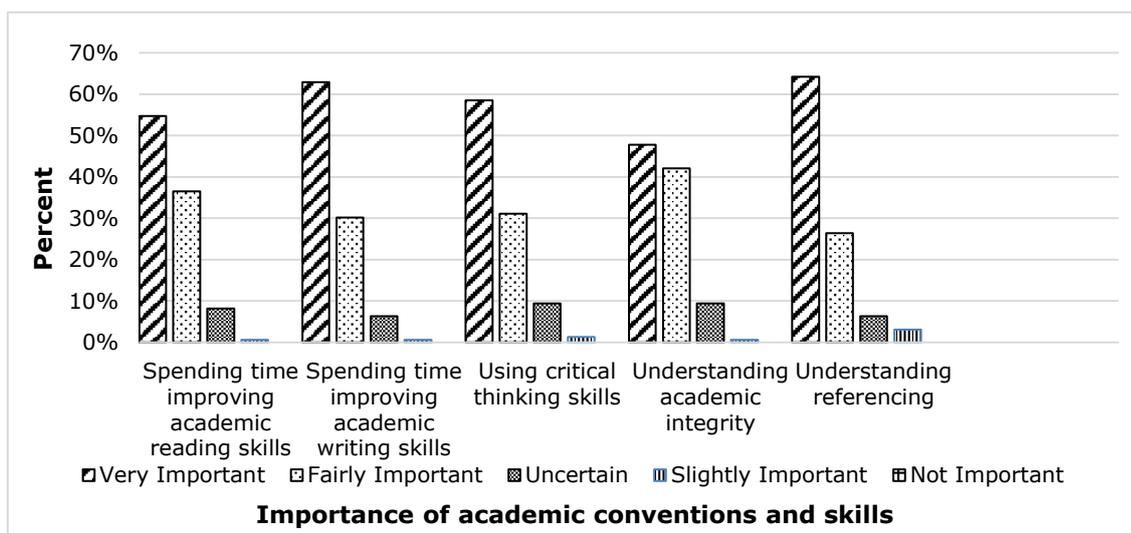


Figure 4.4. Response frequencies for the importance of academic conventions and skills.

Note. There were no responses for 'Not Important'.

As shown in Figure 4.4, almost all respondents indicated that it was very (54.7%) or fairly (31.1%) important to improve their academic reading, and very (62.9%) or fairly (30.2%) important to improve their academic writing. Most respondents also stated it was very or fairly important to use critical thinking (58.5% and 31.1% respectively), understand academic integrity (47.8% and 42.1% respectively), and understand referencing (64.2% and 26.4% respectively). This suggests EAL students recognise the importance of engaging in the disciplinary conventions valued by their new academic community. There were no significant differences between the frequency responses by gender, age group, region of origin or discipline.

The sample was asked to select the options they expected to take if they needed help improving their academic reading and writing (see Figure 4.5). They could choose as many of the listed options that were applicable to them.

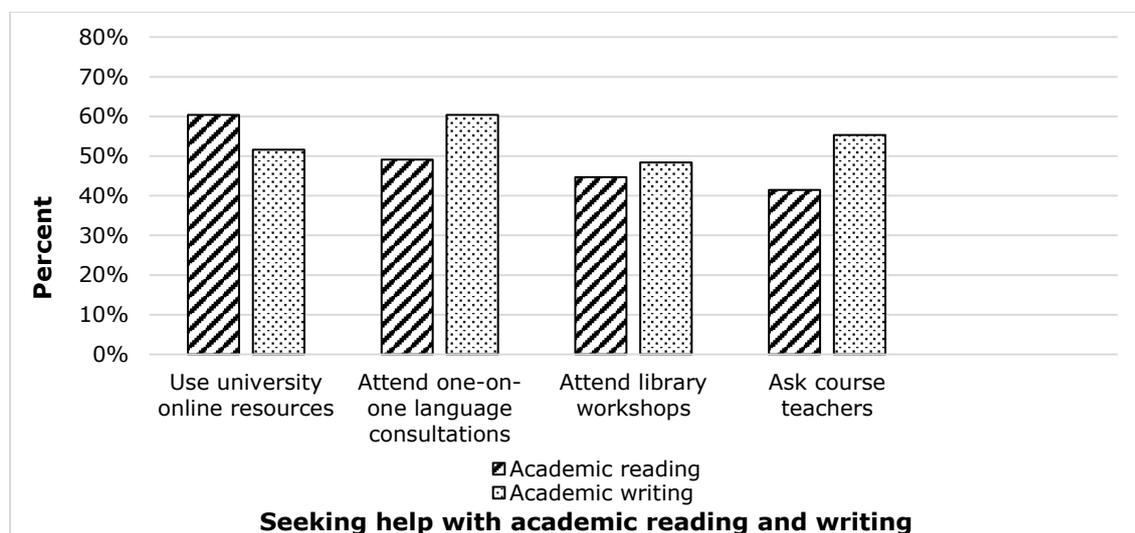


Figure 4.5. Response frequencies for seeking help with academic reading and academic writing.

Note. Respondents could chose more than one option.

The highest response for where students expected to seek academic reading support was ‘university online learning resources’ with 60.4%. Almost half the respondents (49.1%) said they would ‘attend one-on-one language consultations’, 44.7% indicated ‘attend library workshops’, and 41.5% said ‘ask my course teachers for help.’ The highest response for where respondents would seek support to improve their academic writing was ‘attend one-on-one language consultations’ with 60.4%. More than half of students (55.3%) responded ‘ask my course teachers for help’, 51.6% indicated they would ‘use university online learning resources’, and 48.4% stated ‘attend library workshops.’ These results suggested the students were aware of the range of support options available to help them improve their academic reading

and writing. However, the expectation of asking course teachers for help with academic skills reveals a potential mismatch between EAL student expectations of teachers and current university strategies which provide support outside the disciplines.

4.2.2 Reading habits and expectations. Respondents were asked to report their reading habits prior to starting university. First, they were asked to indicate what materials they were reading. Social media and news were the most frequent types of materials respondents were reading in both English and their native language. Then, the students indicated how many hours per week they had spent reading in English, and in their native language, before they commenced university, and their expectations for how many hours they would spend reading for their courses. The results are presented below in Figure 4.6.

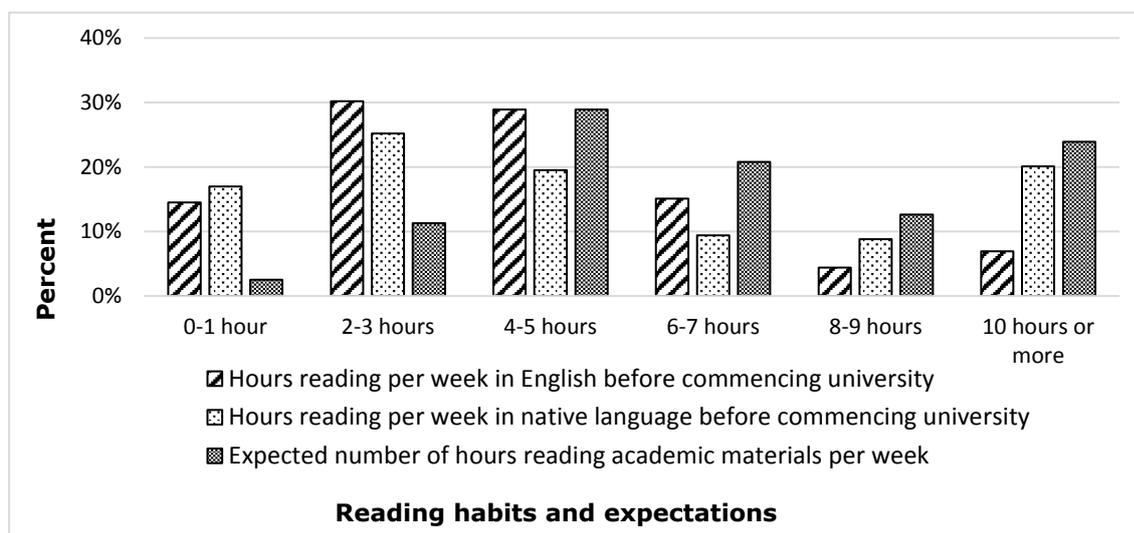


Figure 4.6. Respondents' reading hours in English and their native language per week before the semester and expected number of reading hours required per week for all courses during the semester.

EAL students' academic literacies

Almost three-quarters (73.6%) of respondents had been spending five hours per week or less reading in English prior to commencing university, and two-thirds (61.6%) were spending five hours per week or less reading in their native language (see Figure 4.6). The figures showed that for many commencing EAL students, spending time reading was not a habit they spent time on. In terms of university reading expectations, two-thirds of respondents (63.5%) expected to spend a total of seven hours or less per week reading for all their courses. Less than one quarter (23.9%) of respondents expected to spend ten hours or more reading for their courses each week. These results suggest EAL students' academic reading expectations may not align with the reading loads many university courses require. There were no differences between male and female responses, the different age groups, region of origin or the disciplines in terms of reading habits before commencing university or expected reading hours per week.

4.2.3 Engaging with teachers and peers. A five-point Likert scale was used to examine respondents' expectations of their new learning environment in terms of engaging with teachers and peers. The frequency of responses are presented in Figure 4.7. Respondents chose one option in the Likert scale for each statement: Not Important (1); Slightly Important (2); Uncertain (3); Fairly Important (4); or Very Important (5).

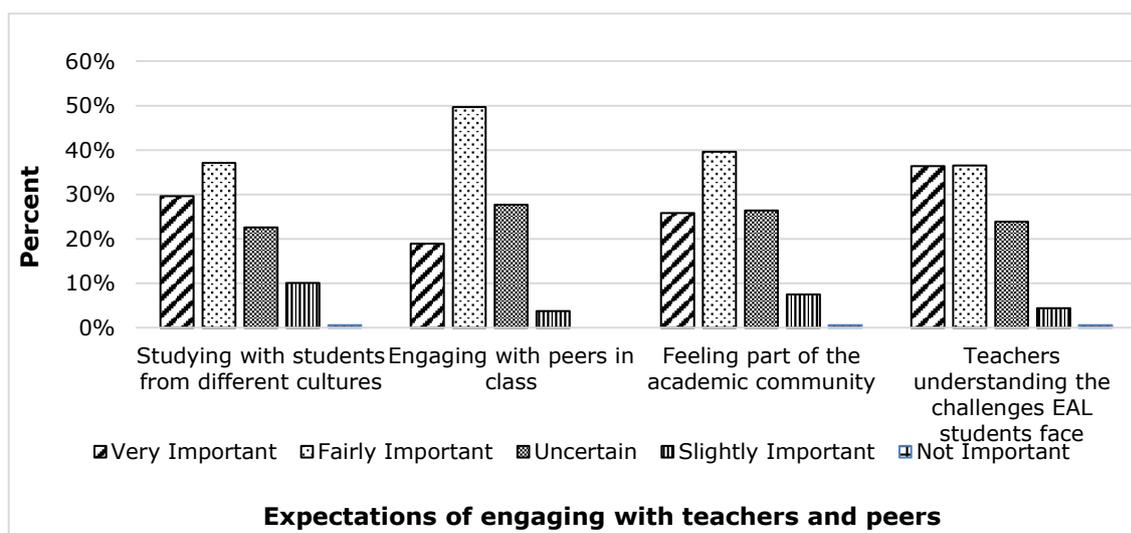


Figure 4.7. Response frequencies for importance of engaging with teacher and peers.

Note. No responses for 'Not important' to engage with peers in class.

Two-thirds of respondents rated studying with students from different cultures as very (29.6%) or fairly (37.1%) important. The results for engaging with peers in class showed 18.9% thought this was very important, and half of respondents (49.7%) said it was fairly important. Almost three-quarters of participants believed it was very (34.6%) or fairly (36.5%) important that teachers understood the language and cultural challenges EAL students faced. Two-thirds of respondents believed feeling part of their academic community was very (25.8%) or

fairly important (39.6%), and one-quarter (26.4%) were uncertain. These results suggest that EAL students expect to develop positive relationships with teachers and peers. The statistical analysis did not yield any differences by gender, age, region of origin, or field of study for any of the questions regarding engaging with teachers and peers.

The last section of the survey also used Likert scale questions and asked respondents to choose one of the following options: Very True (1); Slightly True (2); Uncertain (3); Fairly True (4); or Very True (5). There were two questions related to expectations of teachers. The responses are shown below in Figure 4.8.

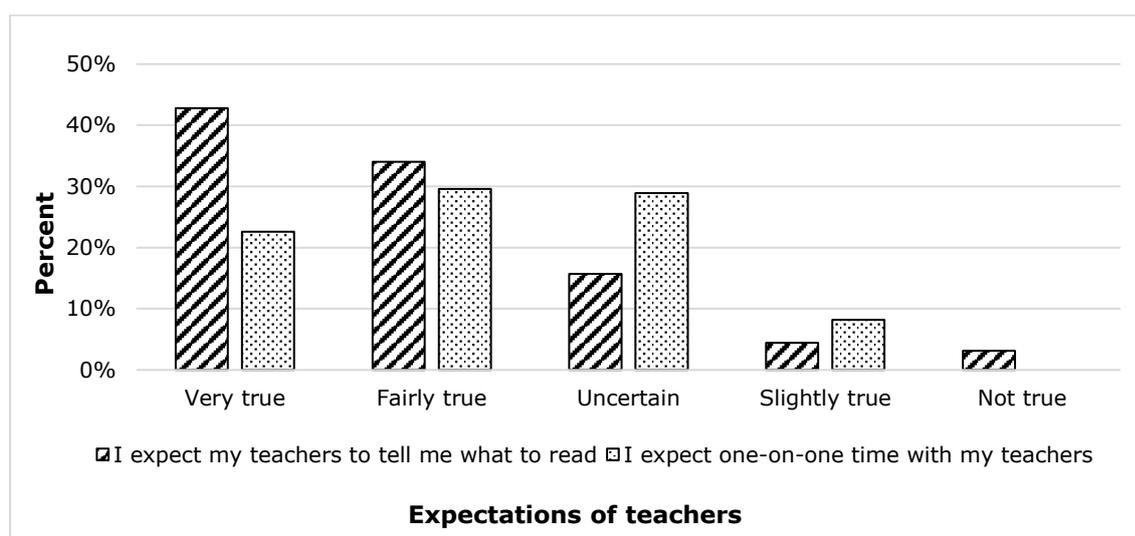


Figure 4.8. Response frequencies for 'I expect my teachers to tell me what to read' and 'I expect on-on-one time with my teachers.'

Three-quarters of respondents indicated very true (42.8%) or fairly true (34%) that their course teachers would tell them what to read. Just over half of the students thought it was very true (22.6%) or fairly true (29.6%) that they would have one-on-one time with their teachers. These figures corresponded with the results presented above, which showed that many participants expected to seek support from course teachers if they needed help improving their academic reading or writing.

4.3 Summary of the Survey Results

The survey results provided an overview of respondents' demographics and academic expectations, which were used to inform the case study protocols and Research Question 1. Respondents were studying in disciplines across the university and came from diverse cultural backgrounds. The demographic results reflected the university's international student data for the same period. This suggested the survey findings could be representative of the research population under investigation, and were appropriate to inform the case study recruitment.

The results showed that many EAL students have already experienced tertiary education, either in Australia, the U.S., or their home countries, before enrolling in an Australian university degree. This indicates that EAL students often have prior knowledge and skills related to Australian tertiary learning environments or their fields of study. This challenges the deficit view of EAL students which assumes their previous educational experiences do not provide them with sufficient understanding of Australian academic conventions and expectations. In order to shift away from the current deficit ideology, universities must provide professional development opportunities to ensure academic staff are aware of the educational capital globally mobile students often possess.

The main reasons for EAL students to study in Australia were to improve their English proficiency, to experience studying abroad, and to increase future career opportunities. This correlated with the data that showed most respondents believed studying with students from a range of different cultures was either very or fairly important. The result supports current international education literature which suggests EAL students value opportunities to enhance both their English and their intercultural skills so that as future global citizens, they can work effectively in

culturally diverse contexts. These values align with one of the goals of their Australian university, which is to provide a learning environment that allows students to develop the desired graduate attribute of 'Competence in Culturally Diverse and International Environments' (see Section 1.4). The university's internationalisation strategies also position the development of EAL and domestic students' intercultural and linguistic competencies as core learning activities. The case study phases examined whether EAL students' expectations of English and intercultural communication enhancement were met.

The statistical analyses did not reveal any significant differences in terms of age, gender, region of origin, or field of study. Although respondents' demographics and backgrounds varied, they shared similar expectations of their new learning environment. This contributes to current understandings of EAL students, particularly in terms of the factors which hinder new learners' academic socialisation. According to Dyson (2014) and Floyd (2015), studies investigating EAL students have reported inconsistent findings regarding the influence region of origin has on first year students' transition into English-speaking universities. Most respondents in this study expected to spend time improving their academic reading and writing skills, and indicated that referencing, academic integrity, and critical thinking were important academic skills. This suggests that cultural background is not a factor that influences EAL students' understanding of disciplinary conventions and the importance of enhancing their academic skills.

In contrast to the results which showed EAL students have an understanding of disciplinary conventions, respondents' expectations in terms of academic reading raised some concerns. The finding that most respondents were spending five hours or less per week reading in English and their native language was concerning because, as discussed in the literature review chapter of this thesis (see Section 2.4),

reading plays a significant role in literacy and learning. In addition, most students appeared to view social media as a reading activity. The number of hours that respondents expected to spend reading academic materials highlighted a potential mismatch between student expectations and what would actually be required. Most respondents stated that less than seven hours per week of academic reading across all courses would be sufficient. Barre (2016) recommends that full-time tertiary students should spend between 24 to 36 hours per week on independent study, which would include academic reading. In addition, the majority of respondents expected teachers would tell them what to read, which seemed incompatible with the implicit assumption within university disciplines that students should be autonomous learners. These issues were investigated further in the case study phases of the research.

The students expected course teachers to provide academic support, including helping them improve their academic reading and writing. Most respondents expected to receive one-on-one time with course teachers. They also believed it was important that teachers understood their linguistic and cultural challenges. The majority of respondents expected to engage with their peers in the classroom, and indicated it was important to feel part of their academic community. While these expectations appear reasonable, Australian tertiary institutions usually expect students to learn independently. This means that for many respondents, their expectations regarding course teachers and opportunities for classroom engagement with peers do not align with tertiary teaching practices. The results support academic literacies researchers (e.g., Baik et al., 2015; Crisp et al., 2009; Hitch et al., 2012; Wingate, 2015) who have called for universities to increase their understanding of EAL students' expectations and learning needs.

The survey phase of this study provided insights into first year EAL students' academic contexts and expectations, as well as issues for further investigation during the case studies. The next chapter introduces the case study participants and presents and discusses their expectations of studying in English, of disciplinary conventions and skills, as well as expectations of course reading requirements and engaging with teachers and peers. It also provides a response for Research Question 1.

Chapter Five - Case Study Participant Profiles and Expectations

This chapter introduces the eight case study participants and their expectations of their first year at an Australian university. The survey results informed the case study recruitment and selection, and each case study participant represented one unit of analysis. Participants representing different nationalities and studying in a variety of university disciplines were purposefully selected to ensure multiple perspectives. The diverse academic contexts of the eight embedded case studies provided a foundation from which EAL students' expectations, perceptions, and experiences could be better understood.

The first section of this chapter describes the participants' demographics, educational backgrounds, and university entry pathways. Next, the students' expectations of their first year at university are presented. Data was collected during the first structured interviews in week 4 (Appendix E), and the first recorded semi-structured interviews in week 7 (Appendix G). The last section discusses the research findings in terms of current EAL student literature, and draws on both the survey and case study findings to respond to Research Question 1:

What are first year undergraduate EAL students' expectations of their new learning environment?

5.1 Participants' Demographics and Academic Profiles

Table 5.1 presents the participants' demographic information and fields of study. Five participants were female and three were male. All were aged between 18 and 22 years. Their countries of origin were Vietnam, Brazil, Japan, Thailand, China, Kuwait and Zimbabwe.

Table 5.1

Case Study Participants

<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Nationality</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Degree</i>
Trang	Vietnamese	Male	22	Bachelor of Business & Bachelor of Digital Media
Gabriella	Thai-Japanese	Female	20	Bachelor of Hotel Management
Snow	Zimbabwean	Male	18	Bachelor of Business
Jaili	Chinese	Female	21	Bachelor of Civil Engineering
Emily	Kuwaiti	Female	20	Bachelor of Engineering
Filipe	Brazilian	Male	21	Bachelor of Science
Camilla	Brazilian	Female	22	Bachelor of Pharmacy
Meko	Japanese	Female	21	Bachelor of Environmental Science

The following section summarises participants' educational backgrounds, reasons for studying in Australia, and pathways into university.

5.1.1 Participants' Profiles.

Trang. Trang was studying in Australia to improve his future job opportunities. After high school, he undertook one year of a Bachelor of Business Degree in Vietnam before deciding to join his sisters who lived in Australia. He left his Vietnamese university and completed a one year English course to prepare for the IELTS test to come to Australia. Trang's overall IELTS result was 6.0, with 5.5 for speaking, 5.5 for listening, 7.0 for reading, and 6.5 for writing. When he arrived in Australia he enrolled in and completed a two-year VET Diploma of Nursing at Queensland TAFE. After graduation he decided nursing was not the career he wanted to pursue and enrolled in a double degree, Business and Digital Media, at university. His TAFE Diploma and IELTS results provided a pathway into university, although

he did not receive any course credits for his Diploma because it was related to a different field.

Gabriella. Gabriella wanted to experience living and studying in an English-speaking country so that she could improve her English. Her IELTS scores were quite low, with an overall score of 4.5 and 3.5 for speaking, 5.5 for listening, 5.0 for reading, and 4 for writing. Gabrielle explained her speaking score was so low because she wrote on the application she was Thai and the examiner asked her to speak about Thai culture. However, as she had grown up in Japan, not in Thailand, she was unable to discuss Thai culture during the examination. Her IELTS results allowed her to enrol in a Diploma of Hotel Management at the university's VET pathway college. She successfully completed two semesters of the Diploma and was accepted into a Bachelor of Hotel Management. She was credited for her Diploma courses and the remaining 2 years of her degree were to be undertaken as a full-time student.

Snow. Snow had just graduated from his high school in Zimbabwe where English was the medium of instruction. His family spoke his native African language Shona at home, never English. His pathway into university was his through IELTS results and he planned to complete his whole degree at the university. He had an overall IELTS of 7.0 with 8.0 for speaking, 7.0 for listening, 6.5 for reading and 7.0 for writing. His motivation to study in Australia was to gain a degree in a first world country. He believed he would receive a better education in Australia compared to Zimbabwe.

Jaili. Jaili had completed two years of a Civil Engineering Degree in China. Her pathway was through her Chinese university's 2 + 2 partnership program with her Australian university. The program enables Chinese students to complete the last two years of their degree in Australia. Jaili's IELTS scores were not sufficient for immediate enrolment. Her scores were 5.5 overall, and 5.5 for speaking, 5.0 for listening, and 5.5 for both reading and writing. She needed to successfully graduate from a 10 week ELICOS Direct Entry Program at the university's language institute before being accepted into her degree. Jaili explained that her motivation to study in Australia was because "with a degree in China, I can only work in China. I want to go to other places."

Emily. Emily came to Australia after completing high school in Kuwait. Emily's IELTS results did not meet the university's English language entry requirements. Her results were 6.0 overall, with 5.5 for speaking, 5.0 for listening and 5.5 for both reading and writing. Her pathway into the university involved two years of study where she completed one year of ELICOS courses at the university's English language institute, followed by two semesters of a Certificate IV tertiary preparation course at the university's VET pathway college. The Certificate IV is a foundation course designed to prepare students for tertiary study. Her entire degree was to be undertaken at this university. Emily's motivation for studying in Australia was to experience studying abroad and because she was interested in the field of Geology. She believed studying in Australia would provide more opportunities in this field compared to Kuwait.

Filipe. Filipe had undertaken two and a half years of a four year Bachelor of Biology degree at his university in Brazil where he was also working on his own research in Entomology. Filipe was on a one year Brazilian Government study abroad scholarship. The courses he was taking in Australia would not be credited towards his degree in Brazil. He still needed to complete the remaining one and a half years of his Brazilian degree when he returned. Filipe's study pathway was through the university's English Language Institute 10 week ELICOS Direct Entry Program. Filipe's motivations to study in Australia were to improve his English, to learn more about his field and Australia's biodiversity, and to experience living abroad. He was interested in studying a Master Degree in the future at an English-speaking university.

Camilla. Camilla had completed three years of a five year Pharmacy Degree in Brazil and was enrolled as a study abroad student for two semesters through a Brazilian Government scholarship. The remaining two years of her Brazilian degree would still need to be completed because none of her courses in Australia would be credited. Her motivations for studying abroad were "to exchange knowledge, learn more about my field and improve my English." Camilla's pathway was the successful completion of a ten week ELICOS Direct Entry Program at the university's English Language Institute.

Meko. Meko was a study abroad student in Australia to study for two semesters. She had already completed three years of a four year Environmental Engineering degree in Japan and her pathway into university was through her Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) results. She would need to complete the

final year of her studies when she returned to Japan as her courses in Australia could not be credited to her Japanese degree. Meko's motivation for studying in Australia was to improve her English. She wanted to study a Master degree in Japan, and to do that she needed to write a dissertation in English as part of her Japanese undergraduate degree.

5.2 Summary

The participants came from a range of educational and cultural backgrounds, and were enrolled in degrees across the university. Seven of the eight students had tertiary experience, either in Australia or in their home countries. Trang, Gabriella and Emily had studied at tertiary level in Australia, and Jaili, Filipe, Camilla and Meko had studied in their fields at university level in their home countries. This corresponded with the survey results which found that more than two-thirds of respondents had undertaken tertiary study before enrolling in first semester at their Australian university. Only Snow and Meko had not attended any form of education in Australia. Snow was the youngest participant and was the only participant who had enrolled at university directly from school. The participants' pathways into the university included all three options open to EAL students: ELICOS courses; VET courses; and Language Test results. Meko, Trang and Snow had enrolled based on their language test results meeting course entry requirements. Filipe, Camilla, Jaili, Gabriella and Emily had passed an ELICOS Direct Entry course at the university's language institute, or a VET course.

Although the participants' backgrounds and fields of study varied, they shared similar reasons for studying in Australia. They wanted to improve their English proficiency, which they believed would widen their future career opportunities. These reasons corresponded with the survey findings reported in the previous

chapter (see Section 4.1.3). The students expressed additional reasons for studying in Australia which aligned with their specific academic contexts. Snow was confident he would receive a better education in Australia compared to Zimbabwe. Filipe and Camilla wanted to increase their knowledge in their field and English language skills. Meko needed to improve her English so she could study a Master degree in Japan. Jaili wanted a degree from an English-speaking country so she could work anywhere in the world. Previous researchers (e.g., Baik, Naylor & Arkoudis, 2015; Crisp et al., 2009; Lobo & Gurney, 2009; Wingate, 2015) have found that EAL students believe that studying in an English-speaking country can improve their career prospects and prepare them to become global citizens. Therefore, it is essential that university internationalisation strategies and disciplinary curricula provide opportunities for students to achieve their English language goals.

5.3 Expectations of Studying at an English-Speaking University

The case study participants' expectations were examined to extend on the survey results. The case studies focused on three key themes: expectations of English, disciplinary conventions and skills, and academic reading.

5.3.1 English proficiency. The participants acknowledged that English language enhancement was a key reason for choosing to study in Australia. Although they had met the university's English requirements through the enrolment pathways, in the first structured interviews the participants elaborated on the importance of improving their English proficiency. Snow and Emily wanted to improve their academic writing as they expected it would be the most challenging English skill. Snow was worried about writing because he knew most of his marks would be based on written assignments, which he anticipated would be more difficult than the

assignments he had completed at school. Emily had similar concerns and was unsure if her writing was at the level needed for university, even after two years studying in English. Four of the participants, Trang, Filipe, Camilla and Meko, expected speaking to be the most challenging because they were concerned about their pronunciation. Trang, Camilla and Meko described themselves as shy, even in their native language, which weakened their confidence speaking in English. Jaili reported at the start of the semester that she wanted to improve her listening skills because sometimes she had trouble keeping up in lectures. The participants' experiences regarding English were investigated during the subsequent case study interviews, including whether English proficiency was a barrier to learning, how they approached English language enhancement, and if they achieved their English language goals.

5.3.2 Disciplinary conventions and skills. The students were asked at the start of their first semester to describe their expectations of the disciplinary conventions and academic skills required in their new learning environment. The participants held similar expectations, and reported that the differences between studying in Australia and studying in their home countries would require new approaches to learning, for example less class time. Participants also demonstrated a clear understanding of disciplinary academic conventions. The students who had attended university before coming to Australia explained that in their home countries they needed to complete between 10 and 15 courses per semester. They attended classes for eight hours a day, five days a week, compared to eight hours of class time in Australia. Although their Australian university required just four courses each semester, they were under no illusion that less class time would mean less work. Camilla observed: "I don't think it is free time because in Brazil, I don't

have to write a lot of assignments.” Meko identified a number of distinctions between university in Australia and Japan:

[In Japan] just go to class, get what the lecturer said and just prepare for exams. So it's easier, more passive than here. In my country I took 10 or 15 courses in one semester. Because we take so many courses, the examination is really easier to pass. And written assignment [in Japan] is much easier than here because... here we, they really check [for plagiarism] strictly, but in Japan not as much.

Meko recognised the different academic standards between the two academic cultures, including assessment requirements and acknowledging sources in written assignments. Similar to Meko, Jaili discussed her understanding of the differences between disciplinary conventions in China and Australia:

I didn't need to write references in China. Just write what you want to say. I think it's good here because you can make the reader to know where those sources come from, and well, it's good to have evidence to support my opinion.

Emily expressed a similar view when she described the stricter academic requirements in Australia compared to her home country of Kuwait. She identified autonomy as a graduate attribute she expected to develop by studying in Australia:

Australian way of studying is much more about writing. In my country studying it's all about exams, it's much different. Here is more challenging, I have to read and I have to research and do everything myself, whereas in my country I can just go to google and copy a paragraph and paste it and print it. But, I like it [here].

EAL students' academic literacies

Because sometimes you need to do self studying just to develop yourself much better.

