

**LEARNER INDEPENDENCE IN HONG KONG: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF
THE EFFECTS OF THE ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES
TRAINING PROGRAMME ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF
AUTONOMOUS LEARNING STRATEGIES**

**being a thesis submitted for the degree of PhD in Education
in the University of Hull**

by Elizabeth Anna Bankowski, MA

July 2000

Acknowledgements

The researcher wishes to express her thanks to Dr. Maurice Whitehead and for his guidance in the development of this study.

The researcher is also indebted to Dr. Jo Lewkowicz, Dr. Michael Bottery, Dr. Jeff Moore and Prof. William Littlewood for their feedback on various parts of this research and to Dr. David Kember and Prof. Mohsen Ghadessy for their encouragement, support.

Thanks should be extended to the instructors, Miss Carol Lam and Mr. Kin Chan, for their time, their co-operation and openness in allowing the research assistant to observe and interview their students. Thanks are also due to Mrs. Elizabeth Cotton, the research assistant, for her contributions, involvement and interest in this study.

Lastly, but most importantly, the researcher wishes to express her thanks to her husband Paul and her son Conrad for their patience, good-humor, and constant encouragement during these past four years.

CONTENTS

	CONTENTS	iii
	LIST OF TABLES	xi
	INTRODUCTION	1
1.0	CHAPTER ONE Background information	8
1.1	INTRODUCTION	9
1.2	GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION OF HONG KONG	9
1.3	BRIEF HISTORY OF HONG KONG	10
1.4	THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG	11
1.5	HONG KONG EDUCATION SYSTEM	12
1.5.1	An overview of Hong Kong education	12
1.5.2	Educational structure	12
1.5.3	School education	15
1.5.4	Public examinations in Hong Kong	16
1.5.5	Options after secondary education	18
1.5.6	Higher education	18
1.5.7	Teacher education	19
1.5.8	Funding	19
1.6	HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY	21
1.6.1	Brief history of HKBU	21
1.6.2	University mission	21
1.6.3	HKBU student profile	22
1.6.4	The Language Centre	23
1.6.5	The teaching of English at Hong Kong Baptist University	24
1.6.6	English for Academic Purposes (EAP)	24
1.6.7	EAP course objectives and expected outcomes	25
1.6.8	Outline of the EAP course content	25

2.0	CHAPTER TWO Literature review	27
2.1	INTRODUCTION	29
2.2	CULTURE AND EDUCATION	30
2.2.1	Confucian culture in Hong Kong	30
2.2.2	The traditional Chinese classroom	32
2.2.3	The role of a student	32
2.2.4	Status of education in Hong Kong	34
2.2.5	Role of reading, memorisation and learning	36
2.2.6	Confucian <i>versus</i> Western values	37
2.3	THE ROLE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE	43
2.3.1	Status of English	43
2.3.2	Use of mixed-code in Hong Kong	47
2.4	CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT OF THE HONG KONG EDUCATION SYSTEM	52
2.4.1	Change of the medium of instruction in schools	52
2.4.2	Language of instruction in universities	53
2.4.3	Teaching and learning	56
2.4.4	Teachers	60
2.4.5	Role of examinations	63
2.4.6	Hong Kong reunification with China and the school curriculum	69
2.4.7	New developments in the language policies	73
2.5	LEARNER AUTONOMY	75
2.5.1	Historical overview	75
2.5.2	Concept of self-directedness	77
2.5.3	Developing independence	81
2.5.4	Self-direction and social context	86
2.5.5	Teachers' role in developing self-directedness	88
2.5.6	Strategies for enhancing self-directedness in learning	94
2.5.7	Characteristics of self-directed learner	100
2.5.8	Disciplinary differences	103
2.5.9	Learning strategies and study approaches	104

2.6	LEARNER INDEPENDENCE IN HONG KONG	112
2.6.1	Chinese learner and self-directedness	112
2.6.2	Creativity	115
2.7	THE NEED TO REFORM	117
3.0	CHAPTER THREE Methodology	125
3.1	HYPOTHESES	127
3.2	DESIGN AND RESEARCH PARADIGM	129
3.2.1	Basic structure of the study	129
3.2.2	Initial stage of the study	131
3.2.3	Second stage of the study – the experiment	132
3.2.4	Measuring the outcome	134
3.3	ASSUMPTIONS	137
3.4	TIMING OF THE STUDY AND LENGTH OF THE EXPERIMENT	138
3.5	POPULATION	139
3.5.1	Defining population	139
3.5.2	Description of the population	139
3.5.3	Target population	140
3.6	THE SAMPLING PROCEDURE	141
3.6.1	Sample for the survey (pre-treatment questionnaire)	141
3.6.2	Sample for the interviews	142
3.6.3	Sample for the experimental and control groups	143
3.6.4	Sample for oral presentation observations	144
3.6.5	Sample for essay evaluation	145
3.7	INSTRUMENTS	146
3.7.1	Use of questionnaires	146
3.7.2	First questionnaire: survey of students' study experience	147
3.7.3	Second questionnaire – training evaluation	151
3.7.4	Third questionnaire	155
3.7.5	Interviews	157
3.7.6	Observation	159

3.7.7	Essay evaluations	161
3.8	TRAINING MATERIALS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION	163
3.8.1	Research Project Packages	163
3.8.2	Library training sessions	165
3.8.3	Classroom training	169
3.8.4	Tutor training	173
3.8.5	Supervision and monitoring	175
3.9	STATISTICAL ANALYSES OF DATA	176
3.9.1	Qualitative research data	176
3.9.2	Quantitative research data	177
3.10	ETHICAL ISSUES	179
3.10.1	Protecting the anonymity of the participants	179
3.10.2	Institutional approvals	180
3.10.3	Use of research assistants	181
3.11	VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY	183
3.12	LIMITATIONS	188
3.13	SUMMARY	189
4.0	CHAPTER FOUR Initial survey of student research experience	191
4.1	INTRODUCTION	193
4.2	THE QUESTIONNAIRE	194
4.2.1	Frequency tables	194
4.2.2	The student sample	194
4.2.3	Language	195
4.2.4	Previous research experience	196
4.2.5	Library use	202
4.2.6	Autonomy <i>versus</i> . teacher guidance at secondary school	206
4.2.7	Learning preferences and confidence levels	208
4.3	INTERVIEW SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION	211
4.3.1	Secondary school - medium of instruction	211
4.3.2	Assignments, projects, and essays	212

4.3.3	Previous research experience	117
4.3.4	Oral presentations	219
4.3.5	Use of libraries	221
4.3.6	Place of opinion	222
4.3.7	Transition - perceptions of differences between secondary and tertiary study	223
4.4	FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	226
4.4.1	Research experience	226
4.4.2	Library use	227
4.4.3	Autonomy <i>versus</i> teacher guidance at secondary school	228
4.4.4	Confidence and learning preferences	229
4.5	CONCLUSIONS	231
5.0	CHAPTER FIVE Evaluation of the Training Programme	233
5.1	INTRODUCTION	236
5.2	STUDENT EVALUATION OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMME: QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS	238
5.2.1	Introduction	238
5.2.2	Sample	239
5.2.3	Scales	239
5.3	RESEARCH PROJECT PACKAGE	240
5.3.1	Interest level	240
5.3.2	Level of difficulty	241
5.3.3.	Usefulness in completing project work	242
5.4.	LIBRARY SKILLS TRAINING	243
5.4.1	Level of understanding	244
5.4.2	Contribution of project work in the development of library skills	245
5.4.3	Usefulness of library skills in academic studies	246
5.5	CLASSROOM TRAINING IN SKILLS AND STRATEGIES	247
5.5.1	Level of understanding	248
5.5.2	Contribution of project work in the development of skills and strategies	249

5.5.3	Usefulness in academic studies	250
5.6	OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS	252
5.7	DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS – QUESTIONNAIRE	255
5.8	OBSERVATIONS OF ORAL PRESENTATIONS	256
5.8.1	Introduction	256
5.8.2	Results	257
5.8.3	Organisation: introductions, content and conclusions	258
5.8.4	Organisation of content and progression of ideas	261
5.8.5	Presentation and delivery	262
5.8.6	Use of visual aids	264
5.9	CASE DESCRIPTIONS	265
5.9.1	Sam	265
5.9.2	Jill	267
5.9.3	Barb	268
5.9.4	Jan	269
5.9.5	Kathy	270
5.9.6	Mark	271
5.9.7	Ada	272
5.9.8	Ivy	273
5.9.9	Cher	275
5.9.10	Vicky	276
5.9.11	Micky	276
5.9.12	Mary	277
5.10	DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS: ORAL PRESENTATIONS	279
5.11	ESSAY EVALUATIONS	281
5.11.1	Introduction	281
5.11.2	Essay requirements and topic choice: differences between first and final essays	282
5.11.3	Results	283
5.11.4	Structure and overall content	284

5.11.5	Organisation and content of body	287
5.11.6	Organisation of and content of introductions and conclusions	289
5.11.7	Quoting, citing and referencing	290
5.11.8	Use of resources	292
5.11.9	Conclusions – essay evaluations	294
5.12	DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS: RESEARCH TRAINING PROGRAMME	295
5.12.1	Research Project Packages	295
5.12.2	Library skills	296
5.12.3	Skills and strategies - classroom training	298
5.12.4	Conclusions	301
6.0	CHAPTER SIX Post-treatment questionnaire results	303
6.1	INTRODUCTION	304
6.1.1	Purpose	304
6.1.2	The experimental group	304
6.1.3	The control group	305
6.1.4	GPA (Grade Point Average)	305
6.1.5	Language	305
6.2	RESULTS	306
6.2.1	Research experience	306
6.2.2	Research training	306
6.2.3	Confidence levels	308
6.2.4	Use of resources	310
6.2.5	Skill in library use	317
6.2.6	Learning preferences	322
6.3	DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS	324
6.3.1	Confidence	324
6.3.2	Use of resources	325
6.3.3	Library skills	326
6.3.4	Learning preferences	327

6.4	CONCLUSIONS	328
7.0	CHAPTER SEVEN Conclusions	330
7.1	INTRODUCTION	331
7.2	RETROSPECTIVE LIMITATIONS	335
7.3	CONCLUSIONS	337
7.3.1	Secondary school experience	337
7.3.2	University study	339
7.3.3	Research Training Programme	341
7.4	RECOMMENDATIONS	345
7.4.1	General recommendations	345
7.4.2	Recommendations for Hong Kong Baptist University	350
7.5	FURTHER RESEARCH	353
7.6	SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	355
	APPENDIXES	360
1	Questionnaire 1 – pilot	361
2	Questionnaire 1	365
3	Questionnaire 2	369
4	Questionnaire 3	374
5	Interview questions	376
6	Transcript of a sample interview	378
7	Oral presentation evaluation sheet	395
8	Observation of oral presentation criteria	397
9	Essay scoring sheet	398
10	List of packages	402
11	Sample of Research Project Package	405
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	426

TABLES

Table no.	TITLE	Page
1	Structure of the Hong Kong education system	14
2	Western <i>versus</i> Eastern cultures	41
3	The distribution (in percentage) of schools choosing different language policies in all secondary schools in Hong Kong in 1994-95, 95-96 and 96-97 as released by Education Department	46
4	Profile of the sample population - distribution by gender and faculty	141
5	Distribution of experimental and control groups samples by faculty	146
6	Frequency of use of materials for assignments or projects in English at secondary school	200
7	Use of English resources at Hong Kong Baptist University library	205
8	Purpose of library book borrowing	206
9	Confidence level of students performing various academic tasks	208
10	Student learning preferences	209
11	Grade in the EAP	239
12	Latest cumulative GPA	239
13	Explanation of the level of interest difficulty and usefulness scales	240
14	Evaluation of the Research Project Package level of interest	241
15	The Research Project Packages: level of difficulty	242
16	The Research Project Packages: usefulness in completing project work	243
17	Explanation of scales for understanding, contribution to skill development, and usefulness in academic study	243
18	Library skills training: level of understanding	244
19	Library skills training: contribution of project work in the development of library skills	246
20	Library skills training: usefulness of skills in academic studies	247
21	Explanation of scales for understanding, contribution to skill development, and usefulness in academic study	248
22	Classroom training in skills and strategies: level of understanding	248
23	Classroom training: contribution of project work in development of skills and strategies	250

24	Classroom training in skills and strategies: usefulness in academic studies	251
25	List of packages and students' choices in 1 st and 2 nd semester	254
26	Application of oral presentation skills – organisation of topic/introduction	258
27	Application of oral presentation skills – organisation of topic/conclusion	259
28	Application of oral presentation skills – content of presentation	261
29	Application of oral presentation skills – presentation delivery	263
30	Application of oral presentation skills – use of visual aids	264
31	Skills used in essay writing – structure and overall content	284
32	Skills used in essay writing – organisation and content of body	287
33	Skills used in essay writing – organisation and content of introduction and conclusion	289
34	Skills used in essay writing – quoting, citing and referencing	291
35	Skills used in essay writing – use of sources	292
36	Skills used in essay writing – variety of sources used (i.e. books, periodicals, newspapers, encyclopaedias, Internet, etc.)	293
37	Frequency of use materials for assignments or projects in student's major at Hong Kong Baptist University	310
38	Skills in locating information in English for research projects in HKBU	318
39	Learning preferences	323

INTRODUCTION

I. Background and rationale of the study

This study, and the preliminary studies associated with it, was borne out of experiences gained, over 7 years, in teaching English for Academic Purposes (EAP) to first-year university students in Hong Kong, as well as a desire to develop more effective ways of helping those students acquire the skills needed for successful tertiary study in English.

The researcher had observed that students often entered EAP classes reluctantly, displaying little confidence or motivation for the study of a language which they saw as divorced from their main studies and from their daily lives. Further, they appeared generally unprepared for the rigors of independent study and loath to present their work or ideas in original or creative ways. Attempts to address these issues by introducing new class materials that were more relevant to students' main areas of study and that made use of authentic and lively language, were encouraging and students generally responded with enthusiasm; but the researcher was concerned to find that the same students commonly reacted with anxiety, confusion and suspicion to activities that required active participation, self-direction or critical evaluation.

These patterns of attitudes and behaviour have been noted by others and have become the subject of considerable research in Hong Kong. It would appear that they are strongly grounded in the wider society and culture of Hong Kong and are particularly problematic when students are required to make radical changes in their learning style as they move from secondary to tertiary level education. An examination of the current literature confirms the observations outlined and points to

a number of complex factors at work in the system, which together serve to limit students' progress at tertiary level. These factors appear to hamper the application of Western-based styles of teaching and learning – approaches which tend to emphasise active student involvement and independent inquiry, approaches which Hong Kong students have to familiarise themselves with as they move to the tertiary study. These “problems” are not unique to English language learning in Hong Kong, but are acknowledged to exist at all levels of the educational system and across all academic subjects.

From an early age, students in Hong Kong must compete fiercely for places within the educational sector. Selection at each level of the educational ladder is invariably made by way of examination and, as a consequence, much of the teaching and learning that takes place in Hong Kong's primary and secondary schools is knowledge-based, focused on specific and frequent examinations. English language learning is often seen as a tool for use in passing examinations and for social advancement, rather than a skill with long-term application. Given that the Hong Kong vernacular is overwhelmingly Cantonese, students generally have limited exposure to English language and limited motivation to move beyond the level of English required for rote learning of curricular subjects. Added to this, the common practice of mixing languages in the teaching of English and other subjects can be seen to have hindered students' progress to the point that the majority of Hong Kong students are not now sufficiently proficient in English to express intricate thoughts or to present ideas creatively.

In this context students are expected to be passive recipients of knowledge passed on to them by their teachers. Learning for learning's sake and open learning, where students are guided in exploration of phenomena, concepts or ideas, has little

place in this system. This situation is further reinforced by pressures of large class sizes and a workforce of largely under-trained teachers. In the absence of sufficient training and in-depth subject knowledge, teachers are likely to rely heavily on text books and “right answers.” With success defined so wholly by examination results, neither teachers nor pupils are likely to take the risk of adopting more individualistic and independent approaches to learning.

Underlying and supporting the current educational system are more fundamental and long-standing societal values which can be related to Confucianism and Buddhism – respect for collectivism rather than individualism and conformity rather than individuality, submission to those in authority and a high regard for education which is prized as the proper path to higher social status and material reward. In the classroom, these values are manifest, not only in the diligence and persistence which students bring to bear on their studies, but also in their passivity in the classroom, and their unquestioning acceptance of teachers’ authority and group consensus.

II. Statement of problem

It would appear that traditional and contemporary forces have combined to produce in Hong Kong an educational system based on repetition, memory, examinations, acceptance of authority and fear of failure. Attempts to introduce autonomous learning into Hong Kong tertiary education syllabus have not been successful, as students do not respond well to this unfamiliar mode of learning.

Hong Kong first-year undergraduate students find it difficult to cope with the many academic tasks; when faced with their first basic research assignments in English, the majority show themselves unable to analyse the task, to identify and

locate potential sources of information, to select and use the most suitable materials, and to present the results in an original and creative manner and in an appropriate format in English. Having to complete tasks requiring an independent and creative approach, researching a topic and finding answers to specific questions, Hong Kong students are often confused and lack direction. Their previous conventional education does not encourage them to develop a capacity for independent study, nor does it offer a context within which independence can be exercised. Their Chinese cultural background, on the other hand, prevents them from asking for directions and leaves them confused and passive. Students seem not to be adequately prepared for the type of university study that Hong Kong institutions offer.

It is important, therefore, to look at all these aspects and to reflect on both learning and teaching practices to enable successful transition of Hong Kong students from the familiar Asian type of primary and secondary schooling to western inquisitive style of tertiary education.

In recent years there has been a growing realisation of the problems inherent in Hong Kong's educational system and a questioning of its ability to produce the types of citizens and workers that Hong Kong needs to succeed in future. Politicians, business leaders and educators have all pointed to the need for people who are creative, flexible and self-motivated. There is evidence that students, too, would welcome change and that they have adopted superficial or repetitive methods of learning through expediency rather than inherent pre-disposition.

III. Objectives of this study

This study attempts to bridge the gap between Asian and Western methods of education, between teacher-led and self-directed study. Through English for Academic Purposes instruction, the study aims to trial a method by which students can acquire those skills that are essential for independent and inquisitive learning – one that recognises students' prior learning, provides the support necessary for them to adopt a new learning style, and that, hopefully, paves the way for them to take charge of the learning process itself.

Two main objectives guide this study:

1. to examine and analyse the nature of experience and training Hong Kong students have received throughout their secondary education in carrying out tasks requiring an independent approach, such as research projects or other investigative tasks;
2. to study the effectiveness of a specially designed Research Training Programme on the development of autonomous learning strategies in Hong Kong students. The Training Programme and its instructional materials were designed by the researcher and implemented as a component of the EAP course in such a way as to provide a step-by-step transition from familiar traditional methods of teaching to an unfamiliar self-directed approach.

The over-riding objective has been to provide better learning opportunities for Hong Kong students and to bridge the gap between secondary schooling and tertiary education, between the Asian and the Western approaches to teaching and learning.

IV. Overview of the structure of the thesis

In the attempt to help students with difficulties encountered in handling academic tasks which require carrying out independent investigation the researcher set out to find efficient ways and teaching methods to help students alleviate these problems.

In this study over 700 first-year students at Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) were surveyed at the outset of university study to ascertain the extent to which they have received training in, and have the skills and confidence to perform the various tasks involved in small-scale independent research. The results of this part of the study are presented in Chapter 4. Based on the outcome of this survey an innovative training programme was designed to help students bridge the prior learning practices and the requirements of tertiary education by providing training in learning strategies for specific academic tasks.

Under this new teaching approach, students were involved in the process of learning how to conduct small research projects in English through the use of specially formulated learning packages, each of which was based on authentic materials related to students' fields of study. In using these materials, students had the opportunity to develop and practise their basic research skills in a lively way that not only matched their interests but also provided individualisation and contextualisation in the choice of materials. While the materials included some strategy instruction, more explicit learner training took place in the EAP classroom and in the university library. The method and the training programme are described in the Methodology section of this thesis, in Chapter 3.

This experimental teaching program was implemented and its effectiveness evaluated through questionnaires, interviews and the assessment of students' actual work. Results, discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, indicate that the approach utilised by

this study provides students with an interesting and productive method of learning, that it enables them to complete tasks which, in other situations, they might not be able or confident to tackle. It is apparent too, that this work has encouraged students in the development of autonomy and equipped them with skills necessary for carrying out independent study and research which they will be able to use and apply in their future academic education.

Chapter 7 brings all the conclusions together pointing out to ways in which this study has helped to identify the needs of the undergraduate students and recommending further consideration to be given to the methods through which those needs might be better catered for. The conclusions have also highlighted areas in which students seem most to require guidance and in which further research would help the practice of teaching.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Background information

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.2 GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION OF HONG KONG

1.3 BRIEF HISTORY OF HONG KONG

1.4 THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG

1.5 OUTLINE OF THE HONG KONG EDUCATION SYSTEM

1.5.1 An overview of Hong Kong education

1.5.2 Educational structure

1.5.3 School education

1.5.4 Public examinations in Hong Kong

1.5.5 Options after secondary education

1.5.6 Higher education

1.5.7 Teacher education

1.5.8 Funding

1.6 HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

1.6.1 Brief history of HKBU

1.6.2 University mission

1.6.3 HKBU student profile

1.6.4 The Language Centre

1.6.5 The teaching of English at Hong Kong Baptist University

1.6.6 English for Academic Purposes (EAP)

1.6.7 EAP course objectives and expected outcomes

1.6.8 Outline of the EAP course content

CHAPTER ONE

Background information

1.1 Introduction

This chapter is intended to provide general information about Hong Kong, its people, and the local education system. Since the empirical component of this research was carried out in the Hong Kong Baptist University as part of the EAP course offered by the Language Centre, the HKBU background information, profile of its students and the description of the course syllabus are presented here.

1.2 GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION OF HONG KONG

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) is situated on the south-eastern coast of China. Its area of 1,078 square kilometres comprises Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, New Territories and 235 outlying islands. New Territories occupy 91% of Hong Kong's land area, and lie south of the border with mainland China and north of Kowloon, a peninsula on the northern side of the harbour. The political, business and commercial heart of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Island, covers only 78 square kilometers and is located on the southern side of the territory. The Outlying Islands, being officially a part of the New Territories, make up almost 20% of Hong Kong's total land area with Lantau, its biggest island, being nearly twice the size of Hong Kong Island.

Much of Hong Kong is hilly, rocky and only about 12% of its land is forested. While tropical flora are abundant, there are few wild animals inhabiting the region. Apart from its harbour, Hong Kong's natural resources are scarce.

1.3 BRIEF HISTORY OF HONG KONG

Before British colonisation, Hong Kong was a small fishing community which in 1836 consisted of about 3,600 people scattered in 20 small villages. It was also a temporary home for opium smugglers and pirates. Britain first used the island as a naval base during the Opium Wars in China. By the Treaty of Nanjing, which ended the First Opium War in 1842, Hong Kong was ceded to the British in perpetuity. Kowloon was obtained as a result of the Second Opium War in 1860 and the New Territories were leased to Britain for 99 years in 1898.

Since 1912 Hong Kong has been a refuge for political exiles from the mainland following the establishment of the Chinese Republic.

In 1949 the Chinese Communist Government denied the validity of the treaties imposed on China by force, but did not attempt to alter the existing arrangements regarding Hong Kong. As 1997 approached, however, the British Government sought to clarify the question of Hong Kong's future. This resulted in the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration, by which, it was agreed, Hong Kong would return to China in 1997, becoming the Special Administrative Region (SAR) in China until 2047. The draft Basic Law, published by the government of China in 1988, made it clear that the democratic and commercial freedoms guaranteed under the Joint Declaration would not be as comprehensive as Hong Kong and Britain had hoped.

The question of Hong Kong's status has affected all aspects of its development from the 1950s onwards. Many believed that its survival would depend on its value to China as a trading and financial centre and as a source of commercial and technological expertise. Hong Kong enjoyed remarkable stability and prosperity under British rule. The 150 years of colonial government in Hong Kong ended on

1st July 1997 as Hong Kong was reunified with China, and British Governor, Christopher Patten, departed Hong Kong leaving his responsibilities to Tung Chee Hwa, the Chief Executive of the Special Administrative Region, China.

The Joint Declaration agreement guarantees the preservation of the main features of the Hong Kong economy for at least fifty years but, in the longer term, the impact of Hong Kong's absorption into the Chinese system is unknown.

1.4 THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG

Hong Kong, especially Kowloon and Hong Kong Island, is one of the most densely populated areas in the world. It has a population of 6.7 million people, of whom 98% are Chinese. Hong Kong and its people can be understood only in a historical context. Geographically, Hong Kong is a part of China but for a century and a half it was a British crown colony. The 1961 census revealed that more than 33% of the Hong Kong working population had entered Hong Kong after 1949 and that only 47.7 % claimed it as their place of birth (England, 1989). The vast majority of these economic migrants were poverty stricken and trapped in very bad housing, yet were ambitious and determined to work hard. This hard-working, determined and conflict-avoiding work force helped Hong Kong to achieve an economic miracle within a few decades.

Although the official languages in the Territory are Chinese and English, there are no precise figures on what proportion of the population can function in English. Even though the citizens of Hong Kong are increasingly proud of their Cantonese heritage, they accept, with few exceptions, the reality of English being the language of administration, the law and the medium of instruction preferred by parents in many schools. The need for English is apparent in the Territory's commercial, financial and telecommunication role in the world.

1.5 HONG KONG EDUCATION SYSTEM

1.5.1 An overview of Hong Kong education

Education was not developed in Hong Kong until 1868 when the first government school, with English as a compulsory subject, was established. When Hennessy became Governor of Hong Kong, in 1877, he boosted the status of education by associating it with political and commercial promotion.

Hong Kong's education system is a product of its past and present situation and the preoccupations. The economy is dominated by the trade sector and heavily influenced by external forces. The importance of foreign markets to Hong Kong's economy is reflected in the education system by the importance attached to the maintenance of internationally recognised educational standards. A feature of the education system is its diversity and flexibility, particularly in the technical sector. This, combined with the quality control, exercised by the use of public examinations and by restricting the number of recognised post-secondary institutions, has created a widely respected, well-managed education system.

Although the English system provides the mainstream model, the influence of the local value system and the Chinese heritage and culture are apparent, institutionally and administratively. The two different strands are co-ordinated by the educational bureaucracy, which in Hong Kong has a very strong tradition, and supported by a shared respect for the philosophical or moral and material benefits of education.

1.5.2 Educational structure

The structure of the Hong Kong educational system (Table 1) is based on a modified British pattern. Schooling consists of up to three years of optional kindergarten,

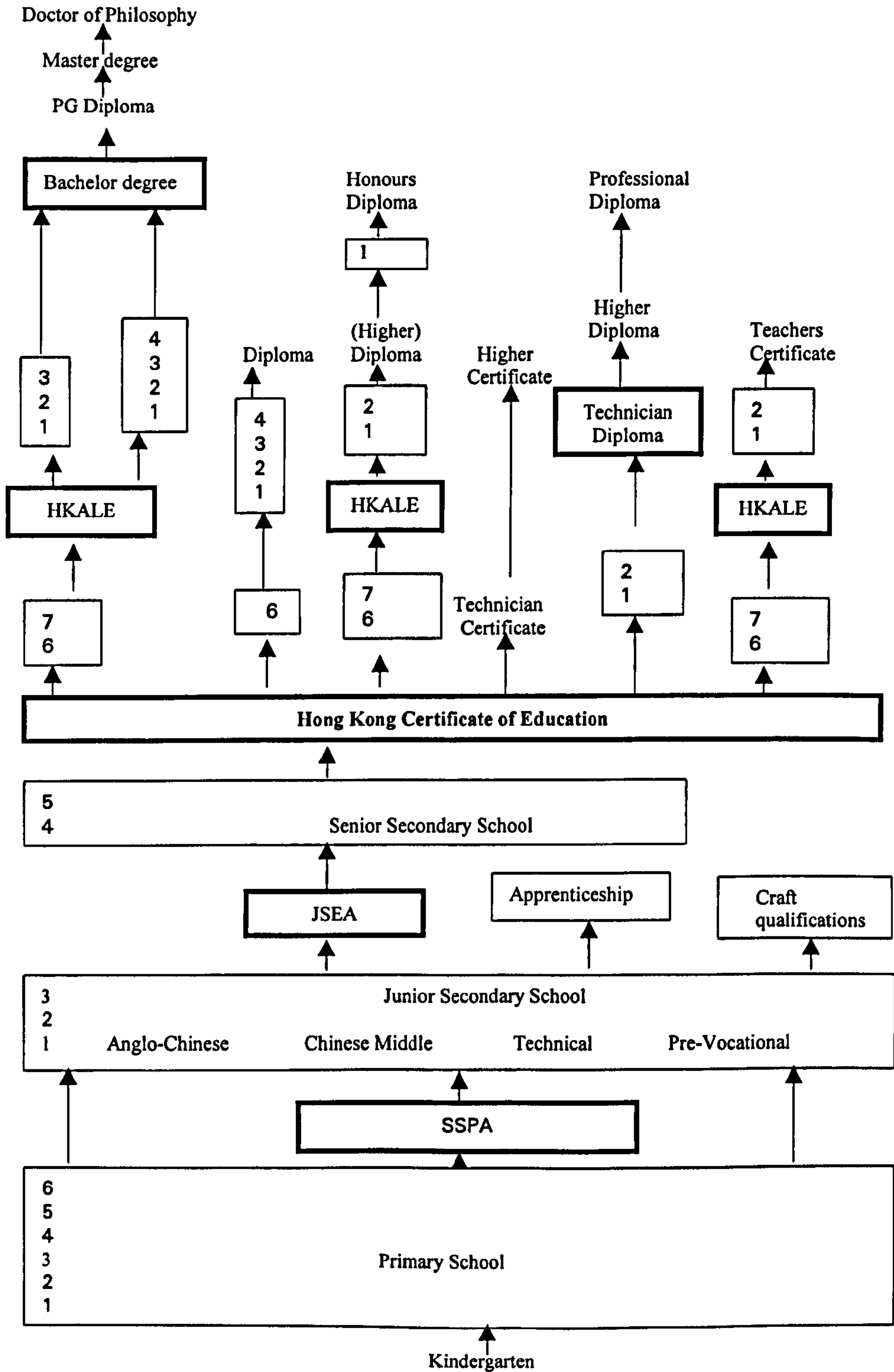
followed by six years of primary school and up to seven years of secondary school, comprising three years of junior secondary and two years of senior secondary education. This leads to the Hong Kong Certificate of Education (HKCEE), plus either one year of Sixth Form leading to the Hong Kong Higher Level Examination (HKHLE), or two years of Sixth Form leading to the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE). The school year operates from September to July and is divided into three terms. Schooling is free and compulsory between the ages of 6 and 15 but as many as two-thirds of the cohort continue to Form 4 and 5.

The basic qualification in higher education is the Bachelor's degree which requires three years of full-time study for most majors (four years at the Chinese University). Masters degrees require a further one or more years of study. Some 18 per cent of the cohort are currently enrolled in the first year of a Bachelor's degree in Hong Kong tertiary institutions and a similar number of students continue their education overseas.

Since 1981 education policy has been the responsibility of the Secretary of Education and Manpower, within the Department of Education, which administers primary, secondary and post-secondary education, and teacher training colleges. The Board of Education is one of a number of independent statutory bodies involved in the educational process, including the Hong Kong Examinations Authority which administers public examinations, the Vocational Training Council which has responsibility for technical education, the University Grants Committee (UGC) and the Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation (HKCAA).

Higher level education is the responsibility of the UGC, which is an autonomous body serviced by a professional secretariat of public servants. UGC members include prominent figures from the Hong Kong business and professional

Table 1. Outline of the Hong Kong education system



community, as well as senior Commonwealth academics, and the Council controls funding and planning. Higher education institutions in Hong Kong are supported by the government and are autonomous. Members of the HKCAA include prominent academics from Hong Kong and the international academic community and they advise the UGC on the academic standards of degree courses in the universities.

1.5.3 School education

Kindergarten education is private and non-compulsory, although it falls under the control of the Department of Education and financial assistance is available.

Primary schooling lasts for six years (Grades 1-6) and has been free and compulsory since 1971. The great majority of primary schools are Cantonese-medium schools, with English taught as a second language from Grade 2. On completion of Grade 6, students proceed to participating secondary schools via the Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) scheme.

Secondary schooling in Hong Kong comprises three years of junior secondary school, two years of senior secondary school and one or two years of higher secondary school or Sixth Form. The three years of junior secondary schooling are compulsory and free at government-run and aided schools. Completion of senior secondary education (Form 5) normally leads to the HKCEE (Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination). Students who wish to continue their education can attend at technical college, or approved post-secondary college or enter a sixth form program lasting one or two years to prepare them for matriculation and a tertiary institution.

Secondary schools, until recently, fell into two main categories, based on the language of instruction. The Anglo-Chinese grammar schools were traditionally,

English-medium schools. In 1998/99 the government restricted the number of schools allowed to teach in English (this is explained further in chapter 2). These schools offer five and seven-year programs leading to HKCEE and the HKALE (Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination). The second school category includes Chinese middle schools which use Cantonese exclusively as the medium of instruction, with English taught as a second language. Not all schools offer the additional one-year course leading to the HKHLE.

Secondary education is also offered at technical and pre-vocational schools. For example, technical secondary schools offer five-year courses leading to the HKCEE and pre-vocational schools offer a basic three-year program, comprising half general education and half practical training courses.

1.5.4 Public examinations in Hong Kong

The following examinations are run by the Hong Kong Examinations Authority, an independent body established in 1977:

- *Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination* (HKCEE) often called the School Certificate. Courses based on HKCEE entry require a minimum of four or five passes (usually including English language), but up to ten subjects may be taken, with seven being the average. Examinations in most subjects may be taken either in English or Chinese. They involve one multiple-choice paper and one or more traditional papers, with oral and practical examinations if appropriate. Sample papers are sent to the United Kingdom each year to check that parity between HKCEE grade C and GCE 'O' level grade C passes is being maintained. Comparative analysis indicates that, in mathematics and science,

Hong Kong grading tends to be stricter than in the United Kingdom, reflecting the strength of these subjects in Hong Kong.

- *Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination* (HKALE) is used as a basis for admission by most tertiary institutions in Hong Kong and is also important for Civil Service recruitment and pay scales. Courses based on HKALE entry mostly require a minimum of two Advanced Level passes (plus three HKCEE passes), but students normally take three or four subjects in addition to the subject Use of English. Most subjects involve two or three traditional papers of two or three hours' duration, with practical examinations required in physics, chemistry and biology. The Hong Kong authorities are concerned to maintain standards in the HKALE at a level comparable to that of GCE 'A' levels and, again, sample scripts are sent to the University of London annually for comparison. As with the HKCEE, comparisons reveal that in mathematics and sciences grading standards for the HKALE are stricter than for GCE 'A' levels.
- *Use of English Examination* (UEE) is not an Advanced Level subject but is required for admission purposes at the Hong Kong's universities by request. The UEE total score is the result of adding scores for the sub-skills tested, i.e. listening, writing, reading and language systems, oral English, and practical skills for work and study. It is possible for a student to receive an F in one or more of the sub-skills tests and yet obtain a final grade above F when grades are added. Grades A-C in the Use of English examination are accepted by the University of London as being about GCE 'O' level standard.

Since 1986 certificates no longer indicate the language in which each subject was taken.

1.5.5 Options after secondary education

Schooling at primary and junior secondary level is free and compulsory. After this, educational participation declines significantly, with up to a third of students leaving school. School leavers at this level either join the workforce or begin an apprenticeship leading to craft or trade qualifications. The great majority of students leave school after taking the HKCEE. Those wishing to undertake further training may attend a technical college, a teacher training college or an approved post-secondary college.

Some 25 per cent of the cohort enter a sixth form program, preparing for matriculation at a tertiary institution. Currently about half succeed.

1.5.6 Higher education

In 1997/98, the Hong Kong government provided 14,500 first-year first-degree places to about 18% of the 17-20 age group. In 1985 less than 5% of the cohort could receive higher education in Hong Kong.

There are ten tertiary institutions, eight of which are funded by the UGC. Of the eight, six are fully self-accrediting and self-awarding institutions, namely:

- the University of Hong Kong, founded in 1911 currently with 10,800 full-time undergraduate students enrolled in 9 faculties;
- the Chinese University of Hong Kong, established in 1963 with 9,630 full-time undergraduates taking courses in 7 faculties;
- the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, opened in 1991, enrolling a total of 5,610 full-time students in 4 faculties;
- the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, founded in 1972 with an enrolment of 11,200 students in 6 faculties;

- the City University of Hong Kong, established in 1984, enrolling 10,530 students in 4 faculties;
- the Hong Kong Baptist University, founded in 1956, with the enrolment of 4,230 full-time students in 6 faculties.

1.5.7 Teacher education

Teachers at primary, junior secondary, and technical schools are trained at four colleges, the Institute of Education and at universities taking the Bachelor of Education degree courses. The colleges and the Institute of Education offer full-time three-year programs based on an entry level of six HKCEE passes.

The Technical Teachers' College offers a one-year full-time course to train experienced technicians to teach specialised subjects in technical institutes and pre-vocational schools.

Professional training for senior and higher secondary teachers (Forms 4-7) is provided at university level in the form of a postgraduate program undertaken after a Bachelor's degree.

The Department of Education offers a wide range of special purpose, remedial and refresher courses for technical, primary and junior secondary teachers, as well as in-service training for full-time teachers who have either technical or academic qualifications but no teacher training.

1.5.8 Funding

Schools can be classified in terms of funding as government, aided and private schools. Government schools are financed and administered by the government. Fewer than 10% of students attend government schools. Aided schools are

subsidised to varying extents; they are non-profit institutions, operating independently within the guidelines of the Department of Education. More than 60% of enrolment is in aided schools. Private schools must be approved by the Government but receive no financial help from them. At government and most aided schools, education is free until Form/Middle/Secondary 3 and subsidised through Sixth Form. Technical education is subsidised, and so is the higher education sector. Fees are charged, but constitute less than 10% of university income.

1.6 HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

1.6.1 Brief history of Hong Kong Baptist University

This institution was founded in 1956 with a mission to provide quality higher education, combining the broad-based characteristics of a liberal education with those of academic and professional rigour. In 1970, Hong Kong Baptist College, as it was then called, became the first institution to be recognised by the Hong Kong Government as an approved post-secondary college. In 1983 the College was established as a statutory body and an autonomous institution and in the same year it became a fully government-funded institution.

With UGC support, the College moved to introduce its first degree courses in 1986, and to introduce the MPhil and PhD research postgraduate degrees in 1988 and 1991 respectively. Postgraduate degrees by means of coursework were initiated in 1992. In September 1993 the College began accrediting its own academic programmes and in November 1994 legislative amendments were introduced and the Institution was renamed the Hong Kong Baptist University.

1.6.2 University mission

Hong Kong Baptist University, as a community of scholars, is committed to a distinctive mission of higher education that incorporates teaching, research, and service, and which inculcates, in all who participate, a sense of value that extends beyond the mere acquisition of knowledge. The University seeks to achieve and to foster excellence, intellectual freedom, and the highest of ethical standards. These commitments are greatly influenced by the University's heritage of Christian higher education within a Chinese cultural setting. Furthermore, as a result of these

traditions, the institution is committed to creating and maintaining an environment which develops and sustains the whole person in all these educational endeavours.

The University undertakes to fulfil its mission through:

- offering a range of programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels based on the carefully assessed needs of students and the community;
- providing students with opportunities to develop intellectually, socially, spiritually, and physically in a community of openness and freedom;
- instilling in students an appreciation for holistic education, along with the ability to learn independently and to recognise that education is a life-long endeavour;
- broadening students' experiences by exposing them to the international community of scholars, their cultures, and the relationship of Hong Kong to the rest of the world;
- encouraging students and staff to undertake studies which are not confined by traditionally defined discipline boundaries, but rather to engage in multidisciplinary, multicultural, and bilingual experiences; and
- providing the environment, facilities, resources, and encouragement to academics and students alike for the pursuit of scholarship of the highest standards.

(HKBU Bulletin, 1998)

1.6.3 HKBU student profile

According to data obtained from the Academic Registry, almost all HKBU students (98.3%) are permanent residents of Hong Kong, with 86.9% being locally born. As many as 86.2% of students live with their parents in households averaging 4.5 family members. Thirteen per cent of fathers and 6.8% of mothers attained an education level at or above matriculation. The three largest categories of occupations for

fathers are: skilled/semi-skilled workers (25.6%), service workers (22.0%), retired/unemployed/housekeeper (14.1%), while slightly less than half of the mothers (45.6%) are currently employed. Around half of the students live in public housing estates and 74.3% of them have a residential area of below 600 sq.ft per family. Only 61.8% of students have either their own room or share with their siblings for study, 18.3% have their own desk and 19.9% do not have a proper study place at home.

1.6.4 The Language Centre

Established in 1985, the Language Centre (LC) at Hong Kong Baptist University caters for students' language needs for academic purposes. The Language Centre is a servicing department and provides courses and activities requested by Departments and Faculties of the University as far as the use of language – English and Chinese – is concerned. The Centre aims to provide each student with the linguistic skills necessary to participate successfully in the academic life of the University.

The major objective of the Language Centre is to enhance the level of each sub-skill to a minimum accepted standard required for the academic tasks at the University. There are three types of English language courses designed for students. Some students may take the Bridging Course if their entry level of English is low. Bridging Courses are taught when students have not yet started their major subjects. The objective here is to give students the fundamental skills that can be built upon after they select their major courses.

All students take English for Academic Purposes (EAP) or comparable courses; and some students may take additional courses offered by the Language Enhancement Programme.

1.6.5 The teaching of English at Hong Kong Baptist University

Students with different proficiency levels in the Use of English Examinations (UEE) are accepted by the University Departments. The minimum grade stipulated is E. However, in special circumstances, lower grades can also be accepted. Some Departments, for example, English, European Studies, Humanities, and Translation, accept only students obtaining D and above. On the other hand, some Departments accept students with grades E and below in the UEE, for example, Departments in the Faculty of Science. The University also accepts qualified students with different ability levels as indicated by the results of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), and the Cambridge Proficiency Examinations (CPE).

1.6.6 English for Academic Purposes (EAP)

Degree programmes in the University require of their students to take 3 or 6 credits of EAP during the course of the students' undergraduate studies. All EAP subjects are examined once or twice a year, depending on whether a student has taken 3 or 6 credit hours of EAP.

English for Academic Purposes is taught during the first year of undergraduate studies. Although there is an essential core and a common set of objectives in teaching English for Academic Purposes, each course has its own specific objectives, methodology, content selection and evaluation procedure. This is due to the differences associated with the nature of each academic discipline and the demands made of students in their respective departments. Syllabuses are designed with the co-operation of the course leaders/co-ordinators in the University.

1.6.7 EAP course objectives and expected outcomes

The writing, reading, speaking and listening techniques taught throughout the course aim to ensure the attainment of an adequate English standard to enable students to cope adequately with their academic tasks in English. Subject material provides integrated language training and specific skills and language structures are taught in the context of topic areas appropriate to students' needs. At the end of this course students are expected to have the following abilities, and to be able to use them effectively to:

- locate and collate information from various sources;
- prepare outlines;
- support and reference oral and written statements;
- write academic papers complete with footnotes and bibliography;
- make academic presentations.

Students' progress is monitored through written assignments, project work and oral presentations.

1.6.8 Outline of the EAP course content

Throughout the year in first and second semesters, students receive training in oral, writing, listening, reading and study skills. In developing these skills, students have to undertake a range of tasks, as indicated below:

Oral skills

- Deliver academic or technical data during oral presentations.
- Use various communicative strategies appropriately.
- Express ideas and opinions coherently, concisely and clearly.

Writing skills

- Develop and organise ideas within an extended piece of writing.
- Use formats of different types of academic writing (essays, reports, abstracts).
- Proof-read and edit a piece of writing for content, syntax and presentation.
- Acknowledge sources of reference material using quotations, references, bibliographies.

Listening skills

- Listen with a clear purpose given a defined objective.
- Isolate main idea/ideas of text from supporting information.
- Take notes for a range of purposes.

Reading skills

- Identify main ideas in text.
- Deduce meaning of unknown words in context.
- Analyse different sources for alternative points of view on a given topic.
- Use textual arrangements to extract relevant information quickly for a given academic task.
- Collate and interpret information presented in written form.

Study skills

- Identify and locate sources of information and resources relevant to the given task.
- Record and provide bibliographic details from different sources of information.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 Literature review

2.1 INTRODUCTION

2.2 CULTURE AND EDUCATION

2.2.1 Confucian culture in Hong Kong

2.2.2 The traditional Chinese classroom

2.2.3 The role of a student in Confucian culture

2.2.4 Status of education in Hong Kong

2.2.5 Role of reading, memorisation and learning

2.2.6 Confucian *versus* Western values

2.3 THE ROLE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

2.3.1 Status of English

2.3.2 Use of mixed-code in Hong Kong

2.4 CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT OF HONG KONG EDUCATION SYSTEM

2.4.1 Change of the medium of instruction in schools

2.4.2 Language of instruction in universities

2.4.3 Teaching and learning

2.4.4 Teachers

2.4.5 Role of examinations

2.4.6 Hong Kong reunification with China and the school curriculum

2.4.7 New developments in the language policies

2.5 LEARNER AUTONOMY

2.5.1 Historical overview

2.5.2 Concept of self-directedness

2.5.3 Developing independence

2.5.4 Self-direction and social context

2.5.5 Teachers' role in developing self-directedness

2.5.6 Strategies for enhancing self-directedness in learning

2.5.7 Characteristics of a self-directed learner

2.5.8 Disciplinary differences

2.5.9 Learning strategies and study approaches

2.6 LEARNER INDEPENDENCE IN HONG KONG

2.6.1 Chinese learner and self-directedness

2.6.2 Creativity

2.7 THE NEED TO REFORM

CHAPTER TWO

Literature review

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the literature review in this chapter is to explain patterns common in the Hong Kong educational context. It focuses on two particular areas: the profiles of Hong Kong learners; descriptions of the values and learning styles employed by them. The section containing literature on Confucian values aims to identify some ways in which Hong Kong patterns do not match experiences elsewhere. The review then turns specifically to independence on the part of the learner with a commentary on the Hong Kong situation. The paper notes the application of the learning approaches of Hong Kong students and observes differences in the strategy use and the approaches taken by the Hong Kong learners with those in students in other parts of the world.

Experiences elsewhere assist comprehension of the Hong Kong case but at the same time, analysis of the Hong Kong situation can add to a broader conceptual understanding of the Asian learner. These comparisons of the Asian educational values and learning styles with the Western ones are not provided with the aim of arguing the inferiority or superiority of any particular system. Rather, the researcher's intention is to place them within a context to serve a better understanding of the dilemmas and difficulties faced by Hong Kong learners when entering universities based on Western models.

2.2 CULTURE AND EDUCATION

2.2.1 Confucian culture in Hong Kong

Many people think of culture as what is often called “high culture” which refers to art, literature, music and the like. That part of culture is set in the framework of history and of social, political and economic structures. The most important part of culture, however, is that which is internal and hidden but which governs people's behaviour and the way they think: “This dimension of culture can be seen as an iceberg with the tip sticking above the water level of conscious awareness. By far the most significant part, however, is unconscious or below the water level of awareness and includes values and thought patterns” (Weaver 1993, 157).

Confucianism is a term associated with the line of thought and concept that has its roots beginning in the culture of Shang Dynasty (16th to 11th century BC) in China. Confucian philosophy affected and continues to influence all aspects of life in East Asia. It is generally linked by many Westerners with “some sort of authoritarianism, a sense of fixed social roles and modern backwardness of China” (Scollon and Scollon 1994, 9).

One might wrongly assume that in an international financial and banking centre like Hong Kong, Confucian values would have died out during the 150 years of the British colonial rule. Surprisingly, Confucian values still prevail among people of Hong Kong and are quite apparent in businesses, family life and education (Biggs and Watkins 1996; Flowerdew 1998).

Confucius died in 479 BC. but he is still regarded as a scholarly leader and a great teacher among the Chinese. His educational thought has been the foundation of Chinese education and his ideas for many centuries have been and are still influencing many aspects of education, for example “the important role of textbooks,

rote learning, examination-orientation, and students' submissive role in the classroom..." (Tong 1997, 75).

Many learning and teaching styles such as co-operation, the concept of "face" and "self-effacement" (Flowerdew 1998, 323) date back to Confucian values. Co-operation within this tradition means supporting each other and working for the common goal. Such a value system operates among Hong Kong learners inside and outside the classroom (Cortazzi and Jin 1996, 178). Flowerdew (1998) exemplifies this phenomenon by describing her mixed class of first and final year students where year-one students tend to defer to the judgement of older students and refer to them as "a big sister" or "a big brother" (p.324). The concept of "face" refers to the social hierarchical order which assumes unquestionable respect for age, seniority and rank.

In this type of interdependent relationships, peers, and especially superiors, must always be accorded "face" and not caused to lose it through overt or public criticism... propriety must at all times be maintained. The individual's social and professional status automatically bestows him or her with "authority" to such an extent that subordinates tend to assume that the boss is always right, purely by virtue of their standing.

(Flowerdew 1998, 325)

This concept is carried into the classroom where students display unquestionable acceptance of teachers' knowledge and reluctance to challenge authority openly and express opinions. Flowerdew (1998) sees this as a culturally-based reason for the passivity and reticence of Hong Kong students. Chinese students do not like to lose face by making incorrect responses and they will not speak up unless they are absolutely certain that their answer is correct.

"Self-effacement" requires that individuals maintain a certain level of humility in accordance with their rank. This is counter-productive in the learning setting as students will downplay their performance, describing themselves in less positive terms than they deserve. The Confucian concepts of co-operation, face and

self-effacement could be seen as aspects which impair the learning process. Therefore, Flowerdew (1998, 327) advocates the use of culturally sensitive methodology to recognize the importance of cultural influences on learning styles.

2.2.2 The traditional Chinese classroom

According to the teachings of Buddha “a pupil should always rise when his teacher enters, wait upon him, follow his instructions well, not neglect an offering for him, and listen respectfully to his teaching” (Kyokai 1966, 424).

The results of a study by Jin and Cortazzi (1993) confirm that the notion of high respect for the teacher among Chinese people still prevails. Their expectations of teachers are that teachers should:

... provide acquisition of knowledge, guidance imitation, models for/of learning, a single answer, results and solutions. Teachers should... be moral leaders, know everything in their area of expertise, should ask students if they have any problems, act as parents supporting children.

(Jin and Cortazzi 1993, 86)

In the traditional Chinese classroom there is emphasis upon silence and minimal participation, and the class organisation relies on "peer pressure, and competition which are used for positive motivation" (Kai 1997, 38-39). The value of silence and meditation is a reflection of Buddhist tradition, where the belief that knowledge, truth and wisdom come to “those who allow the spirit to enter” (Andersen 1985, 162). These values have been incorporated into the school curriculum.

2.2.3 The role of a student

Under the influence of Confucian philosophy, Chinese culture emphasises effort, hard work and endurance. Education and learning are always associated with effort.

Children are taught from an early age to work hard, even when the chances of success are low... They spend much more time doing their homework and drilling than their Western counterparts, often at the expense of their social life. Yet, many Chinese students believe that they can work harder and they are not satisfied with their achievements.

(Salili 1996, 88-89)

To the Confucianist, education is seen as a means of developing one's potentiality to a full extent.

From the cross-cultural, psychological perspective, work and effort are emphasised in Chinese culture, and that working hard is seen as a means of gaining knowledge, showing filial piety, and building character... Chinese believe that working hard not only leads to success, but also increases one's ability. This view provides the best of all possible situations: success is dependent upon hard work and hard work reduces or eliminates any constraint imposed by differences in ability.

(Leong 1997, 13)

This view is echoed by Fung (1998) who points out that in Chinese culture a child who performs poorly at school is scolded for not putting in enough effort. There is no question of inherent abilities or intellectual potential. Given another chance the student will work harder and pass the examinations. Poor academic achievement is not attributed to inability but to laziness.

Societies vary in the way they see achievement. In Hong Kong, students want to achieve not for their own satisfaction, but for the sake of the significant others; often parents or society (Littlewood 1998). Chinese students tend to be more motivated to achieve academically than Western students: they expend more effort as they are being driven by a sense of duty toward their parents and influenced by cultural values. Salili (1996) also comments on the fact that Asian students outperform Westerners academically whether at home or abroad. He reasons that Chinese culture is marked by collectivism and is "centred on obedience and loyalty

towards family” (p.86). The Chinese work hard not to achieve their personal goals, but to meet the goals of their families and they study to fulfil their duty towards their parents. Academic success of the children is a source of pride of the entire family and failure is “a stigma to the family” (p.89).

2.2.4 Status of education in Hong Kong

In the Confucian tradition, the significance of education stands out as being important not only for personal improvement, but also for societal development. The Chinese tradition rests upon the Confucian presumption that everyone is educable. This does not mean that Confucius ignored individual differences at the level of intelligence: rather he stressed that whether one is “born with knowledge” or one “attains knowledge by learning” or one takes great pain and effort to attain knowledge, once one “attains knowledge, it is all the same ...difference in intelligence, according to Confucius, does not inhibit one’s educability but the incentive and attitude to learn does” (Lee Wing On 1996, 28-29).

Asian people have a positive attitude toward education, high achievement motivation and a great willingness to spend most of their free time in the pursuit of education (Lee Wing On 1996).

Cheng's (1995) perception of today's Hong Kong society's attitude towards education is more critical:

It seems that Confucian ethics continue to influence attitudes and values relating to higher education in Hong Kong, although utilitarian considerations play an increasingly important role. Parents and teenagers both appreciate the value of higher education in upward social mobility, and they attempt to achieve the goal together. Family members make sacrifices for the advancement of the others with the knowledge that higher education can pay back handsomely.

(Cheng 1995, 264)

Utilitarianism, warns Cheng, spreads from the choice of discipline to the relationship between staff and students as well as campus life. Cheng also mentions Hong Kong students' disinterest in extra-curricular activities and any pursuit that could not be expected to bring material rewards:

Confucian ethics emphasise the role of education in the cultivation of individual virtues. Today, higher education is largely seen as a tool to secure a respectable and secure professional qualification which pays well.

(Cheng 1995, 264)

The Hong Kong community has inherited traditional Chinese characteristics with regard to the values of education. Cheng Kai Ming (1997) lists five such characteristics:

1. Parents regard education as the proper and almost unique route to upward social mobility. Educational aspiration is instilled in the students' minds.
2. People respect competition and conformity, hence the lack of diversification of curriculum and the examination system. Individual needs and diverse goals appeal to few.
3. The education system is rather monolithic where alternative curricula and different types of education are perceived as being peripheral.
4. The overall notion that teaching and curriculum should be life-oriented is foreign to the teachers' community, therefore the lack of relevance of the curricula prevails.
5. The Hong Kong community generally assumes that effort is more important than genetic ability. That "diligence can compensate for stupidity" and that "those brilliant when young may not be as good when grown up" (p.38) are common beliefs.

The fact that education is highly regarded in Confucian tradition results in Chinese parents having very high aspirations for their children, regardless of their social class (Cannon 1997). Hong Kong parents see university graduation as essential to one's status. Yee (1995) contends that education plays too large a role in the psychology of the Chinese:

Though motivation is high, secondary students seem more dogged than enthusiastic; educational attainment is highly valued and seriously pursued. Given strong pressure to succeed... youngsters endure conformities and rote methods at school which tend to deny the existence of modern professional practices.

(Yee 1995, 49)

2.2.5 Role of reading, memorisation and learning

Intellectuals, in Confucian times, were evaluated by how thorough their knowledge of texts was and by their ability to recite these texts. Therefore, the purpose of reading in the traditional Chinese perceptions is also different to that in the west (Maley 1986).

Students are taken through a text on a word-by-word, phrase-by-phrase basis. Texts are not read rapidly and efficiently to extract meaning and information. As a result, the Chinese student will know the difference between different parts of speech without being able to answer a simple comprehension question about text. Maley (1986) asserts that in the Chinese tradition “the teacher, or the textbook, has the knowledge. In order to acquire it, it is sufficient for the student to commit it to memory” (p.104).

The way Chinese learners are taught to write Chinese characters is to pay a great deal of attention to the shape and the correct order of strokes. Learners have to memorise both. Tong (1997) argues that the memorisation habits adopted by Hong

Kong students are "a natural consequence of their cultural background" (p.76). As

Cortazzi points out:

Learning to read Chinese is seen as requiring some analysis of character components, but consists mostly of memory, hard work and rote-learning. Arguably this is because of the nature of Chinese writing, but it occurs in an educational setting which may emphasise these qualities in any case. Consequently, Chinese learners are likely to perceive reading skills as involving: the need to know the vocabulary; to memorise the words; to read slowly and carefully, a word at a time. Naturally enough, Chinese students and their Chinese teachers would expect other languages to be taught according to these expectations, using a carefully controlled, structured, memory oriented approach. This could contrast greatly with an EFL teacher expecting to use recent Western approaches, where prediction, context skills, skimming, scanning, fluency are involved, and the need to memorise words is de-emphasised. Unless there is some adjustment of expectations on either or both sides, the attempt to use Western approaches in China would be perceived by the learners as being inappropriate, or even as load teaching.

(Cortazzi 1990, 60)

Zu Xi, one of Confucius' disciples, quoted by Lee Wing On (1996), says:

"in reading we must first become intimately familiar with the text so that its words seem to come from our own mouths. We should then continue to reflect on it so that its ideas seem to come from our own mouths: only then can there be real understanding."

(Cortazzi 1990, 35)

Memorising and understanding are inter-related, according to Lee Wing On (1996) and memorisation is seen as a significant part of learning in the Confucian tradition.

2.2.6 Confucian *versus* Western values

The Oriental mode of communication is often indirect and implicit, while the Western tends to be "direct and explicit" (Samovar and Porter 1991, 234).

Samovar and Porter (1991) categorise cultures on a scale from high to low context cultures. Most of the Oriental cultures are classified as high context, which

in the social interaction means that not everything is explained and spelled out but a great deal is left to the participants to make assumptions about. While Westerners have little capability for non-verbal forms of expression, the Oriental nations tend to rely more on non-verbal communication. As they write “the Chinese are prone to seeming passive...they probe for information and conceal any eagerness they may feel” (Samovar and Porter 1991, 241).

These inherent characteristics influence the style of teaching, learning and the whole educational setting:

In the United States teachers talk or lecture to students about 75 percent of the time. Teachers talk much more in China, Japan and Korea. In those cultures, learning is passive, and students are expected to do a great deal of rote memorisation. In cultures such as Russia, China... teachers will read to the students and then ask questions... students participate by silent receipt of information. Discussions are short with rapid turn-taking. Speaking too much is a sign of conceit and superficiality and being considered individual is not desirable...
(Samovar and Porter 1991, 248)

Culture affects the behaviour of individuals in the classroom. In a situation where a Western teacher teaches Oriental students, Samovar and Porter (1991) claim, the effects of the culture may be negative for both the student and the teacher:

Students with a Buddhist tradition of silence may have difficulty in adjusting to classroom discussion. If called to speak, they may feel embarrassed or ashamed, and the teacher may feel that the student does not understand or comprehend the material. The student may actually understand the material completely but be experiencing a conflict in cultural rites.
(Samovar and Porter 1991, 255)

Littlewood (1998) quotes a USA-educated Chinese student on an exchange with a Hong Kong university who comments on the passive approach to learning in Hong Kong, saying that “...the biggest difference is that no one wants to voice their opinion and challenge what lecturers say” (p.1). On that point Littlewood (1999)

explains that values, traditions and ways of behaving are imposed on us by the socio-cultural group in which we grow up, therefore influencing one's perception of learning. This, he warns, does not mean that Hong Kong students have been passively moulded and that all individuals will conform to the same pattern. His study of tertiary students' attitudes and preferences conducted in eight Asian countries shows that most South East Asian students do not wish to see themselves as passive recipients of knowledge transmitted by teachers. More and more students want to be involved in discovering knowledge and more and more question the traditional authority structure of the classroom.

Tudor (1996) points to the differences between Asian and Western educational cultures, concluding that Asian education is based on repetition, memory, persistence and respect of authority. The examinations are crucial and there is an ever-present fear of failure and acceptance of group consensus. Western educational ideas, on the other hand, are based on understanding and developing critical ideas. In the West, examinations are less important, there is less fear of failure and ideas are debated.

While Asians develop interpersonal attitudes to communication, Westerners debate ideas, and while Asians use intuition, Westerners use logical arguments. Asians prefer hints, ambiguity, indirectness and formal, regulated situations. At the same time they avoid disagreement and direct questions. Westerners go for explicitness and, being straight-forward, accept disagreement, ask direct questions and prefer informal spontaneous situations (Tudor 1996).

For Western students, books contain facts, opinions and ideas open for interpretation and discussion, but for many Chinese students and teachers books contain wisdom, knowledge and truth. "Knowledge is in the book and can be taken

out and put inside the students' heads" (Maley 1986, 103). In Western culture "books are tools for learning not the goal of learning" (p.103). In Chinese culture books are treated with reverence, have assigned value and their content should be learned by heart.

Scollon and Scollon (1994) summarise the difference in the Western and Confucian purpose of education in the following way:

Education is based on a number of presuppositions about the self of the person who is being educated. A number of contemporary educators have observed that Americans emphasise the development of creativity over the development of skills in young children. The western sense of education is that one should enjoy children as they are – that's how they'll grow up best. Such an education emphasises the individuality of the person. Such an education emphasises that the self becomes truly enlightened only when one is free to express oneself, free from the restrictions which are placed on one by interpersonal or social roles. Confucian education is also based on self-realisation. The difference is that... in the Confucian tradition education from the earliest times was based on the *Li Chi*, often translated as the *Book of Rites*. In this book the child was taught how and when to speak to elders, how to step up into a room, passing only on the right, or how to place himself on the mat when seated with other students in the teacher's room. In other words, Confucian education from the beginning and continuing down through to the present is based on the teaching of correct behaviour in one's social roles. While the roles have changed from the original Confucian roles, the emphasis in education has not.

(Scollon and Scollon 1994, 19)

This emphasis on correct behaviour, according to Scollon and Scollon (1994), results in the fact that post-Confucian Asian students are seen as having high levels of motivation, discipline and responsibility. At the same time, teaching methodologies that "rely heavily on individual autonomy will not work as well as those which rely on these traditional relationships" (p.19).

Jin and Cortazzi (1993) explain that there is a tendency towards individualism in the West and towards collectivism in the East. Chinese culture can be broadly characterised as collective, the key to which is that the Chinese are

situation-centred: “they see people in terms of relationships, conformity and mutual dependence according to the situation” (p.85).

Littlewood (1999) summarises the individualism in Western culture as being different from the collectivism in Confucian cultures and notes how these affect the learner’s perception and position.

<p>Western cultures support the concept of the independent- self who is more likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be disposed to express individual, unpredictable views • prefer horizontal, equal relationships • be willing to enter into confrontation and competition • be willing to express open criticism • attach importance to individual goals and “self-actualisation”. 	<p>East Asian cultures support the concept of the interdependent- self who is inclined to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pay attention to the group when forming opinions and attitudes • feel comfortable in vertical, unequal relationships • emphasise harmony and co-operation in the group • attach importance to preserving “face” (their own and others’) • attach importance to supporting group goals and expectations
--	--

Table 2 Western versus Eastern Cultures (cited after Littlewood, 1999)

The significant difference between Western and Asian students lies in the way they attribute success or failure; while Western students associate success with ability, the Asian students see it as a result of effort. This, Biggs says, is “one reason why Chinese students do so well in international comparisons of attainment.” (Biggs 1999, 57)

The Hong Kong educational system is based on a combination of society's values in which the level of educational attainment is, to a certain extent also associated with the social and economic level. The banding method in secondary education schools helps some children to move up and blocks others into low places without ever getting a chance to upgrade themselves.

Teachers have an increasingly important role to play in determining who becomes the doctors, taxi drivers, lawyers and construction workers. In this sense, teachers have become society's *gatekeepers*, in that they make important decisions concerning which students will enter the higher level of the social status system and which will stay behind.

(Postiglione 1997, 139)

While socio-economic status of a family is usually a predictor of success at school, most Hong Kong university students come from working class families. This, Postiglione adds, could be explained by the fact that about 40,000 Hong Kong students study overseas in America, Australia, England and Canada. Interestingly, Hong Kong university graduates in Postiglione's study would want their children to be educated in the United States.

2.3 THE ROLE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

2.3.1 Status of English

Hong Kong is a monolingual (Cantonese speaking) and ethnically homogenous society, a population of which is ninety eight percent Chinese. However, over the years a vast number of its students have opted to continue their secondary education in English-medium schools.

The establishment of the first university in the colonised Hong Kong took place in 1911 with the opening of the University of Hong Kong. The University followed the British system and also used English as a medium of instruction.

English language acquired a superior status in Hong Kong as anyone who wanted to continue their study beyond the junior secondary level had to possess a good command of English (Boyle 1997). Although Chinese gained recognition as one of the official languages in Hong Kong in 1973, English still enjoyed a higher status as a legal language and the medium of instruction in schools. Documents in English were considered more important and English was one of the criteria for civil servants' recruitment.

Students study English for very practical purposes; the high value placed on the English language stems from its association with individual and societal success; 93% of students "learn English to improve their career prospects", and 96% of students believe that "English is an important world language". Eighty four percent of students believe that "the use of English is one of the most important factors which has contributed to Hong Kong's success" and 80% agree that "English is the sign of an educated person in Hong Kong" (Littlewood and Ngar-Fun 1996, 79).

A study of attitudes towards English, conducted by Fung (1996) on a smaller scale than that of Littlewood and Ngar-Fung, shows that, in 1995, the most frequent

reasons given for learning English were “English being an international language” and its status as a “compulsory subject in school”. Personal interest in the language was noted only by 7% of the respondents. Despite the dislike of the English language by many, 81% of the students agreed that English should remain as one of the official languages in the future.

Tun *et al.* (1997) also claim that a highly pragmatic attitude toward the study of English prevails in Hong Kong today. Students still learn English primarily to enhance their economic or career prospects. This attitude has been promoted by the government department responsible for educational policy. In 1995, the Hong Kong Educational Commission determined that the highest priorities with respect to English language education are “for sixth form students to have the requisite English skills to enter tertiary education institutions” and “for school leavers and graduates to have a good command of English to enter the business, professional and service sectors” (Hong Kong Education Commission 1995, 14).

It is easy for a Hong Kong student to realise that English has come to dominate international storage and retrieval systems in the world of information and communications technology. Any nation which wishes to access technical information will have to do so using English. The English which has spread is

... to some degree free of cultural bias, since it is not specifically the English of the United States or the English of Australia, but rather the English of science and technology.

(Kaplan 1986, 13)

On the one hand, educating Hong Kong children in English was seen as a threat to the national language and, by extension, to the nation’s culture, but, on the other hand, people want to be proficient in English and want to acquire the prestige that goes with the proficiency (Ozog 1990, 316).