Trang recognised that even though he had experienced tertiary education at TAFE, studying at university would require new academic skills and a higher standard of academic integrity:

At TAFE they didn't require that much academic level. Much more academic here. They have many types of essays, like critical review, or literature review. I think it's really necessary for those rules [academic integrity]. In Vietnam you know, most students literally copy and paste and it's like really bad. I prefer here, it's more fair and reflect your real potential.

Snow had enrolled straight from high school and anticipated that he would need to change the way he studied:

Our teacher [at school] was always literally over our shoulders. I remember going into exams without even studying and it was so easy. But, you should know how the learning, the education is taught, before you even go to the university. I believe here they expect more from you outside the classroom, if you don't do your research you know you will get in trouble [poor results].

Snow's comments showed his awareness that, compared to his high school experiences, tertiary education required him to take responsibility for his own learning and to spend more time undertaking self-study.

Participants expected opportunities in tutorials to discuss course content and enhance their intercultural communication skills. One of the differences between Chinese and Australian universities that Jaili was looking forward to was the opportunity to engage in class discussions: “[In Australia] I can talk with other people and practise my English with native speakers. I can get a lot of discussion [in class].” Emily had similar expectations during tutorials: “It's different than the Kuwaiti style and I'll take benefits from people from other cultures to get different points of view.” Emily and Jaili's expectations of intercultural engagement reinforce the importance of teachers providing opportunities in the classroom for peer engagement.

5.3.3 Reading habits and expectations. The survey results provided some insight into first year EAL students' reading habits and expectations prior to commencing university. The case study results are presented in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2

Summary of Participants' Weekly Reading Habits Prior to Commencing University and Expectations for the Number of Academic Reading Hours

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Field of Study</i>	<i>Hours per week reading in native language</i>	<i>Hours per week reading in English</i>	<i>Expected hours reading academic materials per week</i>
Trang	Business & Digital Media	1	2	14
Gabriella	Hotel Management	7	14	8
Snow	Business Management	0	2	8
Jaili	Civil Engineering	7	7	4
Emily	Engineering	2	2	20
Filipe	Science	2	10	20
Camilla	Pharmacy	10	5	20
Meko	Environmental Science	10	5	20 to 30

As shown in Table 5.2, the number of hours per week participants had spent reading in their first language, and in English, before they commenced university varied considerably. The number of hours they expected to spend reading academic materials for all their courses also varied, from four hours a week to thirty hours a week (see Table 5.2). The main materials the survey respondents and case study participants reported reading, in both their native languages and in English, before they commenced university were social media and news. Four of the case study

participants reported reading materials other than social media and news. Camilla was reading the BBC news in English each day because her Direct Entry course teacher had recommended it as a useful strategy to improve her English. Meko had been given the same advice by an English teacher in Japan, and before she started university she was spending about ten hours per week reading the BBC news and religious materials in English. Jaili liked reading science fiction, and Filipe liked reading Dexter crime novels.

Participants' expectations of the number of hours they would need to spend reading academic materials for their courses were influenced by their previous educational experiences, and the courses they were enrolled in. Trang's Introduction to Marketing lecturer had told students in week 1 that they should spend seven hours reading per week for each course. Trang believed this was too much for him because he had two Digital Media subjects, which he thought would not require much reading. He knew he would need to read for his Business courses, so was expecting seven hours a week for each of them. Trang was the only student given explicit reading expectations from a course teacher at the start of the semester. Gabriella based her reading expectations on her VET course experiences and believed two hours a week per course would be enough time to spend reading academic materials. Snow was unsure how much time he would need to spend reading because he only read academic materials at school if he "really needed to." His expectation that two hours of reading per week per course would be sufficient was based on the amount of reading he had undertaken in his first four weeks of the semester.

Jaili's expectations were two hours reading per week for two of her courses which had written assessments, and no reading for the two maths based courses. Emily had two maths courses which she expected would not require any reading. She believed four hours of reading per week would be enough for each of her other two

courses. Camilla expected to spend more time reading than she had experienced in Brazil, where most assessment tasks were written examinations taken at the end of semester. She mentioned that all her courses had written assessments, and she had already found in her Direct Entry pathway course that it was time consuming to research and read many journal articles to find ones that were useful. She expected to spend three hours per week reading for each of her four courses. Filipe based his academic reading expectations on his experiences in his Direct Entry pathway course and estimated he would need to spend about five hours per week per course.

Although Meko was enrolled in three courses, and the other participants were enrolled in four, she had by far the highest expectations regarding the hours she would need to spend reading academic materials. One of her courses was a maths subject, which she said would not require any reading. Based on her expectations that universities in Australia would require more work than university in Japan, she expected to spend between twenty and thirty hours a week reading academic materials for her other two courses. She knew she needed to research and read journal articles to write her assignments, and she had taken into account that reading in English would be time consuming.

5.4 Discussion of EAL Students' Academic Expectations

The results from this study show that although EAL students have diverse cultural and educational backgrounds, they share similar expectations of their new learning environment. Factors of age, gender, cultural and educational background, field of study, and university pathway do not appear to have a significant influence on student expectations. It is important that institutions and academic staff have an understanding of first year students' expectations in order to meet their learning needs and help them successfully transition into the academic community. Increased

EAL students' academic literacies

understanding of the educational capital EAL students bring to international learning environments can lead to disciplinary pedagogies and curricula that foster intercultural engagement and feelings of acceptance. The following sections discuss the survey and case study findings regarding first year EAL students' academic expectations.

The case study participants began their first semester with an understanding of disciplinary conventions and skills. They expected differences between studying in Australia and their home countries, and understood the requirement to use new approaches to learning. These results corresponded with the survey findings which showed respondents expected to spend time improving their academic reading and writing, and that referencing, academic integrity and critical thinking were important skills. In addition, both the survey and case study results revealed that many students have already experienced tertiary education in their own countries or in Australia prior to enrolling in their university degrees. As previously discussed (see Sections 1.1, 1.2, 2.1 & 2.5), uncertainty regarding EAL students' preparedness for tertiary study in English-speaking universities is based on the deficit ideology, which has assumed that NNES students' backgrounds are barriers to learning. However, the Phase I results indicate that many first year EAL students do not have a deficit in their understanding of disciplinary requirements.

The survey and case study participants shared similar reasons for studying in Australia: to improve their English proficiency, which they believed would broaden their future career opportunities. The case study students expected English to be challenging, understood their personal language weaknesses, and knew they needed to enhance their English proficiency. Although EAL students expect their English to improve when they study at an English-medium university, previous research has suggested that personal, instructional and environmental factors can hinder

language enhancement (e.g., Harper et al., 2011; Humphreys et al., 2012; Knoch et al., 2015; Storch & Hill, 2008). Moreover, as discussed in Chapter One of this thesis (see Section 1.1), the second Symposium (AEI, 2013) reported that Australian universities had not sufficiently acknowledged English language enhancement as a key motivation for EAL students to study in Australia. Consequently, the Good Practice Principles strongly recommend that institutions increase their efforts to assist students to achieve English enhancement goals. To provide further insight into the factors which influence EAL students' English language enhancement, and if the Good Practice Principles have been adopted across university disciplines, these issues were examined in the case study phases of the research.

The expectation that studying in Australia could improve participants' future career opportunities suggests EAL students understand the value of intercultural communication, and being able to work effectively in culturally diverse contexts. Most survey respondents believed that studying with students from a range of different cultures was important, and the case study participants expected to have opportunities to interact with peers in class time. However, while research has indicated that international study can enhance graduate employability, it is not assured (Nilsson & Ripmeester, 2016). Therefore, institutions, courses and students should pay particular attention to developing the range of graduate attributes employers require, which not only include skills relevant to their field, but also literacy and intercultural skills (AEI, 2013; Ashton-Hay et al., 2016). The factors which influenced participants' intercultural competency in their first year of study were further explored in the subsequent phases of this study.

In terms of engaging with teachers, the survey results showed respondents expected teachers to understand their language and cultural challenges. In addition, around half of the survey respondents also expected one-on-one time with their

teachers, which corresponded with findings from Lobo and Gurney (2009) and Hitch et al. (2012). In addition, respondents expected teachers to help them improve their academic reading and writing. This supported Crisp et al.'s (2009) and Lobo and Gurney's (2014) studies which found first year students expected to receive teacher feedback on written drafts to enhance their learning. However, previous studies (e.g., Baik et al., 2015; Crisp et al., 2009; Krause et al., 2005; Hitch et al., 2012; Lobo & Gurney, 2014; Wingate, 2015) have shown that expectations of teacher support are often unmet due to tertiary pedagogies which assume first year students are already autonomous learners. The survey results also revealed that most respondents believed it was important to feel accepted as part of their new learning environment. This aligns with academic literacies research (e.g., Gargano, 2012; Glass et al., 2017; Elliot et al., 2016; Pham & Saltmarsh, 2013) which has suggested that a sense of belonging plays a significant role in constructing positive student identities. The case study interviews provided an opportunity to examine whether participants' expectations of teacher support, and feeling accepted by their new academic community, were fulfilled.

The survey respondents' reading habits before commencing university (see Section 4.2.2) suggested most were spending little time reading in English or their native language. Their main reading materials were social media and news. The case study students reading practices prior to commencing semester 1 (see Table 5.2), were similar to those reported in the survey. According to Roberts and Roberts (2008), many students begin university with reading habits which do not align with university reading demands. Furthermore, Chong (2016) asserts that mass consumption of digital media has changed the way students perceive and approach reading. The reading habits reported in this study appear to verify these claims, and raised doubts as to whether some participants placed a high value on reading. If

students do not already value reading, then it is possible the academic reading required to construct knowledge and write at university level would be challenging. Camilla, Meko, Filipe, and Jaili were spending more time reading than the other participants, more than ten hours a week, and they were reading materials other than social media, before they commenced university. Additionally, they had the highest expectations of how much time they would need to spend reading for their courses. Whether this was an indication that they prioritised reading was examined in the case study interviews during Phases II and III.

In terms of expectations regarding reading for their courses, there seemed to be a gap between the number of hours the survey respondents expected to spend reading for their courses, and the reality of university reading demands (see Section 4.3). For the case study participants, the number of hours they expected to spend reading each week varied greatly, mainly because the students taking maths and digital media courses made the reasonable assumption that those courses would not require much reading. The case study students' reading expectations were higher than the survey respondents, with seven of the eight case study participants expecting eight hours of reading or more. The survey results showed respondents expected less than seven hours of reading per week. This variation may have been because the survey took place in week 1, while for the case study students, they were asked about their reading expectations in their first structured interviews in week 4. Perhaps the case study students had more awareness of their assessment tasks and course requirements by then.

The finding that most of the research participants in this study expected to spend around eight hours per week, or less, reading course materials was below what would be expected for full time tertiary study. Based on the Carnegie unit, which suggests full-time students should spend 24 to 36 hours per week undertaking

independent study, a total of eight hours is an underestimation. The number of expected reading hours are slightly lower than Crisp et al.'s (2009) report on first year domestic and EAL students' expectations of the time they should spend studying outside of class. Their research showed one-third of respondents had expected less than 10 hours of reading per week, compared to three-quarters of the survey respondents in this study. This difference may be because the current study was undertaken more recently. As suggested by Chong (2016), the current phenomenon of digital and social media has influenced the way people now consume information. The study findings support Crisp et al.'s (2009) finding that gender and age have no significant influence on academic reading expectations. Furthermore, it contributes further insight into EAL student reading, based on the result that region of origin does not appear to influence first year students' expectations of the number of hours they need to read for their courses. This suggests that making course reading requirements explicit for all first year students should be a teaching priority in the first weeks of semester 1.

Crisp et al. (2009) advise that when students underestimate the number of hours they need to spend in independent study, it is due to lack of explicit guidelines from course staff. Although academic reading is a fundamental aspect of learning (Boakye & Mai, 2016; Hoeft, 2012; Wingate, 2015), with the exception of Barre's (2016) recommendation that the Carnegie unit is a useful guide, the volume of reading tertiary courses require is not clear. The literature does not appear to provide suggestions, other than confirming the importance of reading to learn and reading to write. At the university where this research took place, the library website provided an online self-help resource titled 'reading effectively', which has information on skim reading, active reading, reading for lectures, and critical reading. However, the resources do not provide guidelines for the number of reading hours students might

be required to undertake. At this stage of the study, just one participant had reported being given instructions by a course teacher regarding academic reading. Trang's Marketing lecturer recommended students spend seven hours reading per week per course, which is in line with Barre's (2016) advice.

These preliminary findings support the view that university reading expectations are implicit (Wingate, 2015). However, the survey results showed that many respondents expected teachers to help them improve their academic reading, and tell them what to read. This expectation appeared incompatible with the assumption within university disciplines that students should be autonomous learners. The implication is that not only do first year students tend to underestimate the amount of academic reading they would be required to undertake, there is also a gap between students' expectations of the reading support teachers provide and current tertiary reading pedagogies. Therefore, there is an urgent need to incorporate reading pedagogy and explicit reading instruction into first year disciplinary curricula.

5.5 Summary

The results for Research Question 1 show that first year undergraduate EAL students that EAL students commence university with an understanding of Australian academic culture gained from previous educational experiences. They expect to improve their skills and knowledge so they can engage in the literacy practices and conventions their new learning environment requires. To mediate this transition, the research participants expected to use university resources, and support from course teachers, to enhance their English proficiency and disciplinary skills. However, their expectations of teacher support may not correspond with

disciplinary classroom practices. The results also indicate that first year students' often underestimate the volume of academic reading required for tertiary study.

A number of questions were raised in this phase of the study, and these were further investigated in the subsequent case study phases. These questions included if and how participants enhanced their English proficiency and intercultural skills, and if their understanding of disciplinary requirements and conventions resulted in successful mediation of their courses. In addition, the case studies examined if students' expectations regarding academic reading matched course requirements, and whether expectations of teacher support and opportunities to engage with peers were fulfilled. The next chapter presents the case study results for Research Question 2, which investigated EAL students' academic socialisation experiences during their first year at their Australian university.

Chapter Six - Participants' Academic Socialisation Experiences

This chapter presents the findings from the Phase II structured interviews. This phase of the study focused on the academic socialisation level of the research framework and examined participants' experiences as they mediated their new learning environment. The first section provides a summary of the structured interviews and document analyses for each case study unit of analysis. The second section reviews the participants' final results for their semester 1 courses. This is followed by a cross case analysis and discussion of the main findings. The discussion also provides insights into whether the academic expectations reported in the previous chapter were fulfilled. The chapter concludes with a response to Research Question 2:

How do first year undergraduate EAL students mediate their academic socialisation in a new learning environment?

6.1 Literacy Practices of First Year EAL Students

The weekly structured interviews commenced in week 4 of the first semester, and continued until the last week of classes in week 13. Each week, participants recounted their literacy practices and mediation of course requirements and assessments, their approaches to academic reading, the number of hours they spent reading each week, and what they read and why. The sections below provide a summary of the structured interview findings for each participant, and the results for the document analysis. The document analysis examined course reading resources, and if participants' reported reading practices aligned with the required course readings set out in their course profile documents.

Course profiles are key documents through which academic staff communicate course expectations and content, including course readings. All course profiles have the same structure and contain two separate sections related to reading (see Appendices M1 to M8): Learning Resources and Teaching and Learning Activities. The Learning Resources section lists Required Resources: usually a textbook displayed as a reference entry. Some courses also list Recommended Resources: journal articles; additional textbooks; or websites. Weekly course readings are assigned from the required and recommended reading materials and are presented in the weekly Teaching and Learning Activities section. Participants were asked in the week 4 structured interviews if they had read their course profiles. All eight indicated they had.

The following sections report the findings from the structured interviews, and provide insights into each students' mediation of course assessments and course reading requirements. The full accounts of the required readings listed in the course profiles, and participants' reported reading, are provided in Appendices M1 to M8 and N1 to N8, respectively.

6.1.1 Trang. Trang was studying a double degree, Business and Digital Media, and was enrolled in four first year courses: Introduction to Marketing; English Language and Communication for Arts and Social Sciences; Digital Visualisation; and Creative Visual Strategies. Trang reported being anxious about speaking in English because he was shy and needed to improve his pronunciation. He was not worried about his written English as much as his speaking, although he acknowledged that he needed to improve his vocabulary to make reading and writing easier. His self-assessment appeared to match his pathway language test results: 7.0 for reading; 6.5 for writing; and 5.5 for speaking. Trang reported in the first

structured interview that at the start of the semester, he had been worried about his understanding of disciplinary academic skills and conventions. He decided to attend a number of academic writing and referencing workshops offered by the library. He said the workshops were useful and helped him understand course expectations and conventions. Trang attended most of his classes, and when he missed a few lectures due to illness, he reviewed the materials online. He did not undertake any specific English enhancement activities during semester 1.

Mediating course assessments. Trang had one individual written assessment: a 1,000 word Language and Communication report. The course implements a process writing approach, which involves students submitting a report outline, and then a draft report. Teachers provide explicit instruction and modelling related to academic writing expectations and conventions, verbal feedback on written outlines, and written feedback on the draft. The students then submit a final report two weeks later. Trang discussed his draft feedback: “I was too descriptive. More critical analysis.” In week 10, he consulted his course tutor to ask how to improve the critical analysis: “She said discuss the influence of my theory, not just what the theory is.” He considered taking his report to a one-on-one English language consultation, but did not have time. He was pleased with his final mark: 16/20. Trang’s other assignments included a written group assessment task with domestic students. Trang’s explanation of the challenges he encountered engaging with his domestic peers during this task have been discussed in detail in Chapter Seven (see Section 7.3).

By the end of semester 1, Trang was less anxious about his understanding of disciplinary conventions, and expressed confidence in his ability to meet course requirements. He said that compared to studying in Vietnam and TAFE, he had “absolutely changed” his approach because he was searching for evidence for his

assignments. Trang had utilised the online library resources, and the feedback from his Language and Communication course, to improve his skills. He believed teachers assumed first year students would know how to write assignments and reference sources because the only assignment feedback he received was from his Language and Communication tutor. Trang's experience demonstrates that first year students may not commence university with a full understanding of disciplinary literacy practices, and reiterates that students would benefit from embedding literacy instruction and feedback in course curricula.

Academic reading. Trang had required readings listed in the course profiles for three of his four courses (see Appendix M1). The Creative Visual Strategies course profile had three textbooks as required resources. Three textbook chapters, one from each of the three required resources, were listed in the course profile as required readings in the first four weeks of semester. He did not think the course had any required readings, and did not read any of the chapters. He reported that reading was not mentioned in his Digital Media classes and there were no required resources or readings. While Trang was correct about Digital Visualisation not having required readings, there were six recommended resources, which he did not use. The marketing course had an E-textbook, which Trang purchased. The Language and Communication readings were provided on the course website. Through the semester, he read some of the E-textbook and one of the Language and Communication readings.

Trang's reported reading time for the semester was 35 hours, most of which was spent reading for assignments (see Appendix N1). He had expected to read for 14 hours a week, a prediction based on his Marketing lecturer advising students they should be reading for at least seven hours per week for each of their courses.

However, Trang read for less than a quarter of the amount of time he had expected. This was because he had not realised that his course assignments would take up most of his time. For the first half of the semester, Trang reported reading for around four hours a week, which he spent researching and reading journal articles for his written assignments. He reported his highest number of reading hours in week 10: 10 hours to complete his written assignments. In weeks 8, 11, 12 and 13, Trang worked on his Digital Media assignments and did not read anything.

In the first weeks of the semester, Trang tried to keep up with the Marketing readings. The Introduction to Marketing course profile stated the same instructions the lecturer had advised, that students should spend seven hours per week on independent study (see Appendix M1). The course profile had seven chapters from the E-textbook listed as readings for the first five weeks of the semester (see Appendix N1). Trang described the chapters as “long and hard” to read. From week 5 to week 13, the marketing course profile had a further seven E-textbook chapters allocated as weekly readings, one for each week. By week 5, he stopped trying to keep up with the readings, preferring to focus on reading for his assignments. In week 9, Trang acknowledged that he was not reading the Marketing textbook chapters: “I think the textbook is difficult. It’s hard to find the main point.” He chose to study for the examination by reviewing the lecture slides instead.

Trang’s Language and Communication lecturer reminded students when there was a required reading for the following week. In addition, reminders to access the course readings to prepare for lectures were posted as announcements on the course website. The course profile listed a journal article reading for week 3, six textbook chapters as required readings in week 6, and another three textbook chapters in weeks 8 and 9. Even though course reading requirements were made explicit, Trang read the first journal article reading for week 3, but chose not to read the others. His

decision was based on time management because he found that reading for his assignments was taking up much of his time.

Trang's approach to reading showed that he understood the importance of reading to write his assignments, which was a new skill he had not had to undertake at TAFE or in Vietnam. Trang's focus on completing his assignments and his preference to read course slides, rather than the textbook which was time consuming and difficult, suggests he may have benefitted from guidance and instruction regarding course reading materials. He did not seek help with course reading materials, likely due to his assumption that teachers expected students to be autonomous.

6.1.2 Gabriella. Gabriella had three first-year courses: English Language and Communication for Business; Foundation Studies; Introduction to Research; and one second year course, Hospitality Marketing. Although her language test scores were low, an overall score of 4.5, she was the most outgoing of the case study participants and was not afraid of making mistakes when she communicated in English. Gabriella was confident with the level of her academic skills and her understanding of disciplinary expectations: "I know how to reference and I know how to write." She believed her VET college pathway course had provided adequate preparation for university, especially when at the start of the semester she appeared to know more than some domestic students: "There are many local students, they have to ask the teacher about it [referencing] many times. They even just lack the basics." Gabriella attended all her classes throughout the semester, and prepared for lectures by printing the slides and using them to take notes. She described time management as her main challenge.

Mediating course assessments. Gabriella had written assignments for all her course assessments. She submitted her first written assignment in week 4: a 350 word Introduction to Research literature review. She asked a NES friend to check her grammar before submitting. Her mark was 6/8: “An ok mark but I lost marks for grammar.” She did not know her errors. There was no feedback provided, and Gabriella did not ask her teacher for feedback. Her reason for not seeking feedback was because the mark was good enough. The course had two more written assessments which extended on the literature review. She consulted the tutor before submitting the first report. He advised: “Paragraphs were too long and needed to be separated.” Her mark was 15.5/25. She felt “bad about this mark. I should’ve done better.” The written feedback was one sentence: “Language is weak and problems with the content as well.” Gabriella had “no idea” what this meant and was disappointed because when she consulted the tutor he had not mentioned anything about her language. She did not seek further feedback because she said she did not have time. Her mark for the final assignment was 18/25: feedback was “a fair effort.” This type of comment offers encouragement, but does not provide specific guidance or instruction on academic skills or content knowledge.

In week 6, Gabriella submitted a Foundation Studies reflective essay. The course profile stated the aim of the assignment was: ‘To help students develop good academic work habits, to get additional feedback on their written expression and to practise referencing sources of information.’ She was pleased with her mark of 35.5/40. The written feedback was: “A high quality piece of assessment” and “good capacity for critical thinking.” Gabriella commented that this feedback was “interesting” because it was the same tutor she had for Introduction to Research who had written that her language was weak. Broad comments such as this do not provide the explicit feedback students require to enhance their skills. In contrast, Gabriella

reported the feedback for the Language and Communication essay draft: "The tutor said it was good but I have to fix the introduction and some grammar." The teacher's written feedback specified the grammar points Gabriella needed to address. Gabriella made the changes and then took the essay to a one-on-one language consultation to gain further feedback. Gabriella recounted that the language tutor advised her to be: "More academic, avoid using speaking words, use nominalisation to help paraphrasing". The tutor also helped her restructure her introduction. She was happy with her mark: 16/20.

Academic reading. Two of Gabriella's courses had assigned textbooks (see Appendix M2): Hospitality Marketing and Introduction to Research. The Foundation Studies required resource was a compilation of readings which could be purchased electronically or in a printed version. Due to the cost of the books, Gabriella did not buy them. She used copies from the library or borrowed her friends' textbooks. Most weeks, Gabriella reported that she had no required readings for any of her courses, which was not the case (see Appendix N2). She did not complete any textbook readings for these three courses. Her reasons were because she did not believe it was necessary to read the course textbooks to pass, and she did not have time to read them. She knew that to pass her courses she needed to successfully complete course assessments, so she used her study time to prepare for and write her assignments.

Gabriella reported 36 hours of reading over the semester (see Appendix N2). She had expected to read for eight hours a week, but read for less than half that amount of time, mainly due to her decision through the semester to not comply with course readings. Hospitality Marketing had seven textbook chapters listed as readings for weeks 1 to 4, and there were nine more chapters over the remaining eight weeks (see Appendix N2). Gabriella did not read any of them. In week 4, she

EAL students' academic literacies

mentioned there was a marketing textbook, but she had not been asked to read it. In week 6 she reported that in that week's lecture, the lecturer had advised students to read the textbook. Gabriella remarked: "I see it now in the course profile we should be reading the textbook." However, she contradicted herself by saying she did not need to read the textbook because she attended the lectures: Gabriella noted: "The lecturer hasn't mentioned specific chapters. So it's hard to be motivated to read." Gabriella stated that reviewing the lecture slides was sufficient to study for her examination: "The lecture slides content is good information so I don't have to read." Although the lecturer and the course profile advised students to read course materials, there was no explicit connection given between the readings and the course content, which led Gabriella to assume they were not important.

The Introduction to Research course profile listed eight chapters for weeks 1 to 4, as well as another seven chapters in weeks 5 to 11. Gabriella did not read any of the chapters, and reported each week that there were no required course readings, even though they were listed in the course profile. Gabriella skimmed the Language and Communication and Foundation Studies required readings in weeks 1 to 3, but by week 4 she had stopped. She admitted the Language and Communication lecturer asked students to read assigned journal articles to prepare for lectures: "But they're too long so I don't want to." She used websites for her Language and Communication essay, and skimmed a few journal articles for her Introduction to Research assignments and Marketing report. Gabriella's view of required course textbooks and readings was they were long and boring and, unless they were relevant to her assignments or examinations, she chose not to comply with weekly course readings. Gabriella may have developed a more positive attitude to course readings if course curricula had included explicit reading instruction and tasks.

6.1.3 Snow. Snow was taking four first year subjects: Language and Communication for Business; Accounting for Decision Making; Government Business Relations; and Employment Relations. He did not have any concerns about his English skills. This was reflected in his pathway language test results which showed an IELTS overall score of 7.0, a speaking score of 8.0, and a writing score of 7.0. At the beginning of semester 1, his main concern was understanding and applying disciplinary conventions, such as referencing, because he had not previously studied at a tertiary level. In week 4, he completed an online library 'study smart' tutorial, which he saw on the library website. The tutorial was not part of his courses and he did it of his own accord: "It was helpful for my academic skills. I'm slowly adjusting from high school." Snow missed just two lectures due to illness and watched the online lecture recordings to catch up. He described a systematic approach to his lectures and tutorials where he read the content before class, and again after class: "To make sure I understand the key points." This demonstrated his understanding that as a tertiary student he needed to undertake self-study and revise course content.

Mediating course assessments. Snow's first assignment was a Government and Business Relations essay outline. The teacher provided written feedback which indicated Snow had not used enough sources, and had formatting mistakes in his reference list. The specific reference list errors were not highlighted. Snow asked a librarian to look at the referencing errors: "She was very helpful. For example, I learnt to put a viewed date for Harvard but not APA style." In week 6, he recounted the Language and Communication draft feedback: "The content and structure were good but I needed more in-text references." In week 10, Snow attended a voluntary Language and Communication essay writing workshop facilitated by his course tutor:

EAL students' academic literacies

“I learnt it’s better to organise references while I write instead of leaving it all to the end. The more assignments I do, the more I understand what’s expected. I need a thesis statement, evidence and referencing.” However, he was disappointed with his final mark of 11/20. He did not look at the online feedback, but assumed that similar to his other assignments he had lost marks for not using enough sources and referencing errors. Although Snow had an understanding of disciplinary requirements, his experience demonstrated that first year students often require explicit academic literacy instruction to help them improve their skills.

Snow also had a 1,200 word argumentative essay for Employment Relations. The course profile indicated that the marking criteria focused on critical thinking, use of sources, as well as ‘spelling, grammar, readability, clarity of ideas.’ He consulted with his tutor after receiving 3/6 for his outline. The tutor advised him he needed more sources as evidence to support his argument and gave him tips to search for journal articles and referencing. His final mark was 15/25. Similar to his Language and Communication essay mark, he was disappointed. He explained the Employment Relations tutor feedback for the essay: “The structure was good, but I put sub-headings which was wrong for an essay and still, errors with in-text referencing. I [need to] put brackets around the year, but not the authors”. The difficulties Snow experienced as he worked to develop his academic skills indicates that first year students would benefit from explicit instruction and feedback on disciplinary expectations, such as referencing.

Academic Reading. Snow had textbooks for three of his courses. There were four textbooks in total, because there were two textbooks for Government Business Relations (see Appendix M3). He purchased all four but rarely used them. Snow said he read the course profiles for all his courses, but was not aware of any information

about self-study expectations. However, the document analysis showed both the Government Business Relations and Accounting course profiles had statements regarding the number of hours students should commit for each course (see Appendix M3).

Snow reported 104 reading hours for the semester (see Appendix N3). The first few weeks he read for two to four hours a week, and for the remainder of the semester he was spending between 10 and 12 hours each week. He had expected to read for 12 hours a week. Snow kept up with his Language and Communication readings throughout the semester. Each week, the lecturer reminded students to read the required texts to prepare for the following week. Snow described his reading strategy: first skim, then he went back and read “densely” two or three times. Snow was able to recount the content of the readings in detail and said they were interesting and not very long, about three or four pages.

Snow did not read the Government Relations textbooks. The course profile listed seven chapters from the two textbooks for the first four weeks, and between one and three textbook chapters each week for the rest of the semester (see Appendix N3). He “skimmed over two random chapters” in one of the textbooks in week 3, but only because he had a reading report assessment: “We have to summarise, analyse and evaluate two chapters from the textbook, any chapters.” In week 12 he said: “I think I’m supposed to read them [the textbooks], but they’re boring.” Every week Snow reported there were no readings for Accounting or Employment Relations, although both course profiles listed textbook chapters as weekly required readings. During weeks 6 to 10, he researched and read journal articles for his written assessments: “Searching is easier now, I’m better at choosing key words. Reading them [journal articles] is fine, no problems.” When Snow was interested in the content, or could see a purpose for reading, he would spend the time reading. This

suggests that when course staff select reading materials, they should consider topics which are relevant to students' learning needs and provide explicit connections between the readings and course content.