While more and more English medium schools have been experiencing difficulties in using English, especially since 1978 when secondary education was made available to all school-age children, the “sociolinguistic and infrastructural dynamics are such that popular demand for English proficiency and English medium education will continue to be strong in Cantonese-speaking Hong Kong” (So 1987).

In spite of Marsh's (1963) Report and the Hong Kong Government's (1973) Green Paper recommendation for the use of the mother-tongue in junior forms of secondary school, English education continued to prosper and, until 1983, any suggestions to teach in Chinese were rejected by the government.

Various advisory bodies which assist with overall educational policies in Hong Kong were consulted on the issue of the language provision. The most significant third party consultation which took place in 1981-82 with the overall review of the Hong Kong education system was headed by John Llewellyn. The panel's recommendations were accepted by the Legislation Council in 1983 as a basis for future policy deliberations. The report by Llewellyn *et al.* (1982) encouraged the use of Chinese as a medium of instruction and suggested giving a quota to Chinese-medium school graduates in the admission of further study and the civil service. To avoid the consequential drop in the standard of English, the Education Department poured additional resources into Chinese medium of instruction schools to strengthen the teaching of English (Hong Kong Education Commission 1990).

Although the Hong Kong government has taken measures to promote mother-tongue teaching, English is continuing its supreme status. The study conducted by Chan, Hoare and Johnson (1997) indicated, that only a limited number of schools were willing to change their medium of instruction from English to Chinese.

While about 60% of schools claimed to have been using English in all of their academic subjects, only 12% in 1994-95, 17% in 1995-96 and 18% in 1996-97 used it as the medium of instruction, a long way from the target of 70% set in the Hong Kong Education Commission Report No 4 (1990).

However, the same study reports that the use of English in the English medium of instruction schools was lower than 50% in all of their lessons (*ibid*: 34).

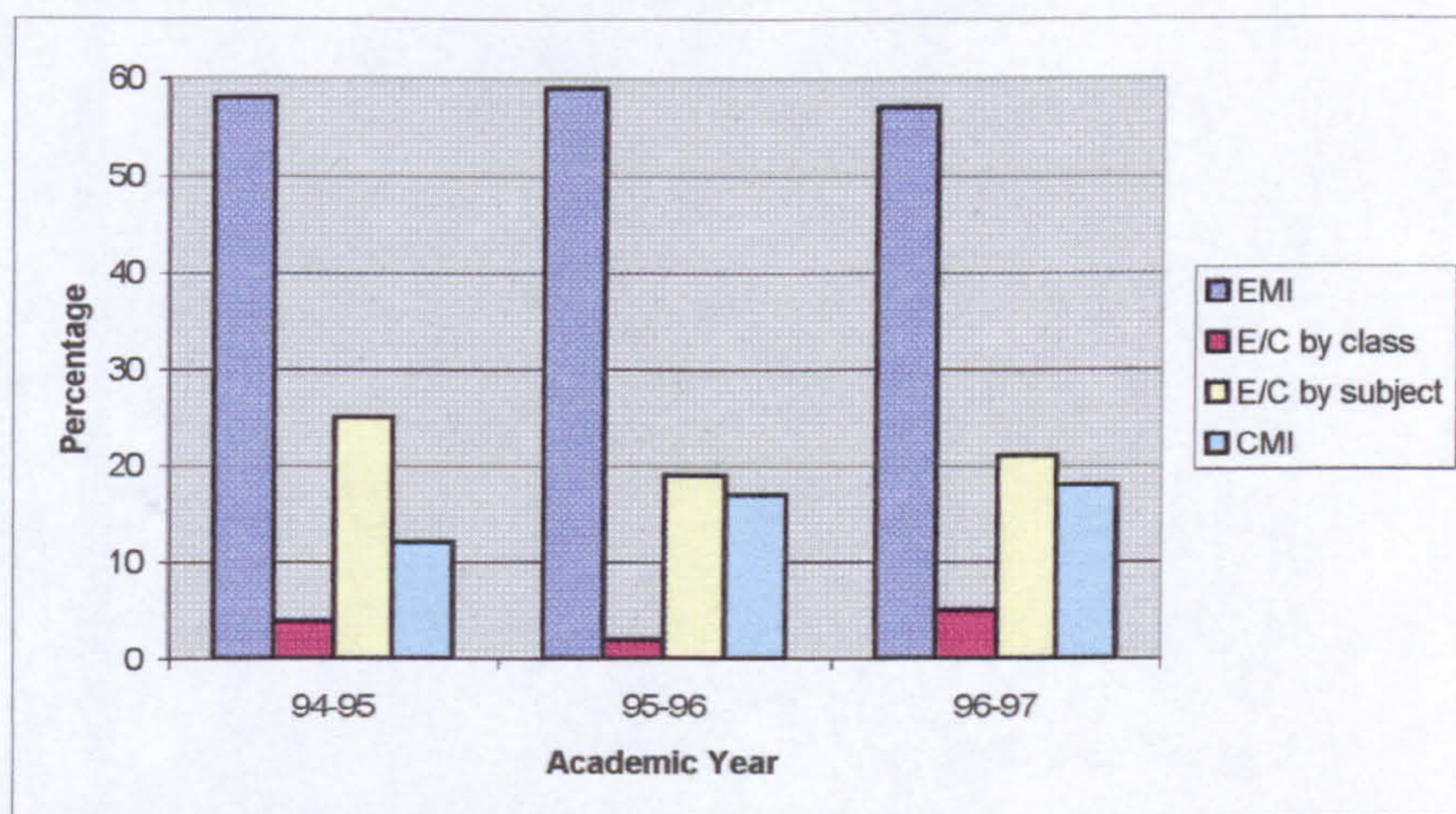


Table 3 The distribution (in percentages) of schools choosing different language policies in all secondary schools in Hong Kong in 1994-95, 95-96 and 96-97 as released by Education Department (copied after Chan, Hoare and Johnson 1997, 20)

So (1992) has stressed that after all Hong Kong is essentially a monolingual Cantonese-speaking society where “English is used in only a restricted number of domains” (p.79). Therefore, it is unrealistic to expect that

...quality English-medium instruction can be provided in all subjects, and at all levels, to such a large number of students most of whom are brought up in Cantonese-speaking environments.

(So 1992, 79)

Thumb’s study (1997) supports this notion, claiming that her subjects have a tendency to speak Cantonese and that they choose to use Cantonese instead of

English, even in formal situations such as the classroom, because “their ethnic and cultural identity made them feel uneasy in using English for normal social interaction” (p.54). She claims that, because of that, secondary school teachers frequently code-switch to serve several functions, such as talking to individual students, for example, in accordance with the social function of the interaction.

2.3.2 Use of mixed-code in Hong Kong

The results of Pennington and Balla’s (1998) study on Hong Kong English teachers show that many code-mix Cantonese and English not only when communicating in professional situations in English, but also when speaking to their Cantonese friends using their first language. Pennington predicts that “English teachers of the present generation are likely to have a greater influence in reinforcing mixed language usage in future than passing English on to the younger generation” (p.260).

It seems unlikely that the present circumstances will bring any major improvement in the standard of Hong Kong students’ English. A large amount of English to which students are exposed comes from both a mixed medium of Cantonese and English and a local variety of English influenced by Cantonese which is unique in Hong Kong (Pennington 1994).

Those students who have been educated through the Chinese medium, or who have been extensively exposed to the mixed code, would find that their level of English hampered and restricted their development and educational potential at university (Ozog 1990).

The following was released by the Curriculum Department Council:

In our daily lives, both written and spoken language in community is Cantonese, our mother tongue in recent years. Many people advocated mother tongue instruction because they believe that such kind of instruction could upgrade

learning abilities. But some schools are afraid of the fact that mother-tongue instruction will affect the image of the school. Some parents will think that the standard of the schools is low and those schools give students less opportunity to learn English. Low English standard will affect students' prospects. (Wen Wei Po, 26 March 1994, translated by Wut Sau Wan)

A decision was then made to divide schools types: (i) Chinese-medium, (ii) English-medium and (iii) Chinese or English by class or by subject. The last group is commonly known and referred to as mixed language schools. As a result until 1998 the school authority and the parents were free to choose in this streaming system (Hong Kong Education Commission 1994).

This controversial decision has brought up the issue of code-mixing in classrooms, and the reverting to the use of Cantonese when teaching in English or the other way round. The mixed language approach in the Hong Kong classroom was not viewed by the government as a genuine bilingualism, but as one that will make teaching materials less comprehensible and eventually lead to rote-learning: "schools must consistently use in each class of either Chinese or English, rather than a mixing of both language" (Hong Kong Education Commission 1994, 20).

Studies of the growing English-language problem in Hong Kong find fault with the system and schools. The way in which education is carried out at the secondary level adversely affects the attainment of the English language itself and results in students having difficulty in becoming creative and expressive in either language. School-work is often aimed toward examinations which are designed to measure the amount of knowledge stored, rather than integrated comprehension, application and problem-solving ability.

The University Grants Committee Report (1998) states:

Many of the learning difficulties which students experience are related to inadequate language competence, particularly in

English. Institutions should be more rigorous in enforcing their entry requirements in this respect.

(University Grants Committee Report 1998, 2)

The report continues:

...One of the advantages which are products of the Hong Kong higher education system, one may hope to have, is multi-lingualism. There is, however, deep concern expressed from many sources – the Education Commission, employers, the press – that advantage (of vital importance to Hong Kong in its roles of an East-West bridge and a window from China to the world) is being lost. In particular, the standard of English of many students leaving school and entering higher education is felt to be inadequate and employers are dissatisfied with the competence in English of those whom they recruit.

(University Grants Committee Report 1998, p. 6)

The UGC “has been sufficiently unhappy with the language skills of recent graduates from its own HEI’s [Higher Education Institutions] to set in train remedial and enhancement measures” (Ch. 18, 2).

Teaching the subjects’ content in English also constitutes a problem to the secondary school teacher. As Lord (1987, 15) observes, English taught in primary school in most cases “would have seemed so boring and so remote that for the average pupil only a very rudimentary proficiency would have been achieved by the end of primary level”. Not surprisingly, the language of the classroom becomes a mixture of English and Chinese. He describes a typical situation at school where practically all the lesson material is in a foreign language (English) and the teacher has to do his or her best to explain and exploit this material in Chinese and may be trying to maintain a “semblance of using English from time to time” (p.14).

When, in the 1980s, a perception began to take hold that there was a decline in the ability of tertiary students to communicate effectively either in Chinese or in English, this decline was attributed to the broadening of the school population brought about by the extension of the period of free and compulsory education to nine years in 1978.

(Lord 1987, 2)

The strong points against instruction using the mother-tongue are that the teachers themselves used English textbooks in their school days and so they can not teach confidently and fluently in Cantonese, and that the Cantonese language is not rich enough in terminology in subjects like biology, chemistry or physics (*South China Morning Post*, 20 February 1991).

Tsui (1992) suggests that Hong Kong teachers are happy if students are able to understand what they are saying, let alone be able to produce output. When students do answer teachers' questions, responses are often monosyllabic. She reports that teachers are already "pleased if students are able to convey their message in English, let alone conveying it accurately, precisely and appropriately" (p.144). According to Tsui (1992), students in Hong Kong have a long way to go before they can produce comprehensible output.

Tung (1997) also observes that students studying in a more familiar language "are more willing to participate in class discussion and other activities" (p.6). He poses the question of "which language(s) of instruction can best help promote the academic development of the students in terms of subject matter and analyzing and synthesizing information?" (p.5)

Academics are faced with students who have not been challenged and instructed to go beyond spoon-feeding, rote memorisation and multiple-choice examinations. Consumer-driven education has denied students the possibility of challenge, cheerfulness and readiness to work and try.

While enrolments were going up, standards had to drop to accommodate a wider spectrum of students. Llewellyn *et al.* (1982) argues that most Hong Kong students find it impossible to master English at the level of proficiency required for

“intricate thinking” (p.26) and yet students have to express themselves in English at school:

Under these conditions more emphasis tends to be placed upon rote learning. If a pupil is expected to reformulate that which he or she has learned in English but has few words at his or her command to express these thoughts, what can be done except to regurgitate verbatim either notes taken during lessons or slabs from textbook?

(Llewellyn *et al.* 1982, 26)

The Education Department’s strong stance on mixed-code teaching in Hong Kong schools has in fact not been supported by any empirical evidence. Quite to the contrary, mixed code is not only practical and useful but, under certain circumstances, more effective than Chinese or English. Boyle (1997a) gives an example of mathematics and science, subjects in which Hong Kong students are known to excel, being predominantly taught in mixed code for better understanding. He sees code-switching as not only inevitable and preferable for most Hong Kong schools, but also a way of enhancing the learning outcomes.

2.4 CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT OF HONG KONG EDUCATION SYSTEM

2.4.1 Change of the medium of instruction in schools

Since schools were unwilling to take the initiative to change their medium of instruction from English to Chinese, the Education Department in 1998/99 enforced Chinese-medium of instruction in schools that could not demonstrate an ability to meet the requirements for implementing English. That is, only “schools with teachers and students who are motivated and capable enough to use English in their lessons should continue to be EMI (English-medium of instruction) schools” (Chan *et al.* 1997, 39). The government forced 357 out of 471 secondary schools to teach in spoken Cantonese and standard written Chinese.

Lee (1997) argues that with the use of Chinese, students are

...learning in the most effortless means. They are able to understand what is taught, express views, make inquiries and absorb knowledge without any language barriers. Mother-tongue teaching thus minimises possible obstacles to communication in the classroom and facilitates students’ development of intellectual and analytical powers.

(Lee 1997, 3)

Lee has further pointed out that teaching in the mother-tongue will lift the language barriers in study and ease frustration in the learning process. She cites evidence that students from Chinese medium schools consistently attain a higher passing percentage in the public examinations than those from the English stream.

Growing business opportunities in the trade within China, along with an expansion of interaction between China and Hong Kong have helped, to some extent, to add value to and promote education in the Chinese language (Sweeting 1992, 63).

Although the evidence is there, parents in Hong Kong, as So (1992) notes, do not want to send their children to Chinese-medium of instruction schools. They prefer English-medium schools not because they are not in favour of teaching in

Chinese, but because of the prestige that is commonly associated with a good command of English.

Still, in today's Hong Kong, English-medium schools are the desired choice of most students and parents. People believe that learning in English will facilitate an easier command of the language which, in turn, will affect students' career development. Now that only 114 schools are authorised to teach in English, they have become the most preferred distinguished schools. They enjoy much higher popularity among Hong Kong people than the Chinese-medium schools. Chinese-medium education has become a second-class education in the minds of people. In brief, it is the Government's policy on mother tongue education that has created a gap between the two kinds of school and has reduced the status of the Chinese-medium schools. No matter how hard the Government strives to promote mother tongue education, the intense competition for positions in English-medium schools will fossilise people's favourable opinions about English education and their bias against mother tongue education.

With the introduction of Chinese-medium education at the secondary school level, the likely outcome for tertiary education will be a rapid acceleration of the present tendency towards mixed-mode teaching and code-mixing. Johnson (1994) predicts bleak prospects for English-medium tertiary education in Hong Kong with a further lowering of English standards.

2.4.2 Language of instruction in universities

Students from both streams will ultimately learn in English in tertiary institutions. Although bilingualism or even trilingualism is called for in universities, no substantial progress has been made by the government in promoting this. A change

in the medium of instruction is restricted very much by the tradition and individual autonomy of each institution. Moreover, a great number of lecturers in tertiary institutions are expatriates who cannot teach in Cantonese. A clear-cut medium of instruction policy for tertiary institutions seems so far not feasible. This somewhat hampers the growth of mother-tongue education in secondary and primary schools as Chinese stream students feel that they are being deprived of the training in learning through English, which is a common practice in tertiary institutions.

Claims have commonly been made that standards of English among university students' and graduates' are declining. This, as Hamp-Lyons (1998) claims, is a direct result of the expansion of the university system in recent years. Admitting students with the required level of English in the HKALE ("A" level examination), the secondary school exit test, has become almost impossible and, as a result, the universities are not truly English-medium institutions.

Even in universities, the attempt to give students full immersion is not successful because "students are only required to produce effective English on a limited number of occasions, and considerable allowances are made" (Walters and Balla 1998, 387). This is because English is used only when it is necessary, that is in written texts, some examinations, and where lecturers are not Cantonese speakers. Walters and Balla's study (1998) show that the vast majority of lecturers use their native language, which is Cantonese.

Students who perform well in their examinations are considered to have demonstrated academic ability and capacity for further study. This is regardless of the medium of instruction. Students' equal achievements in identical examinations taken in English or in Chinese are considered comparable. Problems appear when students' capacity for further study is confused with their readiness for study in the

second language. Students who have demonstrated academic ability through Chinese are not necessarily ready for tertiary study through English medium (Johnson 1994). The readiness that Johnson is referring to is “not a matter simply of memorising the English language equivalents of Chinese terms... They must be ready to use these terms productively in oral and written presentations...” (p.139).

Hylang’s (1997) survey shows that Hong Kong students recognise the importance of English competence to their academic success and acknowledge the value of EAP classes. All groups in her study confessed to difficulties with English and admitted that they considered their English skills inadequate to meet their academic goal:

...tertiary study in Hong Kong confronts students with a more independent, active, and analytical approach to learning than they knew before... the fact that many students struggle to master their subject disciplines with inadequate linguistic resources not only frustrates both students and lecturers, but also encourages learning strategies, such as classroom passivity, rote memorisation, and copying from textbooks, which fuel this frustration...In this situation, effective EAP support is all the more necessary, and while there are obvious implications for teaching here, the solution ultimately requires an appropriate institutional response. Students clearly require language support throughout their studies, and this should be a priority if English is to remain the principal language of tertiary instruction in Hong Kong beyond 1997.

(Hylang 1997, 94-95)

For students to try and improve their English, two conditions should be fulfilled (Biggs 1998). They must (1) see some value and importance in learning English and (2) expect success. However much they might want to learn English, they will not be motivated if they see it as worthless, or if they have no chance of succeeding. If in Hong Kong culture passing examinations is the issue, notes Biggs (1998a), then to make students want to learn something, educators should “make sure that is what you test them on, and you make sure that there is a reasonable

chance of them succeeding." (p.422) He adds that "success in reaching a goal" cannot be expected "if the goal itself is fogbound." (p.423)

To recapitulate, until the 1980s Hong Kong education was basically bilingual in nature. Poon (1998) contends that in the mass education era, English-medium instruction "can only be practised in the local classroom to a limited extent only due to declining English standards of teachers and students" (p.101). She concludes that on one hand the new language policy aims to reduce the use of mixed code in teaching; however, on the other hand, the policy formally shifts Hong Kong's education from bilingual education to monolingual education.

2.4.3 Teaching and learning

Criticism that Hong Kong students have been schooled to memorise what will carry them through examinations, and thus lack analytical skills, is widespread and frequent. Many Hong Kong-based researchers describe local students as relying heavily on rote-learning and memorisation. Dunbar (1988), for example says that:

Learners are conditioned to accept and respect what the teacher presents as correct. The focus is on acquiring propositional knowledge and demonstrating acquisition by outright recall.

(Dunbar 1988, 12)

Kember and Gow (1991) question the assumption that Hong Kong students are more prone to rote-memorisation than western students, putting the blame on the system and the structure of the learning tasks:

Hong Kong students can be influenced to adopt a surface approach by variables such as heavy workload, surface assessment demands or over lecturing... Anecdotal observations of rote-learning, in Asian students, may therefore be explained more by the nature of the teaching environment than as an inherent characteristic of the students... Lecturers believe that their students adopt predominantly rote-learning strategies so set surface level assessment items.

(Kember and Gow 1991, 125-126)

Gow and Kember (1990) maintain that heavy workload, didactic teaching styles and lack of intrinsic motivation, factors identified by students in the interviews, can influence students to adopt rote-learning and recall as their strategies.

Chinese students engage in more repetitive activities than their Western peers because of the demands of the culture:

Learning several thousand characters in common use requires more memorization than learning the 26 letters in the Latin alphabet. But memorizing in these circumstances is in service to understanding. You learn a communication system in order to communicate with understanding. ...Every repetition of an intense and complex structure offers us the opportunity to increase our understanding of it. Sections begin to fall into place; the big picture unfolds.

(Biggs 1999, 126-127)

Study strategies and knowledge of genres and plagiarism rules, are not written in the DNA. They are learned – and can therefore be taught. A major responsibility of learners is clearly to see that they are taught...

(Biggs 1999, 132)

Kember and Gow (1991) quote comments from an external examiner which suggest that the tendency to rote-learn may be influenced by the teaching and the learning environment:

I am still concerned at candidates not being sufficiently required to think and reason. I suspect that there is a tendency to over-lecture. Consequently the students probably do not get sufficient time to think and to study on their own. I would like to see the amount of detail being taught in the whole course reduced. The greatest contribution we as teachers can make to the students is to teach them to think and to create on their own.

(Kember and Gow 1991, 118)

These remarks were echoed in 1995 by the Review Panel which consisted of international experts who were invited by the Hong Kong Baptist University to evaluate their course provision. In their Peer Review Report (1995) they observe:

The syllabuses seem to be heavily knowledge-based and overfull. The Course Team should be proactive in pruning syllabuses down to essential coverage so that the students could have more time for reflection and self-study... Students should be encouraged to participate more actively in their own learning process.

(Peer Review Report 1995, 2)

The same panel commented on the teaching and learning at the university and urged that:

...staff should guard against being overly prescriptive and should ensure that their teaching and learning strategies reflect the university level of the course and help students to develop their problem solving and critical thinking potential. Practices which are not helpful in developing life-long learning and independent thought, like memorisation, should be curtailed... There is a need to allow time for students to read around and reflect on the knowledge received, with a view to developing original creative thought. Heavy loading on students would militate against this.

(Peer Review Report 1995, 3)

In spite of the fact that the government has been very supportive of education, the syllabus-controlled curriculum and the rote-teaching methods do not foster creative, critical thinking, intellectual maturity or independence of mind (Yee 1992, 288). Hong Kong students are expected to be “spoon-fed”, Yee (1992) claims, and because of the nature of Hong Kong education they “cannot think” (p.275). “Learning for the sake of learning was alien” (p.296). Yee also implies that lecturers often find themselves in a no-win situation when faced with students who have not been challenged and instructed to go beyond the spoon-feeding, rote-memorisation and multiple-choice regimen:

University students in Hong Kong... have memorised and forgotten far more than they can comprehend, use and analyse and have difficulty pursuing ideas without cribs and prior instruction. On intellectual matters, they generally have little of substance to contribute or inquire about... students undergo excessive pressure from teachers, examinations and parental expectations. Instead of producing learners, Hong Kong system of education produces reciters and recorders.

(Yee 1992, 297)

Lecturers often find that many Hong Kong students display little intellectual curiosity. Many students openly admit that they want to get through their university study as quickly as possible with the minimum of effort. In Hong Kong, where graduation is almost guaranteed once a student secures admission to a higher education institution, this attitude to learning, according to Yee (1992) can be expected. Yee contends that such a system promotes “rote memorisation, drudgery and anti-intellectual attitudes” (p.289).

Littlewood (1998) examines the assumptions about Hong Kong and other Southeast Asian students, focusing especially on the belief that the teacher is seen as an unquestionable authority. He lists several generalisations from various sources about students in Asia. These include the observation that:

students are expected to show total obedience or submission to their teachers... Students are passive receivers of knowledge ...Learners are expected to acquire knowledge not to contribute in the learning process.

(Littlewood, 1998 2)

He concludes that there are two strands in these beliefs about Asian students. First, that many would benefit from becoming more active, more questioning and innovative. Second, that only few have these qualities at present. This is, he insists, not due to an inherent preference, but to the exposure to a specific educational experience.

Littlewood's study (1998), in which he compares perceptions of learning of students from eight countries, points out that most Southeast Asian students do not wish to see themselves as passive recipients of knowledge transmitted by teachers. They want to be involved in discovering knowledge. Most Southeast Asian tertiary students, Littlewood (1998) claims, question the traditional authority structure of the classroom.

Asian values have features supportive of social stability, public morality, social order, strong leadership but not necessarily dynamism and innovativeness. Confucian countries favour learning and education and this value system encourages expansion and development of education and possibly accounts for the high level of educational achievement of Hong Kong students. Traditional Confucian values have, however, been transformed and influenced by other cultures to serve the interest of modern Hong Kong. This is manifested in several features, for example, the fact that Confucius had little regard for mathematics and science and that education was mainly for men (Cummings 1996), values not evident in today's Hong Kong.

2.4.4 Teachers

In the Chinese context, the teacher's role has traditionally been authoritative. According to Byron and Macmillan (1990), the teacher plays that role in "several guises":

...he instigates and directs activities with considerable authority... he expects them to be disciplined and obedient...
...the teacher expects to have the students' respect for his superior wisdom and recognises that he is considered to be the fountain of all knowledge – able to produce on demand the answer to any question.

(Byron and Macmillan 1990, 194)

Eager, ambitious Chinese parents regard a good teacher as one who makes the pupil study and work hard, who has good discipline and who loads his pupil with homework (Henderson, undated, c. 1989). Henderson holds that "Hong Kong teachers talk too much; the pupils too little" (p.19) and that the atmosphere of the classroom is "strictly authoritarian" (p.21). Yee (1992) reports that, in secondary schools, teachers commonly use microphones, amplifiers and loudspeakers for lessons, and that many schools supply this equipment to all of their classrooms.

This observation was confirmed through discussions that the researcher carried out with over 100 students of different backgrounds. Moreover, many students claimed that a large number of primary school teachers used microphones too, and lectured from behind a lectern. A significant number of students also reported cases of corporal punishment being carried out on them by a teacher for raising a question without being asked to (Bankowski 1999).

Pow's study (1994), conducted on Hong Kong teachers, shows that secondary school teachers still believe that they act as the leaders in the classroom. The chalk-and-talk method is still the most popular methodology used. She argues that the conservative attitude of teachers toward giving lectures is mainly due to their inadequate training. Poor language proficiency, to the point where a teacher is unable to evaluate the correctness of an answer to an open-ended question, causes heavy reliance on textbooks.

This necessity to produce specific answers has led to the neglect of the process of inquisitive and creative learning and made teachers dependent on answer keys. Byron and Macmillan (1990) maintain that in a Chinese context teachers "looked for the often arbitrary imposition of notions of right and wrong" (p.195). They are expected to provide "the right answer" even to open-ended questions or written exercises where a range of acceptable answers is possible.

Teachers' dependence on textbooks, and their focus on examinations results in the preservation of the traditional Confucian balance of power in the classroom. Teachers favour a transmittal style of teaching with authority, power and control in their hands. Students' role in a classroom still seems to be one of sitting and listening to a teacher and quietly working on individual exercises (Evans 1997).

Brown's (1997) study, carried out on Hong Kong teachers, reports that training is not a prerequisite to securing a teaching job. Teaching is often taken up as a last resort, or as a job to be tried out and either pursued or rejected. According to Brown, the demand for teachers is so great that trained candidates often have more than one offer and many have three or more.

A large proportion of Hong Kong teachers are not trained English specialists. Since English occupies a significant portion of the school curriculum, teachers whose specialism lies in another subject are often required to teach one or two English classes, even at senior level. Given their lack of specialist training, it is hardly surprising that they tend to adopt a didactic, transmittal style of teaching and rely heavily on the textbook. Although Hong Kong students acknowledge that teachers use a didactic examination-oriented teaching style which they find boring, they perceive it as a more effective way to satisfy their expectations. The traditional approach, with the emphasis on covering the syllabus and providing information, is a safe way for both the students and the teachers to achieve their objectives (Evans 1996). After all, secondary schools in Hong Kong are mainly concerned with theoretical subjects and emphasise scholastic methods and formal examinations.

The problem of teacher quality in Hong Kong is attributed, in large part, to the rapid build-up in enrolments (Llewellyn *et al.* 1982). Falvey (1998) reports that out of 3,700 secondary school teachers of English, only 14.2% were both subject and professionally trained. He further reveals that of 12,567 Hong Kong primary and secondary school teachers in 1996, only 11.1% held professional teaching qualifications and a directly related degree, such as English Language, linguistics, TESOL or translation.

This may explain the doubts that have been raised about the pedagogic competence of Hong Kong teachers in the teaching of writing. Lee's (1998a) local survey of Hong Kong secondary teachers points to "writing" as the weakest competency both in terms of teaching and proficiency. Teachers predominantly attend to the low-level features of student writing, focusing on grammar and mechanics. The ESL classroom is considered, for Hong Kong teachers, to be another way of teaching and reinforcing grammar (Lee 1998a; Reid 1993; Lee and Falvey 1996). Although Lee's survey shows that teachers believe that textual coherence is more important than grammar, "such belief is not translated into their own practices" (Lee 1998a, 67).

2.4.5 Role of examinations

One of the important educational issues in Hong Kong is the frequency of examinations and the significance of the results of each examination for determining the future of students in terms of educational options available to them (Llewellyn *et al.* 1982).

The power of public examinations in Hong Kong to control individual aspirations and to function as a gate-keeper is great. It is a "central building block of the social structure" (Teather 1998, 3), it identifies winners and losers, and those who fail largely accept the verdict of the examination.

Throughout an educational career, Hong Kong students sit for as many as eight sets of examinations, all of which are beyond diagnostic classroom assessment. The results of these examinations determine the educational options for students and ultimately influences their whole life. This is how Llewellyn *et al.* (1982, 11)

describe the examination ladder that Hong Kong students have to climb in order to reach university:

...there is an interview and an appraisal to be gone through before being accepted into a kindergarten of the parents' choice. The same, with a stronger element of formal testing, may occur for admission to a preferred primary school though official policy discourages the practice. Towards the end of primary school, there is a combination of internal assessment and academic aptitude testing (to scale the school assessment) as the basis for the all-important allocation to secondary school places. Form III – the last year of compulsory education – leads up to the Junior Secondary Education Assessment which runs from November to the following May. In Form V, students sit for the HK Certificate of Education Examination on which admission to FVI or other advanced and/or technical education alternatives depends. In FVI, the HK Higher Level Examination is taken mainly by those who aim for a place at CUHK. Finally, in FVII there is the HK Advanced Level Examination whose main function is to establish entry qualification to HKU. In addition, many students take the English GCE (A and O levels) at the appropriate stages.

(Llewellyn *et al.* 1982, 11)

Apart from their frequency, the alarming problem that Llewellyn *et al.* (1982) observe is that examinations are structured so as to dominate style and content of learning in the classroom. Also, the chance of individual students having been admitted into a school which would promise success is determined by how well their peers performed at the end of primary school.

This is where the impact of the examinations problem lies. At the completion of primary school, each child is placed into a “band” of ability according to the results of school assessment and a procedure of scaling each school in relation to the others on the basis of an aptitude test of the P6 pupils (Llewellyn *et al.* 14). The choice is then not just between different types of school (language of instruction, emphasis), but between schools of higher and lower standards – the “band” in which the child is qualified.

Hong Kong limits the number of students entering universities through a series of examination which are forcefully competitive. As early as the primary level,

students realise that the educational system “rewards attainment through examinations” (Yee 1992, 273). According to Yee (1992) the extreme examination mentality of Hong Kong encourages schools to provide as little individualisation as possible, treating all students uniformly in large groups. A combination of large class sizes, averaging 40 in secondary schools, heavy teaching loads and syllabus allows little flexibility and prevents teachers from treating students as individuals.

Examinations play an important role in Hong Kong. But having the examinations acting in a “gate-keeping” role, geared almost entirely to progression from one form to the next, and then to higher education, leads to narrowing of what is learned. The Interim Report of the Hong Kong Education Department (1998) on the Public Examination System acknowledges strong emphasis on examinations as a characteristic of South East Asian countries:

Higher competition for college admission has led some secondary schools in the region to ignore formal standards of curriculum and concentrate principally on curriculum that prepares students for college entrance examinations. Hence, some teachers in higher schools give weight to memory-centred instructions that encourage cramming and memorisation. It seems that there is a tendency for student assessment to be merely summative, used to support administrative decisions on promotion, streaming and selection of students for tertiary education and for competition in the job market.

(Hong Kong Education Department 1998, ch.1, 9)

To Lord (1987) the examination system seemed formidable, and one that would inevitably result in rote learning. He believes that Hong Kong children have too much to learn and to memorise and that everything unnecessary should be cut down; English, for example, should be taught only up to the level they need in their careers.

In one of his studies conducted on first year undergraduates, Evans's (1997) findings suggest that preparation for the HKCEE examination was the real focus of

the English subjects in the secondary school and that both teachers and students saw passing the examination as a primary goal. Good examination grades are perceived as a prerequisite of a successful career (Richards *et al.* 1992).

The fact that students want teachers to prepare them for the public examinations, and see the passing of the examination as a goal of their learning and, at the same time, claim that their needs and interests are not being given enough attention (Evans 1997), suggest that students may not be as examination-oriented as they are made out to be. Evans's findings also suggest that there is a discrepancy between what is needed to pass the examination and what students need as learners.

Yee (1995) claims that the educational system in Hong Kong rewards attainment through examinations, while the individual learner has been lost. There is little learning for its own sake and "Hong Kong rote-learners and anti-intellectualism are still relevant today" (p.53).

Hamp-Lyons (1998a) warns that the "exam-culture" leads to rote-learning and is score-oriented. Hong Kong should take steps to develop a "learning culture" which according to Hamp-Lyons, is characterised as

- being learner centred;
- where initiative and critical thinking is encouraged;
- where emphasis is on knowledge creation not knowledge repetition.

She urges that the curriculum and materials should be appropriate to local needs and that examinations should be congruent with educational objectives. She further proclaims that the system of examinations creates learner hopelessness. Students are inadequately prepared, demand spoon-feeding, and only work for grades and expect immediate results. The solution to this is a target-oriented curriculum and alternative assessment.

Hamp-Lyons (1998a) analyses the Hong Kong examination culture and its effects on learners, teachers, parents, and society. She reasons that learners face pressure to succeed (to pass the examinations), rely on "model answers" and "crib notes", and become increasingly dependent on teachers and texts. Teachers at the same time are judged by students' examination results, they teach to the test and in all this they feel disempowered. In such an examination-oriented culture, parents accept such values, face anxiety for their children's future and face expenditure on examination preparation. With all the above effects, Hamp-Lyons concludes that Hong Kong society's funding is diverted from public education to private schools and that society's value for commercial success is instilled in young people. As a result, parents blame teachers, teachers blame the system and students blame teachers.

Surprisingly, in spite of a high level of public confidence, credibility and international recognition, many Hong Kong students show poor performance at the public examinations. Professor Teather's (1998) report on the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination results for school candidates in 1997 shows that 13,500 students, or 16% of all students, obtained grade F or below in all subjects, while 34% (29,000) failed one or both languages. As many as 58% (50,300) of students failed to score E or better in any subjects, including two languages. Thirty percent of the age cohort continued their education in secondary schools, grade 6 and 7, and finally 18% entered universities.

The panel of experts in their *Review of the Public Examination System in Hong Kong* (Kong Kong Education Department, 1998) states that:

... there is no place in a developing and changing world for an education system that promotes the interests of only a portion of the student population, and to some extent neglects the needs of others. All students need to receive an appropriately broad and balanced

curriculum that identifies, responds to and develops their individual needs and abilities.

At the same time it is widely recognised that education and training opportunities need to be kept available so that all members of society can have access to learning opportunities when needed. Thus, students of all ages are to be encouraged to be more independent in their thinking, willing to take more responsibility for their own learning, able to see learning as a life-long process, and able to function proactively in a climate of constant change. In order to achieve this, assessment should not only provide evidence of achievement but should also provide the foundation for further learning.

(Kong Kong Education Department, 1998, 9)

The Hong Kong Education Commission (1996) Report No.7 acknowledges the need for a change:

...we consider examinations a valuable tool in assuring quality in education, which should be modified to cope with changes in the development of the education system.

(Hong Kong Education Commission 1996, Ch.7, 13)

The Hong Kong Education Commission (1996) acknowledges that there is little understanding of the undesirable effects of “examination-oriented education” among parents and the public. At the same time they admit that “examinations play an integral part in school education” (p.36). They further say that “school examinations and public examinations in Hong Kong are internationally renowned for their rigorous design” (p.36). They do, however, make a recommendation that the examination system be revamped and that, apart from changes to the content of the examinations, other forms of assessment should be considered.

Hong Kong teachers view their own skills in using their professional judgement in assessing students' capacity for higher level thinking, ability to collaborate and communicating their ideas, as inadequate. Their practices as teachers would benefit from support and training in exercising professional judgement and providing feedback that would support learning and improve study outcomes (Morris 1999).

2.4.6 Hong Kong reunification with China and the school curriculum

Acting as a gateway to China and benefiting from a low level of government intervention, in the last few decades Hong Kong emerged as a regional, financial and commercial centre. At the same time, as a reflection of social and economic progress, education has developed and expanded rapidly. In Hong Kong this was apparent both in the number of enrolments in the secondary schools, which grew from 29% of the population in 1965 to 69% in 1986, and in the expansion of the tertiary sector. The growth of the tertiary sector in the last decade can be seen as a result of government and institutional initiatives and several new programmes have been introduced particularly in technological and business studies, computing and medicine (Morris 1996).

After a period of rapid expansion in Hong Kong's educational system in the late 1980s and 1990s, the government turned its attention to the quality of educational provision. This resulted in a number of developments in the curriculum of which the important ones involve the shift to a target-oriented curriculum with attention being paid to student-centred learning and the language policy, a decision commonly seen as a political one (Dimmock and Walker).

Political change does not always have immediate effect on curriculum in schools. With the change of sovereignty in Hong Kong, education became a major area of focus, perceived as an "instrument for shaping the attitudes and aspirations of young people" (Bray and Lee 1997, 152). Until recently, the curricula were de-centralised and did not focus on Hong Kong, neither did they attempt to strengthen the identity of Hong Kong students. Instead, they concentrated on classical Chinese studies, literature, science and mathematics. This situation has undergone a rapid

change since the 1980s with the introduction of issues of awareness of Chinese culture and emphasis on democracy and liberal political system (Morris 1996).

The more recent educational changes in the pre-transition period are also evident and apparent in the classroom through the changed approach to world history, recent enthusiasm for Hong Kong history, concentration on modern history and, in the approach, preparing Hong Kong students to be independent minded (Sweeting 1997). Hong Kong identity began to be more strongly identified with China, calling for close partnership with the Mainland (Bray and Lee 1997).

Schooling in Hong Kong is accepted and expected to be the government's responsibility: therefore its intervention in education can be justified (Kwok 1996). The political transition brought about three major direct changes in the school curriculum: introduction of civic education, social studies and liberal studies. Promotion of civic education has been given a particularly high status as the low level of loyalty, lack of sense of community and individuality and lack of clear cultural identity have been apparent in Hong Kong citizens. Social studies attempted to provide a "contextualized and politicized" curriculum with topics ranging from democracy to biography of Mao Zedong, and liberal studies aimed at developing students' critical thinking (Morris and Chan 1997).

The attempt to portray China in a favourable light started to be evident soon after the Joint Declaration was signed between Britain and China in 1984 in small gradual modifications to school textbooks. The changes were not easily identified and included textbooks in History, Geography, Economic and Public Affairs, Government and Public Affairs and atlases. Although it is apparent that the government makes no attempt to alter the education system dramatically, there is evidence that the curriculum is manipulated for political purposes (Morris 1992).

Since the 1980s the acceleration in politicization of the curriculum has also included such aspects as developing Chinese cultural identity, promoting awareness of concepts of democracy, and liberal political culture.

The degree of government control over tertiary education is, however, far less directive and far more related to economy and the Territory's needs for manpower. As a result of government initiatives the tertiary sector has grown and funds were made available not only to introduce a range of new programmes but also to improve the quality of teaching and learning resources (Morris and Sweeting 1995).

The Hong Kong school curriculum is based on academic disciplines and stresses the pursuit of the acquisition of knowledge with relatively little emphasis on the development of skills, attitudes, aesthetics, personal, social and moral development (Morris 1996). This results in a situation in which the school focuses on developing a narrow set of competence and even those students who are academically able lack competence in areas such as problem-solving or communication.

The system of curriculum development, as Morris argues, is centralized and top-down and innovations are selected and promoted by decision-makers who, in most cases, are detached from schools. Decisions are often made on a desirability basis and copying Western fashions, and relevance, practicality and feasibility are sometimes overlooked. When such decisions are made, their implementation is poor and as a result teachers are blamed "for their lack of commitment, lack of professionalism and poor skills" (Morris 1996a, 156):

What goes on outside schools is a very powerful influence on decisions on the school curriculum, especially in terms of the nature of the planned curriculum. The most significant changes to the planned curriculum of Hong Kong schools have been a response to major economic, social and political changes.

(Morris 1996, 141)

Morris points out a number of influences on the Hong Kong system which arise from sources external to Hong Kong. These in the past have been: political and economic refugee influx from China in the 1960s, "baby boom" children leaving primary schools, the successful economy of the 1980s and the reunification with China.

The combination of the British tradition of elite education and the Chinese tradition for highly bureaucratized education and state-dominated social order resulted in a well structured and tightly controlled system (Postiglione 1992). Though in general the Education Commission seems to be working towards a continuation of this system, it is apparent that education plays a great part in cementing the reunification with China:

On the one hand Hong Kong will probably have much to teach China, e.g., about curriculum development, teacher support educational, technology, and administrative efficiency. But on the other hand, Hong Kong can also learn from China. Two obvious spheres are in the teaching of Putonghua and in the promotion through the school system of a feeling of national identity.

(Bray 1992, 92)

To better prepare students for their roles in society, Bottery and Shun-Mei (1996) suggest that Hong Kong students should be led towards a school life which would develop better self-awareness, encourage a sense of social and moral responsibility, foster the development of a value system and opinion and provide students with more practical and useful information.

2.4.7 New developments in the language policies

Languages enjoy a high status in the Hong Kong curriculum and though in theory the curriculum is oriented towards all-round development of individual students, in practice languages occupy the central role. English, being the key element in placement in high band secondary schools and in universities, attracts the same time allocation as Chinese from P4 onwards, that is eight periods per week (Adamson and Lai 1997).

The rapid expansion of higher education in the early 1990s created a situation in which the number of places at universities was greater than the number of entrants with their English at the minimum required level. Though some universities lowered their standards and started to admit students whose linguistic ability did not meet the expectations, UGC insisted on maintaining the quality of higher education. With strong encouragement and support from employers, new measures were introduced to strengthen the status of English and funds were made available for a range of remedial and enhancement courses in English. Academic links between Hong Kong and Britain were also supported through collaborative research project funding (Law 1997).

The already complex language situation in Hong Kong, with Chinese and English as official languages, has now been made even more complex by a gradual introduction of Putonghua. Hong Kong people speak Cantonese and use modern written Chinese with its traditional full form characters. Recently Putonghua is being incorporated formally and informally with more TV programmes in Putonghua and job advertisement requiring competence in the language of Mainland China and, since 1996, this has been accompanied by the introduction of simplified characters to the teaching syllabus. This has added another situation where Hong Kong students

code-switch the two writing systems (Adamson and Lai 1997). The planned introduction of Putonghua into the school curriculum will create a situation where almost half of the study time will be devoted to languages and this will most certainly put pressure on such lower level status subjects like music, physical education, art and craft (Morris 1997).

Tan (1997) predicts that the stress on national identity, Chinese culture and history will inevitably influence the role English language plays in the education in a negative way. The situation would have been different if Hong Kong had become an independent state.

As a result of this and the change of the media of instruction in Hong Kong schools, private international schools, which so far seemed to cater predominantly for children of the expatriates, would be more in demand. These schools would seem an obvious choice for parents who wish to educate their children in the English medium and at the same time gain access to foreign universities (Tan 1997).

For a long time English has been considered a second language in Hong Kong, which in fact it is not. The role of English in Hong Kong is that of a foreign language and this is how it should be taught:

Ninety five percent of population speak Cantonese... As Hong Kong grew from a population base of 600,000 just after the Second World War to 5 million in 1979 and 6.5 million today, for many of the immigrants, primary school was the highest level of education they would reach, with consequent lack of exposure to English either in the classroom or in the street.

(Falvey 1998a, 77)

2.5 LEARNER AUTONOMY

2.5.1 Historical overview

Self-education is not a new concept, as it was known to play an important part in the lives of ancient philosophers such as Socrates, Aristotle or Plato. Evidence of self-direction in learning can be found in the history of England as early as in the 16th century and throughout the colonialization of America. The first known publication describing the practice and methods for self-instruction came from Craik in 1840, followed by Hosmer's work in 1847 entitled *Self-Education* (Brockett and Hiemstra 1991). John Henry Newman argued, as early as in 1850s, that, in spite of certain deficiencies in their education, self-taught people have advantage over those who were university educated because, universities "...load their minds with a score of subjects against an examination..." and students "...have too much in their hands to indulge themselves in thinking or investigation..." (quoted in Candy 1991, 2).

The concept and the ideas underlying the notion of self-directed learning, however, have found their way to the institutional settings only recently. Today's interest in self-direction has been influenced by the work of Tough in the late 1960s who reported that a significant number of adults spent seven or more hours over a period of a few months expanding their knowledge of a specific issue or a problem. He found that the self-learning was not related to formal education and that there was no direct relationship between the social status, level of education and the educational initiative undertaken, to which Tough referred as "learning projects". This work directed the educators' attention towards informal, everyday learning, self-study, independent learning and autonomy.

The research on self-direction has grown steadily over the past two decades and continues to expand alongside the concept which seems to embrace more and more learners throughout the world. The idea of self-directed learning, however, has undergone a significant evolution and development over the past several years.

Research into self-direction has moved from descriptive methods of discussing frequency and nature of self-directed activities to quantitative methods and, more recently to qualitative methods of observation and interviews. The quantitative ways of measuring self-directedness have not only contributed to the body of knowledge of this area but have led to concerns about how self-direction is defined and the theoretical underpinnings of the concept.

Earlier work of Tough (1979), Kidd (1973), Knowles (1975) and other researchers provided greater understanding of the participation in self-directed activities and laid the foundation for inquiry into personological variables like self-concept and creativity and the influence of self-direction on the teaching-learning process. With the development of measuring instruments for self-directed learning, such as Rotter's *Internal-External Scale* in 1966, Shostrom's *Personal Orientation Inventory* in 1974, Ferrell's *Autonomous Learner Index* in 1978, Guglielmino's *Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale* in 1977 and Oddi's *Continuing Learning Inventory*, self-direction has become one of the most researched areas in education in the past two decades (Brockett and Hiemstra, 1991).

The current efforts to create a greater understanding of self-direction resulted in the great number of studies using qualitative approach which include such strategies as observation, interviews or case studies.

2.5.2 Concept of self-directedness

The concept of self-directed learning brings different ideas to people's minds; from a picture of a solitary person pursuing education on his own, through a person learning from TV or computer to a student obtaining regular formal education and using a full range of resources in the library of an educational institution to expand his knowledge of a subject-matter.

Self-direction can be seen as a goal or as a process; it could be seen as much a characteristic of a learner as a method of learning (Candy 1991). According to the definition proposed by Foster in 1972 and adopted by Candy (1991) independent study is a process, a method and a philosophy of education in which the student:

...acquires knowledge by his or her own efforts and develops the ability for inquiry and critical evaluation; it includes freedom of choice in determining those objectives, within the limits of a given project or program and with the aid of a faculty adviser; it requires freedom of process to carry out the objectives; it places increased educational responsibility on the student for the achieving of objectives and for the value of the goals.

(Candy 1991, 13)

Self-direction according to Candy (1991) has four distinct phenomena:

1. self-direction as a personal autonomy;
2. self-direction as a willingness and capacity to conduct one's own education;
3. self-direction as a mode of organizing instruction in formal setting;
4. self-direction as the individual, non-institutional pursuit of learning in natural setting, called autodidaxy.

(Candy 1991, 13-23)

With the increased popularity of this style of learning, self-direction in learning today is seen as "a way of life, ...a combination of forces both within and outside the individual that stress the learner accepting ever-increasing responsibility for decisions associated with learning process" (Brockett and Hiemstra 1991, 9-18).

The concept of lifelong education emerged in the last two decades and has been strongly associated with self-directed learning. The relationship between the two concepts is described by Candy (1991) as reciprocal. While self-direction is pursued by people throughout their life and is often carried out alongside formal education, lifelong learning equips people with abilities and skills to pursue their learning beyond the formal setting. He sees self-directed learning "...as a means and an end of lifelong education" (Candy 1991, 15) and refers to any purposeful learning taking place outside of a formal school setting as "autodidaxy" or "self-instruction." Independent study, then, resembles autodidaxy since it is characterized by a high degree of learner control in terms of selecting objectives, methods, materials and evaluating the learning outcomes.

Dickenson (1987) defines "self-instruction" as a situation in which a learner, with others or alone, works without the direct control of a teacher. She distinguishes between learner-centred and material-centred self-instruction where the responsibility is either placed onto the learner or built into the instruction. Self-instruction is a mode of learning in which the learner takes over part, or all, of the instructional process without the direct intervention of the teacher.

According to Boud (1986), autonomy can be seen as a goal common to all academic disciplines. This is more true than ever in times in which actual knowledge and content-bound skills rapidly fall out-of-date. The need for learning skills is even stronger as academic expertise consists of the capacity to produce knowledge rather than simply reproduce what is already known.

Autonomy is defined by Holec (1981) as a capacity or fundamentally critical ability to reflect on one's experience and to take charge of one's own learning. Autonomy, a term often used interchangeably with self-direction, refers to the "ability

to take charge of one's own learning" (Holec 1981, 3). According to Holec (1981), learner autonomy consists of making decisions about learning, setting objectives, defining contents selecting methods and techniques, monitoring the procedure and evaluating the learning outcome. Autonomous learners are those who "have reached a point where they are able to define their own goals and create their own learning opportunities" (Nunan 1995, 147).

Autonomy may refer to slightly different aspects of educational ideas. It could refer to a goal of all education "an ideal individual behaviour to which students or teachers may wish to aspire: teachers assist students to attain this goal" (Boud 1986, 17). It could refer to an approach in educational practice that uses ways of teaching which emphasise independence and responsibility for one's own learning. Autonomy can also be seen as an integral part of all learning:

No learner can be effective in more than a very limited area if he or she cannot make decisions for themselves about what they should be learning and how they should be learning it: teachers cannot... guide every aspect of the process of learning.

(Boud 1986, 17)

Autonomy as an approach to learning requires students to take responsibility and initiative in some of the following activities listed by Boud (1986, 23):

- identifying learning needs;
- setting goals and planning learning activities;
- finding resources needed for learning;
- working collaboratively with others;
- using teachers as guides and counsellors rather than instructors;
- taking up non-teacher directed work for example learning through independent learning materials;
- determining criteria to apply to their work;

- engaging in self assessment;
- deciding when learning is complete.

The major strengths of self-directed or autonomous learning, as enumerated by Hammond and Collins (1991, 15) are that it

- promotes empowerment and liberation (of both educators and learners...);
- ensures that learning is relevant even in heterogeneous learning groups;
- meets conventional institutional demands about maintaining academic standards;
- prepares learners for continuing learning;
- promotes participation and co-operation as important educational and social attributes.

Knowles (1988) holds a similar view, declaring that the new assumption about the purpose of education is that it is to produce autonomous lifelong learners:

The primary mission of education for children and youth must be the development of the skills of self-directed inquiry rather than the inoculation of the subject-matter content.

(Knowles 1988, 5)

The reality at the moment, according to Knowles (1988), is that most people seeking a higher education have been taught to be heavily dependent on teachers. They have not learned skills to help them diagnose their own learning needs, or to identify a variety of learning resources and planning strategies for taking the initiative in using those resources. He urges that there is a need for all programmes of higher education to be geared to developing skills of independent learning:

...the new emphasis in higher education must be on the process of learning, with the acquisition of content (rather than the transmission of content...)

(Knowles 1988, 5)

According to Knowles (1975), self-directed learning is a process in which learners take the initiative with the support and collaboration of others in diagnosing their own learning needs, in identifying human and material resources for learning, and in choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies.

2.5.3 Developing independence

Today it is commonly assumed that self-direction in learning is always possible and all adults are capable of assuming responsibility for their own learning and of planning and executing activities to achieve their learning goal. However, Brockett and Hiemstra (1991) claim that:

...it has been our experience that most adults, when entering a formal educational setting, initially expect the teacher to be authority who passes knowledge on to them as receptive learners.
(Brockett and Hiemstra 1991, 106)

Learners can adapt to independence in learning very quickly if the teachers put enough effort in supporting the learners and in providing guidance. The instructional process of self-directed learning in a educational setting can be significantly improved if both the learner and the facilitator take responsibility for their roles. Brockett and Hiemstra (1991, 106-107) present a four-stage model for the development of independence:

- (1) *initiating*, a stage where needs, objectives and benefits are discussed;
- (2) *planning*, where resources and activities are identified and criteria established;
- (3) *managing*, a stage of carrying out the activities and analyzing information;
- (4) *evaluation*, establishing whether the goals have been achieved.

The fostering of self-directed learning requires that a great number of resources are accessible to the learner during the process and it is the role of the facilitator to make learners aware of how to reach, use and evaluate the various resources. In promoting successful self-direction the learning facilitator should, according to Brockett and Hiemstra (1991), assume the following roles:

- provide information;
- assist learners in accessing resources and collecting information;
- promote a dialogue with the learner to help develop a positive attitude and to stimulate interest;
- help in planning and diagnosing needs and
- help evaluate the progress and the accomplishment.

It is possible to become a competent self-directed learner without any formal or informal instruction. Candy argues that every learner is capable of self-direction to some degree and that the level of independence can be increased through strategy training and specific instruction. A person can be regarded as autonomous when he:

- conceives of goals and plans;
- exercises freedom of choice;
- uses the capacity for rational reflection;
- has will power to follow through;
- exercises self-restraint and self-discipline;
- views himself or herself as autonomous.

(Candy 1991, 125)

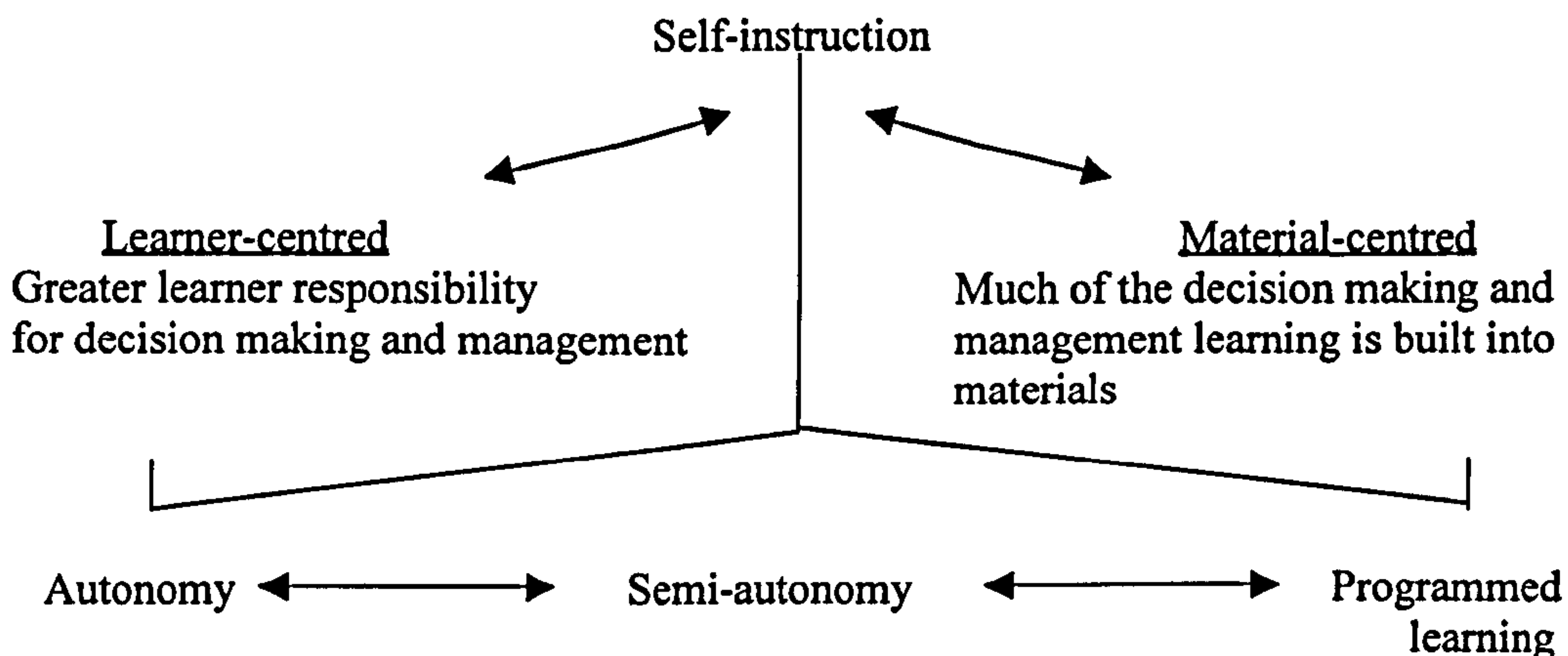
Autonomy is considered to be a desirable aim in higher education and throughout their tertiary study students should be able to “shift from conformity to autonomy and from belief to skepticism” (Squires 1990, 139). These changes have to do with the shift of the locus of control; students develop the capacity to think independently and, with learning to question, learn to criticize and analyze. To describe how these changes develop, Squires uses an interesting metaphor:

The student initially sees the world in fairly simple dualistic and authoritative terms; things are either right or wrong, black or white. Gradually this simplicity becomes clouded, and the student begins to recognize the validity of different points of view, and moves towards the point where everything becomes a shade of gray, and he finds it difficult if not impossible to choose between them. Then he gradually emerges from this state and finds a position to which he can commit himself, still in the knowledge that other positions are possible, and ends up by identifying himself strongly with that commitment...

(Squires 1990, 140)

Squires's picture of students gradually developing their ability to evaluate and analyse information critically has again been recently supported through a cross-sectional, longitudinal study of learners in higher education conducted by Busato *et al.* (1998). Busato *et al.* show that application and meaning directed style, which is defined by them as critical processing, relating and structuring, develops and is substantially used more frequently as a student progresses through the curriculum. Consequently reproductive learning style decreases. These results further point to the relevance of contextual and environmental variables that influence students' use of deep or surface approaches to learning (Entwistle 1985, Ramsden 1992, Gow and Kember 1990).

Depending on the stage of development of independence, a student may be fully autonomous, capable of being responsible for his own learning, making decisions of what, how and when to learn or may need to go through the process of programmed learning gradually to develop independence. Dickenson (1987) explains this using the following diagram.



(Dickenson 1987, 10)

To narrow the gap between teaching and learning is to provide opportunities to the learners to reflect on and to take charge of their own learning processes. The extent to which learners can become involved depends on “critical contextual variables,” such as course objectives, the age, stage and previous learning experiences of the students, as well as the “training and attitudes of the teachers and the philosophy of the institution within which the learning takes place” (Nunan 1995, 149).

Hammond and Collins (1991) warn, however, that self-directed learning may initially be resisted by learners who are accustomed to a teacher-centred approach or other less critical approaches.

This view is shared by Higgs (1988) who warns that the “past experience of students, in particular their contact with traditional teaching/learning methods (which generally do not encourage them to act independently) is likely to result in difficulties for the students if they are suddenly asked to act as autonomous learners” (p.42). The attitude of learners is strongly influenced by their experience of previously encountered independent learning tasks, their enjoyment, success and the abilities they developed from these experiences.

In this age of rapid technological development and frequent change, there is a constant search for educational tools that can best help people acquire skills to cope and adjust to those changes. There is a constant striving to develop human potential and creative talents. This creates the need to move towards self-directed learning as characterised by Areglado, Bradley and Lane (1996), who describe their vision of the school of the future:

In the school of the future, students will learn to educate themselves focusing attention not only on acquiring subject matter but on understanding their own work habits, knowledge bases, insights, aspirations, value systems, how they learn best, and personal talents. This fundamental change – self-directing one’s own learning instead of depending solely on a teacher – is the biggest challenge that education will face.

(Areglado, Bradley and Lane 1996, 1)

Today’s technology requires new kinds of students – those who can invent, create and do abstract thinking on their own without being pushed, prodded or continuously supervised (Areglado *et al.* 1996).

Greater autonomy in learning requires students’ ability, as well as the opportunity given to students to make meaningful choices. The pedagogical change needs to be accompanied by the development of resources, facilities and a structure for learner support (Kenning 1996).

Benson and Lor (1998) suggest that listening to learners and talking to them about their experiences will encourage the development of independence:

... it is especially important to create opportunities for learners to share their experiences and opinions on language learning, to ask students what kind of guidance they are comfortable with in autonomous learning and to try to give it to them, and to keep in mind that autonomy is about becoming autonomous in ways that make sense to learners themselves.

(Benson and Lor 1998, 58)

2.5.4 Self-direction and social context

Self-directed learning activities are rarely carried out by learners alone. Instead they are performed in the context of social groupings such as team, club, work, family or peers (Candy 1991). Self-directed learning activities are placed within a social context in which other people serve an important role of learning resource. Other learners or peers not only provide information, skill model and support but could also be used as comparison in the evaluative process. Successful self-directed students are "...highly aware of context in the sense of placing their learning within a social setting" a setting which could provide them with advice, information, model and "...crucial conditioning for self-directed learning" (Brookfield 1986, 44).

The community itself provides a range of resources that could be utilized in self-directed learning since "self-direction is in tune with the natural way people live and learn" (Brockett and Hiemstra 1991, 218).

Self-direction in learning is not exclusive to any single society, culture or social status but since it exists within a social context, cultural differences may have an impact upon the desirability of self-direction. Ethical conflicts may create negative results if the facilitators or educators are culture insensitive. Learning involves:

...moral issues; ideals; values; abstract social, political, philosophical, or educational concepts, and feelings. We attempt to learn what others mean as they communicate with us through speech, the written word, plays, moving pictures... we learn what is valid in the assertion of others...

(Mezirow 1985, 19)

All of the learning experience, past or present, is relevant to a given learning task. According to Boud, Cohen and Walker (1993), learning is not independent of the environment. Learners construct their learning experience in the context of a

particular setting with social and cultural values. “It is not possible to step beyond the influence of context and culture” (p.13). Learning does not occur in isolation from social and cultural norms and values. There are two key sources of influence – past experience and the positive supportive role of others:

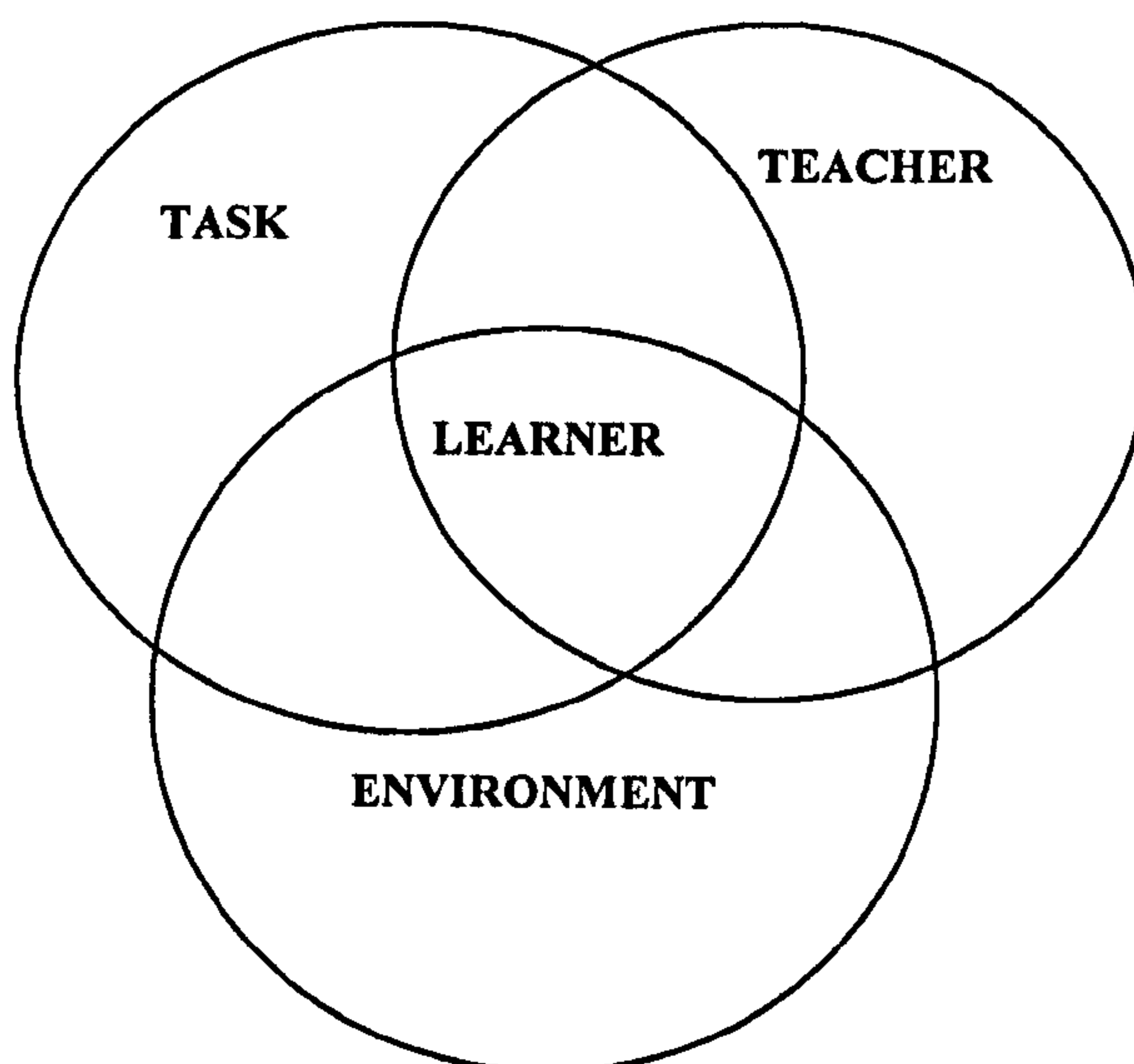
Positive qualities ... manifested through others such as their support, trust and confidence in the learner can help overcome negative influence and allow the person to act and think differently from the past.

(Boud, Cohen and Walker 1993, 15)

Providing students with opportunities for self-directed learning benefits not only the students themselves. Such learning fulfils the ultimate goal of education, which is to create individuals who are self-reliant and independent, but at the same time facilitates skill acquisition, saves teachers’ time, promotes generalisation of skills and promotes cultural aims of education (Agran 1997).

Higgs (1988) lists four principal elements necessary for autonomous learning.

They are:



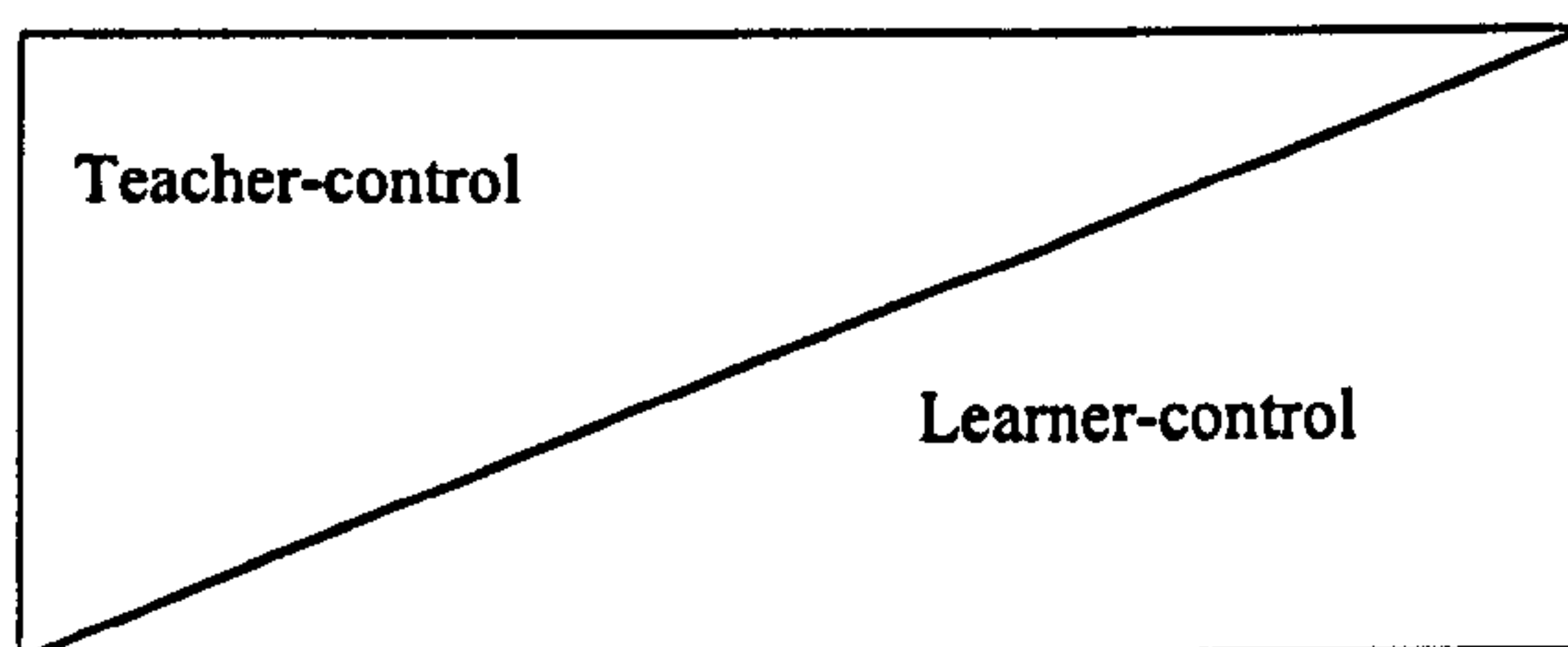
(Higgs 1988, 42)

He claims that the successful outcome of autonomous learning depends on how these four elements, the task, the teacher, the environment, and the learner himself relate to the other. The most important feature of autonomous learning, according to Higgs, is the relationship between the teacher and the learner. The past learning experience of both teacher and learner strongly influences the learning. Depending on the environment, some learners are more ready for independent learning than others.

2.5.5 Teachers' role in developing self-directedness

Knapper and Cropley (1991) pose an interesting question: whether faculty will be prepared to give up their role as subject experts and instead become mentors and facilitators helping students to become more self-directed and active in their learning.

The relationship between the teacher-control and learner-control could be seen as a continuum as shown on the diagram below (Candy 1991). The initial stage of this continuum implies total teacher-control and little degree of control from the learner. The relationship changes as the instruction is provided until the learner achieves complete control of his learning.



Model of Learner-control Continuum (Candy 1991, 10)

When learners are self-directed they are totally in control of their learning process and their teachers' role is merely to provide resources and to facilitate learning (Brookfield 1985). Truly self-directed learners pursue learning with little

assistance as autonomy, independence and isolation are distinctly associated with self-directed learning.

The technique of self-directed learning is manifest in the individual's ability to plan and conduct learning activities. It is discernible when the individual sets realistic and achievable objectives, locates and chooses appropriate resources, designs learning strategies, and generates evaluative procedures.

(Brookfield 1985, 14)

Similar perception of self-directed learning is shared by Knowles (1975) who sees this type of learning as a process where learners take initiative without the help of others in "diagnosing their learning needs, formulating goals, identifying human and material resources, and evaluating learning outcomes" (Knowles 1975, 18).

A study conducted in a Canadian university shows that only a small percentage of faculty members were supportive of self-directed learning in practice (Wilcox 1996). Although in Wilcox's study most instructors not only provided support for students, but also followed a course structure which was flexible enough to meet a variety of students' needs and described their instruction as learner-centred, they believed that self-directed approach was unconventional and difficult to enact. While instructional practices emphasized the development of thinking and problem-solving, clearly the instructors "did not expect students to improve their capacity for managing learning" (Wilcox 1996, 171) and did not provide opportunities for learners to plan and take charge of their own learning.

It is difficult to imagine self-directed learning without any assistance from external sources, be it human in the form of instructors, community or teaching network, or material in the form of information resources. Assistance in self-directed learning pursuits is derived because such learning is not accidental but purposeful and pursued to acquire specific skills and knowledge (Tough 1979).

Ramsden lists out three important educational objectives:

- To teach students to analyze ideas or issues critically
- To develop students' intellectual/thinking skills
- To teach students to comprehend principles or generalisations

(Ramsden 1992, 20)

He further claims that learners in all subject areas express dissatisfaction with learning strategies which involve a mere repetition of information and provide little control over content matter. Students learn best in their own way through active engagement, practising enquiry, arousing their imaginations and understanding the essence of scholarship. This method allows students to control the pace and depth of their learning and accommodates individual differences, at the same time avoiding over-dependency on teachers and fostering development of deep learning approaches.

The learning facilitator or teacher should then

...focus on intensive student interaction with context, clear curriculum structure, engagement of interest, cooperative student endeavour, responsible choice, the lecturer's concern for students...

(Ramsden 1992, 152)

What Entwistle (1990) advocates here is encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning by developing "metacognitive awareness". This can be achieved if teachers emphasize the process of learning itself and encourage students to use a wider range of strategies and to reflect on their own learning. This in turn should lead to greater use of deep approaches to learning. Entwistle (1990) warns, however, about the use of the appropriate assessment procedures and learning resources. He says: "...students' overriding concern is to fulfill assessment requirements so...they will use any newly acquired awareness of study strategies to become more efficient surface learners." He goes on to examine the value of critical thinking and deep levels of understanding and explains that "...the way we teach and assess will have to carry a different message...to make understanding a core learning

activity” (Entwistle 1990, 677). Further, he argues that teachers should be more aware of students’ knowledge base and test it at the beginning of the course to be able to design a course adequately, taking account of the students’ level of understanding and their ability to conceptualize information.

Approaches to learning are directly related to experiences of teaching. Entwistle’s study (1985) shows that surface approaches tend to dominate in subjects with a heavy workload, overfull curriculum and inflexible teachers while students tend to more often employ deep approaches to learning in subjects which provide more freedom in learning and good teacher support. Moreover, students’ attitudes to study are strongly related to evaluating methods in subjects.

Often for effective learning to take place it could be a matter of appropriate methods of teaching rather than the topics. In some cases with careful tutorial advice students may be capable of organising and taking charge of their own learning to suit their needs. The purpose of post-secondary education should be to stimulate students to explore their own ideas, yet many teachers tend to prescribe fixed recipes, never quite understanding how the students could be helped or served better (Riley 1985).

Students in Ramsden’s (1992, 10) longitudinal study associated “...the experience of higher education... with perceptions of an increase in academic interests, self-esteem, liberal attitudes, and general life satisfaction and a decrease in dogmatism”. Similarly in Powell’s (1985) study, propositional knowledge was rarely mentioned by university graduates; and descriptions of the development of problem-solving, capacity to apply logical thinking, evaluate concepts and practice data collection skills, together with the development of self-directedness and autonomy, were more appreciated as educational outcomes.

Empirical evidence suggests that an average language student is likely to lack organizational reference and information processing skills as well as knowledge and understanding of appropriate formats of presentation. The more demanding the tasks, the greater the call for guidance and training. Several other studies also suggest that strategy training promotes independence and improves results (Simmons 1996).

In a learner-centred classroom, the learner makes decisions about what will be taught, as well as how and when it will be taught. Nunan (1995) points out that it is a mistake to assume that learners come into the classroom with “a natural ability to make choices about what and how to learn” (p.134). Instead of assuming that the learner knows and has critical learning skills, a good teacher will help learners to develop such skills in the course of instruction. Nunan (1995) advocates the development of “curricula and materials which encourage learners to move towards the fully autonomous end of the pedagogical continuum” (p.134). He claims that students are unable to make informed choices until well into the course and sometimes at the end of the course.

To facilitate autonomy there should be a “gradual progression towards independence for the students, with the tutor perhaps being more directive and “telling” initially, but becoming increasingly “participatory” or “delegative” as the course proceeds. “Thus...there may be times when the tutor needs to act as a resource person” (Armstrong 1997, 133). As Armstrong goes on to point out:

For goals to be successfully achieved by students workload must be realistic, adequate time needs to be provided for successful self-directed learning to occur, and sufficient resources must be available. Students can be very innovative when it comes to finding appropriate resources for themselves, but they need time to do this.

(Armstrong 1997, 134)

Teachers' enthusiasm for introducing self-directed learning should not be confused with learners' ability or willingness to undertake this form of study (Dickenson 1987). Not all learners want to be self-directed, nor are they all capable of the degree of independence necessary for autonomous learning. The teacher may decide on the level of control and support to be given according to an individual need and readiness for independent study: "group and teacher support are essential to developing self-directed and autonomous learning skills" (Martyn 1994, 76).

While teacher-directed learning assumes that the student is essentially dependent, and that the teacher has the responsibility of deciding what is to be taught, when and how, self-directed learning recognises that the student grows in intellectual and psychological capacity and that subject matter orientation stifles learner initiative (Arellano *et al.* 1996). Student-directed learning provides students with opportunities to perform many of the responsibilities traditionally given to teachers. Students are taught to set goals for themselves, to complete tasks independently, to evaluate their own performance and to make whatever adjustments they think necessary to achieve the goal. Independence and competence is dramatically promoted with this kind of instruction (Wehmeyer 1997).

Higgs (1988) advocates that clear guidance from teachers will help in the development of independence:

With teachers and learners working effectively together, the results of autonomous learning will hopefully go beyond task accomplishment to include development of the student as a learner and as a person. In this way autonomous learning becomes a liberating experience for the learner.

(Higgs 1988, 57-58)

2.5.6 Strategies for enhancing self-directedness in learning

Chamot (1987, 12) defines learning strategies as techniques, approaches or deliberate actions that students take in order to facilitate the learning and recall of both linguistic and content area information. To Weinstein and Mayer (1986), learning strategies are:

...the behaviours and thoughts that a learner engages in during learning that are intended to influence the learner's encoding process.
(Weinstein and Mayer 1986, 17)

Learning strategies can be seen as "steps taken by learners to enhance their own learning" (Oxford 1990, 1) or "behaviours or actions which learners use to make ...learning more successful, self-directed and enjoyable (Oxford 1989, 15). They contribute to the development of the learner and have a direct effect on the outcome of learning (Rubin 1987).

Students approach their academic tasks in ways that are influenced by their previous experience, academic background and culture, individual learning style and the nature of the tasks assigned. The strategies they apply are then varied according to how well they understand the task and the materials they use to complete the task (Li and Munby 1996). Students have different learning styles and some respond better than others by visualising new knowledge: some prefer to hear, others prefer graphic representation (Chamot 1987).

Cohen (1998) suggests that students who have been given a choice of learning strategies and who have managed successfully to apply one, will remember this positive experience. Those students are more likely to try and apply the learning strategy to other similar tasks than those with no experience in usage of new learning strategies. Strategies used successfully to complete one learning task, Cohen claims, are likely to be transferred on to new tasks.

Study skills, thinking skills and social skills are important components of the tertiary curriculum. ESL students may not have developed the learning strategies that underline these skills and, thus, may encounter difficulties in performing certain academic tasks. Studying the information in a foreign language causes particular difficulty, as it is often presented “without the level of explanation needed for students to identify causes and make connections between events” (Beck and Dole 1992, 32).

When students are given opportunities to discover content which they find personally interesting, and they are allowed options in choosing what they study, they experience a higher level of motivation and a greater degree of personal involvement in the learning process (Chamot and O’Malley 1994, 4).

Although Areglado, Bradley and Lane (1996) claim that there is a positive link between high achievement and the use of learning strategies, “...an increased repertoire of learning strategies builds a self-confidence that provides maximum learning power” (p.5). Cohen (1997, 1) notes that “greater or lesser use of strategy is not necessarily a sign of higher or lower success, frequency count is often not the most effective means for describing strategy use.” However, as Williams and Burden (1997, 163) note, information about the “long-term effects of strategy training are as yet limited as is our knowledge about the transferability of strategies learned to new and different situations.”

All learners manifest certain preferred learning strategies – observable behaviour employed by the learner. Self-instruction helps to develop certain learning strategies which would not have been used at all in other learning settings (Dickenson 1987).

Moreover, research on the range and frequency of the use of strategies show that more autonomous learners use more strategies. A greater variety of strategy use enhances learner autonomy and self-direction (Wenden 1987; Oxford 1990; O'Malley and Chamot 1990).

To move students in the direction of independence, plenty of assistance and encouragement may initially be required. Through a series of controlled, guided and free application procedures, using such strategies as direct explanation, process illustration by the instructor, and ample opportunity for guided practice, students start assuming responsibility for learning (Murphy 1996). Nunan (1998) concludes that:

Information will be more deeply processed and stored if learners are given an opportunity to work things out for themselves, rather than simply being given the principle or rule.

(Nunan 1998, 107)

There is a strong relationship between the use of learning strategies and autonomy, as Wenden (1987) observes. Some learners are more successful than others because they have acquired the learning strategies for effective learning. This knowledge about learning, and the attitudes that enable them to use their skills confidently and flexibly, makes them independent of the teacher. Wenden argues that learner training is an essential component of learner independence, especially for those learners who are not very varied and flexible in their use of learning strategies.

Strategy use is affected by context, culture and differences between individuals (Williams and Burden 1997). Similar views are expressed by Chamot and O'Malley (1994) and could well be applicable to Hong Kong students who have had limited experience in a classroom with ideas, questions and individual viewpoints:

These students could gain confidence and skill in classroom participation through practice with the academic language, functions, such as synthesizing, evaluating and persuading... ESL students can profit from explicit learning strategy instruction at various English

proficiency levels. Metacognitive strategies such as planning, selective attention, self-monitoring and self-evaluation can be crucial to academic achievement. Cognitive strategies such as use of prior knowledge making inferences, using resource material are important in remembering new information.

(Chamot and O'Malley 1994, 183)

What adds incentive for learning are good materials which, according to McDonough (1986), show relevance of the content to students' needs, and are complete, covering all skills and knowledge for the aims of study. Materials should be authentic, the "information/skills can be used immediately" and they should give students "satisfaction and the feeling of making progress" (p.156).

Scarino (1994) stresses the importance of moving away from tasks emphasising recall and "lower" cognitive processes to application of understanding and creativity (p.146). Characteristics that are missing in Hong Kong educational practices, according to Scarino (1994), are:

- use of authentic tasks involving novel situations;
- use of fewer tasks of greater breadth and depth;
- focus on integration of skills in tasks;
- emphasis on production, creation and performance;
- use of tasks with flexible time limits;
- use of collaborative tasks.

This usefulness of incorporating authentic and collaborative tasks into the second language curricula to support academic-specific language development is also confirmed by Swain (1997).

For students who are inexperienced in independent tasks and have not yet developed appropriate strategies to cope with such tasks, Or (1994) suggests breaking the objectives into "sub-goals". This will make the task more manageable and

realistic: “the sub-goals established serve as a basis for critical assessment of the learning programme” (Or 1994, 50).

To enhance self-directedness of a learner Candy (1991) suggests two approaches: “...direct instructional intervention, which involves teaching such things as data gathering, critical thinking, organizing information, systematic goal setting and self-management...” and “...experiences in which one is given the opportunity to be self-directed and responsible for one’s actions...” (Candy 1991, 143)

In order to maximize the learning process educators can use a number of strategies to help learners in “facilitating critical thinking, promoting rational thinking and using helping skills in the facilitation process” (Brockett and Hiemstra 1991, 133). This can be achieved through attentive listening, showing support, motivation, evaluation of progress and criticism (Brookfield 1987).

Knowles (1975) sees self-direction as a necessity for survival in today’s world and advocates its development because he believes that the responsibility for learning should be placed with the learner and those who take the initiative in learning are bound to retain more than the passive learners. As other commentators have noted:

Self-directed learning situations will most often be compatible with the needs, desires, and capabilities of adult learners. There are times when a highly teacher-directed approach will prove most effective and indeed, will be expected and even demanded.

(Brockett and Hiemstra 1991, 31)

The success of self-directed learning depends on many factors which need to be recognized by self-learners in order to achieve the highest possible level of autonomy. The development of successful self-directedness relies to a large extent on the training; the type of assistance obtained by learners, the relationship between the learner and the facilitator, the expertise of the assistant, the emotional support

and encouragement received by the learner and the depth of involvement of the facilitator through the stages of the learner's progress (Candy 1991).

It would seem that, although self-directedness is seen as a desired outcome of university education, there is not enough administrative and faculty support to move the change in the structure and style of teaching forward. What Kreber (1998) argues is that the shift to self-directedness is often assumed to be the students' responsibility and that they somehow manage to pick it up by themselves as they mature.

Working on Jung's model of the four personality types Kreber (1998) looks at the relationship between certain aspects of peoples' personality and their ability to develop critical thinking and self-directedness. She argues that there is a positive correlation between learners' intuition and their inclination for, or perceived competence in, self-directed learning and, further, that their ability to think critically prompts them to more willingly engage in the self-directed activities. Though, according to Jung's theory, people are born a certain psychological type, which, as Kreber claims, is a predictor for people's willingness and capability for self-directedness and critical thinking ability, educators can and should encourage learners to exercise their intuition function. Kreber urges that "the skilful promotion of extraverted intuition and logical thinking may eventually enhance students' capacity for self-directed lifelong learning" (Kreber 1998, 84). This, as she says, can be achieved through the introduction of choices for students, the gradual shift of responsibility to the learners themselves, and the relinquishing of teachers' position of power – a challenging task for both teachers and learners.

2.5.7 Characteristics of a self-directed learner

Candy's review of twenty authors on self-direction and autonomy allowed him to compile a list of preferable attributes that the autonomous learner should possess.

Ideally a person who is in control of his or her learning process should:

- be methodical and disciplined;
- be logical and analytical;
- be reflective and self-aware;
- demonstrate curiosity, openness and motivation;
- be flexible;
- be interdependent and interpersonally competent;
- be persistent and responsible;
- be venturesome and creative;
- be independent and self-sufficient;
- show confidence and have a positive self-concept;
- have developed information-seeking and retrieval skills;
- have knowledge about, and skills at learning generally;
- use defensible criteria for evaluating learning (Candy 1991, 459-466).

An autonomous person should be expected to manifest skills in self-directedness in any situation, but most people seem to develop autonomy with respect to a specific aspect or subject. Though some learners may be able to apply their autodidaxy across most disciplines and subject dimensions, the degree of independence they exhibit may vary from situation to situation (Candy 1991). Drawing on the research of several authors Candy (1991, 134-135) presents a list of

features which should characterize a truly autonomous learner. Such a learner should:

- take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing or assessing his own learning needs;
- select appropriate sources of help with learning;
- develop a process to evaluate the particular domain of learning being undertaken;
- ask for justification for rules, procedures, principles, and assumptions;
- refuse agreement or compliance with what others (such as a teacher or trainer) say where this seems critically unacceptable;
- be aware of alternative choices, both as to learning strategies and to interpretations;
- continually review the process of learning (as both a cognitive and a social phenomenon), and make strategic and tactical adjustments to one's approach in order to optimize learning potential;
- conceive of goals, policies, and plans independently of pressures from others;
- develop an understanding of phenomena to such an extent, as to be able to explain the phenomena to others in words unlike those in which they were first encountered;
- independently form opinions and clarify beliefs when relevant contrary evidence is presented.
- be able to pursue a learning goal with determination without being adversely affected by external factors;
- determine what is really of personal value or in one's interests, as distinct from what may be expedient;

- be willing and able to accept alternative points of view as legitimate and criticisms of one's goals without becoming incapacitated, threatened, or angry;
- demonstrate a sober and realistic appraisal of one's short-comings and limitations, based on past experience, of one's strengths, abilities, and motivations as a learner;

One of the definite features of self-direction is controlling the direction of conduct of learning and Brookfield (1985) identifies two cognitive styles in self-direction: field-dependence and field-independence. While field-independent learners, being more characteristic of democratic societies which "...emphasize self-control and autonomy..." are considered "...analytical, socially independent, inner-directed, individualistic and possessed of a strong sense of self-identity...", field-dependent learners are said to be more comfortable in "...highly regulated settings where norms are well defined and unchanging" (Brookfield 1985, 8). According to Brookfield, field-dependent learners want more guidance and structure from their teachers and are generally less self-directed. This type of learner is more common in cultures that adhere to strict social roles, rigid child upbringing and respect for authority. Brookfield (1985) offers a further argument that the cognitive style of self-direction is influenced by a social setting which, by encouraging freedom and autonomy, develops field-independence, and by promoting authoritarian control creates tendencies for field-dependence. However, in practice, learning activities are placed in a real context and other people are "the most important learning resource" (Brookfield 1985, 9) who also provide skill modeling. This is why, Brookfield explains, successful self-directed learners possess the learning style characteristics of field-dependent learners.

Students' capability for autonomy depends on their ability and willingness (Littlewood 1996). Ability depends on processing knowledge about the alternatives, and willingness depends on motivation and confidence to take responsibility. Littlewood (1996) notes that "a student who is accustomed to a high degree of teacher control and support may lack the confidence to carry out whatever skills he or she is taught" (p.428). Therefore the more knowledge and skills students possess, the more confident they will be to perform independently. Providing students with opportunities to develop the motivation, confidence, knowledge and skills for autonomous learning will help them to become independent learners (Littlewood 1996).

Nunan (1996) sees that the degree of autonomy feasible or desirable for learners depends on such factors as personality, goals, the philosophy of the institution providing the instruction, and the cultural context. He also claims that, regardless of the learner's natural predisposition, some degree of autonomy can be fostered through carefully incorporated strategy training. The degree of autonomy achievable by learners will depend on the "extent to which they either desire autonomy or are capable of developing it" (p.20).

2.5.8 Disciplinary differences

The traditional way of classifying different disciplines is to distinguish between hard fields, such as natural sciences, technology or medicine, and soft fields, such as humanities, arts and social sciences. Though boundaries between academic disciplines are complex and subtle there may be some apparent differences in teaching and learning styles in various disciplinary areas (Becher 1989). Students tend to adapt their learning styles to the subjects they study, the demands placed on

them, the evaluation methods and the reward system they experience. These may differ within different disciplines. Therefore, students' learning styles change accordingly and, over time, adapt to accommodate the demands of the character of the educational programme. Nutty and Barrett (1996) warn that students whose learning styles do not match the character of the discipline they study will experience poorer educational outcomes and greater study difficulty. As Squires (1987, 138-139) has noted, it is "quite absurd" that fourteen, or fifteen-year-old teenagers have to decide and commit themselves to study a particular discipline, taking narrowly specialized first degree courses while, in many instances, they would do much better with broader degrees

Students in natural sciences, as Becher (1989) notes, may receive more guidance and less freedom from their teachers than students in humanities or social sciences. A possible explanation to that, as offered by Smelby (1996), may lie in the distribution of resources. Results of Smelby's study show that in Norway the student-teacher ration in medicine is 3:1, in natural sciences and technology 6:1, while in humanities the ratio is 16:1 and in social sciences 26:1, students. Due to high teacher-student ratio students in some disciplines may be more encouraged to be independent and resourceful, as a result of a necessity and shortage of resources.

2.5.9 Learning strategies and study approaches

In his studies, Watkins (1996a) emphasises the importance of stimulation and meaningful context in teaching. Time and again the latest studies stress that effective learning takes place through transformation of knowledge, and relating new information to the old (Watkins 1996a; Wittrock 1977; Walberg and Haertel 1992; Biggs 1993a; Entwistle and Waterson 1988).

In their widely cited paper, Marton and Saljo (1976) classified learning strategies into “surface” and “deep” and proved that outcomes of learning were different, depending on what approaches were utilised. “Surface strategy” users tried to memorise and recall information, while learners using “deep strategy” processed information for meaning and were able to provide an overview of the reading they performed. Entwistle and Ramsden (1983) added a third dimension to this model of learning approaches, the “achieving approach”. Any strategy or combination of strategies used to achieve the highest possible grades or to maximise academic achievement, be it memorisation or analysis of facts, understanding or recall of information, would fall into this third category of learning approaches.

To this model of “deep”, “surface” and “achieving” approaches, Biggs (1987) added the motive-strategy relationships which depended on students' perception of the learning context. Biggs's (1987) motive-strategy model may be summarised in the following way:

Surface Approach

Surface motivation

Motivation is utilitarian; the main aim is to gain qualifications at minimum allowable standard

Surface strategy

Strategy is to reproduce bare essentials often using rote learning

Deep Approach

Deep motivation

Motivation is interest in subject and its related areas

Deep strategy

Strategy is to understand what is to be learnt through inter-relating ideas and reading widely

Achieving Approach

Achievement motivation

Motivation is to obtain highest possible grades

Achievement strategy

Strategy is to achieve high marks by being a 'model' student, e.g., being punctual, doing extra readings, or whatever else that is needed

These current theories identify three processes that could come into play when an individual approaches a learning task. These approaches, deep, surface and achieving, are determined by learner motivation and orientation and the tactics and strategies that the learner uses when dealing with learning tasks. The criticism that these approaches were developed to account for how students learn in Western cultures has been disproved by Biggs (1993) and Watkins (1996) who find that the general approach is suitable for studying learning from the cross-cultural viewpoint.

Biggs (1987, 1992) has developed two questionnaire instruments to evaluate approaches of Hong Kong students to learning. The first one, the *Learning Process Questionnaire*, is designed for secondary school students, and the *Student Process Questionnaire* is intended for tertiary students. These instruments ask students how they usually go about learning, in order to measure the predisposition of students to adopt particular processes. Biggs observes that approaches to learning change in different learning contexts. The nature of the task may require the application of rote-learning strategy because of its level: equally there are times where a higher level of competence may call for deep or achieving strategies to be applied (Biggs 1987).

Kember and Gow (1989) argue that Hong Kong students use both surface and deep strategies for learning, depending on the purpose. Students try to understand and memorise knowledge but, owing to examination orientation and the fact that they study in a foreign language, they resort to survival strategy:

Here is a major challenge to our constructivist theories. The nature of teaching and assessing in CHC [Confucian Heritage Culture] classrooms certainly suggests the rote learning and low level outcomes that some Western observers report, yet CHC students

themselves report a preference for high level, meaning-based learning strategies, and achieve significantly higher than Western students. The paradox of the Asian learner, then, is that high level outcomes emerge from large classes, exam pressure, and expository teaching, not to mention teaching in an exotic language, as happens in Hong Kong and frequently in China.

(Biggs 1996, 59)

Gow *et al.* (1991) find a positive relationship between English abilities and deep and achieving approaches in Hong Kong students, and suggest that lower English ability is associated with surface approach. Students who translate from Chinese to English tend to use more surface approaches while those who can process ideas in English are more prone to deep and achieving strategies use. These views are echoed by Marton *et al.* (1996) who question the Western perception of an Asian student as a rote-learner. Teaching philosophy and practice in Asia are directed towards memorisation which, according to Western beliefs, does not enhance understanding. The two, as a matter of fact, are considered mutually exclusive. To explain the high achievement demonstrated by the Asian students, both in their countries and overseas, Marton *et al.* (1996) claim that mechanical memorisation is not the case of the Asian students' learning: rather it is repetition for the sake of reaching understanding.

Biggs (1996) makes a similar observation of the role of repetition as a way of coming to understanding. He claims that if memorisation is used in this aspect it is not a surface strategy and has little to do with rote-learning which he defines as “mechanical learning without thought of meaning” (p.54). These findings, together with those of Biggs (1996) and Watkins (1996), underscore the importance of cultural values in shaping students' approaches to learning.

Confucian authoritarian education and the pressure for conformity “may not be conducive to the development of creative and analytical thinking” (Salili 1996,

100). Even though Chinese students do better than Western students in mathematics and sciences, observes Salili (1996), they are not known for their creativity and critical thinking.

Watkins (1996) also anticipates problems with the Confucian philosophy of education, arguing that he is unable to “assess the extent to which these students’ intentions are to memorise through understanding or to understand through memorisation” (p.116). He says that this may not make much difference in the immediate learning outcome but may have a marked effect in later situations. He poses a question about Chinese learners: “have they really appreciated the value of understanding for its own sake?” (Watkins 1996, 116).

Hong Kong students arrive at tertiary level with “an armory of superficial strategies tuned to cope with certain kinds of assessment requirements” (Tang and Biggs 1996, 179), such as those required to answer multiple-choice questions in the frequently taken examinations. When students are faced with a novel assessment format involving, for example, extended argument or research, they have few skills, and the need for research and assignment writing is clearly evident:

Hong Kong students are street-wise when it comes to test-taking strategies... even deep oriented students can handle tests using superficial strategies...

(Tang and Biggs 1996, 179)

Tang and Biggs (1996) remark that the teaching-learning infrastructure might need to be more accommodating when it comes to procedural wisdom.

Research has established that even when curricula are apparently appropriate, what is learned will vary according to language and culture (Holliday 1994). Consequently when Western courses are transplanted to other cultures they could be perceived quite differently by both teachers and students.

Numerous studies have been conducted on the cultural differences affecting learning styles of young adults in various countries, many in Asia. Some recent research analyzing Mainland Chinese students' learning styles of English has been compiled in HKPU (Heuring and Zhoe 1995) and more recently at HKBU by Ghadessy (1999). Little, however, has been specifically said about teaching methodologies in Hong Kong, where students face a unique situation of having to adapt their often traditional eastern educational values to the new western educational environment they find themselves in.

It has been widely appreciated that when teaching and learning occur in a foreign language there is little scope for the students to read extensively in their subject and explore it along different avenues through research literature. Their reading gets narrowly confined to the prescribed texts and to the lecture notes. For the same reason libraries are not used enough especially by the younger generation of undergraduate students who are yet unfamiliar with a wide range of more independent teaching methods. Such factors restrict the practicality of some teaching methods (Bligh 1975).

The notion of making choices can then be further questioned in view of the cultural aspect. Nunan (1995) points out that the notion of choice is "a Western one and less familiar to the non-Western psyche" (p.144).

It has been said already that Western teachers often perceive Chinese students as rote learners who merely recite information. Recent studies by Kember (1996), Tang (1991) and Biggs (1999) point to the possibility that Chinese students may be able to combine the process of memorization with understanding in a way Western students seldom do. The Chinese, according to Dahlin and Watkins (2000), differentiate between mechanical memorization-rote learning, and memorizing with

understanding and are able to recall information at different levels, depending on what is expected of them by their teachers. If needed, they are capable of demonstrating their understanding; so what looks to a Western teacher like rote learning is in fact a combination of memorization and understanding:

It seems that a HKC student who sets him/ or herself to repeat reading a text in order to understand it, often does not expect such an outcome without considerable effort. The student may well approach each reading with an open mind *disregarding* what s/he already understands of the text, trying to look at it *anew*. This is not the same as reading again in order to compare *what you already have in mind* with what the text says.

(Dahlin and Watkins 2000, 78)

Much of this commentary seems to be based on anecdote and stereotyping. Biggs (1996, 1999) and Kember (1996) began to question these assumptions by suggesting that Hong Kong students may memorize and understand as a sequential process. Kember (1996) suggests that language plays an important role in the way students are perceived and the way they learn. Also, memorization in Asia is often used as a strategy to meet the demands of the assessment system of the educational institution. Sadler-Smith and Tsang's (1998) study of the relationship between study approach and learning performance conducted on Hong Kong and Hong Kong students, poses a question whether memorization is an aspect of a surface or a strategic approach. The researchers suggest that the role of memorization is strongly connected with the context in which learning is taking place:

...memorisation may equally be considered a strategy (when it is employed as memorization-with-understanding) as well as being potentially dysfunctional (when it is mechanical memorization) along with other aspects of the surface approach.

(Sadler-Smith and Tsang 1998, 91)

Further, the authors argue that in a Hong Kong context, memorization is not considered inferior, it is separate from surface approach and has qualitative differences which means that memorization and understanding are not mutually exclusive. Their study provides further support that the perception of Asian learners as 'rote learners' is incorrect.

Individual students have their preferred ways of tackling academic tasks, hence a variety of different study approaches and strategies used among learners. There have been many studies concerned with the effect of the approaches used by students on the quality of the learning outcome (Entwistle 1991; Biggs 1987, 1993). Research studies have also suggested that there is a relationship between the level of learners' independence and their adoption of learning strategies.

Chinese students are characterized by a competitive and keen approach, hard work, responsible attitudes, high motivation and most of all effort and hard work are seen as more important than ability.

Drew and Watkins (1998) show a direct influence of the way students perceive themselves and the application of deep or surface learning approaches: "a learner with a high academic self-concept is more likely to adopt a deeper learning strategy and to deny the superficial approach to study" (183). Their study sheds some light on the role study enhancement training courses may play in the improvement of student self-concept and eventually their achievement outcomes. It also supports the assumption that learner characteristics influence the adoption of learning strategies and learning outcomes.

2.6 LEARNER INDEPENDENCE IN HONG KONG

2.6.1 Chinese learner and self-directedness

In Hong Kong secondary education, and in many cases at the tertiary level, tuition is highly structured and learners are not only expected to, but also expect, to adopt a passive role. “Formal education in this context teaches the need to be taught: learners are conditioned to believe that in order to learn one must be taught and that the teacher holds the monopoly over the transmission of knowledge” (Farmer 1994, 14).

Murphy (1987, 43) comments on Hong Kong students' attitude to teachers in the following way:

... Hong Kong students display unquestioning acceptance of the knowledge of the teacher or lecturer. This may be explained in terms of an extension or transfer of the Confucian ethics or filial piety. Coupled with this is an emphasis on strictness of discipline and proper behaviour, rather than expression of opinion, independence, self-mastery, creativity and all-around personal development.

(Murphy 1987, 43)

Pierson (1996) observes that Chinese learners, regardless of where in the world they are, exhibit similar learning behaviours:

They seem to want to be told what to do, show little initiative, and accordingly have difficulty in dealing with autonomy.

(Pierson 1996, 52)

This draws the picture of a Chinese learner as conditioned to a pattern of cultural forces which are not “harmonious” with independence, self-direction or autonomy. The teacher, according to Pierson (1996), decides what is correct and his function is to transmit the knowledge. The student is given little room to exercise initiative and is supposed to absorb knowledge.

As discussed earlier, Hong Kong students may follow primitive learning strategies, ignoring more enriching but time-consuming study skills, because of their

practical approach – they want to get through the course quickly and with minimal effort (Garner 1990).

Kennedy (1998) compares the difference between Eastern and Western educational goals and teaching styles to being a passenger in a car: being driven by a teacher is the Eastern way, and driving yourself and learning the route is the Western style. This results in the situation in which Hong Kong learners lack the foundations to develop autonomy and many resent the notion of independent learning (Farmer 1994). In his study, Farmer (1994) describes some students who were “bewildered by the idea of accepting responsibilities for their learning” (p.15). He cautions that self-directed learning should not be imposed upon learners who are not ready for it. Eighty per cent of his student sample believed that 100% teacher contact was important. The expectations of the Hong Kong learner should be recognised and respected and teachers should be realistic as to how much independence Hong Kong learners can cope with and where they should start.

Most Hong Kong students are not ready to manage their learning, as Chu (1998) finds in her study. If autonomy is the ultimate goal in education, curriculum design and instruction have to be oriented towards training learners to take charge of their own learning. To reinforce autonomy in Hong Kong, she proposes the following: embedding strategy training into the training; creating a supporting environment in which teachers and students can share such responsibility as setting objectives, choosing materials, selecting techniques, monitoring and evaluating progress; encouraging a gradual move away from teacher dependence by setting elements of self-instruction in the syllabus, for example through project assignments and peer feedback.

Hard-working as they are, Hong Kong students have little incentive to undertake learning outside their studies and tend to limit their studies to what is taught in the course. Lee (1998) is certain that Hong Kong students' self-directed learning could be more effective and could lead to autonomy if such areas as learner training, teacher counselling, collaborative learning and provision of genuine choices were addressed. Some learners, she claims, are not ready for independent learning, especially those less enthusiastic about learning.

Littlewood *et al.* (1996) urge that at the tertiary level there is a need to explore strategies for encouraging students to move away from the passivity to which they are accustomed "towards the more active roles..." (p.84). In Eastern cultures learners have to be encouraged to make choices and have to be provided with ample opportunities and models.

Beliefs and expectations about the teacher's role in transmitting knowledge have to change. To foster autonomy, teacher counselling has to be integrated into self-directed learning. Students should have resources at their disposal and should know how to use them in order to make choices:

Creating a self-directed learning programme... does not enable learners to become self-directed.

(Lee 1998, 288)

Teachers need to think very carefully about "how the necessary supportive circumstances and contexts can be provided to help learners develop the necessary capacity and willingness to take on more responsibility for their own learning" (Lee 1998, 288).

Universities the world over are paying closer attention to the quality of their teaching than ever before. This is due, first, to their expansion. In Hong Kong the proportion of students seeking university-level qualifications increased from about

6% in 1987, to nearer 20% at the present time. The new clientele of students is different from the academic elite of Hong Kong that the tertiary institutions used to entertain, and they require more student-friendly and more effective teaching methods than lecturing (Biggs 1993a).

2.6.2 Creativity

The Confucian authoritarian style of education does not encourage the development of creative and analytical thinking (Salili 1996). Even though Chinese students do better than Western students in mathematics and sciences, observes Salili (1996), they are not known for their creativity and critical thinking.

Western parents encourage their children to solve a problem by themselves while the Chinese child

...will be shown exactly how to do things. Chinese parents and teachers convey to their children and students from an early age very clear messages about what a good painting should look like, how a proper character should be drawn, how a story should be told etc. The child is firmly told that there is one and only one right way of doing things...

(Rudowicz *et al.* 1994, 4)

Rudowicz and Hui (1996) argue that Hong Kong children are not given time to play and create, even in the early kindergarten stage. At the age of three, children work hard to learn how to read and write and are already given hours of homework.

Such an environment does not encourage the development of creative potential and original thought. Rudowicz and Hui's (1996) analysis of Hong Kong people shows that the Hong Kong Chinese concept of creativity is different from the Western concept, as it does not encompass originality and self-expression. When their subjects were asked to nominate highly creative Hong Kong people, the majority offered names of businessmen and politicians who were financially very successful.

Creativity, Rudowicz *et al.* (1994) claim, seems to require a “flexible and supportive social framework” and the provision of encouragement for “independent and creative exploration” (p.5). Children need to be allowed to look for solutions and make mistakes on the way:

... rigid exams and a practice oriented educational system is ... counterproductive to the development of creative thought and innovative problem solving in general and the formation of a high degree of fluency and flexibility...

(Rudowicz *et al.* 1994, 5)

In other words Chinese culture has problems in providing a supportive social framework for creative development (Bond 1991). A recent article in the *South China Morning Post* (28 February 1999) describes a survey with Hong Kong secondary students in which the majority of respondents highlighted discontentment with the education system. They said there were not enough opportunities for them to develop and the education system was too examination-oriented. One student said, about the system, that it was “narrow minded” and “harmful to students” (Chow 1999). As Forestier (1999) has observed:

Independence and creativity are also crushed by teachers who regard sitting quietly and not asking questions as more important virtues for a child than being active and inquisitive. It used to be that all kindergartens were like this.

(Forestier 1999, 17)

Sin-ming Shaw (1999), notes that “the Confucian stress on order is a major obstacle to creative thinking...”. She claims that:

Blaming Asian schools for focusing on memorisation – as opposed to “thinking” – is too pat an excuse, as schools and universities reflect the basic values of a society. It is ingrained in the Asian psyche that “correct” answers always exist and are to be found in books or from authorities. Teachers dispense truth, parents are always right and political leaders know better... Questioning authority, especially in public, is disrespectful, un-Asian, un-Confucian.

(*Time*, 31 May 1999)

2.7 THE NEED TO REFORM

Schools do not exist in a vacuum: rather, they are a part of the society that surrounds them. According to Postiglione and Lee Wing On (1997), education is affected by both the social transformations of the past and people's expectations about their future. They quote Robert Church (1976) who says:

Schools... change dramatically only when a society's vision of its own future changes... Education institutions are assumed to shape the lives of children, of future generations; therefore, major changes in educational institutions follow major changes in society's aspiration.
(Church 1976, 3)

They claim that teachers, parents, students and administrators should serve as catalysts for change. In order to be receptive to change, teachers must have "good morale, a sense of satisfaction with their work, and autonomy to carry out their professional work" (Postiglione and Lee Wing On 1997, 9).

The difficulty is that the Hong Kong teachers' position is subordinate in the school. For the change to take place there must be a positive attitude toward solving problems and toward adapting to change: "the teachers and students must be willing to change" (Postiglione and Lee 1997, 9).

Fullan's (1993) criticism of the educational system is just as relevant to Hong Kong as it is to any other:

...we have an educational system which is fundamentally conservative. The way that teachers are trained, the way that schools are organized, the way that the educational hierarchy operates, and the way that education is treated by political decision-makers results in a system that is more likely to retain the status quo than to change. When change is attempted under such circumstances it results in defensiveness, superficiality or at best short-lived pockets of success.
(Fullan 1993, 3)

When discussing innovation in teaching methodology, several factors should be considered, ranging from culture in the wide sense to the psychology of learners. When we talk about the Chinese learner, tradition and culture can not be ignored.

At the reunification ceremony on 1 July 1997, the Chief Executive of Hong Kong, Tung Chee Hwa, said:

Our education system must cater for Hong Kong's needs, contribute to the country, and adopt an international outlook. It should encourage diversification and combine the strengths of the east and west.

(Tung Chee Hwa 1997, 14)

Yee (1995) urges that the proper approach to reform education in Hong Kong should:

...emphasise the value of education in mind, heart and body and make full use of proven methods of learning and teaching. These qualities surely transcend rote-mindedness and certificate for its own sake. Endowed with much drive and basic intelligence, the people... deserve far better education than they have been getting.

(Yee 1995, 54)

The Hong Kong Education Department (1998) has identified several concerns with the current Hong Kong education system which are summarised below and they include:

- an ever-increasing fragmentation and overcrowding within the curriculum;
- a view of learning which highlights rote memorisation of information and linear mastery of en-route skills;
- little conception of what is meant by progress in learning;
- a view of cognitive ability as largely predetermined and unalterable;
- a situation where classes are taught as a whole, with little or no differentiation;
- a view of the teacher as an educational mechanic, obedient to the schools' scheme of work and to the textbook;

- a view of assessment as primarily concerned with determining how much information a student has absorbed and can give back, and with rank-ordering and norm-referencing;
- a view of language as largely irrelevant to subject learning, and of cognitive development as independent from language development.

Any changes introduced in Hong Kong would have to bear in mind the fact that Hong Kong students are practical. If a subject does not affect their academic results, invariably they are going to pay less attention to it. One way to motivate students to study is to build in a true reward structure (Pierson 1992).

The *Hong Kong Education Commission Report No.7* (1996) illustrates a move towards a broader view of education which includes non-economic purpose:

Traditional Chinese values towards a whole-man education of a child include moral, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic developments. We endorse these values. Our society needs committed citizens and a diversity of talents. The major yardstick for assessing the outcome of school education must therefore be the school's ability to develop fully the potential of its students.

(Hong Kong Education Commission Report No. 7 1996, 10)

These statements seem to be a departure from the traditional economic model of education that has been presented in previous language policy documents, and are supported by recommendations to schools about goal-setting.

Schools should aim:

...to equip students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will help them to meet the challenges of life and to instill in them a desire for continuous improvement and self-learning, ...to impart confidence and social skills to students to help them communicate effectively in community life, ...to prepare students to become responsible citizens and maintain high moral standards.

(Hong Kong Education Commission Report No. 7, 1996, 39)

For reform in teaching to be effective, the initiative should come from teachers themselves, however formidable the challenge:

...teachers in many lands are also being expected to help rebuild national cultures and identities.

(Hargreaves 1994, 5)

The change in the role that a teacher plays in Hong Kong's present educational system will positively influence the quality of teaching if it focuses on

...an expansion of opportunities for the classroom teacher to play an active role in curriculum development and in other school-level professional decisions. Teacher quality depends on professional satisfaction. Schools should be encouraged to adopt a more participatory form of decision making, especially in professional matters such as school organization and programme.

(Llewellyn *et al.* 1982, 99)

In spite of the fact that the report of Llewellyn *et al.* was published as long ago as 1982, not many of his recommendations have been carried out and his advice still remains current. His views are that examinations dominate the Hong Kong education system, to its detriment. There is a need to relieve the strain of the present examination system on both teachers and students; there is also a need to improve the curriculum by making it more relevant to the developmental needs of students rather than allowing it to be dominated by administrative procedures within the system (pp.111-112).

The position of a teacher is never easy, as Hargreaves notes:

People are always wanting teachers to change. Rarely has this been more true than in recent years. These times of global competitiveness, like all moments of economic crisis, are producing immense moral panics about how we are preparing the generations of the future in our respective nations.

(Hargreaves 1994, 5)

But as Fullan (1993) contends, changes cannot be left to the educators alone. The expectations of a teacher's role are greater than ever and teachers' jobs are "more complex than ever before. They must respond to the needs of a diverse and changing student population, a rapidly changing technology in the workplace and demands for excellence from all segments of society" (Fullan 1993, 5).

Successful school improvement depends on "an understanding of the problem of change at the level of practice and the development of the corresponding strategies for bringing about beneficial reforms" (Fullan 1992, 27).

Today's schools should provide a foundation of knowledge but, most importantly, skills for self-directed learning for school learners to continue acquiring knowledge:

Schools should focus on developing skills for inquiry, reasoning, memory, creativity, interpersonal relations, metacognition and perceptual control. Self-directed learners will thus have a powerful hold on learning for the rest of their lives – a goal only hoped for by educators in the past, but achievable...now.

(Areglado, Bradley and Lane 1996, 2)

Chung (1999) warns, however, that:

Overhauling the curriculum to turn students into creative thinkers is one thing; training decent teachers is another.

(Chung 1999, 52)

Beare and Slaughter (1993) provide their vision of a good school which should be:

...safe for a student to be curious, to play with ideas, to experiment and to make mistakes. Good schools do not burden either their students or their staff so heavily that time for enrichment, time to reflect time to participate in artistic or professional or other educational pursuits are crowded out of the program.

(Beare and Slaughter 1993, 74)

The Hong Kong Education Commission has realised that there is a pressing need for reform in education. It is now launching a territory-wide discussion to identify the basis for reforms in structure, curriculum and assessment. The Hong

Kong Education Commission (1999) in its *Educational Blueprint for the 21st Century Review of Academic System: Aims of Education Statement*, issued in January 1999 says that:

... the first and foremost, among many other problems, is the redefinition of the aims of Hong Kong's education system that are appropriate for the times.

(Hong Kong Education Commission 1999, pages not numbered)

The Commission states that the overall aims of education should:

... enable everyone to develop to their full and individual potential in all areas covering ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics, so that each individual is ready for continuous self-learning, thinking, exploring, innovating and adapting to changes throughout life; filled with self-confidence and team spirit; and is willing to strive incessantly for the prosperity, progress, freedom and democracy of the society, and to contribute to the future well-being of the nation and the world at large.

(Hong Kong Education Commission 1999, pages not numbered)

If societies expect to prepare students adequately to meet the challenges of the 21st century "...revising, enhancing and creating new curriculum and instructional strategies must be a priority" (Adelman, Eagle and Hargreaves 1997, 43).

Dalin (1998) predicts that if schools do not face up to future challenges, they will fulfil a much more modest mission in the 21st century. One of the main challenges to schools is "to move away from the traditional reproduction process in the classroom towards creativity and production in multiple environments" (p.1065).

The whole Hong Kong Education system needs to shift to produce questioning, arguing, innovative students, rather than those geared towards passing examinations (Littlewood 1998). To achieve that, Hong Kong academics have been invited by the government to carry out research to identify the best possible ways to make the change as effectively as possible. Large funds have been made available

for relevant initiatives and research projects that will put the re-defined aims of Hong Kong education into practice. As for tertiary education, the Education Commission has stated that the aims of education must be:

- student-centred;
- practised through the learning process;
- achieved through the collective efforts of everyone; and
- implemented through optimal use of resources.

The present tertiary education system is being questioned.

Does our present tertiary education

- give full play to students' talents and groom excellence?
- let students have adequate room and freedom to develop themselves?
- enable students to live up to the requirements of the society, expose them to the challenges of the world and the experience of diverse cultures?
- regard the first degree as the foundation for life-long learning, instead of the terminus of learning?
- endeavour to develop the curriculum and explore new learning modes for the information era?

The Education Commission recognised that future Hong Kong graduates should “have a broad knowledge base, critical and creative thinking, and be masters of a specialised or relevant discipline” (Hong Kong Education Commission 1999).

Chung (1999) adds:

Consensus is emerging on what kind of graduates the city needs: creative ones, people who can think for themselves, come up with new solutions – the mental ingredients required to fulfil the government's dream to build a high-tech powerhouse. Right now, most graduates are like robots – afraid to ask questions, admit errors, question decisions.

(Chung 1999, 52)

Postiglione and Lee Wing On (1997) see that the question facing Hong Kong educators is that of the ability of the present educational system to produce the kind of leaders capable to take Hong Kong “through the transitional period and into the twenty-first century” (p.4).

Entry to higher education at present represents an educational discontinuity to many students: “modes of learning and expectations of competence may be quite different from those at school. Secondary and tertiary teachers need to work together to make this transition smoother” (University Grants Committee, 1998, 2).

The need to change has also been noted in the *Education Commission Report No. 7*

...We recommend the Government and the education community to foster among the general public a proper appreciation of the aims of all-round education and the importance of comprehensive quality education.

(Education Commission Report No. 7, 1996, Ch.7, 15)

The *Education Commission Report No.7* (1996) carries on to say that Hong Kong schools should aim to equip students with “knowledge, skills and attitudes that will help them to meet the challenges of life” and the education should “instil in ... [students] a desire for continuous improvement and self-learning” This is also echoed in the *University Grants Committee Report* (1998):

learning how to learn is perhaps the most significant skill which higher education can bestow.

(University Grants Committee Report 1998, 3)

In present-day Hong Kong though, there is a growing public debate about the kind of education society needs for the future, there is a lack of information about the current functioning of the education system to inform this debate:

...if we can come to understand the possible futures of change, we may be more able to take charge of such change in the future.

(Hargreaves 1994, 19)

Such is the broad aim of the present study.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 Methodology

3.1 HYPOTHESES

3.2 DESIGN AND RESEARCH PARADIGM

3.2.1 Basic structure of the study

3.2.2 Initial stage of the study

3.2.3 Second stage of the study – the experiment

3.2.4 Measuring the outcome

3.3 ASSUMPTIONS

3.4 TIMING OF THE STUDY AND LENGTH OF THE EXPERIMENT

3.5 POPULATION

3.5.1 Defining population

3.5.2 Description of the population

3.5.3 Target population

3.6 THE SAMPLING PROCEDURE

3.6.1 Sample for the survey (pre-treatment questionnaire)

3.6.2 Sample for the interviews

3.6.3 Sample for the experimental and control groups

3.6.4 Sample for oral presentation observations

3.6.5 Sample for essay evaluation

3.7 INSTRUMENTS

3.7.1 Use of questionnaires

3.7.2 First questionnaire: survey of students study experience

3.7.3 Second questionnaire – training evaluation

3.7.4 Third questionnaire

3.7.5 Interviews

3.7.6 Observation

3.7.7 Essay evaluations

3.8 TRAINING MATERIALS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

3.8.1 Research project packages

3.8.2 Library training sessions

3.8.3 Classroom training

3.8.4 Tutor training

3.8.5 Supervision and monitoring

3.9 STATISTICAL ANALYSES OF DATA

3.9.1 Qualitative research data

3.9.2 Quantitative research data

3.10 ETHICAL ISSUES

3.10.1 Protecting the anonymity of the participants

3.10.2 Institutional approvals

3.10.3 Use of the research assistants

3.11 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

3.12 LIMITATIONS

3.13 SUMMARY

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

3.1. HYPOTHESES

The principal hypotheses of this study are as follows:

- a) students' learning behaviour is conditioned by the school educational culture which in Hong Kong is reported to favour rote learning and passivity. Independence and creativity are not encouraged at primary and secondary levels and when research projects are introduced to students at university, they are met with resentment, confusion and a lack of understanding;
- b) Hong Kong students are inclined to use primitive learning strategies. The reason for that is lack of awareness of more sophisticated methods and lack of training and experience. Students have only developed those study skills which were needed to tackle the tasks assigned to them in secondary skills and those did not require creativity or intellectual stimulation;
- c) EAP teachers could guide learners in acquiring skills related to independent study by providing a bridge between prior learning experience and the more individual, inquisitive style of Western tertiary education;
- d) properly designed EAP training and project assignments could teach and stimulate independence if their topic contexts were relevant to students' needs and if target skills were immediately applicable to other academic tasks;

- e) introduction of custom-made Project Packages in EAP courses could help to meet the need for materials that could be seen as more relevant to students and students would be able to experience realistic language in a lively way that also matched their individual interests. The packages, and the additional training in the steps involved in conducting the basic research for the purpose of writing an academic paper, would equip students with very useful academic skills required for creative and independent study;
- f) instructional methods, such as autonomous learning, being Western educational innovations, cannot be directly transplanted into a different socio-cultural context. Established social and personal values have to be considered and adjustments allowed for a successful implementation of any new method into a society. Once students are successfully guided through the process of acquiring new learning strategies, they can then have confidence in managing their own learning and thus skills to define learning needs and identify learning recourses. This reduces their dependency on the teacher, exposes them to the resources, challenges them and provides them with tools for lifelong learning.

3.2 DESIGN

3.2.1 Basic structure of the study

The overall aim of this study was two-fold: firstly to ascertain, for those students entering HKBU, the nature and extent of their training, their ability and their confidence in the various tasks involved in small-scale independent research; and, secondly, to develop and trial a method of EAP teaching which would better meet students' language needs and would also provide materials for and training in learning strategies for independent academic tasks.

While the first part of this research project is descriptive and seeks to obtain information to describe the existing situation, the second part has the experimental design. The chart on the following page shows a general design of this study. The numbers in brackets represent the student sample used for each component of this study. The overview of the study is presented in sections 3.2.2 - 3.2.5 of this chapter.

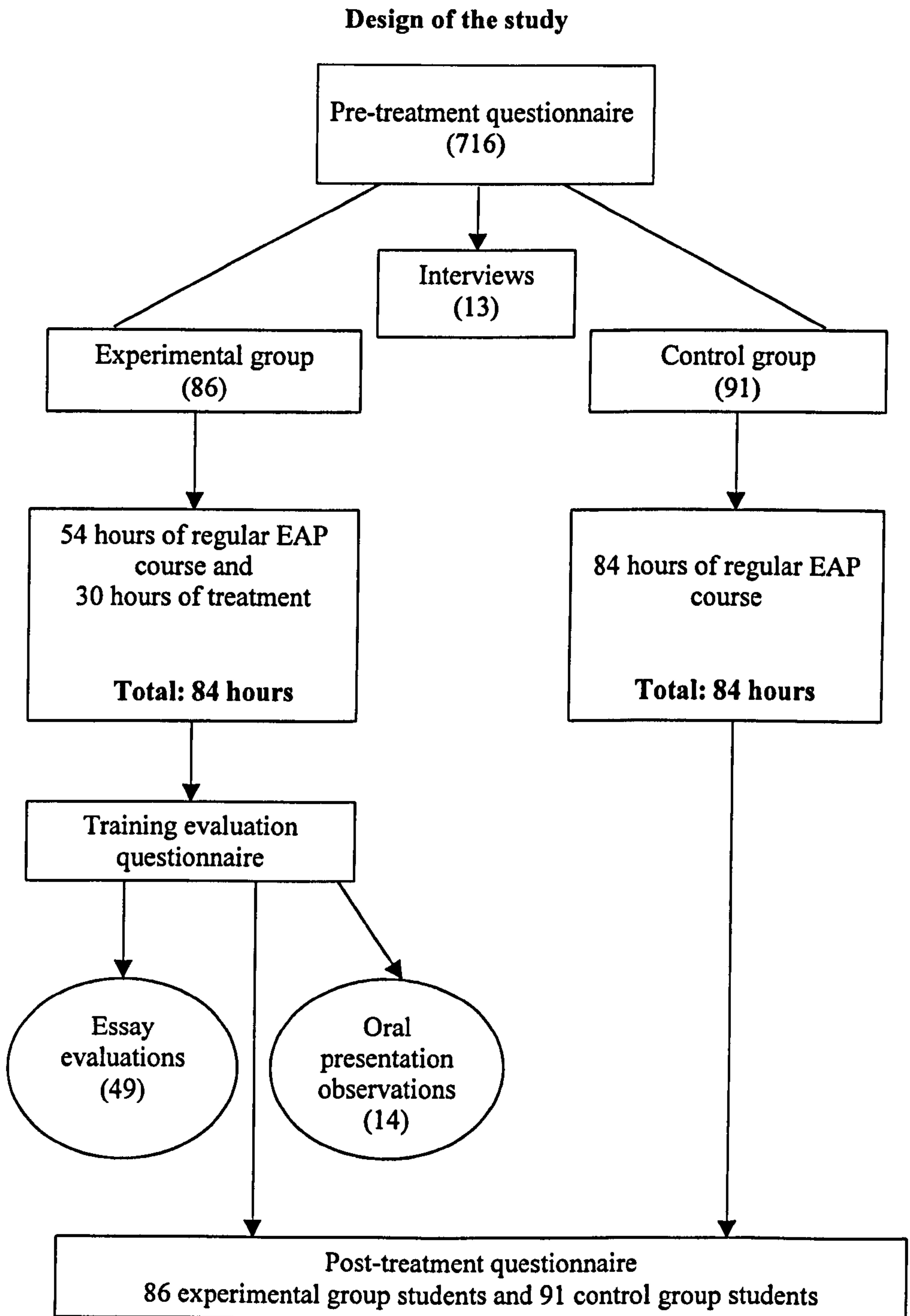


Figure 1 Design of the study

3.2.2 Initial stage of the study

This section of the study was designed to ascertain what research experience and skills HKBU students possess upon entry to university. To achieve the first objective, a survey of student research experience was conducted. A series of 60 questions was created and compiled with a view to establishing the degree to which students were prepared to undertake independent research at university level. Specifically, the questions explored the students' prior exposure to independent projects in English, the nature and range of resources used to complete those assignments or projects, any training that students had received in research and or library skills, and the level of confidence felt by students in completing research tasks in English.

The survey was distributed to 1130 students through EAP tutors who administered and collected the questionnaires during class time. A total of 716 respondents completed the questionnaire, representing 63.4% of the population. Questions employed in the survey were varied in form. Some required *yes/no* responses, some invited students to select one option from the multiple-choice list and others employed five-point Likert-type scales. Students entered their responses directly onto computerised answer sheets which were then read and statistically analysed using SPSS statistical software.

In order to extend and clarify the information gained through the survey and to identify issues which may not have been sufficiently examined, interviews were conducted with 13 students drawn from the survey sample. The semi-structured interviews conducted by a research assistant, who is a trained and experienced interviewer, were all audio-recorded. Responses were then collated, classified and analysed.

Both instruments used in this part of the study, along with the development and administration procedures, are described in detail later in this chapter.

3.2.3 Second stage of the study – the experiment

Of those students surveyed, 86 participated in the second experimental part of the study while 91 acted as the control group. Both groups attended EAP classes throughout the whole academic year for the same number of hours and have followed the same syllabus. The experimental group was exposed to a carefully planned Research Training Programme which was introduced as an integral part of the EAP course. Many of the skills taught within the regular EAP curriculum were already relevant to small-scale research. However, this Training Programme sought to expand on regular EAP instruction by giving particular attention to those skills essential to original and independent research work. The instruction and training provided to students under this programme was delivered on 3 levels:

- Research Project Package;
- library training;
- classroom training.

The Research Project Package

A total of 25 Research Project Packages were produced to provide the basis for students' independent research. The Packages were designed for individual work with initial teacher support, and all students from the experimental groups were required to select one Package on which to work.

Each Research Project Package was based on authentic audio-visual and reading materials that related to the students' major fields of study. Packages

included exercises and written materials intended to extend the theme and language presented in the audio-visuals. Students were required to extend further the Package materials through the writing of individual research essays – the process of which was intended to help students develop those skills associated with researching, compiling and presenting information in English in a logical, creative and original fashion. They were also required to present their findings in individual oral presentations.

The library training

A series of library orientation sessions was carried out to help students better understand and access those areas and resources of the library that they would need to use in completing their Project Package assignments. Each of the sessions was conducted during class time in the library to allow students hands-on experience. Students were shown the available resources and given opportunity to practise various skills related to the use of those resources.

Specific instruction aimed at familiarising students with the range of library resources open to them: students were shown how to access various forms of material and how they might use those in their research work.

The classroom training

Students were taught how to identify suitable ideas for research, to formulate their own research questions for a topic and to narrow topics appropriately. They were shown how to extract relevant information from references for use in writing and how to incorporate information from a number of sources in their own work.

Class time was set aside to address individual questions and problems and to discuss issues of general concern. Particular care was given to preparing students for the research section of their work. Before proceeding with the research, students were required to attend individual consultations with their EAP instructor to establish appropriate topics for their research essays, topics for which library materials would be available and which would provide scope for the development of original and individual arguments.

3.2.4 Measuring the outcome

Evaluating the programme

Once members of the experimental group had completed their Package work and the training, they were asked to provide feedback on the Programme through a student evaluation questionnaire. Questions invited opinions about the Packages, the classroom training, and the library training that the students had received. The questionnaire was intended to determine students' perception of the value of the Programme. Students were asked to express their opinions about the level of interest, level of difficulty and the usefulness of each component of the Research Project Package. They were asked to rate their level of understanding of the skills taught and the usefulness of those skills to their academic studies.

Measure of skill acquisition

It was also anticipated that the learning that had taken place as a result of the Research Training Programme would be evident in the written and oral work produced by students. Therefore instruments to measure the acquisition of skills were designed and used.

Oral presentations observations

Students were required to give two oral presentations, one in each semester, each centred around the same research as an essay that also constituted part of their course

requirement. A list of criteria expected to be evident in oral presentations was compiled. The performance of a number of students from the experimental group was then assessed according to those criteria and a comparison of their first and second presentations (before and after training) was made. Observations were made by a research assistant who had no involvement in teaching and did not know the students.

Both the methods of observation and evaluation criteria are described in detail further in this chapter (section 3.7).

Essay evaluations

As part of the EAP course, the participants of the Research Training Programme completed a number of research essays. Essays produced in the first semester and those submitted upon the completion of the training were assessed according to a specially formulated scoring sheet, made up of items related to strategies and skills taught in the course, which were expected to be evident in students' research essays (Appendix 9).

The requirements for the first and the second semester essays were similar. On both occasions students were instructed to choose a topic, narrow it appropriately, and present a discussion making use of sources found in the library. The two sets of essays, submitted by each student, were paired. The use of skills was evaluated by a research assistant who had no teaching role in the course, and data were then collated and analysed.

Results of the comparison

To measure students' perception of the influence of the Research Training Programme on the development of students' study and research skills, a questionnaire was designed. This included a number of questions that had been posed in the pre-treatment survey given to the entire population at the beginning of the academic year. All students from the experimental group, and a similar number of students in the control group, answered the same questionnaire under the same conditions, and their results were compared.

3.3 ASSUMPTIONS

Current literature and the researcher's own experience of similar student groups in previous years (Bankowski and Cotton 1997) suggested that, at the beginning of their first year at university, most students lack both the skills and the confidence to conduct independent research at a university level and that students' learning at secondary level would have involved limited choice and a high degree of teacher guidance (Biggs 1994a, Gow and Kember 1990, Hamp-Lyons 1998, Morris 1996).

It was assumed that university tutors could enhance learning by taking account of their students' individual styles, needs and interests. The introduction of custom-made Project Packages in EAP courses would help to meet the need for materials that would be seen as more relevant by students and, by allowing students to choose from a broad range of themes based on authentic documentaries, films and magazine or newspaper articles, they would be able to experience realistic language in a lively way that also matched their individual interests. Audio-visuals were intended to provide a "language bath" for students, a rich language environment more likely to motivate learners (Riley, 1985). The cues provided by pictures in the audio-visual elements would enable even those students of relatively low ability in English to follow the narrative and, at the same time, boost their confidence.

It was expected that most students would be unfamiliar with the learning format of this Program and that, this being their first such experience, they would require particular guidance and support from their instructors. Further, it was believed that, in order to provide this level of assistance to students, all instructors involved in trialling the Program should be familiar with the objectives of self-access type learning and should have the skills required to facilitate it. An initial training

session was therefore held for the instructors involved in this Research Training Programme.

3.4 TIMING OF THE STUDY AND LENGTH OF THE EXPERIMENT

The whole study was carried out in the 1997/98 academic year and took one year to complete.

The first stage, the administration of the questionnaire to the whole population followed by interviews conducted with a smaller sample, was carried out at the beginning of the academic year in September and November 1997. In the next stage the sample for the experimental and control groups was identified. Both the experimental and the control groups received a total of 28 weeks (84 hours) of EAP instruction over two semesters. Within that period the experimental group was exposed to 30 hours of Research Training Programme. The training was carried out over a period of 10 weeks, out of which 3 weeks took place in the first semester (October, November) and 7 weeks were delivered in the second semester (February and April 1998).

The oral presentations of the experimental group were observed twice; first in late November 1997, and then again in late April/early May 1998. The research essays followed the oral presentations; the first essays were submitted on November 21, 1997, and May 8, 1998 was the deadline for the final essays. The Training Programme evaluation questionnaire and the final survey of both the experimental and the control groups were administered, upon completion of the training, in late April/ early May 1998.