6.1.4 Jaili. In Jaili's first semester she was enrolled in one first year course, English Language and Communication for Sciences, and three third year courses, Geotechnical Engineering, Structural Analysis and Construction Materials. She attended all her classes throughout the semester. She did not spend any time working towards improving her language, even though she was worried about making mistakes and misunderstanding NES. In contrast to her speaking skills, Jaili felt comfortable with her level of academic skills at the start of semester 1. She believed her Direct Entry pathway course had helped her gain a clear understanding of disciplinary conventions and she was confident with her academic writing. She said she had learnt how to write in an "academic way" during her pathway course. She was confident with unpacking assignment questions, collecting and analysing information, and referencing: "It's not difficult for me here because I was studying in the [university's] Language Institute."

Mediating course assessments. Jaili had three written assignments in semester 1: a 1,000 word report for Language and Communication; a group 2,000 word literature review; and a group 2,500 word laboratory report for Construction Materials. She advised that she did not have any problems with the Construction Materials assignments because she had learnt how to approach and structure different types of assignments during her Direct Entry course. Jaili remarked in week 12 that the tutor had given clear assignment instructions so she knew what was

required. In week 8, Jaili reported that although she was busy with her assignments she was enjoying them because they were different to what she had done in China.

The course Jaili was most concerned about was Construction Materials because she found it difficult to understand her lecturer's accent. She failed the mid-semester examination (49/100). Feedback was not provided, and according to Jaili, the results were not discussed by course teachers at all. Jaili described feeling "afraid" to ask her lecturer for feedback because she was worried she would not understand him. Jaili's solution was to form a study group with her friends. Her perceptions of this experience are discussed in detail in Chapter Seven (see Section 7.1.2).

The only assessment feedback Jaili received was for the Language and Communication report: "The tutor said well done. She suggested writing consultations to help me improve. My referencing was ok. I still need to work on grammar." Jaili corrected the errors her tutor had highlighted, but did not have time to attend a one-on-one writing consultation before she submitted in week 11: "I've had too much to do. It's ok, but yeah, I'm worried about the grammar I guess." She was disappointed with her mark of 14/20, and regretted not attending a writing consultation. When she reviewed her tutor's final essay feedback, she realised that although she had demonstrated effective academic skills, she could have received a higher mark if she had sought assistance to improve her written English. Jaili's experiences highlight that first year students may take time to adjust their time management to suit their new learning environment. Furthermore, it indicates that students could benefit from embedded language enhancement in course curricula.

Academic reading. Jaili's three Engineering courses had required resources: a textbook and workbook for Structural Analysis; two textbooks for Geotechnical

Engineering; and the Australian Concrete Standards Guide for Construction Materials (see Appendix M4). Jaili did not buy any of the books because they were too expensive. She used library copies instead. She stated that students were not required to read the textbooks: "Students read them if they want to." There were laboratory guides for each Engineering courses. Jaili printed and read the relevant guides to prepare for lectures and laboratory classes each week, and used them to practice mechanical calculations. Jaili reported 116 hours of reading during the semester, which was slightly more than she had expected (see Appendix N4). In the first six weeks and last three weeks of semester 1, she spent around 14 hours reading each week. In the middle weeks of the semester she was spending around seven hours reading.

The Geotech and Construction Materials course profiles did not list specific weekly readings, even though each course had required and recommended resources (see Appendix M4). She rarely used the Geotech resources, and read the lecture slides and tutorial materials instead. In the first weeks of the semester, Jaili did not use the resources for Construction Materials either, again preferring to review the lecture slides each week. But when she failed the mid-semester examination she began using the required resources, as well as the lecture slides to revise for the final examination. She did not use the Structural Analysis required textbook, and it was not listed as a required reading in the course profile. The required readings were chapters from the workbook, which she used every week to practice calculations. The workbook also set out the steps for structuring and writing her weekly laboratory reports.

Jaili kept up with the Language and Communication readings. She researched and found five journal articles for the Language and Communication written report, and read four journal articles for her Construction Materials group lab report. By

week 11, Jaili was already preparing for the final Engineering examinations. For Structural Analysis, she reviewed course content using the workbook, for Geotech she reviewed the weekly lecture slides, and for Construction Materials she studied by reviewing the weekly lecture slides and recommended resources. Jaili complied with the course readings which were directly connected to laboratory content or assessments. This demonstrates that when course reading materials are explicitly related to course content, and students' learning needs, students would be more likely to comply with required readings, and increase their understanding of course content.

6.1.5 Emily. Emily had four first year courses in her first semester: English Language and Communication for Sciences; Engineering Fundamentals; Computing and Programming MATLAB; and Maths IA. She was comfortable communicating in English, and at the start of semester 1 she reported being “satisfied” with her academic skills. Emily believed she was well prepared for university due to her VET pathway course. She described feeling a “little stressed” about time management in the middle of the semester when she was trying to complete her assignments. Nevertheless, she stated that she enjoyed learning new content, and believed the courses and assessments “fit with future jobs.” She attended most of her classes throughout the semester.

Mediating course assessments. In week 5, Emily began to worry about her academic writing after she received 2/5 for a 250 word Engineering Fundamentals written assignment worth 5% of the course assessment. The aim of the task, as stated in the course profile, was to ‘evaluate technical writing skills [including] spelling and grammar.’ Emily knew she was being assessed on her writing and language, not the

content, so she asked a NES friend to help her proofread it. She preferred to ask a friend, rather than attend a one-on-one language consultation, due to time restrictions. She was surprised with her mark because she did not think her paper had grammar errors and believed she should have received a higher mark. When she asked the lecturer for feedback in week 5, he said she needed to wait until he had received the papers back from the marker. It took until week 8 for the lecturer to return her paper. The written feedback was “minor grammar & punctuation errors.” She could not see any errors so she spoke to her lecturer again. He told her he would make an appointment for her to receive help with grammar. He said he would email her the details, but did not say who would provide the help. By week 12, Emily had not received an email. She tried to follow up by calling him, his preferred way for students to contact him. “When I call he doesn’t reply or he gives his phone to his assistant and she says I can leave a message but it’s too awkward, what to say?” She decided to give up and accept the mark, but the experience affected her confidence in her academic writing. Emily’s negative experience illustrates the importance of academic staff providing timely and constructive feedback.

Emily’s other written assignment was a 1,000 word report for Language and Communication. The feedback on her draft report was to develop her ideas more, and to make better use of linking words: “I don’t think I use the right linking words in the right place. But structure was good and my referencing ok.” She decided not to use one-on-one writing support because she did not think it would help, even though she was still worried about her writing. Her final mark was 15/20, which she was happy with because no one had helped her proof read. The feedback was to improve grammar and linking, and the tutor suggested she would benefit from one-on-one writing support: “Yes, about cohesive devices. I've been using them inappropriately, like I have to, make my range much more. I use them, but I put maybe some words in

a different place. Like it doesn't match the sentence.” Emily’s attention to the feedback she received demonstrates that students can benefit from effective and explicit feedback on language.

Academic reading. Emily said she did not have any assigned textbooks. The Matlab course profile listed three books as the required and recommended resources (see Appendix M5). The Engineering Fundamentals and Maths IA course profiles did not indicate any resources or weekly readings. Emily read the least of all the case study participants, 20 hours over the semester (Appendix N5). She said she did not need to read anything for her two maths courses, although the Matlab course profile listed chapters from the required textbook as readings each week. Emily had expected four hours a week, but read for less than half that time. Emily reported reading the Language and Communication readings to prepare for the lectures. She said she liked reading them, and each one took 30 minutes to read. She read the lecture slides to prepare for the Engineering Fundamentals lectures every week.

In weeks 1 to 4, Emily researched and found five journal articles for her Language and Communication report. She said she did not have any problems reading them, although she was worried that they might not be scholarly. But, she reasoned that as she had found them on google scholar, they should be appropriate. She read the articles and wrote the report in weeks 6 and 7. In weeks 7 and 8, she spent her time reviewing the Engineering Fundamentals lecture slides to prepare for her mid-semester examination. In weeks 10 and 11, her reading again focused on reviewing Engineering Fundamentals lecture slides to prepare for the final examination. In weeks 12 and 13, she did not read at all. Emily’s reported reading reflected the types of courses she was taking where her two maths courses required little reading.

6.1.6 Filipe. Filipe was enrolled in three first year courses, Language and Communication for Science, Biological Systems, Introduction to Environmental Sustainability and one second year course, Entomology. He attended most classes, but stopped attending Biological Systems lectures after week 8. He said the lectures were based around “very general” information which he already knew, but he attended the tutorials: “To apply my knowledge.” Filipe believed his Direct Entry pathway course helped him develop effective academic skills, in particular referencing, academic writing and critical thinking. He commented that students he knew who had entered university through language test results did not have the same understanding that he had about disciplinary standards and conventions: “They have lots of problems with how to reference, how to write a report and do assignments.”

Filipe was not shy, but lacked confidence speaking in English because he thought his pronunciation was terrible. This was an aspect of his English he was determined to improve. It was the main language weakness identified by the teacher for his Direct Entry course. He used a self-initiated strategy he found online called *speech shadowing*: a listening and speaking technique, aimed at improving pronunciation and intonation, where the learner listens to an audio text they are interested in and copies the speech simultaneously. Filipe committed two hours every two to three days to speech shadowing. By week 11, he thought his speaking was improving because he had increased the shadowing to two to three hours each day. He also wanted to improve his vocabulary. His strategy was to take screen shots of new words on his phone, and then he tried to use them in writing and speaking. He thought this strategy helped because he was no longer “getting stuck” on vocabulary when he was reading. Filipe’s determination to improve his English was reflected in the amount of time he dedicated to language enhancement strategies.

Mediating course assessments. Filipe had written assignments for all his courses. The Environmental Sustainability course included a draft essay peer review process in the week 8 tutorial, but Filipe was sick and missed the class. He still needed to submit the draft and emailed it to the tutor. He did not receive feedback, and did not seek any either. He wrote the final essay without help and was happy with it when he submitted. He thought his final mark of 65/100 was “reasonable.” He did not receive any feedback.

Filipe reported the feedback he had received for his Language and Communication draft essay. He had not addressed the whole question and had “a lot of grammar mistakes.” On the positive side, he was pleased with the teacher’s comment that his essay structure and topic sentences were well written. He fixed the errors and added the extra information, but decided not to seek help with proofreading because he thought it was good. He was happy with his mark: 18/20.

Filipe had another written assessment, a 1,000 word Entomology report. Entomology was his major in Brazil and he planned to study an Entomology Master Degree. It was the course he was most engaged in and spent many hours researching and writing the report. He was excited about his mark (97.5/100). Filipe’s most difficult assessment was a group oral presentation for Environmental Sustainability, which he described as “a terrible experience.” His group members were domestic students. Similar to Trang, Filipe encountered difficulties working with his domestic peers. The details of both Filipe and Trang’s experiences are discussed in Section 7.3 in the next chapter.

Academic reading. Filipe had three course textbooks, one for each of his three science subjects (see Appendix M6). The Introduction to Environmental

EAL students' academic literacies

Sustainability textbook was an academic writing textbook. He did not buy it because he said he was confident with his writing. He bought the E-textbooks for Entomology and Biological Systems. The Entomology course profile listed both the required and recommended books as the readings every week, although no chapters or sections were specified. Filipe used the E-book for his report, and to study for the course examinations. He used the Biological Systems E-textbook regularly, although similar to his Entomology course, there were no specified weekly readings in the Biological Systems course profile. The lecturer advised students read the textbook to prepare for lectures, but Filipe used it to prepare for his lab classes because he found it helped him learn the vocabulary. Filipe purchased another text, a 20 page report writing book the lecturer suggested. He found it useful because it provided format templates, which he used for the Biological Systems lab reports.

Filipe spent 42 hours reading during the semester; less than one quarter of the amount of time he had expected (see Appendix N6). Most weeks Filipe spent around four hours reading. He did not comply with most of his required course readings. Most of his reported reading was reading journal articles for his written assignments, and reading his Biological Systems and Entomology textbooks to prepare for classes. The Environmental Sustainability course profile listed five chapters of the textbook and four journal article readings for the first four weeks of the semester, and eight more readings in the subsequent weeks. Filipe did not read any of them. He knew the course profile listed readings each week, but was not interested in the content, which in the first few weeks was on academic skills. He chose to review the lecture slides each week instead. He explained that he preferred to prioritise his time toward Entomology.

Filipe did not read the Language and Communication readings either. He said there were “lots of readings for the lectures,” although according to the course profile

there were just three. He said he was not interested in reading them because, similar to Environmental Sustainability, the content was about academic skills. He read eight journal articles for his Language and Communication essay, and 13 for his Entomology report. Filipe's approach to reading was to use course resources that he believed were relevant for his assignments and learning course content. If he perceived no connection between his learning needs and course materials he did not comply with the required readings. This shows the importance of course staff providing explicit reasons for students to engage in course readings if they expect reading compliance.

6.1.7 Camilla. Camilla was enrolled in two first year courses (English Language and Communication for Health and Introduction to Health Promotions), one second year course (Priorities and Interventions in Public Health), and one third year course (Clinical Microbiology). Camilla's main concern was pronunciation, which caused her to feel shy when communicating in English. Her teacher in her Direct Entry course had advised her to address her pronunciation to improve her speaking proficiency. In the first four weeks of semester 1, she attended a weekly 90 minute pronunciation workshop offered by the university Language Institute and found it helpful. However, she stopped going because it clashed with her Microbiology lecture. She had been watching the lecture recordings online so she could attend the pronunciation workshop, but in week 5 decided she should attend the lecture because the course was difficult and had a large volume of content. She attended most of her classes throughout the semester.

Mediating course assessments. In week 6, Camilla had her first examination: multiple choice questions and short answer questions for Priorities and

Interventions in Public Health. She studied using lecture notes and the textbook. She was disappointed with her mark of 20/40. There was no feedback given in the lectures, except the lecturer advised that the worst mark was 4/40. Camilla decided not to seek feedback because she thought maybe her mark was not that bad. In week 8 she failed her Microbiology multiple choice question mid-semester examination: 17/40. She thought she had studied enough, but realised in the examination that there were more questions and topics than she had expected: "So many things to memorise!" There was no feedback given after the examination. In week 9, Camilla had her third multiple choice question examination, this time for Health Promotions: her mark was 35/50. Camilla believed she improved because she had learnt how multiple choice question examinations were set out. Camilla's experiences with these examinations is discussed further in the next chapter in Section 7.1.2.

Camilla was confident with her academic writing, much more than speaking, and commented that course teachers did not "explain anything about academic skills except to say we must reference and we are expected to know how to answer assignments." She had written assessments in three of her courses. In week 7, she took her Language and Communication draft essay to a one-on-one consultation, where the tutor helped with sentence structure, vocabulary and paraphrasing, and advised her to use relative clauses: "I sometimes write in simple sentences." The draft feedback from her course tutor was: "A few punctuation errors in my relative clauses and I needed to paraphrase two sentences a bit more." She fixed the grammar errors on her own and then took the essay to another one-on-one language consultation in week 10. The tutor "helped with my paraphrasing and pointed out some silly mistakes." Her mark was 19.5/20.

Camilla submitted a 1,000 word Health Promotions essay in week 10. She did not use the one-on-one writing support for this essay because she believed she had

addressed the question using appropriate sources, and was happy with what she wrote. She was disappointed with her mark of 59/100 and said the feedback was: “Problems with structure and I had to write more deeply about the topic, be less descriptive.” She thought she should have received a higher grade, so she showed a one-on-one writing tutor her essay. Camilla reported that the writing tutor “could not see any problems with the structure.” But, she did not seek further feedback from her course tutor. She was worried the teacher might reduce her mark further, which she explained sometimes happened in Brazil if students questioned assessment marks. This suggests that at the beginning of a course, teachers should explain to students their process for providing feedback.

Academic reading. Camilla had four textbooks for her courses; two for *Priorities and Interventions in Public Health*, and one each for *Introduction to Health Promotion and Clinical Microbiology* (see Appendix M7). She did not buy any of the books because they were “too expensive.” She used library copies instead. As well as the textbook for *Microbiology*, there was also an online lab manual, which Camilla read for 30 minutes every week before her class: “I have to or I won’t know what to do.” There were no specific weekly readings in the *Microbiology* course profile. The weekly readings were listed as ‘textbook’. Camilla did not read the textbook, even though she reported that the lecturer had advised students that they should. The lecturer did not provide any reasons as to why reading the textbook was important.

Camilla’s reported reading hours for the semester totalled 145 hours (see Appendix N7), which was the second highest of the eight participants. She had expected to read for 12 hours a week, which was slightly more than what she actually did. Most weeks Camilla spent between 10 and 20 hours a week reading. In week 9,

she reported 28 hours of reading, which was mainly to prepare for her mid-semester Microbiology examination. However, as reported above, she failed the examination despite the time spent studying.

As well as reading to prepare for classes and examinations, Camilla spent time reading journal articles for her written assignments: "I have to read many to find good ones." Camilla said her Language and Communication lecturer advised students about readings for the following week. The course profile itemised one reading each week for the first 11 weeks. She kept up with the readings for the first five weeks. She found it easier to read them at the end of the lecture, after the lecturer discussed the vocabulary. She said they were not hard to read, but they were too long. After week 6, she stopped reading them and explained that there was "too much other reading to do." In week 7, she reported that the Microbiology vocabulary and concepts were difficult, so in addition to reading the lab manual, she was reviewing the lecture slides to prepare for the examination.

Camilla said she should be reading the Health Promotions textbook to prepare for the lectures, but only skimmed a few pages to prepare for the mid-semester examination. The Health Promotions course profile had twelve textbook chapters and two videos listed for weeks 1 to 10. Camilla did not read the chapters or watch the videos. She reported that the lecturer had advised students that they "only needed to review the lecture slides" to study for the final examination. For the Priorities and Interventions in Public Health course, Camilla read the five textbook chapters set as the readings for weeks 1 to 4. She read them to prepare for her lectures and the mid-semester examination. She said the chapters were not difficult, and each one took about one hour to read. The course profile listed readings for every week and in week 6, Camilla reported the course now had two textbooks she was supposed to read. She realised it was easier to participate in class if she read the

textbooks, but found it hard to find time. She caught up on the required reading at the end of the semester to prepare for the final examination. Camilla's reported reading experiences showed she complied with course readings that she believed were relevant to her learning needs.

6.1.8 Meko. Meko decided to enrol in three courses instead of four because she knew studying in English would be difficult. She selected three first year subjects: English Language and Communication for Sciences; Introduction to Environmental Sustainability; and Applied Maths. Meko described herself as very shy. She was not confident communicating in English. She also wanted to improve her time management because she thought she took a long time to read and write. She explained that this was not just a problem in English, it was the same when she wrote assignments in Japanese. She attended all of her classes except for two lectures she missed due to being sick. She caught up by watching the lecture recordings.

Meko did not implement any specific strategies to improve her English. In the first structured interview she described feeling uncertain about the level of her academic skills and emphasised that her main priority was improving her understanding of disciplinary expectations and conventions, in particular her academic writing. In the first five weeks of semester, Meko spent many hours reading a range of online library self-help resources for academic writing, brainstorming, time management, and note-taking. She was happy when she realised that two of her courses, Language and Communication and Environmental Sustainability, provided content and readings related to academic skills. In addition, her Introduction to Environmental Sustainability course required students to complete an online library study smart tutorial and academic integrity quiz: they were each worth 5% of the assessment marks. In week 9, she reported that her academic writing had improved

due to all the reading she had done at the start of the semester: "I have learnt how to structure a good essay."

Mediating course assessments. Meko had two written assignments, a 1,000 word Language and Communication report, and a 2,000 word essay for Introduction to Environmental Sustainability. Most of her reported reading time was spent researching and reading journal articles for these assignments. Both courses required written outlines and drafts for the written assignments, and provided opportunities for feedback. Meko's draft feedback from her Language and Communication tutor was: "Excellent work. Just one poor paragraph I need to fix, make it longer and mainly missing articles and [incorrect] word choice." Meko addressed the feedback and her final mark was 19/20: "I had a few grammar errors still and feedback was to improve my editing."

In week 8, Meko's Environmental Sustainability tutorials held peer reviewing for the essay drafts, which she was worried about because she thought her essay was "horrible". In week 9, when she discussed the peer feedback experience she was pleased because her peer reviewer, a domestic student, was "kind and positive and said it was a good analysis." Her final mark was 80/100, which she was happy with. She said she lost marks because she had not understood one part of the question, so had not written anything for that section. Meko's assignment results appeared to show that the effort she made to improve her understanding of disciplinary literacy practices and conventions had helped increase both her confidence and her skills.

Academic reading. Two of Meko's courses had textbooks as required resources, Applied Maths and Environmental Sustainability (see Appendix M8). She purchased both. The maths course profile listed one chapter each week for students to practice maths problems. Meko only used the textbook occasionally because she had already studied the same content in Japan. The Environmental Sustainability required resource was an academic writing textbook, the same one Filipe had decided was not useful for him. Meko used it regularly to enhance her understanding of disciplinary conventions and academic skills. There was some repetition between the Language and Communication and Environmental Sustainability readings, they were both based around academic skills, but Meko liked the double up of information. She said it helped her know she had understood the readings. Meko's compliance with required course readings was related to her efforts to improve her literacy practices and understanding of disciplinary expectations.

Meko reported 190 reading hours over the semester (Appendix N8). This was by far the most of any of the participants, and she was the only participant who read all her assigned course readings. For the first eight weeks of the semester, she was spending more than 20 hours per week reading, and for the last weeks she was spending about 15 hours. Her prediction at the beginning of semester 1, that she would need to read for 20 to 30 hours per week, had been accurate. Meko described herself as a slow reader. She said this was because she wanted to be thorough, and understand new vocabulary. She read every text two to three times to make sure she understood it. In week 7, she commented that researching was taking less time than it had at the start of the semester, because she was now able to quickly see which articles were useful. She was certain that the time she was spending on researching was expected for tertiary students: "I think the long time it takes to do the research is

normal.” Meko’s approach to reading showed that she viewed course reading compliance as an expected part of disciplinary expectations.

Meko read the three required readings in the course profile for Language and Communication. The Environmental Sustainability course profile listed five textbook chapters for the first six weeks, and then another three for the remaining weeks. There were additional articles and reports as required readings most weeks. Meko found it difficult to keep up with the weekly Environmental Sustainability readings because there were so many. She fell behind, but by the end of the semester she had caught up and read them all. She believed she needed to read them to prepare for the course examination. She also reviewed the course lecture slides each week as part of her weekly reported reading. Meko complied with her course readings because she believed they were relevant to her learning needs and would be necessary to pass course assessments.

The following section reports the eight case study students’ semester 1 course results.

6.2 Semester 1 Course Results

The third recorded interviews, held in week 3 semester 2, began by asking participants to report their semester 1 results, and how they felt about them. The eight participants completed a combined total of 31 courses in their first semester (see Table 6.1).

Table 6.1

Participants' Semester 1 Results

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Degree</i>	<i>Results</i>
Trang	Business & Digital Media	Introduction to Marketing – Pass Creative Visual Strategies – Distinction Digital Visualisation – Credit Language & Communication – Distinction
Gabriella	Hotel Management	Hospitality Marketing – Pass Introduction to Research – Pass Foundation Studies – Credit Language & Communication – Credit
Snow	Business majoring in Management	Employment Relations – Pass Government Business Relations – Credit Accounting for Decision Making – Pass Language & Communication – Credit
Jaili	Civil Engineering	Structural Analysis (3 rd yr) – High Distinction Construction Materials (3 rd yr) – Credit Geotechnical Engineering (3 rd yr) – Credit Language & Communication – Credit
Emily	Engineering	Engineering Fundamentals – Distinction MATLAB – Distinction Maths IA – Distinction Language & Communication – Distinction
Filipe	Science	Entomology (2 nd yr) – Pass Biological Systems – Fail Environmental Sustainability – Pass Language & Communication – Distinction
Camilla	Bachelor of Pharmacy	Clinical Microbiology (3 rd yr) – Pass Priorities & Interventions (2 nd yr) – Pass Introduction to Health Promotions – Credit Language & Communication – High Distinction
Meko	Environmental Science	Applied Maths – High Distinction Environmental Sustainability – High Distinction Language & Communication – High Distinction

Note. Pass = 4, Credit = 5, Distinction = 6, High Distinction = 7

All the participants reported feeling pleased with their results, and believed their grades reflected their efforts through the semester. As shown in Table 6.1, there were five high distinctions, seven distinctions, nine credits, nine passes, and one fail. Meko's three high distinctions, and Emily's four distinctions, stood out as high achievements, as did Trang's two distinctions. Jaili's results of a high distinction and three credits were notable given she had undertaken three third year courses.

Trang described his results as "not really good but ok. I studied hard." Camilla mentioned she was used to receiving higher marks in Brazil, "but I did my best, so these results were all right." Emily was "satisfied" with four distinctions, and believed the grades reflected her ability. Gabriella was "proud" of her two credits because she had expected to receive passes. Meko's three high distinctions were higher grades than she had expected and she felt "great." Snow was slightly disappointed with his results, reflecting that he had not done as well as he had expected in the final examinations. He explained he had "sacrificed a lot of time" preparing for his accounting examination, instead of sharing the time equally between all four courses, and then felt "crushed" when he had not received a good result. Based on the practice examination, Snow had expected questions with calculations and equations, but there were additional short answer theoretical questions. He commented, "I would have done better if I had done the readings. I think I would have known more in-depth." He had read the Language and Communication required readings, but had not complied with the textbook readings for his other three courses. Snow stated at the beginning of semester 2 that he intended to change his approach to reading in order to enhance his knowledge of course content.

Filipe was the only participant who failed a course. His initial result for Biological Systems was a 'supplementary' grade, which required him to sit another examination to pass the course. However, when he found out the results he was

travelling overseas and could not return, and subsequently failed the course. He knew why he failed and took full responsibility, believing it was because he had decided not to attend the last five weeks of lectures. He described his experience in the examination:

I realised I didn't know the meaning for some words specifically about biological systems. I knew everything in Portuguese, I just didn't know the vocabulary in English. So if I had attended the class, for sure I would know the vocabulary so it was my fault.

Despite failing one course, Filipe remained positive about his studies:

It's my first time in a foreign country. It's my first time in an international university so I don't feel disappointed.

Filipe's feeling of satisfaction for studying at an English-speaking university was shared by the other participants, except for Snow who was slightly frustrated with his results. Although like Filipe, Snow believed he could have achieved higher grades if he had mediated his courses a little better. The participants' semester 1 academic results demonstrated that they met course requirements, and successfully transitioned into their new learning environment. Their achievements could be summarised using an observation put forward by Trang at the end of semester 1: "Most international students, we are working very hard."

The participants were asked if there were changes they would make in their approach to their studies in semester 2, based on their semester 1 experiences and results. Meko and Trang planned to start assessment tasks earlier so they would have more time to address assessment requirements. This aligned with their experiences reported in the structured interviews, which showed managing the time it took to

undertake their assignments was difficult for them. Trang also decided he would review course content straight after the lecture to help keep up with course content. Similarly, Gabriella resolved to listen to the lecture recordings after attending the lectures, so she could review the content. Based on his semester 1 examination results, Snow planned to share his time equally between all his courses. As mentioned above, Snow believed he could improve his results if he complied with course readings because it would help him gain deeper understanding of course content. Overall, the participants' reflections indicated student agency and willingness to continue improving their literacy and learning in semester 2.

The next section provides a cross-case analysis and discussion of the structured interview results.

6.3 Academic Socialisation Cross-Case Analysis and Discussion

The participants' accounts of their experiences in their first semester, as well as their course results, demonstrated they understood disciplinary literacy practices, and successfully mediated course requirements and assessment tasks. Given that academic socialisation and academic literacies are overlapping models within the research framework, the results and discussion in this chapter have informed Phase III of the study. Phase III focuses on academic literacies and is presented in the following chapter. The Phase II cross-case analysis revealed common themes across the cases in relation to participants' language enhancement, their understanding and application of disciplinary skills and conventions, and approaches to academic reading.

6.3.1 English language proficiency and enhancement. EAL students' language proficiency has received increased attention in the last decade. Although such attention is warranted due to the significant link between language, learning and literacy, much of the discourse surrounding EAL students has perpetuated a deficit view regarding their ability to understand and engage in disciplinary literacy practices. As previously discussed in this thesis (see Section 2.5.2), academic literacy researchers (e.g., Ashton-Hay et al., 2016; Boreland, 2016; Dyson, 2014; Harper et al., 2011; Floyd, 2015; Phakiti et al., 2013) have argued that commencing EAL students meet university language requirements before they are accepted into their degrees. Thus, rather than focusing on English proficiency as a potential deficit, a more effective strategy would be for institutions and academic staff to assist EAL students to reach their English language enhancement goals.

The shift away from the deficit approach is supported by the Good Practice Principles (AEI, 2013), which assert that English language enhancement is the responsibility of both students and institutions. The Good Practice Principles advocate that universities embed discipline-specific language enhancement instruction and support strategies in curricula design, assessment practices and course delivery. In addition, recent studies have found all first year students, not just EAL students, can benefit from embedded language instruction (AEI, 2013; Boreland, 2016; Floyd, 2014; Gale et al., 2017; Paxton & Frith, 2014; Wilson et al., 2016; Wingate, 2015). The results from this study support research (e.g., Gale, 2017; Lea & Street, 2006; O'Shea et al., 2015; Parr & Campbell, 2012; Wingate, 2015) which has contested that university disciplines are yet to implement embedded language strategies. Furthermore, the findings suggest that ELICOS and VET pathway courses provide valuable learning experiences, which assist students to

prepare for tertiary study. However, regardless of their pathway, first year students still require language instruction and opportunities to enhance their language skills.