3.5 POPULATION

3.5.1 Defining population

The population for this study consists of all first-year undergraduate students who undertook degree programmes at Hong Kong Baptist University in the 1997/98 academic year. The total intake for that year consisted of 1130 students enrolled in the following disciplines offered by the University:

Chinese Language and Literature	Sociology
European Studies	Humanities
English Language and Literature	Music
Religion and Philosophy	Geography
Government and International Studies	History
Physical Education and Recreational Management	Translation
Business Administration	Biology
Mathematical Science	Physics
Computing Studies	Chemistry
China Studies	Communication
Social Work	

3.5.2 Description of the population

As stated earlier, Hong Kong Baptist University is one of eight publicly funded tertiary education institutions in Hong Kong. The organisational structure and regulations governing the entry to tertiary education institutions in Hong Kong are similar for all eight universities in Hong Kong. They all offer a range of programmes leading to the award of first degrees and postgraduate qualifications; they cover a range of subjects including Arts, Science, Social Sciences, and Business Administration; they incorporate professional schools; offer research programmes for a significant number of students in every subject area; and provide scope for academic staff to undertake consultancy and collaborative projects.

All candidates for university courses in Hong Kong follow the same application procedure; final placements are made through JUPAS (Joint University Programmes Admissions System), established by the Education Commission of

Hong Kong. The entry requirements for various courses within the tertiary institutions differ slightly from one major to another, but the selection criteria are comparable. Overall, students enrolled in Hong Kong universities have similar educational backgrounds and similar profiles.

3.5.3 Target population

Gay (1987, 124) defines population as “the group of interest to the researcher, the group to which she or he would like the results of the study to be generalizable.”

The total number of students who entered first-year first degree courses in Hong Kong in September 1997 was 14,500. The sample used in this research represents only 7.9% of this group and, owing to the fact that all the accessible population come from one institution, technically they may not be considered representative of the entire Hong Kong freshmen population. However, considering the similarities in backgrounds and profiles of Hong Kong students across tertiary institutions, it is the researcher's belief that **some** of the findings, conclusions and recommendations may be generalisable to a wider population.

3.6 THE SAMPLING PROCEDURE

The initial part of the study was descriptive and involved collecting data, “in order to test hypothesis or answer questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study” (Gay 1987, 13).

3.6.1 Sample for the survey (pre-treatment questionnaire)

The researcher aimed to test the entire accessible population. The sample for this part of the study consisted of all 1130 year one students enrolled in all majors offered by the Hong Kong Baptist University in 1997/98 academic year. The intake for that year consisted of 41.5% male and 58.5% female students.

The questionnaire was administered between September 22 and October 25, 1997 to all students, through their EAP teachers. Some teachers conducted the survey during the class time, others gave survey forms out to students. Of those, 744 questionnaires were returned, representing a 65.8% response rate. Twenty-eight responses were discarded because they were incomplete. The final analysable sample was therefore 716, representing 63.4% of HKBU 1997/98 first-year intake.

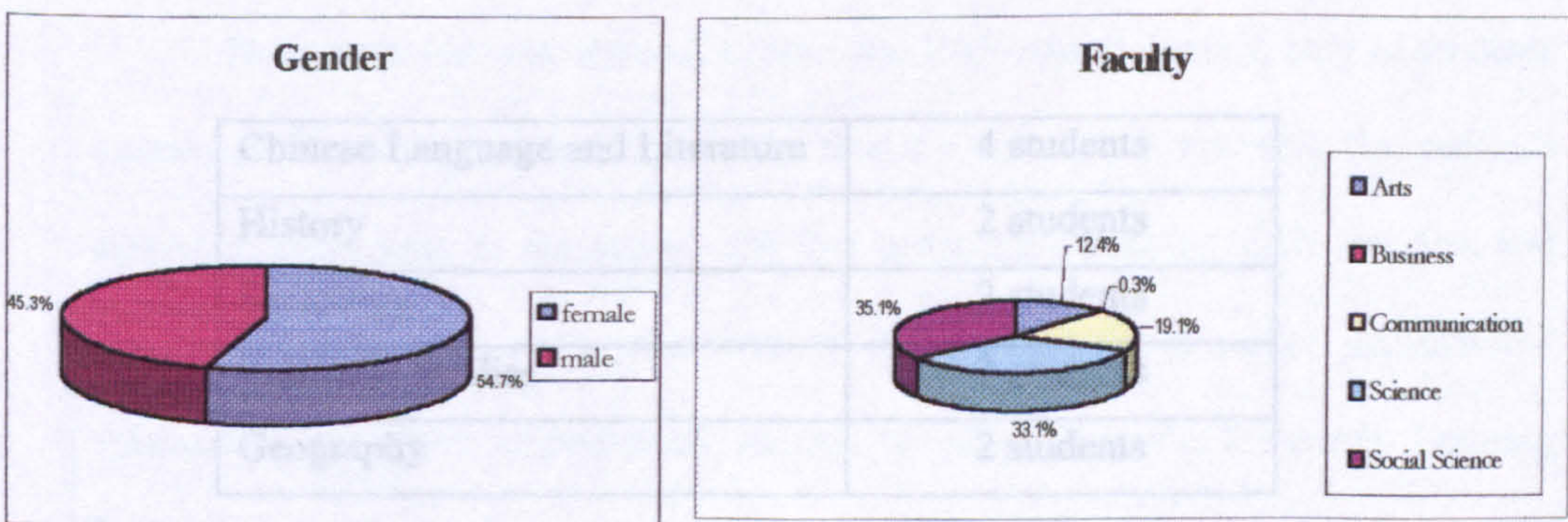


Table 4 Profile of the sample population -distribution by gender and faculty

Three hundred and twenty four of this sample were male students (45%) and 391 were female (55%).

3.6.2 Sample for the interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a stratified sample of 13 students who were drawn from the population. Care was taken that this small sample was as representative of the population as was feasible. To control for sample validity a decision was made that the interviewed students should represent the various sub-groups in the population; they should come from a variety of majors, represent both sexes, have different secondary school backgrounds and different achievement and ability levels. A limitation, however, was that the students should be relatively fluent in spoken English and be willing to share the information and the experience of their secondary school education. Twenty students were initially identified as an ideal sample, and all were approached. Of those, thirteen students were willing to participate in the study and, owing to time constraints and timetable difficulties, the other 7 students were not replaced. The final sample, believed to be representative of the population, comprised 6 male and 7 female students who majored in the following subjects:

Chinese Language and Literature	4 students
History	2 students
Sociology	2 students
Religious Studies	3 students
Geography	2 students

A decision was made that students would be interviewed in groups of 3 or 4 in anticipation of their shyness and lack of confidence in conversing in a foreign

language. This format of focus group interviews would allow those with stronger English skills to help others who might have difficulty expressing themselves.

3.6.3 Sample for the experimental and control groups

The only feasible method available to the researcher for selecting a sample for the experimental part of this study was cluster sampling.

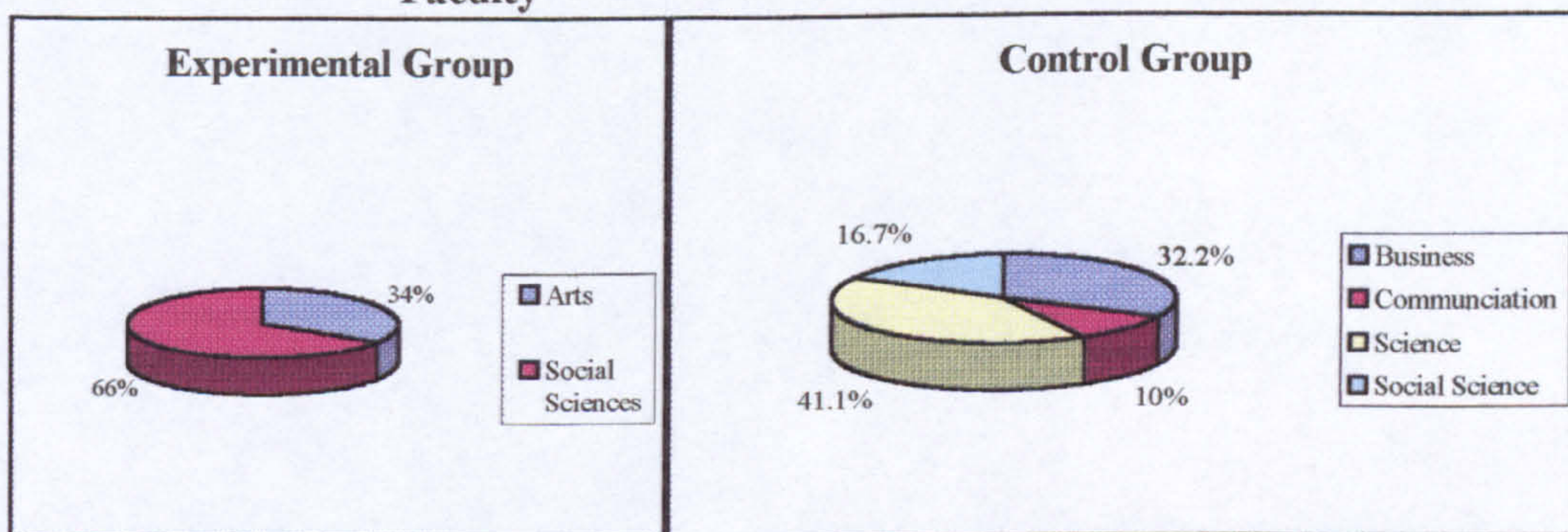
When entering university, students of each major are grouped into sections (15-22 students) for the convenience of attending tutorials usually conducted in smaller groups. The allocation of students to sections is done randomly by the Academic Registry. The researcher co-ordinates the provision of English for Academic Purposes courses to students enrolled in the Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences which, in the academic year 1997/98, consisted of 264 students grouped in 14 homogenous and equal sections. The Head of Department decides on the number of instructors who will teach under the co-ordinator of a given EAP course and on their teaching load. Upon receiving that information, the Academic Registry assigns sections of students according to the needs of the timetable. Neither the instructors nor the researcher has any control over the allocation of the students.

The researcher was allowed to alter the EAP course content only to students under her direct supervision, providing that the instructors teaching the sections agreed to participate in the study. Of five instructors teaching EAP for Arts and Social Sciences, two were perceived as enthusiastic about novel instructional approaches and were experienced enough to administer the Research Training Programme. As a result, the experimental group comprised 86 students of whom 49 were those taught by the researcher herself, and 37 by two other instructors under the researcher's supervision.

After a discussion with other EAP course co-ordinators and a detailed analysis of the contents of all EAP courses within the Language Centre, a decision was made to use, as a control group, 91 students enrolled in various courses.

All students who made up the experimental and the control groups participated in the initial survey of the whole population. The possible threat to validity, resulting from some differences in the disciplines studied among experimental and control groups, is discussed in the section on validity and reliability (Chapter 3.9) and in the literature review (Chapter 2.4.8).

Table 5 Distribution of experimental and control groups samples by Faculty



3.6.4 Sample for oral presentation observations

The 14 students included in this section of the study (16% of the experimental group) were randomly selected from their classes with no input from the researcher. They were majoring in Religious Studies, Chinese Language and Literature, or Sociology. The order in which students performed their oral presentations was decided by a draw taken by students in class. Thus, neither the researcher nor the assistant controlled who would be presenting on a given day. As the research assistant who carried out the observations was employed in the Language Centre on a part-time

basis, students were drawn from the classes scheduled on those days on which she was present at the University in both the first and second semesters.

The research assistant observed 20 and 27 presentations in 1 and 2 semester respectively. However, out of those, 14 students were observed on both occasions and their performance could be analysed on a comparative basis.

3.6.5 Sample for essay evaluation

The students whose work was included for evaluation in this part of the study were all those who attended the researcher's EAP classes in both the first and second semesters – a total number of 49 students drawn from three classes (sections) majoring in Chinese Language and Literature, Sociology, Religion, History and Geography. The sample constituted 60% of the experimental group. The essays of the other 37 students from the experimental group were not available to the researcher as the Head's permission was not granted, owing to ethical reasons.

3.7 INSTRUMENTS

The descriptive component of this study involved the use of a questionnaire and the interviews. This experimental research component involved the use of two questionnaires, observations, interviews and essays evaluations.

3.7.1 Use of questionnaires

Three questionnaire surveys were conducted as part of this study. One questionnaire was designed and used with all first-year undergraduates at Hong Kong Baptist University. The second was administered to the experimental group to evaluate the Training Programme. The third questionnaire was given to both the experimental and the control groups to provide a measure of individual students' perceived effectiveness of the EAP course and of the degree of change in attitudes which had occurred for both groups within one year of academic study in respect to the objectives being measured.

Together, the three questionnaires developed for use in this research were intended to address the objectives of the study and to provide measures of students' confidence and experience in research-related tasks at the commencement, and the end of their first year of university study and to assess the effects of research training provided in EAP classes throughout that year.

Though a number of studies have been carried out in Hong Kong that have investigated learning strategies and preferred learning methods (Biggs 1994; Biggs 1992; Biggs and Watkins 1996; Kember and Gow 1991; Littlewood 1999) and several instruments have been developed that measure students' attitudes to and preferences for different approaches to learning, this study appears to be unique in focusing on the effectiveness of the teaching of research-related activities, at a

tertiary level, in Hong Kong. In a few instances, particularly in those parts of the first questionnaire that relate to independence, it was possible to use or adapt questions from those instruments that related to autonomous learning. However, owing to the originality of this approach/study, there was no suitable ready-made instrument available appropriate either to research-related inquiry or to Hong Kong students. It was necessary therefore, to develop a new purpose-specific set of questionnaires.

The questionnaire design was a synthesis of a literature review – ideas drawn from Bigg's *Study Process Questionnaires* (1987, 1993) and a set of questionnaires received from Dr. David Kember as a loose attachment to *Action Learning Project Manual* (1994).

3.7.2 First questionnaire: survey of students' study experience

Aim

The main purposes of this questionnaire were to establish:

- the degree of students' exposure to independent projects in English;
- the nature and range of source materials used to complete assignments or projects;
- the training students received in research skills and library skills;
- the level of confidence students felt in completing research tasks in English.

Development

In the initial stage of this study, the researcher began to compile questions which might be included in this first questionnaire and which might be used to explore the experience and attitudes of first-year students in the following areas:

- English language usage and training;
- autonomous learning / study preferences;
- research and library use.

Each of these would influence the confidence and ability that students would bring to bear on research assignments in their first year of university study. It became clear, however, that the investigation of all of these areas was beyond the scope of this one study and questions were consequently limited to those that dealt more specifically with research skills and experience. Most questions pertaining to learning preferences and English language usage were then discarded. Those that were retained would provide some understanding of any variance in students' prior research experience and might guide further study.

At this stage, too, consideration was given to the form that questions should take. It was expected that, for all sample groups, English would be a second language and one in which they were not necessarily proficient. Care was taken to ensure that the wording of questions was commensurate with their level of English and preparation was made for translation of the questionnaire into Chinese should piloting prove that to be necessary.

Another factor determining the format of the questionnaire was that of data collation and analysis and this was discussed in depth at a meeting of the research team and statistical support staff. It was agreed that the SPSS package would provide the most appropriate form of analysis and that, given the large size of the sample, data should be entered by scanning rather than being inputted manually. Open questions would be more difficult, if not impossible, to analyse and their use would be limited.

As a consequence of this decision, the questionnaire was structured to allow responses on OMR (Optical Mark Recognition) cards, the total number of questions limited to 60, individualised questions were discarded and multi-choice questions reworded to invite single scaled responses.

The amended questionnaire was then submitted to three tutors who again were asked to assess the questionnaire in terms of how it would be viewed and understood by students. They were also asked to suggest additions or changes that might improve the questionnaire's effectiveness. Each of these tutors was ethnic Chinese and had received his/her secondary and undergraduate training in Hong Kong. One had completed post-graduate study in USA and, on returning to Hong Kong, had completed one year as a university tutor; another, with five years academic teaching experience, had completed her post-graduate study in Hong Kong; while the third had over 20 years' teaching experience in secondary schools in Hong Kong. It was hoped that, by virtue of their personal and professional experience in the Hong Kong educational system, these tutors would be able to offer valuable advice about the questionnaire as it related to Hong Kong students.

At the suggestion of the tutors, several changes were made in the wording of the survey. Some questions were reworded, expanded or qualified to ensure that their meanings were clear to students.

Before piloting, final consideration was given as to whether or not the questionnaire should be translated into Chinese. However, given that the Cantonese tutors believed that students would readily understand the questions in English and seeing that initial trialling of the questions with students had not uncovered any problems, it was decided that the main part of the questionnaire should be presented

in English, and that only the introduction and a few words, which might otherwise be misunderstood, should be translated into Chinese.

Description of the questionnaire

Sixty questions were divided into two sections according to the format. The first comprised questions that invited dichotomous and multi-choice responses, the second, questions for which a response could be given according to a five-point Likert-type scale.

Piloting

The completed questionnaire was piloted with a group of 20 students and was administered by an EAP instructor during class time. Students were encouraged to ask for clarification should they have problems understanding any of the questions.

Optical Mark Recognition (OMR) cards were not used in piloting of the questionnaire and students were invited to mark their responses directly after each question on the questionnaire sheet. No apparent problems were reported in constructing the pilot survey. All questionnaires were collected and responses were analysed manually. Basic statistical analysis of calculating frequencies was carried out and the results were as anticipated.

Two small adjustments to the wording of questions were made and, there being no other apparent problems, the questionnaire was adopted for use in this research. A copy of the pilot questionnaire is attached as Appendix 1.

Administration

Most students were asked to complete the questionnaires in class time, under the direction of their EAP tutors. Students were not required to submit their names or any other information that might threaten their anonymity. They were instructed to enter their responses on OMR cards which had been distributed with the questionnaire, and were encouraged to provide additional details or information or explanations of their responses on the questionnaire form itself. The questionnaire took, on average, 15-20 minutes to complete.

All completed questionnaires and OMR cards were returned to the tutor and forwarded to the researcher. The forms and the OMR cards were numbered to allow matching of the open-ended responses with the rest of the questionnaire. The cards were then sent to the Department of Mathematics – Statistics and Research Support Unit of HKBU for statistical analysis. The open-ended responses were coded, collated and analysed manually. All students' responses and their analyses are presented and discussed in Chapter 4. A copy of the final questionnaire is included in the Appendix 2.

3.7.3 Second questionnaire – training evaluation

Aim

The aim of the student evaluation questionnaire was to determine students' perception of the value of the Research Training Program. Students were asked to assess the various components of the Research Project Packages in terms of:

- level of interest;
- level of difficulty;

- usefulness of the components (language worksheet, information provided and assignments related to packages);
- time needed to complete.

The library and classroom training sessions were assessed in terms of:

- understanding of skills taught;
- development of skills / strategies;
- usefulness of skills to academic studies.

Development

In order to obtain insight into students' perceptions of the training, which could then help further to improve the programme in the next academic year, a lengthy and detailed questionnaire was devised.

There were four stages in the development of the questionnaire. Firstly, the areas which needed to be surveyed and the list of possible questions were identified and categorised.

Secondly, a review of literature provided some useful suggestions for the structure and the layout design. The *Study Process Questionnaires* (Biggs 1987, 1993) inspired some modifications for certain questions and provided useful guidelines for creating our own set of questions. The final report of *Action Learning Project* (Kember *et al.* 1997) contained descriptions of various training evaluations and some questionnaires described there (Callaghan and Holroyd 1997; Tang and Anderson 1997; Rodowicz and Wu 1997) influenced the researcher's decision about the final structure and layout of the questionnaire. It was decided that using a format and some questions that had already been tested would strengthen the reliability of the

instrument. The format used by Rudowicz and Wu (1997) in their evaluation was specifically designed for Action Learning research with the use of SPSS statistical software and seemed particularly appropriate because of its straightforward and logical layout.

Once items had been modified to fit into the adopted layout and format, the questionnaire was passed on to the two instructors of the experimental group for their suggestions and comments. After some minor changes were made to the draft, the researcher consulted a colleague, who was an independent consultant with a PhD in educational psychology, to obtain further advice.

Some format changes resulted from that consultation and the questionnaire further benefited from the advice obtained from the researcher's supervisor. Following his advice various adjustments to the language used in some items were made and that led to the final form of the questionnaire.

The fourth stage of the development involved its piloting and changes that resulted from that.

Description

The questionnaire contained two parts. The first surveyed opinions on individual components of the Research Packages, the classroom training and the library training. Each component contained a detailed list of topics/strategies actually covered within the training.

Within the first part, the format was essentially the same in each section although the scales to which the students referred depended on the quality that was being measured. Appropriate scales were devised for each area and the values were explained on the front page of the questionnaire.

The second part of the survey was intended to elicit information about students' major, use of English, cumulative GPA, choice of package and pre-existing knowledge of the subject matter. Students were encouraged to describe any problems they might have encountered in any of these spheres.

Piloting

A pilot study with 5 students from the experimental group was carried out to check students' understanding of the questions and the time needed to complete the questionnaire. Piloting took place in the last week of April 1998, two weeks before the final questionnaire was administered and this process did not reveal any problems with any of the questions. It helped, however, to appreciate that the questionnaire took much longer to complete than had been expected and that, for that reason, it would have to be administered on the very last class of the semester to ensure that the teaching syllabus was not affected.

Administration

Students were asked to complete the questionnaire during class time under the direction of the EAP Instructors. The questionnaire was administered in the last lesson of the academic year in May 1998 and took 30 – 45 minutes to complete. Absenteeism was high at that time of the year and out of 86 students of the experimental group, only 69 students could be reached and asked to fill in the questionnaire.

All the responses were placed directly on the forms and students were not required to submit their names. Collected forms were forwarded to the researcher and

data were entered into the SPSS statistical package for analyses. A copy of the questionnaire is included in the Appendix 3.

3.7.4 Third questionnaire

Aim

The aim of the third questionnaire was to measure the perceived changes in students' abilities in pursuing research-related tasks over one academic year.

The questionnaire was designed to provide information for both the experimental and the control groups in the following areas:

- perceived level of attainment of skills;
- range of resources used in assignments;
- level of confidence in performing research related tasks.

The overall objective of this survey was to provide an analysis of the effectiveness of the EAP course with the Research Training Programme in comparison to the effectiveness of the unmodified EAP course.

Development

To achieve the objectives of this survey, relevant questions were selected from the first questionnaire for inclusion in the final survey of both the experimental and the control groups.

The EAP syllabi were examined again. Any questions related to abilities or attitudes that could have changed or that could have been influenced as a result of training received, either through regular EAP instruction or through the Research Training Programme or both, were selected for inclusion. All items related to secondary school experience were dropped. Only questions about research-related

tasks, attitudes towards various ways of learning and frequency of use of resources were considered.

To ensure that the respondents were not confused about the time frame referred to in the questionnaire, some items needed changes in their grammatical structure. Additional questions about students' GPA distribution and their experiences in performing research tasks at university were needed in order to justify the comparison of similarities and differences in the two groups.

With all these modifications made, the next stage involved checking clarity and validity. Three tutors, with local training and experience, all involved in teaching EAP courses, were invited to comment on the questionnaire.

There were no suggestions of any further changes to the content and the items themselves. One instructor, however, indicated that the questionnaire could be further improved by moving one of the important items about research experience at HKBU towards the beginning of the form to ensure more detailed responses.

Description

Thirty-two questions were put into two parts (not labeled) on a two page questionnaire. The first page consisted of questions that invited dichotomous, multi-choice and open-ended responses; the second part included items for which responses could be given on a five-point Likert-type scale. All items, except for the open-ended questions, were structured to allow responses on OMR cards.

Piloting

A small group of 5 students from each of the experimental and the control groups were used for piloting of the questionnaire in late April 1998. Students were asked

to complete the questionnaires during their break time in a two-hour EAP class. No problems were reported during the administration of the pilot survey. OMR cards were not used in the pilot study; responses were marked on the forms and analysed manually, by calculating frequencies.

Administration

The final questionnaire was administered by EAP Instructors two weeks before the end of the semester. At that stage, students were delivering their oral presentations on their final projects when attendance in class was compulsory.

The EAP Instructors in 5 experimental groups and 5 control groups distributed the questionnaires and OMR cards and instructed students about the procedure. Only 7 to 10 minutes were needed to complete the survey. All collected forms and OMR cards were forwarded to the researcher who then sent the OMR cards to the Action Research Project – Research Consultation and Statistical Support Unit of Hong Kong Polytechnic University for statistical analyses. A copy of this questionnaire is included as Appendix 4.

3.7.5 Interviews

Purpose

The interviews that make up this part of the study were designed to address issues and topics similar to those covered in the initial student surveys; that is, to determine the nature and degree of students' experience in carrying out tasks related to small-scale research. It was hoped that, through the interviews, more detailed information about students' prior training would be gained – information which might extend and clarify that provided by the survey. By virtue of their semi-structured nature, the

interviews might also allow the identification of concerns or issues that had not been addressed by the questionnaire but which were relevant to the study and to the training programme in particular.

Format and structure

All 13 students involved had taken part in the initial survey. Interviews were held outside of class time in one of the meeting rooms within the Language Centre of the university. They were conducted by a research assistant who was experienced in interviewing and familiar with the study, but who was not involved in the teaching of EAP classes. "Reliability related to the persons collecting information can be enhanced if they know exactly how to get the desired information and if they are well trained and experienced..." (Genesee and Upshur 1996, 59)

Some of the students had met the interviewer previously when giving their oral presentations and all were willing participants. However, it was expected that they would be somewhat shy and lacking in confidence – particularly since they would be conversing in their second language. Students then were interviewed along with classmates in groups of three or four to help them feel more at ease and to allow those with stronger English skills to help others who might have difficulty expressing themselves.

Each of the interviews was semi-structured, a series of questions forming the basis of a guided discussion that lasted from one to two hours. In semi-structured interview, the interviewer "has a general idea of where he or she wants the interview to go, and what should come out of it, but does not enter the interview with a list of predetermined questions. Topics and issues rather than questions determine the course of the interview" (Nunan 1992, 149) It was hoped that this informal and

flexible format would allow students to give more detailed answers than those invited by the survey; that it would allow students to offer additional information or opinions that they felt were pertinent to the issues raised; and that it would provide the researcher with an opportunity to clarify or extend inquiry into those areas where the information gathered had seemed problematic or unclear. All 4 interviews were audio-recorded.

To comply with the ethical issues the purpose of the interviews was clearly explained to all interviewees and their permission obtained for audio-recording and later transcription. A copy of questions/topics for interviews is attached as Appendix 5 and a transcript of one of the interviews as Appendix 6. All names have been changes to guarantee anonymity to the interviewees and the interviewer.

3.7.6 Observation

Observation was used to evaluate students' learning and to assess the effectiveness of particular teaching strategies, to understand how “students are learning and, in particular, to explain those instances when learning does not occur as planned. Their explanation of those situation can be used to plan instruction that will promote learning” (Genesee and Upshur 1996, 79).

Rationale / Purpose

In their EAP courses, first-year students are required to give two oral presentations, one in each semester, each centred around the same research as an essay that also constitutes part of their course requirement. The presentations, 15 minutes in duration, are assessed by course instructors and account for 15% of the semester's

course mark. They are delivered during class time, to tutors and classmates, and are marked according to criteria outlined in Appendix 7.

It was expected that the results of the training provided to the experimental group could be evident in the work students presented for assessment. The purpose of observing two oral presentations delivered by 14 students was to illustrate the changes that might have occurred in students' use of skills and strategies during their first year at university. As Foster (1996) points out, the aim of more structured observation is "to produce quantitative data on specific categories of observable behaviour, the nature of the categories and procedure for allocating instances of behaviour to them, must be clearly specified before data collection" (p.81).

Procedure

The performance of 14 students, all from the experimental group, was compared in their first and second presentations. Students received a part of their training in research and presentation skills prior to making their first presentations. By the time they gave their second presentations, they had the benefit of their previous experience and their tutor's feedback, reinforced by further more specific classroom and library training – all of which should have served to make them more aware of and able to apply the training to their research work.

The observations were carried out by a research assistant who was not involved in any teaching there and had no knowledge of students' overall academic or language abilities. Neither was she aware of the outcome or grades of students' completed EAP work; her focus of interest was not the same as that of their tutor.

Students' presentations were observed and comments recorded for each observation on a specially designed evaluation sheet containing a list of skills in which changes were expected to be apparent (Appendix 8). The research assistant

also took note of the level of accuracy at which the skills were displayed during the presentation and the presence or absence of certain strategies. Those changes that were apparent but did not fit into the standardised description – the form – were noted and described. As mentioned earlier, out of 20 presentations observed in the first semester and 27 in the second semester, 14 students were observed in both semesters and the results were all collated and presented along with the analysis in Chapter 5.

3.7.7 Essay evaluations

Rationale / Purpose

Throughout the EAP courses, students completed three research essays, each of which contributed to their overall course mark. These essays were presented at the end of the first semester on November 21, 1997, the middle of the second semester, and at the end of the second semester on May 8, 1998.

First and last essays from 49 students from the experimental group were collected for the purpose of this study to be evaluated by the Research Assistant. The essay evaluation was carried out to determine which of the skills taught were evident in the work presented by students and to which they had been successfully applied.

Procedure

Essays used for the purpose of this study were those presented by students as part of their EAP course requirement. EAP course marks were allocated to them by the instructor according to criteria which focused on language acquisition. The evaluations carried out for the study were made according to separate criteria and

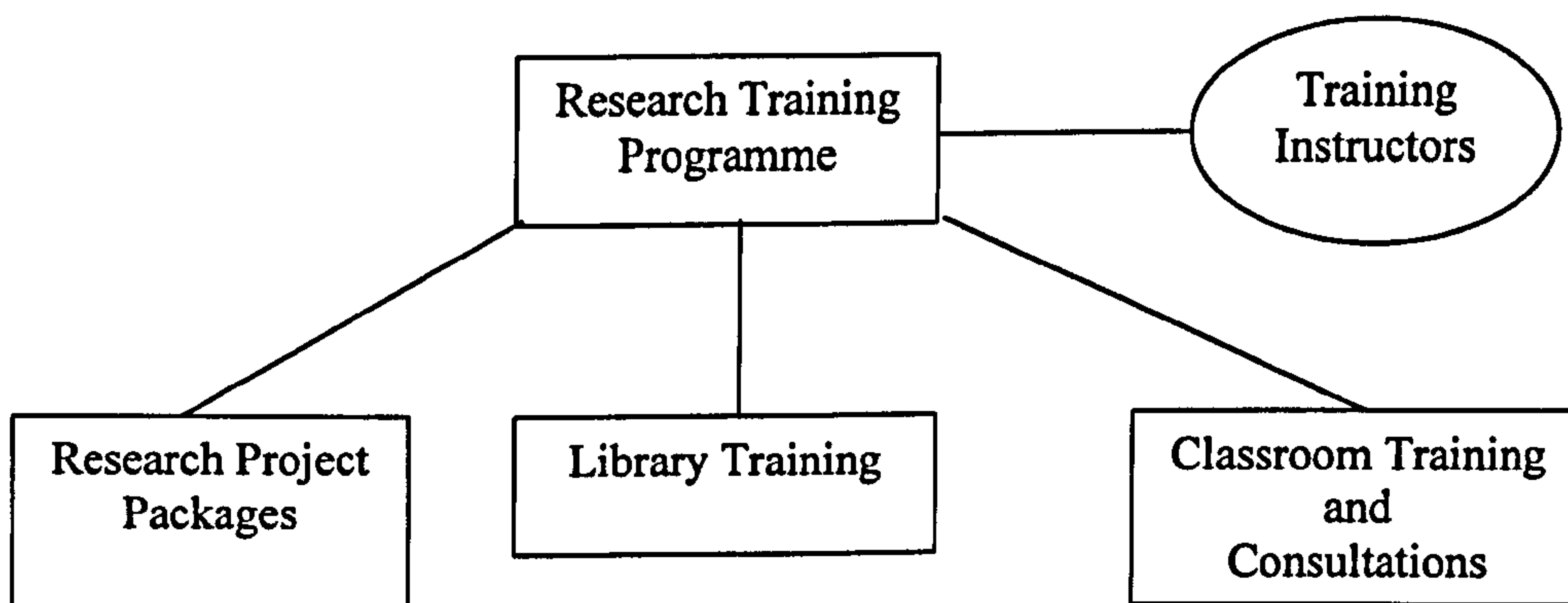
were carried out independently by a research assistant who had had no teaching role in the course.

Each essay was assessed through the use of a specially formulated scoring sheet (Appendix 9). This sheet was made up of items related to those strategies and skills taught throughout the course which could be expected to be evident in a student's research essays. It also included a number of other items designed to provide additional information about students' use of reference materials. The research assistant then marked each essay using the scoring sheets. Items that evaluated a student's use of particular skills and strategies were scored numerically from 0 to 3 according to whether or not the particular skill or strategy had been used successfully in the essay. In most instances skill use was judged as *evident/successful, partially evident or absent/unsuccessful*.

A full explanation of the scoring system is included in the discussion of results in Chapter 5. All results were summarised in tables to show general pattern of skill use in each semester and to allow comparison of proficiency levels across semesters.

3.8 TRAINING MATERIALS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

The experimental part of this study involved substituting 30 hours of the EAP course with a specially designed training programme. As the chart below indicates, the training was delivered on three levels.



The components of the training are described below, whereas the complete list of Research Project Packages and one Package sample are included as the Appendix 10 and 11.

3.8.1 Research Project Packages

A major part of this project involved the preparation of the Research Project Packages. A total of twenty-five video tapes and laser discs were selected from the range available within the University's Library, selection being primarily based on the relevance of subject matter (i.e. history, geography and politics and religion related topics), and the clarity and level of language content. The tapes and discs chosen were all authentic films and documentaries produced for English-speaking

audiences. Supplementary materials were then prepared to accompany each audio-visual package. These materials included background information and relevant magazine and newspaper articles intended to clarify and extend the information/subject matter of the audio-visuals, and a series of activities designed to encourage listening, comprehension, note-taking and research skills.

Each of the packages produced and trialled followed the same format and contained the following sections:

1. *Instructions* – outlining the purpose of the project, introducing the package and explaining its use
2. *Background information* (2-3 pages) – written information intended to help students better understand the audio-visual by providing a background and context for viewing
3. *Vocabulary worksheets* – required students to identify the meaning of words used in the audio-visual
4. *Audio-visual comprehension sheet* – questions which encouraged active viewing
5. *Reading material* – a selection of authentic newspaper and/or periodical articles related to the topic of the audio-visual; to provide an opportunity for students to experience authentic written English in other than text-book form
6. *Reading comprehension sheet* – analytical questions to ensure students' reading and understanding of the articles
7. *Research assignment* – intended further to extend the subject of the audio-visual and to help students develop skills associated with researching, compiling and presenting information in English in a logical, creative and original fashion

The Packages were designed to achieve the following aims:

- raise students' motivation to learn English through demonstration of useful and relevant applications of the language;
- enhance and enrich subject-specific vocabulary in English;
- reinforce grammatical structures appropriate for use in varied language situations (e.g. making commentaries, arguments or descriptions within a context of study field);
- allow students to practise analytical skills;
- promote independence in learning;
- promote confidence in conducting small-scale research;
- improve students' listening skills.

The purpose and procedure for use of the Research Project Packages was explained to students in class workshops and opportunity was given to students to examine sample packages. They were then required to submit their work to their instructors on prescribed dates and in set stages. The project work constituted part of the students' on-going assessment for the EAP course.

3.8.2 Library training sessions

The aim of these sessions was to familiarise students with those areas and resources of the library which they would need to use in completing their research assignments. The sessions were not intended to provide general information about the library or its uses; that information is readily available to students through courses run by University library staff and on an individual basis from the library information desk.

Each of the 5 groups of students in the experimental group received three orientation sessions during class times carried out at the HKBU library. The tutors met with students in the library for three 2-hour-long sessions during which resources available were shown and the various skills related to the use of those resources were practised.

On their first group session in the library, students visited those sections of the library directly related to their Research project work. They were firstly guided through the Media Services section of the library where the audio-visuals related to their Research project packages were held and could be viewed.

They then moved to the OPAC stations of the library where it was envisaged they would begin their search for information. They were given time, in this section, to use the computer terminals in an initial search for information on their chosen topics. Most students were familiar with at least some features of the system – particularly with provisions for accessing information through broad subject headings. In most cases, though, students had had little idea of how to limit or extend their searches in order to identify relevant information.

Most students needed encouragement and help to carry out the other, more appropriate forms of OPAC search, for example using key words, narrower subject headings, bibliographical details or other known materials to locate information. These methods of researching, it seemed, were new and challenging to them. The second section of the library included in the session was the index section where students were encouraged to look beyond the subject-specific books available to make use of professional journals and magazine articles related to their chosen topics. By contrast to the OPAC section, students were clearly unfamiliar with this section

of the library, with the indexes themselves and, more often than not, with the periodicals to which they referred.

The advantages of using these types of materials were discussed. Students were shown how they might use the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* to find information and then given the opportunity, with the help of tutors, to use the *Guide* to find articles related to their specific topics. Students tended to work in small groups with others who had chosen the same Research Project Package. Using the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* proved to be quite a challenge for most students. The concept and format of the index and the periodicals to which it refers were all evidently new to them.

The first difficulty they appeared to face in using the *Guide* was in identifying the appropriate volume, that is, the time-frame, in which to begin their searches. In some cases, students appeared not to have enough knowledge of their topic to make such a choice.

Once they had chosen an appropriate volume, they again seemed hampered in making use of the index by difficulties in identifying key words and alternative subject headings which might guide their searches. Students also had difficulty understanding and recording reference details that would enable them to locate specific articles, for example, with determining the full title of the publication, the year of publication, the volume, issue, and page numbers of particular articles.

After using the indexes, students returned to the OPAC section of the library where they were able to use the references obtained from the indexes to search for periodicals. They were shown how to use the OPAC system title search to determine whether or not the periodical they had identified was available within HKBU library, and, if it was, which issues were held and where.

Lastly, the orientation session introduced students to the reference sections of the library where they could be expected to find reference books and encyclopaedias that might provide specific information for their projects, but would also help in extending their search for sources and ideas. Students were encouraged to use the bibliographies and cross-references in publications to identify other useful sources and to make use of chapter headings and sub-headings to determine possible ways of narrowing or directing their research.

The second session for students, held early in the second semester, included a guide to the use of encyclopaedias and a refresher course on the use of indexes.

All students indicated that they had never before used an encyclopaedia, in English or in Chinese. The students were shown how to look up their topics in the index guides rather than just going to the volume with the correct letter for their topic on the spine (in the case of *World Book Encyclopaedia*), or guessing which volume would contain the desired entry. The function of the annual updates of the encyclopaedias in the form of year books was also pointed out to the students, along with other kinds of information that these volumes contain, for example national statistics. The students were given time to photocopy any articles of interest that they found in the encyclopaedias during this part of the session. Many students found useful information in the encyclopaedias, although not all the students' topics for research were equally suited to researching in this way.

In the sessions using the indexes, a review of the steps required to search the guide for suitable references was provided, followed by the steps for locating the call number from the OPAC. Assistance was provided when any student became "stuck" at some stage of the process. Many students were successful in finding suitable articles on their topics, while others actually changed the narrowed topic for their

essays as a result of seeing other headings and subheadings that held their interest or provided a number of suitable references.

The next session for students, held early in the second semester, covered how to locate a journal once a call number had been found, how to access indexes on CD-ROM, how to find relevant information with the use of the Internet, and provided further time for students to search out other references with assistance if required. In addition, students were given time to locate, photocopy and evaluate articles. The fact that the CD-ROM version of indexes provides a brief abstract of each article proved helpful to students in determining whether or not to pursue a particular reference further.

The final part of this session was devoted to using the Internet. The students were shown how to log on to the Internet, find a suitable search engine, for example, *Alta Vista*, and how to use subject headings to find information. Following this demonstration, students used terminals, individually or in pairs according to their topics and levels of experience, to carry out subject searches.

Throughout all of these sessions, it was apparent that students preferred using electronic media, rather than the hard copy of the Indexes.

3.8.3 Classroom training

Objectives

The main objectives of the training delivered to students in the experimental group as part of the Research Training Programme were:

- learning by applying knowledge to solve problems;
- learning how to plan, manage and control projects;
- learning how to review & analyse research questions;

- identifying resources;
- formulating solutions;
- considering alternatives and choosing an option;
- managing a project by:
 - identification of tasks;
 - allocation of resources;
 - monitoring progress;
 - taking remedial action.

To facilitate learning of the skills and strategies, the following areas were addressed in the classroom training:

- ensuring students' background knowledge of subject area was sufficient to cope with the task;
- ensuring students knew how to access required resources;
- motivating students to have an interest in the topic.

The whole process of learning was structured and monitored and students were given the opportunity to display the outcomes of their learning and to be rewarded for good work through the EAP grades allocated for various assignments.

Reporting

The expected learning outcomes were to take the form of oral presentations and written essays and they were clearly communicated to students. Detailed feedback on both was provided to give students a chance to recognise how and where they could improve.

Introducing strategies

A decision was made to introduce many strategies simultaneously, as some strategies might be built on the same basic knowledge, some could support others, or some might extend others (Chamot and O'Malley 1994). Even strategies that seemed easy and intuitive to the instructors were presented on the assumption that they may be obvious to some students but not others or that it may not have occurred to the students to use particular strategy for a particular task.

Specific learning activities which followed the presentation required students to use one or a combination of the strategies put forward so that they explained how or why they had used them.

The strategies that the instructors presented were specifically relevant to the tasks that students had then to perform; all related to tasks in their Research Packages, so that the results and usefulness could be seen immediately. In that way, motivation could not only be sustained but possibly enhanced. At the same time, the usefulness and transferability of the strategies to other content areas, like tasks in their major subjects, was presented so that they could be seen as part of the learning process and necessary for academic success (Cohen 1998).

Interest

Chamot and O'Malley's (1994) model of teaching strategies was adapted with the following steps carried out: preparation-presentation, practice, evaluation of expansion of the learning strategies.

An effort was made to make students aware of the link between what they already knew, either through prior schooling or life experiences, and what they were about to learn, even if prior knowledge had been acquired through Cantonese and in

a different cultural setting. This was especially important as the researcher believes that this technique provides students with the ability to make similar linkages in their future learning.

Selecting strategies

The strategies that were selected were determined by the nature of the tasks that students had to perform. They were compatible with the goals and objectives of the various types of activities that students were expected to perform. The important thing was that students should see the strategy as being useful, important and applicable not only to the classroom activity but to other academic tasks that they may have encountered or might be asked to perform in the future.

With the introduction of each new skill, the instructors tried to apply various techniques to appeal to as many learners as possible. To achieve this, the tutor often elicited information from students, made notes, charts, graphs on the whiteboard, gave mini lectures and used various practical exercises.

Functional language skills

The students needed training not only in English language structures and vocabulary but analytical and critical thinking skills that would encourage and lead to the development of creativity. The following skills were practised as part of this training:

analysing	organising
drawing conclusions	generating information
synthesising	interpreting data and results
evaluating	reasoning
paraphrasing	making judgements

summarising	informing
comparing	explaining
reading	solving problems
inferring	discussing
finding relations, causes and effects	describing

3.8.4 Tutor training

It was believed that in order to provide this assistance to students, any instructors involved in trialling the Package work should be familiar with the objectives of self-access type learning and should have the skills required to facilitate it.

Six tutors, those involved in the programme and others who volunteered, attended a two-hour orientation session conducted by the researcher and held in the Hong Kong Baptist University Library. The session was not intended to provide general or comprehensive research training. Rather it was intended to familiarise tutors with those services and resources available in the library which their students would be required to use when completing the research assignment component of EAP course work.

The tutors themselves were unfamiliar with the HKBU Library and this session was seen as a necessary precursor to their carrying out similar orientation sessions for their students. It was hoped that an orientation session for tutors would not only provide them with information which they could then pass on to students, but would also encourage them to think through the issues that their students would face and to consider how they, as teachers, could best give support.

This session took the form of an informal, guided tour of those areas of the library that students were expected to use in preparing their research presentations

and essays. At each stage, tutors were able to access and study relevant resources, clarify the library procedures for their use, consider how they might introduce their own students to those resources, and discuss how they could encourage students to use them to best effect.

Supporting students posed a challenge to some tutors as they seemed unfamiliar not only with the index and abstract section of the library, but also with actual resources held there; with their format and with how and when they could be used. Interestingly, some tutors seemed to feel that books provided sufficient information, and expressed the belief that information in books would be more up-to-date than that in periodicals.

The following sections of the library were included in the session: media services (the library's facility for accessing and using audio-visual and audio material), CD ROM and newspaper holdings, OPAC stations, English references books, abstracts and indexes (in particular *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature*), and bound and current English periodicals.

For the most part, tutors seemed enthusiastic about the session, keen to support their students in this new type of work and interested in finding ways of encouraging students and helping them overcome any difficulties they might experience.

3.8.5 Supervision and monitoring

It was expected that most students would be unfamiliar with the learning format of this program and that they would, therefore, require particular guidance and support from their instructors.

Instructors invited students to approach them at any time, should they have queries or experience any difficulties. Particular care was taken to prepare students for the research section of their work. Before proceeding with the research, students were required to attend individual consultations with instructors to establish appropriate topics for their research essays, ones for which library materials would be available and which would provide scope for the development of original and individual arguments. Students were also offered individual guidance in searching for and selecting resource materials for their essays. The researcher was available to them in the university library for a set time to answer queries and to help them work through any problems that they encountered in using the library materials.

The instructors, then, were in regular contact with students throughout the project and this, together with the fact that work was submitted in stages, allowed them opportunities to gauge students' progress, and to identify and address any common areas of difficulty as the project proceeded.

3.9 STATISTICAL ANALYSES OF DATA

3.9.1 Qualitative research data

Seliger and Shohamy (1989) identify two types of technique for analysing qualitative data: an inductive procedure in which a set of categories is derived as a result of dealing with data, and a deductive procedure in which the system of categories exists and was derived from a conceptual framework.

In the analysis of the oral presentations and students' essay evaluation a combination of both techniques was used. The researcher compiled a set of criteria based on categories used previously in similar situations and then added other categories to the list which derived from the conceptual analyses of the teaching syllabus. The list of different skills and strategies was then tested on a small sample of essays and oral presentation and some additional criteria were identified in the process. That list was then analysed in an attempt to collapse and combine certain categories. The definite group of categories was identified and the set was complete.

In order to obtain some indication of the reliability of the analysis and the categories, the reliability of the two raters was examined. A number of essays and a few oral presentations, randomly selected, were categorised and analysed by the researcher and the research assistant independently. The comparison of the results revealed a high degree of agreement between the two markers which established an indication of the reliability of the analysis used.

All qualitative data obtained through the observation of oral presentations and evaluation of essays was analysed by the same research assistant, who followed the same procedures. Since the sample was not overwhelming, the statistical calculations were performed manually.

3.9.2 Quantitative research data

Data obtained from the three questionnaires were analysed with the aid of descriptive statistics.

In the case of the first and the final questionnaires, the researcher was interested in finding out how frequently certain situations had occurred in students' previous learning, or how often students had come across various learning situations. Therefore, most of the statistical analysis performed was based on frequencies.

To highlight similarities and differences information obtained from questions using a five-point scale was re-grouped to a three-point scale, the extremes being put together with the next point on the scale. Therefore a scale used in the questionnaire consisting of the following 5 points:

1) *never*, 2) *seldom*, 3) *occasionally*, 4) *often*, 5) *always*

was for the purpose of analysis simplified and reduced to 3 points:

1) *never / seldom*

2) *occasionally*

3) *often / always*

Application of this method was useful in displaying trends and patterns. In the analyses, all frequencies were quoted as raw numbers and as percentages.

In the case of the second questionnaire, the evaluation of the Research Training Programme, some additional statistical analyses were performed to provide the central tendency measure. This allowed the researcher to obtain information about the average and the typical attitude of the students in respect of the training they received.

The mean was calculated and presented in the discussion. The mean was considered sufficient for the purpose of that evaluation, as it provided information on

the attitude on average of a group with respect to a given skill or component. The performance of each individual was evaluated separately in a more thorough and accurate way – through the actual assessment of skills displayed in the tasks. Individual information would not provide meaningful insight as the researcher was more interested to find out how the group as a whole perceived the training.

Data obtained through all three questionnaires were analysed with the use of SPSS statistical software package.

In the case of the first and the third questionnaires, where large samples were used, data were entered on OMR cards which were sent to the statistical units of the University for analysis. Data from the second questionnaire were entered into the SPSS program manually by the researcher and her student assistants. Responses to all open-ended questions were coded and analysed manually.

3.10 ETHICAL ISSUES

In all research studies there are ethical issues that have to be considered by the investigator and these are usually more acute in experimental designs which by definition manipulate and control subjects (Gay, 1992).

In accordance with the *Ethical Principle in the Conduct of Research with Human Participants*, issued by the American Psychological Association in 1982:

The investigator always retains the responsibility for ensuring ethical practice in research. The investigator is also responsible for ethical treatment of research participants by collaborators, assistants, students and employers, all of whom, however, incur similar obligations. (copied after Gay 1992, 6)

A substantial amount of time was invested in discussing the study and its benefits in order to obtain the approval and co-operation of the University administration, colleagues and the subjects themselves.

The investigator informed students involved in the study of the nature and the procedure of the project prior to their participation and obtained their permission and willingness to participate. Students were also told that the results of the study would be, at some later stage, available at the University library and that they might contact the researcher to obtain clarification and further information. Subjects were familiarised with the purpose and procedure for the observation of their oral presentations and the evaluation of their essays and their permission was obtained.

3.10.1 Protecting the anonymity of the participants

Since the participants have the right to privacy, individual scores were reported and coded to ensure that the scores could not be associated with specific subjects
invo

whenever it was necessary to look at raw data, as in the case of interviews and observations, names have been changed to guarantee confidentiality.

All three questionnaires used in this research were anonymous and while their objectives were clearly explained on the form, further clarification was provided by the instructors conducting the surveys. Students had an option of not participating in the study by either not returning the questionnaires or not answering the questions.

3.10.2 Institutional approvals

The study was conducted with the co-operation of the University personnel, namely, with the members of the University Standards Committee, the Academic Registry, the Head of Department and a number of Faculty staff. An effort was made to ensure monitoring and a good response level with other instructors involved and with the Head of Department throughout the duration of the study.

Because the study involved the development and the use of special instructional material it was agreed that not only the subject in the experimental group but all students under the researcher's care would benefit from the innovative treatment. In one way this decision has strengthened the reliability of the study by the fact that students in the experimental group did not feel "special". It had also created a difficulty in the selection of a control group. As a consequence the study did suffer because the control group could not be drawn from the students studying the same discipline. That compromise had to be reached to ensure that the experiment was not conducted at the expense of students' achievements, their final grades and that all 264 students under the supervision of the researcher were treated equally.

To compensate for that, the study paradigm had to be changed and additional measuring tools, such as the Programme evaluation questionnaire, oral presentation observations and essay evaluations had to be introduced. This was done to assure that the results could indeed be attributed to the treatment.

3.10.3 Use of the research assistants

There were three other people directly involved in assisting the researcher in actual conduct of this investigation. A substantial part of this study, namely the evaluation of the Research Training Program carried out in the library and in the classroom attracted funding from the Hong Kong Action Learning Project Initiative, which allowed the hiring of a research assistant.

The research assistant's role was to conduct interviews, carry out oral presentation observations and essay evaluations. Using the assistant for these particular tasks warranted objectivity and non-bias evaluation as the assistant had no involvement in teaching, did not know the students and did not participate in the assessment process. The research assistant, though selected by the researcher was employed by the University and was a qualified and mature educational counsellor, undertaking her postgraduate MA degree course in Language Studies.

Permission was obtained from the Head of Department to involve two other instructors in assisting the study by conducting the Research Training Programme with subjects in the experimental group. Out of five faculty members, who were allocated to teach EAP under the researcher's supervision during that academic year, two instructors who were approached eagerly agreed to participate in the study. They were both highly qualified local teachers with many years of experience in teaching

EAP to Hong Kong tertiary students. A decision was made to use 86 of students in the experiment; half of those students were taught by the researcher and the other half were shared between the two other instructors. The assistants were clearly informed of the nature, purpose and expectations of the study and provided with the written description of the Research Training Programme along with the instructional materials. Detailed plans and on-going support were given throughout the duration of the experiment and the results of the study were shared upon its completion.

3.11 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

There have been several references made already about precautions taken to assure reliability and validity of this study particularly in the sections describing instruments, data collection and sampling procedures. Because validity and reliability are of central importance to research this section contains further, more detailed explanation of how the threats to validity and reliability have been controlled for.

Validity refers to the “extent to which the data collection procedure measures what it intends to measure” while content validity checks that “the data collection procedure is a good representation of the content which needs to be measured” (Seliger and Shohamy 1989, 188). There are two types of validity: internal validity and external validity. “Internal validity refers to interpretability of research... external validity refers to the extent to which the results can be generalized from samples to population” (Nunan 1992, 15). Seliger and Shohamy (1989) identify a number of factors affecting internal validity, these are: subject variability, size and subject population, history, attrition, instrument/task sensitivity and maturation.

Reliability refers to the consistency of the results obtained from a piece of research and to replicability of the research. In the words of Nunan (1992, 14) internal reliability refers to “the consistency of data collection, analysis and interpretation... [while] external reliability refers to the extent to which independent researchers can reproduce a study and obtain results similar to those obtained in the original study.” There are many variables and student characteristics that might effect the results in a study that is as complex as this one. Thus care has been taken in selecting samples, instruments and methods to control for validity and reliability and to appropriately interpret the results.

Cambel and Stanley (1971) have identified a number of major threats to internal and external validity and reliability. Validity and reliability of assessment procedure "...can be often judged by identifying the possible factors that can invalidate them..." (Genesee and Upshur 1996, 67). A discussion on how these sources of invalidity and unreliability have been controlled for in this study follows.

History refers to events outside of the treatment which may effect the performance on the dependent variable. To control for this source of invalidity this study was carried out over the shortest possible time, i.e. seven months, and several instruments were used simultaneously as " ... inaccuracy resulting from the use of one method could be offset by other methods" (Genesee and Upshur 1996, 59). When evaluating the training, the participants were specifically requested only to refer to the direct influence of the Research Training Programme on the development of their skills.

Maturation refers to physical or mental changes that may occur within the subjects during the period of the study. In this case the researcher had no way of controlling for maturation; but since the subjects of this study were young adults and the study took only a little over half a year it could be assumed that maturation should not have affected the results.

Testing refers to improved scores on a post-test as a result of having taken a pre-test. Probability of testing, then being a source of invalidity is not a consideration for this study because pre-test and post-test (oral presentations and essays) did not measure the acquisition of factual knowledge which could simply be recalled, but they

measured the acquisition of skills.

Instrumentation refers to unreliability or lack of consistency in a measuring instrument which may result in an invalid evaluation. With each instrument used in this study, observation, non-objective essay evaluation, questionnaires and interview, care and precautions were taken to assure objectivity of all raters. To secure comparability and accurate assessment, the scales used with questions in pre-and post-treatment questionnaires were the same and the questionnaires were of the self-reporting type. The description of instruments on the previous pages of this chapter (Chapter 3.6) contains further details of measures taken to control for validity and reliability of the instruments.

Differential selection of subjects refers to the situation where groups may be different before the study begins. The experimental component comprised a number of methods of evaluation involving the use of various size samples. In the case of oral presentations, observations and essay evaluation groups used for pre-test and post-test were identical. In her effort to control for sample validity, the researcher randomized the subjects for experimental and control groups as much as it was feasible; but there were still some disciplinary differences among the groups. As mentioned earlier, the experimental group consisted of randomly select cluster groups of social sciences and arts students while the control group contained a greater range of disciplines, i.e. social sciences, communication, business and science. In the pre-test carried out at the outset of the academic year the differences among the disciplines were tested through the analysis of variance and proved to be statistically non-significant. It has to be admitted, however, that the results of the

post-test could have been, to some extent, influenced by the discipline orientation of the students. By the time of the administration of the post-test, students in both groups had nearly completed their first year of study at the university. Hence possibility of some inequality effecting internal validity and generalisability of the results. Current research points to variations in the development of learning styles among students of different disciplines (Becher 1989, Squires 1987, Smelby 1996). Section 2.4.8 of the literature review contains discussion of these differences.

As the researcher was aware of this potential threat, measures were employed to strengthen validity by the use of triangulation. Triangulation involves a simultaneous use of a variety of methods of data collection to allow the researcher to validate findings. "In triangulation, the same pattern or example of behavior is sought in different sources. Use of the process increases the reliability of the conclusions reached" (Seliger and Shohamy 1989, 123). In case of this study data drawn from post-treatment questionnaire was confirmed by data drawn from observations of oral presentations, marking of the essays and self-reported training evaluation data from all sources being collected at the same time. In the given circumstances, triangulation was considered desirable since:

A further function of triangulation is that it offers a richer and more complex understanding of a phenomenon than a single method approach. Although different methods of gathering data will overlap in direct and indirect ways they will also collect information at different levels, in different forms and in different circumstances. These differences result in a more elaborate and complex view of the phenomena under study. (Bright 1991, 77)

Experimenter effect or insider research refers to a situation in which researchers may represent a potential threat to the validity of their own research. This can happen when the researcher fails to "...demonstrate unambiguously that phenomena have been observed and that the interpretation of these data is not dependent on the

subjective judgement of an individual researcher" (Seliger and Shohamy 1989, 104).

The data may be distorted by the presence of the researchers and by their involvement with the training. To control for this experimenter bias effect the following measures were taken:

- half of the subjects in the experimental group were assigned to be trained by two other instructors. The results were analyzed for any significant differences among cluster samples within the experimental group and it appeared the fact that students were trained by different instructors did not prove to be significant;
- whenever possible, a research assistant who did not know students and had no part in the formal university evaluation procedure was used for data collection;
- all statistical data were read from OMR cards and analyzed by an independent body the Statistical and Research Support Unit in the Department of Mathematics at HKBU;
- all results of the statistical analyses performed for this study have been bound and placed with the HKBU library;
- the use of triangulation has also helped to control for the experimenter effect.

Scorer/ rater reliability refers to reliability of rating of individual scorers. In this study a research assistant was used as a scorer for oral presentation observations and essay evaluations. The reliability of the rater was established through comparison with other raters by checking the degree of agreement among markers as discussed in section 3.7.

3.12 LIMITATIONS

The nature of the sample population employed throughout the study was largely determined by administrative procedures outside the researcher's control and by the availability of research supporting staff. The selection of an appropriate control group was hampered by the Departmental directive that all of the students in the researcher's courses be included in the experimental group and that she should not have access to assignments submitted by students in other EAP classes. This decision also served to limit options available for assessment of the Programme's effectiveness and created a threat to the validity of the results. To strengthen the validity a decision was made to use triangulation and introduce additional methods of evaluation.

- Individualisation and contextualisation were considered integral aspects of this Programme: considerable effort was made to ensure that students' personal interests were catered for and that topics were relevant to students' major fields of study. However, the topics and packages available to students for their research work were still limited and the training provided was, of necessity, group based.
- The major limitation in this study was the timing. The same population of students is only available to the researcher for a duration of eight months, so this study had to be completed within a short span of time. This, to some extent, predetermined the format and the design of the study.
- That classes are mixed with respect to language ability meant that it was difficult for tutors to tailor the Programme to individual needs and abilities and at the same time meet the general curriculum requirements of the EAP course.
- The other obstacle was the use of English in the interviews and the questionnaires, especially in the open-ended questions. The fact that English is a

foreign language to all students and that some are not proficient users could have affected the results or lack of response.

- Some of the locally trained EAP instructors were not very familiar with study skills training and required substantial guidance before they could administer the Training. Their lack of confidence could have influenced students' perceptions of the Programme as well as the level of skills that the students have acquired.

3.13 SUMMARY

The overall aim of this study was two-fold: firstly to ascertain, for those students entering HKBU, the nature and extent of their training, their ability and their confidence in the various tasks involved in small-scale independent research; and, secondly, to develop and trial a method of EAP teaching (Research Training Programme) which would better meet students' language needs and would also provide materials for and training in learning strategies for independent academic tasks.

The study took place in the 1997/98 academic year and took one year to complete. The first stage, the *Survey of Student Research Experience* questionnaire, was administered at the beginning of the academic year in September and October 1997. A total of 1130 first-year students from various faculties at HKBU were involved in the first stage of this study, of that 716 returned the questionnaires. To extend and expand on the information elicited through the questionnaire, a small sample of students were interviewed. The data obtained in this part of the research project provided a description of the existing situation of Hong Kong students in respect to their experience and training in research related skills.

Of those surveyed, 86 students participated in the second stage as subjects of the experimental group and 91 students constituted the control group. This stage involved a delivery of a 30-hour Research Training Programme to students in the experimental group. Upon the completion of the Training Programme, evaluation of its effectiveness, as well as students' perceptions of the various components of the Programme, was carried out. Students' final essays were compared with those handed in at the beginning of the year, and the use of skills and strategies in their earlier and final oral presentation of projects was measured. Finally, a survey of students' confidence, abilities and experience was administered to both the experimental and the control groups.

All results were statistically analysed and are discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, while the comparison of the experimental and the control groups is discussed in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 Initial survey of student research experience

4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.2 THE QUESTIONNAIRE

4.2.1 Frequency tables

4.2.2 The student sample

4.2.3 Language

4.2.4 Previous research experience

4.2.5 Library use

4.2.6 Autonomy *versus* teacher guidance at secondary school

4.2.7 Learning preferences and confidence levels

4.3 INTERVIEW SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

4.3.1 Secondary school - medium of instruction

4.3.2 Assignments, projects, and essays

4.3.3 Previous research experience

4.3.4 Oral presentations

4.3.5 Use of libraries

4.3.6 Place of opinion

4.3.7 Transition - perceptions of differences between secondary and tertiary study

4.4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.4.1 Research experience

4.4.2 Library use

4.4.3 Autonomy *versus* teacher guidance at secondary school

4.4.4 Confidence and learning preferences

4.5 CONCLUSIONS

CHAPTER FOUR

Initial survey of student research experience

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter details that part of the study concerned with assessing the nature and degree of students' experience in carrying out tasks related to small-scale research at the time of their entry to university. As has been previously outlined, this assessment was made by obtaining the survey responses of some 716 first-year students and through interviews conducted with 13 students drawn from the survey sample.

The results of the survey presented in this section show students' prior exposure to independent projects in English, the nature and range of source materials previously used to complete assignments, experience and training in library use, and the level of confidence felt by students in completing research tasks in English. The interviews were designed to address similar issues – to extend and clarify the information gained through the survey and to identify issues or concerns that had not been addressed but that might usefully be examined through the study. Together, it was hoped that the two forms of investigation would allow to determine whether or not students had been adequately prepared for the challenge of independent research at university level.

4.2 THE QUESTIONNAIRE

4.2.1 Frequency tables

The tables that follow show the number of students that responded to each of the possible answers for all of the questions in the survey. Some of the questions required the students to make a choice between *yes* and *no*, and others asked the students to select one of several options. Two sections provided a Likert-type scale in which students were asked to choose from five points along the scale. Those questions which were left blank, or which were given invalid answers on the computerized answer sheet, are documented in the tables as *missing*. A corresponding percentage value is provided in the adjacent column, and is calculated using the number of valid responses, that is, for each question, the *missing* responses are excluded from the calculation.

In this section and in those that follow, the questions have not been presented in the same format as they appeared on the questionnaire (see Appendix 2), but have been regrouped to allow questions relating to similar issues to be analysed together. Issues such as previous research experience, library skills, teacher guidance, confidence and learning preferences will be discussed.

4.2.2 The student sample

The 716 subjects who completed the questionnaire were all first year students at the Hong Kong Baptist University. This large sample represents approximately 63% of first-year students at HKBU and includes students from a number of faculties. A total of 89 of the students belonged to the faculty of Arts, 251 to the faculty of Social Sciences, 237 were enrolled either in the Science faculty, 137 in Communications

and two in the faculty of Business. A total of 324 (45.3%) of the students were male and 391 (54.7%) were female. One student did not specify gender.

4.2.3 Language

Classes at the university can be conducted either in English or in Chinese. For 336 students (46.9%), the language most often used in lectures at HKBU was English, and for 354 (49.4%), it was Chinese. Twelve students reported a mix of languages, and the remaining 14 students did not specify their main language of study at HKBU.

The sample is made up of students from various language backgrounds. Some have attended a secondary school which used English as the medium of instruction, others have been schooled in the local Chinese language, Cantonese, or in a combination of English and Cantonese. Of the students questioned, 153 (21.4%) had received their secondary school training in English and 154 (21.6%) had attended schools that use Chinese as a medium of instruction. Four hundred and four students reported a mixed medium of instruction in their schools. Two students did not specify a medium of instruction and three students gave invalid answers.

The level of English language skill also varied within the sample. Each student's grade in the 'Use of English Exam', which was taken at the end of secondary school, is used as a measure of competence in using the English language. Out of the group surveyed, 15 (2.1%) of the students had received a grade A or B, while 49 students (6.9%) obtained a grade of C. A total of 209 students (29.5%) reported a grade of D7 or D8, and 435 students (61.5%) scored a grade of E or below. Eight students did not report their examination grade.

4.2.4 Previous research experience

10. *Did you ever prepare a project in English (i.e., you had to research a topic and present your findings in writing or orally) at secondary school?*

Students were asked whether or not they had prior research experience in English. The questions specified research using the English language since the intent of the questionnaire was to assess students' preparedness for research that was to be presented in English. The Hong Kong Baptist University generally requires that papers and examinations be carried out in English.

	Number of students	Percentage
Yes	210	29.7
No	496	70.3
Missing	10	*
Total	716	100.0

Only a minority of students, 210 (29.7%), had ever prepared a project in English at secondary school. Most of the students (70.3%) had never completed such a task. Those students who answered "yes" were instructed to answer questions eleven and twelve, which related specifically to their projects. The results of these questions are discussed below. The answers to this question confirm the hypothesis that a majority of students have not been exposed to this mode of learning.

It is interesting to note that those students interviewed as part of this study, having undertaken an EAP research project, tended to differentiate between that research and the projects they had carried out at school. At that time, most seemed to feel that while they had completed projects for which they found their own material, that work had not constituted research as they had come to understand it at university.

13. *Have you ever conducted your own research for a project or assignment in English (other than the bridging course) at Hong Kong Baptist University? If yes, please specify _____.*

	Number of students	Percentage
Yes	258	36.5
No	449	63.5
Missed	9	*
Total	716	100.0

This question yielded results similar to the last. The majority of students, 63.2%, had yet to conduct research at the university, while only 36.5% had conducted their own inquiry for a research project or assignment. Out of 258 students who had already carried out their own research, 100 students specified the nature of their work. These written answers varied widely but, with the exception of a few, all were projects from courses in the Arts and Social Science faculty. Two hundred and fifty one students surveyed were enrolled in Arts and Social Sciences and a large majority had to carry out a research project in their first month at university. Projects given in language courses dominated, comprising 28% of the total responses.

13. Have you ever received any training in how to research a topic at HKBU?

	Number of students	Percentage
Yes	170	23.8
No	544	76.2
Missed	2	*
Total	716	100

Only 23.8% of the student sample had ever received any research training at Hong Kong Baptist University.