The participants' language test scores and entry pathways indicated they commenced university with different levels of English language proficiency. The apparent disparity between participants' IELTS scores and, for some their lack of English proficiency test results, did not affect their ability to engage with their courses and mediate disciplinary expectations and conventions. The findings contradict discussions (e.g., AEI, 2007; Birrell, 2006) suggesting that students who enrol via non-language test pathways may not be adequately prepared for tertiary study. Gabriella enrolled via a VET pathway course because her IELTS score did not meet the minimum entry requirements. Her IELTS writing score was 3.5, while for Snow, who enrolled based on his IELTS results, his score for writing was 7.0. They were in the same Language and Communication tutorial, and the same teacher provided draft feedback and marked their final essays. They both sought extra support, with Snow attending an essay writing workshop and Gabriella taking her assignment to a one-on-one language consultation. Gabriella was pleased with her mark of 16/20. Snow was disappointed with his 11/20. All the participants completed a written essay in their Language and Communication course. Snow received the lowest mark, despite having distinctly higher IELTS scores compared to the other students. Snow explained that his mark reflected his inexperience in terms of understanding and applying disciplinary conventions, an issue which is discussed in more detail in the next section.

Snow and Gabriella had distinct IELTS speaking results. Snow's speaking score was 8.0 and Gabriella's was 3.5, yet both were equally confident communicating in English. Snow was confident because he had experienced speaking English at school. Gabriella felt comfortable with her communication skills after

successfully completing her pathway VET course. Similarly, Emily expressed confidence communicating in English, even though her speaking test score was 5.5, still quite low compared to Snow. Similar to Gabriella, Emily attributed her confidence to successfully completing her ELICOS and VET pathway courses. The interview results showed that similar to Phakiti et al. (2013), Ashton-Hay et al. (2016), and Boreland's (2016) research findings, there was no connection between participants' English proficiency test results and their ability to transition into university.

Language enhancement requires opportunities for communication and feedback, as well as acknowledgement from students regarding the aspects of their language proficiency which require specific attention. When the case study students reflected on their individual language proficiency (see Section 5.3.1), Snow, Gabriella, and Emily were comfortable with their communication skills. The other participants did not demonstrate the same level of confidence. Camilla and Filipe were particularly worried about pronunciation. They each explained that this stemmed from feedback given by their Direct Entry teacher that pronunciation was their main language weakness, which motivated them to focus on this aspect of their language. Both students endeavoured to improve their pronunciation, in particular Filipe with his use of 'shadowing' throughout the semester. Camilla attended a pronunciation workshop, which she believed was helpful, but her timetable prevented her from going for more than a few weeks. Trang was also worried about his pronunciation, which led him to feel shy when he communicated with NES. Although he described his speaking as a constant source of worry, he cited lack of time as the reason for not implementing any specific enhancement strategies.

In Meko's case, she was concerned about speaking because she felt shy, which she described as being a problem for her in Japan as well. Jaili reported listening as

her biggest challenge, and the reason for this became clear in the interviews when she described having difficulty understanding one of her lecturer's accent. She perceived this as her problem, but it increased her self-doubt about her communication skills. The issue of low self-confidence and feeling shy could be addressed by providing students with opportunities to practice and enhance their communication skills within a supportive learning environment, particularly when they first begin their university studies. For example, the results presented in the previous chapter (see Section 5.3.1) indicated that participants expected to have opportunities to communicate with their peers in class. Furthermore, they expected that studying in Australia would help them enhance their English and intercultural communication skills. As discussed in Section 2.6 of this thesis, first year transition and internationalisation strategies, and embedding language instruction in course curricula, would address these learning needs.

A major reason why respondents come to Australia to study is to enhance their English language skills. The survey results showed that respondents believed it was important to spend time improving their English skills (see Section 4.2.1). However, although the case study participants were aware of their language weaknesses (see Section 5.3.1), most did not dedicate specific time to improve their language skills and chose to spend the time mediating course assessments instead. Filipe was the one exception. He spent many hours using his speech shadowing strategy. By the end of the semester he thought his pronunciation had improved and consequently, his self-confidence increased. Camilla and Gabriella were the only participants who chose to use language support services offered by the university and both attended two one-on-one language consultations. They described the consultations as helpful and recounted aspects of their written language they needed to improve. The other students knew the workshops and consultations were

available, but did not attend due to time constraints, preferring to allocate their time to completing assignments. This supports previous studies (e.g., Beatty et al., 2014; Chanock, 2010; Storch & Hill, 2008), which have found that many international students do not attend language support programs due to time management and course workloads. These findings confirm the need for disciplines to embed language enhancement support within curricula.

Participants' descriptions of how they mediated their first semester courses showed they prioritised assessments over spending time attending language enhancement support. This suggests, that while language support programs outside of disciplinary contexts are valuable, disciplinary staff should also play a role in assisting students to achieve their language enhancement goals. As shown in the previous chapter (see Section 5.3), many of the survey respondents expected one-on-one time with teachers, as well as feedback to help them improve their academic reading and writing. In addition, previous studies (e.g., Lea & Street, 1998; Knoch et al., 2014; Knoch et al., 2015; Storch & Hill, 2008) have found that an important aspect of embedded language support involves course teachers providing students with feedback on their written language skills. Indeed, the 2007 and 2013 International Student Symposiums, the Good Practice Principles, and academic literacy researchers, have strongly recommended universities provide professional training to increase teachers' understanding of language instruction and support (AEI, 2013; AUQA, 2009; Dunworth, 2013; Leask, 2013; Wingate, 2015). However, the case study participants' experiences suggest that the only courses across the disciplines which have incorporated language enhancement into course curricula are the ELEC Language and Communication courses.

The Language and Communication teachers provided written feedback specifically related to language in both the draft and final assignments. The students

EAL students' academic literacies

described the feedback, and were willing to address their weaknesses. For example, based on ELEC tutor feedback, Emily focused on improving her use of appropriate linking phrases, and Meko concentrated on her use of articles. Camilla described paying more attention to writing complex sentences, rather than simple sentences. The only other example of feedback on language was Gabriella's tutor, who wrote 'language is weak' on one of her assignments. There were no other comments provided. Gabriella remarked that the feedback was not useful, particularly as she had shown the tutor her draft prior to submitting, and he had not commented on the language. Gabriella was further confused when she received 'fair effort' as written feedback for the final assignment in the same course. It is significant to note that the curricula for the ELEC Language and Communication courses have been developed by Language and Linguistics teaching staff, not within the disciplines. In addition, the teachers are English language instructors, which means they would have the professional knowledge and skills to deliver effective language instruction and feedback.

Embedded language enhancement strategies were not evident in the other courses across the disciplines. The document analysis supported the interview data and revealed that only two Business course profiles, three Engineering profiles, and one Health profile mentioned language in the assignment marking criteria. Furthermore, the criteria was given in vague terms with phrases such as 'written expression,' 'readability,' 'clarity of ideas'. Only one course included an assessment task which was explicitly related to language proficiency. Emily's first Engineering Fundamentals task, which she failed, was explicitly described in the course profile as being a task which aimed to assess students' language skills. The task may have been included in the curriculum as a 'low-stakes' assignment, which is described by Wilson et al. (2016) as a best practice first year transition strategy to demonstrate

course expectations and disciplinary standards. However, when Emily failed the task, she tried to obtain feedback and support from her lecturer over a number of weeks, but received none. This was an unsatisfactory outcome in terms of the supposed aim of the task. Furthermore, the lack of feedback led Emily to lose confidence in her written English skills. Lea and Street (1998), Storch and Hill (2008), and Knoch et al. (2015) have reported that students can become discouraged if they receive written feedback that is vague or does not provide specific strategies to improve.

The university in this study has acknowledged the importance of language enhancement and responded to the Good Practice Principles through the Language and Communication courses. However, the same level of commitment was not evident across disciplinary curricula, indicating the need for increased effort to implement best practice strategies and embedded language enhancement in course content and assessments. The findings suggest disciplinary academic staff need professional development regarding their role in assisting EAL students' language enhancement. Crosby (2012) and Wingate (2015) have reported similar findings, and have emphasised an urgent need for academic staff to be trained to understand EAL students' needs so they can provide effective language feedback and support.

6.3.2 Mediating disciplinary skills and course assessments. EAL students' understanding of disciplinary conventions and requirements is a factor which influences their academic socialisation and academic performance. The participants' expectations (see Sections 4.2.1 & 5.3.2) suggest they understood that studying in Australia required changes to their approaches to learning, compared to their previous educational experiences. For example, adhering to academic integrity and referencing conventions. The structured interviews and the participants' academic achievements showed that the students tried to implement those changes,

and adapted to their new learning environment. While previous studies by Dyson (2014) and Floyd (2015) have reported inconsistent findings regarding the influence of region of origin on EAL students' academic socialisation, the cultural backgrounds of the students in this study did not appear to hinder their ability to adapt to their new learning environment. The students engaged in their courses by attending most of their classes and reviewing course content before and after lectures. They read course materials they perceived were relevant to participate in class, and to complete assignments and study for examinations. Filipe was the only participant who made the decision to deliberately miss classes when he thought he knew the Biological Systems lecture content. He regretted his decision when he failed the course and realised he would have passed if he had attended all the lectures (see Section 6.2).

At the beginning of semester 1, the five students who had entered the university through VET or ELICOS pathway courses were confident that the courses had helped them acquire the disciplinary skills they needed to transition into university. The certainty Gabriella, Filipe, Emily, Jaili, and Camilla shared was validated by their ability to mediate course assessments and their semester 1 academic results. This appears to contradict the concerns raised in recent literature (e.g., AEI, 2009, 2013; Chaney, 2013; Dyson, 2014; Floyd, 2015) regarding the efficacy of VET and ELICOS pathway courses. According to Dyson (2014), the issue of pathway courses has remained largely uninformed, despite the 2009 Symposium specifying that entry pathways should be a research priority. The results from this study provide evidence to help fill this gap, and suggest that non-language test pathways can offer adequate preparation for EAL students. In fact, the VET and ELICOS pathway students appeared to be better prepared than the three students who enrolled based on language test results.

Snow, Trang, and Meko's language test scores met the university's minimum language requirements. However, in contrast to the other participants, when the semester began they were worried about whether their literacy practices were at the level required to successfully mediate their courses. They addressed this challenge in the first weeks by accessing library academic skills learning materials and resources, and consulting course teachers. Meko's concerns motivated her to spend many hours reading to enhance her academic skills. Trang utilised library workshops to improve his understanding of university expectations and requirements. Although both Meko and Trang needed to work hard initially to enhance their academic skills, their previous educational experiences helped their transition.

In Snow's case, his language test results showed he had the highest level of language proficiency compared to the other participants. His native language was Shona, but he had just graduated from high school where English was the medium of instruction. Even though Snow's English language tests scores were higher than the university's language requirements, he did not have previous tertiary education experience and found many of his assignments difficult to write. His marks reflected this. He was aware of the disciplinary conventions and literacy practices that he needed to adhere to, but found it challenging to implement them during his first semester, in particular writing from sources and referencing. Each time when he received assignment results, he was disappointed because the content was appropriate, but he lost marks due to poor academic conventions. Conversely, the other participants who had educational backgrounds which included tertiary experience demonstrated more understanding of tertiary academic skills and conventions, and had fewer problems mediating course requirements.

Snow's experience of commencing university directly from high school reinforces the importance of providing first year students with modelling and explicit

literacy instruction. Embedded academic literacy instruction would also have benefitted Trang and Meko. Previous researchers (e.g., Crosby, 2007; Gale et al., 2017; Paxton & Frith, 2014; Wilson et al., 2016) have found that students who commence university from school are often hindered in their transition due to limited understanding of disciplinary literacy practices. In addition, Snow's case supports the argument that language test results alone cannot be used as a basis to predict preparedness for university or academic achievement (Ashton-Hay et al., 2016; Phakiti et al., 2013). These findings support Dyson (2014) and Floyd's (2015) directive that universities pay closer attention to EAL students' academic experiences after they are accepted into university, so that first year disciplinary pedagogies can be improved. This is because, regardless of their entry pathway, first year tertiary students require disciplinary support, whether it be in terms of English language or academic skill enhancement, or both.

In terms of course assessments, all the participants completed written tasks, oral presentations, and mid-semester examinations. Undertaking a variety of assignments for each course was a new method of assessment compared to their previous academic contexts, which had involved end of semester examinations. This distinction between their new academic culture and their previous experiences was not unexpected and participants understood they needed to spend the majority of their study time preparing for, and completing, assessment tasks. They dedicated time to researching library databases to locate academic sources for written assignments. While they often found the academic writing process time consuming, they persevered and endeavoured to complete assignments to disciplinary standards. Nevertheless, this was the main challenge they encountered, keeping up with course work loads and managing their time effectively in terms of completing numerous assignments for each course. Time pressure was the reason participants gave for not

attending institutional language and academic support services. Again, this emphasises the importance of embedding language and literacy instruction and support within the disciplines. Wilson et al., (2016) have reported that commencing students often identify time management as an ongoing concern. They suggest course teachers could support students' transition to become independent learners by providing guidance "as to the strategic steps" (Wilson et al., 2016, p. 1035) to undertake, and successfully complete, course assessment tasks.

As semester 1 progressed, when the participants began to receive pass results for their written assignments, it reinforced their belief that the time spent on course assessments was worthwhile. They discussed the importance of being independent learners, and observed that teachers expected students to understand disciplinary conventions and assessment expectations. The weekly accounts of their experiences confirmed this view, with just three courses across the disciplines incorporating academic literacy instruction and teacher feedback into curricula. In addition to the Language and Communication courses, Filipe and Meko's Environmental Sustainability course included embedded content related to communication skills, and a peer-review process for written drafts. Snow's Employment Relations course provided written teacher feedback on essay outlines, which he used to improve his understanding of course requirements. However, the Language and Communication courses appeared to be the only courses that provided explicit instruction and modelling in conjunction with comprehensive and timely written teacher feedback. The issue of teacher feedback is discussed further in Section 7.1.3 of Chapter Seven.

Despite recommendations put forward in the Good Practice Principles and previous research, other courses across the disciplines did not appear to have adopted first year transition strategies, or embedded literacy or academic skill instruction in curricula. Even though some participants had previous tertiary

experience, embedded instruction and feedback could have helped improve their understanding and skills. Meko, Trang, and Snow certainly would have benefitted from disciplinary instruction and support to help their transition, and ease their concerns about meeting course expectations. These findings reinforce the need for universities to change the way they support first year students so that first year transition and internationalisation strategies becomes disciplinary priorities. As argued in recent studies (e.g., Ashton-Hay et al., 2016; Beatty et al., 2014; Grabe & Zhang, 2013; Hillege et al., 2014; Hocking & Fieldhouse, 2011; Paxton & Frith, 2014; Wilson et al., 2016; Wingate, 2015) regular practice and exposure to complex literacy practices, such as reading to write, must be incorporated into disciplinary curricula to address first year students' learning needs.

6.3.3 Academic reading. The Phase I results indicated that the research participants' reading habits before commencing university, and expectations of the hours they might be required to spend reading academic materials, did not appear sufficient for tertiary study (see Sections 4.2.2 & 5.3.3). However, the participants' semester 1 academic results demonstrated that their reading strategies helped them achieve their academic goals, and successfully mediate course assessments. The structured interviews provided detailed insights into participants' weekly reading practices, and revealed academic reading was an essential part of their approach to learning course content and completing assessments, in particular reading to write. The results reinforce previous studies which have reported that reading is seldom integrated into disciplinary curricula or course instruction. There was no indication that cultural or educational backgrounds, or reading habits prior to commencing university, negatively influenced participants' approaches to reading. Language was a constraint to some extent in that reading was often time consuming, commonly due

to unfamiliar vocabulary. This is not surprising given that previous studies (e.g., Boakye & Mai, 2016; Hoeft, 2012; Roberts & Roberts, 2008) have reported that many first year NES students also find the vocabulary in academic texts challenging. Table 6.2 illustrates the number of hours each participant spent reading each week.

Table 6.2

Reported Hours Reading Academic Texts Weeks 4 to 13, Semester 1

	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Break	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12	Week 13	Total
Trang	4	4	4	4	5	0	4	10	0	0	0	35
Gabriella	6	12	2	2	2	2	3	3	4	0	0	36
Snow	2	4	12	10	3	10	12	12	12	12	15	104
Jaili	14	14	14	7	7	7	4	7	14	14	14	116
Emily	1	0	5	4	5	2	1	1	1	0	0	20
Filipe	5	4	4	4	5	7	0	10	3	0	0	42
Camilla	10	10	20	10	0	20	28	10	10	12	15	145
Meko	20	20	30	20	20	15	10	15	10	15	15	190

Trang, Emily, Filipe, and Gabriella read for less time than they had expected. Meko, Camilla, and Snow read for about the same number of hours as they predicted, and Jaili read a little more than expected. In terms of reported reading hours, there was a large disparity between the period of time Meko, Camilla, Jaili, and Snow spent reading compared to the other students. The time the participants spent reading also verified Barre's (2016) assertion that although the six to eight hours of independent study per course set out by the Carnegie unit should be considered reasonable, tertiary students have tended to spend less than half this time. In the absence of

guidance from teachers, it was up to the students to determine for themselves what to read and when.

At first, the inconsistency between expected and actual reading hours, as well as the significant differences between participants' total hours of reading, appeared to be attributed to the courses they were taking. For example, Emily and Trang had the lowest number of reading hours compared to the other students. Two of Emily's courses were maths based and did not require reading. Similarly, Trang did not read for his two digital media courses. This meant they both only had two courses that required reading. Meko had a maths course which did not require reading, and as she was enrolled in three courses not four, so she was reading for two courses as well. Yet, her reported reading hours were by far the most of any of the participants. This indicated that the types of courses the students were taking did not particularly influence time spent on reading. The cross-case analysis revealed reading practices varied due to three inter-related reasons: participants chose to read strategically; there was a pattern of non-compliance with required readings; and there was little evidence of reading instruction in disciplinary curricula.

Participants read strategically, meaning they read academic materials based on what they believed would help them meet course requirements, complete course assessments, and address their own learning needs. The students appeared to value reading as a literacy practice, as long as they perceived a clear reason for spending the time reading. As already discussed (see Sections 6.3.1 & 6.3.2), time management was a challenging issue for all participants, and they prioritised reading to complete assignments and to study for examinations over reading other course materials stipulated in the course profiles. This supports Roberts and Roberts (2008) cost/benefit theory, whereby students tend to avoid reading course materials they do not believe are important. Trang and Gabriella both found reading course textbooks

difficult and time consuming, and did not believe the textbook content was useful, so they only read materials directly relevant to assessments. In contrast, Camilla and Jaili's spent much more time reading than Trang and Gabriella, because as well as reading for assignments, they found it useful to read course materials every week to prepare for classes and examinations. Meko took the view that reading course materials was important for her learning needs and dedicated many hours to reading materials she believed would help improve her academic skills (see Section 6.1.8). This was in addition to the hours she spent reading to write, and complying with required course readings.

Meko was the only student who read all the required readings for her courses. This is a reason why the number of hours she spent reading was higher than the other participants. Noticeably, Meko's semester 1 results were higher than the other students. Snow, Jaili, and Camilla were the other students who had the highest number of reading hours, and also complied with most course readings. However, it is difficult to make judgements as to whether the participants who did not comply with required course readings may have achieved higher grades if they had completed the readings. There were a number of reasons why participants did not engage with required course readings. Firstly, as described above, in an effort to manage their time effectively, participants did not engage with course required readings they perceived were not relevant to their literacy or learning. For example, Meko wanted to read the Environmental Sustainability required readings because she believed they were valuable for her to enhance her academic skills. The content focused on communication and academic writing skills. Filipe did not find the same readings useful so did not read them. Gabriella and Snow also had different perceptions about their Business course readings. This was reflected in the amount of

time they spent reading. Gabriella complained that readings were long and boring, while Snow found the same readings useful and interesting.

Directly linked to time as a constraint was the difficulty participants experienced keeping up with heavy weekly reading loads. Previous studies (e.g., Boakye & Mai, 2016; Hill & Meo, 2015; Hoeft, 2012; Sani et al., 2011) have shown that students find compliance challenging when they are expected to undertake a large volume of reading. This was the case for the students in this study who reported that courses often set many textbook chapters as required readings in a short period of time. The analysis of the participants' semester 1 course profiles supported their claims. For most courses, the required reading materials were textbooks (see Appendices M1 to M8). Furthermore, many first year courses across the disciplines allocated multiple textbook chapters as weekly required readings, particularly in the first few weeks of semester. For example, Introduction to Marketing (see Appendix N1) and Government Business Relations (see Appendix N3) listed seven textbook chapters for the first five weeks, and first four weeks respectively. Hospitality Marketing (see Appendix N2) had seven textbook chapters as required readings in the first four weeks. Introduction to Research (see Appendix N2) had 13 textbook chapters as required readings in the first six weeks. Environmental Sustainability (see Appendix N6) had eleven readings in the first five weeks. These reading loads described above could be regarded as excessive, particularly for first year students who may be adjusting to tertiary reading demands. These findings support Barre's (2016) recent advice that disciplinary staff reconsider assigned readings, and be realistic about the amount of time students may require to read course materials. Wilson et al., (2016) suggests course teachers can help students improve their time management by providing weekly reminders for course readings, and advising the time commitments required.

Another reason for non-compliance of required textbook readings was that participants preferred to review course lecture slides, particularly to study for examinations. Some participants expressed the belief that it was unnecessary to read course textbooks because the lecture slides provided sufficient content. Jaili and Camilla noted that their course textbooks and lecture slides often contained the same information, and they preferred to use the slides. However, focusing on the slides and not engaging with course reading materials could prevent students from acquiring in-depth knowledge of course content. Another issue related to reading compliance was the cost of course textbooks. While some participants purchased the required textbooks, Gabriella, Jaili, and Camilla did not buy the books because they thought the books were too expensive. They used library copies instead. The issue regarding course textbooks being expensive has not been mentioned in previous studies. This is perhaps an issue restricted to the Australian context where textbooks can cost between \$80 and \$200 per book.

Another reason for non-compliance with course readings was that participants were often unaware there were required readings. This became evident during the document analysis, when the students' reported reading was compared to the required readings in their course profiles (see Appendices N1 to N8). At the beginning of semester 1, all participants indicated they had read their course profiles. However, they clearly had not read them carefully. Although the participants often believed there were no weekly required course readings, on many occasions required readings were in the course profiles. Electronic course profiles are described by Wadley (2010) as a convenient method to communicate course information, particularly as all students would have internet access. However, Wadley (2010) maintains that while teachers might assume students have read their course profiles, this is not always the case. Wadley (2010) argues that there has been little research

examining whether students are aware of the information course profiles disseminate. The results of this study suggest students often do not engage with course profiles, and in fact, as shown in the survey results (see Section 4.2.2), students often expect teachers to tell them the materials they need to read. Lobo and Gurney (2014) also found that students did not actively search for course information and recommended that teachers make course expectations explicit. Therefore, teachers would be advised to provide guidance and discuss course reading expectations in class.

The participants' accounts of their reading experiences, and the document analysis, did not provide evidence of course content related to enhancing students' academic reading skills, or of teachers modelling the value of reading to build knowledge and new perspectives. Although most courses listed required readings in the course profiles, course curricula did not incorporate reading instruction or tasks related to the required readings. Snow was the only participant who reported an assessment task linked specifically to a course reading. The course profile analysis confirmed that there were no assessments related to reading in any of the other course profiles. In addition, teachers did not seem to discuss required readings in class. Gabriella's marketing lecturer mentioned once that students should read course textbooks, but because the textbooks were never discussed within course content, Gabriella decided reading the chapters was unnecessary. The exception was the Language and Communication lecturers, who reminded students about weekly readings, and discussed the readings in the lectures, including unpacking the vocabulary. Most of the participants complied with the Language and Communication readings to prepare for lectures.

When participants did engage in reading for their courses, it was based on their own perceptions of what was required to complete course assignments and

study for examinations. In addition, the tendency of some students to review course lecture slides, rather than complying with course required readings, indicated they did not see any reason to engage with course readings. Except for the Language and Communication courses, the students received little guidance or instruction from teachers in terms of academic reading. There was no indication in disciplinary curricula that reading was valued as a literacy practice. Considering reading plays a key role in tertiary students' literacy and learning and developing knowledge of their field, the lack of attention towards reading in courses across the disciplines is concerning, particularly for first year courses. According to current research (e.g., Boakye & Mai, 2016; Hill & Meo, 2015; Hoeft, 2012; Grabe & Zhang, 2013; Roberts & Roberts, 2008), disciplines need to prioritise reading by integrating reading instruction into course content and assessments, and providing classroom opportunities for critical discussions related to course readings. Such strategies could stimulate students' motivation to read and engage with required and recommended course resources. Chapter Seven (see Section 7.2) provides further discussion on participants experiences regarding disciplinary reading pedagogy.

6.4 Summary

The cross-case analysis and discussion have shown that the EAL students in this study were active in their endeavours to adapt and extend their literacy practices to meet disciplinary and course requirements. The students demonstrated self-agency, and mediated their academic socialisation into their new learning environment by preparing for and attending classes, reading strategically, seeking support from teachers and online resources, responding to constructive teacher feedback when it was provided, and focusing their time on completing course assessments. The results also provide support for the efficacy of VET and ELICOS

pathways, and reinforce the endorsement put forward by Chaney (2013) and the Australian Productivity Commission (2015), that these courses are an important component of Australia's higher education system.

However, there was little evidence of first year transition strategies, or embedded literacy or language instruction, which have been recommended as best practice to support first year students. In addition, there were inconsistencies across the disciplines in terms of the provision of teacher feedback on written assignments and examinations. The disciplines did not appear to prioritise reading as a core literacy practice. Most courses included weekly required readings as learning resources, but did not provide guidance or instruction regarding disciplinary reading expectations and practices. These findings suggest that disciplines must make urgent changes to address these issues, and improve current teaching pedagogies and curricula, to meet first year students' academic expectations and learning needs. The Good Practice Principles, internationalisation policies and strategies, and academic literacies research have provided extensive guidelines and recommendations for disciplinary pedagogy and curricula. It is essential that disciplines across universities incorporate these recommendations into course curricula. It is also crucial for institutions to ensure course teachers to increase their understanding of effective classroom practices, such as the provision of timely and constructive feedback and implementing explicit reading pedagogy.

The study findings challenge the deficit view of EAL students. The case study participants successfully mediated their academic socialisation by utilising their educational capital, demonstrating commitment to their studies and applying the language and literacy instruction they received in a few of their courses. The findings also confirm disparities between first year students' expectations and needs, and disciplinary pedagogies and practices. Nevertheless, as highlighted by the academic

EAL students' academic literacies

literacies framework, gaining knowledge and skills relevant to a field of study, and gaining the attributes graduates need for their future careers requires more than understanding disciplinary academic conventions and discourses. Students need opportunities to engage with their new academic community through interactions with teachers and peers so they can develop new knowledge, intercultural competence and positive student identities. These aspects of the case study participants' experiences were examined in Phase III of the study. The findings and discussion for Phase III, and the response for Research Question 3, are presented in Chapter Seven.

Chapter Seven - Participants' Academic Literacies Experiences

Phase III of this study focused on the third level of the academic literacies framework (see Figure 2.1 in Chapter 2). Academic literacies is concerned with student identity, and the communicative practices of literacy and learning. This phase extended the scope of the research by collecting data in semester 2, and using semi-structured interviews to gain deeper insights into participants' mediation of their new learning environment, engagement with teachers and peers, and experiences in the classroom. As reported in the previous chapter, participants successfully socialised into their disciplines by acquiring and applying the literacy practices valued by their new academic community. The findings challenge the prevailing assumption that EAL students' linguistic, cultural, and educational backgrounds are barriers to learning. However, as Lea and Street (1998) have explained, while academic socialisation is a significant component of the academic literacies framework, it is also important that first year students feel part of their academic community and construct positive student identities.

The semi-structured interview schedules (see Appendices G to K) were guided by the key academic literacies concepts identified in the literature review, the results from the first two phases of the study, and the data analysis after each round of interviews. The section below discusses the themes revealed in the case study analysis. It includes excerpts from the recorded interviews to provide insights into participants' student identities, and their perceptions of their first year studying in Australia. The themes are discussed separately, but inevitably intersect due to the complex links between literacy, language, and learning. Due to the overlapping levels of the academic literacies framework, the discussion refers to the Phase II results reported in Chapter Six. The final section of this chapter presents a summary of the

main findings related to the academic literacies level of the theoretical framework. It also responds to Research Question 3:

What factors associated with first year undergraduate EAL students' experiences enable or constrain their academic literacies?

7.1 Literacy and Learning

The academic literacies framework emphasises that first year tertiary students need to develop new ways of learning, understanding, and interpreting knowledge. As discussed in previous chapters (see Sections 5.3.2 & 6.3.2), the participants in this study illustrated they understood disciplinary expectations, and knew they needed to acquire new literacy practices and approaches to learning to meet those expectations. For the students who attended the ELICOS and VET college pathway courses, the belief that their pathway courses offered sufficient preparation for tertiary study indicated an encouraging start for their transition (see Section 6.3.2). The three students who commenced university based on their language test results alone were initially less confident in their ability to fulfil course expectations. These students addressed the gaps in their skills by independently using university learning resources. The semester 1 academic results (See Section 6.2) suggested that by actively engaging with their courses, and using their existing knowledge and skills, the students were able to adapt their literacy practices to meet disciplinary requirements.

The following sections give details of the students' literacy and learning experiences. The main themes emerging from the interview data are related to valuing new literacy practices, adapting to new ways of assessment and feedback on assessments.

7.1.1 The value of new literacy practices. The semi-structured interviews provided evidence that the case study students valued the disciplinary literacy practices they were acquiring. In particular, participants highlighted the benefits of learning new literacy and communicative practices, such as using sources to support academic arguments, thinking critically, and writing in a structured way. When Meko began semester 1, she demonstrated that she understood there were differences between the communicative practices expected in Australian universities compared to Japan (see Section 6.1.8). However, she was initially self-critical of her academic skills, felt shy in class, and was unsure if she could adapt to those differences. During semester 1, Meko reported more reading hours than any of the other participants (see Section 6.3.3), even though she was taking three courses not four. She used university learning resources to improve her academic skills, read widely to complete course assignments, and complied with required course readings. The following comments gave an insight into why she dedicated so many hours to reading:

Studying here is not just about language, it's about critical thinking. I should think more if I write something. That's the importance of reading. I have learnt how to organise and write the good way. Recently I really think about that. Also, in Japan people tend to have the same kind of opinion all the time. But here I feel like I can say my opinion. I did know in some foreign countries people say honest opinions every time but even if I know it, unless I go there I don't know what it is like. Knowing it and experiencing it is a lot different. Here we are not forced to have one single right answer so it's a good thing.