6. Was there an assignment in English in your secondary school in which you were required to use materials other than course books and teacher supplied handouts?

If yes, what were those materials _____?

	Number of students	Percentage
Yes	319	45.1
No	389	54.9
Missed	8	*
Total	716	100.0

Responses to this question revealed that at least half of the Hong Kong Baptist University student sample had never been required to search for materials beyond what was immediately supplied by a secondary school teacher. Only 319 (45.1%) answered *yes*, while 389 (54.9%) of the students had never been required to use more materials than were provided for them.

These findings are in line with the theory that Hong Kong students are generally not encouraged to be independent learners (Kember and Gow 1991) and lack experience in using the variety of self-located sources of information.

In the open-ended part of the questionnaire, the students specified a wide range of other materials, with newspapers, being the most frequent choice and reference books the second most frequent. Other materials used by students, apart from texts supplied by the teachers, were: videos, TV programmes, notes and previously written papers.

7. *Were you required to use more than one source of information for one assignment (e.g. handouts, magazine articles, or videos)?*

	Number of students	Percentage
Yes	331	46.6
No	379	53.4
Missed	6	*
Total	716	100.0

According to the table above, slightly fewer than half of the students had been required to use multiple sources of information. These findings indicate that most assignments given at high schools do not require students to compare, collate and

analyse information from different sources. In interviews, discussed in detail further in this chapter, students indicated that while they may have used several sources as the basis for some assignments, those sources were usually books.

12. *What was the main source of information for those projects? (In reference to Q10.)*

	Number of students	Percentage
Course books or teacher handouts	37	16.2
Materials from school library	40	17.5
Other self-selected sources	56	24.6
Combination of the above	90	39.5
Other	5	2.2
Subtotal	228	100.0
Missing	488	*
Total	716	100.0

Of the students who responded to this question, 37 (16.2%) reported that school course books and/or teacher handouts were the main source of information used to complete their projects. Forty (17.5%) chose materials from the school library, and 56 (24.6%) selected their resources independently. The remaining 90 students (39.5%) used a combination of the aforementioned. Five students selected other non-specified sources of information.

19 -29. *In your previous study at secondary school, how often did you use the following materials to complete homework assignments or projects in English?"*

Questions 19-29 were intended to determine the range of resources that the students had used at secondary school. The students were asked to choose, from a five-point scale, the frequency with which they had used specified materials to complete homework assignments or projects in English.

Table 6 Frequency of use of materials for assignments or projects in English at secondary school

	Never/Seldom % of students	Occasionally %	Often/Always /Most of the time %
19. Own notes from lessons	24.3	24.6	50.9
20. Textbook or teacher handouts	9.9	17.8	72.3
21. Optional reading	36.0	40.8	23.2
22. Magazines and newspapers	41.5	35.6	22.9
23. Professional journals	80.0	14.7	5.3
24. Chinese-English Dictionary	22.6	26.2	51.2
25. English-English dictionary	55.1	25.4	19.4
26. Encyclopedia	92.9	5.5	1.7
27. TV programmes or videos	70.6	21.8	7.5
28. CD ROMs or Internet	82.8	10.0	7.2
29. Library material found by self	49.0	31.3	19.7

The following tables provide, in more detail, the results of questions 19, 20, 23, 26, 27, 28, and 29. The responses to these questions illustrate the limited scope of materials utilised by students for projects or assignments in English at secondary school.

Consistent with the other responses in this section, readily available materials, such as teacher handouts, textbooks and notes, were used frequently.

19. Own notes	Number of students	Percentage
Never/Seldom	174	24.4
Occasionally	176	24.6
Often/Always/Most of the time	364	51.0
Missing	2	*
Total	716	100.0

20. Textbook or teacher handouts	Number of students	Percentage
Never/Seldom	71	9.9
Occasionally	127	17.8
Often/Always/Most of the time	516	72.3
Missing	2	*
Total	716	100.0

It is surprising that very few students turned to encyclopedias as a source of information when completing assignments in English at secondary school (1.7% or 12 students) – given the accessibility, their clarity and the breadth of information that they offer.

26. Encyclopaedia Use	Number of students	Percentage
Never/Seldom	664	92.9
Occasionally	39	5.4
Often/Always/Most of the time	12	1.7
Missing	1	*
Total	716	100.0

Very few students used optional reading to complete their assignments restricting themselves to readily provided sources. Likewise, TV programmes or videos were not commonly used as a research medium.

27. TV programmes or Videos	Number of students	Percentage
Never/Seldom	505	70.6
Occasionally	156	21.8
Often/Always/Most of the time	54	7.6
Missing	1	*
Total	716	100.0

Even fewer students referred to CD-ROMs or the Internet.

28. CD-ROM or Internet use	Number of students	Percentage
Never/Seldom	587	82.8
Occasionally	71	10.0
Often/Always/Most of the time	51	7.2
Missing	7	*
Total	716	100.0

Almost half of the students questioned never or seldom used material that they had found independently in the library to complete their homework or projects at secondary school. Two hundred and twenty (31.3%) students occasionally used material that they had discovered on their own.

29. Material found in library by self	Number of students	Percentage
Never/Seldom	344	49.0
Occasionally	220	31.3
Often/Always/Most of the time	138	19.7
Missing	14	*
Total	716	100.0

Chinese-English dictionaries are far more popular among secondary school students in Hong Kong for their English assignments than English-English dictionaries. Fifty one per cent of students use Chinese-English dictionaries all the time when working on English assignments, while only 14.4% use the English-English version.

Not many students used magazines or newspaper clipping for their projects. Only 22.9% used them often, while 41.5% had never used them. Again, the lack of use of resources here may well reflect a lack of demand for that form of study or an inability to find suitable materials.

4.2.5 Library use

15. *Have you ever received any practical training on how to use library resources (other than the University Life)? If yes, please specify _____.*

	Number of students	Percentage
Yes	128	17.9
No	587	82.1
Missing	1	*
Total	716	100.0

Practical training in library use was reported by 144 (20.1%) of the students questioned. Despite instructions, 17 students answered *yes* because they had attended the University Life sessions. These *yes* responses have been transferred to the *no* category in the above table. In interviews too, students referred to training received in the HKBU library (as part of the University Life course). Interestingly, none mentioned having received any other form of training, except that given in their EAP courses.

16. *Do you feel confident in using library resources?*

	Number of students	Percentage
Yes	235	33.0
No	477	67.0
Missing	4	*
Total	716	100.0

Confidence in using library resources was indicated by only 33% of students.

17. *Do you know how to access information using key words and subject catalogue on OPAC?*

	Number of students	Percentage
Yes	582	82.0
No	128	18.0
Missing	6	*
Total	716	100.0

The majority of students (81.5% or 128 students) claimed that they could carry out these basic procedures.

18. *If you use the library, what is your **most** common reason for doing so?*

The most common reasons for using the library were “to obtain books and materials assigned by lecturers” (30.6%) and “to borrow books of your choice for study”. Less often, the library is used as a place to study own materials (13.7%) or

to do homework (11.1%). Rarely is it regarded as a place to use encyclopaedias (6.4%), a place for leisure reading (4.4%), or to meet with friends.

	Number of students	Percentage
To obtain books and materials assigned by lecturers	210	29.9
To borrow books for study (own choice of books)	215	30.6
To use encyclopaedias or other reference material	45	6.4
To listen to tapes, records or laser discs	11	1.6
A place to study own materials or textbooks	96	13.7
A place to do your homework	78	11.1
For leisure reading	31	4.4
To meet with friends	7	1.0
Other	6	0.9
Have not used the library yet	3	0.4
Missing	14	*
Total	716	100.0

These responses suggest a shift in the reasons for library use between school and university. In interviews, students indicated that at secondary school, though they had used libraries to find information for their school work, they more often used them for leisure reading or as a place to relax.

51 - 60. How often have you used the following resources in English at HKBU library?

Early in the academic year, at the time when this questionnaire was administered, HKBU students' use of choice of resources in the library appeared to be quite limited. The responses indicate a fair use of general and reference books, but also point to a lack of awareness of the value of other sources such as encyclopaedias, magazines and professional journals. It is possible that some students in some majors

were not expected or required to use resources other than course and reference books.

The only big shift noticeable here is the use of Internet at University. While only 18% used it in their secondary schools almost half were regular Internet users at University. Table 7 below describes in more detail, the extent to which library resources are used.

Table 7 Use of English resources at Hong Kong Baptist University Library

	Never Seldom &	Occasionally %	Often/Always/ Most of the time %
51. General books	31.6	33.0	35.3
52. Reference books	34.3	32.6	33.0
53. Indexes	71.0	20.9	8.2
54. Magazines	62.7	25.4	11.9
55. Professional journals	69.7	19.9	10.4
56. CD ROM's	77.9	15.3	6.8
57. Encyclopaedias	89.3	7.3	3.5
58. Newspapers	49.7	26.1	24.2
59. Videos and tapes	69.7	21.2	9.0
60. Internet	32.3	20.9	46.7

30 -35. How often have you borrowed books from any library for the following purposes?

The purpose for which books were borrowed from the library was measured using the same scale as the previous question. According to the findings, as detailed below in Table 8, nearly half of the students have never borrowed books from the library which were unrelated to their school work and only about 30% of tertiary students borrow books for pleasure or personal reading. Over half of the respondents had never borrowed from the library books which were their own selection for the purpose of study.

Table 8 Purpose of library book borrowing

	Never/Seldom % of students	Occasionally %	Often/Always/ Most of the time %
30. Leisure reading	36.1	34.5	29.3
31. Personal interest	32.5	34.6	32.8
32. Information unrelated to school	44.5	35.4	20.1
33. Compulsory course reading	27.9	40.1	31.9
34. Optional course reading	43.1	37.4	19.4
35. Use in study – own selection	50.8	34.3	14.9

4.2.6 *Autonomy versus teacher guidance at secondary school*

As discussed in Chapter 2, secondary schools in Hong Kong have been criticised for not promoting, or providing students with the opportunity for independent study. The following questions address this issue and provide further support for these claims.

9. *Was there an assignment in English in your secondary school in which you were required to find the information by yourself without teacher's guidance?*

	Number of students	Percentage
Yes	260	36.8
No	447	63.2
Missed	9	*
Total	716	100.0

The above figures help to illustrate secondary school students' lack of experience in locating resources independently. While 36.7% of the students questioned had been required to search for information on their own, the remaining 63.2% had consistently been offered teacher guidance. Students' accounts, given in interviews, of assignments for which they were required to find their own information, suggest that such projects might have been the exception rather than the norm and that the information may not have been in book form. Students mentioned using magazines and newspapers, interviewing classmates and friends.

11. How were project topics *usually* determined? (in reference to Q.10)

	Number of students	Percentage
Set by the teacher	82	35.0
Selected from a list of options	90	38.5
No guidelines, own choice	57	24.4
Other	5	2.1
Sub-sample Total	234	100.0
Missing	482	*
Total	716	100.0

Out of the 234 students who had answered this question, 82 (35%) reported that the topics were usually set by the teacher. Ninety students (38.5%) indicated that they usually chose from a set of options, and 57 (24.4%) typically chose their topic without any guidelines.

It should be noted that although 234 students actually responded to this question, only the 210 students who had indicated in question 10 that they had conducted research in English should have answered this question. Considering the layout of the questionnaire, it is plausible that the extra 28 students may have continued through questions 11 and 12, despite instructions to the contrary. In these cases, it should be noted that their interpretation of a project may have been broader than that specified in question 10. It should also be pointed out that, in interviews, most students indicated that they were seldom required to carry out project work in the latter part of their secondary schooling and that, when they were required to complete assignments, their choice of topic was limited to one of up to three topics supplied by the teacher. None mentioned projects for which they had been free to choose their own topic with no direction given.

4.2.7 Learning preferences and confidence levels

The confidence level of students in performing basic academic tasks was ascertained, using the questions presented in the following table.

36-39 *Would you feel confident performing the following academic tasks?*

Table 9 Confidence level of students performing various academic tasks

	Never/Seldom % of students	Occasionally %	Often/Always /Most of the time %
36. writing an essay in Chinese based on information in a text book	9.7	31.2	59.1
37. writing an essay in English based on information in a textbook	27.3	47.8	24.9
38. searching for information suggested to you by your teacher	18.7	47.6	33.7
39. finding information on a topic with no guidelines of assistance from your teacher	56.1	34.1	9.8

While over half of the students indicated that they would have no problems writing an essay in Chinese, only 24.9% would do so confidently in English. In line with the previous findings, only 9.8% of students indicated that they felt confident finding information on a topic with no guidance or assistance from their teachers.

Table 10 Student learning preferences

	Never/ Seldom % of students	Occasiona lly %	Often/Alw ays/Most of the time %
40. Do you learn best from teachers who work carefully from prepared notes and outline major points neatly on the blackboard?	8.8	30.6	60.6
41. Do you learn best from teachers who encourage you to find your own information and reach your own conclusions?	21.1	49.6	29.3
42. Do you make a point of looking at most of the suggested readings that go with the lectures and class presentations?	36.9	51.1	12.0
43. Do you enjoy trying new ways of studying and learning?	20.2	37.6	42.2
44. Do you prefer to use the study methods that have worked for you in the past?	19.5	42.9	37.6
45. Do you prefer to have as many sources of information as possible – the more data to think over the better?	13.3	41.9	44.8
46. Do you find it useful to do your own reading in academic subjects rather than simply reading set course texts?	24.4	52.7	22.9
47. Do you find it difficult to produce new ideas?	11.6	43.6	44.8
47. Do you try to relate what you have learned in one subject to what you are studying in other subjects?	17.8	46.4	35.8
48. Do you find it confusing to have too much information about a subject?	14.1	42.0	43.9
49. Do you find the information presented by your teacher and through textbooks sufficient for study in your subjects?	19.0	51.5	29.5

The majority of students believed that they learned best from teachers who presented work from prepared notes and outlined major points for them on the blackboard, but 29.3% also believed that they learned best from teachers who encouraged them to find their own information and to reach their own conclusions. Only a small proportion of students (12%) consistently went beyond teacher supplied materials to look at the suggested readings that accompanied their courses. Although

most students only occasionally chose to do their own reading for their academic subjects, only 22.9% had commonly found such reading to be useful. A slightly higher number (24.4%) indicated that they had seldom found additional reading useful.

Most students indicated that they had difficulty producing new ideas (44.8%) stating that that was most often the case for them. A minority of students claimed that they seldom experienced such difficulties.

Not surprisingly, a considerable number of students (37.6%) expressed their preference for using study methods that had proved successful in the past. Only 19.5% indicated that they would prefer not to follow those methods. However, 42.2% of students claimed that, in general, they enjoyed trying new ways of studying and learning, and a further 37.6% said that this was only sometimes true for them.

4.3 INTERVIEW SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

4.3.1 Secondary school - medium of instruction

At the outset of each interview, some time was spent in general discussion of the medium of instruction used at students' secondary schools and in talking about their overall perceptions of English language lessons. Students were asked what language they had commonly used in their secondary study (aside from English lessons). In a number of cases students went on to comment and contrast those lessons with their English language lessons:

Both in English and in my subject Geography I also need to write in English, but when I listen to the teacher, he or she may always use Chinese, not English. Both in my English teacher because he need to make us clearly to know how to use and how to write a better essay. For me actually, just in the English lesson, I will use English and read newspaper in English. Other lesson, although it may be say that it use English to teach and write, actually it is in Chinese. (Candy/ Chinese)

When I study in English class or Geography class the teacher most of the time talk English but the classmates ourselves we will talk in Chinese. (Jo/ History)

Most of the time each subject was taught in English. In my school the teacher would speak in Chinese to teach these subjects...For me, a just little speak English in English lesson...The teacher will use Chinese to teach us... But if we write the assignment or essay we need to use the English. (Alice/ Rel)

Sometimes used English, sometimes Cantonese. For example for A level History I have to write essay in English, but in Chinese Language and Culture I have to answer the question in Chinese. In English - just English used. Sometimes if a question is very difficult for us to understand the teacher will teach us in Chinese so it will be better for us to understand. (Dave/ Soc.)

The teachers use English to teach them but when we don't know what it is about of the meaning he must use the Chinese to explain to me. But mainly English (Ken/ Hist)

English Lessons

In general, the responses of students highlighted the variations in their school experiences. Almost all students had used English textbooks in their secondary

study and had carried out at least part of their written work in English. However, while some students were clearly schooled predominantly in English, comfortable and confident in listening, speaking and writing in that medium, others had had limited experience of English and had received the most part of their instruction in Cantonese. These students seemed to feel far less positive about the language teaching they had received at school and several expressed concerns about their ability to use English in conversation or in their studies.

When I jumps to Form four and Form five most of it is emphasis on HKC examination syllabus. Just put most of effort to do that exercise try and do the paper all the time I just like a machine to do the things to taught the things. Then I jumps to Form 6 and 7 then it is better because I think the teacher is better because first the A level have conversation so we can talk more and ... have presentation. It is quite different from the past. we still have to do that paper like comprehension.... Why I say it is much better because most student is motivate to talk to think how to learn English. (Elle/ Soc.)

In secondary school, I think I just like a machine...and I hate English at that time. (Candy/ Chinese)

To me, I think it is different from them because I have studied in the evening school for about four years. So, since I may be older than them and so in the evening school, there are the same subjects comparing to the day school but we have limited time, more limited time, so there are many skills, especially for English, may be ignored, for example, oral and listening skills. Also, although I my writing task is okay, but sad to say, my oral and listening skills is very poor. (Ross/ Chinese)

I think its okay ...It is good for our examination. (Elle/ Soc.)

4.3.2 Assignments, projects, and essays

A major part of each interview was spent in discussion about the nature of the work students had been asked to complete at secondary school (in English or in Chinese). Students were asked whether or not they had been required to carry out assignment and project work and then to explain what form that work had taken. Similarly they were asked whether or not they had ever been asked to write essays during their time at school; and, if so, what that had entailed.

The discussion then moved on to focus on the way in which topics were set for essays and assignments, to the types and sources of information that students used in their work and to the degree to which they perceived they could present their own ideas or opinions in their writing.

Essays:

I think the teachers always focus on the form such as the composition. They teach me first I must be, how many points and the first point you need supporting point counter attack. Just like to teach me the form how to write argumentative essay. But they didn't focus - such as the topic is drug abuse - but they have never they have never discussed about drug abuse. Only focus on the form. How many points of the points are true or false, they don't mind. (Ken/ Hist)

Actually, in the essay, my teacher will give us a topic and then we will try to write, but, before we write our essay, she will tell me how to write our essay. For example, how to give an introduction, the body and the conclusion. And then, after we finish our work, she collect it, give it our mark, and then it's OK. Nothing else (Wendy/ Chinese talking about essays for English)

(In) the use of English we have to do the assignment for writing an essay to the teacher to mark it and the History essay. When I do the accounting exam I have to write English about the accounting theory. ... These assignments are similar to the A level exam papers because our aim is to do well in the exam. (Jo/ Hist)

I wrote a lot of essays in many every subject. (Ken/ Hist)

Lots and lots of essays. In the examination we have to write essays. It is a part of the examination and so the teacher gives us topics which are related to the examination or she predicts that the examination would ask us these topics and gives us these topics for us to write essays. Mostly it is about discussion of problems issues of Hong Kong or today's phenomenon. (Ron/ Geo)

All of the students interviewed had been required to write essays in the course of their secondary schooling, both for English lessons and for some of their other subjects. Again, experiences varied with some students explaining that they had written many essays for most of their subjects and others saying that they had only been required to produce them for a few subjects - most commonly, for English and Chinese studies.

One the whole, whatever essays they did write would seem to have been brief and based on information supplied by their class teachers. Students' descriptions of

their essay writing in English lessons suggest that they believed teachers were only interested in the structure of their work and paid little attention to the actual content of their writing. The general feeling seemed to be that the essay-writing set during the year was given as “practice” for the writing required in their end-of-year examinations.

In their other studies too, students appeared to regard the essay-writing component of course-work as preparation for examinations.

Assignment and Projects:

Well, I did a project on problems of youngsters in Hong Kong - for example drug abuse , pre-marriage pregnancy and sort of things like that. And we did a project on that by interviewing and making questionnaires and finding resources in books or something like that .. It is a bit similar to the university here when we do projects but it is less involved in library work like finding books because we just simply go to libraries and find whatever we can get but not so particularly narrowed to one topic or something. (Ron/ Geo)

When I was in Form 3 my geography teacher told us to go to the library and find some books such as just focus on one country and we should introduce this country. (Elle/ Soc)

I have a ...(I don't know whether it is a project or not). Our teachers just told us to have a oral presentation that is recorded in the text - the topic can everything that we like, for example record a football match and horse racing or just like some in the video. We have some students to have a role play and tape record them. But we have not find any material resources in library books or etc. (Alice/ Soc.)

If the teacher make us to do projects, students would bring down because the syllabus is so much we still have lesson after the regular lesson or at Saturday So all of us just put all our time just in that schedule. (Jane/ Rel)

Because last year, Form 7, we need to do the project (in Chinese studies) but the name is not the project. It's the academic work. We need to group to students to do the work about the special topics about the Chinese history. So we need to check and to find the information to do the summary and then we need to make it like a book to get the mark. (Ken/ Hist)

From the discussion, it would seem that students associated the notion of assignments with a wide variety of tasks set by teachers as homework. These tasks included book reports, summarising short pieces of writing, and answering multiple-

choice questions. Project work seemed more likely to be viewed as work involving some form of searching for and presentation of information, carried out either individually or in groups, relatively independent of their teachers and of the examinations. While the majority of students indicated that they had, at one time or another, completed projects, many gave as examples work carried out in their early years at secondary school. Some said that, as they moved to more senior classes, opportunities for such work decreased. Their perception seemed to be that in the higher grades work focused more on examinations and on learning the specific information that they would need in order to pass their papers.

Choice of topics:

I think it (topics) is the teachers have given to me. We only write the introduction and the conclusion in our own word and the content is to a large extent is fixed. (Ken/ Hist)

Many come from the past papers. (John/ Rel)

Sometime the teacher give three we can choose one (Alice/ Soc)

Chinese Literature and History we have a little bit choice but all the choice is from the past paper. (Wendy/ Chinese)

When asked if they had ever been able to choose their topics for essays or assignments, most students stated that they had had little or no choice; that topics were usually given to them and that, on occasions, they might choose from up to three options. One student suggested (and her classmates agreed) that the topics from which they could choose were themselves “set” in that teachers would usually draw them from a list of topics used in past examination papers.

From the wider discussion, however, it was evident that most students, at some time or another, had the chance of choosing a topic for study and they viewed

such opportunities positively. By whatever means they were gained, it would appear that topics were usually closely linked to the subject matter of courses and were presented in such a way that students had no need to amend, narrow or individualise them.

Sources of information:

For the China History my teacher will tell us to find the materials in the library and we do it ourselves and he will only give some things for us and for the History and Geography the teacher will teach the content of the topics. When he or she finished we have to write the essay about that topics and no need to find materials. (Ken/ Hist)

Oh, yes, more alternative (sources of information) is the best essay from our classmates. (Candy/ Chinese)

Apart from English, all of the information are given well us. In English in secondary school we have to find our own material like I said about the projects but other subjects such as history, geography or something all those things the materials are given by the teachers ... Sometimes she writes on the board his own notes and sometimes or in books the text books. (Rick/ Hist)

I think that most of the resources in your essays is mainly find in the textbooks or the notes prepared by the teacher and we seldom go to the library and find material and although we in Chinese History it is only a few students will look up the resources in the books in the library I seldom go to the library because all the details are given by our teachers. (Dave/ Soc)

I think is common-sense. Some subjects use the notes from the teacher. And even you can say in past paper, marking scheme. (Ross/ Chinese)

In my school... the teacher have some reference books or when I decide which topic she will talk to me about how to guide us to information maybe just in school library or in the Regional Council library. (Alice/ Rel)

Most of the time we have to find information by myself. There is no reference from the teachers and we have to settle the topics or maybe sometimes the teachers will set up the topics for us and we have to find it in our library or the public library. (Jo/ Hist)

Some students who is smart will find some information from the, how can, the government leaflet, and then we copy all the things. (Wendy/ Chinese - referring to the subject guide books published by the Examination Department)

The most common response of students to questions about where they had acquired by the information used in their essays and assignments was that it had been provided by their teachers or was drawn from course text books. In most cases it

seemed, this information was sufficient for their purposes. A number of students went on to say that they seldom used the library for information, though they might at times have used reference books, newspapers or the marking scheme associated with a particular course.

However, most said that at some stage they had needed to find their own information for topics. A few reported that they commonly had to do this, but that it seemed to be the exception rather than the rule. Those students who had found their own information had commonly used public libraries, rather than their school libraries, and appeared to have made only limited use of material there.

4.3.3 Previous research experience

Students were asked whether or not they had ever been asked to undertake research work at school or to complete a research paper – either in English or Chinese. There was no discussion of what constituted research; students having already completed the first of their EAP Research Projects, appeared to use that task as a guide in assessing earlier work.

Actually, even in secondary school, when I was in secondary 1, 2, or 3, we had a chance to do some proposals, but we have a team work. We need not to do by your own. And also we just have to copy a book, all the information from book and attach some pictures, some photos, and then we finished our work. (Wendy/ Chinese) (This student indicated that she didn't see this as research)

I think it is the, a common phenomena in our, in Hong Kong secondary school because I remember when I was in secondary 1 or 2, I did the same thing as Wendy - to research a very very boring, not interesting topic maybe it just about the common species of trees or flowers in Hong Kong, and I just walk around my garden near my estate, and I cut the leave, put it on, and write something that it is and then close it. That's it. (Candy/ Chinese)

I have never attempt any research paper at my secondary school in English. And I found this, it is actually a very very new thing to me when I attempt this at university. (Candy/ Chinese)

(After a pause, some uncertainty) I think it is not research the assignment we have to hand in to our teachers. (Jo/ Hist)

When I was studying in Form 2, my history teacher let us to do a project which have an interview with any kinds of people who have different religions and once and do some research about these kinds of religion. (John/ Rel)

While some students said very definitely that they had never carried out research at school, others seemed unclear as to what part of their school work might constitute research. They described projects they had completed, comparing them, as they did so, with their work on the EAP Projects. The majority of students interviewed indicated that the research work required of them under the Training Programme was different from any that had been set to them before – both in the nature and number of the resources required and in way in which they had to select and shape and investigate their topics. As mentioned previously, some had chosen topics for their work at school, most had at times found their own information, and all had completed essays at secondary school. None, however, appeared to have carried out work as individualistic or as comprehensive as that required of them in the Research Projects. Most had no experience of finding or using materials other than books in a library. Most students had not been required to use a variety of sources in preparing their work, and few had been required to amalgamate information from differing sources and present it in an original way. Several students pointed to the ways in which the expectations of their school teachers differed from those of university lecturers, pointing out that it was no longer possible or acceptable simply to copy information from books.

4.3.4 Oral presentations

In addition to discussing the nature of their written assignments and projects, some time was spent in discussing students' experiences in giving oral presentations. Students were asked whether or not they had given oral presentations before coming to university and to explain the circumstances of those presentations – that is, the format they had followed and the training they had been given.

Format

We practice the oral presentations just for aim of doing well in the A level exam. We just discuss something or gave you an article and then read article in several minute and then gave your opinion and then present before the teacher. (Dave/ Soc)

About four people in the group to have a topic to discuss about twelve minutes The topics is assigned to you and each one have a different topic and we have to prepare for about 5 – 10 minutes and then you have your own oral presentation after a short time. (Janc/Rel)

It is a part of the examination, English oral presentation. Our teachers will give us a short passage and we need to summarise this and present in a group of 4-5 students and then, the other part is also. Teachers will give discussion topics and we need to discuss for about twelve minutes. In Chinese subjects that is similar we have a discussion but the other parts is just given topics and present our own opinions. (Ken/ Hist)

(The) individual presentation was for 1-2 minutes discussion was for 12 minutes. We have to think about it right away. We only have five minutes of preparation at school. (Rick/ Geo)

Training

Whereas some students had been hesitant in answering questions about their previous research experience (it seemed because they were not entirely sure what tasks were indeed research task), all responded quickly to queries about oral presentations saying that they had been required to give them on many occasions in class and in examinations, both in English and in Chinese. However, in further discussion, it was apparent that these oral presentations, made at school were quite unlike those given for their project work in EAP. Whereas their EAP presentations were 15 to 20

minutes long, based on a body of information that they had researched, prepared in writing and supported by facts and visual aids, the oral presentations given at school were more spontaneous and appeared to focus on language use and speaking skills. By all accounts, the school presentations were short (1-2 minutes long), and prepared at short notice on the basis of a passage given to students by their teachers, and requiring no visual aids or assessment of information.

As with the essays and assignments set at school, students saw the oral presentations given at secondary school as being a necessary preparation and practice for the oral presentations requirement of English and Chinese language examinations.

The teacher act as a model for us he present before us and tell us what we should be aware of and then we learn for it ... (we learned) ...I learned how to avoid feeling nervous and practical techniques. The most important thing is learning how to control time. (Ron/ Geo)

The examination authority have publish a booklet and every candidate have on copy so the teacher will teach us use the information from the booklet... for example gestures... and for girls we have to speak louder otherwise the examiner cannot hear us. (Vic/ Chinese)

I think the most important thing in the discussion is learn how to express your own ideas and to hold an attention. (Alice/ Rel)

The teachers always teach us to use the simple sentences such as the opening presentation we need to say, "The passage I read is about...". Is boring because everyone used the sentences is the same. Because it is for the examination so it is the fixed form. (Rick/ Hist)

Comparing now and the past it is quite different because the time is different the material is different the preparation time also different I can't compare. (Jo/ Hist)

4.3.5 Use of libraries

A considerable part of each interview was devoted to discussion of students' use of libraries (school and public) prior to entering university. Students talked about their reasons for using libraries, the types of information they had commonly sought and how they had usually selected their materials. They also explained which of the resources included in the EAP course and held at HKBU had been available or familiar to them at secondary level.

School libraries

The library is not big and not many books. (Vic/ Chinese)

Actually it is not a library. It is a study room, a self-study room, because library is about 400 metres square and half of the places (or more than half of the places) is the self-study rooms, and the small places is the books. And the books is what kind of books is, it is a some of the magazines, but the magazines is written in Chinese, no English. Some magazines, lots of the books is Chinese book, but is not related to our school work, only for you to read and you are leisure. (Wendy/ Chinese)

The library at school was not that much of academic use its just for interest reading. We always go to the library to find novels or the cartoons seldom to find the academic information. Maybe the Chinese history is sometimes I go to check but another subject never. (Ken/ Hist)

In the past, we just see library is a place for you to relax.(Ross/ Chinese)

Methods of searching for material

Because the topics is chosen by myself so I others know how or where to find. Its the topic we are interest in so we know that how to find. (Ron/ Geog)

Look at the catalogue and find where the book is and just go there. (Jo/ Hist)

I just enter the library and then I know how to look because I knowhow to look the science fiction books because I know where have the science fiction. I go there. This one I haven't read so I take it. (Rick/ Geog)

Actually, I don't know how to use the Public Library and I found this the most simple way to do it is to search every shelf and if you lucky enough you may find. (Candy/ Chinese)

At that time we don't know how to find the thing in systematic way. We just search around the library. (Jane/ Rel)

Most of the time we need to go to the public library because our school haven't enough resources to do projects. They (teachers) might give us some hints or some ideas to help us for example, you can narrow down the topic and go to somewhere to find the resources. (Elle/ Soc)

Most students described their school libraries as being very small and of little use to them either for recreation or for study. On the occasions when they had needed to use a library for school work, most, it seemed, preferred to use the public library. However, the most common reason given for using the public libraries was for recreation – the borrowing newspapers or magazines. Only one of the students mentioned using any other form of material, that being an encyclopaedia which he said he had used “for fun” to follow up a hobby.

While some students were obviously aware of and experienced in using the index and catalogue systems in public libraries, a considerable number were unfamiliar with both and had never used a computerised system such as OPAC before coming to university. When asked how, in that case, they managed to find the books they needed, students responded by describing a variety of ways. These included asking friends or older students, searching shelves, going directly to a familiar section, using the labels on the shelves, looking through the content pages of books, and/or generally “looking around”. Few students, it appeared, had ever needed to search systematically or comprehensively for specific information.

4.3.6 Place of opinion

In the context of discussing the sources of their information for essays, projects and assignments, students were asked to say briefly whether or not it had been acceptable for them to express their own opinions in that work.

The teacher tell us how to write an essay - the introduction, the body and then conclusion - but it is not many opinion, because the marker may not agree with

our opinion. So in our essay, we can write many opinion in our paper and but we may follow the marking scheme. Maybe this point is, we must put it in our essay, but an other point, we cannot put because many student may write this wrong thing. We must remember this and do not put in our essay. Then we can get higher mark in our examination. (Vic/ Chinese)

If you can , you want to get a higher grade or higher mark, you must follow the marking scheme. Also you can express some of your own opinions but it is very dangerous. The marker may not been agree with you, with what you say. So the most good way is to follow the marking scheme. (Ross/ Chinese)

One topic is very, a little bit interesting is Chinese Language and Culture...because this topic is talk about some issue of Chinese culture. You can use your own language or your own opinions to write the essay. I think it is the only one paper that are interest. (Wendy/ Chinese)

(They) write some their own opinions, not in the same word or same idea from the books, and so, when the marker find this, it is different from the marking scheme, or the book, the marker only put a U shape, or U grade or F grade to the paper, and, oh, then it is fail. (Candy/ Chinese)

Yes, but not always right own ideas but we have to find opinions from the famous economists but we cannot understand them all so sometimes we express our ideas and we may be wrong, but we have to write our own idea. (Jo/ Hist)

Several students said that they had been asked to present their own views in essays, providing that they could support them with theory or the ideas of influential people. Others felt that there was little place for stating their own opinion in their writing, suggesting that to do so would have been to jeopardise their final marks. Some expressed their strong belief that it was better to keep to the marking scheme, that is to the information provided, rather than risk errors or disagreement with the marker.

4.3.7 Transition: perceptions of differences between secondary and tertiary study

At the outset of each interview, as a means of helping students turn their focus away from their current studies to their past school work and helping them settle into discussion, students were asked to comment on the ways in which they had observed school study to be different from university study. Although this was not specifically

raised again as a topic throughout the interviews by the interviewer, students often returned to the issue of differences when they attempted to explain their school work, or when they digressed to discuss some aspect of their EAP projects.

I think university is more freedom than school. And in school, the teacher may plan many things for us but in university, we must plan many things by ourselves. (Vic/ Chinese)

(At school) We don't have to find the reference books because the details the reference books are provided by the teacher so we always find it comfortable to do with the assignments but at this university we have to find the details from the reference books by ourselves and then we have to finish it in a short time. (Dave/ Soc)

In secondary school I just go to school half past eight in the morning and then I home at about 3 o'clock in afternoon but in university maybe I have a lesson in the morning and then waiting for several hours just for another lesson. I think it is very difficult for me to adapt to it. (Alice/ Rel)

Also we have more freedom we can skip the class if we want to and we can delay the assignment for example we have to hand it in Wednesday but we can hand it in Friday but in secondary the teacher does not permit it. (Jo/ Hist)

So I think in the secondary, all the work is focus on our examination, but in the university, our work is to try to , (hmm, how to say) try to make us interesting, interest in English, and try to practice more. (Elle/ Chinese)

And anyway, I found it is interesting and more freedom on this because a choice is because of my interests, not for focus, not focus on the examination or marks. (Candy / Chinese – speaking about her Project work in EAP)

One thing is good about secondary school is my teacher had me to go and find the material for projects and this is similar to the university but now the university the main difference is you have to find lots and lots of materials for in essay which is only about 6-700 words. So it has to be accurate has to be not only your idea. You can't make things up because the teachers have to check the books they can check the references to check whether the texts are true or not. Also no more copying no more plagiarism. (Ron /Geo)

The planned part of this discussion of this area was brief, limited to individual perceptions and allowing little time for conversation that would have helped identify common areas of experience. However, it was clear that the topic figured highly for most students and that they saw the move from secondary school to university as a major one – in some ways pleasant, in others, very difficult.

Several students indicated that, even well into the semester, they were still experiencing difficulties in settling into the routine of university life. It was pointed out that the hours of study were longer and less regular than they had been at school, instructors in their various subjects set assignments independently of one another, often resulting in variations in work load throughout the semester (something that they had not had to face at school). Some students were finding it extremely difficult to meet the demands for original work, based on a variety of sources, but which was not copied. Others explained that whilst at school they had been able to concentrate their efforts on the actual writing of assignments and essays, at university, the search for information was a major and time-consuming part of their work.

Despite the discomforts of adapting to new demands, students seemed generally positive about their studies and were apparently enjoying the freedoms that university life afforded. Several students commented on the way in which they now had to plan for themselves rather than rely on the teacher's guidance. Many talked enthusiastically about the choices that they now had and explained how the availability of options had led to study which seemed more interesting and more relevant to them as individuals.

4.4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results obtained from both the survey of the broader first-year student population and from the interviews were as hypothesised, in line with the findings of other research studies (Biggs, 1996; Falvey, 1998; Yee, 1995) and with the researcher's previous observations of first-year EAP students at HKBU (Bankowski and Cotton, 1997).

4.4.1 Research experience

Results indicate that, at the outset of university study, only a minority of students have ever conducted research in English or received training in how to carry out research. Only 30% of the students surveyed had prepared a research project in English and only 36% had prepared a project since the commencement of university.

The range of resources to which students had been exposed appeared to be extremely limited. Only half of the students surveyed had ever been required to use more than one source of information for a project and less than half had ever been required to locate their own resources for an assignment. The most commonly used sources were books and handouts supplied by teachers, while resources such as television, video, Internet, CD-ROMs, journals and encyclopedias were rarely used. Eighty percent of students indicated that they had seldom or never used journals, CD-ROMs or the Internet in preparing assignments, and an even greater number (92.9%) stated that they seldom or never used encyclopedias in school projects or assignments.

Similarly, students interviewed also indicated that they had had little or no research experience in either English or Chinese. What experience they did have seemed to be elementary, based on very simple information presented in an uncritical way. None of the students had been asked to present findings orally, the oral

presentations they gave at school having been prepared at short notice on the basis of material given to them by teachers. Of those interviewed, all students indicated that they had prepared projects and essays in English and that they had, at times, been required to find simple, readily available forms of information for assignments. However it would seem that they more commonly used information given to them by their teachers and that, in any case, they seldom used material other than books. Most students said that they had not used CD-ROMS, journals, encyclopedias, or Internet resources for assignments prior to university study.

Interestingly, many of the students interviewed indicated that, rather than being required to carry out more projects as they progressed through secondary school, the opportunities for such work decreased, in favour of examination-based study.

4.4.2 Library use

Although at the start of the academic year the majority of students surveyed claimed that they knew how to access information through OPAC using key word and subject catalogues, most indicated that they had had no practical training in and lacked confidence in using library resources. Perhaps as a result of this, very limited use was being made of the wide range of materials available within the library. Students indicated that the resources they most commonly used at HKBU library were general books, reference books, and newspapers. In line with the pattern of resource use at secondary school, they used magazines, videos, tapes, professional journals and encyclopedias far less frequently.

From discussion too, it seemed that students had only limited knowledge and experience of library resources at the outset of their university study. Most

indicated that they had seldom used their school libraries for anything other than leisure reading and expressed their beliefs that the books in the public libraries were more useful for school work. That said, however, students seemed only to use public libraries occasionally and appeared to have only 'sketchy' ideas of how they might find or use the materials located there. The methods of searching some described showed that they had little idea of how to search for material in a focused, thorough and systematic way.

4.4.3 Autonomy *versus* teacher guidance at secondary school

Results suggest that, in most cases, students' secondary schooling provided little opportunity for students to develop those skills necessary for independent inquiry or research. Only 37% of students surveyed had ever been assigned a project where they were required to find their own information without the guidance of a teacher; and only 24% indicated that they had generally been given the freedom to choose their own project topics, the others having usually been assigned specific topics or asked to choose from a list of options.

Those students interviewed also said that they were usually allocated assignment topics by their teachers, sometimes being given a choice from up to three topics. None of these students recalled having been given a free choice of topic. Most indicated that, when they did have a choice of topic, the information sought by their teacher was still somewhat pre-determined by the course structure. While some students indicated that they had been expected to present their own ideas and opinions in their school, the majority appeared to think that this would have been unwise – that the only acceptable views and information for assignments were those in line with the official course materials.

4.4.4 Confidence and learning preferences

Not surprisingly, the survey showed that students felt more confident searching for information suggested by teachers than they did in finding information without assistance or guidelines. Over half of the students surveyed said that they would seldom or never feel confident carrying out such searches alone. Far more students felt confident in completing essays in Chinese than in English: in interviews, many students expressed doubts about their general ability to carry out work in English.

Responses to survey questions about learning preferences suggest that first year students feel more comfortable in learning situations in which teachers present information and outline major points, as opposed to those in which they are encouraged to find their own information and arrive at their own conclusions. Few indicated a need or desire to use more than the set course materials, or to look at the suggested reading that might accompany courses. A considerable number of students indicated that they found it difficult to produce new ideas, and confusing to have too much information about a subject.

Encouragingly, however, whilst appearing to rely on teachers' guidance and on materials supplied to them, students also expressed an openness to other approaches to learning and a willingness to consider a variety of sources in their study. The majority of students indicated that, although they might for the most part prefer to use those learning methods that had worked for them in the past, they do, under some circumstances, enjoy trying new ways of studying and learning, and acknowledge that sometimes they have learned best when given the encouragement to work independently and to reach their own conclusions.

In interviews, students expressed enthusiasm for the greater degree of freedom they experienced in university study and for the novel approach of the EAP research work. However, as in the survey, students' responses showed that they also felt discomfort and frustration when faced with the need to carry out independent and unfamiliar work at university. Many reported how difficult it was to plan time, and to manage their work-load. Others said how hard it was to find materials, without guidance, on subjects about which they knew little; and how difficult it was to use those materials in an original way that did not lead to accusations of copying or plagiarism.

4.5 CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, it would appear from our investigations that the majority of students enter university unprepared for the challenges of independent, research related work at university level.

Most of their school work would seem to have been carried out under the close guidance of teachers, who would focus on helping students acquire the information and skills necessary to pass their examinations. Students appear to rely heavily on information provided for them by their teachers and there would seem to have been little incentive or opportunity for them to reach beyond this to using wider resources in more individual and independent study. Students are therefore generally unpractised at finding academic resource material and lack the confidence to carry out such searches alone. They have had little or no opportunity freely to select and investigate topics within their school subjects or to collate, compare or analyse information from different sources. These findings confirm the views of Hamp-Lyons (1998a) and Littlewood and Ngar-Fu (1999) on the importance of the preparation for examinations in the Hong Kong education system. They are also in line with the observations made by other Hong Kong-based researchers (Teather, 1998; Yee, 1992, 1995; Evans, 1997), as discussed in the literature review section.

Perhaps as a consequence of their not needing to find or use a variety of materials for school assignments, students appear to have made only limited use of libraries and are unfamiliar with many of the resources that could be used in carrying out research. Though most students claim to be able to locate material through the OPAC system, it would seem that they generally lack confidence in using library resources and have seldom carried out more than simple searches for books. Their

descriptions of searching methods and their outlines of materials used, suggest that, when they arrive at university, most students do not know how to carry out systematic searches for information, have never used CD-ROMs or the Internet, and have never used resources such as journals, indexes, or encyclopaedias in their study.

The investigative approach to learning often employed in university study then, represents a real departure from the style of learning employed by most students at secondary school. Similar comments have been made by various researchers (Teather, 1998; Farmer, 1994; Henderson, not dated), as discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. Not only are students at university faced with the need to find their own information for projects, but they also often need to formulate their own approach, to compare, contrast and analyse sources and to present their findings in an original way. At the same time, they must learn how to use new forms of resources and must carry out searches and present their work in English – their second language and one in which many lack confidence and ability.

The Hong Kong Education Commission (1999) has recently recognised the need to carry out more research in this area to help bridge the gap between students' experience of secondary school education and the requirements and expectations placed upon the university students.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 Evaluation of the training programme

5.1 INTRODUCTION

5.2 STUDENT EVALUATION OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMME: QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS

5.2.1 Introduction

5.2.2 Sample

5.2.3 Scales

5.3 RESEARCH PROJECT PACKAGE

5.3.1 Interest level

5.3.2 Level of difficulty

5.3.3 Usefulness in completing project work

5.4 LIBRARY SKILLS TRAINING

5.4.1 Level of understanding

5.4.2 Contribution of project work in the development of library skills

5.4.3 Usefulness of library skills in academic studies

5.5 CLASSROOM TRAINING IN SKILLS AND STRATEGIES

5.5.1 Level of understanding

5.5.2 Contribution of project work in the development of skills and strategies

5.5.3 Usefulness in academic studies

5.6 OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

5.7 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS: QUESTIONNAIRE

5.8 OBSERVATIONS OF ORAL PRESENTATIONS

5.8.1 Introduction

5.8.2 Results

5.8.3 Organisation - introductions, content and conclusions

5.8.4 Organisation of content and progression of ideas

5.8.5 Presentation and delivery

5.8.6 Use of visual aids

5.8.7 Discussion

5.9 CASE DESCRIPTIONS

5.9.1 Sam

5.9.2 Jill

5.9.3 Barb

5.9.4 Jan

5.9.5 Kathy

5.9.6 Mark

5.9.7 Ada

5.9.8 Ivy

5.9.9 Cher

5.9.10 Vicky

5.9.11 Micky

5.9.12 Mary

5.10 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS: ORAL PRESENTATIONS

5.11 ESSAY EVALUATIONS

5.11.1 Introduction

5.11.2 Essay requirements and topic choice -- differences between first and final essays

5.11.3 Results

5.11.4 Structure and overall content

5.11.5 Organisation and content of body

5.11.6 Organisation of and content of introductions and conclusions

5.11.7 Quoting, citing and referencing

5.11.8 Referencing – use of resources

5.11.9 Conclusions – essay evaluations

5.12 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS: RESEARCH TRAINING PROGRAMME

5.12.1 Research Project Packages

5.12.2 Library skills

5.12.3 Skills and strategies - classroom training

5.12.4 Conclusions

CHAPTER FIVE

Evaluation of the training programme

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Each of the sections of the study detailed in this chapter was devoted to evaluating the Research Training Programme and the effects on students' acquisition of skills.

This chapter contains three major sections:

- questionnaire analysis -- evaluation of the Research Training Programme;
- observations of oral presentations;
- essay evaluations.

The first, the student evaluation questionnaire, was developed to determine students' perceptions of the value of the Programme. Out of 86 students of Arts and Social Sciences who participated in the Research Training Programme, 69 students received the copy of the questionnaire. This was administered upon the completion of the training at the end of the second semester during their last EAP class in May 1998. As this was their last class in the academic year, absenteeism was high and as many as 17 students were away and could not be reached. Students were asked to give their opinions on the three major components of the Programme – the research project packages, the library training sessions and the classroom instruction in research-related skills and strategies. Details of the development and the format of the questionnaire are explained in the Methodology section – Chapter 3.

The oral presentation and essay evaluation sections were intended to provide a measure of the actual learning that resulted from participation in the Programme – that, as reflected in the students' course work. In the essay evaluation, both of the essays submitted by 49 students were assessed to determine which of the skills taught

to students had been used in their research work, and with what degree of success. Similarly, the oral presentations delivered by 14 students were observed and assessed in terms of the skills utilised. Comparisons were then made, for each student, of the patterns of skill use demonstrated in the first and second semesters' work. Full details of the procedures followed are included in Chapter 3.

The oral presentation evaluations and essay evaluations are closely linked since, in any one semester, the oral presentations and essays submitted by students followed the same narrowed topics and thesis statements and addressed the same research questions. It was anticipated that any learning that had taken place as a result of the Research Training Programme would be evident in both the oral and written work produced by students over the two semesters. It was also expected that students would show a greater ability in using the skills taught as the year progressed, as they received further instruction and had more opportunity to practise what they had been taught.

5.2 STUDENT EVALUATION OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMME: QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS

5.2.1 Introduction

In the first section of the evaluation form, the basic components of the Research Project Package (for example, vocabulary and comprehension worksheets and audio-visual tapes) were assessed. Students were asked how interesting they found each component to be, what level of difficulty each of the components presented, and how useful they thought each to be in completing research project assignments. In addition, they were asked to report their recollection of the amount of time that they had taken to complete each one of the Research Package components.

In the second section of the questionnaire, students were asked to evaluate the library skills training sessions. For each of the skills that were taught in the programme, students were asked to rate how well they had come to understand the skill, to report the degree to which they felt the project work helped them to develop the skill, and to assess the usefulness of the skill in their academic studies.

The third section required students to evaluate the various aspects of classroom training. Again, they were asked about their understanding of each of the skills that was taught; to say to what extent they believed the project work had helped them develop those skills; and how useful they perceived the skills to be in their academic studies. In the final section, students were asked to elaborate on the usefulness of the programme by stating which part of the project work they felt was the most useful and why. They also answered questions about factors which, it was anticipated, might be related to their performance in the research programme – their major, their EAP course grade from the previous semester, their cumulative GPA, the language that they used most often for their written assignments, their choice of

package, as well as their pre-existing knowledge about the subject matter. In addition, students were encouraged to express any problems that they had encountered while carrying out their projects.

5.2.2 Sample

Out of the total of 69 students who returned the questionnaires, 21.7% (15) students were majoring in Chinese Language and Literature, 15.9% (11) in History, 17.4% (12) in Geography, 26.1% (18) were from the Sociology Department and 18.8% (13) from Religious Studies. Thirty-five students (50.7%) use predominantly English for their assignments while the others (34) write mainly in Chinese. Students' grades and GPA distribution are presented in the two tables that follow.

Table 11. Grade in the EAP

Grade in the EAP course last semester	Frequency	Percentage
A, A- or B+	16	23.2
B, B- or C+	38	55.1
C, C- or D	15	21.7

Table 12. Latest cumulative GPA

Latest cumulative GPA	Frequency	Percentage
3.50-4.00		
3.00-3.49	12	17.4
2.50-2.99	34	49.3
2.00-2.49	17	24.6
below 2.00	6	8.7

5.2.3 Scales

The scales that the students used to answer the questions are contained in Table 13 below. The tables that follow in sections 5.3 to 5.5. summarise the results for each

question on the evaluation, including both the average score along a five-point scale and the corresponding standard deviation.

Table 13. Explanation of the level of interest, difficulty, and usefulness scales

Level of interest	Level of difficulty	Usefulness in completing Research Project assignments	Score
<i>Very interesting</i>	<i>Very difficult</i>	<i>Very useful</i>	5
<i>Interesting</i>	<i>Difficult</i>	<i>Useful</i>	4
<i>Moderately interesting</i>	<i>Moderately difficult</i>	<i>Moderately useful</i>	3
<i>Not very interesting</i>	<i>Quite easy</i>	<i>Not very useful</i>	2
<i>Not at all interesting</i>	<i>Very easy</i>	<i>Not at all useful</i>	1

5.3 RESEARCH PROJECT PACKAGE

Students were asked to evaluate the Research Project Package on three levels:

- interest level;
- level of difficulty;
- usefulness of each component in completing the project.

5.3.1 Interest level

One of the goals of the programme was to provide materials which the students would find interesting and therefore motivating. In the hope that all students would find something to capture their interest, they were given a wide selection of Project Packages to choose from, all of which were related to one of several relevant majors. Although the Packages were different in content, each comprised the same components. While students regarded the various sections with slightly differing levels of interest, overall their response to the packages was very positive, conveying a significant degree of interest and enthusiasm. The students considered the audio-visual tapes to be particularly interesting, having awarded a mean score of 3.14. They found the audio-visual comprehension questions and the vocabulary

worksheets to be slightly less interesting than the other components, as the average respective scores of 2.52 and 2.55 demonstrate. The average of the interest scores over all of the components was 2.81.

Table 14. Evaluation of the Research Project Package: level of interest

COMPONENT	MEAN	STD. DEV.
Background information	2.91	.89
Vocabulary worksheets	2.55	.88
Related reading	2.99	.88
Reading comprehension questions	2.71	.77
Audio-visual tapes	3.14	.99
Audio-visual comprehension questions	2.52	.90
How to choose a topic - guidelines	2.93	.90
Research topic proposal form	2.64	.91
Suggested areas for research	2.93	.90
Research question and statement of purpose	2.75	.81
Research topic outline	2.81	.94
Average level of interest	2.81	.52

5.3.2 Level of difficulty

The Programme was intended to introduce students to and empower them to carry out the process of research. To this end, the activities were designed to challenge students but not to overwhelm or confuse or evoke feelings of anxiety. The different elements of the package were expected to present different levels of difficulty, so responses to each were obtained. The audio-visual tapes were held to be one of the most difficult aspects of the package, as reflected in their average score of 3.75. The audio-visual comprehension questions were considered to be equally difficult, as the average score of 3.77 shows. The vocabulary worksheets were reportedly the easiest activity, with a difficulty score of 2.64. The combined mean for the degree of difficulty was 3.02.

All these results are summarised in Table 15.

Table 15. The Research Project Packages: level of difficulty

COMPONENT	MEAN	STD. DEV.
Background information	2.70	.73
Vocabulary worksheets	2.64	.95
Related reading	2.86	.79
Reading comprehension questions	2.83	.82
Audio-visual tapes	3.75	.88
Audio-visual comprehension questions	3.77	.88
How to choose a topic - guidelines	2.96	.78
Research topic proposal form	2.84	.78
Suggested areas for research	2.80	.83
Research question and statement of purpose	3.01	.78
Research topic outline	2.84	.78
Average level of difficulty	3.02	.50

5.3.3 Usefulness in completing project work

The Package was carefully constructed to include activities that were fundamental to the process of research, in order to guide the students, step by step, through a small-scale research project. The students were asked in the evaluation questionnaire how useful they felt each activity to be in completing their projects (Table 16). Positive feedback was given for all aspects of the project. Students identified preparation of an outline as one of the most useful tasks in the package (mean of 3.62), while the reading comprehension questions and vocabulary worksheets were considered to be slightly less useful than the other components, with scores of 2.68 and 2.71 respectively. On the whole, the students felt the activities were useful for the completion of the assigned project, as reflected in the overall mean of 3.09.

Table 16. The Research Project Packages: usefulness in completing project work

COMPONENT	MEAN	STD. DEV.
Background information	2.94	.95
Vocabulary worksheets	2.71	1.02
Related reading	3.00	.91
Reading comprehension questions	2.68	.81
Audio-visual tapes	3.13	.87
Audio-visual comprehension questions	2.87	.89
How to choose a topic - guidelines	3.20	.85
Research topic proposal form	3.30	.69
Suggested areas for research	3.33	.92
Research question and statement of purpose	3.16	.82
Research topic outline	3.62	.89
Average level of usefulness	3.09	.48

5.4 LIBRARY SKILLS TRAINING

Students were asked to evaluate the components of the library training on three levels:

- level of understanding of the skill;
- contribution of project work to the development of the skill;
- usefulness of training to the academic needs.

The scales that students used to answer the questions are given in Table 17 below.

Table 17. Explanation of scales for understanding, contribution to skill development, and usefulness in academic study

I understand the subject thoroughly	The work related to this Project has helped me develop this skill	How useful/relevant is this skill in your academic studies?	Score
<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Very useful</i>	5
<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Useful</i>	4
<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Moderately useful</i>	3
<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Not very useful</i>	2
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Not at all useful</i>	1

5.4.1 Level of understanding

The average levels of understanding of library skills that the students claimed to attain rank very highly, with a score of 3.51 on the five-point scale that was provided (Table 18). The best understood library skills were generally the most basic ones – the use of key words in OPAC (mean of 3.96) and the locating of books on library shelves (mean of 3.94). These were the skills that in the initial survey many students indicated they could use. Locating information through the Internet and using OPAC to locate relevant information ranked closely behind, with scores of 3.87 and 3.84 respectively. The least understood library skills were the use of CD-ROMS and of encyclopaedias, as respective scores of 2.84 and 3.10 demonstrate. These findings are in line with the patterns of prior experience shown in the initial survey and also follow the pattern of resource use shown in assessment of students' essays and oral presentations.

Table 18. Library skills training: level of understanding

LIBRARY SKILL	MEAN	STD. DEV.
Using key words in OPAC	3.96	.78
Using OPAC to locate relevant information	3.84	.78
Locating books on shelves	3.94	.91
Using encyclopaedias	3.10	.86
Using indexes to gain ideas for a topic	3.48	.78
Finding articles in periodicals through indexes	3.48	.78
Checking availability of periodicals in HKBU library collection	3.39	.96
Locating periodicals on shelves	3.36	1.0
Finding information through the Internet	3.87	.95
Using sources that you have already found to look for other possible sources	3.38	.81
Using CD ROMS	2.84	1.18
Average level of understanding	3.51	.50

5.4.2 Contribution of project work in the development of library skills

By all accounts, the libraries to which students have access at the secondary school level are small and rather unsophisticated. Consequently, those students who were not required to use public libraries arrived at university with very limited development of library skills. The Hong Kong Baptist University runs only a very brief, training programme which lacks hands-on guidance and, thus, as evidenced by the results of the first questionnaire discussed in Chapter 4, students continue to struggle when they need to use resources for project work.

The Research Training Programme attempts to fill this void with a component which trains the students in library skills so that they are able to undertake meaningful, comprehensive, and reliable research.

The next section of the evaluation asked students to indicate how much the Research Programme contributed to the development of their library skill: the findings are summarised in Table 19. According to the students, the project work helped them in learning to find information on the Internet (mean 3.91), but they also felt the programme was very helpful in their development of skills with OPAC and in locating books on library shelves (mean 3.62). The project work helped, to a lesser degree, to develop skill in the use of CD-ROMs and of encyclopaedias, as respective scores of 2.74 and 3.19 make apparent. Interestingly, the type of source (Internet) that students identified the programme as having helped them most to use in their work was also the one that showed the greatest increase in use over the two semesters. This is shown in the analysis of essays that follow in this chapter. Similarly, the sources that the students felt the course helped them least to use (CD-

ROM and encyclopaedias) were also the ones least used in students' research work and for which the level of usage changed little over the semesters.

Table 19. Library skills training: contribution of project work in the development of library skills

LIBRARY SKILL	MEAN	STD.DEV.
Using key words in OPAC	3.58	.98
Using OPAC to locate relevant information	3.61	.93
Locating books on shelves	3.62	.94
Using encyclopaedias	3.19	.84
Using indexes to gain ideas for a topic	3.35	.92
Finding articles in periodicals through indexes	3.43	.95
Checking availability of periodicals in HKBU library collection	3.29	.96
Locating periodicals on shelves	3.35	.98
Finding information through the Internet	3.91	1.00
Using sources that you have already found to look for other possible sources	3.23	.89
Using CD ROMS	2.74	1.21
Average	3.39	.59

5.4.3 Usefulness of library skills in academic studies

The foremost goal of this Programme is to ensure that students are equipped with the skills required for research at university level, including library skills. The responses to the next series of questions in the evaluation illustrate how valuable the students perceived the library skills taught in this Programme to be in their academic studies in general. The overall score of 3.81 clearly suggests that students believed the skills to be useful in their academic studies. As in both of the previous sections, questions about the skills in the use of OPAC, about finding books on library shelves, and about Internet use produced the highest scores, while questions about skills in the use of encyclopaedias and CD-ROMs generated lower scores (see Table 20). Apparently, the library skills that were most readily understood were perceived as the most useful of the skills, while those that were least understood were viewed as the least useful. Those skills judged least useful also proved to be least used. These

become more apparent in the evaluations of students' essays and oral presentations discussed in sections 5.8 to 5.10 below.

Table 20. Library skills training: usefulness of skills in academic studies

LIBRARY_SKILL	MEA N	STD.DEV.
Using key words in OPAC	4.20	.85
Using OPAC to locate relevant information	4.16	.80
Locating books on shelves	4.16	.70
Using encyclopaedias	3.45	.95
Using indexes to gain ideas for a topic	3.52	.92
Finding articles in periodicals through indexes	3.77	1.00
Checking availability of periodicals in HKBU library collection	3.64	1.03
Locating periodicals on shelves	3.67	.98
Finding information through the Internet	4.35	.84
Using sources that you have already found to look for other possible sources	3.65	.95
Using CD-ROMs	3.36	1.14
Average level of usefulness	3.81	.58

5.5 CLASSROOM TRAINING IN SKILLS AND STRATEGIES

Students were asked to evaluate classroom training in skills and strategies on three levels:

- level of understanding of the skill;
- contribution of the project work to the development of the skill;
- usefulness of training to academic needs.

The scales that the students used to answer the questions are outlined in Table 21 below.

Table 21. Explanation of scales for understanding, contribution to skill development, and usefulness in academic study

I understand the subject thoroughly	The work related to this Project has helped me develop this skill.	How useful/relevant is this skill in your academic studies?	Score
<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Very useful</i>	5
<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Useful</i>	4
<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Moderately useful</i>	3
<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Not very useful</i>	2
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Not at all useful</i>	1

5.5.1 Level of understanding

Of the classroom skills taught, ‘presenting ideas creatively’ was the skill that the students least understood (mean of 3.04), while ‘narrowing topics’ was the skill that students appeared to understand the best (mean of 3.78). The average level of understanding for all of the skills combined was 3.49, as presented in Table 22. Interestingly, the skills best understood were those for which students received individual tuition and consultations. Writing skills, format, support, and bibliographies rated in the middle, while those skills rated lowest have to do with reading, preparation of oral presentations, creative use of ideas, summarising and paraphrasing, concluding and citing.

Table 22. Classroom training in skills and strategies: level of understanding

SKILLS AND STRATEGIES	MEAN	STD.DEV.
Identifying ideas for suitable research topics	3.65	.68
Formulating research questions for a topic	3.62	.81
Narrowing topics	3.78	.74
Selecting relevant references	3.67	.74
Evaluating the suitability of resources	3.55	.70
Reading for a specific purpose	3.39	.75
Extracting useful information from references for use in writing	3.49	.82
Preparing outlines	3.64	.77
Formulating a thesis statement	3.58	.81
Using information from various sources to write about a topic	3.55	.76

Presenting ideas in a logical order	3.48	.82
Supporting oral and written statements	3.52	.74
Paraphrasing	3.33	.74
Summarising	3.36	.69
Using an appropriate format for writing academic papers	3.48	.76
Presenting ideas creatively	3.04	.88
Drawing conclusions from data or factual information	3.41	.83
Referencing and citing sources within a text	3.45	.83
Compiling bibliographies	3.54	.96
Rehearsing for oral presentations	3.33	.85
Preparing oral presentations	3.49	.88
Average level of understanding	3.49	.50

5.5.2 Contribution of project work in the development of skills and strategies

Throughout the year, students engage in a variety of courses and activities which also contribute to their skill development. This section of the evaluation attempts to establish the unique role that this programme played in their overall development of research skills. Scores clearly show that students recognised the benefits and the special purpose of this Research Training Programme. A summary of these opinions is presented in Table 23.

The degree to which students felt that the project work in this programme helped to develop the skills in question is reflected in an average score of 3.44. These perceptions of benefit are in line with the improvements evident in the work that students submitted under the programme, as explained further in this chapter. Students found that the project work was particularly helpful in the development of their skill of 'narrowing topics', with a score of 3.64 for this skill. Their positive attitude towards this activity may be a result of the fact that that part of the project package work was reviewed individually with their instructor.

Presenting ideas creatively scored the lowest, thus supporting the general perception of Hong Kong students as passive and lacking creativity. These views shared by Salili (1996), Rudowicz, Kitto and Lok (1994), Forestier (1999) and other

Hong Kong-based researchers have been addressed in a more detailed manner in the Literature Review (section 2.6.1).

Table 23. Classroom training: contribution of project work in development of skills and strategies

SKILLS AND STRATEGIES	MEAN	STD.DEV.
Identifying ideas for suitable research topics	3.46	.74
Formulating research questions for a topic	3.45	.70
Narrowing topics	3.64	.73
Selecting relevant references	3.62	.84
Evaluating the suitability of resources	3.48	.78
Reading for a specific purpose	3.32	.78
Extracting useful information from references for use in writing	3.42	.79
Preparing outlines	3.55	.90
Formulating a thesis statement	3.54	.80
Using information from various sources to write about a topic	3.43	.98
Presenting ideas in a logical order	3.51	.93
Supporting oral and written statements	3.48	.83
Paraphrasing	3.45	.74
Summarising	3.38	.73
Using an appropriate format for writing academic papers	3.39	.93
Presenting ideas creatively	3.07	1.13
Drawing conclusions from data or factual information	3.25	.86
Referencing and citing sources within a text	3.29	.93
Compiling bibliographies	3.61	.88
Rehearsing for oral presentations	3.39	.89
Preparing oral presentations	3.61	.84
Average	3.44	.51

5.5.3 Usefulness in academic studies

The questions in this section addressed the value of the classroom training and its applicability to other academic pursuits beyond the EAP projects. It appears that the students highly endorse the classroom training component of the programme, awarding it a mean score for overall usefulness at 3.77 on the five-point scale. The skills thought to be the most useful were 'selecting relevant references' (mean of 4.01), preparing oral presentations (mean of 3.97), and using an appropriate format for writing academic papers (mean of 3.97). Presenting ideas in a logical order was

another skill that was clearly considered to be useful in academic studies, as indicated by a mean of 3.93. Skills such as: evaluating the suitability of resources, using information from various sources to write about a topic, supporting oral and written statements, referencing and citing sources within a text and compiling bibliographies were all valued as very useful, attracting a mean of 3.8 or above. Students' perceptions of the usefulness of the programme are presented in Table 24.

Table 24. Classroom training in skills and strategies: usefulness in academic studies

SKILLS AND STRATEGIES	MEAN	STD.DEV.
Identifying ideas for suitable research topics	3.74	.82
Formulating research questions for a topic	3.72	.75
Narrowing topics	3.81	.90
Selecting relevant references	4.01	.70
Evaluating the suitability of resources	3.84	.74
Reading for a specific purpose	3.55	.83
Extracting useful information from references for use in writing	3.77	.71
Preparing outlines	3.72	.80
Formulating a thesis statement	3.71	.82
Using information from various sources to write about a topic	3.80	.88
Presenting ideas in a logical order	3.93	.88
Supporting oral and written statements	3.84	.74
Paraphrasing	3.64	.87
Summarising	3.65	.78
Using an appropriate format for writing academic papers	3.97	.75
Presenting ideas creatively	3.49	.93
Drawing conclusions from data or factual information	3.71	.81
Referencing and citing sources within a text	3.81	.83
Compiling bibliographies	3.83	.86
Rehearsing for oral presentations	3.72	.86
Preparing oral presentations	3.97	.82
Average	3.77	.50

5.6 OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

In this section, students were invited to provide more details about their experiences in the Training Programme and to express their opinions of the programme in a less structured way. Not all students answered every question in this section of the questionnaire.