EAL students' academic literacies

Meko achieved three High Distinctions in semester 1. Just as importantly, her commitment to her studies, and desire to adapt to her new learning environment, enabled her to acquire literacy and communicative practices she “knew” about, and also wanted to experience. According to Meko, reading helped enhance her academic writing skills, increased her understanding of critical thinking, and gave her confidence to express her opinion. Meko valued learning these skills, and believed they placed her in a better position to write her Masters dissertation in English when she returned to Japan.

Camilla also reflected positively on the disciplinary literacy practices she had gained:

When we come back to Brazil, in the end of our degree we have to write a final work so I think it's good because, it's different language but we can take with us the knowledge and the writing skills. For example, choose better resources, I think I can now select better.

Similar to Meko, Camilla's comments indicated that she believed the time she had devoted to her studies in Australia was worthwhile. Camilla's semester 1 reported reading hours were the second highest, after Meko (see Section 6.1.7). She had spent many hours reading for her written assignments and examinations, and complying with course readings. She was pleased that her new literacy practices, such as using academic sources and her academic writing skills, would be advantageous in the future when she returned home to complete her studies.

Filipe had been confident about his academic skills from the beginning of semester 1, due to his experiences in his Direct Entry pathway course. The positive feedback he received from his Language and Communication tutor (see Section

6.6.6) reassured him that his writing aligned with disciplinary requirements: "I know what the teachers are looking for." He described his approach to writing:

I always reread [my] written work to check the topic sentences are clear. I check the coherence and cohesion too. I think it's very useful to see how to organise my ideas because I didn't do it in Brazil, I just started writing things. But now I need to focus on the structure and follow my ideas to make it better to read, to see if I had all the information linked with my references and my own opinion.

The literacy practices Filipe valued were similar to Meko and Camilla. For example, writing with "coherence and cohesion", and using sources to support his opinion. These skills were beneficial to Filipe because he planned to use them when he returned to Brazil to complete his degree. Emily discussed the literacy practices she regarded as being important for her:

At home, if I want to make an essay, just I have to write the headings and just a block of sentences and then a block of graphs. That's all (laughs). Without thinking about introduction, the body, the conclusion. I think this way is much better, because if I'm going to read an essay I can judge it from the introduction or the conclusion, but whereas in my country I have to go through it all. [And] I like to learn new things, I started to not believe anything that's not proved (laughs). I want to use evidence [from sources]. I think it makes your mind better.

Emily's reflections on the skills she had learned focused on structured writing and using evidence from sources. Her belief that it was worthwhile to engage in these new

literacy practices aligned with the views put forward by the three participants discussed above.

Marginson (2013) and Tobell and Burton (2015) have suggested that EAL students are usually high achievers in their home countries, and consequently, constructing new student identities in an English-speaking learning environment can be an intimidating process. The value EAL students place on learning and engaging in disciplinary literacy practices provides insights into why they undertake the significant dedication and financial commitments necessary to meet Australian tertiary entry requirements, and study in an English-medium university.

7.1.2 New approaches to assessment. During the semester 1 semi-structured interviews, Jaili, Camilla, and Filipe discussed needing to change the way they approached studying for examinations. Jaili was confident with her literacy practices when she commenced semester 1, but there was one learning strategy she had never tried, and wanted to put into practice. In the first few weeks, she noticed groups of domestic students studying together in the library. She was intrigued because she said it seemed a fun and effective way to study. She spoke a number of times at the start of semester 1 about wanting to “adopt that studying style.” When she failed her first mid-semester multiple choice examination (see Section 6.1.4), Jaili became more determined to form a study group with her friends. Jaili’s friends had failed the same examination. Her resolve was further strengthened when two weeks passed and the lecturer had not provided feedback on the examination. Initially, Jaili was disappointed because her friends resisted her idea, and preferred to continue studying on their own. She persevered and eventually convinced her friends to meet each week to practice problems and calculations related to course content to prepare for their final examinations:

Lots of benefits during the discussion. I can find the details and where I made a lot of mistakes and something I didn't know.

Jaili was delighted to have changed her “Chinese way of studying” and believed discussing course content with peers enabled her to increase her understanding of course content. Jaili's experiences illustrate the academic support students can gain from peer engagement, particularly when they are finding course content challenging.

Camilla had a similar experience to Jaili during her semester 1 mid-semester examinations. She described feeling worried when she just passed the first examination and failed her second one, even though she thought she knew the content (see Section 6.1.7). Camilla had not experienced multiple choice examinations before. She found they contained more topics than she had anticipated, and the types of questions were not what she expected. In particular, Camilla was surprised that the examination questions appeared to be testing students' ability to memorise course content, rather than encouraging critical thinking:

In the Direct Entry course the teacher always say have to be a critical thinker and for example, in my Microbiology test, I just have to memorise. In my tests in Brazil not so much about who says something, the important thing is what he says. In Brazil we have to understand everything and then you have to do the test. Here we have to memorise everything to the end of the book.

Camilla's response was to increase the amount of course content revision she was doing by spending time reading and summarising course textbooks. As mentioned above, in semester 1 Camilla reported a high number of reading hours compared to

most participants. She spent around 10 hours per week reading course materials, and some weeks up to twenty hours or more (see Appendix N7). Camilla expressed relief when she passed her third mid-semester multiple choice examination. Camilla and Jaili demonstrated student agency through their willingness to change their approach to learning to fulfil course requirements, and achieve their academic goals. Beatty et al. (2014) and Hillege et al. (2014) advocate that teachers should encourage first year students to engage in self-reflection as a strategy to take responsibility for, and improve, their literacy and learning.

Although Camilla and Filipe were studying different degrees, Filipe had a similar complaint regarding multiple choice examinations and memorisation in his semester 1 courses:

When I did the Direct Entry course you're told that when you get into university you have to use your critical thinking, you have to show you understand the idea and you have to share your knowledge. But when you get here you have to memorise. All my tests have been about memorising things. I'm surprised. I feel like in Brazil we must think a lot and I thought it would be the same here. I just think they [examinations] should be better developed. They should explore more what I think, or what I have learned, not what I read in a book exactly.

The examinations the students described above were their first assessment tasks for those courses. As Wilson et al. (2016) point out, curricula assessment processes should incorporate specific guidance and exemplars to model disciplinary expectations and standards, and help commencing students prepare for their assessment tasks.

Filipe provided further comments about course examinations being “about memorising things” when he expressed disappointment that he had received a pass grade for his semester 1 Entomology course. He was particularly frustrated because he had attended every class and received high marks for his assessments (see Section 6.1.6). He cited the multiple choice format in the end of semester examination as the reason why he did not receive a higher final grade. Filipe went to see his lecturer to review his examination paper. He had answered the short answer questions correctly, but had lost marks in the multiple choice questions. Filipe believed he had not answered the multiple choice questions correctly because they required memorisation of facts, rather than testing his application of knowledge and critical thinking:

We have some questions [in the examination] like "how many ants in a nest?" I was "what? How can I answer this, it's impossible!" 20 million was the answer. And this was like written in the bottom of the power point presentation. How would I notice that? It's not important. The question was too specific, you don't have to think, you have to memorise things. This is crazy.

Based on their experiences in their Direct Entry pathway courses, Camilla and Filipe valued critical thinking to increase their knowledge, and had not expected memorisation to be a learning strategy required for their university courses. Their experiences highlight the benefit to student learning if course teachers provide guidance regarding the format of examinations. In his final interview, Filipe was eager to share a different experience that he had in a semester 2 course, where the examination format was not multiple choice:

I had an exam, was the hardest exam that I did because I had to really think, no multiple choice. Do you remember last semester it was like memorising stuff? She [tutor] knows how to link information very, very well. This is **awesome**. She put the topic and you have to research about it. And, her exam was completely different. I really enjoyed it. And it's more hard to forget the answer to this kind of question. If you ask me now about last semester, I don't remember anything. But this one I will always remember because I had to think. It was really cool. If I didn't do it [this course] I would think that every course here is the same, they just ask you to memorise.

Critical thinking and applying his knowledge were academic skills that he believed were significant for his learning. This aligned with one of his goals for studying in Australia, which was to enhance his literacy and learning to a level where he could continue his studies through a Master Degree at an English-speaking university (see Section 5.1). Even though the examination he described above was more challenging compared to his semester 1 courses, it met his expectations of studying at an Australian university.

Camilla and Filipe's opinions regarding their first semester examinations draw attention to the argument put forward in previous research (Hatteberg & Steffy, 2013; Hoefft, 2012; Johnson & Kiviniemi, 2009; Roberts & Roberts, 2008), that multiple choice assessments are often ineffective in achieving deep learning. Certainly in Camilla's case, the multiple choice format pressured her to comply with course textbook readings. Reading compliance has been stated in the literature as a reason why curricula designers use multiple choice examinations. However, as both students explained, the examinations appeared to promote memorising facts, rather

than testing their understanding and application of knowledge. The students were also frustrated when they received a grade for their mid-semester multiple choice examinations and no other feedback. Jaili encountered a similar situation with her mid-semester multiple choice examinations, which led her to form a study group. This suggests that courses which include multiple choice examinations should provide feedback to promote a deeper understanding of course content. Wilson et al. (2016) and Ashton-Hay et al. (2016) have insisted that timely and constructive assessment feedback processes should be a priority in disciplinary curricula design as a strategy to enhance students' learning. The following section presents further discussion on the students' experiences regarding the provision of feedback on assessments.

7.1.3 Feedback on assessments. As discussed in Sections 6.3.1 and 6.3.2, the students' accounts of mediating course assessments showed they had few opportunities for teacher feedback to help them enhance their language and academic skills. The Phase III interviews provided further insight into the students' experiences regarding feedback on assessments. In conversations about assignment and examination feedback, the students expressed surprise and dissatisfaction that most teachers did not provide feedback. Filipe worried about not receiving feedback: "This is terrible. I can't prepare for my exams if I don't have feedback." Further, when students were given written feedback, it was often unhelpful. For example, for one of Gabriella's semester 1 assignments the written feedback was: "Language is weak." No further comments were given (see Section 6.1.2). Meko reflected on her experiences with teacher feedback on assignments: "They [teachers] don't comment. Just 'I recognise your efforts' or 'excellent' or 'good'."

Snow was disappointed with most of his semester 1 assignment results. He commented that specific feedback would have helped him to improve:

They [tutors] just told me that referencing, need to work on it, not specific [no specific feedback on errors]. I don't believe they gave us enough information for it. I think it was very unfair because the details on what I needed to do weren't really enough. They [tutors] always say my knowledge is there, but structure and referencing [needs to improve].

Snow had some understanding of disciplinary conventions, such as referencing sources, but the lack of feedback on assignments hindered his progress in correctly applying those conventions in his written assessments. Snow was the only participant who had no previous tertiary experience, and clearly needed guidance from his teachers to notice his mistakes, and refine his academic skills.

Gabriella recounted her experiences regarding teacher feedback. Similar to the other participants, she was unsatisfied:

I just get the mark, I didn't get the feedback. It's getting normal for me but it's strange. Normally in Japan we would get the feedback and check which part we got the mistake. Yeah, I want the feedback. If they can tell the feedbacks that would be better. Then I won't make the same mistake anymore.

Snow and Gabriella's comments highlighted a key point all participants made during the interviews, that feedback from their teachers was valuable for their literacy and learning. This is not surprising. As discussed in Phase I (see Section 5.4), participants in this study expected to receive language and literacy support from course teachers.

Constructive feedback on assignments would be a useful way to provide such support. Previous research (e.g., Baik, et al., 2015; Glass et al., 2015; Lea & Street, 1998; Slaten et al., 2016; Yefanova et al., 2017; Wingate, 2015), has shown that first year students expect teachers to provide academic support, and furthermore, insufficient constructive feedback can be discouraging for new learners. According to Knoch et al. (2014) and Knoch et al. (2015), teacher feedback on assessment tasks is crucial for EAL students' academic literacies development.

When the participants received constructive written feedback from course teachers, for example in the Language and Communication courses, they tended to respond to the advice (see Sections 6.3.1 & 6.3.2). However, across the disciplines, very few teachers gave feedback on assessments. In some courses, instead of providing feedback in class, or as part of the assessment process, teachers indicated feedback would be given if students booked individual consultations outside of class. This could be a useful strategy, but it raised a number of issues which teachers may need to consider. The students in this study often chose not to take up the opportunity of making individual appointments due to time constraints, or fear of miscommunication with their teachers. Effective time management was a challenge the participants also raised in Phase II of the study (see Sections 6.3.1 & 6.3.2). The issue of communicating with teachers is discussed in the next section (see Section 7.2).

Emily and Camilla encountered another problem related to making appointments with teachers outside of class time. For example, when Emily attempted numerous times to find out why she failed an assignment which assessed writing and language, her lecturer failed to respond (see Section 6.1.5). Camilla had a similar experience when she did not receive a reply after emailing a lecturer twice to obtain feedback for one of her written assignments (see Section 6.1.7). In both these

instances, the students gave up because they did not want to cause problems with their teachers. These experiences suggest that if teachers prefer to offer individual appointments outside of class time, they should ensure the process is accessible for all students, and respond to student requests in a timely manner.

The absence of constructive feedback was an issue across the disciplines. Researchers (e.g., Ashton-Hay et al., 2016; Harper et al., 2011; Hillege et al., 2014; Hocking & Fieldhouse, 2014; Wilson et al., 2016) have argued that all first year students need guidance in the form of instruction and feedback aligned with course activities and assessments. The lack of feedback on assessments limited the opportunities participants had to enhance their literacy and learning, and English language skills. Researchers including Lea and Street (1998), Roberts and Roberts (2008), Knoch et al. (2015), and Wingate (2015), have urged university disciplines to incorporate feedback opportunities into assessment design, and provide staff training to enhance teachers' capacity to provide effective feedback. In addition, the Good Practice Principles stipulate that courses need to embed discipline-specific language and literacy learning activities. Despite these recommendations, the participants' experiences indicate disciplines have been slow to incorporate assessment feedback into curricula, or deliver training for teachers so they can implement effective feedback practices. It is necessary for universities and disciplinary staff to address this issue so that first year students' literacy and learning can be supported, and develop positive identities in their new learning environment.

7.1.4 Summary. Student identity is influenced by how well learners understand and engage in the literacy and learning practices required by their new academic community. Gee (2004) points out that, due to inextricable links between literacy, language, and identity, acquiring new literacy and communicative practices

in NES learning environments can be a complex process for EAL students. Indeed, the participants in this study reported a number of obstacles which hindered their literacy and learning: the absence of constructive teacher feedback; few opportunities for literacy and language instruction within their disciplines; and some participants failed early assessment tasks. The students responded to these challenges and took responsibility for their academic socialisation by adapting the knowledge and skills gained from previous educational experiences, and taking advantage of the feedback they received from the Language and Communication courses. Similar to the findings in earlier studies (e.g., Gargano, 2012; Pham & Saltmarsh, 2013; Marginson, 2013), the EAL students in this study embraced Australian academic culture, and believed their new knowledge and skills would be advantageous for their future education and careers. Participants' first semester academic results not only indicated they understood and valued disciplinary literacy practices, their achievements also reinforced their perceptions of themselves as hard working students committed to their education. The next section examines and discusses the participants' academic reading experiences.

7.2 Academic Reading Experiences

A major focus of this study was EAL students' approach to academic reading and reading compliance. Phase III provided an opportunity to gain deeper insights into the issues related to reading, which were discussed in Chapter Six of this thesis (see Section 6.3.3). When the students perceived there was a specific reason to read course materials, for example, to take part in laboratory experiments, or to find evidence to support their arguments in written assessments, they were willing to spend the time reading. Jaili highlighted further reasons why reading helped her literacy and learning:

My writing skills have been improved because I read a lot of books. You read a lot it becomes easier to write. When I study in China, I don't read anything. I just write what I want to explain. No any theory to support or evidence to support. It's very boring. It's kind of like I make it up. And, while I'm reading I am learning more knowledge. It's good to have evidence to support my opinion.

The connection Jaili made between reading and writing, and the value of reading to gain knowledge, was observed by Meko (see Section 7.1.1). As discussed above, when Meko discussed the literacy practices she valued, like Jaili she cited academic reading as a major part of her learning, and believed that reading had helped her “to organise and write the good way.” The fundamental link between reading and writing is acknowledged in the literature (e.g., Hill & Meo, 2015; Phakiti & Li, 2014; Zhao & Hirvela, 2015), and is a central reason why disciplinary academic reading and writing practices should be taught concurrently within disciplinary curricula. Furthermore, Gee (2004), Hirvela (2004), and Paxton and Frith (2014) explicate that students' engagement with academic reading can have a positive influence on their academic literacies development, and their academic success. Conversely, Gee (2014) emphasises that when students find academic reading difficult, it can have an adverse effect on their literacy and learning. Snow realised the value of reading to extend his knowledge and understanding of disciplinary literacy practices when he reflected on his semester 1 results (see Section 6.2). He acknowledged that non-compliance with course readings contributed to lower than expected results. In response, he changed his approach to reading in semester 2, and reported he was complying with course readings.

Non-compliance with required course readings was revealed as a common issue among most of the participants (see Section 6.3.3). Gabriella made the decision early in semester 1 not to engage with course readings. She identified why she believed students did not comply with required readings:

I like it [reading]. I like to know the new things, new information.

But, the readings are actually very hard. I scanned them, too many words we don't understand. Even we search that one word, there's so many different meanings so I couldn't understand. I want them [teachers] to help a little bit more. So support us more, if there are some special words. I want them to tell the meaning, then I would do more.

Gabriella's comments highlight once again to the value of course teachers providing language and literacy support for first year students. As discussed in Section 2.4, researchers (e.g., Boakye & Mai, 2016; Hoefft, 2012; Roberts & Roberts, 2008) have found that both NES and NNES first year students often find it difficult to read complex texts which have unfamiliar discipline-specific vocabulary. This issue could be alleviated if course curricula incorporated instruction on disciplinary vocabulary, and included opportunities for students to discuss course readings in class. Gabriella reasoned that if teachers did not advise students to read course materials, then it was not necessary to comply because the lecture slides must contain all the content students needed to learn (see Section 6.1.2 & 6.3.3). Filipe put forward a similar reason why he did not comply with required readings:

Why would I do a thing that my Professor doesn't show me is important? So, if he doesn't talk about it, why would I read it? So that's why I think some people don't read anything. I think the

Professor counts so much. If he or she is really excited about the thing he is teaching you.

Gabriella and Filipe's opinions indicate that teachers cannot assume that students will read course required readings independently. Their experiences suggest that if course teachers referred to course materials in class, students may be more likely to engage with required readings. In semester 2 Filipe recounted one course where course readings were discussed in class:

We've got textbooks and, for example when she [the lecturer] uses pictures or figures on the [lecture] slides she always references the textbooks so we can go and check to find out more. And journal articles. And you must do it because her questions are very very difficult to answer if you don't read. It's nice. I try hard.

Filipe's reflections reconfirm the positive influence course teachers can have in encouraging students to engage with course readings to increase their knowledge of course content. The semester 2 teacher Filipe describes in the excerpt above utilised lecture slides to provide an explicit connection between the required readings and course content. This prompted Filipe to engage with the readings. In semester 1, he had not complied with most of his course readings (see Section 6.1.6). As discussed above, a reason for Filipe's non-compliance was that teachers did not "show" him why the readings were important.

The findings from this study align with previous research (Boayke, 2011; Gee, 2004; Hill & Meo, 2016; Wingate, 2015) which suggests that if teachers do not communicate reading expectations, and convey explicit connections between course readings and content, students are unlikely to comply with required readings.

Gabriella, Snow, and Filipe's experiences reinforce the importance of teachers highlighting to students the value of reading course materials. Making reading a visible and core literacy practice is particularly necessary because many EAL students expect teachers to tell them what to read (see Section 4.2.3). Roberts and Roberts (2008) have also stressed the imperative of teachers helping students enhance their disciplinary knowledge by drawing attention to relevant discipline-specific vocabulary in course readings.

As reported in Chapter Six (see Section 6.3.3), the participants' accounts of their experiences across the disciplines indicated that explicit reading instruction was not offered. Furthermore, it did not appear that course teachers had tried to foster positive student attitudes towards reading course materials. As shown above, Phase III of the study provided further evidence to support contentions that reading strategies are not incorporated into course curricula. This supports Hill and Meo (2015) and Wingate's (2015) argument that tertiary reading is often an invisible literacy practice, and reading pedagogy is non-existent. Engaging with course texts can stimulate students' literacy and learning, and help them to achieve course learning outcomes. However, research has confirmed (e.g., Crosby, 2010; Roberts & Roberts, 2008; Sani et al., 2011; Wingate, 2015) that reading compliance is clearly challenging for both NES and EAL students (see Section 2.4). Therefore, institutions and disciplines must address this issue and provide support for all students by incorporating reading pedagogy into course curricula design and embedding reading as a core disciplinary practice.

7.3 Engaging with Teachers and NES Peers

As well as adapting to new ways of learning, meaningful engagement with teachers and peers is a significant factor which helps new learners construct positive

student identities. While the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of the EAL participants in this study did not appear to constrain their ability to mediate disciplinary literacy practices, they were confronted with a different situation when they engaged with teachers and domestic peers. The survey respondents commenced university with the expectation they would improve their English and intercultural communication skills by interact with NES (see Section 4.2.3). In addition, they believed it was important to feel part of their new academic community. As discussed previously in this thesis (see Sections 1.4 & 2.6.2), the university setting had similar goals, as reflected in its institution-wide English Language Enhancement Strategy (ELES), compulsory Language and Communication courses for EAL students and internationalisation strategies. These goals aim to enhance students' intercultural and linguistic competencies.

The university's active response to the Good Practice Principles, and the student agency demonstrated by the participants in terms of their engagement with their courses should have facilitated opportunities for intercultural communication. In reality, the students found it challenging to gain membership into their new discourse community. The constraints related to participants' feelings of uncertainty about their language proficiency and intercultural communication skills, and the absence of inclusive disciplinary strategies to promote cross-cultural understanding and engagement. In the first weeks of semester 1, six of the students reported feeling scared and afraid when they interacted with NES. Emily and Snow did not have the same concerns. Emily felt comfortable communicating with NES because she had already studied and lived in Australia for two years. For Snow, English was the medium of instruction at his high school. The other participants did not share the same level of confidence when they communicated in English.

7.3.1 Engaging with teachers. At the beginning of semester 1, Camilla, Meko, Jaili and Gabriella were worried about communicating with teachers. Camilla was concerned she might make grammar or pronunciation errors when she spoke in front of teachers. Meko explained that she was too nervous to ask her teachers any questions in case she did not understand their answers. If she had questions about her courses or academic skills, her solution was to search for the information she needed on the university, library, and course websites. Jaili reflected on why she felt uncomfortable:

For me, for my people [Chinese students], I think they are afraid to talk to the teacher. It may be uncomfortable to talk to the teacher.

What if we misunderstand?

For these participants, the perceived cultural and linguistic barriers hindered them from engaging with their teachers. Gabriella also admitted feeling anxious about speaking to teachers. Unlike other participants she was not shy or worried about her language, but was instead concerned that an incident she saw in her first week of classes might happen to her. She gave an account of a situation where another EAL student asked a question about a topic the teacher had already discussed:

Maybe they [the teacher] already mentioned it before. I saw this kind of situation. The student, her face was like 'oh, so sorry'. Because she asked her teacher [a question], and the teacher was like, her face changed like evil, 'ahh, I told you many times'.

Gabriella's negative experience deterred her from engaging with her teachers. This situation where a student might miss essential information when it is first given could potentially be avoided if teachers use both verbal and written communication.

The participants' apprehension about engaging with academic staff began to ease by the end of semester 1 when the participants realised that their course teachers were often willing to answer student queries at the beginning or end of class. After some positive experiences, Jaili realised that communicating with her teachers was not as scary as she thought. One of her lecturers always stayed back at the end of class to take questions, and she consulted with him a number of times to check course content she was unsure about. She reported that he was kind, and explained the answers twice to make sure she was clear:

They [teachers] don't mind whether it is a silly question. Last semester [semester 1] I afraid to talk to the teacher. And it has changed a lot, now I'm not afraid to ask questions.

When Jaili had opportunities to ask questions in a context where she was not concerned about feeling embarrassed in front of her peers, it had a positive influence on her learning. When she was no longer feeling afraid, it helped with her confidence and increased her feeling of belonging.

Emily was confident with her communication skills and did not experience the same feelings of anxiety as Jaili. Nevertheless, she still appreciated teachers who expressed interest in their students and supported student learning. She defined the teachers she wanted to engage with:

It depends on the teacher like if he is interested in the level of the student, I think it's different, if the lecturer is interested in teaching students or just like giving their marks. For example, I've seen my math lecturer, he's teaching one of the students who doesn't know and he taught her where is her mistakes and how to do it. And that's what I like, he's teaching her to improve her level of maths.

Gabriella's views about effective teachers were similar to Emily's. When one of Gabriella's teachers in semester 2 demonstrated genuine care, she began to feel more comfortable in class than she had in semester 1:

He [her tutor] cares about us, each of us. Sometimes he asked us, the Asian students, 'did you understand?' Like that. And I feel like oh, he is worrying about us, he can see us, he is thinking of us.

The positive experiences above illustrate the critical role teachers have in helping first year students to feel comfortable in their new learning environment. In semester 2, Filipe discussed how he felt when a teacher acknowledged him as a NNES:

She started talking about how hard it must be for me to learn a different language and give a seminar to NES. I think this was the only time I had an interaction with a Professor for the fact we were overseas students. That's the best moment for me to feel part of the university.

Filipe's description of his "best moment" supports the Phase I finding in this study (see Section 4.2.3), where EAL respondents believed it was important for teachers to understand the challenges they faced.

The students' accounts of their experiences demonstrate a contrast between their initial concerns about communicating with teachers, and how they felt after positive interactions. When academic staff provided encouragement it enhanced their learning, and increased their confidence in themselves. As Wingate (2015) explains, teachers are the experts in the discourse community, and can provide invaluable support for first year students as they transition into their new learning

environment. Showing interest and kindness, and offering assistance, are simple teaching strategies, but they can have a significant influence on new learners' feelings of belonging. Appreciation of teacher support has been reported in previous studies (e.g., Baik, et al., 2015; Glass et al., 2015; Slaten et al., 2016), which have shown that positive engagement with teachers is an essential part of first year students' academic socialisation, and construction of positive student identities.

7.3.2 Engaging with NES peers. Despite feeling more comfortable interacting with teachers as semester 1 progressed, the challenge of engaging with domestic students remained a constant source of worry for most participants throughout the first year. During the case study interviews, the students were happy to discuss course assessments and literacy practices, but the topic they were most interested in was trying to understand why domestic students did not want to communicate with them. Initially, they shared the belief that it was their fault. They presumed that their English proficiency, and the potential for intercultural misunderstandings between NES and NNES, caused domestic students to feel uncomfortable. Jaili described how she felt:

I'm just afraid. I'm afraid they [domestic students] cannot understand what I am talking about. I'm also afraid I cannot understand what they are talking about. And I'm afraid they don't like other people to ask them anything. It's like we have nothing in common. What is private, what would make them unhappy or uncomfortable? I'm not sure so I'm just afraid.

Jaili's concerns regarding communication with domestic students appeared to be more worrying for her than the anxiousness she initially felt when she talked to her

teachers. In particular, Jaili was “afraid” of potential cultural barriers that she was unsure how to mediate. This challenge was exacerbated when she realised there were few opportunities to engage in intercultural communication in class. This issue is discussed in the following section (see Section 7.3). Classroom opportunities for cross-cultural communication may have helped Jaili increase her confidence and intercultural understanding, and ease the burden she felt when initiating conversations with NES. Moeller and Faltin Osborn (2014) recommend that if course teachers have an understanding of how to foster cross-cultural interactions, and allocate class time for peer discussion, classrooms provide an appropriate space for students to enhance their intercultural communication skills.

Meko also found it difficult to talk to domestic students:

Really, few people [domestic students] like to talk to international students. It just, gives me much stress every day. Even if you try to, try not to care about it, you have to care. It varies day by day. I'm trying not to feel hesitant.

Positive engagement with NES peers can help first year students feel a sense of belonging in their new learning environment. However, the experiences detailed above indicated that although Jaili and Meko wanted to engage with domestic students, it was stressful because they perceived that domestic students may not feel the same way.

Gabriella was eager to interact with her domestic peers, but was frustrated when she tried:

I cannot talk with the local students. It's hard to talk to them. Feel like I don't want to talk with them anymore. But I still want to. They're [domestic students] not interested in me. They don't really

care. I can see that. I feel like, I think a divide. Because if they were interested in us, I will be happy.

Gabriella's observation of a divide between EAL and domestic students is concerning, particularly due to EAL students' expectations that studying in Australia would provide opportunities to engage with NES.

Filipe was hugely disappointed that he was finding it so difficult to talk to domestic students:

When I talk to native speakers (sighs), my heart starts hurting, because I feel like they do not like talking with non-native speakers. They are not interested in wasting their time making you feel welcome. When I got here I thought it would be a little bit different.

The feelings Filipe described were disturbing. The participants' experiences engaging with their domestic peers were unexpected, and hindered their opportunities to enhance their English and intercultural communication skills. While the other participants were finding communication with domestic students challenging, Snow gave a different perspective:

I'm not really that shy of a person. I'm lucky because, I just seem to get along with everyone for some reason. But I have seen a lot of people who are very shy and quiet. And then they sort of feel ignored sometimes so, which I don't like people to feel. That's why I'm always a person who approaches, I'm a guy who always does the first talking, or first greeting. I can see they're like "oh wow, he's greeting me."

EAL students' academic literacies

Snow did not encounter the same challenges as the other participants in terms of his spoken English proficiency. Although his native language was Shona, the medium of instruction at his high school had been English (see Section 5.1.1). Very few EAL students would have had the same experience. Snow's observations of students who he believed felt "ignored" corroborated the experiences reported by the participants in the interview excerpts above. For Filipe, Meko, Gabriella, and Jaili, they were the students who were feeling ignored.

Another challenge encountered by five of the participants in semester 1 was working on group assignments with domestic students. Snow, Meko, and Camilla were not required to complete group work with domestic students in semester 1. The other students who worked with domestic students had similar experiences. For example, they were shocked when domestic group mates did not reply to messages to organise group meetings. In semester 1, when Emily had her first group assignment with domestic students, she was unhappy with the level of cooperation from some: "I like working with any people but some of them [domestic students] not participating that much." Trang and Filipe had particularly difficult experiences which caused them much stress.

Two days before Trang was due to submit a group written assessment, the domestic students in his group replied to him for the first time, after he had tried for weeks to contact them. He was unhappy when they insisted on delegating most of the assignment to themselves, despite knowing Trang and his other group mate, a Korean student, had already divided the task into four equal sections and completed their parts. Trang's interpretation was: "They think Asian students couldn't do the task or wouldn't do it very well." On the day of submission, the domestic students sent their sections to Trang to put together because "they didn't have time." He was surprised, and then annoyed, that they had not addressed the assignment criteria

correctly, or included in-text references or a reference list. His domestic group mates dismissed his attempts to point out the sections that did not align with the assignment template the tutor had provided, and argued that references were not required. Trang submitted on time after spending many hours fixing their parts, adding citations and the reference list, but was frustrated with the final mark of 64/100.

Similar to Trang's experience with his group assignment, Filipe's domestic group mates refused to meet to organise their group oral presentation. Filipe prepared his part on his own, and was panicking the day of the presentation:

I'm scared [of what will happen]. I know my part but the flow won't be good. They don't care. They said they just want to pass. Not even sure we will.

The week after the presentation he revealed how it went:

A remarkable experience. They [domestic students] had no eye contact with the audience at all! Just reading [from their papers]. Weird. The Professor said I was the best speaker. It was amazing. He said I spoke so well, and naturally. The whole class agreed. I'm so happy.

Filipe was particularly pleased to receive positive feedback from his teacher and peers about his speaking, because of the effort he had made to improve his pronunciation (see Section 6.1.6). Receiving recognition from "the whole class" that he had spoken "so well and naturally" reassured Filipe about his language proficiency.

Overall, the participants found it stressful, as well as puzzling, to work with students who overlooked disciplinary conventions and criteria, and were content to “just pass”. It was a situation they had not encountered in group work in their home countries, or in their pathway courses. Filipe pointed out that students should know “the purpose of group work is to discuss with others and get different views because it is important to share.” At the end of semester 1, the participants resolved to avoid group work with students who were not prepared to cooperate. Gabriella put forward a strong opinion:

[Domestic students] not coming to the meetings and not doing stuff.

I would tell [international students] don't do the group assignments with the local students. We, all Asian students say don't do with them. They are lazy. Most of them, not all of them.

The unpleasant interactions with domestic students, as well as the negative experiences in their group assignments, were issues the participants remained disappointed about throughout semester 1. Nevertheless, by the end of semester 1, they had shifted from their initial belief that the obstacles to engaging with their domestic peers were solely their fault. They realised language was not a barrier to interacting with teachers and other EAL students, or engaging in their courses and meeting assessment criteria. This reflects the contention put forward by Harper et al. (2011) and Humphreys et al. (2012), that even though EAL students' English proficiency varies considerably, their level of language competency should be accepted by their academic community, once they have met university entry requirements through the available pathway options. For the students in this study, even though they demonstrated resilience, and successfully mediated course requirements, their reflections in the interviews showed that their sense of belonging

and confidence were affected when they were unable to develop relationships with domestic students as they had hoped.

According to Dawson (2011), EAL students often lose self-confidence if they do not feel accepted by the dominant cultural group. Jones (2017) and Wingate (2015) have verified this as an extension of the deficit view of EAL students, whereby domestic students may pre-judge EAL students based on nationality, and regard their own linguistic and academic capacity to be higher than NNES. This was Trang's perception when he reported his group assignment experience. Trang believed his domestic group mates assumed that because he was "Asian" he would have limited ability to contribute to the assignment. Yet, Trang appeared to have a better understanding of assessment requirements and disciplinary conventions than they did. Similarly, Filipe described feeling taken aback when the students in his group were unprepared and told him they "just want to pass." He prepared for the task on his own, without any contributions from his group mates. He then undertook the presentation successfully, and was praised by his teacher for being "the best speaker." In contrast, his domestic peers had read their parts of the presentation straight from a piece of paper and "had no eye contact with the audience." Boreland (2016), Jones (2017), and Yan and Sendall (2016) have recently advised universities to move away from differentiating between international and domestic students because all commencing students need guidance and instruction at some point in their academic socialisation.

Understandably, communication between NES and NNES can be constrained due to linguistic and cultural differences, and the prevailing deficit assumption. The consequence of these challenges for participants in this study was the divide they perceived between themselves and their domestic peers, which caused uncertainty and stress. Leask (2010) contends that domestic students also experience a divide in

multicultural learning environment. Although domestic students are often aware of the benefits of intercultural engagement, they may perceive linguistic and cultural barriers as being too difficult to overcome. If both domestic and EAL students find intercultural communication challenging, but value international education as a means to become global citizens, it is necessary for institutions and teachers to help reduce these barriers. This could be achieved through disciplinary pedagogies which reflect the fundamental intention of the academic literacies framework, and Habermas's communicative action (see Section 2.2). This means universities must increase efforts to respond to first year students' needs and provide learning environments which foster mutual understanding and acceptance.

7.4 Experiences in the Classroom

Contrary to the confidence participants exhibited when they discussed course requirements and assessments, their experiences in the classroom during semester 1 exposed a disparate narrative. The challenges reported above, where most participants felt anxious about their language proficiency and intercultural competence, were further compounded by few opportunities for meaningful interactions in class. This indicated a gap between the students' experiences, and the university's internationalisation policies that aim to support international students' integration into the university community. EAL students come to Australia with the belief that studying with people from diverse cultures can prepare them for future employment in multicultural work environments. In semester 1, the case study participants found that across the disciplines, their courses did not appear to prioritise cross-cultural communication.

The participants understood that lectures were not interactive, but they had expected to have opportunities to discuss course content with their peers during

tutorials. In particular, for the students who had already experienced Australian tertiary education through TAFE, ELICOS and VET courses, their understanding was that students were expected to participate in tutorials. They were unsatisfied with their classroom experiences during semester 1. Camilla was unhappy because she had spoken English every day in her ELICOS Direct Entry course before commencing university. But, she reported that she had few chances to interact with other students in her university tutorials: "Just listening, listening, listening." Jaili also voiced her frustration:

Well [I expected] more time for discussing [in the tutorials]. So, not quite happening. Not very hopeful, a little bit disappointing. The teachers do talking a lot. We don't have time to discuss by ourselves. The teachers talk and the students listen.

As discussed earlier in this chapter (see Section 7.1.2), Jaili understood the advantages of peer engagement, and she had organised a study group with her friends. She had expected classroom discussions with her peers, and was disheartened when that did not happen in semester 1. Emily shared a similar disappointment:

Actually like in the tutes, the students don't normally interact, just the tutor do the answer and just that's all. It's better to discuss. And we can learn much better from our mistakes than in individual study.

Jaili and Emily's observations that opportunities for discussion would help enhance their learning suggests that student centred classroom practices, where group discussions are encouraged, should be incorporated into disciplinary curricula and tutorials.

Gabriella reported feeling excluded in her tutorials when she was unable to hear or keep up with class discussions:

And when the teachers ask us the questions, most of the local students answer, they answer very fast and we couldn't understand what the answer is and teachers just say, 'yes that's right, exactly.' It was like, we didn't know exactly the answer for the question. They could do more. Like more detail and easier explanations for international students.

Gabriella's comments reaffirm the importance of inclusive classroom practices. As Winchester (2013) has asserted, teachers can have a positive influence on student identities if they facilitate class discussions which allow equal participation among all students.

Trang was another participant who reported feeling isolated in class in semester 1. This was exacerbated when he experienced an uncomfortable situation in one of his tutorials:

Like he [the tutor] used to work in Vietnam, like 5 years ago. He's not Vietnamese. [But] he knows I'm Vietnamese because my surname [is Vietnamese]. Yeah, he already know I'm Vietnamese. But then, he like, when he, was teaching, he like give a lot of examples, but they're always like ah, 'when I worked in Vietnam it's not a pleasure place to work.' It was like a lot of negative things about Vietnam. Every 10 minutes, in Vietnam bad things, they have problems. He should just say, you know, Asian countries. Every country has problems. I feel uncomfortable. Like everybody knows

I'm Vietnamese there. The country looks so bad. I just feel awkward listening.

Trang's reaction to the cultural insensitivity displayed by his teacher highlights the significance of ensuring academic staff developing appropriate levels of intercultural competence. As reported by Baik et al. (2015), Glass et al. (2016), and Slaten et al. (2017), when students experience cultural insensitivity in the classroom it can have long-lasting discouraging effects on their sense of belonging.

Students' identities are constructed through interactions with other members of their new academic community. First year students in particular may feel marginalised if there are few opportunities for classroom engagement (Gee, 2004; Wingate, 2015). The absence of tutorial activities which promoted peer discussion was surprising for many of the participants. As described above, the students had expected tutorials to be interactive. Combined with the feelings of doubt they expressed in regard to their English and cross-cultural communication skills (see Section 7.2), this was a setback in mediating positive identities. Although the students' approaches to their literacy and learning demonstrated student agency, they also experienced an uncomfortable transition in terms of gaining a sense belonging in their new discourse community. According to Dawson (2011), cross-cultural communication "seldom occurs spontaneously" (p. 7) in the classroom. Consequently, researchers (e.g., Dunworth, 2013; Glass et al., 2015; Leask & Bridge, 2013; Yan & Sendall, 2016) have recommended that opportunities for cross-cultural communication require structured activities to be embedded into disciplinary curricula. In addition, Winchester (2013), Wingate (2015), and Harvey et al. (2016) have called for institutions to support disciplinary teachers to increase their intercultural awareness.

EAL students' academic literacies

In the first weeks of semester 2, the participants began new courses. They also began to experience new feelings of belonging. Five of the students arrived for their interviews excited to share positive classroom experiences that showed that their academic community knew they were there, and cared about them. In semester 1, Camilla had believed international students were ghosts in the classroom. A lecturer in semester 2 shifted this perception:

In the first lecture the Professor put 'welcome to Brazilian students' on the first slide in Portuguese and in English. I think for the first time, 'oh! Someone knows we are here!' And every lecture she put in [examples of] Brazil and she says 'oh in Brazil it is working this way.' So she worrying about how it works in your country, I think it's nice. This semester they know about us, the Professors. Last semester they didn't know about us, who we are. I think when some people is interested in what are you doing in another country it's amazing. It changes the experience.

Camilla's happiness that "someone knows we are here" illustrates the significant influence teachers can have in welcoming students to their new academic community. Acknowledgement of students' cultures and backgrounds, even in a way that is as simple as a welcoming message on a lecture slide, can have a positive influence on students' feelings of belonging.

Trang was one of the students who felt shy and worried in semester 1. In semester 2, Trang became more confident, based on his experiences in one of his courses:

EAL students' academic literacies

I have one subject, and every tutorial everyone has to speak in front of the class. I have time to prepare, so I think that will help a lot. I feel like, I'm not scared like I was in semester 1.

The key to Trang's increased self-confidence were twofold. Firstly, all the students in the class had the same opportunity to practice their communication skills. Secondly, and most importantly for EAL students concerned about their speaking, the students had time to prepare because they knew in advance they would need to speak. The opportunity to participate in structured speaking tasks in class can provide valuable experience for students to increase their communicative confidence and skills.

According to Ashton-Hay et al. (2016) and Wilson et al. (2016), speaking opportunities should be embedded in course curricula to ensure teachers allocate time for students to practise their speaking skills.

Snow was not a shy student, and had a high level of confidence engaging with his peers. But, he still appreciated teachers who facilitated class discussions and encouraged all students to be engaged. In semester 2, Snow described two teachers who encouraged class discussion:

Management I've got a great tutor. He gives us a chance for discussion, yeah, you feel engaged. The whole class is engaged, from the back row to the front. He's got everyone involved. Marketing [tutor], she's also very interactive. She also tries to open discussions and things. She's really good.

These new classroom experiences in semester 2 were facilitated by teachers who nurtured participants' sense of belonging, and provided opportunities for classroom engagement.

EAL students' academic literacies

In interviews during semester 1, Jaili expressed disappointment when she had been unable to communicate with her domestic peers. In semester 2, Jaili was in an interactive laboratory class where students who had used the course software before were assisting their peers. Jaili and a friend were having trouble using the software and asked two domestic students for help:

It's the first time we talk to domestic students! I said 'we don't know how to use it, could you help us?' Well, before I asked them I tried to watch the video to teach us, training video. But, the video talk too fast. Yeah, they were nice. A great help. It's the first time we discuss with domestic students about the professional knowledge. Finally!

The joy Jaili expressed at “finally” interacting with her domestic peers emphasises the value EAL students place on cross-cultural communication. It took almost two full semesters for Jaili to have this chance. If her courses had incorporated peer discussion activities, she could have had this opportunity much sooner.

Like Jaili, Filipe had been particularly disillusioned in semester 1 that it had been so challenging to engage with his domestic peers. He described that his “heart hurt” when he tried to communicate with domestic students, and at the end of semester 1 he did not believe this situation would improve. In the first week of semester 2, one of Filipe’s science courses held a field trip. He was initially apprehensive, because he was the only international student, and the teacher had advised the class that everyone was required to work together on the field work activities. To his surprise, the experience was better than he had expected. He described how he felt when he had an opportunity to connect with the other students:

It [the field trip] broke the barrier. I realise that English is not what I thought it was, it doesn't matter to do it perfectly. I'm more free now. I can breathe. You don't feel so ashamed when you've got interaction with your classmates. You know them and you feel comfortable. You have a voice.

Filipe's comments indicated that he believed meaningful engagement with his peers helped him break the "barrier" he had felt between himself and NES in semester 1. His interactions with his domestic peers while on the field trip altered his perception of how NES viewed him. Instead of feeling ashamed, he felt comfortable because he had a voice, and his peers listened. Yet, even though he had this positive experience, the strong feelings of hurt he had encountered in semester 1 were still there. He explained that after the field trip, he had been worried that he would arrive in class the following week and no one would want to talk to him. He reasoned that the domestic students may have only engaged with him because they had to complete the field trip tasks. He was "amazed" when the opposite occurred:

When I came and started class, everyone was 'good morning!' It was amazing. I had good interactions with everybody together. And, the Professor, he's always asking questions so we're talking all the time. I can feel that I'm just a student, normal. Like the other students and I can do whatever they can do. Before I was, I don't know, somebody apart.

The participants' perception of a divide between NNES and NES, and feeling "apart" from domestic students, was discussed earlier in this chapter. Filipe's experiences draw attention to the significant impact that positive relationships with NES can

have on bridging this gap. This is clearly a serious issue that needs to be addressed in disciplinary curricula, and classroom learning environments, through the implementation of inclusive pedagogies.

The opportunity that Filipe's field trip afforded him to develop relationships with his peers led to a complete turnaround in the way he felt about his academic community. The other participants who reported positive classroom interactions also expressed an increased sense of belonging when their cultural backgrounds were acknowledged and accepted, and when teachers facilitated class discussions. In semester 1, participants described feeling afraid, uncomfortable, and isolated. In semester 2, inclusive teaching strategies led to positive emotions the students had not previously felt in the classroom. The examples above demonstrate Elliot et al.'s (2016) explanation that inclusive classrooms and positive academic relationships are instrumental in helping first year students develop strong identities as they transition into their new learning environment. Lizzio (2011) describes identity construction as an invisible transaction between teachers and students, and advocates that disciplinary curricula incorporate inclusive classroom practices. However, the participants' accounts of their classroom experiences showed that not all courses across the disciplines provided inclusive learning environments, or promoted peer interaction. The consequences were that students' expectations were not met, and opportunities to enhance their language and communication skills were limited. These issues reinforce the imperative of inclusive pedagogies where interactive activities are embedded within course content.

The case study results suggest that disciplinary curricula must do more to facilitate engagement among students from diverse backgrounds. Slaten et al. (2016) found that academic achievement was a vital factor in enhancing international students' sense of belonging. For the participants in this study, even when they began

constructing new student identities by fulfilling course demands, feelings of belonging were the missing piece of the puzzle that hindered their transition in semester 1. In contrast, critical moments of inclusion and recognition in semester 2, which were lacking in their semester 1 courses, “broke the barrier,” whereby participants no longer felt like “ghosts.” Significantly, the most striking aspect was the simplicity of the events that prompted this shift: acknowledgement on a lecture slide; a kind word from a teacher; and the chance for meaningful engagement with peers. These findings support evidence from earlier studies (e.g., Glass et al., 2015; Yefanova et al., 2016; Wingate, 2013) regarding the obligation teachers have to foster students' sense of belonging.

Institutions cannot assume that disciplinary teachers have sufficient knowledge and skills to facilitate classroom intercultural communication, or that teachers are aware of EAL students' language and communication goals (Harvey et al., 2016; Moeller & Faltin Osborne, 2014; Yan & Sendall; Wingate, 2015). In addition, academic staff may not know that many EAL students' educational backgrounds and pathways include tertiary experience in Australia or their home countries. According to Doherty and Singh (2007), the deficit view of EAL students fails to recognise the financial and personal commitments EAL students make to study in Australia. This problem was identified in the 2013 'Five Years On' Symposium (AEI, 2013), which concluded that English language enhancement was not sufficiently addressed within disciplinary curricula. Professional development for academic staff can enhance their intercultural competence, and help them gain a more informed understanding of EAL students' identities. It is also necessary to consider that teachers may be constrained if there is insufficient class time to foster academic relationships. The participants' classroom experiences described in this study have emphasised the importance of peer engagement. Thus, disciplinary staff

designing course curricula need to achieve an appropriate balance between course content and academic literacies. As illustrated in the Good Practice Principles, universities should aim to provide effective and regular opportunities for academic interaction and cross-cultural discussion within disciplinary learning settings.

The first year transition and internationalisation strategies recommended in the literature, as well as the Good Practice Principles, have prompted increased institutional support for international cohorts. However, the case studies revealed a contradiction between reported classroom practices and the internationalisation strategies of the university where this study took place. The university has comprehensive internationalisation goals (see Section 1.4), which aim to assist EAL students' integration into the university, and enhance EAL and domestic graduates' intercultural and linguistic competencies. Moreover, one of the university's Graduate Attributes (see Section 1.4), which all students are expected to develop is the ability to interact effectively in diverse and international environments. This was also an attribute to which the case study participants aspired. In spite of this, their experiences showed that facilitating opportunities to attain intercultural competency did not appear to be a priority in disciplinary curricula. Although there were instances of classroom practices that fostered feelings of belonging, there was little evidence across the disciplines of classroom strategies which promoted cross-cultural communication.

This study has shown that although the institution has developed internationalisation policies and strategies, participants found it challenging to gain membership into their new academic community. This reconfirms Leask and Carroll's (2010) assertion that intercultural understanding and communication does not automatically occur in culturally diverse learning environments, and institutions need to stop 'wishing and hoping' that internationalisation policies will lead to cross-

cultural interactions. The gap between policy and practice could be filled by ensuring teachers have the knowledge and skills required to facilitate a more inclusive learning environment. Therefore, it is essential that teachers are supported through disciplinary pedagogies and curricula that take into account the intercultural and linguistic goals of students and the university (Gale et al., 2017; Lizzio, 2011). Classrooms with students from diverse backgrounds are complex learning environments with potential tensions and barriers. As evident in this study, even small actions of inclusion can transform classrooms into communities of practice where barriers can be overcome, and cross-cultural interactions can take place.

7.5 Summary

The case studies reported in this thesis have provided insights into first year undergraduate EAL students' experiences, and factors which enabled and constrained their academic literacies. Even though participants positioned themselves as motivated and willing students, their first semester classroom experiences indicated that their university disciplines had not adequately operationalised an academic literacies approach. Although the participants were constructing positive student identities through engagement in their courses, they encountered learning environments which created feelings of doubt and isolation. At the same time, consistent with previous studies (Gargano, 2012; Marginson, 2013; Pham & Saltmarsh, 2013), the students displayed resilience and put their disappointment aside to achieve their academic goals.

The participants commenced university with diverse cultural and educational backgrounds, and were studying in different disciplines, yet common challenges and experiences emerged. Their academic literacies were enabled by a number of factors. They prioritised their literacy and learning by engaging in and valuing disciplinary

practices and conventions. They read strategically, and were diligent in meeting course requirements. They also attended class, took advantage of feedback when it was given, and wanted to participate and engage in their courses and with peers. However, they were constrained by assumptions of deficit, few opportunities for language or literacy instruction or feedback, and an absence of reading pedagogy. They encountered difficulties interacting with peers due to low self-confidence and uncomfortable classroom environments. There was evidence of language and literacy instruction and feedback in the Language and Communication courses. Nevertheless, as Fenton-Smith et al. (2015) have pointed out, these courses cannot be viewed as a 'silver bullet' for first year transition and should be considered one part of a whole of institution approach.

First year students are learners, and by that definition need guidance and feedback, as well as opportunities to build relationships, to enhance their self-confidence, and for learning to occur (Dunworth, 2013; Glass et al., 2015; Gu et al., 2014; Wilson et al., 2016). A noteworthy finding in this study is that the classroom practices which helped participants' communicative confidence and learning required little effort. Teachers showing interest and facilitating peer interaction had a significant and positive impact on participants' feelings of belonging, and student identity. However, the case studies revealed that participants had few opportunities for these positive classroom experiences. Despite this issue, student agency and perseverance in adhering to the expectations and values of their new academic community enabled the participants to successfully mediate their courses. This contradicts the deficit view of EAL students, and instead indicates that the deficit lies with the learning environment, due to the disparity between recommended transition and internationalisation strategies and students' classroom experiences. These findings suggest that teachers would be in the best position to address this

gap, by providing inclusive classrooms to reduce communication barriers and bridge the divide perceived by international students.

The research results show the value of the academic literacies approach to examine literacy and learning, and as a framework to guide curricula and instructional practices. Furthermore, the results validate the underlying principle of the academic literacies framework, which is that the first two levels of the framework, study skills and academic socialisation, are inadequate to address the complex social and cultural processes involved in tertiary study. In particular, the case studies provide evidence to support Lea and Street's (1998) argument that learning is a communicative practice which requires meaningful interactions with teachers and peers. Similarly, Habermas's (1984) communicative action theory places teachers at the centre of the dominant cultural group, and emphasises their responsibility to help learners shape new student identities, and gain membership into their academic community.

Teachers are valuable resources within a university community and play a vital role in students' academic experiences. But, they require opportunities for professional development to keep improving their teaching practices, and they need to be supported through disciplinary pedagogies and curricula which are underpinned by the academic literacies approach. Implementing such changes across the disciplines is necessary so that first year students not only transition into their disciplines, but also develop positive student identities, feel a sense of belonging, and achieve the graduate attributes they, and the institution, intend for them to gain.

Chapter Eight - Conclusion

Australian universities have become places where students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds come together to pursue tertiary studies. Improving their learning calls for ongoing appraisal of university learning environments. Hence, there is a need for more scientific research to examine students' learning experiences, and to ascertain areas for improvement. The study reported in this thesis set out to achieve such a goal. The aim of this study was to contribute to current higher education research by investigating first year undergraduate EAL students' expectations, academic socialisation and academic literacies. The study was guided by the academic literacies approach advocated by Lea and Street (1998). The approach offered a valuable research framework to examine the complex factors associated with EAL students' literacy and learning, and their identities. The findings from this study contribute to a gap in current research identified by Lea and Street (2006) and Wingate (2015), who contend that university pedagogies do not adequately cater for students from diverse backgrounds. The quantitative and qualitative research design used in this study yielded valuable insights into ways disciplinary pedagogy and curricula, and classroom practices, can be improved to enhance support for first year EAL students across the disciplines.

The findings of this research provide evidence which challenges the deficit view of EAL students, and highlights disparities between first year students' expectations and current disciplinary pedagogies and classroom practices. The study reaffirms previous recommendations that institutions pay critical attention to how they support first year EAL students' transition into Australian university learning environments. In particular, it is strongly recommended that disciplines implement inclusive pedagogies, first year transition and internationalisation strategies, and embed literacy and language instruction in curricula. While such changes require a

whole of institution approach, as well as major shifts in disciplinary pedagogies, the study findings suggest that course teachers can have a significant and positive affect on EAL students' socialisation and academic literacies. The case study findings show that when teachers demonstrate interest and care, it fosters EAL students' sense of belonging, and can bring about positive learning outcomes. However, disciplinary teachers may not be aware of inclusive classroom teaching practices, or have the necessary level of intercultural understanding to create this positive influence. This calls for institutions to ensure academic staff are afforded the training and resources required to increase their understanding of EAL students' academic expectations and learning needs.

This chapter brings together the main findings for the three research questions, and the implications they have for theory and practice. It also considers the research limitations, and proposes recommendations for future research.

8.1 Main Findings

The purpose of the research was to gain a comprehensive explanation of first year EAL students' academic experiences. The study examined participants' expectations in their first weeks of semester 1, how they mediated their academic socialisation, and the factors which enabled and constrained their academic literacies. Particular emphasis was placed on investigating participants' academic reading experiences to address the current gap in research on undergraduate academic reading. In addition, the study examined participants' experiences reconstructing their student identities. This aspect of the study responds to the paucity of research on the role of student identity when undergraduate EAL students transition into international learning environments. The response from disciplines,

across the university research setting, towards implementing the Good Practice Principles, and institutional internationalisation strategies, were also examined.

A salient finding was that participants' expectations and experiences were not influenced by age, gender, or region of origin. In addition, although their previous education, university entry pathways, and fields of study varied, the participants' experiences were similar across the disciplines. This suggests that first year EAL students share similar learning needs. The case study participants demonstrated positive student identities by successfully mediating disciplinary requirements. Yet, their transition was hindered by insufficient opportunities for meaningful classroom interactions, and lack of language and literacy instruction and feedback. The implication is that universities need to move away from existing deficit assumptions of EAL students, and improve pedagogical practices. The following sections suggest recommendations on how this could be achieved based on the main findings for the research questions.

8.1.1 Research question 1. The first research question examined EAL students' expectations of their new learning environment. The participants expressed similar reasons for choosing to study in Australia, believing they could enhance their English and intercultural communication skills, which in turn would improve their future employment prospects. They shared similar expectations of disciplinary literacy practices and conventions, academic reading, and engaging with teachers and peers. Many participants had experienced Australian tertiary education prior to commencing their degrees, for example completing a TAFE or college Diploma, or attending the university's Direct Entry Pathway course. Many had also studied in their fields at university level in their home countries.

The participants stated it was important to enhance their English language communication and improve their academic skills by attending one-on-one consultations and library workshops, using online learning materials, and seeking support from course teachers. They demonstrated an understanding of disciplinary literacy practices and conventions, such as critical thinking, academic integrity, and referencing. These results indicate that the prevailing perception about EAL students' cultural and educational backgrounds being barriers to learning is misguided. It is essential that academic staff know their students' educational and cultural backgrounds, and the educational capital they bring to global learning environments. If teachers have an informed understanding of EAL students' identities, they can be in a better position to meet their learning needs.

Many students commenced university with reading habits and expectations that did not appear to match tertiary reading demands. Most participants anticipated that teachers would tell them what to read, and expected to spend less than eight hours per week reading course materials, which equates to about two hours per course. Although there is little indication in the literature of the number of hours that first year students should spend reading for their courses, according to the recommendations that are available, two hours per course could be regarded as insufficient for tertiary study. Academic reading practices have been found to significantly impact learning, which makes first year students' approaches to reading an important consideration. However, studies investigating undergraduate EAL students reading have been limited, as most academic literacy research has tended to focus on writing. The results show that first year students often underestimate the reality of course reading demands. This supports previous studies which have recommended the importance of embedding explicit reading instruction in disciplinary curricula.

The students expected to interact with their peers, and believed it was important to feel part of their academic community. They expected teachers to understand their linguistic and cultural challenges, to receive one-on-one time with teachers, and that teachers would offer academic reading and writing support. These expectations appear reasonable for first year learners transitioning into a new learning environment. Nevertheless, as academic literacies research has emphasised, for many EAL students these expectations are often unfulfilled because they are incompatible with university pedagogies and practices. Indeed, this was the case for the students in this study, as their anticipation of receiving disciplinary support and opportunities for intercultural communication in semester 1 were largely unmet.

The issue of first year EAL student expectations not aligning with their experiences has been a point of discussion within tertiary education research for decades. Much of the attention has centred on assumptions that EAL students' previous education and cultural backgrounds constrain learning, and do not prepare them for Australian tertiary learning environments. However, ELICOS and VET university entry pathways can deliver adequate preparation which students use to build on and improve their language and literacy practices. The deficit approach imposes on students to change to meet the expectations of their new learning environment, but it fails to hold institutions to the same standard, whereby they should be required to adapt to their diverse student cohorts. Evidence that EAL students from diverse backgrounds share similar expectations and learning needs should be considered by institutions so they can adjust curricula and classroom practices to better accommodate first year students.

8.1.2 Research question 2. The second research question investigated how first year EAL students mediated their academic socialisation. The study findings,

and the students' academic achievements, showed the participants successfully transitioned into their new learning environment. They mediated their academic socialisation by preparing for and attending classes, and prioritising their time to complete course assessments to meet disciplinary standards. They utilised online learning resources, and teacher support and written feedback, when it was provided. They demonstrated student agency and a commitment to adapt and extend their literacy practices to meet disciplinary and course requirements. For example, adjusting studying approaches for multiple choice examinations, forming a study group to improve understanding of course content, and reading academic sources to obtain evidence for written essays and reports.

The participants' accounts of their first semester experiences illustrated that their university entry pathways, and linguistic, cultural and educational backgrounds did not hinder their capability to engage in their courses and complete assessment tasks. Hence, these factors were not barriers to their academic socialisation. This contradicts the view that students from educational and cultural backgrounds distinctly different from Australia have a deficit in their understanding of disciplinary conventions and academic skills. By including students who enrolled through a range of entry pathways, the findings add to current knowledge regarding the efficacy of non-language testing pathways. The EAL students who enrolled via VET and ELICOS pathways appeared to commence university with an understanding of Australian academic culture, and language proficiency, sufficient to mediate their courses. At the same time, they were conscious of the necessity to continue enhancing their English and intercultural communication skills, and literacy practices.