4. What problems, if any, did you experience when carrying out your research project?

In general, students expressed problems related to the supply of library information (29), difficulty in choosing topics (4), comprehension and quality of audio-visual tapes (6) and a few other apparently insignificant technical complaints (6).

A concern of many of the students (29) was the shortage of material in the library which made it difficult for everyone to obtain the information that they needed. In some cases, the resources were claimed to be in use by another student, unavailable in the university library, or were unavailable in English. Although a variety of research project packages were offered, some overlap was inevitable and this led to a high demand for resources on a specific topic. This reported shortage of material, however, may well be a reflection of students' limited skills and abilities in locating other than the most accessible of resources; and it could also be due to their continued reliance on books as their main source of information. This is quite apparent in the analyses of their essays and oral presentations that follow.

Complaints about audio-visual tapes revolved around the audio-tracks being worn and difficult to listen to, and being "too long and difficult". These complaints were investigated and most of these complaints were unfounded and resulted from poor listening skills in English, rather than from technical inadequacies of the tapes.

5. *Which approach in the EAP course prepares you better for academic tasks in your major?*

a. *Formal training*

b. *Research Project Package work*

With the exception of three students, everyone felt that the Research Project Package work was more valuable to their studies than formal training (66 students). Students explained that they felt the package work was very useful and practical (34), as well as interesting (8). Furthermore, some students (4) expressed appreciation of the opportunity to learn to work independently on research projects, and a few (4) acknowledged how well that work related to work performed in their major. Several students' statements were made, explaining how the work on the Research Project Package benefited them. Many students appreciated the transferability of skills taught and commented:

... because we have to do a research paper in our major and this approach teaches me how to do it step by step.

and

It provides me with an opportunity to use the library in a useful and meaningful way searching for information and using it. A good practice for my future assignments.

Some students noted that they had become more independent and made comments similar to the one below:

...it's a good chance for me to finish an interesting task independently, learn to use the library resources and present it in front of other people.

Another student said:

We can involve ourselves in this project and find out what problems are to be solved. Also I know how to present in a better way. Doing this project gave me practical experience. Now I am ready to do another one independently.

Creativity and interest were other noted factors. The comments included:

This was a much more extensive project than anything I have done before. It can test different skills and give space for self-creativity.

and

It's new and interesting to do a serious project. It's learning by practice.

6. *Which part of the project work and training do you consider to be the most useful for your academic needs?*

The students considered several aspects of the project to be useful, with the Research Package itself (15), the essay writing component (11) and the oral presentation (9) ranking as the most useful. Close behind were the classroom training and the library training, each having seven students vouching for its usefulness.

2. *Which Research package did you complete in 1st semester and 2nd semester?*

Some Packages were more popular than others. Table 25 below indicates students' selection of Packages in each semester. A list with titles along with a brief description of each Package is enclosed as Appendix 10.

Table 25 List of packages and students' choices in 1st and 2nd semester

	1 st Semester	2 nd Semester
Package No.	Frequency	Frequency
1		
2		3
3	5	2
4	2	1
5	11	9
6	6	3
7	8	7
8	3	1
9	2	7
10	5	7
11	1	5
12	2	2
13	6	5
14	5	1
15		
16	6	6
17		6
18	5	4
19	11	9
20		2
21	3	1
22	2	
23	3	1
24		2
25		2

5.7 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS: QUESTIONNAIRE

Overall, the response to the research programme was positive, there being no negative feedback to any aspect of the programme. The Research Packages themselves were perceived by the students to be highly interesting, while at the same time presenting a challenge and serving a very useful purpose in their wider academic studies. The library skills training sessions have achieved the programme objectives of bringing students to a better understanding of basic library skills – as evidenced in their use of materials in their final essays and presentations discussed in sections 5.8 and 5.10 further in this chapter.

Furthermore, students appear to recognise the usefulness of library skills in their academic studies. The classroom sessions in research-related skills and strategies have also made an impression on the students: students profess to have reached a good level of understanding of the skills taught, claims borne out by changes in the quality of their work over the Programme, and they credit this Research Programme for the development of these skills. Again, they have stated an appreciation of the usefulness of these skills in academic study.

5.8 OBSERVATIONS OF ORAL PRESENTATIONS

5.8.1 Introduction

As was stated at the beginning of this chapter, the learning that occurred as a result of Research Skills Training could be expected to be demonstrated in both oral presentations and essays. However, in the case of oral presentations, assessment of the research-related skills employed by students is made more difficult by the interplay of factors such as personality, confidence, and ability in spoken English which, for most students, is generally below the level of their written English.

The oral presentations are an integral part of course work for EAP and are closely linked to students' research essays. Though students may need to present information over and above that of their essays in order to fill the time requirement of the presentations, the topics, subject matter, and organisation of the presentations are generally very similar to that of the essays. Along with their research assignments, students are required to complete and submit forms (see Appendix 11) that outline the procedures they have followed to arrive at their narrowed topics, their thesis statements and research questions, and show the basic structure of their assignments. Thus, although each semester's research essays and presentations are presented as separate assignments, they are often similar, if not the same, in their overall format and structure.

The observations of oral presentations of 14 students from the experimental group, outlined in this section, support the findings of the Programme evaluation and follow the changes observed in students' essay-writing abilities, in showing that students have acquired many research skills as a result of their classroom training and research practice. They do not, alone, provide conclusive evidence of the

effectiveness of the training, but they do serve to illustrate the changes that have occurred in students' use of skills and strategies during their first year of study.

5.8.2 Results

The results of the observations made are summarised in Tables 26 – 30 below. These tables outline a number of research-related skills and strategies taught throughout the course and indicate which of these skills were evident in students' first and second presentations respectively. In general, skills were judged as being either present (1) or absent (0), though clearly there was wide variation across students and semesters in how successfully they were employed. Rather than focusing on those differences, the tables serve to illustrate the broad changes that were evident between students' first and second presentations – changes in the overall organisation, content, and manner of the students' presentations. A fuller, comparative account of the performances of individual students is given in case by case discussion later in this chapter (section 5.9).

The following tables demonstrate which of the particular skills/strategies taught to students were employed in oral presentations in both the first and second semesters. Tables 26, 27 and 28 contain data related to the organisation of topics – introductions, content and conclusions – while Tables 29 and 30 are concerned with the manner in which presentations were delivered and the visual aids that students employed to illustrate their points. In the tables that follow, skills displayed are marked as 1, absence of a given skill is recorded as 0 and not applicable or missing data are represented as * . In terms of the nature of topic, D stands for a descriptive and A for an analytical topic. The table referring to presentation skills has three

categories (eye contact, use of notes and use of own words) measured on the scale from 1 (poor), 2 (good) to 3 (excellent).

The column and row totals are intended simply to highlight the changes reflected in the tables – giving an indication of the number of skill categories in which change was observed between the first and second semesters for individual students and across the group of students.

5.8.3 Organisation: introductions, content and conclusions

Table 26. Application of oral presentation skills - organisation of topic / introduction

Organization of topic/ introduction	Sam		Jill		Barb		Mark		Ivy		Mary		Ala	
	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II
SKILL / STRATEGY														
Topic suitably narrowed	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Nature of topic - descriptive/analytical	D	D	A	A	D	A	A	A	A	D	D	A	D	A
Research question clear and precise	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1
Purpose of presentation defined	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Organisational principle presented	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Introduction outlined ideas presented	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	-	0	1
Strategy used to “grab” attention (photo, question, quotation, etc.)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0

Organization of topic /introduction – continuation	Jan		Kathy		Ada		Cher		Vicky		Micky		Chris	
	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II
SKILL / STRATEGY														
Topic suitably narrowed	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1
Nature of topic - descriptive/analytical	D	D	D	A	D	D	D	A	A	A	A	A	D	D
Research question clear and precise	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Purpose of presentation defined	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
Organisational principle presented	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1
Introduction outlined ideas presented	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1
Strategy used to “grab” attention (photo, question, quotation, etc.)	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1

Table 27. Application of oral presentation skills: organisation of topic/ conclusion

Organization of topic / conclusion	Sam		Jill		Barb		Mark		Ivy		Mary		Ala	
	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II
SKILL / STRATEGY														
Presentation followed outline	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1
Talk addressed the research question	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
Conclusions: attempted	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
Conclusions followed on from content of talk	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1
Appropriate - concluding	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
Recommendation/inferences made (appropriate)	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
Main ideas presented summed up	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
Effort to involve audience	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0

Organization of topic / conclusion – continuation	Jan		Kathy		Ada		Cher		Vicky		Micky		Chris	
	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II
SKILL / STRATEGY														
Presentation followed outline	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1
Talk addressed the research question/thesis statement/topic	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1
Conclusions: attempted	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Conclusions followed on from content of talk	1	1	-	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1
Appropriate - concluding	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Recommendation/inferences made (appropriate)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Main ideas presented summed up	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1
Effort to involve audience	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1

In the first semester, while the great majority of students (12 out of the 14) began their talks by presenting outlines giving their thesis statements, introductions, sequences of their main points, and conclusions, a significant number then went on to

present information which either failed to address their topics or did not follow their outlines (Sam, Barb, Ivy, Ala, and Micky).

The introductions given and conclusions drawn were often extremely brief and only loosely related to the main body of their presentations. Only two students succeeded in presenting conclusions that were both appropriate and followed on from the material presented in their talks. Although 11 out of the 14 explained the purpose of their presentations in their introductions, only four outlined their research questions and the main ideas to be presented.

In the second semester, it can be seen that while some students (4) still experienced difficulty in presenting comprehensive introductions and conclusions, many were able to link them more firmly to the purpose and content of their presentations. In contrast to the first semester's presentations, it can be seen that, in their second semester presentations, students followed their outline in the body of their talks, making better use of reference material and providing better support for their main points. In the second semester, all but one student (Ada) followed their outlines in presenting their talks. Only one student too (Micky), failed to provide adequate support for statements made in the presentation, as compared with eight who failed to do so in their first presentations.

That a considerable number of students (11) still had difficulty forming appropriate conclusions, summing up their speeches or making recommendations in the second semester, may be an indication of the comparative difficulty of these tasks. These findings are in line with students' perceptions of relative difficulty, as discussed earlier in this chapter. In their programme evaluations, students indicated that drawing conclusions, supporting statements, and summarising were among the skills they least understood. It could also be seen to be a function of the type of

topic chosen by students and related to apparent difficulties in formulating or presenting research questions. Over half of the topics chosen by students in the first semester were descriptive by nature, and having no analytical content, did not lead easily to research questions or to evaluative conclusions. In the second semester five students still selected descriptive topics. Overall, these choices meant that most of these students had only a limited opportunity to practise those skills normally associated with an analytical research.

5.8.4 Organisation of content and progression of ideas

Table 28. Application of oral presentation skills: content of presentation

Content of presentation	Sam		Jill		Barb		Mark		Ivy		Mary		Ala	
	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II
SKILL / STRATEGY														
Main statements supported	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
Use of reference materials apparent	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1
Student thinking while speaking	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0
Progression of ideas/ ordered sequence of subject matter e.g. old to new, basic to complex	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
Flow of argument/description logical	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1

Content of presentation – continuation.	Jan		Kathy		Ada		Cher		Vicky		Micky		Chris	
	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II
SKILL / STRATEGY														
Main statements supported	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1
Use of reference materials apparent	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1
Student thinking while speaking	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Progression of ideas/ ordered sequence of subject matter e.g. old to new, basic to complex	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1
Flow of argument/description logical	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1

In the first semester, 8 out of 14 students failed to provide support for their main statements and 4 presentations showed no evidence of the use of reference material. Seven lacked progression and linking of main ideas, leading to presentations that were not cohesive, did not flow logically and had no real central point or theme. By contrast, in the second semester, only one presentation (Barb's) had no apparent progression or sequence. Only one student (Micky) failed to provide support for main ideas and only one presentation (Micky's) still showed no evidence of having been based on reference material.

5.8.5 Presentation and delivery

Another area in which students appeared to experience difficulties in the first semester was in the way in which they delivered their presentations.

With the exception of a few students (Ivy and Kathy), most appeared nervous and very reliant on their notes, making eye contact with others occasionally and reading for much of the time. Eleven of the students read their notes throughout their talks, with five relying on them to such an extent that they scarcely looked up from them. This could have been due to lack of preparation, unfamiliarity with the topic or subject matter, and/or to a general lack of confidence in their spoken English. In some cases, the language used by students was clearly not typical of their true level of spoken level of English: in a few, the wording of the presentations was beyond that of their written English abilities as well, suggesting that the work presented was not their own. These observations are to be expected, perhaps, given students' perceptions of paraphrasing and presenting ideas creatively as skills they least understood.

Table 29. Application of oral presentation skills – presentation delivery

Presentation / delivery	Sam		Jill		Barb		Mark		Ivy		Mary		Ala	
	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II
Use of strategies to hold attention	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
Well prepared	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
Rate of speech appropriate	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
Voice well modulated	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Eye contact	2	2	2	3	1	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	1	2
Use of notes	2	2	2	1	3	3	2	1	0	1	2	2	3	2
Using own words	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2

Presentation / delivery – continuation	Jan		Kathy		Ada		Cher		Vicky		Micky		Chris	
	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II
Use of strategies to hold attention	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Well prepared	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Rate of speech appropriate	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1
Voice well modulated	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1
Eye contact	1	2	3	3	1	2	2	2	1	3	2	2	2	3
Use of notes	3	2	1	1	3	2	2	2	3	1	2	2	1	1
Using own words	2	3	3	3	1	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	3

In the second presentations, however, most students seemed far more at ease, less reliant on their notes, and better able directly to address their audience. Only one (Barb) appeared to read her notes throughout the presentation. Seven were able to speak using their notes for reference only. All of the students appeared to use their own words for the most of the time and, in contrast to the first semester's presentations, most made a clear effort to gain the attention of classmates and to involve them throughout their talks, through the use of questions, comments, relating information to Hong Kong student life and so on.

5.8.6 Use of visual aids

Finally, considerable change was evident between the first and second semester presentations in the use students made of visual aids. The great majority of students used some form of visual aid in both their presentations (13 out of 14). However, in the first semester, all but a few students (Kathy and Ada) simply used photographs from books, shown by way of the overhead opaque projector. While some students related these well to the subject matter of their talks, using them to support and illustrate their statements, others (about half) presented pictures that, though topical, were sometimes irrelevant or only loosely connected to the points they made, and contributed little to the purpose of their presentations.

Table 30. Application of oral presentation skills –use of visual aids

Visual aids employed	Sam		Jill		Barb		Mark		Ivy		Mary		Ala	
	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II
Form: Photograph (lifted or copied)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1
Table /graph “				1						1				
Map “				1						1		1		
Students' own construction														
Visual aid used to illustrate or support statements	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	-	-
Tables and graphs explained adequately	-	-	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	1	0	0

Visual aids employed – continuation	Jan		Kathy		Ada		Cher		Vicky		Micky		Chris	
	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II
Form: Photograph (lifted or copied)	1	1				1	1	1	1		1	1	1	
Table /graph “		1	1		1					1				1
Map “		1		1		1		1						1
Students own construction				1						1				
Visual aid used to illustrate or support statements	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Tables and graphs explained adequately	-	1	1	1	0	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1

In the second presentations, all of the students made better use of the visual aids, explaining them more fully and linking them more effectively to the subject matter of their presentations. Further, many students, particularly those who had used visual aids appropriately in their first talks (Jan, Kathy, Ada, Cher, Vicky and Chris) used a greater variety of material in their second presentations – maps, tables and graphs.

5.9 CASE DESCRIPTIONS

Students' oral presentation were observed and comments recorded on a specially designed sheet containing a list of criteria/skills in which changes were expected to take place as a result of training.

However, a number of important changes were apparent in the presentations that did not fit into the list of criteria. As these changes constituted a development in students' abilities, they should not be overlooked. They are described below in twelve case-by-case descriptive analyses of students' oral presentations.

5.9.1 Sam

Topic 1: Kangaroos and the attitude of Europeans to kangaroos

Topic 2: The unique wildlife of Alaska – Polar bears

This student's generally high level of competence in English was reflected in the delivery of both her first and second presentations. In contrast to some other students who were nervous about using English in such a public way and hampered by limited vocabulary and pronunciation skills, she was, for the most part, able to speak clearly and confidently using her own words supported by notes. Her

engaging manner and choice of visual aids on both occasions helped to gain and hold the interest of classmates.

However, the two presentations differed considerably in their overall structure. The first presentation was marked by a lack of structure. Although a topic was defined and an outline presented, the topic was extremely broad and was divided into two independent parts. Information related to those parts was mixed throughout the presentation. In addition, some minor aspects of the topic were dealt with in great detail at the expense of the major issues. Photographs and diagrams were used to illustrate statements, but again the points they served to illustrate were often minor ones. The presentation then lacked cohesion and direction. It ended, somewhat abruptly, without a summing up, recommendation or conclusion.

By contrast, the second presentation was more focused and had a clearer progression. The topic, though still broad, was divided into subtopics that were covered sequentially according to an outline presented at the outset. The points made were grouped for subject matter and well supported and appropriately illustrated, logically linked to one another and more evenly matched for relevance. A clear attempt was made to present a conclusion – albeit still short and only loosely connected to the main part of the presentation.

The overall structure of this second talk closely followed the guidelines set out in class training, and although this at times seemed unnaturally formal, it was apparent that the student had made a real effort to put into practice those strategies that she had been taught.

5.9.2 Jill

Topic 1: What were the causes of food shortage and famine in Sudan

Topic 2: What was the societal and economic impact of the Kobe Earthquake?

This student, too, was above average in academic and English abilities – strengths which were reflected in her presentations and in her choices of topic. On both occasions her chosen topics were analytical rather than descriptive, requiring more than the presentation of a sequence of related facts. Though the first one followed closely the topic of the audio-visual package on which it was based, the second could be seen as far more challenging, since it represented a clear departure from the Research Package material.

Each talk was well organised and logically ordered, with main points clearly outlined, and supported with relevant factual information. However, the second presentation stood out, not only from the first but also from those presented by other students, because of its thorough coverage of subject matter and flawless progression. Main points were supported by detailed information, illustrated and backed by the presentation of statistics and photographs.

When visual aids had been used in the first presentation, they had functioned primarily to gain and hold attention. In the second presentation they were used very effectively to enhance and further the arguments put forward.

Aside from the use of visual aids, perhaps the most notable area of change in this student's presentation was in her preparedness and confidence. Both presentations were well prepared. However, although she made eye contact with her audience throughout the first, the student was very reliant on her notes, reading a

good deal of the time. In the second presentation, however, she spoke more clearly and evenly, addressed her audience more directly and was able to present many points in her own words without reference to her notes.

5.9.3 Barb

Topic 1: The life and philosophy of Socrates

Topic 2: To what extent does the Chinese government suppress human rights in Tibet?

For both her presentations, this student selected her own topics which were independent of the subject matter of the Research Packages. The way in which the talks were delivered on each occasion was similar – the outline given on an overhead transparency and an initial effort made to gain the attention of listeners. Information was presented naturally, with good linkage of the main points involved. However, the student relied heavily on notes and clearly had difficulty expressing some of her ideas in English.

A major difference between the two presentations lay in the type of topic chosen and in the way in which the information included in the talks was organised and presented. While the first topic was extremely broad and descriptive in nature, the second was more focused, and this seemed to result in a presentation that had more purpose and direction. In her first presentation, the student failed to introduce the purpose or main points of her topic, or to sum up her points or reach any conclusion. Instead her talk ended somewhat abruptly.

The main body of her talk, though to the point and orderly, lacked real substance and support and did not advance any particular argument. By contrast, she began her second presentation by outlining the purpose of the talk, presented two

opposing points of view concerning her topic and then presented information that, in the main, allowed for assessment of those views. While the relevance and balance of this information was sometimes rather uneven, the way in which she approached the topic showed an awareness of what could be done and what should be covered.

Whereas her first presentation ended abruptly with no real conclusion, the second was rounded off appropriately. An attempt was made to summarise the information presented and to present a conclusion that addressed the research question posed at the outset of the talk.

5.9.4 Jan

Topic 1: The discovery of the Titanic Wreck

Topic 2: The 'One Child' population control policy in China

By comparison with the students described thus far, this student's written and, more particularly, spoken English ability was very low. This inevitably showed in and limited her oral presentations: throughout both presentations there were times when it was difficult to understand what was said and when much of what she did say was read directly from her notes.

Adding to those difficulties was her apparent nervousness at presenting before the class. Her voice trembled and she clearly found it difficult to make eye contact. Perhaps it was on account of those difficulties that her first presentation had no real introduction and showed no attempt to gain or hold the interest of the audience. Photographs from a book were used appropriately to illustrate points made and the student seemed more comfortable and spoke more naturally when addressing these, though she did have difficulty displaying them (bound as they were

in a book) on the overhead projector. As the talk progressed, her speech became clearer and she relied less on her notes.

From the outset of her second presentation, it was apparent that the student was better prepared and more confident. Though she was still nervous and her introduction was still not full or precise, she spoke clearly and evenly, and made an effort throughout the talk to address her classmates, asking questions and drawing their attention to the important points on visual aids.

Overall, she seemed far less reliant on her notes and, though still struggling with the language, more familiar with the material she was presenting. Her visual aids, this time, were clear and varied (pictures and tables and a map), more effectively used and better suited for use on the OHP. That her second conclusion was less appropriate than the first was most probably in part due to the more demanding topic, but also to the fact that at this point in her presentation the student introduced new information about her topic and attempted to reach a more analytical conclusion not wholly supported by the body of her talk.

5.9.5 Kathy

Topic 1: Changing status of Japanese women between 1945 and 1975

Topic 2: Causes of the Cuban missile crisis

This student has, by nature, a confident and forthright manner. In making her presentations, she spoke clearly and loudly, referring to rather than relying on her notes and using natural language. Her ability to organise and present material in a logical and coherent way was evident in both presentations.

The major areas of difference between her two presentations were in the nature of the topics chosen and the ways in which she related to her audience.

While the first topic was primarily descriptive (information given was concerned with ‘what’ happened, was factual and statistics-based), the second was more analytical, with information presented intended to explain ‘why’ certain events had occurred. This second approach can be seen as more challenging for students.

In her second presentation, the student showed greater awareness of her audience, trying to involve them more through the use of questions and a variety of visual aids. Her speech was less hurried, she addressed comments more directly to classmates, and she used eye-catching pictures and posters, rather than simply presenting statistical tables as she had in her first presentation.

Though confident and competent on both occasions, she seemed more involved and enthusiastic when delivering her second presentation.

5.9.6 Mark

Topic 1: The effect of the events in Tiananmen Square 1989 on democracy

Topic 2: Is Tibet an autonomous region after the Chinese occupation in 1950?

Both of the topics chosen by this student followed on from the subject matter of the Research Packages, but required him to find his own material and to present it in a way that involved using facts to support an argument, rather than simply relaying on descriptive information. In delivering both presentations, though a little nervous at first, he displayed obvious enthusiasm for his topics and was eager to share his ideas with his classmates. In both he was able to present the information in an orderly, logical way, and to speak naturally without relying unduly on his notes. However, his second presentation was noticeably better than the first, both in its content and in the manner in which it was delivered.

In his first presentation, the student attempted to gain and focus his audience's attention through the use of a book of photographs, passed from one person to another. Unfortunately, this had the opposite effect, proving to be a distraction both for him and for those listening. Though some points made in this talk were backed up with examples or statistics, many remained unclear or insufficiently supported.

Further, although a conclusion was attempted, because the information given throughout the talk was not summed up in any way, the conclusion did not follow on easily or relate closely to the main points presented.

In the second presentation, however, the student began more confidently, giving a clear outline of his topic and of what he hoped to show through the presentation. He used a map (on an overhead projector) and a pertinent question to focus attention, and then worked through the main points, at each stage supporting them well with examples, making deductions and linking these to his research question. His conclusion, then, followed neatly on from the main body of his talk, relating it to the purpose of the presentation and to his research question.

5.9.7 Ada

Topic 1: The status of Japanese women in the labour market 1977-1977

Topic 2: The damage of the Great China Earthquake 1976 and the prevention of earthquakes

The most obvious change between the first and second presentations given by this student was in the way in which the presentations were delivered, as opposed to their organisation or content.

In her first talk, the student spoke clearly and introduced her topic well. However, she did little to acknowledge her audience, presenting relevant statistics and tables, but explaining them only briefly and for the most part reading from full notes (not prompts), rather than directly addressing her classmates. Despite the fact that her English language ability was below that of many of her classmates, the presentation was delivered in near perfect English – perhaps because she was reading, probably because the words were not her own.

By contrast, in her second presentation, the student attempted to involve her classmates by asking questions, relating the subject matter to their experiences in Hong Kong and by using photographs and maps to illustrate points. Throughout this second presentation she displayed greater enthusiasm and confidence, relied much less on her notes, and used language which, though less correct, was clearly her own. That this second presentation was not so well defined or concluded probably reflects the nature of the topic which had not been suitably narrowed, and therefore did not allow for a single purpose or summing up. It seems likely that, in order to meet the time requirement for the oral presentation, rather than expand on the main points made in her essay, the student chose instead to broaden the topic so as to include new information.

5.9.8 Ivy

Topic 1: Japanese women in professions in modern Japan

Topic 2: Life of tribesmen in Irian Jaya, Indonesia

Perhaps of all the students included in this section of the study, this student is the most ‘natural’ speaker. Her speech was flowing and easy and she had an energetic and engaging manner that invited the attention and interest of others. With

apparently little effort, she appeared to be able to speak freely and confidently on a topic, structuring her subject matter in an interesting, orderly and logical fashion. This she did throughout both presentations.

In her first presentation, although she had full notes at hand, the student seldom referred to them and never read from them. However, although the presentation was clear, well-defined and to the point, it lacked substance. The main points made were not well supported and no references were given to back up her statements. Although an outline was provided, no other visual aids were used to illustrate points or ideas.

In her second presentation, the student made more use of notes, still not reading from them, but using them as prompts for her speech. Her natural speaking ability still played a large part in ensuring that the speech was interesting and involving of classmates, but she was evidently better prepared and the information that she presented was more detailed and better supported with obvious use of reference materials. She related much of the subject matter of the talk to her audience, asking interesting and pertinent questions to gain and hold their attention, and illustrating the main points of her presentation with a variety of visual aids – photographs, maps and tables.

That she used notes more in the second presentation was not an indication of her being in any way less prepared or familiar with the material, but of the fact that what she had prepared was fuller and so lent itself less to being able to be presented in an ‘off the cuff’ manner.

5.9.9 Cher

Topic 1: Daily life of Aborigines in the northern part of Australia

Topic 2: Why did famine occur in Sudan in the late 1960s?

While most students showed an improvement in their presentation skills in some areas but not others, this student appears to have made gains across the full range of skills measured.

As was the case with Jan, Cher Heung's limited ability in spoken English made it hard for her to express her ideas and difficult for those listening to understand what she had to say. Despite this, it was clear that the content and structure of her second talk was much improved from that of the first.

Whereas her first presentation was simply descriptive – sequential facts briefly stated with little or no support – her second was more complex and analytical. In it, information was well ordered. Facts were supported, illustrated with photographs and statistics, inter-linked, and were generally more substantial and more accurate.

It would seem that the type of topic chosen for her second presentation helped this student to make a fuller introduction, stating the purpose of her talk and the research question it addressed. Her conclusion, too, was markedly different in the second presentation. In her first talk, the conclusion reached had been brief and unrelated to the content presented. It centred on issues not previously raised in the talk and included statements for which no support was offered.

In her second presentation, however, conclusion followed on from her talk. In it she was able to sum up the main points, link them to the research question and on the basis of her findings, make appropriate recommendations.

5.9.10 Vicky

Topic 1: The reasons that so many people died when the Titanic sank

Topic 2: One country, two educational systems

Both the presentations given by this student were well organised, introduced and concluded. The points made throughout were relevant, adequately supported, and presented in a logical way.

The greatest area of change between the two presentations was in their delivery. In her first talk, the student spoke clearly but shyly, seldom making eye contact with her audience and instead focusing on her notes. In the second, she was more animated and appeared to be more at ease. She faced her audience directly, asking them questions and relying much less on her notes. In addition, she seemed more familiar with the subject matter of her talk, and generally better prepared. This was reflected in both the language and the visual aids used.

Whereas, in her first presentation, some of the wording she used was not her own, in the second she was clearly using her own words and ideas. She seemed far more sure of herself and of the direction of her talk. Rather than using pictures from books, as she had in the first semester, she had prepared her own charts and tables. These were well laid out and designed very effectively to support her main points and to reinforce her thesis statement.

5.9.11 Micky

Topic 1: The Titanic

Topic 2: Gorbachev's policies: Perestroika and Glasnost

This student can be seen, from Tables 28 and 29, to have made the least gains in her use of skills related to the content and delivery of her presentations over the two

semesters. She was also one of the less able students in her class and was hampered in her presentations by her limited level of English.

However, there were significant differences in her two presentations that suggest an attempt to apply strategies in the second presentation that were totally lacking in the first. This student's first presentation stood out from those of the other students for its lack of clarity and organisation. The topic had not been narrowed and, despite a lengthy introduction, the purpose of the talk was unclear throughout. No arguments were presented and the items of information that were put forward were unrelated, unsupported and muddled. Though a conclusion was attempted, it was quite unrelated to the main content of the talk.

In the second presentation, too, the topic had not been suitably narrowed. The content was consequently wide-ranging and the purpose and direction of the talk were unclear. The statements made were broad and still not supported by reference material. However, what information was presented was relevant and logically ordered – though sometimes difficult to understand because of the language used. It followed the outline given at the beginning of the talk and was summed up, albeit briefly, in a conclusion which, though still not appropriate, was more clearly linked to the main body of the presentation.

5.9.12 Mary

Topic 1: Working women in Japan

Topic 2: Famine as a result of war in Cambodia

In common with most of the other of students, this student's second presentation showed a marked increase in the use of strategies and skills related to the content and overall organisation of material. That the table shows little change in the actual

delivery is perhaps indicative of the fact that her first talk was comparatively well presented.

Although she referred to her notes, she addressed her classmates directly using thoughtful questions to catch their attention and to keep them involved. These things she still did throughout the second presentation. She was still reliant on notes, but this may well have been due to the topic of the second talk, which differed from the first being much more challenging – less descriptive, more complex and requiring an analytical approach. It is perhaps on account of the changed nature of the topic in the second semester that the student showed greater use of those skills related to the organisation and structure of presentation. The second topic allowed the formation of a research question and a more substantial conclusion and also demanded that information be presented in a logical fashion linked in such a way as to support the points made. These things the student completed successfully.

By comparison with her first presentation, in which the information presented often lacked depth and was uneven in terms of its overall relevance, the student's second presentation showed a greater use of reference material and better support for the main points outlined. The information covered, though complicated in nature, was generally well ordered, grouped, and linked, and appropriately linked to the research question.

5.10 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS: ORAL PRESENTATIONS

All students showed an increase in the overall use of skills, with most showing some change in each of the major areas of organisation, content, and delivery. While the degree to which individuals employed skills in the first presentations varied considerably, results were much more uniform in the second semester, with the majority of students applying the skills to their work. From the tables it can be seen that changes have occurred over the semesters in the way in which students have organised and prepared their presentations and in the degree to which they have been able successfully to link or integrate their outlines, introductions, and conclusions to the main content of their assignments.

The use of some skills, particularly those outlined in Table 26 (for example, 'topics suitably narrowed', 'organisational principles presented', 'purpose defined', 'Reference materials evident', and 'conclusion attempted') appears to have changed little, the table showing them as apparent in most presentations in both the first and second semesters. Though the usage of these skills did still increase in the second semester, the table shows that at least 10 students used the skills, even in their first semester's presentations. This pattern of skill use may reflect the course requirements and direct input of instructors, rather than showing that students had acquired or mastered those skills at an earlier time. In both semesters, topics should have been suitably narrowed since students were required to submit them for their tutors' approval before preparing their reports. Similarly, there was a requirement that students use a minimum number of references in preparing their assignments and that they present, for marking, outlines of their thesis statements and the overall structure of their work, clearly giving their introductions and conclusions. Despite

these requirements, 7 presentations were based on topics that were too broad, as students strayed from the approved topics, and 13 were delivered without mention of the outline or overall form that the presentation would take.

In a small number of instances, some students appear not to have utilised strategies in the second semester that were evident in their first semester's presentations. The reasons for this can only be surmised, as no real pattern is apparent across these presentations. However, it is possible that some of these changes were due, in part, to differences in the types of topic selected in the first and second semesters: students who chose a more descriptive topic in the second semester might have found it harder to formulate research questions and conclusions for their second topics. Students who chose descriptive topics in the first semester and analytical topics in the second, while they may have been able to formulate research questions, introductions and conclusions more easily, could have found their second areas of research less familiar and far more challenging.

The differences described above could also simply reflect the general inexperience of students in this type of task and the fact that these presentations represent only the first stages of skill acquisition and practice. Students would require many more hours of supported practice to master these skills and to use them in a systematic and comprehensive way.

5.11 ESSAY EVALUATIONS

5.11.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section of the study, as outlined earlier, was to evaluate changes in the degree to which students used the research skills taught in the EAP course in their first and final essays – submitted at the end of the first and second semesters respectively. These essays were individually scored according to the usage of the specific skills, and the results have been summarised to allow comparison to be made of the patterns of skill use within and across semesters.

The 49 students whose work was included for evaluation in this part of the study were all those who attended the researcher's EAP classes in both the first and second semesters and had majored in Chinese Language and Literature, Sociology, Religion, History and Geography. It was expected that, in their later essays, these students would demonstrate greater ability to use research-related skills. However, since the great majority of these skills taught were completely new to students at the beginning of the year, it was also expected that the learning displayed would be partial rather than complete.

Further, while some students were required to complete similar projects in English during the semester for their majors, others (for example, Chinese Language and Literature major students) did not have the same opportunity to practise using the skills throughout the year.

5.11.2 Essay requirements and topic choice: differences between first and final essays

The basic research and writing requirements that students were expected to meet in completing their essays, and the manner in which they were expected to present their work, was exactly the same for both the first and last essays submitted. However, the preparation and procedures that led up to the research and writing stages differed for the two sets of essays. While students received considerable guidance in the preparation of their first essays, they received little or no help from tutors in completing their final essays. The first essays were closely related to the Research Project Packages: the broad topics of those essays were drawn from the packages and supported by the information within the Packages.

Considerable help was given to students in choosing, narrowing and researching their topics for these essays. By contrast, the final essays that students were required to write as part of the EAP course were not based on Research Project Packages and were completed without the guidance of instructors. Students were able to choose from a list of 32 essay topics provided by their instructor Appendix 12). They were then required to research, narrow and write about the topics independently.

A further difference in the procedure followed in the two sets of essays presented was in the suggested topics provided. In the first instance, these were purposefully broad, requiring considerable narrowing on the part of the student. However, in case of the final essays, topics did not necessarily require narrowing and students did not necessarily have to formulate their own research questions, since many were inherent in the topic provided. Though the existence of these differences did not prevent evaluation of the success with which students had used narrowed

topics and research questions in their essays, it must be noted that it has, in some cases, prevented a full comparison of skill use in the two sets of essays.

5.11.3 Results

Each of the tables presented and described in this section relates to a broad area of research skills and shows the way in which specific skills were employed by students in their research essays.

For Tables 31 - 36, columns list specific skills and the degree to which they were used in both the first and second semester essays – either fully (F), partially (P), or not at all (O). In some cases, when it proved impossible to make such an assessment, essays were scored with an asterisk (*). The most common reason for this was blatant plagiarism, where material had been copied to such a degree that it was not possible to judge the student's own level of skill. On other occasions, sections of work were missing (not handed in or not completed), so could not be marked. These were also scored with an asterisk.

Cell numbers then, indicate for each skill, the number of essays in which that skill was assessed as having been used fully, partially, or not at all. For example in Table 31, it can be seen that, in the first semester, in 9 essays the topic was not narrowed, in 10 it was partially narrowed and in 31 it was fully or appropriately narrowed.

Figures Tables 35 – 36, too, show the relative success with which specific skills were used in the two sets of essays, by indicating the range and number of references students employed in their essays. However, in these tables, the numbers that head columns represent the actual incidence of particular forms of referencing in each essay: that is, how many quotations or citations were used, how many sources

were used, or how many of a particular type of publication were used. Cell numbers then show the number of essays that used particular levels of, or numbers of, certain forms of reference material. For example, from the first row of Table 35, giving information about the incidence of citations in first semester essays, it can be seen that thirty-three essays used no citations, nine used 1 or 2 citations, seven used 3 or 4 citations and none used more than 4 .

5.11.4 Structure and overall content

Table 31. Skills used in essay writing: structure and overall content

Structure and overall content	1 st Semester				2 nd Semester			
	*	0	P	F	*	0	P	F
Topic suitably narrowed	-	9	10	31	-	2	4	43
Research question clear and precise	-	29	6	14	-	12	13	24
Essay adequately answers the research question	1	13	19	16	-	5	19	25
Adequate details and support given	1	16	23	9	-	5	28	16
All ideas are relevant to the topic	-	10	6	33	-	4	9	36
Own words used throughout	-	9	23	17	-	4	26	19

For each of the research-related skills outlined in the table above, it can be seen that there has been a marked increase in the success with which students employed skills in their essays. Although a similar number of students are shown as having partially used those skills in their 1st and 2nd essays (essays scored P), considerably more essays scored F (skills used fully) in the second semester, and there was a

corresponding drop in the number of essays scoring 0 (skill not used/unsuccessfully used) in the second semester.

It would appear that the use of skills related to the adequacy of the information presented have changed the most. Overall, it can be seen that the content of students' essays in the second semester was better related to the topics and that those topics were more fully discussed. In those essays, fewer students included material that was irrelevant to their arguments and, by contrast to the first semester, most provided sufficient material to cover their topics and to support their main points.

The number of essays in which the research question was properly addressed, and in which adequate details were given in support of the topic, increased from 16 and 9 to 25 and 16 respectively, in the second semester. The numbers of essays which failed to answer the research question, and which did not provide sufficient information about the topic, fell from 14 and 17 in the first semester to 5 and 5 in the second.

Although the number of essays in which information presented was consistently relevant to the topic was little changed in the second semester (33 in the first and 36 in the second semester), it can be seen that fewer essays presented ideas that were irrelevant to the topic (4 in the second semester as opposed to 10 in the first).

In both the first and second semesters, while at least a third of the students presented information and ideas using their own words, a considerable number of students submitted work in which paraphrasing had been used with only partial success – these differences being clearly related to students' English language ability. A number of the essays presented in both semesters largely comprised information

taken from sources and were presented with few or no changes made. However, the incidence of such “copying”, whether through poor paraphrasing or deliberate plagiarism, can be seen to have halved in the second semester’s essays (decreased from 9 to 4). In addition, the data also shows a rise, in the second semester, in the number of essays for which students used their own words entirely to express their ideas (from 17 to 19).

Examination of students’ essays also shows a change in the degree to which topics were appropriately narrowed and the way in which research questions were presented. Of the second semester essays, 43 had successfully narrowed topics, as compared with 31 in the first semester. Whilst in the first semester 9 of the essays were based on topics that were not suitably narrowed, in the second semester that number dropped to 2. In the first semester, although 14 essays presented research questions appropriately, 29 essays did not. However, in the second semester, this situation was reversed. Only 12 essays failed to present any research question, while 24 were based on clearly stated questions.

The figures above (drawn from items 1 and 2 on the table), though they are in line with changes apparent in other skill use, should be interpreted cautiously and may not simply reflect students’ abilities. The apparent success of some students in narrowing topics in their first essays could be due to the input of tutors, rather than to students’ actual skills, since topics were narrowed in conjunction with teachers and students were not supposed to proceed with their research essays until their topics had been narrowed to their tutor’s satisfaction. The given topics for the second set of essays were, for the most part, already quite narrow and suggestive of research questions. Hence the level of skill that students themselves brought to bear in choosing their topics and formulating research questions may have been determined

by the nature of the topics provided. While it is to be hoped that students did learn to use these skills more successfully throughout the year, this data does not provide for any such assessment.

5.11.5 Organisation and content of the body

The data shows that this aspect of students' essay writing had also improved by the end of the second semester. As with the preceding table, while the number of students displaying only partial use of skills was similar in both first and second semesters, the number of essays in which skills had been successfully used increased from the first to the second semester, and there was a significant decrease in the number of essays in which skills were not used or had been used unsuccessfully.

Table 32. Skills used in essay writing: organisation and content of the body

Organisation/ content	1 st semester				2 nd Semester			
	*	0	P	F	*	0	P	F
Body								
Main ideas clearly presented	3	6	8	32	1	3	5	40
Each main idea well supported	3	11	13	22	1	3	18	27
Argument logically structured	3	9	6	31	1	1	8	39
Progression of ideas	5	5	8	31	2	-	5	42
Evidence of use of reference material	-	5	3	41	1	-	4	44

In the first semester, language difficulties accepted, it can be seen that most of students were able to present their ideas clearly, provide information to support those ideas, and to link them in such a way as to form a logical argument or descriptive passage. However, a considerable number of students either failed to exhibit those skills or did so with only partial success. In the first semester the

number of essays in which ideas were not clear and were not adequately supported were 6 and 11 respectively. In the second semester, these numbers had dropped to 3 and 3 respectively. Similarly, the number of essays which failed to present a logical argument dropped from 9 in the first semester to 1 in the second. Whilst 5 of the first semester's essays showed no real progression of ideas, all of the second semester's essays showed at least partial progression.

In the second semester, too, all of the essays showed some evidence of the use of research material, compared with the first semester in which 5 did not – the information in those being of very general in nature that could be considered to be 'common knowledge'. The way in which reference materials were used can also be seen to have changed (see section 5.11.7 on referencing).

A further overall change evident in the data for these items is in the number of items for which students' skill usage could not be assessed. This number decreased from an average of 3 in the first semester to 1 in the second. In those cases where the first semester's essays were scored with an asterisk, the rating was due to material having been plagiarised to such an extent that no real evaluation could be made of students' own skills. These instances, though linked to the item in Table 31 which indicates whether or not students used their own words, clearly went beyond a failure to paraphrase correctly, as entire discussions (barring introductions and conclusions) appeared to have been copied in their entirety. By contrast, in the second semester's essays, none of the essays was plagiarised to that degree – the only essay for which an asterisk was allocated was one in which several pages of discussion were missing.

5.11.6 Organisation of and content of introductions and conclusions

Table 33. Skills used in essay writing – organisation and content of introduction and conclusion

Organisation/ content	1 st Semester				2 nd Semester			
	*	0	P	F	*	0	P	F
Introduction								
Attention-getting sentence to the point/relevant	-	8	5	36	-	1	2	46
Main points mentioned in the introduction	-	21	7	21	-	17	9	23
Conclusion								
n								
Conclusion attempted	-	3	-	46	-	1	-	48
Ending included a summing up	-	26	12	11	1	21	14	13
Conclusion appropriate – relevant and connected	-	16	21	12		1	21	22

Much of the change related to introductions and conclusions of essays was slight, and by far the majority of students, in both semesters, ensured that their essays included introductory and concluding paragraphs. This is not surprising since the instructions given for essay writing made it clear that these elements must be present. The results suggest however, that these aspects of essays writing (for example, introducing main points at the outset and summing up at the end of essays) were relatively challenging for students, even by the end of the second semester.

However, in those measures related to the relevance of points made, essays showed a marked improvement. In the first semester, 8 students introduced their topics using material that was either inappropriate or irrelevant. In the second semester, however, this number had dropped to 1, almost all students having chosen introductions that commanded attention and that were, for the most part,

appropriately linked to their main points. In the second semester, too, a far greater number of students were able to end their essays with conclusions that followed on from and successfully closed the discussions they had presented (22 as opposed to 12 in the first semester). Furthermore, far fewer students rounded off their work with conclusions that were inappropriate or insufficiently related to their topics (5 as compared to 16 in the first semester).

5.11.7 Quoting, citing and referencing

Tables 34 and 35 are concerned specifically with the use of reference material in the research essays. They detail the use of skills related to incorporating and acknowledging materials and outline the pattern of resource use across the two sets of essays.

Overall, as with the tables previously discussed, these tables show a clear improvement in skills use between the first and second semester essays. Second semester essays show a decrease in incorrect use of referencing skills and a corresponding increase in the successful use of those skills.

As was noted in the previous section, all but a handful of essays in both semesters showed evidence of the use of reference materials. Perhaps the most notable feature of the first set of essays was the large number of essays in which no quotations or citations were made (44 and 35 respectively) and the significant, though lesser number, that were presented with no biographical details (10). In over half of the remaining instances where citations were used and bibliographies included, the references were made incorrectly or with only partial success. Fewer than one fifth of the essays (7) contained citations and references that were used and noted correctly. Quotations were used in only 5 essays.

Table 34. Skills used in essay writing: quoting, citing and referencing

Referencing	1 st Semester				2 nd Semester			
	*	0	P	F	*	0	P	F
Quotations used correctly in body of essay	44	2	1	2	33	4	2	10
Citations (not quotations) used correctly	35	3	4	7	10	3	9	27
Sources cited correctly	29	7	4	9	8	6	22	13
Bibliographic details presented correctly in bibliography	10	11	21	7	6	8	22	13
References used in support of main points	20	15	7	7	7	7	15	20

In the second semester, the number of essays in which quotations were used was still low (16) but far more essays contained some form of referencing (39). In addition, it can be seen that the number of essays in which quotations and references were used correctly increased considerably from the first to the second semester – from 2 and 7 to 10 and 27 respectively. Further, in the second semester, the majority of students had used citations (39), most of them employing these correctly in support of their main points (27).

The number of essays which included bibliographies also increased - from 39 in the first semester to 43 in the second. For most of the bibliographies submitted in both semesters, the way in which sources were presented was only partially correct (21 essays in the first semester and 22 in the second). However, the number of essays in which details were presented correctly rose from 7 in the first semester to 13 in the second and the number in which details were, for the most part, incorrect decreased from 11 to 8.

Clearly, a considerable number of students were still experiencing difficulty in listing sources correctly within their essays, in their footnotes, and in their

bibliographies by the second semester. However, the overall use of resource material in the writing of second semester essays can still be viewed as a significant advance on the first semester when so few even attempted to acknowledge and integrate their sources in their discussion.

5.11.8 Use of resources

Table 35 below shows the pattern of use of different types of reference material in the two sets of essays evaluated according to the sources acknowledged in the bibliographies of essays. The column headings show the type of resource for which use was measured, the row headings indicate the number of sources of that type employed in the essay. For example, in the first semester, books were not used as a source in 12 essays, but 22 essays were prepared with the use of 1 or 2 books, 12 using 3 or 4 books, and 2 with 5 or 6 books.

Table 35. Skills used in essay writing - use of sources

Referencing	1 st Semester					2 nd Semester				
	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7+	0	1-2	3-4	5-6	7+
No. of sources cited in essay	33	9	7	-	-	8	9	22	6	4
No. of sources included in bibliography	10	13	20	3	3	3	5	21	11	9
Types of sources used										
Books	12	22	12	2	1	12	23	14	-	-
Encyclopaedias	48	1	-	-	-	47	2	-	-	-
Journals/magazines	43	6	-	-	-	33	11	4	-	1
Newspapers	46	2	1	-	-	40	6	3	-	-
Internet	36	9	2	1	1	19	14	10	3	3
Number of quotations used	44	2	-	1	2	32	9	6	1	1

Comparison of the first and second sets of essays shows that, not only did the way in which resources were used change, but the number and type of resources used in the two sets of essays also varied.

In both semesters it can be seen that students relied heavily on books as their main source of information, the pattern of use showing little change from the first to second semester.

In their second essays, though, students can be seen to have used a wider variety of sources. Encyclopaedias were the least used resource in both semesters – used in 1 essay in the first semester and 2 in the second. The use of periodicals (journals and magazines) increased – used in 6 essays in the first semester and 16 in the second. The greatest increase in the use of a particular reference type, however, can be seen in the use of Internet sources. While in the first semester 13 essays used references from the Internet, in the second semester this number had increased to 30, with 16 essays showing the use of three or more articles (as compared with 4 in the first semester).

The overall number of sources employed by students in preparing their second essays also appears to have increased, with more students using three or more particular types of sources than was the case in the first semester (26 in the first semester up to 41 in the second).

Table 36. Skills used in essay writing: variety of sources used (i.e. books, periodicals, newspapers, encyclopaedias and Internet)

No. of different types of sources	1 st semester					2 nd semester				
	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4
No. of students using different types of sources	9	24	15	1	-	2	14	22	10	1

In addition to using a greater number of sources in their second essays, results show (Table 36) that students also used a wider variety of sources. In the first semester, 24 essays were prepared on the basis of one type of source (i.e. books, or periodicals, or newspapers), 15 used two forms of source and only 1 used more than 2. In the second semester, however, 14 essays relied on only one type of source, 22 used two, and 11 used three or more forms of material as references.

Given students' questionnaire responses, it is very likely that as a result of training and practice over the semesters, they were indeed better able to make use of a wider range of resources.

5.11.9 Conclusions: essay evaluations

Comparison of the first and final research essays submitted by students in the EAP course show that, for the great majority of skills measured, a greater number of students were able to use those skills successfully in their final essays and a correspondingly lesser number failed to exhibit the skills in their work or used them incorrectly.

Overall, the essays show a marked increase in students' abilities to present material in a coherent way and to use reference material to support their main points, and in their abilities to develop logical and convincing arguments in response to research questions. They also show a greater use of materials other than books and suggest that students were willing and able to incorporate a greater number of sources into their second semester essays. Second semester essays also indicate a greater willingness on the part of students to acknowledge their sources and an increased ability to present those references in an appropriate way through citations and bibliographies.

In many cases, in both semesters, essay writing contained evidence of partial use of skills – sometimes skills were used inconsistently or with fair but not complete success. This partial use is to be expected since most students had had no prior experience of carrying out research or research writing when they entered university. It could be expected that the training provided in the EAP course would help them to acquire related skills, but mastery of those skills could only be achieved with considerably more time, practice and instruction.

5.12 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS: RESEARCH TRAINING PROGRAMME

5.12.1 Research Project Packages

The Research Packages used in this programme were intended to help students make the transition to a new form of learning, in a language in which many could be expected to lack both proficiency and confidence. Packages provided background material to guide and provide a context for students' research in their chosen subjects. They also provided step-by-step procedures which students could follow in carrying out their research, and in organising and presenting their results. Just as importantly, by addressing issues and subjects related to students' majors, the packages were designed better to motivate students in their EAP study – study for which they might otherwise have little confidence or enthusiasm.

The results of the student evaluation suggest that the use of the Research Packages has achieved the aims. The Research Package work was perceived as challenging, interesting and as serving a useful purpose in students' wider academic studies. Students considered the audio-visual tape sections of the Packages especially interesting – this despite also regarding this section of work as being one

of the most difficult. The other areas that students indicated as being of comparatively greater interest were also closely related to the subject matter of the Package chosen, to their narrowed topics, and to “getting started” on research – for example, related reading, background information, suggested areas for research, and guidelines for choosing a topic. Several of these were considered to be relatively difficult, for example “related reading” or “how to choose a topic”.

Of the other skills that students perceived to be relatively difficult, a considerable number were related to the direction and organisation of work – to the selection and narrowing of topics and the formulation of research questions and outlines. Interestingly, these elements were also ranked by students as being among the most useful in their academic studies and included those aspects of work for which students had received the most individual support from tutors. That these aspects of the research work were indeed difficult for students is evident in the assessments made both of their oral presentations and essays, particularly in the first semester, when much of the information given was very general, lacked focus and direction or failed to address a specific ‘point’ or question.

5.12.2 Library skills

All three of the evaluation measures that have been detailed in this chapter provide an indication of the influence of library training on students' research work: the student evaluation – by outlining students' perceptions of their development and understanding of library-related skills and the usefulness of those skills, the oral presentations and essay assessments, and by providing a measure of students' actual use of library material in their research.

Responses to evaluation questions about library training show that, at the end of the second semester, students felt they possessed a reasonable understanding of most of the skills surveyed – even in those areas in which they had professed to have little experience in at the beginning of the year. Not surprisingly, the aspects of library use that students felt they understood best were those with which they were familiar even at the outset of university study (for example, using key words in OPAC, using OPAC to locate relevant information, and finding books on shelves). The one exception to this apparent pattern related to the use of the Internet. Students, many of whom had indicated at the beginning of the year that they had never before used the Internet, claimed that ‘finding information through the Internet’ was a skill they understood comparatively well by the end of the second semester. Their confidence in using the Internet as a source is also reflected in the actual use of Internet material in essays and oral presentations – use that changed markedly between the two semesters. While a considerable number of students had already used this resource in their first semester’s assignments, the majority of students did so in their final projects, many using two or more articles.

It is clear from the survey results that students saw each of the library skills listed as being useful in their studies and as having improved as a result of the Research Training Programme. In general, the skills that students felt they understood best were also the ones which they credited the programme as having helped most to develop, and the ones which they believed were most useful in their academic study. The assessment of essays and oral presentation evaluation support students’ claims of increasing ability in accessing and using library materials. Not surprisingly, students made most use of those resources which they ranked as being most useful and best understood. In both semesters, books were the most commonly

used source of information, and encyclopaedias were least used. The use of periodicals and newspapers, though still comparatively low in the second semester, had increased considerably over semesters and, as has already been mentioned, the use of Internet resources increased markedly.

In spite of the many changes evident in students' work, which support their claims to have developed understanding and skills related to library use, for some of the skills surveyed – for example those related to encyclopaedias, indexes, periodicals and CD ROMs – essays and oral presentations give no indication of students' true abilities since, in both semesters, so few students appear to have used these resources in their work. Given the topics they chose and the material known to be held in the library, it is very unlikely that relevant information of this type was not available. It is probable that students either had difficulty accessing the information, or that they simply chose to use other more familiar forms of material.

However, it is clear that students' overall use of reference materials did change markedly from their first to their final essays. Not only can they be seen to have used a greater number and variety of sources, but the way in which materials were incorporated and acknowledged in their writing and presentations can also be seen to have changed.

5.12.3 Skills and strategies: classroom training

The third aspect of the Programme assessed through the student evaluation and examination of students' essays and presentations was that of classroom training in research-related skills and strategies. If the Programme had achieved its aim of teaching these skills, students could be expected not only to be aware of and

understand these skills, but to recognise their value in research. They could also be expected to use the skills with increasing success in their work throughout the year.

As was the case with library-related skills, students indicated that they had a reasonable understanding of the skills taught in the programme through classroom training and credited the Programme with helping them develop those skills. Students indicated that they found the project work most helpful in developing their abilities to narrow topics, select relevant references, prepare oral presentations and compile bibliographies. Responses showed that students also perceived the skills they had been taught as being useful in their wider academic studies – in particular the skills of ‘selecting relevant references’, ‘preparing oral presentations’, ‘using an appropriate format for academic writing’ and ‘presenting ideas in a logical order’.

Those strategies and skills which students claimed best to understand were all ones for which they had followed worksheets in their Research Project Packages or had been offered individual help – for example: narrowing topics, formulating research questions, preparing outlines and selecting relevant references. Essays and presentations showed that students were to use these skills comparatively well – though some of the results cannot be interpreted conclusively. What was clear from the students’ work over the two semesters, however, was that, in their final assignments, students had been far more successful in combining the skills taught to produce work that was more focused, more coherent, and better organised. When compared to their initial project work, final essays and oral presentations showed that the information and ideas presented were generally more relevant to the topic and supported by reference material, and progressed logically with support given for main points. This could be contrasted with the first essays and presentations in which

the information put forward was often inadequate, unsupported and sometimes irrelevant.

The research skills that students felt they least understood can be seen to relate to the creative use of ideas and materials – for example, presenting ideas creatively, paraphrasing and summarising, citing and referencing. Interestingly, these last skills, though still considered useful in their academic studies, were seen by students as being less useful than the other skills taught. Further, ‘presenting ideas creatively’ was the skill students felt they had developed least as a result of the Training Programme.

The relative difficulty of these last aspects of research, apparent in students’ evaluation responses, can also be seen in their research work. In their first oral presentations, many students had gathered information linked to their topic and presented it with little change to the order, focus or wording. Others, whilst they had used their own overall structure for the work, had still often used the wording of their original sources. Attempts to use visual aids were often unsuccessful, since the material shown contributed little to the overall purpose of the presentations. In their essays, too, many students had clearly followed the progression of ideas found in their source material and some had included wording, phrases, sentences, and even paragraphs, found in those sources. In only a minority of cases had students acknowledged those sources through citations or references.

By contrast, however, the work that students submitted in their final research projects showed greater originality and purpose. Reference material and visual aids appeared to have been used more in support of the individual research theses than as schema for work and were generally better integrated. The wordings that students used were usually their own and the majority of students had used citations (with

varying degrees of success) and acknowledged their sources throughout their essays and in bibliographies.

5.12.4 Conclusions

When compared to the work produced in the first semester, students' research assignments at the end of the second semester show a marked increase in successful use of research-related skills and a corresponding decrease in instances where skills were not used or were used incorrectly. In oral presentations, all students showed an increase in overall skill use, most showing a change in each of the main areas assessed – organisation, content and delivery. In their essays, too, students displayed greater ability in organising material in a coherent way, in incorporating reference material appropriately and in developing a line of thought in which the main ideas were clear and well supported. The pattern of resource use shown in their work had also changed in the second semester. Students were able to use a greater number and wider variety of resources in their work. They showed an increased ability in incorporating the materials in their own writing and greater willingness to acknowledge their sources.

Results of the student evaluation indicate that students were aware of ways in which their ability to conduct research had changed over the course of the Training Programme and that they were also aware of the applicability their EAP research work to their wider academic studies. They credited the course for having helped them develop the skills covered in library and classroom training and claimed to have a moderate understanding of those skills.

By their own assessment and this evaluation of their work, it is clear that students have made clear gains in their understanding of and ability to carry out

small-scale research tasks. That students see their understanding as moderate rather than thorough is reassuring since, although much improved, they will certainly need considerably more practice in similar tasks in order to use research-related skills well and consistently. It is to be hoped that the elementary work they have carried out in the EAP course and the training associated with it, will provide them with a base for future work; that the interest generated by studying relevant topics will motivate students to investigate other topics in a similar way; and that awareness of the strategies involved in research will encourage self-development of skills. It is hoped too that as students progress to more advanced tertiary study, they will be able to build on the skills they have acquired in the Programme to carry out more creative and independent study.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 Post-treatment questionnaire results

6.1 INTRODUCTION

6.1.1 Purpose

6.1.2 The experimental group

6.1.3 The control group

6.1.4 GPA (Grade Point Average)

6.1.5 Language

6.2 RESULTS

6.2.1 Research experience

6.2.2 Research training

6.2.3 Confidence levels

6.2.4 Use of resources

6.2.5 Skill in library use

6.2.6 Learning preferences

6.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.3.1 Confidence

6.3.2 Use of resources

6.3.3 Library skills

6.3.4 Learning preferences

6.4 CONCLUSIONS

CHAPTER SIX

Post-treatment questionnaire results

6.1 INTRODUCTION

6.1.1 Purpose

This questionnaire was designed to measure the influence of the Research Training Programme on students' development and application of crucial library and research skills. In addition to providing a measure of students' level of confidence in research-related tasks at the end of their first year of study, the questionnaire was also intended to provide information about the range of resources that students had employed in preparing their research projects, and the level of skill they felt they had attained in using those resources. The questionnaire was further intended to provide results which could be used in a longitudinal comparison against data obtained at the beginning of the year. To this end, it included a number of questions (some slightly amended) that had been posed in the pre-treatment Survey of Student Experience (Chapter 4).

In order to provide an analysis of the effectiveness of the Research Training Programme, both the experimental group and the control group answered the same questions under the same conditions, and their results were compared.

6.1.2 The experimental group

The 86 students in the experimental group were enrolled in one of the EAP classes which included the Research Training Programme. Forty-nine of those students were trained by the researcher and the others by other instructors who worked under the researcher's supervision (as detailed in Chapter 3). All of the students in this

group belonged to either the faculty of Arts (34.1%) or the faculty of Social Sciences (65.9%).

6.1.3 The control group

The 91 students who made up the control group were drawn from a variety of faculties: 16.7% of the students from the Social Sciences, 41.1% enrolled in the faculty of Science, 10% registered with the faculty of Communication, and 32.2% in Business. These students had all attended EAP classes that had not employed the experimental Training Programme. The differences in the control and the experimental groups have been discussed in detail in the Methodology chapter (Chapter 3.6.3).

6.1.4 GPA (Grade Point Average)

The two groups showed a similar distribution of Grade Point Averages among their students. Thirty-one percent of the experimental group, and 29.2% of the control group had a GPA between 3.0 and 3.49. In the experimental group, 47.6%, and, in the control group, 53.9% of students reported a GPA between 2.5 and 2.99. Nineteen percent of the experimental group and 15.7% of the control group's GPA ranked between 2.0 and 2.49. In the experimental group, 2.4% of students had a GPA of less than 2.0, while in the control group only 1.2% had such a low GPA.

6.1.5 Language

A difference appeared between the groups in the language they used most often for written assignments. The vast majority of the control group (91.0%) reported that they used English for most of their written assignments, while only 47.6% of the experimental group primarily used English for this purpose. This difference is most

likely a result of the fact that 25% of the experimental group were from the department of Chinese Language and Literature. These students would only be required to use English in their EAP classes.

6.2 RESULTS

It was expected that those students who were exposed to the Research Training Programme would have gained skills in researching and presenting topics for their academic assignments at a higher level and would have gained more confidence in those skills than students who participated a regular EAP course without the experimental component of the Research Training Programme.

6.2.1 Research experience

In order to measure the benefits of this Research Training Programme, and for the comparisons to be meaningful, the students in both groups had to have conducted research in their major at some point during the university year. To ensure this, the questionnaire included a question asking the students whether or not they had prepared such a project. With the exception of three students (3.4%) and three non-respondents in the control group, all of the students had fulfilled this requirement. The meaning of the phrase 'research for a project' was clarified with the statement: "you had to research a topic and present your findings in writing or orally".

6.2.2 Research training

5. *Have you ever received any training at University on how to research a topic?*
A. Yes B. No
If yes, please specify _____.

	Experimental		Control	
	Number of students	%	Number of students	%
Yes	86	100.0	21	23.1
No	0	0.0	64	70.3
Missing	0	0.0	6	6.6
Total	86	100.0	91	100.0

All of the students in the experimental group had participated in the EAP Research Training Programme. However, the type of research training that students in the control group had received at the university level was unknown. According to the results of the survey, twenty-one students or 23.1% of the control group acknowledged that they had been involved in some form of research instruction. Details given, however, were too vague to be comprehensible.

Seventy percent of the control group students answered “no” to this question, and the remaining six of the 91 students did not answer this question.

6. *Have you ever received any practical training on how to use library resources (other than the University Life)?*
 A. Yes B. No
 If yes, please specify _____.

	Experimental		Control	
	Number of students	%	Number of students	%
Yes	85	98.8	16	17.6
No	0	0	71	78.0
Missing	1	1.2	4	4.4
Total	86	100.0	91	100.0

All of the students in the experimental group had received training in the use of library resources as part of the EAP Research Training Programme, and 16

(17.6%) of the control group had undergone research training in some other context. Many students reported the training received as part of the introduction to the University Life (in spite of instructions) which, as mentioned earlier, included 2 hours of lecture type, without hands-on practice in the university library.

6.2.3 Confidence levels

7. *Do you feel confident in using library resources?*
 A. Yes B. No

	Experimental		Control	
	Number of students	%	Number of students	%
Yes	86	100.0	17	18.7
No	0	0.0	68	74.7
Missing	0	0.0	4	4.4
Invalid	0	0.0	2	2.2
Total	86	100.0	91	100.0

As discussed in various parts of this study, Hong Kong Baptist University students typically arrive from secondary school with very little research experience, and very little confidence in using library resources. One of the goals of this EAP Research Training Programme has been to increase students' confidence levels in library and other research-related skills so that they will be better placed to optimise their academic performance. The results of the above question suggest that the training offered in the EAP programme successfully instils in the students a strong sense of confidence in library use; all of the students who were involved in the experimental group (EAP research training group) report that they are confident in using library resources, while only 18.7% of the control group can say that they feel confident in doing so.

These results not only attest to a marked improvement in the confidence levels of the trained group since the time of the initial survey, but also indicate a drop in confidence of the control group. Confidence in library skills was expressed by 33% of the students in the initial questionnaire, rising at the end of the year to 100% in the experimental group and falling to 18.7% in the control group.

8. *Would you feel confident finding information on a given topic with no guidelines or assistance from your tutor?*

	Experimental		Control	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Never/Seldom	1	1.2	48	52.7
Occasionally	40	46.5	35	38.5
Often/Very Often	45	52.3	8	8.8
Total	86	100.0	91	100.0

Students who took part in the training programme expressed more confidence than others in locating information independently. Only a small minority (8.8%) of the students in the control group said that they felt comfortable looking for information without guidance, while a clear majority of the experimental group reported confidence in this situation.

Affirming the results of the previous question, these figures mark a positive change in the confidence levels of the students in the experimental group. At the beginning of the academic year, 56.1% of all students indicated that they would never or seldom feel confident finding information without guidance, 34% said they would feel confident on occasion, and 9.8% expressed feeling confident often. In the second survey, the results of the control group remained much the same as in the initial survey, while the students in the experimental group clearly demonstrated a move toward independence in carrying out research.

6.2.4 Use of resources

15 – 25. *How often have you used the following resources or materials to complete your projects/assignments in your Major?*

Table 37 Frequency of use of materials for assignments or projects in student's major at Hong Kong Baptist University

	Never/Seldom % of students		Occasionally %		Often/Very Often %	
	Exp	Cont	Exp	Cont	Exp	Cont
15. Textbook or lecturer handouts	10.8	7.8	22.9	28.9	66.3	63.3
16. Recommended reading	27.9	30.8	27.9	47.2	44.2	22.0
17. English-English dictionary	37.6	34.0	31.8	37.4	30.6	28.6
18. Videos and TV programs	50.0	49.4	37.2	31.9	12.8	18.7
19. Internet	27.9	30.8	25.6	13.2	46.5	56.0
20. Magazines and newspapers	23.3	35.1	36.0	37.4	40.7	27.5
21. Encyclopaedia	18.6	95.6	31.4	4.4	50.0	0.0
22. Reference books	7.0	64.8	24.4	19.8	68.6	15.4
23. Volumes of indexes	14.1	91.2	37.7	8.8	48.2	0.0
24. Professional journals	46.4	84.6	28.6	12.1	25.0	3.3
25. Information from books	4.8	10.0	22.3	37.8	72.9	52.2

15. Textbooks and lecturers' handouts

	Experimental		Control	
	Number of students	%	Number of students	%
Never/Seldom	9	10.8	7	7.8
Occasionally	19	22.9	26	28.9
Often/Very Often	55	66.3	57	63.3
Total	83	100.0	90	100.0

The experimental and the control groups reported similar usage of textbooks and lecturers' handouts. A majority of the students (experimental: 66.3%, control: 63.3%) used these materials often or very often, while 10.8% of the experimental group and 7.8% of the control group never or seldom used their notes or handouts to complete projects in their major.