The opportunity for participants to engage in English language and academic skill enhancement was constrained by a number of factors. Individual characteristics,

EAL students' academic literacies

such as low self-confidence and shyness, made it challenging for some students to engage with teachers and peers. The Good Practice Principles confirm the importance of disciplines prioritising language development and peer engagement in curricula design. In spite of this, language enhancement, constructive teacher feedback on written language, and teacher facilitated cross-cultural communication were not evident in most of the disciplinary curricula, except in the Language and Communication courses. Time management was another challenge, and the students attributed their course assignment loads as a reason for not attending institutional language and academic skills support programs. It is vital for disciplines to respond to these issues by embedding language and literacy instruction, and feedback on assessments, in course curricula. The lack of language and literacy support in the disciplines reinforces the need for universities to pay greater attention to classroom learning environments, particularly for first year students.

The students made strategic choices about the required and recommended course materials they read. They often perceived course readings time-consuming, but irrelevant to their learning needs. In particular, students described course textbooks as boring, and difficult to read. Instead, they preferred to review course lecture slides and read materials relevant to course assignments. The course profile analysis confirmed that most courses listed weekly required readings, often textbook chapters. Yet, reading instruction was not included in disciplinary curricula, and course readings were rarely discussed in class, or incorporated in assessment tasks. Most participants did not comply with course readings. They expected teachers to tell them what to read, and found heavy reading loads difficult to manage. Disciplines need to implement reading pedagogy to close the gap between student reading strategies and disciplinary reading expectations. Reading pedagogy would involve embedding reading instruction, and explicit connections between readings and

EAL students' academic literacies

course content, in curricula and assessments to promote student engagement with course resources. Additionally, academic staff should reconsider course reading loads, and give clear explanations on how weekly required readings, such as textbook chapters, are relevant to course content.

First year EAL students are active in their transition into their new learning environment. They are also new learners within the discourse community and by that definition, it is critical that disciplinary staff offer guidance, feedback and support. However, students' expectations of language and academic skills instruction and teacher feedback were often unfulfilled across the disciplines. Therefore, as well as expecting students to change their approaches to learning, disciplines must also adapt by implementing the Good Practice Principles and recommended best practice first year transition strategies. For example, first year course curricula should provide students with: exemplars to model disciplinary standards; constructive written feedback on assessments to acknowledge strengths, and suggest ways to address weaknesses; discipline-specific language and academic skills instruction.

8.1.3 Research question 3. The third research question investigated the factors that enabled and constrained first year undergraduate EAL students' academic literacies. The participants responded to the challenges of transitioning into a new learning environment by demonstrating student agency and extending on their previous educational experiences. Their academic literacies were enabled by their willingness to embrace Australian academic culture, engage in disciplinary literacy practices, and utilise teacher feedback when it was given. The participants believed new skills and knowledge, such as using evidence from sources to support academic arguments and critical thinking, would be advantageous for their future education, and as graduates. At the same time, participants' academic literacies were

hindered when they encountered classroom learning environments which did not incorporate language and literacy instruction, constructive feedback on assessments, or peer engagement. These challenges, in particular the lack of classroom engagement with peers, negatively affected their sense of belonging in their new academic community.

The participants' semester 1 academic results contributed towards a solid foundation to construct positive identities, and reinforced their perceptions of themselves as hard working students, committed to their education. The students' educational capital was not defined by nationality. Although their ability to mediate their courses was not hindered by their linguistic or cultural backgrounds, low confidence in their language and intercultural communication skills challenged their student and cultural identities. Assumptions of deficit, lack of disciplinary language and literacy instruction or teacher feedback, and difficulties interacting with peers constrained participants' access into their new discourse community. The overlapping levels of the academic literacies framework emphasise that literacy and learning require meaningful engagement, and a sense of belonging. In addition, EAL students come to English-speaking countries with the reasonable expectation of engaging with NES. For the students in this study, their classroom learning environments in semester 1 did not afford such opportunities. Gaining feelings of belonging were hindered by their learning environment when they experienced disciplinary pedagogies and classroom practices which overlooked their learning needs.

The positive classroom experiences reported by the participants in semester 2 elucidate the vital role of teachers in nurturing students' sense of belonging. Inclusive classroom practices, such as teachers showing interest in students' learning, and facilitating peer engagement, eased the strong feelings of stress and

apprehension the students experienced in semester 1. However, there were few examples of positive and inclusive classroom experiences across the disciplines. The results of this study reinforce the imperative of embedding peer engagement activities within course content. Furthermore, they illuminate an important finding, that small actions from teachers, such as acknowledging EAL students' language and culture, and a kind word to show genuine interest and care, can have a significant impact on students' feelings of belonging.

EAL students value both English as global language, and learning in a multicultural environment. It is essential that teachers across the disciplines foster inclusive classrooms environments which help reduce communication barriers, and bridge the divide that international students often perceive between themselves and NES. This requires professional development for academic staff to ensure they understand the needs of their diverse student cohorts, and the responsibility they have to encourage peer engagement in the classroom. Disciplines can strive for inclusive and participatory classrooms through curricula, classroom activities and assessments which facilitate intercultural communication and cooperation.

8.2 Implications for Theory and Practice

The study findings expose inconsistencies between first year EAL students' academic expectations and needs, and their experiences of disciplinary curricula and classroom learning environments. This problem persists because university disciplines have not adequately operationalised an academic literacies approach to literacy and learning. The study skills model, or deficit view of literacy, is still the dominant approach guiding tertiary curricula and instructional practice, whereby disciplines tend to view literacy as a technical and individual skill. This approach is

unsound due to literacy being a complex social practice which requires meaningful engagement between teachers and students. In addition, language and literacy support continues to be delivered predominately outside the disciplines. This is despite the Good Practice Principles, and best practice internationalisation and first year transition strategies, stipulating the importance of embedding language and literacy instruction within course curricula. Universities can expedite solutions to these issues by paying increased attention to students' expectations and learning needs, and through pedagogical solutions which encompass the academic socialisation and academic literacies levels in the framework. The theoretical and practical implications suggested here offer insights into the ways such solutions can be implemented.

The theoretical implications relate to the academic literacies framework. The practical implications focus on classroom practices, disciplinary pedagogies and curricula, and institutional policies and strategies. Key recommendations and strategies to improve classroom practices and curricula design are also provided.

8.2.1 Implications for theory. A theoretical implication of this study is that it reinforces academic literacies as a valuable conceptual framework to guide research and practice in tertiary learning contexts. By taking into account the multiple factors which influence students' literacy and learning, the three overlapping models present a comprehensive lens to appreciate students' experiences, and learning needs. In particular, the findings yielded evidence that while the academic socialisation level of the framework is significant to understand how new learners mediate their transition into university, it is insufficient to fully account for the complexity of tertiary learning environments. The theory underpinning the academic literacies level of the framework is that literacy and learning are social practices.

EAL students' academic literacies

Successful engagement in a new discourse community requires students to construct positive identities through inclusive classroom practices, and meaningful relationships with teachers and peers. The study findings confirmed that positive engagement with teachers and peers created feelings of belonging, which were critical in meeting the students' learning needs. Academic literacies is a framework universities can operationalise to promote learning environments which not only teach disciplinary skills and knowledge, but also ensure students develop the communicative competence and intercultural understanding that society, and students themselves expect to gain.

This study has extended the theoretical framework by examining first year students' academic reading practices. Academic literacies research has previously focused on writing, and in particular the need for universities to move away from deficit pedagogies and towards teaching writing as a communicative practice. Academic literacies theory emphasises that university writing cannot be taught outside the disciplines, and new learners require instruction and feedback as they construct their identities as academic writers. Academic reading needs to be viewed the same way. The findings in this study showed that reading pedagogy was largely non-existent in disciplinary curricula. This is concerning due to the significant role of reading in gaining knowledge of disciplinary discourses, theories and content. Furthermore, first year students often underestimate tertiary reading demands, and may require instruction and guidance to enhance their understanding and application of critical reading strategies that tertiary contexts demand. Importantly, the disciplines must take into account that reading and writing practices cannot be separated. Written tasks are just the final product of a complex meaning-making process, which requires constant shifts between both reading and writing. Hence, the

academic literacies framework should be broadened to include reading so that it is incorporated into disciplinary pedagogy as a core literacy practice.

8.2.2 Implications for practice. The practical implications of this study are threefold, and concern course teachers, disciplinary pedagogies and curricula, and institutional policies and strategies. This is because efforts to resolve the disparity between students' experiences, and best practice internationalisation and transition strategies, require a whole of institution approach. The multiple case studies in this study have obtained comprehensive insights into first year EAL students' experiences mediating a new learning environment. Although language and culture constrained participants' self-confidence, this barrier was reduced in classroom environments where teachers acknowledged their backgrounds, delivered effective instruction and feedback, and facilitated opportunities for meaningful intercultural communication. The negative and uncomfortable experiences reported by participants may have been alleviated if they had experienced inclusive classrooms sooner. The purpose of the classroom is to stimulate learning, and consequently teachers are in the best position to provide supportive and inclusive learning environments that fulfil students' learning needs.

Course teachers have a significant impact on students' literacy and learning, and feelings of belonging. Therefore, it is imperative that teachers have a strong understanding of their students' backgrounds are, their learning needs, and best practice classroom strategies to meet those needs. It is important for academic staff to be aware that EAL students have an appreciation of the differences between their own academic cultures, and Australian academic culture. Furthermore, teachers should understand that EAL students are striving to acquire new disciplinary skills, which they value for their learning, and their futures as global citizens. Enhancement

EAL students' academic literacies

of teachers' knowledge of EAL students educational goals could help reduce potential negative assumptions about EAL students' identities. It is suggested that course teachers' professional development includes intercultural competence so that teachers are in a better position to implement practices appropriate for culturally diverse classrooms. Important considerations for teachers are to gain knowledge and understanding of: 1) the significant dedication and financial commitments made by EAL students to meet university entry requirements; 2) EAL students' previous skills and knowledge gained from educational backgrounds, which often include tertiary experience in Australia, or university level education in their field of study in their home countries; and 3) inclusive classroom strategies to encourage engagement among students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Academic staff could also be assisted to increase their understanding of the value of timely, constructive feedback. The provision of feedback is fundamental for learning, and it is vital that teachers receive practical instruction and guidance on how to provide effective feedback on assessments. Training should focus on equipping teachers with specific strategies for providing written feedback related to course content, literacy practices, and language enhancement. Disciplinary staff could use observations and mentoring to encourage a community of practice where teachers can reflect on their teaching, learn from one another, and share ideas to improve their classroom practices. Although institutions often publish online documents, which recommend best practice internationalisation strategies and classroom practices, these resources are inadequate for teachers to acquire effective classroom practices required for international learning environments. Teacher training must be a disciplinary priority, and professional development can target the specific needs of academic staff in different fields of study.

A further implication of this study is it has confirmed that disciplines need to adopt pedagogies which position language and literacy enhancement, and intercultural engagement, as core elements in course curricula. Course teachers have limited contact time with students. Therefore, it is necessary for course curricula to incorporate materials, activities and assessment tasks which achieve an appropriate balance between course content, language and literacy enhancement, and opportunities for peer engagement. Courses should ensure that assessment design takes into consideration teachers' time to provide constructive feedback. Furthermore, all students can benefit from the inclusive and reading pedagogies recommended in this study. Inclusive classrooms which promote intercultural communication, can enhance students' language and literacy, and foster feelings of belonging. Reading pedagogy can enhance students' language, literacy, and learning. Institutional language and literacy support strategies, such as Language and Communication courses, online resources, library workshops, and one-on-one language consultations are valuable for learning, but should be supplementary to the instruction and support embedded in disciplinary curricula.

Universities require a whole of institution approach across the disciplines to successfully implement internationalisation policies and strategies. It is also important that universities listen to the student voice, and ensure that first year learners' needs are at the centre of disciplinary pedagogy. Tertiary institutions and students are striving for the same graduate attributes. Disciplinary curricula and course teachers determine the learning environments for these goals to be achieved. In addition, institutions can inspire a more inclusive approach by shifting the discourse away from linguistic and cultural differences, and assumed deficits. Multicultural learning environments need to embrace diversity, and promote cultural understanding and awareness, to prepare students for culturally diverse work

settings. Moreover, the findings from this study have added to current understandings regarding the efficacy of EAL student university entry pathways. This has been a controversial issue that has received little research attention. Institutions can have confidence in the entry pathways they have in place for commencing EAL students, and should view them as a starting point which students extend on throughout their degrees. The focus for institutions should be on the learning environments students experience when they commence university.

Australian universities need to offer high quality education to remain competitive in the international education industry, and to continue receiving the cultural and economic benefits that international students contribute. The pressure for universities to improve how they cater for culturally diverse students remains strong. Street (2013) and Wingate (2015) have reflected that the slow pace of change towards an academic literacies approach makes it vital that researchers persevere in advocating ways to achieve inclusive classroom environments. This study contributes to current understanding of EAL students' experiences, and provides evidence to inform and improve pedagogical decisions about curriculum and classroom practices. While advancements need to be made to achieve the required shifts in disciplinary pedagogies, it is possible for course teachers to make a significant and immediate impact in enhancing students' sense of belonging. This can be done through small actions and inclusive practices. Such practices include acknowledging EAL students' cultural backgrounds, providing feedback and support, facilitating peer engagement, and demonstrating genuine interest and care. The following section lists key recommendations from the study findings.

8.2.3 Recommendations. The following recommendations are suggested to improve curricula design and classroom practices for first year university students, EAL students in particular.

The Good Practice Principles related to language and academic skills, and intercultural communication, should be incorporated in course curricula, and classroom and assessment activities. This would include embedding: discipline-specific language instruction and feedback; discipline-specific academic skills instruction and feedback; and effective and regular opportunities for cross-cultural discussion. In addition, first year transition strategies can be implemented in course curricula, such as: exemplars to model disciplinary standards; low-stakes assessment tasks in the first weeks of first year courses to demonstrate disciplinary expectations and standards; and the provision of constructive feedback on assessments, including multiple choice examinations.

Constructive feedback involves acknowledging students' strengths, and suggesting ways to address weaknesses. Whole class feedback is an alternative strategy for courses with large cohorts where individual feedback would be impractical. Feedback on multiple choice examinations could be addressed using general whole class feedback which focuses on gaps in students' knowledge revealed by the examination results. When providing feedback, teachers could draw attention to, and encourage students to use, relevant university and library learning resources, such as workshops and one-on-one language consultations, to improve their language and literacy skills. Teachers could encourage students to form study groups as a way to enhance understanding of course content, practice disciplinary skills, gain new perspectives, and practice communication skills.

Reading pedagogy should be incorporated into curricula and assessments. This would include: explicit explanations of course reading and independent study

expectations so that course profiles are not the only method to disseminate reading requirements; providing explicit links between course reading materials and content; classroom opportunities to discuss course readings; integration of reading and writing tasks; highlighting discipline-specific vocabulary in course readings; and moderating reading loads in first year courses, for example, avoiding multiple book chapters for weekly required readings.

Disciplines should provide professional development for course teachers. Such support should focus on: intercultural competence; strategies for providing constructive feedback related to language and literacy; and strategies for inclusive classroom practices. Teaching practices which foster an inclusive classroom learning environment include: acknowledging cultural diversity; showing interest in students' cultural backgrounds; facilitating peer engagement through small group and whole class discussions; providing clear instructions in week 1 on the preferred process for student consultations; following up on student requests for feedback; repeating student questions before giving an answer to ensure the whole class hears the question.

The following sections discuss the limitations of the study and suggest directions for future research.

8.3 Limitations of the Study

The quantitative and qualitative research design aimed to maximise the strengths and minimise the weaknesses of each research method, and to widen the scope of the research. There were still limitations related to the survey and case study approaches in the study for this thesis. These limitations, and the procedures that were implemented to minimise them, have been discussed in detail in Chapter Three of this thesis (see Sections 3.4, 3.5 & 3.7). The limitations related to the quantitative

sampling strategy and the potential for researcher bias in the qualitative phases of the study. In addition, the time-consuming nature of case study research meant that only a small sample of the research population could be included in the case study phases of the research design. Nevertheless, the findings contribute insights into first year undergraduate EAL students' academic socialisation and literacies experiences.

8.4 Directions for Further Research

For universities to improve learning for diverse student cohorts it is important for researchers to continue investigating student experiences across disciplines and university settings. Such research can acquire evidence to appraise curricula design and teaching practices. Further research is also needed to obtain explicit accounts of pedagogies where literacy instruction is embedded into curricula and classroom practices, so that institutions and instructors can implement similar approaches. In addition, more research investigating the adoption and efficacy of first year transition strategies which facilitate meaningful engagement, and nurture a sense of belonging is required. Longitudinal studies examining students' experiences through their entire degree programs would be useful to gain further insight into how their first year socialisation experiences influence their academic success and student identities in subsequent years of study.

Another crucial area for future research is investigating teachers' perceptions and experiences of their role in global learning environments. Studies which examine teachers' classroom experiences, and the factors which may help or hinder their capacity to provide inclusive learning environments, could contribute to improving classroom practices. Research into reading pedagogy and teaching strategies which promote undergraduate engagement in course materials is required. Such studies could yield evidence of the importance of reading as a core literacy activity. Studies

EAL students' academic literacies

which examine reading compliance, and how it may influence academic achievement, would generate useful insights into tertiary reading. There is also a critical need for evidence of professional development strategies which enhance teachers' understandings of their diverse student cohorts.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Information sheet for questionnaire participants

Investigating international undergraduate students' academic literacy experiences

Chief Investigator

Dr Minglin Li
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Email: m.li@griffith.edu.au

Student Researcher

Keri Freeman
School of Education & Professional Studies
Email: k.freeman@griffith.edu.au

Why is the research being conducted?

The proposed research aims to examine the factors which impact on first year international students' academic literacy practices and experiences.

What will you be asked to do?

You will be asked to participate in a 15 minute questionnaire to help the researcher understand your academic expectations for your first year of university. You will also be asked to give information about your age and nationality. All questionnaire responses will be anonymous.

How will participants be selected for the research?

Student participants will be selected based on the following:

- 1.** First year international undergraduate student, Gold Coast Campus
- 2.** Willingness to participate in the research
- 3.** Gives informed consent.

Risks to you

There are no risks associated with participation in this research project. All participants will be over 18 and there are no perceived conflicts of interest for participants. The research will be conducted in a completely ethical manner with the interests of the participants being of paramount importance at all times.

Your Confidentiality

All participants will remain anonymous. While the data is analysed it will be kept in a locked filing cabinet with only the researcher having access. All data is being collected for research purposes only and will be destroyed upon completion of the thesis.

Your participation is voluntary

All participation is voluntary. The decision not to participate in this research project will in no way impact upon your academic results. Potential participants are free to withdraw at any time.

Questions and further information

If you have any questions regarding the research project please contact Keri Freeman on 0409155440 or k.freeman@griffith.edu.au.

Privacy Statement

This research involves the collection, access and/or use of your personal information. The information collected is confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties without your consent, except to meet government, legal or other regulatory authority requirements. Your anonymity will be safe-guarded at all times. For further information consult the University's Privacy Plan at www.gu.edu.au/ua/aa/vc/pp or telephone (07) 37355585.

By completing this questionnaire, I confirm that I have read and understood the information presented to me and in particular:

- I understand that my involvement in this research will include a 15 minute questionnaire;
- I understand that there are no risks involved to me;
- I understand that there will be no benefit to me from my participation in this research;
- I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary and in no way will it impact on my grades;
- I understand that if I have any questions I can contact the research team;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty;
- I understand that I can contact the Chief Investigator, Dr Minglin Li on 07 37353471 or m.li@griffith.edu.au OR the Manager, Research Ethics, at Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee on 07 37355585 or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au if I have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the project; and
- I agree to participate in the project.

Appendix B - Questionnaire

The academic literacy expectations of first year International students

The purpose of this survey is to collect information about your educational and cultural background and your expectations for your first year of university in Australia.

Academic literacy is everything you do as part of your university courses, including reading, writing, attending classes and researching. All your answers will remain confidential and there are no right or wrong answers.

Demographic information

1. Gender: (circle one) male female
2. Age: _____
3. Nationality: _____
4. Native language: _____
5. Is this your first semester? Yes / No
6. Please write your Major area of study: _____
7. What are your main reasons for studying at a university in Australia? (Circle more than one if appropriate)
 - Better job opportunities in my home country
 - Better job opportunities worldwide
 - To improve my English
 - To experience living abroad
 - My parents want me to study abroad
 - Other reasons _____
8. Have you studied at university or college before? Yes / No
9. If **yes**, what did you study and where: _____

Reading habits and expectations

10. What materials do you currently read in English? (Circle all the answers which apply to you)

News Magazines Academic journal articles Social media
Non-fiction books Fiction books (novels) Online blogs
Other _____

11. How many hours per week do you currently spend reading in **English**? (circle **ONE**)

0-1 hours 2-3 hours 4-5 hours 6-7 hours 8-9 hours
10 hours or more

12. What materials do you currently read in **your native language**? (Circle all the answers which apply to you)

News Magazines Academic journal articles Social media
Non-fiction books Fiction books (novels) Online blogs
Other _____

13. How many hours per week do you currently spend reading in **your native language**? (circle **ONE**)

0-1 hours 2-3 hours 4-5 hours 6-7 hours 8-9 hours
10 hours or more

14. How many hours **per week** do you expect to have to spend reading **academic materials** to successfully complete your assignments and exams?

0-1 hours 2-3 hours 4-5 hours 6-7 hours 8-9 hours
10 hours or more

Academic Conventions and Skills

15. If you need help improving your **academic reading** what will you do? (Circle all the answers which apply to you)

Use university online learning resources

Attend library workshops

One-on-one language consultations

Ask my course teachers for help

Other _____

16. If you need help improving your **academic writing** what will you do? (Circle all the answers which apply to you)

Use university online learning resources

Attend library workshops

One-on-one language consultations

Ask my course teachers for help

Other _____

Please read each of the following statements carefully. Rate whether you believe each one is Not Important, Slightly Important, you are Uncertain, it is Fairly Important or Very Important. Please circle **ONE** of the numbers below for each statement.

Not Important Slightly Important Uncertain Fairly Important Very Important

17. Spending time improving my English **academic writing** 1 2 3 4 5

18. Spending time improving my English **academic reading** 1 2 3 4 5

19. Understanding **academic integrity** 1 2 3 4 5

20. Understanding how to **reference academic sources** in assignments 1 2 3 4 5

21. Being able to use **critical thinking** 1 2 3 4 5

Learning Environment

	Not Important	Slightly Important	Uncertain	Fairly Important	Very Important
22. Studying with students from different cultures	1	2	3	4	5
23. Engaging with students in class discussions	1	2	3	4	5
24. My teachers understanding the cultural and language challenges I face	1	2	3	4	5

Please read each of the following statements carefully. Rate whether you believe each one is Not True, Slightly True, you are Uncertain, it is Fairly True or Very True. Please circle **ONE** of the numbers below for each statement.

	Not True	Slightly True	Uncertain	Fairly True	Very True
25. I expect my course teachers to tell me what I need to read	1	2	3	4	5
26. I expect to have one-on-one time with my course teachers	1	2	3	4	5

Do you have any other comments you would like to make about your experiences at the university so far this semester:

Thank you for participating.

Appendix C - Information sheet for potential case study participants

Investigating international undergraduate students' academic literacy experiences

Chief Investigator

Dr Minglin Li
School of Education & Professional Studies
Email: m.li@griffith.edu.au

Student Researcher

Keri Freeman
School of Education & Professional Studies
Email: k.freeman@griffith.edu.au

Why is the research being conducted?

The proposed research aims to examine the factors which impact on first year international students' academic literacy practices and experiences.

What will you be asked to do?

You will be asked to participate in weekly 15 minute structured interviews from week 5 to week 13 in semester 1, 2014. You will also be asked to participate in three 30 minute semi-structured interviews, one in week 6 of semester 1, 2014, one in week 14 of semester 1, 2014 and one around week 7 of semester 2, 2014. All the interviews will be audio recorded with your permission. The purpose of the interviews is to gain understanding of the academic literacy experiences first year international students have, in particular their academic reading experiences.

How will participants be selected for the research?

Student participants will be selected based on the following:

1. First year international undergraduate student, Gold Coast Campus
2. Willingness to participate in the research
3. Gives informed consent.

Risks to you

There are no risks associated with participation in this research project. All participants will be over 18 and there are no perceived conflicts of interest for participants. The research will be conducted in a completely ethical manner with the interests of the participants being of paramount importance at all times.

Your Confidentiality

All participants will remain anonymous. While the data is analysed it will be kept in a locked filing cabinet with only the researcher having access. All data is being collected for research purposes only and will be destroyed upon completion of the thesis.

Your participation is voluntary

All participation is voluntary. The decision not to participate in this research project will in no way impact upon your academic results. Potential participants are free to withdraw at any time.

Questions and further information

If you have any questions regarding the research project please contact Keri Freeman on 0409155440 or k.freeman@griffith.edu.au.

Privacy Statement

This research involves the collection, access and/or use of your personal information. The information collected is confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties without your consent, except to meet government, legal or other regulatory authority requirements. Your anonymity will be safe-guarded at all times. For further information consult the University's Privacy Plan at www.gu.edu.au/ua/aa/vc/pp or telephone (07) 37355585.

Appendix D - Case study participant consent form

Chief Investigator

Dr Minglin Li
School of Education & Professional Studies
Email: m.li@griffith.edu.au

Student Researcher

Keri Freeman
School of Education & Professional Studies
Email: k.freeman@griffith.edu.au

By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understood the information package and in particular:

- I understand that my involvement in this research will include nine structured interviews and three semi-structured interviews;
- I understand that the interviews will be audio recorded and the files will be kept in a locked drawer which only the researcher will have access to;
- I understand there are no risks involved;
- I understand that there will be no benefit to me from my participation in this research;
- I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary and in no way will it impact on my grades;
- I understand that if I have any additional questions I can contact the research team;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty;
- I understand that I can contact the Manager, Research Ethics, at Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee on 37355585 or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au if I have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the project; and
- I agree to participate in the project.

NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

Appendix E - First structured interview schedule

Week 4

Pseudonym _____

Date and Place: _____

Courses: _____

Background Information

1. Age: _____
2. Nationality: _____
3. Degree: _____
4. Previous education _____
5. Pathway into university _____
6. What are your main motivations for studying at a university in Australia?

7. The English language skill you expect to find the **most difficult** and why?

8. Before the semester began, how many hours per week did you spend reading in **English**?

9. Before the semester began, what materials did you read in English?
News Magazines Journal articles Non-fiction Fiction
Social media Other _____
10. Before the semester began, how many hours per week did you spend reading in **your native language**?

EAL students' academic literacies

11. Before the semester began, what materials did you read in your native language?

News Magazines Journal articles Non-fiction Fiction
Social media Other _____

12. How many hours **per week** do you expect to have to spend reading **academic materials** to successfully complete your courses?

13. Which of your classes did you attend this week?

14. What Course assignments/exams have you completed this week?

15. Have you received any marks or feedback for assessment tasks?

16. What course assignments/exams do you have due next week?

17. How many hours did you spend reading academic texts this week?

18. What academic materials did you spend time reading this week and why?

Course required readings

Textbooks (or sections of text books)

Journal articles

Other academic materials

19. What have you done this week to enhance your academic skills?

20. What have you done this week to enhance your English language skills?

21. Who have you sought help from this week?

Additional field notes

Appendix F - Weekly structured interview schedule

Weeks 5 -13

Pseudonym _____

Date and Place: _____

Courses: _____

1. Which classes did you attend this week?

2. What course assignments/exams have you completed this week?

3. What course assignments/exams do you have due next week?

4. What marks and feedback have you received for your course assessments this week?

5. How many hours did you spend reading academic texts this week?

6. What did you spend time reading this week and why?

Course required readings

Textbooks (or sections of text books)

Journal articles

Other academic materials

7. What have you done this week to enhance your academic skills?

8. What have you done this week to enhance your English language skills?

9. Who have you sought help from this week?

Additional field notes

Appendix G - First semi-structured interview schedule

Week 7, semester 1

Background

Can you describe your previous educational background in your home country and how does it compare to Australia so far?

Can you describe your entry pathway into the university?

What are your expectations for this semester in terms of the academic skills and language skills you think you need to improve?

How will you try to improve them?

Courses

Can you describe your experiences in your courses during the first few weeks at university?

Were these experiences what you were expecting and why?

Where do you find the knowledge you need to improve your academic skills

Where do you find the knowledge you need for your courses?

Academic literacy

What have the academic demands for your courses been like so far? What kinds of assignments do you have?

What are the most important academic skills you will need to pass your courses?

Which aspects of your academic literacy do you think you need to develop further and how will you do this?

How do you know what to read for your courses?

Engaging with peers and university staff

How do you feel when you interact with other students in your courses?

What do you think about the communication to students through course profiles?

What benefits do you think you will gain from studying with students from many different cultures?

Appendix H - Second semi-structured interview schedule

Week 14, semester 1

English

Which English language skill have you found the most challenging and was it what you expected?

What have you been doing to improve your English skills?

Reading

Were your expected number of reading hours per week what you actually did? Why do you think it was different?

Did you use your assigned textbooks and what did you use them for?

What kinds of materials did you have for your required readings and did you keep up with them for your courses? Do you think you will have needed to for your exams?

Courses

What do you think about your course results so far? Are they what you expected? Do they reflect your effort?

What feedback have you received for assignments and exams?

How have you responded to that feedback?

Academic Literacy

How do you feel about your level of academic skills, understanding assignment expectations, critical thinking, referencing? Anything to improve?

Anything you will change for next semester or want to do better?

Did teachers expect you to know disciplinary skills and conventions?

What challenges have you faced using new literacy practices?

How have you improved or changed as a student?

Engagement with teachers and peers

Are you encouraged to participate in class? Given time to formulate your answers?

What interactions do you have with your peers?

Have you completed any group assignments? If yes, describe your experiences.

EAL students' academic literacies

How often do you consult with your teachers and what have those experiences been like?

What feelings do you have about the academic community here, do you feel part of it? Has this changed through the semester?

Do you think your teachers understand the challenges EAL students face?

Have your experiences met your expectations?

Appendix I - Third semi-structured interview schedule

Week 3, semester 2

Semester 1 results and reflection

What were your results for your courses last semester? Were they what you expected?

Did they reflect your effort?

What do you need to do to improve as a student this semester?

As a commencing student last semester, how were your needs met by the university and your teachers? Can you share some examples? What are your needs now? Are the same as last semester or similar?

Expectations for semester 2

What courses and assignments do you have this semester?

What information did you receive from the university at the start of the semester?

How will you achieve your academic goals?

Reading

Do your courses have assigned textbooks this semester? Required readings?

Why is reading important? How will you handle the reading load?

What will you do differently this semester in your approach to reading?

Academic literacy

Do you need to improve your skills?

What are your biggest academic literacy challenges?

Do you feel you are successfully adapting/ have adapted to Australian university?

What do your courses do to help you improve your academic literacy and language?

Do you plan to use any support services this semester?

Student Identity

How important is it to be an independent learner in your courses?

Do you know the university's Graduate Attributes?

How do you feel about your academic community now? Do you feel part of it?

What are your student attributes and what do you need to improve?

Why is interacting with peers important?

Appendix J - Fourth semi-structured interview schedule

Week 7 of Semester 2, 2014

Courses

What experiences have you had in your courses and with your assignments?

What kind of feedback do you receive from teachers? Have you received teacher feedback on language or academic literacy?

What knowledge are you gaining to help in your career?

What support services have you used?

Reading

How much reading have you been doing and what do you read?

Academic Literacy

Do you feel the university values your knowledge and experiences? How is this shown?

How do you approach and your assignments now? Is it different to last semester?

Which experiences or people have had the greatest influence on you in terms of enhancing your academic literacy?

Can you describe your experiences in the classroom? Are they the same or different compared to last semester and why?

If you were at home you might get better grades, how does this make you feel?

Appendix K - Fifth semi-structured interview schedule

Week 14, semester 2

Academic experiences

Tell me about your courses and assignments?

Where do you get your knowledge about course content?

How has your English improved?

Do teachers provide feedback on your language? Do you think they should?

What are your thoughts about the disciplinary conventions you have to adhere to?

How have culture and language affected your interactions with teachers and peers?

Which support services have you used this semester?

What aspects of academic literacy do you think students need to focus on to be successful in Australian universities?

How has studying in Australia changed you as a student?

Is it important to have the chance to discuss concepts with other students?

How can teachers facilitate these opportunities?

Appendix L - Transcription conventions

(Adapted from Richards, 2003, p. 173)

?	Questioning intonation
!	Exclamatory utterance
,	Pause of about 1 second
...	Pause of about 3 seconds
<u>Underline</u>	Marks emphatic stress
/?/	Unable to transcribe
()	used to add details such as body language or laughing
[]	used to provide context where required in excerpts

Appendix M1 - Readings listed in Trang's course profiles

<i>Digital Visualisation (1st year course)</i>	<i>Creative Visual Strategies (1st year course)</i>	<i>Introduction to Marketing (1st year course)</i>	<i>Language & Communication (1st year course)</i>
<p>Required Resources: 'Access to Adobe After Effects and Photoshop.'</p> <p>Recommended Resources: 6 books</p>	<p>Required Resources: 3 textbooks</p> <p>Recommended Resources: 20 books</p>	<p>Required Resources: 1 E-textbook</p> <p>Recommended Resources: None</p> <p>Section 4.2 Other Teaching and Learning Activities: 'It is expected that students will spend a further 7 hours per week engaging in self-directed learning, which will include readings, assigned exercises and assignments.'</p>	<p>Required Resources: None listed</p> <p>Recommended Resources: 5 books & 1 journal article.</p> <p>Section 4.2 Other Teaching and Learning Activities: 'The course involves approximately 10 hours of study every week (4 hours contact and 6 hours self-study).'</p>

Appendix M2 - Readings listed in Gabriella's course profiles

<i>Hospitality Marketing (2nd year course)</i>	<i>Language & Communication (1st year course)</i>	<i>Introduction to Research (1st year course)</i>	<i>Foundation Studies (1st year course)</i>
<p>Required Resources: 1 textbook</p> <p>Recommended Resources: Industry and Government websites and academic and industry journals. No links given.</p> <p>Section 1.4. Timetable: 'Students should be prepared to commit approximately 10 hours per week for each course throughout the semester/trimester. These 10 hours include lecture and tutorial attendance, reading and revision, and the preparation of items for assessment.'</p>	<p>Required Resources: 'There is no set textbook for this course. Readings will be set by your lecturer during the semester. These readings will be available on the course website under Readings.'</p>	<p>Required Resources: 1 textbook</p> <p>Recommended Resources: 6 textbooks</p> <p>Section 4.2 Other Teaching and Learning Activities: 'the university norm expected for student work is approximately one hour per credit point per week or ten hours per week for a ten-credit point course.'</p>	<p>Required Resources: 'Digitised Readings available on the course website and there will be copies for purchase as a reader at the Co-op bookstore.'</p> <p>Recommended Resources: Additional readings on the course website</p> <p>Section 4.2 Other Teaching and Learning Activities: 'Students are expected to spend around 10 hours per week on learning and assessment activities including class and tutorial participation.'</p>

Appendix M3 - Readings listed in Snow's course profiles

<i>Employment Relations (1st year course)</i>	<i>Language & Communication (1st year course)</i>	<i>Government Business Relations (1st year course)</i>	<i>Accounting for Decision Making (1st year course)</i>
<p>Required Resources: 1 textbook & a Communication Skills Handbook</p> <p>Recommended Resources: None</p>	<p>Required Resources: 'There is no set textbook for this course. Readings will be set by your lecturer during the semester. These readings will be available on the course website under Readings.'</p>	<p>Required Resources: 2 textbooks</p> <p>Recommended Resources: Available on the course webpage</p> <p>Section 1.4.Timetable: 'Students should be prepared to commit approximately 10 hours per week for each course throughout the semester/trimester. These 10 hours include lecture and tutorial attendance, reading and revision, and the preparation of items for assessment.'</p>	<p>Required Resources: 1 textbook</p> <p>Recommended Resources: 2 books & the Australian Accounting Standards Board website. No link given.</p> <p>Section 1.4.Timetable: 'Students should be prepared to commit approximately 10 hours per week for each course throughout the semester/trimester. These 10 hours include lecture and tutorial attendance, reading and revision, and the preparation of items for assessment.'</p>

Appendix M4 - Readings listed in Jaili's course profiles

<i>Structural Analysis (3rd year course)</i>	<i>Geotechnical Engineering (3rd year course)</i>	<i>Construction Materials (3rd year course)</i>	<i>Language & Communication (1st year course)</i>
Required Resources: 1 textbook and 1 workbook Recommended Resources: 4 books	Required Resources: 2 textbooks Recommended Resources: 3 books	Required Resources: 'Guide to Concrete Standards in Australia.' Recommended Resources: 6 books	Required Resources: 'There is no set textbook for this course. Readings will be set by your lecturer during the semester. These readings will be available on the course website under Readings.'

Appendix M5 - Readings listed in Emily's course profiles

<i>Engineering Fundamentals (1st year course)</i>	<i>Language & Communication (1st year course)</i>	<i>MATLAB (1st year course)</i>	<i>Maths IA (1st year course)</i>
<p>Required Resources: 'All resources will be provided on the course website'</p> <p>Recommended Resources: None</p>	<p>Required Resources: 'There is no set textbook for this course. Readings will be set by your lecturer during the semester. These readings will be available on the course website under Readings.'</p>	<p>Required Resources: 1 textbook</p> <p>Recommended Resources: 2 books</p>	<p>Required Resources: Printed lecture notes available to purchase from university bookstore</p> <p>Recommended Resources: 6 books</p>

Appendix M6 - Readings listed in Filipe's course profiles

Entomology (2nd year course)	Language & Communication (1st year course)	Biological Systems (1st year course)	Introduction to Environmental Sustainability (1st year course)
<p>Required Resources: 1 E-book. 'Do not buy this text until you have determined the level of need you may have for it.'</p> <p>Recommended Resources: 1 book. 'Do not buy this text unless you plan to become a professional entomologist.'</p>	<p>Required Resources: 'There is no set textbook for this course. Readings will be set by your lecturer during the semester. These readings will be available on the course website under Readings.'</p>	<p>Required Resources: 1 E-textbook</p> <p>Recommended Resources: 'There are numerous basic biology texts in the library that cover substantial parts of this course. "Biology" by Campbell et al., Pearson Education Publishers, and "Principles of Life" by Hillis et al., Sinauer Publishers are just two of the many excellent Biology texts available.'</p> <p>Section 1.2 Course Introduction: 'Students are expected to spend a total of ten hours per week on this course during the semester.'</p>	<p>Required Resources: Communication and academic writing for Geography and Environmental Science.</p> <p>Plus, 'on-line notes for each topic with links to supporting resources are provided on the course website.'</p> <p>Recommended Resources: None</p>

Appendix M7 - Readings listed in Camilla's course profiles

<i>Clinical Microbiology (3rd year course)</i>	<i>Language & Communication (1st year course)</i>	<i>Priorities & Interventions in Public Health (2nd year course)</i>	<i>Introduction to Health Promotion (1st year course)</i>
<p>Required Resources: 1 textbook & 1 lab manual</p> <p>Recommended Resources: 1 book & 'online Mycology website.' No link given.</p>	<p>Required Resources: 'All the readings for this course have been digitized and placed on the course website. Students are expected to download these resources and read them each week.'</p> <p>Recommended Resources: 'Further recommendations will be made to students via the course website.'</p>	<p>Required Resources: 1 textbook</p> <p>Recommended Resources: 1 textbook & 'there will be a reading on the particular topic of the week posted on the course website each week.'</p>	<p>Required Resources: 1 textbook & 3 videos</p> <p>Recommended Resources: 4 books</p>

Appendix M8 – Readings listed in Meko's course profiles

<i>Introduction to Environmental Sustainability (1st year course)</i>	<i>English Language & Communication (1st year course)</i>	<i>Applied Maths (1st year course)</i>
<p>Required Resources: 1 textbook - Communication and academic writing for Geography and Environmental Science.</p> <p>Plus, 'on-line notes for each topic with links to supporting resources are provided on the course website.'</p>	<p>Required Resources: 'There is no set textbook for this course. Readings will be set by your lecturer during the semester. These readings will be available on the course website under Readings.'</p>	<p>Required Resources: 1 textbook</p> <p>Recommended Resources: 6 books</p>

Appendix N1 - Trang's reported reading & course profiles

Week	Reported reading activities	Weekly readings according to course profiles		
		<i>Introduction to Marketing</i>	<i>Language & Communication</i>	<i>Creative Visual Strategies</i>
4	<p>4 hours 1 ½ chapters of Marketing E-textbook</p> <p>4 journal articles to prepare for Digital Visualization online quiz.</p> <p>Week 3 Language & Communication reading.</p>	E-textbook chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 14	Week 3 - Journal article (pp. 237-251).	<p>Textbook 1 chapter 4</p> <p>Textbook 2 chapter 8</p> <p>Textbook 3 chapter 7</p>
5	<p>4 hours 1 chapter of Marketing E-textbook.</p> <p>Searched for journal articles for Language & Communication report.</p>	E-textbook chapter 6	No weekly reading listed.	No weekly reading listed.
6	<p>4 hours Skimmed 4 ½ chapters of Marketing E-textbook. Knew he had not read all the required chapters.</p>	E-textbook chapters 1,2,3,4,5 & 6	6 textbook chapters from recommended resources.	No weekly reading listed
7	<p>4 hours Found & skimmed 3 articles for Language & Communication report; "took a long time to find" but the articles had "a lot of good ideas I can use."</p>	E-textbook chapter 7.	No weekly reading listed.	No weekly reading listed.
Br e a k	<p>5 hours Journal articles for Language & Communication report.</p>	No weekly reading listed.	No weekly reading listed.	No weekly reading listed.
8	<p>0 hours Reported no required course readings.</p> <p>Worked on Digital Visualisation skills targets.</p>	E-textbook chapter 9	Textbook chapter from recommended resources.	No weekly reading listed.
9	<p>4 hours Reported no required course readings.</p> <p>Found & read 3 journal articles for Marketing plan.</p>	E-textbook - chapters 8 & 10	2 textbook chapters from recommended resource.	No weekly reading listed.

EAL students' academic literacies

10	10 hours Reported no required course readings. Marketing E-textbook for group assignment; "I used it a lot". 2 journal articles for marketing assignment.	No weekly reading listed.	No weekly reading listed.	No weekly reading listed.
11	0 hours Reported no required course readings.	E-textbook - chapter 11	No weekly reading listed.	No weekly reading listed.
12	0 hours Reported no required course readings.	E-textbook - chapter 13	No weekly reading listed.	No weekly reading listed.
13	0 hours Reported no required course readings.	'Weaven, S.' Not listed as a resource.	No weekly reading listed.	No weekly reading listed.
Total Reading Hours = 35				

Note. No weekly readings for Digital Visualisation listed in the course profile.

Appendix N2 - Gabriella's reported reading & course profiles

W e e k	Reported reading activities	Weekly readings according to course profiles			
		<i>Hospitality Marketing</i>	<i>Language & Communication</i>	<i>Intro to Research</i>	<i>Foundation Studies</i>
4	6 hours Skimmed Foundation Studies & Language & Communication journal readings. Found & read 3 journal articles for Intro to Research literature review.	Textbook chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 17, 9 & 10.	Week 3 – Journal article (pp. 237-251).	Textbook chapters 1, 4, 2, 16, 17, 18 & 19. 1 chapter from recommended resource.	Readings 1, 2, 3 & 4.
5	12 hours Journal articles for Intro to Research literature review.	No weekly reading listed.	No weekly reading listed.	Textbook chapters 16 & 22.	Reading 5.
6	2 hours Reported no required course readings. Section of Foundation Studies textbook for assignment.	Textbook chapter 8.	6 textbook chapters	Textbook chapters 6, 7, 9 & 14.	Reading 7.
7	2 hours Reported no required course readings. Marketing textbook which tutor recommended for presentation; "it wasn't useful."	No weekly reading listed.	No weekly reading listed.	Textbook chapter 6, 7, 9 & 14.	No weekly reading listed.
B r e a k	2 hours Journal article for Language & Communication oral presentation	No weekly reading listed.	No weekly reading listed.	No weekly reading listed.	No weekly reading listed.
8	2 hours Reported no required course readings. Journal article for Language & Communication oral presentation.	Textbook chapters 6 & 7.	Textbook chapter from recommended resources.	Textbook chapters 6, 7 & 9.	Reading 9.
9	3 hours Reported no required course readings.	Textbook chapter 13.	2 textbook chapters from recomm-	Textbook chapters 6, 7 & 9.	Reading 8.

EAL students' academic literacies

	Searching for & skimming websites & journal articles for 3 written assignments.		ended resource.		
1 0	3 hours Reported no required course readings. 3 journal articles for Intro to Research assignment.	Textbook chapters 14 & 15.	No weekly reading listed.	Textbook chapter 5.	Reading 10.
1 1	4 hours Reported no required course readings. Intro to Research textbook for assignment. 6 journal articles for marketing report; "easy to find and easy to read".	Textbook chapters 11 & 12.	No weekly reading listed.	Textbook chapter 5.	Reading 11.
1 2	0 hours Reported no required course readings.	Textbook chapter 16.	No weekly reading listed.	No weekly reading listed.	Reading 12.
1 3	0 hours	No weekly reading listed.	No weekly reading listed.	No weekly reading listed.	No weekly reading listed.
Total Reading Hours = 36					

Appendix N3 - Snow's reported reading & course profiles

W e e k	Reported reading activities	Weekly readings according to course profiles			
		<i>Employment Relations</i>	<i>Language & Communication</i>	<i>Government Business Relations</i>	<i>Accounting for Decision Making</i>
4	2 hours Language & Communication required reading: "interesting and "straightforward" to read.	Textbook chapters 1, 2 & 3.	Week 3 – Journal article (pp. 237-251).	Textbook 1, chapters 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6. Textbook 2, chapters 1 & 2.	Textbook chapters 1, 3, 4 & 5.
5	4 hours Language & Communication required reading. Government Business Relations textbook chapter for Reading report.	Textbook chapters 4 & 5.	No weekly reading listed.	Textbook 2, chapters 1 & 2.	Textbook chapter 6.
6	12 hours Language & Communication required reading. 3 journal articles for Language & Communication essay. Accounting textbook; summarising content for prepare for mid-semester exam.	Textbook chapter 1.1	No weekly reading listed.	Textbook 2, chapter 6.	Textbook chapters 1, 2, 4, 5 & 6 (Revision for mid-semester exam).
7	10 hours Language & Communication required reading. Employment Relations textbook to understand new concepts e.g. "legislation & lobbying."	Textbook chapter 10.	No weekly reading listed.	No weekly reading listed.	Textbook chapter 7.
B r e a k	3 hours Accounting textbook to practice.	No weekly reading listed.	No weekly reading listed.	No weekly reading listed.	No weekly reading listed.

EAL students' academic literacies

8	<p>10 hours Language & Communication required reading.</p> <p>Journal articles for assignments.</p> <p>Reported no other required course readings.</p>	Textbook appendix 2.	Textbook chapter from recommended resources.	Textbook 2, chapters 3 & 5.	Textbook chapter 9.
9	<p>12 hours Reported no required readings.</p> <p>Accounting textbook to practice calculations & equations for exam.</p> <p>Newspaper articles for Government Business Relations essay.</p>	Textbook chapter 6.	2 textbook chapters from recommended resource.	Textbook 2, chapters 7 & 8.	Textbook chapter 10.
10	<p>12 hours Reported no required readings.</p> <p>2 journal articles for Government Business Relations essay.</p>	Textbook chapter 7.	No weekly reading listed.	Textbook 2, chapter 9.	Textbook chapter 11.
11	<p>12 hours Reported no required readings.</p> <p>1 journal article for Employment Relations assignment.</p> <p>2 journal articles to increase Language & Communication essay sources.</p>	Textbook chapter 8	No weekly reading listed.	Textbook 2, chapter 1.	Textbook chapter 12.
12	<p>12 hours Reported no required readings.</p> <p>Textbook chapter for Government Business Relations reading report.</p>	Textbook chapter 9.	No weekly reading listed.	Textbook 2, chapter 12.	Textbook chapter 14.
13	<p>15 hours Caught up on Language & Communication required readings for exam.</p>	No weekly reading listed.	No weekly reading listed.	No weekly reading listed.	No weekly reading listed.
Total Reading Hours = 104					

Appendix N4 - Jali's reported reading & course profiles

	Reported reading activities	Weekly readings according to course profiles	
		<i>Structural Analysis</i>	<i>Language & Communication</i>
4	14 hours Structural Analysis workbook & lab guide. Geotech lab guide.	Workbook chapters 1 & 2.	No weekly reading listed.
5	14 hours Language & Communication required reading. 1 journal article for the English report, but "it was hard to find and wasn't helpful." Structural Analysis workbook & lab guide. Geotech lab guide.	Workbook chapters 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5.	Journal article, 'Presenting in today's world.'
6	14 hours Geotech review lecture slides & lab guide. Construction Materials review lecture slides. Structural analysis workbook & lab guide. 4 journal articles for English report.	Workbook chapter 6.	No weekly reading listed.
7	7 hours Structural Analysis workbook, lab guide & review slides to prepare for exam. Geotech lab guide.	Workbook chapter 7.	No weekly reading listed.
B r e a k	7 hours Structural Analysis workbook, lab guide & review slides to prepare for exam.	No weekly reading	No weekly reading in listed.
8	7 hours Structural Analysis workbook & lab guide. Journal article for Language & Communication presentation: difficult to read because the topic is hard."	Workbook chapter 8.	No weekly reading in listed.
9	4 hours Journal article for Language & Communication presentation	Workbook chapter 8.	No weekly reading in listed.
1 0	7 hours Structural Analysis workbook & lab guide. 4 journal articles for construction materials lab report: "easy to find and helpful, but "some complex sentences were difficult to understand." Doesn't need the journal articles for the report but wants to include them.	Workbook chapter 9.	No weekly reading in listed.

EAL students' academic literacies

1 1	14 hours Structural Analysis workbook to prepare for exam. Geotech lecture slides to prepare for exam. Construction Materials lecture slides to prepare for exam: back to week 1 & working through the weeks to memorise concepts & writes notes as she reads.	Workbook chapter 9.	Journal article, 'Vocabulary.'
1 2	14 hours Structural Analysis workbook to prepare for exam. Geotech lecture slides to prepare for exam. Construction Materials lecture slides & recommended resources to prepare for exam.	Workbook chapter 10 & 11.	No weekly reading listed.
1 3	14 hours Structural Analysis workbook to prepare for exam. Geotech lecture slides to prepare for exam. Construction Materials lecture slides & recommended resources to prepare for exam.	No weekly reading listed.	No weekly reading listed.
Total Reading Hours = 116			

Note. No weekly readings for Construction Materials listed in the course profile. All of the required & recommended textbooks for Geotechnical Engineering were listed in the course profile as readings every week – no chapters specified.

Appendix N5 - Emily's reported reading & course profiles

W e e k	Reported reading activities	Weekly readings according to course profiles	
		<i>Language & Communication</i>	<i>MATLAB</i>
4	1 hour 5 journal articles for English report: "no problems" reading them	No weekly reading listed.	Textbook chapters 1, 2, 4 & 8.
5	0 hours	Journal article, 'Presenting in today's world.'	Textbook chapter 8.
6	5 hours Journal articles for Language & Communication report. Week 5 Language & Communication reading.	No weekly reading listed.	Textbook chapter 9.
7	4 hours Journal articles for Language & Communication report Reviewing Engineering Fundamental lecture slides for exam.	No weekly reading listed.	Textbook chapter 7.
Br ea k	5 hours Journal articles for Language & Communication report Reviewing Engineering Fundamental lecture slides for exam.	No weekly reading listed.	No weekly reading listed.
8	2 hours Reviewing Engineering Fundamentals lecture slides for exam.	No weekly reading listed.	Textbook chapters 5 & 14.
9	1 hour Journal articles for Language & Communication report.	No weekly reading listed.	Textbook chapter 3.
10	1 hour Journal articles for Language & Communication report.	No weekly reading listed.	Textbook chapter 6.
11	1 hour Language & Communication reading.	Journal article, 'Vocabulary'	Textbook chapter 6.
12	0 hours	No weekly reading listed.	Textbook chapter 9.
13	0 hours	No weekly reading listed.	No weekly reading listed.
Total Reading Hours = 20			

Note. No weekly readings for Engineering Fundamentals or Math 1A listed in the course profile.

Appendix N6 - Filipe's reported reading & course profiles

Week	Reported reading activities	Weekly readings according to course profiles	
		<i>Language & Communication</i>	<i>Environmental Sustainability</i>
4	5 hours Biology textbook to prepare for labs.	No weekly reading listed.	Topics 1, 2, 3 & 4 readings on LMS & Textbook chapters 1, 6, 8, 9 & 10.
5	4 hours Biology & Entomology textbooks. Journal articles for Environmental essay.	Journal article, 'Presenting in today's world.'	Topic 5 readings on LMS & Textbook chapters 10.
6	4 hours Biology & Entomology textbooks. 8 journal articles for Language & Communication report	No weekly reading listed.	Topic 6 readings on LMS & Textbook chapters 1, 6 & 10.
7	4 hours Journal articles for Language & Communication report.	No weekly reading listed	Topic 7 readings on LMS & Textbook chapter 9.
Break	5 hours Biological systems & Entomology textbooks	No weekly reading listed.	No weekly reading.
8	7 hours Biological systems & Entomology textbooks. Journal articles for Entomology report	No weekly reading listed.	Topic 8 readings on LMS & Textbook chapters 1, 6 & 10.
9	0 hours	No weekly reading listed.	Topic 9 readings on LMS & Textbook chapters 1, 6 & 10.
10	10 hours 13 journal articles & Entomology textbook for Entomology report.	No weekly reading listed.	Topic 10 readings on LMS & Textbook chapter 8.
11	3 hours Journal articles to finish Entomology report.	Journal article, 'Vocabulary.'	Topic 11 readings on LMS & Textbook chapter 8.
12	0 hours	No weekly reading listed.	Topic 12 readings on LMS & Textbook chapter 8.

EAL students' academic literacies

1 3	0 hours	No weekly reading listed.	Topic 13 readings on LMS & Textbook chapter 8.
Total Reading Hours = 42			

Note. No weekly readings for Filipe's Entomology or Biological Systems listed in the course profiles.

Appendix N7 - Camilla's reported reading & course profiles

Week	Reported reading activities	Weekly reading according to course profiles		
		<i>Language & Communication for Health</i>	<i>Priorities & Interventions in Public Health</i>	<i>Introduction to Health Promotion</i>
4	<p>10 hours Language & Communication required reading.</p> <p>4 chapters of Public Health textbook to prepare for lectures & mid-semester exam. 1 hour for each chapter and "not too hard to understand."</p> <p>Microbiology lab manual.</p>	Journal article – Mental illness	Textbook chapters 1, 8, 2, 5 & 6. Recommended textbook chapter 17. Topic specific reading TBA	Textbook chapters 1, 2, 3 & 10. Insight & Catalyst video.
5	<p>10 hours 1 chapter of Public Health textbook to prepare for lectures & exam.</p> <p>Microbiology lab manual.</p>	Journal article - 'Presenting in today's world'	No weekly reading listed.	Four Corners Video.
6	<p>20 hours Journal article for Language & Communication presentation.</p> <p>Health Promotions textbook: skimmed a few pages to for exam.</p> <p>Microbiology lab manual.</p>	Obtain your group's oral presentation article and read it.	Recommended textbook chapters 12, 15 & 16. Topic specific reading TBA.	Textbook chapters 4 & 5.
7	<p>10 hours Journal articles for Language & Communication essay: two hours each to read because reading "a few times".</p> <p>Public Health textbook to prepare for lecture because only 50% in mid-semester exam and wants higher mark next time.</p> <p>Microbiology lab manual.</p>	Journal article - 'In search of an alternative discourse on international medical graduates'	Recommended textbook chapter 31. Topic specific reading TBA.	No weekly reading listed.
8	<p>20 hours Journal articles for Language & Communication & Health Promotions essays.</p> <p>Public Health textbook.</p> <p>Microbiology lab manual.</p>	'Australian health care system: An outline'	Recommended textbook chapter 24. Topic specific reading TBA	Textbook chapters 15 & 19.

EAL students' academic literacies

9	<p>28 hours Microbiology lecture slides & her notes and making summaries to prepare for exam.</p> <p>Microbiology lab manual.</p> <p>Reported no required readings.</p>	Journal article - 'The relationship among anxiety, anger and blood pressure'. (pp.17-18)	Topic specific reading TBA.	Textbook chapters 9, 17 & 18.
10	<p>10 hours Journal articles for Public Health essay & Health Promotions essay: "had to read many to find a good ones".</p> <p>Language & Communication reading.</p> <p>Microbiology lab manual.</p>	Journal article - 'The relationship among anxiety, anger and blood pressure'. (pp.19-23)	Topic specific reading TBA.	Textbook chapter 20.
11	<p>10 hours Public Health weekly online reading before lecture.</p> <p>Microbiology lab manual.</p>	Journal article – 'Vocabulary'	Topic specific reading TBA.	No weekly reading listed.
12	<p>12 hours Journal articles for assignments.</p> <p>Microbiology lab manual.</p>	No weekly reading listed.	Topic specific reading TBA.	No weekly reading listed.
13	<p>15 hours Microbiology lab manual & lecture notes to prepare for exam.</p>	No weekly reading listed.	No weekly reading listed.	No weekly reading listed.
Total Reading Hours = 145				

Note. Microbiology course profile listed 'textbook' every week in the course profile. No specific chapters given.

Appendix N8 - Meko's reported reading & course profiles

W e e k	Reported reading activities	Required reading according to Course Profiles		
		<i>Environmental Sustainability</i>	<i>Language & Communication for Science & Engineering</i>	<i>Applied Maths</i>
4	<p>20 hours Journal articles for Language & Communication report.</p> <p>Environmental Sustainability slides & reading.</p> <p>Maths textbook – practice problems.</p>	Topics 1, 2, 3 & 4 readings on LMS & Textbook chapters 1, 6, 8, 9 & 10.	No reading listed.	Textbook chapters 1 & 2.
5	<p>20 hours Journal articles for Language & Communication report.</p> <p>Environmental Sustainability slides & reading.</p>	Topic 5 readings on LMS & Textbook chapter 10.	No weekly reading listed.	Textbook chapter 2.
6	<p>30 hours Journal articles for Language & Communication report & Environmental Sustainability essay.</p> <p>Language & Communication reading.</p> <p>Environmental Sustainability slides & readings.</p> <p>Maths text book – practice problems.</p>	Topic 6 readings on LMS & Textbook chapters 1, 6 & 10.	Journal article, 'Presenting in today's world.'	Textbook chapter 3.
7	<p>20 hours Journal articles for Language & Communication report & Environmental Sustainability essay.</p> <p>Environmental Sustainability slides & readings.</p>	Topic 7 readings on LMS & Textbook chapter 9.	No weekly reading listed.	Textbook chapter 4.
Break	<p>20 hours Journal articles for Language & Communication report & Environmental Sustainability essay.</p>	No weekly reading listed.	No weekly reading listed.	No weekly reading listed.
8	<p>20 hours Journal articles for Language & Communication report &</p>	Topic 8 readings on LMS &	No weekly reading listed.	Textbook chapter 5.

EAL students' academic literacies

	Environmental Sustainability essay. Environmental Sustainability slides & catching up on readings.	Textbook chapters 1, 6 & 10.		
9	15 hours Journal articles for Language & Communication report & Environmental Sustainability essay. Environmental Sustainability slides & readings.	Topic 9 readings on LMS & Textbook chapters 1, 6 & 10.	No weekly reading listed.	Textbook chapter 7 (7.1).
10	15 hours Journal articles for Language & Communication report & Environmental Sustainability essay. Environmental Sustainability slides & readings.	Topic 10 readings on LMS & Textbook chapter 8.	No weekly reading listed.	Textbook chapter 7
11	10 hours Environmental Sustainability slides & readings.	Topic 11 readings on LMS & Textbook chapter 8.	No weekly reading listed.	Textbook chapter 11
12	15 hours Environmental Sustainability slides & readings.	Topic 12 readings on LMS & Textbook chapter 8.	No weekly reading listed.	Textbook chapter 10
13	15 hours Revision for three exams: reading lecture slides & notes.	Topic 13 readings on LMS & Textbook chapter 8.	Journal article, 'Vocabulary.'	No weekly reading listed.
Total Reading Hours = 190				