Over the year, both groups slightly decreased their reliance on the use of textbooks and lecturers' handouts for assignments – as seen by the shift of a small percentage of students from frequent to occasional use. The initial survey showed 9.9% of students rarely using textbooks or handouts, 17.8% occasionally and 72.3% frequently using these sources of information.

16. Recommended reading

	Experimental		Control	
	Number of students	%	Number of students	%
Never/Seldom	24	27.9	28	30.8
Occasionally	24	27.9	43	47.2
Often/Very Often	38	44.2	20	22.0
Total	86	100.0	91	100.0

Students in the experimental group were more inclined than those in the control group to make use of readings that were recommended by lecturers, but which were not compulsory. In the experimental group, 44.2% of students often used optional readings to complete their assignments, while only 22% of the control group made such frequent use of recommended materials.

Close to one third of the students in both groups never or seldom used optional readings (exp: 27.9%, cont 30.8%), while 27.9% of the trained group and 47.2% of the control group occasionally opted to use recommended materials.

Again, the experimental group showed more of an improvement over the school year than did the control group. The percentage of students in the experimental group that made frequent use of optional reading was almost double that of the percentage estimates at the start of the year, while the control group gained a few occasional users but retained the same percentage of frequent users. The results of the initial survey revealed that 36% never or seldom, 40.8%

occasionally, and 23.2% often or very often used optional readings as a source of information for their assignments.

18. Videos and TV programmes

	Experimental		Control	
	Number of students	%	Number of students	%
Never/Seldom	43	50.0	45	49.4
Occasionally	32	37.2	29	31.9
Often/Very Often	11	12.8	17	18.7
Total	86	100.0	91	100.0

The two groups reported a similar pattern of use of TV programmes and videos. In both groups, 50% of students never or seldom made use of these sources of information for their projects at university, and just slightly more of the control group than the experimental group (18.7% versus 12.8%) said that they often referred to TV or video. The remainder of the groups occasionally used videos or TV programmes in their research (exp: 37.2%; cont: 31.9%).

These figures also indicate a slight increase in the use of these media by both groups since the initial survey. The initial survey revealed that 70.6% of students rarely used information from the TV or video for research, while 21.8% used it occasionally and only 7.6% used this type of information frequently.

19. Internet

	Experimental		Control	
	Number of students	%	Number of students	%
Never/Seldom	24	27.9	28	30.8
Occasionally	22	25.6	12	13.2
Often/Very Often	40	46.5	51	56.0
Total	86	100.0	91	100.0

The Internet appears to be a popular medium among all students for obtaining research information. Forty-six percent of the experimental group, and 56% of the control group used the Internet to prepare their research assignments. Approximately one quarter of the experimental group never used the Internet and the same number occasionally used it, while 30.8 % of the control group never used the medium and 13.2% used it on occasion.

Earlier in the year, neither group was using the Internet as frequently for their projects. A large majority of the students (82.8%) reported that they had seldom or never made use of the Internet or CD-ROMs, while 10% said they had used them on occasion, and 7.2% indicated that they made use of them frequently. These figures, therefore, demonstrate a significant increase in the use of the Internet.

20. Magazines and newspapers

	Experimental		Control	
	Number of students	%	Number of students	%
Never/Seldom	20	23.3	32	35.1
Occasionally	31	36.0	34	37.4
Often/Very Often	35	40.7	25	27.5
Total	86	100.0	91	100.0

The Research Training Programme seems to have made its students more aware than other students of the value of using magazines and newspapers in research projects. This latest questionnaire indicated that while these materials were used often by 40.7% of the experimental group, only 27.5 % of the control group made use of them on such a frequent basis. Further, more students in the control group (35.1%) than in the experimental group (23.3%) reported that they never or seldom referred to magazines or newspapers, while in both groups a similar

percentage (exp: 36%; cont: 37.6%) of students claimed to use magazines or newspapers every so often for research purposes.

Both groups increased their use of these media over the course of the year, although the experimental group increased their utilisation more than did the control group. At the start of the year, 41.5% of the students rarely made use of magazines or newspapers, 35.6% made occasional use, and 22.9% used them often or very often.

21. *Encyclopaedias*

	Experimental		Control	
	Number of students	%	Number of students	%
Never/Seldom	16	18.6	87	95.6
Occasionally	27	31.4	4	4.4
Often/Very Often	43	50.0	0	0.0
Total	86	100.0	91	100.0

The Research Training Programme appears to have successfully encouraged students to use encyclopaedias as a source of information for their research projects: 50% of students in the Research Training Programme made frequent use of encyclopaedias, while only 4% of the control group made occasional use of encyclopaedias. None of the control group reported having used encyclopaedias with any frequency. Instead, 95% admitted that they never or rarely used them.

Encyclopaedia use by students in the experimental group had increased dramatically by year end, while their use in the control group was very similar to that recorded in the first survey. Initially, 92.9% of students never or seldom made use of encyclopaedias for their research, 5.4% made use of them occasionally, and only 1.7% used them often.

22. Reference books

	Experimental		Control	
	Number of students	%	Number of students	%
Never/Seldom	6	7.0	59	64.8
Occasionally	21	24.4	18	19.8
Often/Very Often	59	68.6	14	15.4
Total	86	100.0	91	100.0

Likewise, a difference between the groups was evident in their use of reference books. A sizeable majority of students in the training programme (68.6%) used reference books often, while the majority of the control group (64.8%) indicated that they never or seldom used reference books in their research projects.

Correspondingly, a small minority of the experimental group (7%) never or seldom used reference books and a slightly larger minority (15.4%) of the control group reported that they frequently used them for their project work. Twenty-four percent of the experimental and 19.8% of the control group used reference books on an occasional basis.

23. Indexes

	Experimental		Control	
	Number of students	%	Number of students	%
Never/Seldom	12	14.1	83	91.2
Occasionally	32	37.6	8	8.8
Often/Very Often	41	48.3	0	0.0
Total	85	100.0	91	100.0

The results from this question again demonstrate the successful influence that the research programme has had in the range of resources used by students for their project work. Far more of the students in the experimental group (48%) reported

frequent use of the indexes available in the library to source information than did students in the control group (0%). The vast majority of students in the control group (95%) had seldom or never made use of the indexes, and the remaining 8.8% had used them occasionally. On the other hand, only 14.1% of the experimental group reported rarely using indexes, while 37.7% did make occasional use of them.

24. Professional journals

	Experimental		Control	
	Number of students	%	Number of students	%
Never/Seldom	39	46.4	77	84.6
Occasionally	24	28.6	11	12.1
Often/Very Often	21	25.0	3	3.3
Total	84	100.0	91	100.0

Although relatively few of the students used professional journals, a higher percentage of students from the group in training (25%) than in the control group (3.3%) reported having used professional journals often. Most of the control group (85%) rarely made use of them at all, while 12.1% used them occasionally. Of the experimental group, 46.4% used these journals rarely and 18.6% occasionally for their project work.

While the control group showed no increase in the usage of professional journals since the first questionnaire, the experimental group showed a dramatic one. The first survey indicated that 80% of students had never or seldom used journals for research, 14.7% used them on occasion, and 5.3% used them frequently.

25. Information from books

	Experimental		Control	
	Number of students	%	Number of students	%
Never/Seldom	4	4.8	9	10.0
Occasionally	19	22.3	34	37.8
Often/Very Often	62	72.9	47	52.2
Total	85	100.0	90	100.0

The experimental group led the control group slightly in their frequency of obtaining information from books for their projects, with 72.9% of the former and 52.2% of the latter group claiming to use books often as a resource for project work. Only 4.8% of the experimental group stated that they rarely or never used books for research and 22.3% reported to be occasional users. Within the control group, 10% of the students recalled that they never or seldom used information from books, and 37.8% said that they used books occasionally for research purposes.

6.2.5 Skill in library use

26 – 32. *How well can you use the following resources to locate information in English?*

A dramatic difference between students in the two groups was evident in their ability to find information, in English, for use in their university research projects. In answer to every question, at least 50% of the experimental group said that they had learned the skill well, and fewer than 6% had expressed any difficulty with the skill. Although the control group reported a high level of skill using both reference books and the Internet, over 64% of the group admitted to difficulty in locating information by the other methods that were listed.

Table 38 Skill in locating information in English for research projects at HKBU

	Not at all/with much difficulty %		With little difficulty %		Quite well/very well %	
	Exp	Cont	Exp	Cont	Exp	Cont
26. Key words in OPAC to find specific information	0.0	64.8	29.8	26.4	70.2	8.8
27. OPAC to locate periodicals	2.4	73.6	36.5	25.3	61.1	1.1
28. Internet to obtain information on a given topic	1.2	12.1	19.8	28.6	79.0	59.3
29. Indexes to find articles in periodicals	5.8	74.7	37.2	20.9	57.0	4.4
30. Encyclopaedias to find information	5.8	82.4	38.4	15.4	55.8	2.2
31. Bibliographies of one source to locate further references	3.5	82.2	40.0	17.8	56.5	0.0
32. Reference books	4.8	12.1	22.9	45.0	72.3	42.9

26. Key words in OPAC

	Experimental		Control	
	Number of students	%	Number of students	%
Not at all/with much difficulty	0	0.0	59	64.8
With little difficulty	25	29.8	24	26.4
Quite well/very well	59	70.2	8	8.8
Total	84	100.0	91	100.0

A large percentage of the experimental group (70.2%) considered that they had mastered the use of key words in OPAC to find specific information. None of the students in this group reported having much difficulty with this task, while 64.8% of the control group did experience difficulty. Only 8.8% of the control group used key words in OPAC well. Twenty-six percent of the control group and 29.8%

of the experimental group indicated that they had managed such tasks with a little difficulty.

27. *OPAC to locate periodicals*

This question generated a similar response to the last. The large majority of students in the experimental group (61.1%) thought that they used OPAC quite well to locate periodicals, while the majority of students in the control group (73.6%) appeared to have much difficulty in doing so.

	Experimental		Control	
	Number of students	%	Number of students	%
Not at all/with much difficulty	2	2.4	67	73.6
With little difficulty	31	36.5	23	25.3
Quite well/very well	52	61.1	1	1.1
Total	85	100.0	91	100.0

Only a few students in the trained group (2.4%) appeared to have serious difficulties, and the remaining 36.5% handled this task with little difficulty. Very few of the control group (1.1%) managed this activity quite well, while 25.3% experienced some difficulty.

28. *Internet to obtain information on a given topic*

	Experimental		Control	
	Number of students	%	Number of students	%
Not at all/with much difficulty	1	1.2	11	12.1
With little difficulty	17	19.8	26	28.6
Quite well/very well	68	79.0	54	59.3
Total	86	100.0	91	100.0

The control group fared better with Internet than with the other resources. In this group, 59.3% of students reported being able to use the Internet quite well, and 12.1% expressed difficulty with its use. However, the experimental group again claimed greater skill, with 79.0% of its students saying that they could use of the Internet well and only 1.2% of students recalling much difficulty. Twenty percent of the trained group and 28.6% of the control group encountered a little difficulty with this method of obtaining information.

29. *Indexes to find articles in periodicals*

	Experimental		Control	
	Number of students	%	Number of students	%
Not at all/with much difficulty	5	5.8	68	74.7
With little difficulty	32	37.2	19	20.9
Quite well/very well	49	57.0	4	4.4
Total	86	100.0	91	100.0

Again, the experimental group exceeded the control group in the number of students with accomplished skill in this task. Most of the trained group experienced no difficulty (57%) or only a little difficulty (37.2%), and only 5.8% of this group claimed much difficulty. In contrast, a large number of the control group encountered either much difficulty (74.7%) or a little difficulty (20.9%) with this library resource. Only 4.4% of the control group stated that they used indexes quite well.

30. *Encyclopaedias to find information.*

	Experimental		Control	
	Number of students	%	Number of students	%
Not at all/with much difficulty	5	5.8	75	82.4
With little difficulty	33	38.4	14	15.4
Quite well/very well	48	55.8	2	2.2
Total	86	100.0	91	100.0

Responses very similar to those for the previous question were obtained for the question on encyclopaedias, with most of the trained group (55.8%) excelling in their use and most of the control group (82.4%) experiencing much difficulty. Two percent of the control group reported that they used encyclopaedias well, but 38.4% found their use a little difficult. Some difficulty was had by 38.4% of the trained group, but only 5.8% of this group still found encyclopaedia use very difficult.

31. *Bibliographies of one source to locate further references*

	Experimental		Control	
	Number of students	%	Number of students	%
Not at all/with much difficulty	3	3.5	74	82.2
With little difficulty	34	40.0	16	17.8
Quite well/very well	48	56.5	0	0.0
Total	85	100.0	90	100.0

Once again, the experimental group indicated a mastery of the skill that the control group did not. None of students in the control group claimed to use this source of information well – most (82.2%) found this very difficult, and many (17.8%) found this task somewhat difficult. Within the experimental group, 56.5%

used bibliographies skilfully as a resource, 40% found it a little difficult, but only 3.5% found this very difficult.

32. Reference books

Like the Internet, reference books are a popular research tool, with both groups reportedly finding them easy to use for their research work.

	Experimental		Control	
	Number of students	%	Number of students	%
Not at all/with much difficulty	4	4.8	11	12.1
With little difficulty	19	22.9	41	45.0
Quite well/very well	60	72.3	39	43.9
Total	83	100.0	91	100.0

Seventy-two percent of the experimental group stated that they used reference books quite well, 22.9% with some difficulty, and 4.8% found them very difficult to use for research. The control group appeared to have found their use in research slightly more difficult; 12.1% found them very difficult to use in research, and 45% experienced some difficulty. However, the control group had more success with this resource than most other resources, as 42.9% of the group used reference books quite well for the purpose of research.

6.2.6 Learning preferences

Questions 9 -14 (Table 39) sought students' views on their preferred ways of learning. Students from the experimental group expressed far greater enjoyment for new methods of learning and studying than did students in the control group, as presented in Table 39 below. Of the control group, 31.1% said that they never or seldom enjoyed trying new ways of studying, and a further 44.4% said that they

enjoyed doing so occasionally. By contrast, a great majority of students in the experimental group said that they enjoyed trying new ways of learning – 40.7% occasionally and a further 57% often. Students in the experimental group also professed to experience greater difficulty in producing new ideas than at the beginning of the academic year – an outcome which was somewhat surprising.

Table 39 Learning preferences

	Never/Seldom %		Occasionally %		Often/Very Often %	
	Exp	Cont	Exp	Cont	Exp	Cont
9. Do you enjoy trying new ways of studying and learning?	2.3	31.1	40.7	44.4	57.0	24.4
10. Do you prefer to use the study methods that have worked for you in the past?	5.8	9.9	39.5	45.1	54.7	45.1
11. Do you prefer to have as many sources of information as possible?	4.7	16.5	40.0	35.2	55.3	48.4
12. Do you find it difficult to produce new ideas?	4.7	25.0	43.0	45.5	52.3	29.6
13. Do you try to related what you have learned in one subject to what you are studying in other subjects?	4.7	14.3	50.6	39.6	44.7	46.2
14. Do you find it confusing to have too much information about a subject?	29.8	20.9	34.5	37.4	35.8	41.8

6.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results of this second survey suggest that the first year of university study has brought about changes for all the students surveyed. However, those students who took part in the Research Training Programme appear, at year's end, to have gained considerably more experience and confidence in research-related tasks than did their control group counterparts.

6.3.1 Confidence

Both groups of students (control and experimental) were required to carry out some form of research project during the year – aside from that set in EAP classes, but it would appear that only the experimental group received any real training in how to research topics. Fewer than a quarter of the control group indicated that they had received any such training – a similar number to that in the initial survey.

At the end of the year, students in the control group seemed no more confident than they had been initially in finding information independently; over half said they would never or seldom feel confident and 8.8% that they would often feel confident. Further, many appeared to be less confident than they had been initially in their ability to use library resources.

By contrast, members of the experimental group all acknowledged their training in researching topics and showed dramatic improvement in levels of confidence, both in using library resources and in researching topics without the guidance of teachers. In the first instance 33% of students described themselves as confident and, in the second, over half said they were confident, with only 1.2% saying that they would seldom or never feel confident.

6.3.2 Use of resources

The frequency with which students used textbooks, teacher handouts, TV, video and Internet resources for assignments throughout the year was shown to be very similar for both groups. TV and video resources were used slightly more than they had been at the beginning of the year, and textbooks and handouts slightly less. Internet sources, on the other hand, were used far more than they had been previously – perhaps because they are easily available within the university.

For the other library resources surveyed, the pattern of use shown for the experimental group differed markedly from that of the control group. Students in the experimental group were more likely to use recommended reading in preparing assignments and projects. They also made greater use of magazines and newspapers and periodicals than did students in the control group.

The most pronounced differences between the two groups were shown in the use of encyclopaedias, indexes and reference books. Encyclopaedia use in the experimental group increased dramatically over the year but was little changed for those in the control group. Students in the experimental group also reported making considerably more use of indexes and references than did their control group counterparts. None of the students in the control group claimed to have used indexes frequently, but 48% of the experimental group said they had. A total of 95% of the control group said that they never/seldom used them, as opposed to 14.1% of the experimental group. Likewise, while the majority of students in the experimental group said that they often used reference books, the majority of the control group said that they seldom or never did.

Relatively few students in either group used periodicals but, again, the percentage use was notably higher in the experimental group, with 25% reporting

that they used these resources often and 46.4% saying they used them rarely: this was opposed to 3.3% and 85% respectively in the control group.

6.3.3 Library skills

Students in the control group reported being able to access information through both the Internet and reference books with relative ease (59.3% and 43% respectively said they used it well, and a further 28.6% and 45% said they experienced little difficulty), though their claims in respect of reference books are somewhat puzzling, given that 64% of the group reported seldom or never using this resource for projects.

Students in the control group appear to have experienced much greater difficulty in using the other resources listed – over 64%, and in some cases over 80% admitting to having had difficulty locating information by those means. Most difficult to use appeared to be encyclopaedias and bibliographies (82.4% said that they could only use encyclopaedias with much difficulty or not at all, and 82.2% said that they could use bibliographies only with difficulty or not at all) while the use of indexes rated as slightly less difficult.

By comparison, far fewer students in the experimental group experienced that degree of difficulty in locating information using the other means listed (less than 6% for any one resource). At least 50% of the students in the experimental group reported that they could use these methods well. These students found encyclopaedias, indexes and bibliographies less easy to use.

6.3.4 Learning preferences

While in most respects the learning preferences of students in the experimental and control groups were similar, the groups differed markedly in their attitudes to new approaches to learning and in the degree to which they felt able to produce 'new' ideas.

Students in the experimental group expressed a far greater liking for trying new ways of studying. The majority (54.7%) said that they often enjoyed these methods and only 2.3% said that they never enjoyed trying new ways of learning. By contrast, 31.1% of the control group indicated that they seldom or never enjoyed trying new approaches, and only 24.4% said that they often enjoyed trying new ways of studying or learning. Rather surprisingly, it was the students from the experimental group who admitted having the greatest difficulties producing new ideas. While 52.3% said that they often experienced difficulties, only 4.7% said that they seldom or never did – this as compared with 29.6% and 25% respectively for control group students. The reasons for this difference are not clear. However it seems unlikely that it is due to any actual difference in abilities between the two groups. It seems more likely that the difference might lie in differing expectations set down by teachers for work in different courses. The Research Training Programme emphasised individual and creative work. Students were expected to produce original writing and were penalised if they did not – requirements which appeared to be new to many students and which many found difficult to meet.

6.4 CONCLUSIONS

The survey responses of those students who took part in the Research Training Programme were significantly different from those given by students involved in the routine EAP classes. This was the case both in terms of the confidence and the skills students claimed to have for research-related work and in the pattern of materials that students used in their work throughout the year.

Students from the experimental group recognised the various skills and strategies that had been covered in the Research Training Programme and expressed far greater confidence than their counterparts in finding resources independently and using the library resources available to them. At the conclusion of the programme, very few students reported feeling unable to carry out research without the guidance of teachers, or experiencing difficulty in accessing information by the means they had been taught. Most expressed a strong liking for trying new ways of learning and studying.

By contrast, students in the control group were less likely to enjoy new approaches to learning. They were far less confident in their ability to find information independently. They also reported using a much smaller range of resources than students in the experimental group, and also expressed a greater degree of difficulty in accessing materials. Indeed students in the control group appeared to be even less confident in their ability to use library resources than they had been at the beginning of the year.

Over the year, both groups of students had dramatically increased their use of the Internet in carrying out research. Only the experimental group, however, showed an increase in the use of resources such as indexes, encyclopaedias and reference books, and periodicals. They made far greater use of these resources than did

students in the control group. Students in the experimental group were also more likely to use the reading recommended by their teachers in preparing their assignments.

As mentioned previously, students from the experimental group felt less confident than their counterparts in producing new ideas. This outcome cannot be properly interpreted on the basis of information gathered to date and needs further study. It is possible, though, that it reflects not simply a lack of confidence borne of inexperience on the part of those students, but a realistic concern arising from increased awareness of the need for originality in tertiary level study and research. Throughout the course it was apparent that students had considerable difficulty in meeting requirements for original lines of inquiry, avoiding plagiarism and developing their own line of discussion on a chosen topic, and from discussions in interviews it would seem that these requirements were not necessarily part of other course work.

Whatever the reason for this outcome, it is to be hoped that as students move to further and more advanced study, their recognition of the nature of, and need for, originality and creative work, together with the skills they have acquired in accessing and using research materials, will encourage them to follow independent lines of study and help them to achieve optimal academic success.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7.0 Conclusions

7.1 INTRODUCTION

7.2 RETROSPECTIVE LIMITATIONS

7.3 CONCLUSIONS

7.3.1 Secondary school experience

7.3.2 University study

7.3.3 Research Training Programme

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.4.1 General recommendations

7.4.2 Recommendations for Hong Kong Baptist University

7.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

7.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusions

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Over the years the researcher has observed that when first-year students are faced with their first basic research assignments in English, the majority show themselves unable to analyse the tasks, identify and locate potential sources of information, select and use the most suitable materials, and present the results in an original and creative manner and in an appropriate format in English (Bankowski 1999; Bankowski and Cotton 1996).

Hong Kong secondary schools, being examination-oriented (Hamps-Lyons 1998), have not trained students for tasks requiring an independent and creative approach, and therefore have not prepared them adequately for the western inquisitive style of tertiary education. The dramatic change in the structure of the learning tasks at university level leaves Hong Kong first year undergraduates confused and often unable to achieve their maximum academic potential (Kember 1996).

The objectives of the present study, therefore, were two-fold,

- to examine and analyse the nature of experience and training Hong Kong students have received throughout their secondary education in carrying out tasks requiring an independent approach, such as research projects or other investigative tasks;
- to study the effectiveness of a specially designed Research Training Programme on the development of autonomous learning strategies in Hong Kong students.

It was hoped that EAP training could serve not only to equip students with the language skills required for tertiary study, but to fit them better for the more independent, inquisitive style of learning characteristic of university study. I have endeavoured to develop teaching methods and materials that ensure that the content of lessons is interesting and relevant, that provide goals that are both challenging and attainable, and that encourage students to take charge of their own learning – thereby giving them the opportunity to make their own way and to engage in creative and independent study when formal training ends or is not available.

It was hypothesised at the outset that:

- a) students' learning behaviour is conditioned by the school educational culture which in Hong Kong is reported to favour rote learning and passivity. Independence and creativity are not encouraged at primary and secondary levels and when research projects are introduced to students at university, they are met with resentment, confusion and a lack of understanding;
- b) Hong Kong students are inclined to use primitive learning strategies. The reason for that is lack of awareness of more sophisticated methods and lack of training and experience. Students have only developed those study skills which were needed to tackle the tasks assigned to them in secondary skills and those did not require creativity or intellectual stimulation;
- c) EAP teachers could guide learners in acquiring skills related to independent study by providing a bridge between prior learning

experience and the more individual, inquisitive style of Western tertiary education;

- d) properly designed EAP training and project assignments could teach and stimulate independence if their topic contexts were relevant to students' needs and if target skills were immediately applicable to other academic tasks;
- e) introduction of custom-made Project Packages in EAP courses could help to meet the need for materials that could be seen as more relevant to students and students would be able to experience realistic language in a lively way that also matched their individual interests. The packages, and the additional training in the steps involved in conducting the basic research for the purpose of writing an academic paper, would equip students with very useful academic skills required for creative and independent study;
- f) instructional methods, such as autonomous learning, being Western educational innovations, cannot be directly transplanted into a different socio-cultural context. Established social and personal values have to be considered and adjustments allowed for a successful implementation of any new method into a society. Once students are successfully guided through the process of acquiring new learning strategies, they can then have confidence in managing their own learning and thus skills to define learning needs and identify learning recourses. This reduces their dependency on the teacher, exposes them to the resources, challenges them and provides them with tools for lifelong learning.

The first stage of this study, as outlined in Chapter 3, was to determine the extent of students' experience and training in carrying out independent, research-type tasks and to learn something of their confidence and attitudes towards this type of learning. This was done by way of a broad survey of all year one Hong Kong Baptist University students, the findings of which were compared with results of a similar survey administered at the close of the academic year. The results of this part of the investigation are presented in Chapters 4 and 6.

The experimental section of this study has focused on a group of first year undergraduate students attending the EAP classes throughout the year and on the implementation of a specially designed Research Training Programme. The course was specifically tailored to meet students' EAP needs whilst training them in skills and strategies related to small-scale research tasks. Students' experiences in participating in the Research Training Programme were closely monitored and the influence of the Programme on their academic work, attitudes and confidence throughout the year was assessed by evaluation of their course work and through surveys (Chapter 5). Comparison, at year end, of the survey responses of the experimental group and those given by students in control group, not included in the programme, provided a measure of the broader influence of the Programme – the extent to which the training offered in EAP classes had influenced students' attitudes and approaches to their wider academic studies (Chapter 6).

7.2 RETROSPECTIVE LIMITATIONS

As is generally the case, there are aspects of this investigation that might have been carried out differently and which, given, the time and opportunity, in future studies would need to be revised or extended. Some of these limitations were imposed at the outset by circumstance and design as detailed in Chapter 3. In retrospect it has emerged that a number of elements in the research design which initially did not seem important have proved to be significant when subjected to more detailed analysis.

Whilst enabling the use of a large sample, the use of OMR cards did not allow for the open or multiple responses which in turn might have clarified answers or suggested ways in which the Research Training Programme could be extended or modified. Interviews did serve to fill this gap to some degree. However, the small sample used and the need for those students to be reasonably confident and proficient in their use of English meant that responses could not necessarily be generalised to the wider sample population.

Information that came to hand as the study progressed also suggested ways in which the study or the Programme might be modified, though in many cases, owing to constraints of the academic schedule, it was not possible to effect changes once the Programme had begun. In collating the data from the initial survey for use in development in subsequent stages of the study, it became evident that some of questions should have been presented to invite scaled responses and that the format used in the survey yielded results which were limited in their application. Despite careful piloting, these shortcomings had not come to light earlier.

Much of the material used in the Programme had to be prepared according to the academic schedule for the year, rather than as study data came to hand. Teaching

materials, Research Packages, and the initial questionnaire had to be available at the outset of the first semester; other materials had to be developed and introduced as time allowed throughout the year.

Interviews, though run as early in the year as possible, were still held two months into the semester, at a time when secondary study had ended and students were well entrenched in their tertiary work. The initial survey alone provided a baseline measure of students' experience and confidence in research-related activities, since the teaching schedule did not allow for testing of students' research skills at the outset of the year. A measure of students' actual (as opposed to reported) skill or ability in these areas could not be made until mid-way through the first semester, when students had already been exposed to some research training and tasks through the Programme.

Despite their obvious enthusiasm for the Programme and their acknowledgement of its relevance to their wider studies, students' input was naturally affected by the demands of their other courses to which they inevitably gave priority. In some cases this meant that they rushed their project work, or, particularly close to end of year examinations, that they "skipped" classes. As has been previously mentioned, this last factor affected the response rate to the student evaluation questionnaire, since close to 20% of the students in the experimental group were absent from class and could not be contacted to take part.

7.3 CONCLUSIONS

The results of the investigations throughout this project support previous informal observations, confirm hypotheses and again highlight the educational dichotomy faced by first year undergraduate students in Hong Kong that has been noted by other researchers (Biggs 1992, Cheng 1995, Hamp-Lyons 1998) and that was outlined in the Education Commission's report on Higher Education in 1996 and further stated Education Commission Blueprint in May 2000.

Conclusions drawn from this study have been grouped into three categories: those related to students' experiences in secondary school, their study at university and finally the effects of the experimental treatment.

7.3.1 Secondary school experience

- It would appear that, as the Hong Kong Education Commission (1996) pointed out, the modes of learning and expectations of confidence in place at university are indeed different from those at school; that there is a real need for teachers to develop ways to help their students make the transition from one level of learning to another.
- As hypothesised, results of the broad survey of first year undergraduates at HKBU and of interviews with selected students confirm that students enter university with little experience of and confidence for independent, research-based study. Of those surveyed only a minority had ever received instruction in how to carry out such work (either in English or Chinese) and less than a third had ever prepared a research type project in English. The experience they did have appeared to be elementary, based on information from a few simple sources presented in an uncritical way.

- The range of resources that students had employed in their previous work was also limited. Materials used were generally supplied by teachers – either in book form (for example texts) or as handouts. Only half of the students had ever been required to use more than one source of information for a project and less than half had been required to locate their own resources for assignments. By far the majority of students (80%) had never used the Internet, CD-ROMs or journals in their work, and an even greater number (92%) said that they had seldom or never used encyclopaedias in their school assignments.
- Students' use of libraries, too, would seem to be extremely limited. At the outset of the academic year, the majority of students had little or no training or confidence in using library resources and little experience in using resources other than general books, reference books, and newspapers. Most of the students interviewed indicated that they had seldom used their school libraries for other than leisure reading. Their descriptions of the usual methods employed to find the books they wanted showed that they had little or no idea of how to carry out a comprehensive search using library systems.
- Further, it was confirmed that as students progressed through their secondary schooling, the opportunities for project work – in which they could search for their own materials or follow up topics that were of interest to them, decreased rather than increased. Similar observations were noted in the study of Gow and Kember (1990). Students' work was increasingly focused on acquiring information needed to pass set examinations. Secondary schooling has generally provided students with little opportunity for independent study or thought. It is clear that students have relied heavily on teachers for information and that there

has been little incentive given for them to find their own information, use multiple sources or present their work in an original manner.

- Topics for assignments were usually allocated by teachers and closely allied to course content.
- Although some students indicated that they were required to present their own views and conclusions in their writings, most appeared to be reluctant to do so, feeling that, in order to attain the necessary marks in any subject, the safest and surest course of action was to present information in line with course materials and texts, a further confirmation of Byron and MacMillan's (1990) results.
- Perhaps as a result of the emphasis on passing examinations and their dependence on teachers for direction and materials, few students indicated a desire to use resources other than set course materials in their work and most expressed a preference for those learning situations in which teachers present information and outline major points. Over half of the students surveyed said that they would not (or would seldom) feel comfortable searching for materials on their own; and a significant number indicated that they found it confusing to have too much information about a subject and difficult to produce their own ideas.

7.3.2 University study

- It seems clear that, given their lack of confidence and experience in investigative tasks, first year students will be unable to achieve their maximum academic potential and that part of our role as tertiary teachers must be to help them acquire relevant skills and strategies for learning – rather than simply focusing on the need to pass on factual information related to academic subjects. The

training programme that forms the basis/backbone of this study was designed to that end.

- The findings outlined above are consistent with information obtained in that part of the study which examined students' written and oral work in EAP throughout their first year at university, and also with students' evaluations of their course work. In their first semester, students required considerable input from tutors to adopt and follow novel lines of enquiry, to choose, narrow and research topics for their essays and presentations. The information on which their work was based was, for the most part, drawn from books. The majority of students appeared to use only one or two sources and most failed to acknowledge their sources either by way of references or bibliographies.
- Students clearly struggled and lacked confidence in their ability to complete tasks in English. Many experienced considerable difficulty in organising their material in a coherent way, introducing their research theses, establishing and supporting major points and reaching relevant conclusions. A significant number, too, had obvious difficulty in presenting work in their own words and in developing their own lines of argument.
- In interviews students commented on the difficulties they had experienced in finding and using information, and on how their English abilities at times hampered them in reading materials and in paraphrasing information. Most indicated that the demand for original words and arguments was new to them and some expressed indignation and frustration that they should be penalised for plagiarism.

- Students' comments also highlighted other aspects of the work that were new and challenging to them, for example the need to plan their time, to set their priorities and to balance the often conflicting time demands of their various subjects.
- These findings, then, suggest that the majority of students entering HKBU are generally unprepared for the challenges of independent, research-related work at university level and also confirm the hypotheses of this study.
- In interviews, a significant number of students said that, despite the difficulties they were experiencing in meeting the new demands of university study, they appreciated the freedom associated with it, the chance to leave behind the broad set curriculum and examination based focus of secondary schooling, to take responsibility for their own study, and to have the opportunity to follow subjects of individual interest.

7.3.3 Research Training Programme

- When compared to their work submitted in the first semester, students' essays and oral presentations in the second semester of the Programme show a marked increase in the successful use of research-related skills and a corresponding decrease in instances in which skills were used incorrectly or were not applied at all. In presentations, students appeared to have a better grasp of their subject matter, to be more at ease and more willing or able to use their own words.
- They also show a greater ability to use the formats and structures appropriate to research writing – introducing their research questions and theses, outlining and supporting the main points of their argument, and drawing conclusions based the material presented. Students' later work was generally more cohesive, and more fully covered their chosen topics.

- The work submitted by students can also be seen to be better referenced. All but a few students made use of a greater number and variety of sources and acknowledged them appropriately through citations and bibliographies.
- That students had not mastered the skills and strategies taught through the Programme is clear from their work and also reflected in their assessment of their abilities. Most believed that they had come to a moderate understanding of the skills involved in research. This appraisal is both realistic and reassuring, given students' lack of previous experience in such tasks. As has been previously noted, students would need considerably more practice in order to use research-related skills well and consistently.
- Of the strategies and skills taught through classroom training, those that students claimed to understand best were ones for which the programme had provided support through specially designed worksheets or individual tutor assistance – identifying and selecting suitable topics and references, narrowing topics, formulating research questions and outlines. Interestingly, many of those skills were also perceived to be among the most difficult. Identified as most difficult were skills connected to related reading, formulating research questions, and selecting and narrowing topics for research. These difficulties expressed by students were reflected in their written work and are not surprising given the apparent lack of encouragement given to students prior to entering university to set their own topics and follow their own lines of argument, a situation also noted by other researchers (Murphy 1996).
- The least understood skills, also considered to be the least useful in other academic studies, were those related to the creative use of ideas and materials. Again this would appear to follow on from the learning approaches that students

indicated were predominant in their secondary schools. Why students should perceive the creative presentation of work and ideas as being less relevant to their wider studies than other skills assessed is not clear, but may be associated with the culture (Rudowicz and Hui 1996). It could also be an indication of students' own priorities at this stage of their learning and development. Whichever is the case, it is to be hoped that, as students progress through the levels of tertiary study, they will have increased opportunities and increased desire to develop research skills and to follow their own individual lines of enquiry and thought.

- Responses obtained from the experimental group in our second survey, conducted at the close of the academic year, suggest that as a consequence of EAP training, students had, at year-end, already begun to apply the skills taught in the Programme to their wider studies (Chapter 6).
- As hypothesised, results of the questionnaire point to the value of the focused, teacher support offered throughout the Programme.
- Importantly, students involved in the programme recognised the gains they had made and credited the Programme with helping them develop those skills. Results of the Student Evaluation Questionnaire (Chapter 5) show that students had noted the specific skills involved in the course, were aware of the relative changes in their abilities and had considered the degree to which they were pertinent to their other university work. Overall, students determined that the programme was challenging, interesting, useful and relevant to their wider studies.
- The responses of those who took part in the Research Training Programme also clearly illustrate the gains that these students made ahead of first year students who received regular EAP training. While first-year students, no doubt, adjust to the demands of their university courses and begin to acquire relevant skills in the

course of their normal study, their results serve to demonstrate how specific training can enhance their learning.

- In the course of the year, all students surveyed had dramatically increased the use of the Internet for assignments and projects. However, only those students who had received research training showed an increase in the use of other resources, such as indexes, encyclopaedias, reference books and periodicals in work for their majors.
- These students were also more likely to make use of recommended reading in preparing assignments. They expressed a strong liking for trying new methods of studying and considerable confidence in their abilities to work independently to carry out research, finding and utilising library resources. By contrast, those students not involved in the Programme were no more confident than they had been at the outset of the year and they were significantly less likely to enjoy new approaches to learning. Furthermore, their confidence in using library resources appeared to have dropped as a result of their experiences during the year.

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.4.1 General recommendations

It is clear that, given a supportive environment and appropriate training, Hong Kong students are willing and able to adopt new methods, and keen to follow their individual interests in creative study. It is also apparent that, in order to facilitate students' skill and independence in handling research-related work, teachers need to take an active role in guiding learners and in helping them to make the transition from prior learning practices to the inquisitive and individualistic style of tertiary education. Strategy training and guided, step-by-step, instruction play an important role in raising students' awareness of the learning process, thereby increasing the confidence and skills with which they tackle academic tasks. The nature of the tasks required in such training is important in determining the success of such programmes – that students must perceive work as interesting to them personally, connected and useful to other areas of work, and relevant to their longer term goals.

It is the researcher's hope, then, that this study and the Research Training Programme will provide encouragement and assistance to teachers as they endeavour to help current students make the demanding transition to tertiary level study, and from one style of learning to another. It is also hoped that this project will be of use to those who set the future direction of education in Hong Kong: that it will serve to guide the development of new programmes and systems, and will thereby encourage in future students the curiosity, independence of thought and skills needed for life-long learning.

That being the case, on the basis of the findings, it is highly recommended that the educational authorities in Hong Kong acknowledge the role that independence plays in such learning and that they provide the resources necessary to

facilitate changes in learning and teaching environments within Hong Kong's educational institutions.

These proposed changes should concentrate on:

1. providing a favourable learning environment to foster independence;
2. helping students to become more self-directed and to learn more effectively;
3. supporting the enhancement of teachers' professionalism.

Providing favourable learning environment to foster independence

Independence in learning should be recognised as a way of life and the key to personal and societal development. To foster independence and creative thought among learners educational institutions must provide environment that encourages enjoyment of learning, and that builds on young people's interest and curiosity rather than promote passive acceptance of information. In order to successfully facilitate the change in Hong Kong students' attitude to learning and to promote the concept of self-direction in learning the following is recommended.

- Changes to programmes should be introduced so that subject matter is extended by way of projects and investigative work. In addition to acquiring basic knowledge in core areas, students need be able to look beyond given facts, to access and assess, for themselves, the wider and ever-growing pool of information related to their subjects.
- Learning tasks should be structured so that learning is grounded in skills training and problem solving – rather than being focused simply on knowledge testing and the passing of examinations. Students must have an understanding of processes in order to have confidence and ability to apply their knowledge to new situations.

- Opportunities and situations should be created for learners to complete measurable tasks and the feedback and evaluation provided should assist in learners' development.
- The design of the curriculum and the application of the teaching and learning methods should facilitate growth of students' critical and analytical abilities, assisting them to become aware of contexts and promoting interest in disciplinary inquiry.
- The availability of educational resources and student's awareness and abilities to access them should be broadened.
- Techniques and strategies for self-study could be fostered through peer support groups within content areas.
- Institutions should provide settings where students could gather to support each other and share resources.

Helping students to become more self-directed and to learn more effectively

Learners need to be supported and encouraged in their efforts to take individual responsibility for their own learning. They should be helped to develop, strengthen and understand their own learning styles and learning goals.

- Students should be provided with formal training in self-directed learning concepts and approaches.
- Study skills subjects or their components should be introduced prior to beginning of year one of university; in the pre-session bridging course or at the beginning of the academic year. The dramatic change in the structure of learning tasks that poses such difficulty to first-year university students at present could be considerably lessened if students were given the opportunity to acquire necessary

skills at an earlier stage, through specially targeted programmes available to them in the first year of university study. In this way, many of the difficulties faced by today's students would be alleviated.

- The skills required for self-motivated and independent learning could be introduced, reinforced and refined throughout the entire period of students' formal training across all academic subjects.
- The applicability of self-directed learning strategies to various subject-related tasks and assignments should be ensured to develop learners' potential and expand their experience.
- University educators should assist students to exercise and further develop their self-directedness and help participants acquire perspectives on their own learning needs. They could further encourage the progress of students' autonomy by gradually transferring the responsibility for designing, conducting and evaluating students' own learning.
- Scope should be provided for students to experiment with innovative methods of evaluation and assessment, for example, projects, interviews and team networking.
- The instructional support provided to learners should help them to identify and overcome potential blocks to learning, and point out areas that are likely to prove difficult new or demanding.
- University educators should create better awareness and support for learner autonomy and self-directed learning methods within university, other educational settings and within the wider community.

Supporting the enhancement of teachers' professionalism

Faculty staff needs to understand the learning environment and the range of resources that could be used to facilitate and foster self-direction in learning. The Director of Education has identified teacher training as being “the single most important task in the pursuit of excellence in education” (Hong Kong Education Commission 1999). Not only does Hong Kong need a greater proportion of professionally trained teachers, but if those teachers are to support changes in learning styles, they must themselves value creativity and individuality in their students and be competent to teach student how to learn.

Teachers should be trained to understand their role in promoting learner autonomy and self-directedness in learning. In this context:

- Training in self-directed learning approaches could be provided to the existing teaching force through the in-service training, seminars or short courses.
- The culture and interest in self-directed learning should be fostered through research opportunities and provision of other appropriate academic forums.

7.4.2 Recommendations for Hong Kong Baptist University

The administration of Hong Kong Baptist University should find means to provide necessary resources and support to introduce new academic programmes, restructure existing programmes and train Faculty staff to prepare better their students for the challenges of living and working in the ever changing world of the 21st century.

Introduction of new academic programmes

- The University should introduce an academic programme in developing skills for independent study that includes a holistic approach involving subjects from arts and humanities, business, communication, social sciences and science.
- The choice of supporting and elective subjects covering study skills, learning strategies, project-work skills, and library research skills should be made available to students in their first and second years at the University.
- As an interim measure, the inclusion of topics such as library skills and research skills, as well as topics related to independent work on projects, should be included in the pre-sessional Bridging Course and the University Life subject in the cross- Faculty/ cross-Departmental levels.
- Majors should consider the introduction of a Reading and Consultation week to give students an opportunity to discuss their progress and projects and to provide time for further student reflection and self-study.
- Adequate support should be provided for project work supervision. At present each Faculty staff member offers a minimum of six open consultation hours (office hours) to students. These hours could be better utilized for guidance and feedback given to students.

Staff development

- Innovative teaching should be encouraged through support and availability of resources. Teaching Development Grants should be made available to develop new teaching techniques and to research the effectiveness of teaching and learning.
- Development of "self-directedness and research culture" in various departments should be encouraged through seminars, conferences and in-service training.

Changing the teaching and learning styles

- Students should be helped to develop their problem-solving and critical thinking potential. There is a need to allow time for students to self-study in order to develop original and creative thought. This could be achieved through well-thought-out and well-planned assignments. Heavy workloads would mitigate against this.
- Students' workload should be reduced to essential coverage so that students could have more time for reflection and self-study. Students should be encouraged to participate more actively in their own learning process. They should not be over-taught or over-examined.
- At present, many subjects rely heavily on examinations as the main method of assessing students' progress. Whenever possible, there should be a move towards assessment methods by coursework and project work, rather than the final examination.
- Majors should look for more flexible ways of using lecture and tutorial hours so that individual learning might be encouraged alongside other study techniques.

- The importance of project work or other academic tasks requiring and developing independence should be viewed the main vehicle through which students develop skills which could be transformed to a life-long learning pattern.
- Variations in content to match the needs and interests of the students in various majors is essential. Group and interdisciplinary projects should be encouraged. For example projects assigned in a major subjects could be carried out as part of the EAP course.
- Faculty should give structured feedback to students and consider innovative forms of teaching encouraging students to use their creativity and imagination and helping them to develop resourcefulness. Hong Kong students do not want to be and should not be expected to be passive learners.
- Faculty staff should give up their traditional position of authority and assume more collegial function, developing professional/ academic relationships in which academics assume the role of mentors and guide students towards independence.

Student initiatives

- Space is at premium at the University but some space should be provided for students in order to set up "information sharing" or "experimental stations". The purpose of these would be for students to help, advise and support each other and to promote team research and experimentation.

7.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

Clearly, there are many questions still to be answered and avenues that require further exploration in connection with the field of study associated with this thesis. It is hoped that this Research Training Programme can be further trialled through controlled application in different situations, with wider and varied sample populations. Such investigation would serve to test further the effectiveness of the method employed, to determine which aspects of the Programme are fundamental to its success and to identify ways in which it could be improved to meet better the needs of students. It is hoped, too, that these results can be used to guide the development of similar programmes for use, not only in service courses such as EAP, but in other core tertiary courses.

The limitations of the current system of education in Hong Kong have called for radical changes, as pointed out in Chapter 2.7 of this study. The Hong Kong government has already recognised such need and called for ideas to make these changes as effective as possible (Hong Kong Education Commission 1999).

Based on the findings of this study, the University Grants Committee has awarded funds to the researcher to improve further and broaden the scope of the teaching materials, already designed and tested through this study and to develop a study skills manual for HKBU students.

Further, in conjunction with the library staff, the researcher has become involved in designing for EAP teachers a series of seminars which aims at improving teachers' awareness of the need to train students in basic research skills and to present ways in which such training could be carried out.

The researcher sees the need to test which of the basic research-related skills are most needed to perform academic tasks assigned to students during their first year

of university study and to design and test teaching materials which could introduce those skills to students during their pre-semester training course (the University Life).

7.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The changes evident in the work and confidence of those students involved in the programme suggest that this Programme does indeed provide both a means by which students can be successfully encouraged to pursue independent study and a method of overcoming the difficulties outlined by Gow, Kember and Sivan (1992). This appears to hold true for a broad range of students, regardless of ability level, or the major for which they enrolled. Further, it would appear that students can be motivated in this investigative and independent work even when they perceive it to be difficult. In fact, the aspects of work that students considered most challenging were often the ones they found most enjoyable or worthwhile. They commonly expressed a preference for this approach over the more familiar, traditional methods of EAP teaching and learning.

Despite their lack of experience and confidence and the obvious difficulties students faced in completing the projects set under this programme, the results are reassuring in that they show a willingness and ability on the part of students to adopt new methods of learning. This would seem to suggest that the preference for “rote learning” so commonly attributed to Hong Kong students (Kember 1996; Biggs and Watkins 1996) is indeed the result of expectations and experiences in previous learning situations, rather than the intrinsic and inherent characteristics of the learners themselves. This survey shows that, though most students entering university exhibit a preference for teacher-dominated learning, many enjoy trying new ways of studying and acknowledge that, on occasions, they learn best if allowed to work independently and reach their own conclusions.

This Research Training Programme, then, appears to provide a means by which students, with little or no prior experience, can acquire both the skills and

confidence required for independent, research-related study. With support and guidance, students have been able to tackle relatively difficult and demanding tasks. As a result of their training, they are better able to utilise library systems and resources, to choose and investigate topics, to compare, collate and analyse information for different sources and to present findings in cohesive and original ways. Thus, they should be able to make better use of learning opportunities that present themselves in future years. It is apparent, too, that the Programme has created in students an awareness of the specific skills involved in such activities and a desire to apply those skills to their wider studies. Further, that it has increased their motivation to try new approaches to studying and learning.

This study has, it appears, met the aims of learning more about the past experiences and problems facing HKBU first-year students and also of determining a method of EAP training which will imbue students with both the confidence and ability to carry out independent, investigative work.

The results confirm the findings of previous studies in showing that, at the outset of tertiary study, students are unaccustomed to carrying out individualistic, research-type work and that they are unskilled in the use of library systems and resources which are generally regarded as essential to such work. It would appear instead that, throughout their secondary schooling, students have adopted learning methods appropriate to the examination-based system that prevails in Hong Kong, “rote” or “surface” methods which are not necessarily suited to the style of tertiary study (Hamp-Lyons 1998a).

Experience gained from this project demonstrated that tertiary teachers can successfully assist their students in making the change to a new style of learning, that through focused and supported skills training, students can acquire the skills

necessary for such creative and independent work and can also gain the confidence and motivation needed to apply those skills to their wider studies.

The approach utilised by the study can be used to provide students with an interesting and productive method of language learning, one that enables them to complete work which, in other situations, they might not be able or confident enough to tackle. That students should feel positively about work that clearly presented a challenge to them is heartening and would suggest that the present approach has much to offer in allowing students to extend their learning in areas in which they are uncertain and might not otherwise be prepared to take risks.

Given the consistency of the findings of this and other studies with regard to the nature of Hong Kong students, and the fact that these observations appear to hold true for students sampled no matter what their major, or final grades, there is reason to believe that the methods employed in this study are not simply applicable to students at HKBU and results could be applied to the wider population of Hong Kong students.

Interestingly, when the researcher embarked upon this avenue of study, concern for the type of learning habits adopted by Hong Kong students was, for the most part, academic – confined to educational research. However, it is significant that, at the time of writing, such issues have become part of much wider discussion involving educational authorities and the public at large. Hong Kong has been, and still is, experiencing a period of political and economic change, leading authorities to re-evaluate the current educational system and to question what forms of teaching and learning would be most beneficial to tomorrow's students and to society as a whole. Increasingly, people are pointing to the limitations of rote learning and passive acceptance of transmitted information; to the need to train people to think

creatively and independently. There seems to be general agreement that the education system, as a whole, is in urgent need of reform. However, as yet there appears to be no consensus on the form that changes should take.

The Education Commission, set up in April 1998 to deal with these concerns, has clearly stated its belief that, in order to ensure a workforce capable of meeting Hong Kong's future needs, Hong Kong's educational institutions must change: that they should develop in children a curiosity and interest in learning, allow students to use their initiative, and to promote critical and creative thinking. As the Commission Chairman, Andrew Leung has indicated:

We need graduates who are broad-based, creative and global in their outlook to sustain our competitive power in the new millennium... Our education system lays the emphasis more on memorising than creativity while our society wants people to be versatile and creative.

(South China Morning Post, 23 January 1999)

Consultations to date suggest that there is general support for the four main educational aims raised by the Commission: that the educational system promote enjoyment, language (competency), creativity, and commitment. The current public debate on the aims of education for the 21st century (Education Commission 2000) has resulted in a number of reform proposals in which the key changes are to shift from "transmission of knowledge" to "learning how to learn", and the development of culture and appreciation for life-long learning.

As has already been mentioned, though there has been a great deal of research carried out that describes Hong Kong students, their learning patterns, and the strategies that they apply in various learning situations, as discussed in sections 2.4 to 2.5 of the literature review chapter, few have investigated the problems students face at tertiary level and ways by which those problems might be alleviated.

This study is unique in that it has focused on those strategies and learning patterns appropriate to research-based tertiary study. It has attempted to establish which of the skills essential to such study have been encouraged at secondary level and to identify 'gaps' in students' knowledge which would hamper their progress at university. Further, it has suggested a means by which problems arising from lack of training at secondary level can be overcome.

APPENDIXES

- 1 Questionnaire 1 – pilot**
- 2 Questionnaire 1**
- 3 Questionnaire 2**
- 4 Questionnaire 3**
- 5 Interview questions**
- 6 Transcript of a sample interview**
- 7 Oral presentation evaluation sheet**
- 8 Observation of oral presentation criteria**
- 9 Essay scoring sheet**
- 10 List of packages**
- 11 Sample of Research Project Package**

SURVEY OF STUDENT STUDY EXPERIENCE AND PREFERENCES

Dear Student,

University study can be different in many ways from study at a secondary school. Often this means that first-year students must learn new skills in order to complete satisfactorily their course work.

This survey has been designed to help teachers understand more about the way you have studied in the past - both at secondary school and during your first months here at HKBU. Your responses will help them to develop better ways of teaching that will help you meet the demands of your university courses.

It is important that you answer the questions as honestly and accurately as possible. There are no wrong or right answers. It is your own experiences and opinions that are important.

All answers are requested anonymously and will be treated in strict confidence.

Section One

Please answer the following questions by circling the answer that applies to you or by writing in the space provided.

1. Sex

A. Male B. Female

2. Your faculty at HKBU?

A. Arts B. Social Sciences C. Science D. Communication E. Business

3. What is your **main** language of study at HKBU (i.e. the language most often used in lectures, tutorials and assignments)?

A. English B. Chinese C. Other (please specify) _____

4. What was the medium of instruction at your secondary school?

A. English B. Chinese C. Mixed D. Other (please specify) _____

5. What grade did you obtain in *the Use of English Exam*?

A. *A* B. *B* C. *C* D. *D7* E. *D8* F. *E9* G. *E10* H. *F* I. *U*

• **Was there an assignment in English in your secondary school in which you were required:**

6. to use materials other than course books and teacher supplied handouts?

A. Yes B. No

If yes, what were those materials _____

7. to use more than one source of information to complete one assignment (e.g. magazine articles, handouts, videos)?

A. Yes B. No

8. to read a variety of articles on one topic, analyse the information in them and then draw your own conclusions?

A. Yes B. No

9. to find the information by yourself without teacher's guidance?

A. Yes B. No

10. Did you ever prepare a project in English (i.e. you had to research a topic and present your findings in writing or orally) at secondary school?

A. Yes B. No If **no** go to question 13

11. How were project topics usually determined?

A. set by the teacher (no choice)

B. selected from a list of options

C. own choice completely (no guidelines given)

D. other (please specify) _____

12. What was the main source of information for those projects? (give only **ONE** answer!)
- school course books or/and teacher's handouts
 - materials from school library
 - other sources selected by yourself
 - combination of the above A, B and C
 - other (please specify)_____
13. Have you ever been asked to do your own research for a project or assignment at HKBU?
A Yes B. No
- If yes please explain _____
14. Have you ever received any training in how to research a topic?
A Yes B. No
15. Have you ever received any practical training on how to use library resources?
A. Yes B. No
- If yes, please explain _____
16. Do you feel confident in using library resources?
A Yes B. No
17. Do you know how to access information using OPAC ?
A. Yes B. No
18. Do you know how to access information using indexes and/or abstracts?
A. Yes B. No
19. If you use library, what is your **most** common reason for doing so? (give only **ONE** answer!)
- to obtain books and materials assigned by lecturers
 - to borrow books for study (your choice)
 - to use encyclopaedias or other reference materials
 - to listen to tapes, records or laser discs
 - a place to study own materials or textbooks
 - a place to do your homework
 - for leisure reading - books or magazines textbooks
 - to meet with friends
 - other (please specify)_____
 - have not yet used the library (go to questions in Section 2 below)
20. What is your next **most** common reason?
- to obtain books and materials assigned by lecturers
 - to borrow books for study (your choice)
 - to use encyclopaedias or other reference materials
 - to listen to tapes, records or laser discs
 - a place to study own materials or textbooks
 - a place to do your homework
 - for leisure reading - books or magazines textbooks
 - to meet with friends
 - other (please specify)_____
21. What is your **third** most common reason?
- to obtain books and materials assigned by lecturers
 - to borrow books for study (your choice)
 - to use encyclopaedias or other reference materials
 - to listen to tapes, records or laser discs
 - a place to study own materials or textbooks
 - a place to do your homework
 - for leisure reading - books or magazines textbooks
 - to meet with friends
 - other (please specify)_____

Section Two

Please read the following statements and indicate how true the statement is in your case by ticking one of the options - A, B, C, D or E - according to the following scale.

A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. always/most of the time

*Please remember that **there are no wrong answers** and no answer is better than another.*

- **In your previous study at secondary school, how often did you use the following materials to complete homework assignments or projects in English?**
22. your own notes from lessons
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
 23. teacher's handouts
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
 24. textbooks
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
 25. additional reading suggested by your teacher (not compulsory)
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
 26. own material from home
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
 27. material found by self (not from home or class).
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
 28. magazines and newspaper articles
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
 29. academic journals
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
 30. TV programmes or videos
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
 31. Chinese-English Dictionary
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
 32. English-English dictionary (e.g. Webster's)
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
 33. electronic dictionary
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
 34. encyclopaedia (e.g. Encyclopaedia Britannica, World Book, etc.) Please specify _____
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
 35. CD ROM's or Internet
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
- **How often have you borrowed books in English from any library for the following purposes:**
36. leisure reading (e.g. novels or comics)?
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
 37. your own personal interest (e.g. hobby or sport) ?
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
 38. information (not related to school work) ?
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
 39. compulsory reading for a course of study
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
 40. suggested but optional reading for a course of study
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
 41. use in study - own selection
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
- **Would you feel confident:**
42. writing an essay in Chinese based on information in a text book?
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
 43. writing an essay in English based on information in a text book?
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
 44. searching for information suggested to you by your teacher?
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time

45. finding information on a topic with no guidelines or assistance from your teacher?
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
46. Do you learn best from teachers who work carefully from prepared notes and outline major points neatly on the blackboard?
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
47. Do you learn best from teachers who encourage you to find your own information and reach your own conclusions?
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
48. Do you make a point of looking at most of the suggested readings that go with the lectures and class presentations?
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
49. Do you enjoy trying new ways of studying and learning?
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
50. Do you prefer to use the study methods that have worked for you in the past?
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
51. Do prefer to have as many sources of information as possible - the more data to think over the better?
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
52. Do you find it useful to do your own reading in academic subjects rather than simply reading set course texts?
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
53. Do you find it difficult to produce new ideas?
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
54. Do you try to relate what you have learned in one subject to what you are studying in other subjects?
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
55. Do you find it confusing to have too much information about a subject?
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
56. Do you find the information presented by your teacher and through textbooks sufficient for study in your subject.
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
- **How often have you used the following resources in English at HKBU Library?**
57. general books
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
58. reference books
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
59. indexes
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
60. magazines
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
61. journals
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
62. CD ROM's
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
63. encyclopaedias
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
64. newspapers
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
65. videos and tapes
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time
66. Internet
A. never B. seldom C. occasionally D. often E. most of the time

Thank you for taking time to answer these questions.

SURVEY OF STUDENT STUDY EXPERIENCE AND PREFERENCES

問卷調查——學生之學習經驗及取向

Dear Student, 親愛的同學:

大學學習方式與中學迥然不同。換句話說，一年級生必須掌握一套新的學習技巧才能成功地完成他們的課程習作。

本卷旨在讓老師更了解學生過往的學習經驗（包括中學及踏入大學最初的幾個月）。你的答案將有助老師改進其教學方式，以切合你們的需要，讓同學更易應付大學學習的要求。

同學回答問卷時須盡量坦誠和準確。每題答案均無一定的對與錯，最重要是表達出你個人的學習經驗。

所有答案將絕對保密，無須記名。

Section One

Please answer the following questions by placing a mark in pencil in the appropriate box on the card or by writing in the space provided.

1. Sex
A Male B Female
2. Your faculty at HKBU?
A Arts B Social Sciences C Science D Communication E Business
3. What is your main language of study at HKBU? (i.e. the language most often used in lectures, tutorials and assignments)?
A English B Chinese C Other (please specify) _____
4. What was the medium of instruction at your secondary school?
A English B Chinese C Mixed D Other (please specify) _____
5. What grade did you obtain in *the Use of English Exam*?
A A B B C C D D⁺ D D⁻ E E⁺ E E⁻ G F H U
6. Was there an assignment in English in your secondary school in which you were required to:
a. use materials other than course books and teacher supplied handouts?
A Yes B No
If yes what were those materials _____

10. Did you ever prepare a project in English (i.e. you had to research a topic and present your findings in writing or orally) at secondary school?
 A. Yes B. No
 If no go to question 13
11. How were project topics usually determined?
 A. set by the teacher (no choice)
 B. selected from a list of options
 C. own choice completely (no guidelines given) ~~✗~~
 D. other (please specify) _____
12. What was the main source of information for those projects? (give only **ONE** answer!)
 A. school course books or/and teacher's handouts
 B. materials from school library
 C. other sources selected by yourself
 D. combination of the above A, B and C
 other (please specify) _____
13. Have you ever conducted your own research for a project or assignment in English at HKBU?
 A Yes B. No
 If yes please explain _____
14. Have you ever received any training in how to research a topic?
 A Yes B. No
15. Have you ever received any practical training on how to use library resources?
 A. Yes B. No
 If yes, please explain _____
16. Do you feel confident in using library resources?
 A Yes B. No
17. Do you know how to access information using key words and subject catalogue on OPAC?
 A Yes B. No
18. If you use library, what is your **most** common reason for doing so? (give only **ONE** answer!)
 A. to obtain books and materials assigned by lecturers
 B. to borrow books for study (your choice)
 C. to use encyclopaedias or other reference materials
 D. to listen to tapes, records or laser discs
 E. a place to study own materials or textbooks
 F. a place to do your homework
 G. for leisure reading - books or magazines textbooks
 H. to meet with friends
 I. other (please specify) _____
 J. have not yet used the library (go to questions in Section 2 below)

Section Two

Please read the following statements and indicate how true the statement is in your case by placing a mark in pencil on the card provided, next to the option A, B, C, D or E, according to the following scale. Please remember that there are no wrong answers and no answer is better than another.

A. never	B. seldom	C. occasionally	D. often	E. always/ most of the time
----------	-----------	-----------------	----------	-----------------------------

- In your previous study at secondary school, how often did you use the following materials to complete homework assignments or projects in English?

19. your own notes from lessons
 20. textbook and teacher's handouts
 21. additional reading recommended by your teacher (not compulsory)
 22. magazines and newspaper articles
 23. professional journals (專業期刊)
 24. Chinese-English Dictionary
 25. English-English dictionary (e.g. Webster's)
 26. encyclopaedia (e.g. Encyclopaedia Britannica, World Book, etc.) Please specify _____ (英文百科全書)
 27. TV programmes or videos
 28. CD ROM's or Internet
 29. material found by yourself in the library
- How often have you borrowed books from any library for the following purposes:
30. leisure reading (e.g. novels or comics)?
 31. your own personal interest (e.g. hobby or sport) ?
 32. information (not related to school work) ?
 33. compulsory reading for a course of study
 34. suggested but optional reading for a course of study
 35. use in study - own selection
- Would you feel confident:
36. writing an essay in Chinese based on information in a text book?
 37. writing an essay in English based on information in a text book?
 38. searching for information suggested to you by your teacher?
 39. finding information on a topic with no guidelines or assistance from your teacher?
 40. Do you learn best from teachers who work carefully from prepared notes and outline major points neatly on the blackboard?

A. never	B. seldom	C. occasionally	D. often	E. always/ most of the time
----------	-----------	-----------------	----------	-----------------------------

41. Do you learn best from teachers who encourage you to find your own information and reach your own conclusions?
 42. Do you make a point of looking at most of the suggested readings that go with the lectures and class presentations?
 43. Do you enjoy trying new ways of studying and learning?
 44. Do you prefer to use the study methods that have worked for you in the past?
 45. Do you prefer to have as many sources of information as possible - the more data to think over the better?
 46. Do you find it useful to do your own reading in academic subjects rather than simply reading set course texts?
 47. Do you find it difficult to produce new ideas?
 48. Do you try to relate what you have learned in one subject to what you are studying in other subjects?
 49. Do you find it confusing to have too much information about a subject?
 50. Do you find the information presented by your teacher and through textbooks sufficient for study in your subject.
- **How often have you used the following resources in English at HKBU Library?**
 - 51. general books
 - 52. reference books
 - 53. indexes (英文索引)
 - 54. magazines
 - 55. journals
 - 56. CD ROM's
 - 57. encyclopaedias (英文百科全書)
 - 58. newspapers
 - 59. videos and tapes
 - 60. Internet

Thank you for taking time to answer these questions.

STUDENT EVALUATION OF EAP TRAINING IN PROJECT RELATED TASKS

Please answer the questions on the following pages as accurately as you can, being sure to give your comments where invited. Your answers will be anonymous and confidential. Remember that this is not an evaluation of your work but of the programme itself.

You are asked to express your opinion about the training in project work that you have received in the EAP course (Lang 1121/22). The training was provided through:

- (1) the Research Project Packages
- (2) library practical sessions
- (3) classroom instruction in skills and strategies

To answer questions on the following pages, please enter a number from 1 to 5 for each component using the following table to determine which number best reflects your opinion.

Thank you.

EXPLANATION OF THE SCALES (do not write on this page)

	5	4	3	2	1
Level of interest	very interesting	interesting	moderately interesting	not very interesting	not at all interesting
Level of difficulty	very difficult	difficult	moderately difficult	quite easy	very easy
Usefulness in completing Research Project assignments	very useful	useful	moderately useful	not very useful	not at all useful
I understand the subject thoroughly.	strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
The work related to this Project has helped me develop this skill.	strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
How useful/relevant is this skill in your academic studies?	very useful	useful	moderately useful	not very useful	not at all useful

Please refer to the key on page 1

COMPONENTS OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT PACKAGES	Level of interest 5 <u> </u> 4 <u> </u> 3 <u> </u> 2 <u> </u> 1 <u> </u> very interesting not at all interesting	Level of difficulty 5 <u> </u> 4 <u> </u> 3 <u> </u> 2 <u> </u> 1 <u> </u> very difficult very easy	Usefulness in completing project work 5 <u> </u> 4 <u> </u> 3 <u> </u> 2 <u> </u> 1 <u> </u> very useful not at all useful	Length of time to complete Package components hrs <u> </u> mins <u> </u>
Background Information				
Vocabulary Worksheets				
Related Reading				
Reading Comprehension Questions				
Audio-visual Tapes				
Audio-visual Comprehension Questions				
How to Choose a Topic for a Research Assignment- guidelines				
Research Topic Proposal Form				
Suggested Areas for Research				
Research question and Statement of Purpose				
Research Topic Outline				

Please refer to the key on page 1

	I understand this skill/activity thoroughly. 5 strongly agree 4 3 2 1 strongly disagree	The work related to this Project has helped me develop this skill/carry out this activity. 5 strongly agree 4 3 2 1 strongly disagree	How useful is this skill in your academic studies? 5 very useful 4 3 2 1 not at all useful
LIBRARY TRAINING: SKILLS ↓			
using key words in OPAC			
using OPAC to locate relevant information			
locating books on shelves			
using encyclopaedias			
using indexes to gain ideas for a researchable topic			
finding articles in periodicals through indexes (e.g. Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature)			
checking availability of periodicals in HKBU Library collection			
locating periodicals on shelves			
finding information through the Internet			
using sources that you have already found to look for other possible sources			
using CD ROM's			

<p>CLASSROOM TRAINING: SKILLS ↓</p>	<p>I understand this skill/activity thoroughly.</p> <p>5 _____ 4 _____ 3 _____ 2 _____ 1 _____</p> <p>strongly agree strongly disagree</p>	<p>The work related to this Project has helped me develop this skill/carry out this activity.</p> <p>5 _____ 4 _____ 3 _____ 2 _____ 1 _____</p> <p>strongly agree strongly disagree</p>	<p>How useful is this skill in your academic studies?</p> <p>5 _____ 4 _____ 3 _____ 2 _____ 1 _____</p> <p>very useful not at all useful</p>
<p>identifying ideas for suitable research topics</p>			
<p>formulating research questions for a topic</p>			
<p>narrowing topics</p>			
<p>selecting relevant references</p>			
<p>evaluating the suitability of resources</p>			
<p>reading for a specific purpose e.g. to answer research questions and support ideas</p>			
<p>extracting useful information from references for use in writing</p>			
<p>preparing outlines</p>			
<p>formulating a thesis statement</p>			
<p>using information from various sources to write about a topic</p>			
<p>presenting ideas in a logical order</p>			
<p>supporting oral and written statements</p>			
<p>paraphrasing</p>			
<p>summarising</p>			
<p>using an appropriate format for writing academic papers</p>			
<p>presenting ideas creatively</p>			
<p>drawing conclusions from data or factual information</p>			
<p>referencing and citing sources within a text</p>			
<p>compiling bibliographies</p>			
<p>rehearsing for oral presentations</p>			
<p>preparing oral presentations</p>			

Part Two (please tick the box next to your answer)

1. Your major at HKBU? Chinese History Geography GIS Sociology Religion

2. Which Research Project Packages did you complete? (Please give Title or topic)

1st Semester _____ 2nd Semester _____

3. How much did you know about the subject matter of your chosen Research Project Package before you began this study?

1st Package: 1. a great deal 2. quite a lot 3. a moderate amount 4. very little 5. nothing at all

2nd Package: 1. a great deal 2. quite a lot 3. a moderate amount 4. very little 5. nothing at all

4. What problems, if any, did you experience when carrying out your research project?

5. Which approach in the EAP course prepares you better for academic tasks in your Major?

a) formal training ? b) research project package work?

Why? (please explain) _____

6. Which part of the project work and training do you consider to be the most useful for your academic needs in English?

Why? (please explain) _____

7. What language do you use most often for written assignments at HKBU?

a) English b) Chinese

8. Your grade in the EAP course last semester? a) A, A- or B+ b) B, B- or C+ c) C, C- or D

9. Your latest cumulative GPA? a) 3.50-4.00 b) 3.00-3.49 c) 2.50-2.99 d) 2.00-2.49 e) below 2.00

Survey of Student Study Experience

Dear Student,

This questionnaire has been designed to help us learn more about your general study experiences throughout your first year at HKBU.

Please answer the following questions as accurately as you can by placing a pencil mark in the appropriate box on the card and by writing in the space provided. Your answers will be confidential. Remember, this is not an evaluation.

1. Your faculty at HKBU?
 A. Arts B. Social Sciences C. Science D. Communication E. Business
 What is your Major? _____
2. What was your latest cumulative GPA?
 A. 3.50-4.00 B. 3.00-3.49 C. 2.50-2.99 D. 2.00-2.49 E. below 2.00
3. What language do you use most often for written assignments at HKBU?
 A. English B. Chinese
4. Have you ever conducted research for a project or for an academic paper **in your Major?** (i.e. you had to research a topic and present your findings in writing or orally)
 A. Yes B. No

If yes, how many research projects/ research papers have you prepared? _____

(If you have done more than 1 project, please give details of the one that was the most difficult for you.)

Which course was the project for? _____

Was the project presented in the format of a research essay, report, oral presentation or other?

What was its length? _____

Language of the project? _____

Project topic? _____

Which types of sources of information did you use? (For examples please refer to the list in questions 15-25)

5. Have you ever received any training at University on how to research a topic?
 A. Yes B. No
 If yes, please specify _____
6. Have you ever received any practical training on how to use library resources (other than the University Life)?
 A. Yes B. No
 If yes, please specify _____
7. Do you feel confident in using library resources?
 A. Yes B. No

For questions 8 – 25 use the following scale

<i>A. never</i>	<i>B. seldom</i>	<i>C. occasionally</i>	<i>D. often</i>	<i>E. very often</i>
-----------------	------------------	------------------------	-----------------	----------------------

8. Would you feel confident finding information on a given topic with no guidelines or assistance from your tutor?
9. Do you enjoy trying new ways of studying and learning?
10. Do you prefer to use the study methods that have worked for you in the past?
11. Do you prefer to have as many sources of information as possible - the more data to think over the better?
12. Do you find it difficult to produce new ideas?
13. Do you try to relate what you have learned in one subject to what you are studying in other subjects?
14. Do you find it confusing to have too much information about a subject?

How often have you used the following resources or materials to complete your projects/assignments in your Major?

15. textbook and lecturer's handouts
16. additional reading recommended by your lecturer (not compulsory)
17. English -English dictionary (e.g. Webster's, Oxford)
18. videos and TV programs
19. Internet
20. magazines and newspaper articles
21. encyclopaedia (e.g. Encyclopaedia Britannica, World Book, etc.) If yes, which one? _____
22. reference books
23. volumes of indexes
24. information from professional journals
25. information from books

For questions 26- 32 use the following scale

<i>A. not at all</i>	<i>B. with much difficulty</i>	<i>C. with little difficulty</i>	<i>D. quite well</i>	<i>E. very well</i>
----------------------	--------------------------------	----------------------------------	----------------------	---------------------

How well can you use the following resources to locate information in English?

26. key words in OPAC to find specific information
27. OPAC to locate periodicals
28. Internet to obtain information on a given topic
29. indexes to find relevant articles in periodicals
30. encyclopaedias to find information (e.g. Encyclopaedia Britannica, World Book, Americana, etc.)
31. bibliographies of one source to locate further references
32. reference books

Interview questions

With reference to secondary schooling:

General Study

What language did you use in your studies (other than English)?

Main focus of school work?

What did school feel like?

Focus of school work

Format of school work

English Lessons

Perception of classes - focus, format, usefulness etc.

Projects and Assignments?

Nature of work at school

Perception of what constitutes projects, assignments and research

Essay writing

Did you have to write essays

in English?

in Chinese?

for which subjects?

Oral Presentations

Have you ever made an oral presentation

in English?

in Chinese?

What were you taught about how to give presentations?

How did you know what to do?

Research Work

Have you ever completed a research paper in English?

Did you ever have a research assignment

in English?

in Chinese?

Library

Has anyone ever showed you how to use a library?

Did you have a library at school? What was it like?

What library resources had you used prior to university?

CD-ROM's?

Internet?

Encyclopaedias?

Journals?

How did you find materials in the library?

Have you used a public library? How did you access the materials there? What sort of materials did you use?

How did you know what resources to look for (for school work)?

Resources used in assignments - sources of information

What information did you use in school assignments?

Where did the material for those assignment come from?

Where did the information come from that you included in your essays?

Where did the books come from?

Did you ever have to find your own information?

Topic Choice for assignments and essays

How were essay/assignment topics usually decided?

Have you ever chosen your assignment topics before?

Reactions to choice at university

Place of opinions in school work

Were you ever asked to give your opinions in your work? How would you have felt about giving your own opinions in assignments?

University vs. School

Differences between school and university study - general perceptions

What is different about the work at school and at university?

(check comments re setting own timetable, longer work day and changes needed)

Transcript of One Interview

(Chinese Studies group)

L: Liz - the interviewer

1: Candy - student

2: Ross - student

3: Wendy - student

4: Vic - student

L: I think it's [the recorder] OK now. And if it doesn't work again you'll have to help me remember!

We have just started to talk about the differences and you said that some things are different between school and here. For all of you? Did you all notice differences?

All: Yes yes we remembers

L: Tell me about them

3: Actually I don't know how to use the library at the first times because most of the works, we have used some extra materials. For example, using from the CD-ROM or some journals.

L: Mmm. Yeah

3: Hmm... but I think Elizabeth take us to the library is very helpful for us and now I think I can familiarise for the work.

L: Yeah. How about you Vic? What did you notice was different from school to university?

4: I think university is more freedom than school. And in school, the teacher may plan many things for us but in university, we must plan many things by ourselves.

L: Mmm. It's a big change.

All: Yes, Yes

1: Before it was quite a difficult thing for me to find materials from the library. Now on, I spend more time on the searching work. I found that the lesson in the library by Elizabeth is very helpful actually. I found many many new thing that I haven't used it before, such as CD-ROM and some recent journals such as recent CD serials by such as the New York Times and that's magazines help me very very helpful. I found the information is up dated, not like the book I find in the library. Most updated book in the library I found is that 1989. And I found this is a useless because the world change a lot.

- L: That is nearly ten years go – that is a big change.
- 1: So I found when I use the CD ROM , I found more more new materials that I can use in my research.
- L: That's good, that's great! Now what I want to talk about today is just a part of your experience at school and then we will probably meet again to talk more about what it is like for you to study at university.
So today, if you can, I want you to think back – before you came to university
- L: Before
- L: To school - to secondary school. A long time ago now yes?
- All: Yes
- 2: Not long time, just some months ago.
- L: You have done a lot of new things in the meantime. So sometimes it is hard to think back. Think back to when you were at school because I would like you to help me learn about the way you did your work at school, especially the way you did your assignments and your projects.
- All: Mmmm
- L: So what can you tell me about the way you worked at school - about your school work?
- 2: Hmm – To me, I think it is different from them because I have studied in the evening school for about four years. So, hmm, since I may be older than them and so in the evening school, there are the same subjects comparing to the day school but we have limited time, more limited time, so there are many skills, especially for English, may be ignored, for example, oral and listening skills. Also, although I my writing task is okay, but hmm, sad to say, my oral and listening skills is very poor. And I cannot pass in the A-level exam both of these papers.
- L: In English?
- 2: Yes, So when I come here I think it is may be very difficult to me to listen and say. So hmm there may be something I cannot express in the right way.
- L: Mmm. And how about you? When you were at school did you learn English?
- 2&3: Yes
- L: Were your lessons in Chinese or English, tell me.

3: Hmm. I am studying in Chinese school, but actually we have English lessons. And the teacher speak English for us. So I think it is not very difficult for me to listen to Elizabeth's speech. But actually, hm, I am not , (how can I say) we are always done the school at class, or assign some homework, no any research paper, so actually I don't know how to use the library.

L: OK. So you say you had assignment but not research?

3: Yes.

L: How about you Vic?

4: I think in school I had many homework to do. The homework is about how to use the grammar and vocabulary. But in the university, many research to do . It is a big difference.

L: This is in English?

All: yes

1: For me actually, I remember, it is a hard time for me in the secondary school in Form 6 and 7, because my English teacher is a traditional old man.

Laughter all round

4: Me too.

1: He always say that "Oh your grammar is poor, your work is rubbish, don't let me see, don't let me see it, I will not correct it anytime from now on. But to him, examination is the most important thing that I must achieve it. And to me, the examination is the things I most hated and scared because my English is not very well actually compare to my Chinese subject,. Umm it is the most weaker subject to me at that time. I found, it, the grammar and the tenses is the thing I hated anyway. And I found this when I attempt the paper, the past exam paper, it is the, I like a machine to finish it all the time, and the most, and 99% of my lesson is to do this Pass paper and to correct it and to say which is correct and which is wrong, and why and why and why.

I have never attempt any research paper at my secondary school in English. And I found this, it is actually a very new thing to me when I attempt this at university.

And I found this, when I use the library, the materials in the library is quite interesting hmmm, actually help me a lot to finish my work. And besides, I have never use the Internet before, and I know that, half an hour later, I may be need to use this Internet. I think, to me, it is excited and interesting, and I found this, hmmm,, for using the new way to do the same thing is very helpful to me at all subjects, not (just) in English.

L: And how about you Ross? Candy was saying that she did grammar for English at school. What was the main subject for English in your night classes?

- 2: Hmm.. Yes. Because the public exam is the most important thing is you can write and read and (4 - Talk, listen) yes but there are 3 paper about reading and writing so if you know how to write in a good grammar, even in good usage, I think you can pass the public exam , although the other thing you may be weak.
- L: So tell me, when you were at school, if you think of your English lessons, were you ever asked to write an essay in English or to make an oral presentation in English?
- 3: Yes.
- L: In English?
- 3: Yes.
- L: You were. Tell me about that.
- 3: Actually, in the essay, my teacher will give us a topic and then we will try to write, but hmm, before we write our essay, she will tell me how to write our essay, for example, how to give and introduction, the body and the conclusion. And then, after we finish our work she collect it, give it our mark, and then it's OK, Nothing else.
- L: I see.
- 3: It means we only have to finish our work and since the work is, hmmm, when we nearly to our public examination, we will not do any writing, and just do in he pass paper.
- All: Yes
- 3: Training and Training
- 2: Practice and Practice
- L: Just practice?
- 3: Mmm. But the most thing I think is not very good, is hmm, we have a paper called Practical skills.
- All: practical skills
- 3: Practical skills it is told us how to summarise the passage but our teacher don't teach this thing. She just told us how to finish the work on time.
- 2: And how to know, how to take the point that you can gain mark.

- 3: Yes. So I think in the secondary, all the work is focus on our examination, but in the university, our work is to try to , (hmm, how to say) try to make us interesting , interest in English, and try to practice more.
- L: Mmm
- 3: Not only focus on the paper, is in maybe you can have a good habit in your daily life. But in secondary school, I think I just like a machine.
- 1: Just finish the pass paper.
- 3: Yes. And I hate English at that time.
- L: Mmm . How about you? (to Vic)
- 4: Me too.
- L: Can we talk for a while now about the other lessons, not just the English lessons, but the other lessons. Tell me about the assignments you had for the other lessons. Did you write essays or give presentations in Chinese?
- 3: Yes
- 1: For me, as my secondary is an English school, actually, we have to write in English both in English and in my subject Geography I also need to write in English, but when I listen to the teacher, he or she may always use Chinese, not English. both in my English teacher because he need to make us clearly to know how to use and how to write a better essay. For me actually, just in the English lesson , I will use English and read newspaper in English. Other lesson, although it may be say that it use English to teach and write, actually it is in Chinese.
- L: So did you need to write essays in Chinese?
- 1: I need to write many many essay in Chinese but still I need to attend my exam in English and so I found it is terrible for me to translate Chinese words to English words and how to combine them. Lastly, I found this my essay write in English can 100% be translated to Chinese. Actually I think if the teacher is an English man or maybe a foreigner, he or she maybe don't understand what is say.
- L: She may not understand? Yes. And how about you? For writing essays at school. Not necessarily in English, how much did you write? (to Wendy) Did you write essay or presentation in Chinese in other subjects at school.
- 3: Only for Chinese Language and Culture
- L; So in the three areas you wrote essays?
- 3: Yes

L: How about you Ross? What do you think?

2: Hmm, I think maybe in Chinese Literature

3: Yes in Chinese literature

2: And even Chinese history. You can make many many essay in Chinese and but at least you can know a little bit of skill how to write an essay. I think there may be some maybe sent in Chinese and English to write ummm argue.. argument....

L: Argumentative , argumentative essay.

L: And when you think about the essay and assignments that you did at school, how were the topics chosen? How did you get a topic for your essay?

3: From the teacher

All: Yes

3: From the public examinations

1: Only

L: During the school year, if you wrote an essay, how did you decide the topic?

3: Past paper, pass paper. From the hmm, he would chooses some topic in he examination, yeah past paper

L: Did you ever have a choice of topic?

3: No, because in our public examination we have no choice but actually in Chinese Literature is no....Chinese Literature and History we have a little bit choice but all the choice is from the pass paper.

L: So topics come from the paper and you have little choice?

ALL: Yes

L: And what about the information that you need to use for your essay?

Laughter

L: Why are you laughing ?

1: I think is common-sense. Hmm... Some subjects use the notes from the teacher We just to...

L: Common sense

- 2: And even you can say in pass paper, marking scheme.
- 1&3: Yes, marking scheme
- L: How does that work, I've never seen one of these papers?
- 2: It is terrible , I think you can
- 1&3: Comprehension paper
- 2: If you can , you want to get a higher grade or higher mark, you must follow the marking scheme. Also you can express some of your own opinions but it is very dangerous.
- 3: Yes
- 2: The marker may not been ...
- 3: Accept...
- 1: Agree...
- 2: Agree with you, with what you say. So the most good way is to follow the marking scheme. There were many students to follow the same way/
- L: So, once you have a topic, you usually follow the marking scheme?
- ALL: Yes
- 3: One topic is very, a little bit interesting is Chinese Language and Culture...
- 2: Chinese Language
- 3: because this topic is talk about some issue of Chinese culture. You can use your own language or your own opinions to write the essay. I think it is the only one paper that are interest.
- 1: Maybe that is not true actually.
- 3: Not true?
- 1: Yes, for me
- 1: Hmm, my classmate is not as fortunate as me, although she or he may be the same level in our school, but actually when I attempt this paper, the grade is very very very different. Hmm, One of my classmate have a U, have a U grade, but my subject my paper in A grade. I have never know why, because she or he may be a very very good student and smart student, but they tell me some main point that they have, they know why he or she may be fail. They write some their own opinions, not in the same word or same idea from the books, and so, when the marker find this, it is different from the marking

- scheme, or the book, the marker only put a U shape, or U grade or F grade to the paper, and, Oh, then it is fail.
- 2: All 5 paper?
- 1: Not 5 paper, the Culture, the main paper.
- 3: The comprehension paper?
- 1: The comprehension paper is stupid, stupid, and stupid!
- L: It sounds as if when you were working on your essays, you would have been worried about putting your own opinions forward. So where did the information that you used come from?
- All: Books.
- L: Text books?
- 3: Those books is the, how can we say, the Examination Department. The Hong Kong Examination Department designed to us.
- L: Is it..... . You need to help me here, Is it like a course book, you need for a course or something different?
- All: Yes, yes!
- 3: You read an essay and then he will ask some topic related to the essay.
- L: Okay, so this is for lots of subjects? For Science, or Chinese studies or whatever?
- 3: Yes.
- L: Is that your experience too? When you write an essay at school for your other subjects – not English – what ...?
- 4: The teacher tell us how to write an essay, the introduction, the body and then conclusion, but it is not many opinion, because the marker may not agree with our opinion, so in our essay, we can write many opinion in our paper and but we may follow the marking scheme. Maybe this point is, we must put it in our essay, but an other point, we cannot put because many student may write this wrong thing. We must remember this and do not put in our essay. Then we can get higher mark in our examination.
1. When I found this in university, I need to attend the research paper, this is actually a new thing to me, I think this is more freedom to do it. Actually I can, under the topic, I can ... I can stress on or focus on something related to something for me. For me the topic is Indonesian pressure- population pressure in Indonesia. And I can find this I can research the Indonesian fire

- or something related to Indonesia, or population pressure. And anyway, I found it is interesting and more freedom on this because a choice is because of my interests, not for focus, not focus on the examination or marks.
- L: So this time you could choose your topic and you could choose how to narrow your topic. Have you ever done that before at school?
- All: No, No!
- 2: Sad to say, in school , we just decide? The pattern of essay. We do not know how to.
- L Yeah, So you have your topic, and you use the textbook. What other materials did you use at school for assignments?
- 3: Notes, assigned from teachers.
- 2: Hmmm
- L What about you Ross?
- 3 Teachers.
- 2: Seldom, hmmm practice about this because in the evening school, it just stress on writing, stress on writing article, and practice, practice many summary.
- L: Yeah, So if you think again about all of your subjects, not just English, when you did assignments or projects at school, did you ever have to find your own information - apart from the textbook and teachers?
- 3: No, we have, actually we have no turn to find our own information because in the Form 7, in the time at Form 7, the time is limit, only have a half year only, maybe more one or two week, and we need to attend a mock examination and a pre-mock examination in the half years.
- L: This is for all the subjects or just ... ?
- 3 Yes, and so when I found this I attend this subject in tests and one week later, I may need to attend a exam and so I have, oh, the only way to me to get a higher mark is to remembering all the materials and information in my mind, when I see that at the examination, in a hall, I need to like coping machine.
- 2: Just a writing game in three hours, in the public exam. You must, you must fill up the book, the answer book.
- L: So that's exams. But what about the assignments that you did at school? How did you go about those?

- 3: All assignment is related to examination.
- L: All related. So if you have a school assignment, what would you use? You would use text books for information, you'd use teachers notes
- 3: and marking scheme.
- L: ...and marking scheme?
- 4: Most important thing.
- L: So those three. Anything else? Did you ever use any other material at school?
- 3&4: No.
- 1: Oh, yes, more alternative is the best essay from our classmates.
- 3,4: Yes, yes, sometimes.
- L: Like a sample?
- 1&3 Yes.
- L: How about you Vic? Did you use any different materials for those at school - for assignments?
- 4: Mmm. No.
- 2: In brief, it is very different, a big difference secondary school and university
- 3: Actually even in secondary school, when I was in secondary 1,2 or 3, we had a chance to do some proposals, but we have a team work, we need not to do by your own. And also we just have to copy a book, all the information from book and attach some pictures, some photos, and then we finished our work.
- L: So that's like a research?
- 3: No research.
- L: So where did the book come from for that?
- 3: Some from the public library because we do our research in the summer holiday.
- L: And how about you, did you do that sort of thing too?
- 1: Yes, I think it is the, a common phenomena in our, in Hong Kong secondary school because I remember when I was in secondary 1 or 2, I did the same thing as Wendy to research a (laughter) a very very boring, not interesting

- topic, and I have never think I need it to do it anyway, because the stupid subject is something like, "What is the, I remember,
- 3: Pollution, Pollution in Hong Kong.
- 1: Yes, No no no, It's the too high-tech actually, maybe it just about the common species of trees or flowers in Hong Kong, and I just walk around my garden near my estate, and I cut the leave, put it on, and write something that it is and then close it. That's it.
- L: How about Vic? Did you doany assignment where you had to find ...?
- 4: Only in Chinese History and Chinese Literature, I have a, the oral presentation, but no more research among this. And oral presentation we must find many books on the reference book and teacher's note and then jot down the notes and then go to theof the classroom and talk to other students and then that's all.
- L: So you were using reference books?.
- 4: Reference book is the teacher tell us it is useful,
- 3: Teacher recommend.
- L: So the teacher helped you by giving you ...? What did the teacher give you?
- 3: Actually, the reference book is the answer of the examination question.
- L: Was that for you, Vic. What was the reference book?
- 3: Yes. The answer.
- 2: For example, if there may be five question option in public school,
- 3: public exam.
- 2: public exam, so and then maybe it will give you a standard answer.
- 3: Yes.
- 2: you can choose which is best to me to recite it.
- L: Okay. But Wendy, you mentioned using the public library to get a book .
- 3: Yes.
- L: For an assignment?

- 3: Yes, But I only borrow one book. (Laughter) We separate the topic, and then one copy this one and the other copy the other part of the book and then we combine and then send to the teachers.
- L: So, How did you find the book? How did you know which book to use? How did you do it?
- 3 We just to use our own sense, with common sense and then we took it.
- L: So you took it yourself.
- 3: Yes. But we do the teamwork.
- 1: But the information, I found my information is always unrelated to the subject I do and but most reference are all sentence, sentence and sentence, and the whole book maybe I one passage is related to my topic. And, I can find no book related to it, and I found for the Public library, actually, I don't know how to use the public library and I found this the most simple way to do it is to search every shelf and if you lucky enough you may find.
- 3: Yes.
- L: So you go along all the ...
- 1: Shelves.
- L: If you were alone, is that the way you would normally have found books.
- 3: Yes.
- 1: Maybe.
- L: What other way would you look? Any other ways? How about you?
- 3: Some students who is smart will find some information from the, how can, the government leaflet, and then we copy all the things.
- L: So you share the information that you find .
- 1&3 yes.
- L: This is at school? While you are at school you would do that ?
- 3: No, we only do that in our summer holiday. School we have no any.
- 1: And more of the time secondary is to attend the examination.
- 3: Yes, Because teacher can't, sometimes teacher can't teach all the language for us on time, so she only ask us to focus on our books.

- L: So tell me, at the schools you were at, or at night school Ross, did you have a library that you could use?
- I&3: Yes
- 1: A very very small library.
- L: How about you, Vic?
- 4: Yes. The library is not big and not many books.
- 3: Actually it is not a library. It is a study room, a self-study room because library is about 400 metres square and half of the places or more than half of the places is the self-study rooms, and the small places is the books. And the books is what kind of books is, it is a some of the magazines, but the magazines is written in Chinese, no English. The English book is focus on Science, not in Art. Only a few book or about 12 to 13 books are related to Art in English.
- L: What about the library you had at your school? Did you have a library to use? What was it like Wendy?
- 3: Yes, some magazines, lots of the books is Chinese book, but is not related to our school work, only for you to read and you are leisure
- 4: leisure time.
- 3: and, but we have some English reference book is focus on the English grammar and
- 4: storybook.
- 3: storybook, yes, some storybook.
- 2: I think you seldom did seldom to read this book because you do not know what kinds of these.
- 3: yes.
- L: So before you came here to Baptist University, had you used a big library before? Have you ever used a big library?
- 1, 3, 4: Public library.
- L: Yeah. What sorts of things did you use the Public library for?
- 3: Read some magazines, newspaper..
- L: Yeah, yeah

4: Not for me seldom

1: Oh no, for me cooking and so I borrow books for different kind of cooking - cooking, cooking, cooking, and I find this is interesting to use the public library as in search my topic. Because in my secondary school, the library is too small to store all the information and the information is all like grammar, grammar, grammar.

And I seldom to borrow any interesting materials in it. When I found...., so I feel very happy right at the day I found this, oh, the Baptist University I found my some cooking book, and I found this, oh, it is too great for me. I no need to walk a very very long long long way to the public library to borrow the book.

L: So if you use the library, how did you find what you wanted, how did you know where..

3: You have some built in labels. He will mark some labels on the top of the shelf then you can look at it and find by yourself.

2: Also mmm the Public library maybe computerised so you can check the same skill.

L: Like the OPAC?

All: Yes, yes.

L: So had you used those before you came to the university?

All: Yes.

R: And also I know you can find information through Internet but I forget the Website.

L: So had you used the Internet before you came to university?

3: No.

1: No.

L: You hadn't Candy, Wendy? No Vic? Ross, it sounds like you had.

2: Mm Mm. Just a little bit.

L: What about the other things that are here in the library. There are books and magazines of course that you have used. But there are other things here in the library. There are encyclopaedias and CD ROMs. Which of those things had you used before?

- 1: I think the encyclopaedias very helpful one because as the kind of encyclopaedia is quite boring, or bored, and I found this when I use encyclopaedia in B, B letter, I can't how to pronounce the word, it's a very long letter start at B.
- L: Britannica?
- 1: Yes, and I found this help me to do my research.
- L: Had you ever use an encyclopaedia before you came here?
- 1&4: No
- L: None of you. What about CD-ROMs ? Had you ever used those?
- 1&3: No
- L: What about other things in there? I'm trying to think of other things maybe you used before....
- 1: I think the most useful is the join school university ... umm
- 4: Joint school?
- 1: Yes, in our OPAC system it is a join school system and I can find the books or related books.
- 3: Other universities
- 1: Other universities
- L: So you can check other places?
- 1,3: Yes
- 3: But actually I don't know how to use our library, the newspaper cutting service....I don't know how to use
- L: So you haven't used that.
- 1&3: Yes - Newspaper cutting
- 3: Don't know
- 2: I know, I know
- 3: Don't know how to use this.
- 1: Yes me too, I don't know

3: I don't know how to use it.

2: Go to the fourth floor and to the counter to say I want, I need this service and the staff will help you to know how to use the machine.

L: I found them very helpful because I didn't know how to use that either when I started here. There's a catalogue that lists the subject of different newspaper articles and a lot of the catalogue is in Cantonese so you could use ones that I couldn't use because I only speak English.... there are lots of things there that have to do with the work you are doing now that you might find useful.

4: OK

L: So let me see, what else do we need to think about..... It sounds like there are lots of new things that you have done when you've come here that you haven't done before.

1,3,4: Yes

2: Also I want to say umm there are many my classmates that there are many homework to do. I think I am very lucky to be taught by Elizabeth because she is very nice and know what we are need. But maybe some teachers do not know our situation so as you may even give them a great pressure so if I ever meet them, she or he will say the same thing. It is many many thing I have to do.

L: So there is a lot of pressure?

2: Uh hh.

L: I know that she really does want to help with the study and that's part of the reason you are doing the type of work...

1: Beside I think the way of Elizabeth present the lesson is quite interesting because just like the last lesson I attend in 704 that's she just like a real situation and let me know how to chose the relevant passage from the information and cut it off and how to organise it. And I think that although it may seem too simple or maybe but it is useful actually and I learn so many important skill from this place.

Others: Mmm, hmm... Yes.

L: I know you've been learning how to do certain things and the library is one that you mentioned. Has anyone ever shown you how to use a library before? Before you came to university or started in your class have you ever been shown how to?

1,3,4,: No, No.

2: Sniggering, starting to laugh

- L: There is a lot involved in using the library. Its difficult if you're not shown how.
- 2: In the past, we just see library is a place for you to relax. (Laughter)
- 1: But do you remember when I first came to this university, we need to attend a courses organised by Language Centre. It seems to teach you how to use the library but actually it a time for you to sit in the class room and to sleep.... Because actually although I have paid attention to the topic to teach me how to use the OPAC system or to use the CD-ROM actually I have attempt to use the CD-ROMs before I really know it how to use, but the time is limit and I actually just sit in on the key board a bit and hello and actually I didn't know how to use it.
- 3: Yes no-one to tell you.
- L: I am afraid that we will have to end this discussion now because it's almost time for your class. Hopefully, we will meet again and have another chance to talk... All this has been very interesting to me.
- 3: And to us it's fun.
- 1&2: Yes, yes.
- L: You have been very helpful. Thank you very much. All the best.
- All: Thank you. Thanks.

Lang 1122 Oral Presentation Evaluation Form

Speaker : _____ Mark : _____

Topic : _____

Rated on a five point scale from the weakest to the strongest.

1. Content

1 2 3 4 5

	Yes	No	Comment
The presentation answers the research question			
a. Main ideas are clear.			
b. There are enough details/facts/examples to support or illustrate the ideas.			
c. All ideas are directly related to the topic.			
d. The presentation is logically structured.			
e. The presentation flows smoothly.			
f. The introduction evokes interests.			
g. The conclusion is effective.			

Other comments:

2. Method of presentation

1 2 3 4 5

	Yes	No	Comment
a. The presentation is on the whole interesting.			
b. Suitable aids are used (e.g. audio-visual aids; gestures; blackboard notes...)			
c. The speed is appropriate.			
d. You are well-prepared.			
e. The presentation is timed well.			
f. You maintain sufficient contact with the audience(eyes, poise).			

Other comments: _____

3. Language

1 2 3 4 5

	Yes	No	Comment
a. Effective use of language			
b. Sophisticated range of vocabulary.			
c. Correct or semi-correct pronunciation.			
d. Correct use of tense.			
e. Sentences are well structured.			

f. Overall comments on English accuracy.

OBSERVATION OF ORAL PRESENTATION CRITERIA

- Is the topic suitably narrowed?
- Has the purpose of the presentation been defined?
- Is organisational principle of the presentation identified?
- Does the introduction clearly outline the ideas to be presented?
- Are main statements supported?
- Is the use of reference materials apparent?
- Is the student thinking while speaking?
- Is there a use of graphic organisers (outlines, charts)?
- Is there a progression of ideas (from old to new, from basic to complex)?
- Are there analogies made when new or difficult concepts are discussed?
- Is the information delivered at the right level for this audience?
- Is appropriate academic vocabulary used?
- Is appropriate academic register used?
- Is the research question clear and precise?
- Are data, graphs, tables, pictures etc used to illustrate statements?
- Has the student explained the graphs or tables used, if necessary?
- Did the student use his/her own words?
- Does the ending include a summing up of the main ideas presented?
- Are there conclusions/recommendations/inferences etc?
- Was the overall flow of argument/description logical?
- Did the talk address the research question/thesis statement?
- Did the student use his/her own words?
- Is the abstract in the required format?
- Has the student used audio-visual aids, blackboard?
- Is the rate of speech appropriate?
- Is the student's voice well-modulated?
- Is the student well prepared and not reliant on the use of notes?

Essay scoring sheet

Major/ Class:

1st semester / 2nd Semester

Structure and Overall Content	1 st Semester				2 nd Semester			
	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
1. Topic suitably narrowed								
2. Purpose of essay defined								
3. Research question clear and precise								
4. Type of essay								
5. Essay adequately answers the research question								
6. Adequate details and support given								
7. All ideas are relevant to the topic								
8. Own words used through out								

REFERENCING	1 st Semester				2 nd Semester			
	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
1. Quotes used correctly in body of essay								
2. Citations (not quotes) used correctly								
3. Sources cited correctly								
4. Bibliographic details presented correctly in bibliography								
5. References used in support of main points								

REFERENCING	1 st Semester					2 nd Semester				
	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4
1. No. of sources cited in essay										
2. No. of sources included in bibliography										
3. Types and numbers of sources used										
books										
encyclopedias										
journals/magazines										
newspapers										
internet										
4. Number of quotes used										
5. Number of other citations used										
	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4
6. No. of types of sources used										

ORGANISATION / CONTENT	1 st Semester			2 nd Semester				
	*	1	2	3	*	1	2	3
<p>Introduction</p> <p>1. Attention-getting sentence included in introduction</p> <p>2. Attention-getting sentence to the point/relevant</p> <p>3. Main points mentioned in the introduction</p> <p>4. Indication of order / outline given</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>5. Conclusion attempted</p> <p>6. Recommendation / inferences made</p> <p>7. Ending included a summing up</p> <p>8. Conclusion appropriate – relevant and connected</p>								

ORGANISATION / CONTENT (cont.)	1 st semester				2 nd Semester			
<p>Body</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Key concepts and words defined 2. Main ideas clearly presented 3. Each main idea well supported 4. Argument logically structured 5. Graphs, data and tables used to illustrate statements 6. Graphs ,data and tables adequately explained 7. Progression of ideas 8. Evidence of use of reference material 								

ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES
RESEARCH PROJECT PACKAGES

N
o.

DESCRIPTION OF PACKAGE

- 1 Breaking the Rules of World Politics**
Iraq's aggressive role in wars against Iran and Kuwait in opposition to the United States and the United Nations
- 2 Berlin - divided city 1961- 1989**
Events surrounding the Cold War division of the city of Berlin, the construction of the Berlin Wall and its subsequent reunification of Berlin in 1989
- 3 Tiananmen Square Democracy Protest 1989**
The background and course of the pro-democracy protest at Tiananmen Square in 1989
- 4 Vietnam - wars for Independence 1954 and 1968**
The wars for independence and reunification in Vietnam - firstly against French colonial forces in the 1950's and then against the US in the Vietnam War in the 1960's
- 5 Central American Rain forest**
The unique environment of the rain forest and the links between the creatures and plants that live there
- 6 China: the formation of the People's Republic**
The conditions and events that led to the establishment of the Chinese Communist Party, the civil war and the formation of the P.R.C.
- 7 Food Shortage and Famine: the politics of food supply**
A study of the way in which politics can contribute to the development of food crisis and famine - using famine in Sudan as an example
- 8 Cuba: the Cuban missile crisis**
The Cold war conflict between the USA and the USSR in Cuba in 1962 that nearly resulted in open war between the Super powers
- 9 Indonesia - pressure of a growing population**
Problems caused by rapid population growth in Indonesia and ways in which the Indonesian government has tried to deal with those difficulties
- 10 The Changing Earth: earthquakes and volcanic activity**
The way in various forms of plate movement are changing the shape of the land in different parts of the world today
- 11 Tibet - independent state or Chinese province**
Changes in the Tibetan system, institutions and way of life since its incorporation into the People's Republic of China

- 12 **India: land of the tiger**
Tigers in India's Kanha and Ranthambhor National Parks: their relationship with the land, the climate and the animals with whom they share the reserves
- 13 **Life in Australia**
Australian society today
- 14 **Ancient Civilisations: Greece and Rome**
The civilisations of Ancient Greece and Rome; their influence on modern society
- 15 **The Break-up of Yugoslavia**
The nationalist conflict and war in Yugoslavia (1991- 1993) that led to the break-up of that country and to the establishment of the Baltic States Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia
- 16 **Alaska - endangered animals and cultures**
The people and the creatures of the Bering Sea, Alaska; the way in which development in the region threatens both the animals and the way of life of the indigenous people
- 17 **Treasure hunters - the search for Spanish gold**
The hunt for and discovery of the Spanish galleon, Atocha, which sank in 1622 with a cargo of gold, silver and precious jewels whilst en-route from Cuba to Spain
- 18 **Shipwreck - the sinking of the Titanic**
The story of the passenger liner Titanic which sunk in 1912 on her first voyage and the discovery of the wreck of the Titanic in 1985
- 19 **Japanese Women: changing roles**
Changes in the traditional way of life of Japanese women
- 20 **Native Americans Indians in the USA today**
Modern day Hopi Indians - the choices they must make between life in modern American cities and the more traditional life on the tribal reservation
- 21 **The Korean War**
The events that led to the partitioning of Korea into North and South and the war that followed (1950-1953)
- 22 **The End of the Ancient World**
The decline and disappearance of the great empires of Europe, China and Asia in the 4th and 5th Centuries AD
- 23 **Changes in the Soviet Union - the new policies of Mikhail Gorbachev**
The restructuring of the Soviet system and way of life in 1985 under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev - changes that led, eventually, to the break-up of the USSR
- 24 **The Beginning of the End - the decline of Communism in Eastern Europe**
A study of the worker's revolution in Poland that eventually lead to the fall of communist governments in Poland and the other countries of Eastern Europe

25 American Indians and their right to self-government

The right of Native Americans to independent government and use of their lands within the USA - a study of promises made to Indian tribes by the US government in the past and whether or not those promises are being honoured today - The audio-visual looks at those issues as they affect the Onondaga, Navajo and Lummi Indian tribes.

**HKBU LANGUAGE CENTRE
ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES**

TIBET

**Independent State or
Chinese Province?**

**AUDIO VISUAL LEARNING PACKAGE
NO. 11**

Prepared by: Elizabeth Bankowski and Elizabeth Cotton

© 1997 Elizabeth Bankowski

**LANGUAGE CENTRE
ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES**

AUDIO VISUAL LEARNING PACKAGE

This package has been developed to help you gain the skills in English language that you will need to complete your academic studies at Hong Kong Baptist University. It provides an alternative to lecture-type teaching - giving you, the student, an opportunity to participate in your own learning in a way that, it is hoped, will be interesting and relevant to your major course of study e.g. history, geography or political studies.

Each of the packages available in this Self-access Learning Programme is based on an audio-visual - available within the University. It contains background information (to help you as you view the tapes), a series of worksheets, reading materials, and a research essay assignment. The audio-visual you will watch and articles that you will read were not produced for language instruction. They are authentic films, television programmes or documentaries, newspaper clippings, magazine articles or book extracts.

Watching the audio-visual and completing the related exercises will provide you with opportunities to:

- listen to naturally spoken English
- expand your vocabulary
- improve your comprehension skills
- take notes in English
- carry out research

- all of which should be useful to you as you attend lectures and complete written work for this and other courses of study.

This package should take approximately 30 hours to complete and will account for 70% of your total semester assessment. Help will be available to you as you work through this package. You will see your instructor at least twice during that time and will need to give completed sections to your instructor, throughout the course, as requested.

At the end of the course you will be asked to participate in an assessment of this programme. Your experiences and opinions will be of assistance in the further development of this and other programmes.

CONTENTS

Background information

Vocabulary worksheet

Reading comprehension questions

Related reading

Audio-visual comprehension questions

Research assignment

N.B. In order to complete this self-learning package you will need to watch the audio-visual:

“Tibet: The Forbidden Land”

This tape is available from:
Centre for Educational Studies
(Old Campus)

Call number: **VC 497**

BACKGROUND READING

Tibet is situated in the highest region on Earth. Its area of about 1,200,000 sq km consists of high plateaux and some of the tallest mountains in the world, and its average elevation of over 16,000 ft has led to it often being referred to as the "roof of the world". Many of Asia's great rivers have their beginnings in the Tibetan mountains e.g. the Ganges, Indus, Brahmaputra, Mekong, Yangtze and Yellow Rivers. Tibet is also one of the world's most isolated regions. On three sides, it is bound by vast mountain ranges: the Himalayas to the south separate it from Burma, India, Butan and Nepal; and the Karakorum Range to the west and the Kunlun Mountains to the north separate it from China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and Quighai Province. Until recently, there were no roads linking Tibet with the outside world, and travellers relied on the ancient caravan routes that led through the mountains to the region's capital, Lhasa.

The climate throughout most of Tibet is cold and dry with strong winds occurring the year round. Soils are generally thin and poor - like those in desert environments - and are generally not suitable for farming. In the south, particularly along the river valleys, the climate is less harsh and the soils richer, allowing the growth of forest and grass. It is here, along the valleys of the Brahmautra River and its tributaries, that most people live and that subsistence farming takes place. The main crops are barley, wheat, peas, beans, millet and buckwheat. Farmers also raise yaks, horses, sheep and goats. In the colder areas where it is too cold to raise crops, people follow a nomadic existence, living in tents and moving from place to place as they need new grazing grounds for their animals.

Until the Communist Chinese government became active in Tibet, there was no modern industry in the region. Even recently, the extensive mineral reserves in the area - which include significant deposits of gold, iron, coal, manganese, copper and lead - have been largely untouched due to the difficulties of mining and transportation.

The present ties between Tibet and China are the most recent of a long history of connections - often unhappy - that go back hundreds of years. The history of the region prior to the 7th century is not clear. However, from 618-907, Tibet is known to have been a powerful kingdom. Buddhism, introduced during that time, led to the development of Lamism and a powerful Lamist religious hierarchy. Towards the end of the 10th century, internal disunity led to the division of the kingdom into a number of smaller principalities. In 1206, Tibet became part of the Mongol Empire and, under that rule, the Sa-skya Lama was appointed as the Mongolian viceroy for the region.

With the collapse of the Yuan dynasty and the establishment of the Chinese Ming dynasty, Tibet became virtually independent. It was in this period that competition arose between different Buddhist sects - notably between the Red Hats (the old church) and the Yellow Hats (reformists). It was the Yellow Hats who emerged as most influential. Their leader was designated the Dalai (All-embracing) Lama and became the spiritual and temporal ruler of Tibet. The Lamist belief in reincarnation meant that when the Dalai Lama died, his successor was found in a new-born infant who was raised as the next Dalai Lama.

Under the Manchu dynasty, China became more involved in Tibetan politics. Throughout the early 1700s, China intervened on several occasions when invasion or civil war threatened. In 1750, the Dalai Lama was established in full temporal power under Chinese protection, following which time Tibet was incorporated into the Chinese empire. Despite this, the area enjoyed almost complete autonomy.

In 1904, Britain, concerned about growing Russian influence in the area, invaded Tibet. Under the terms of settlement of 1906, the Chinese Empire became the sovereign power in Tibet and in a later agreement (1907) both Britain and Russia promised not to interfere in Tibetan affairs.

In 1911, the Chinese revolution again left Tibet virtually independent. All Chinese officials and troops were expelled from the country and the Dalai Lama returned from exile to declare Tibet free of Chinese control. Despite this, and efforts through conference with China and Britain, no agreement was reached with China over the issue of Tibetan autonomy. In October 1950, the Chinese Communist army entered Tibet. A treaty signed in 1951 provided that the Dalai Lama retain power in domestic affairs whilst China controlled foreign and military affairs. However, disagreements and discontent followed and, in 1959, Lhasa broke into open revolt. The Dalai Lama fled into India, the uprising was crushed and China installed the Panchen Lama (the Dalai's deputy) as Tibet's Head of State.

Tibet was formally established as an autonomous region of the P.R.C. in 1965 and a programme was instituted to ensure a steady socialist transformation of the area. A committee of ruling party officials governs the affairs of the region from Lhasa, supported by a regional military commander, and makes key administrative and governmental decisions. Local government is carried out by prefectural and county leaders, commissioners and departmental heads under Chinese control.

In 1980, China admitted that many of its policies in Tibet had been unwise and reforms were introduced to redress past mistakes. Tibetans were allowed to return to cultivating their traditional crop of barley, new religious freedoms were allowed, monasteries could be rebuilt, efforts were made to return some religious objects to their owners and young men were again permitted to become monks. Under these new policies, Tibet's economy appeared to recover. The country opened to tourists, and efforts were made to encourage development in the region, not only through the use of Chinese capital, but also by attracting investment from foreigners through the Tibet Development Fund. It was during this period, that the video that accompanies this package was produced.

Despite that apparent harmony and progress in Tibet, pro-independence protests continued and in 1987, 1989 and 1993 Tibetan grievances broke out in a series of violent riots. The 1989 demonstrations resulted in martial law being imposed and in foreign tourists being ordered to leave Lhasa until the situation had been brought back under control. Martial law was lifted in 1990 but opposition to Chinese rule in Tibet has continued with many Tibetans and foreign agencies claiming that China's policies in the area suppress human rights, restrict religious practices and threaten Tibetan cultural traditions.

VOCABULARY WORKSHEET

Exercise 1:

You will hear the following words on the audio-visual in this package.

Before viewing the tape/disc, look up the words in an English-English dictionary and write a brief definition of each word on this Worksheet.

Note: Some words may have more than one meaning. If this is so, note down each of the meanings.

Example: blitz-krieg: *sudden attack (using aircraft and forces on the ground) that is intended to surprise and quickly defeat an enemy.*

1. impenetrable:

2. mere:

3. taboo:

4. toil (verb):

5. barely:

6. precariously:

7. instigator:

8. thrive:

9. perpetual:

10. trivial:

11. prestigious:

12. dire:

13. successive:

VOCABULARY WORKSHEET**Exercise 2:**

Complete the sentences below using the appropriate words, in their correct form, from the vocabulary list on the previous page.

1. The prison lies behind a high and wall.
2. It was his third win in the tournament.
3. Her first novel won the Booker Prize for Literature.
4. The decision to proceed with reclamation work in the area will have consequences for coastal wildlife.
5. You shouldn't let such a thing upset you!
6. After taking part in the robbery, he lived in fear of being discovered and arrested.

READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Read the following articles before answering the questions on this page. Answers should be typed on a separate piece of paper and attached to this package for return to your instructor.

Note: This exercise is designed to help you read for general meaning. You do not need to understand the meaning of every word in the articles, but should try to recognise the ideas expressed in the articles. (In many cases you will be able to guess the meanings of new words or phrases by looking at the context in which they appear in the articles.)

1. What were the demonstrators and rioters in Lhasa demanding?
2. What is one of the suggested reasons for the Chinese crack-down in Tibet?
3. What actions were taken in Tibet during the Cultural Revolution?
4. What do Chinese authorities accuse the Dalai Lama of trying to do?
5. According to the writer in the *Tibet Daily*, what is the only way in which Tibet can enjoy a bright future?
6. What effect did the Chinese occupation have on Tibetan culture, according to the Dalai Lama?
7. What did the Dalai Lama feel was the main reason for China's refusal to negotiate with him or his group?

**TEXT BOUND INTO
THE SPINE**

A Firestorm in Shangri-la

Chinese troops crack down hard on demonstrators demanding greater autonomy for Tibet

Closely watched by Chinese authorities, Western visitors could only see a part of the violence that swept the Tibetan capital of Lhasa last week. What they did witness was savage enough. Hurling tear gas and stun grenades, police battled crowds of up to 2,000 pro-independence rioters beneath the gilded roof of the Jokhang temple, the holiest shrine of Tibetan Buddhism. Shouting protesters attacked more than 50 Chinese-owned shops and restaurants along Lhasa's Beijing Road. Women carried stones in their multicolored aprons; a young Tibetan beat a Chinese boy with a chain. At times the city's ancient Tibetan quarter echoed with bursts of automatic weapons as security forces fired wildly at demonstrators who were armed only with rocks and slingshots. "Police shot at people as if they were animals," claimed one Western witness. Some Westerners were escorted to a courtyard building where a pool of blood lay congealing beneath a dung-burning stove. Dozens of Tibetans had come to mourn the 18-year-old victim of a random Chinese bullet. "She wasn't demonstrating. She was just fixing a cup of tea," cried an elderly woman. Please tell the Dalai Lama what has happened here."

Last week's fighting was the bloodiest since 1959, when the Chinese suppressed a fierce revolt in which as many as 10,000 Tibetans died. According to official Chinese reports, the latest clashes left 16 dead and more than 110 injured. Tibetan sources estimated that more than 100 died three days of gradually diminishing unrest. One foreign eyewitness said he saw Chinese soldiers dumping up to 60 corpses to military trucks on the first afternoon of the rioting. The casualties might have been even greater had not Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng placed Tibet under martial law. By Tuesday night, thousands of heavily armed Chinese troops were pouring into Lhasa to enforce the most oppressive security measures in any part of China since the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976. Soldiers checked identity cards and

demanding special permits from residents who ventured into the streets. Nearly all foreigners were expelled from the capital. Before they left, some foreigners saw Tibetans dragged from their homes during house-to-house searches. Local sources estimated that there were 1,000 arrests.

By resorting to such massive force, the Chinese leadership was effectively admitting defeat. Over the past 18 months, Beijing has reacted harshly to three previous incidents of serious Tibetan rioting, often torturing prisoners. But those reprisals were directed at what the Chinese described as "a small group of splittists," not Tibetans in general. Instead, Chinese officials have attempted to win Tibetan loyalties through a more permissive approach toward Tibetan Buddhism and by promoting economic development and tourism. In addition, Beijing has been seeking a politi-

cal rapprochement through indirect talks with the Dalai Lama, Tibet's exiled spiritual leader. Until last week, that effort appeared to be succeeding. In a speech before the European Parliament in Strasbourg last June, the Dalai Lama relinquished his longstanding demand for Tibetan independence. In return for Tibetan autonomy over religious and cultural matters, he said, he would accept Chinese control over Tibet's defense and foreign policy, its currency and its transportation.

But now any hope for a breakthrough has faded. "The separatists interpreted [official restraint] as a sign of weakness," declared Doje Ccring, chairman of the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region, in a radio report last week. "Now is a time for a radical solution." One reason for the crackdown may have been increasing Chinese concern over several underground independence groups with names such as "The Freedom Movement of Tibet" and "Tigers and Dragons." Authorities in Lhasa were said to be particularly jittery about an undisclosed amount of arms and ammunition that apparently found its way to Tibet's pro-independence underground after a burglary at a police armory late last December.

Too lenient: The show of force may also signal a victory for Beijing's conservative hard-liners, who blame the liberal reforms of Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping for the country's double-digit inflation, widespread corruption and unrest. "This has got to have strengthened the hand of the law-and-order brigade," said a Western diplomat in Beijing. "It's another example of things going wrong because of things being too lenient. The moderates' position will be weakened."

And Tibet's sudden isolation meant even more danger ahead. The only independent reports on the crackdown had come from foreign tourists and businessmen forced to make hasty exits to the Chinese city of Chengdu. With foreign witnesses gone, Tibetans anticipated an escalation of Chinese repression and cultural assimilation. The region's monasteries and Buddhist devotees have yet to recover fully from the devastation of China's decade-long Cultural Revolution, when hundreds of monasteries were closed and Tibetan monks were sent to labor reform camps by the thousands. Religious rites were banned; Tibetans were forbidden even to spin their traditional prayer wheels. Now the Chinese may again come to see traditional Buddhist culture as a dangerous source of rebellion. "If the Chinese policies continue as they are," warned Steve Marshall, a frequent traveler to Tibet, "in 10 or 20 years Tibetan culture will be something you can only read about in the library."

HARRY ANDERSON with MELINDA LIU in Chengdu and DORINDA ELLIOTT in Beijing

Extract from: Anderson H, "A firestorm in Shangri-la", *Newsweek*, 20 March 1989: 10-12

Dalai Lama faces fresh offensive

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

China has launched a fresh attack on the Dalai Lama and warned against a return to feudalism and slavery in Tibet.

An official in Sichuan province, bordering Tibet, said "old forces" were trying to reverse history by attempting to re-establish the old hierarchical system in some areas.

The Dalai Lama's clique was using all means to organise infiltration operations and sabotage in regions of Tibet, said Wang Jingrong, secretary of Sichuan's Communist Party political and

legislative committee, quoted by the *Sichuan Legal Daily*.

He wrote the article after a recent visit to two prefectures in Tibet.

Mr Wang's commentary follows publication last month of a report by the Tibet High Court denouncing terrorist activities, assassinations and bomb attacks by separatists.

The Dalai Lama, the Tibetan Buddhist spiritual leader who has lived in exile in India since an anti-Chinese uprising in Tibet in 1959, has been fiercely attacked by Beijing.

It has accused him of try-

ing to separate Tibet from China.

"The Dalai Lama has betrayed the Chinese nation," said the *Tibet Daily* in its June 10 edition.

"Foreigners support him in his secessionist activities, solely for their own interest. But when this is no longer relevant they will drop him without pity and it will be too late for any regrets," it added.

Tibet's future was only bright if it followed the socialist path and the communist Government's leadership, said the writer.

The paper said Tibet had been officially Chinese since the 13th century and that

thanks to the former kingdom's "peaceful liberation" in 1951 by communist troops, the system of slavery had been abolished.

But the Dalai Lama and some Western countries wanted to internationalise the Tibet question, and restore the slavery system, it said.

The Dalai Lama was using his religious status to promote secessionist activities, said the *Tibet Daily* writer. He accused the religious leader of trying to extend his influence in the temples and rural areas.

"But the religious mask of the Dalai Lama will not fool

the Tibetan people because the policy of religious freedom is widely approved by the monks and people of Tibet," he said.

This version of the situation in the monasteries in Tibet is at odds with reports of serious troubles in several temples last month.

The *Tibet Daily* said Tibet's security and development was linked to the security and development of China as a whole.

"This is why the problem of the security, stability and development of Tibet can only be settled within the great Chinese family," said the article.

Spiritual leader condemns 'cultural genocide'

Dalai Lama hopeful of Tibet settlement

AGENCIES in Chicago

The Dalai Lama is confident a solution can be reached with the Chinese Government on Tibet, although Beijing continues to wage what he calls "cultural genocide" in his homeland.

"Help us materialise meaningful negotiations," he told a crowd of thousands yesterday at an auditorium in Chicago.

The head of Tibet's government-in-exile said he was confident that with increased awareness of the plight of his six million fellow countrymen a "mutually agreeable solution" could be reached with China.

He said nearly half a cen-

tury of Chinese occupation had continued to result in virtual cultural genocide.

Urging non-violence and human compassion, the Buddhist leader called for "inner-disarmament" to bring peace to the world.

"This century has been a century of bloodshed. Now the next century should be a century of dialogue," he said.

"Non-violence is not just the mere absence of violence, however. Non-violence is any act that comes out of true compassion.

"We cannot judge non-violence superficially. Sometimes we use harsh words, perhaps even a little physical action, out of genuine compassion, a genuine sense of

concern. That should be considered an act of non-violence."

Only in the question-and-answer session that followed his talk did he make a more direct, political appeal.

"The Tibetan nation, with its unique cultural heritage, is facing extinction. Time is running out," he said. "I'm ready to negotiate [with China] without any preconditions, anytime, anywhere."

Yesterday's programme included remarks by actor Richard Gere, and came ahead of a two-day conference on "socially engaged Buddhism and Christianity" at DePaul University.

In an interview with the *Chicago Tribune*, the spiri-

tual leader said: "It is time the United States and other nations used real pressure to urge China to stop transferring masses of Chinese settlers into Tibet and to enter into serious negotiations about the future of Tibet.

"A major reason China refuses to negotiate with us is that the world has stood silent about the original falsehood that Tibet has always been a part of China."

The Nobel Peace Prize winner, 61, told his audience that once he could return to Tibet, he would establish an interim government and democratic self-rule.

"Then I will become a simple Buddhist monk. That is my wish."

Article from: *South China Morning Post*. 30 July 1996

AUDIO VISUAL COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Watch the video tape and answer the following questions. Answers can be brief and in note form. They should be typed on a separate sheet of paper and attached to this package for return to your instructor.

NOTE: Questions are in chronological order i.e. they follow the order of the information on the video tape.

1. In what ways is Tibet important to China?
2. Why have so few outsiders seen Tibet?
3. Which rivers have their origins in Tibet? What is the source of their water?
4. Tibetan land is not fertile. What skill has allowed people to use the land to grow crops?
5. Where do people in Lhasa get their supplies of wood? Why are supplies reserved for essential services?
6. What changes in Lhasa can be attributed to the influence of the Chinese?
7. How have Chinese authorities made Tibet more accessible to adjoining provinces?
8. What restrictions were placed on Buddhism? What was the effect of those restrictions?
9. Why might people who visit Lhasa have trouble breathing?
10. What do people do to appease the gods?
11. For whom did Mrs Chang work before 1959?
12. There is only one department store in Lhasa. Where do people go to get things that are not available in the store?
13. What happened to many of the buildings in Tibet during the Cultural revolution?

14. What Buddhist belief gave religious leaders a stable base from which to rule the kingdom?
15. What is the Jokhang?
16. Under the hierarchical system in Tibet, which groups had power over the serfs?
17. How are commune farmers rewarded for work they do in the communes nowadays?
18. Why are cattle and sheep prized possessions of people who live in the country areas?
19. When did the Dalai Lama leave Tibet?
20. When did building on the Potalla Palace begin?
21. Where is the palace of the present Dalai Lama sited?
22. According to Tudan Tongba, what is Tibet's position within the P.R.C.?

RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT

1. Choose one topic for your oral presentation and essay. It may either be a topic from the list of suggested topics, providing you can narrow it down, or you can make up your own topic related to the contents of the package you studied.
2. Answer questions 1 to 5 on the next page to make sure your topic is acceptable.
3. Fill in the Research Assignment Proposal Form and submit it to your Instructor for his/her approval of your topic.
4. Fill in the Research Question and Statement of Purpose Form and submit it to your Instructor for his/her approval.
5. Once both of your Proposals are approved and all materials collected, you should start planning your assignments.

ASSESSMENT

Marks will be allocated to your Research Project as follows:

Package Comprehension Exercises	15%
Research Proposal	10%
Oral Presentation	20%
Essay	20%
Matrix	5%

Research Assignment Part 1 - Oral Presentation

Presentation format:

A mini lecture on the topic as proposed by you on the Research Topic Proposal Form and approved by your lecturer.

You should use OHT or other visual aids, as well as note cards. You are not supposed to read word for word from your notes.

Topic:

The topic chosen by you has to be presented to your EAP lecturer on the Research Topic Proposal Form (all steps followed) and approval for the final version of your topic must be obtained.

Requirements:

1. Deliver a ten minute long oral presentation to your class and lecturer on the chosen topic using OHTs and (optional) other visual aids.
2. Prepare an outline of your presentation and then submit it to your lecturer just before your talk. You may use the same outline on your OHT.
3. Prepare a set of note cards for your presentation in whichever size is most comfortable for you.
4. You are requested to submit all notes that you have used during your presentation immediately after you have finished your talk.

Skills to apply:

1. Choosing and narrowing a topic
2. Organising and supporting ideas
3. Preparing an outline
4. Preparing and using note cards
5. Structuring a speech
6. Delivering oral presentations

Assessment method:

This assignment will attract a maximum of 20 marks. You will be assessed on a scale of 0 - 5 marks in each of the following criteria:

1. content selection
2. structure/organisation
3. language accuracy
4. presentation manner

Research Assignment Part 2 - Essay

Task:

Write an essay of approximately 600 - 700 words on a chosen topic, expressing your opinion and providing a thorough support for your ideas.

Follow these steps:

1. Fill in the organisational matrix, included in the package, to organise your information and to guide your writing.

To do that you must:

- Write one sentence that expresses your opinion of the topic, along with three or four general reasons, and write it down as your Thesis Statement.
 - Express each reason mentioned in the Thesis Statement in the form of a full sentence and write it down as a Topic Sentence in your Matrix.
 - For each Topic Sentence, find and write down three or four SUPPORTING IDEAS from the articles to reinforce or illustrate the reasons for your opinion.
2. Write an essay using this information.
 3. Provide footnotes or endnotes and a bibliography list following the proper format.

Assessment:

25% distributed as follows: content marked out of 6 marks, organisation out of 6 marks, language accuracy out of 8 marks, and matrix out of 5 marks.

DO NOT COPY SENTENCES OR STRINGS OF WORDS FROM TEXTS

PLAGIARISM WILL BE HEAVILY PENALISED!

How to Choose a Topic for Your Research Assignment

1. Is the topic narrow enough so that you can meaningfully discuss it and come to some conclusion in 600 - 700 words?
2. Does the HKBU library have relevant material so that you can gather the authoritative information you will need? Usually a student finds out that the library has much more on a chosen topic than what he or she first concludes. Do not change your topic just because you cannot find some sources in 10 or 15 minutes. However, you will need to have at least two different sources (not all in the same volume) that discuss your narrowed topic, each containing a page or more of helpful information.
3. Do you have enough knowledge and interest in the topic in order to develop a particular point of view? You must do more than just gather information about a topic. You must relate the findings to a personal opinion or criticism, or to some useful application. While some topics, in essence, are more interpretative than others, each topic must lead to a conclusion that shows your own thinking. For example, it would be hard for you to have your own view on the kind of equipment used for the past moon landing. You would, however, have a viewpoint on prevention of hearing loss caused by listening to excessively loud sound on Walkmans.
4. Can you discuss the topic in a non-technical way so that your classmates and instructor will understand the report? That is, the report is for the purpose of communicating findings to others and not mainly to summarise the findings for yourself.
5. Is the narrowed topic different from all other topics chosen by your classmates? Two different students can research different aspects of the same subject, but not the same aspect. Each student must work individually on his or her own topic.

Research Topic Proposal Form

Student's name: _____ Major: _____

Package number: _____

A. What is your chosen broad topic?

B. Limit this broad topic three or four times, each time making it more specific. Do this by adding each time a new adjective or prepositional phrase.

Degree of
Limitations

(These must be cumulative. That is, each new level of limitation includes all the previous limitations.)

1

2

3

4

Instructor's Response: / / # _____ approved as your topic

/ / limit the topic further

/ / improve phrasing of the topic

/ / _____

Research Question and Statement of Purpose

To help you give your narrowed topic a clear focus, you should transform it into a research question. Then, your main job in research will be basically to develop the best possible answer to your question. Your answer, of course, will be given in the form of : 1) a well-presented and documented oral presentation, and
 2) a few well-written and documented pages of discussion.

The following are a few examples of research questions:

1. Narrowed topic: Conservation of the Giant Panda in China
Research question: How are agencies within China attempting to protect China's panda population?

2. Narrowed topic: The Assassination of President J.F. Kennedy
Research question: Why does President Kennedy's assassination arouse interest and controversy (even though it happened over 30 years ago?)

3. Narrowed topic: The Environmental Impact of Construction in Hong Kong
Research question: To what extent is the environmental effect of construction projects considered by the authorities when giving permission for such projects to proceed?

TASK:

1. Transform the approved topic into a research question:

/ / Instructor's approval

2. Formulate a statement of purpose that will appear in the introductory paragraph of your presentation/essay. Extend the following:
(select one and continue)

The purpose of this presentation/essay is to:

- argue that
- analyse.....
- explain.....
- evaluate.....
- identify.....
- show.....
- compare.....

Matrix for Research Assignment

Title: _____

Thesis Statement: (= opinion + reasons)

TOPIC SENTENCES (reasons)	SUPPORTING DETAILS

Suggested Areas of Research:

- Tibetan History - links between China and Tibet or India and Tibet
- Tibetan Buddhism
- The 1959 rebellion
- The present Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama
- Differing views of Tibet under P.R.C. - e.g. compare the situation presented in the video with another view e.g. from Friends of Tibet, European countries
- The current situation in Tibet - political, industrial, cultural

REFERENCES

Chiu, Hungdah. *Tibet: Past and Present*. Baltimore: University of Maryland, 1989

Compton's Interactive Encyclopaedia. Compton's New Media Inc., 1994, 1995

Microsoft Encarta '95, Microsoft Corporation, 1994

The Guinness Encyclopaedia, Guinness Publishing Ltd., 1990

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adamson, Bob, and Lai, Auyeung Winnie. 1997. Language and the Curriculum in Hong Kong: Dilemmas of Trigllossia. *Comparative Education*, 33(2): 233-246.
- Adelman, Nancy E., Walking Eagle, Karen Panton, and Hargreaves, Andy. eds. 1997. *Racing with the Clock: Making Time for Teaching and Learning in School Reform*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Agran, Martin. 1997. Teaching Self-Management. In *Student Directed Learning: Teaching Self-Determination Skills*, ed. Agran, M., 1-27. USA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.
- Andersen, Janis F. 1985. Educational Assumptions Highlighted from a Crosscultural Comparison. In *Intercultural Communication: A Reader*, 4th ed. eds. Samovar, L.A., and Porter, R.E.. Belmont C.A., 106-164. Wadsworth Publishing Co.
- Areglado, Ronald, Bradley, R.C., and Lane, Pamela. 1996. *Learning for Life: Creating Classrooms for Self-Directed Learning*. California: Corwin Press, Inc.
- Armstrong, Elizabeth. 1997. A Hybrid Model of Problem Based Learning. In *The Challenge of Problem Based Learning*, 2nd ed. eds. Boud, D., and Feletti, G.I., 137-150. London: Kogan Page.
- Bankowski, Elizabeth. 1999. How Can EAP Classes Help Students in Becoming Independent Learners? In *Quality in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*. ed. James, J. 138-145. University Grants Committee. Hong Kong.
- Bankowski, Elizabeth. 1999a. Training Students in Learning Strategies for Small Scale Independent Tasks. In *Exploring Diversity in the Language Curriculum*, eds. Crew, V., Berry, V. and Hung, J. 199-216. Hong Kong Institute of Education. Hong Kong
- Bankowski, Elizabeth, and Cotton, Elizabeth. 1997. Teaching EAP Through the Use of Learning Packages Based on Authentic Audio-visual Material. Hong Kong Baptist University. *Occasional Papers in Applied Language Studies* 2, 123-133.
- Beare, Hedley, and Slaughter, Richard. 1993. *Education for the Twenty-first Century*. London: Routledge.
- Becher, Tony. 1989. Academic Tribes and Territories: Intellectual Enquiry and the Culture of Discipline. The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.
- Beck, Isabel L., and Dole, Janice A. 1992. Reading and thinking with history and science text. In *Teaching Thinking: An agenda for 21st century*, eds. Collins, C., and Mangieri, J.N., 3-21. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

- Benson, Phil, and Lor, Winnie. 1998. Making Sense of Autonomous Language Learning: Conceptions of Learning and Readiness for Autonomy. *English Centre Monograph, no. 2*. The University of Hong Kong.
- Biggs, John B. 1987. *Student approaches to learning and studying*. Hawthorn, Vic. Australian Council for Educational Research.
- Biggs, John B. 1992. Why and How do Hong Kong Students Learn? Using the Learning and Study Process Questionnaires. *Education Paper 14*. University of Hong Kong. Faculty of Education.
- Biggs, John B. 1993. What do Inventories of Students' learning processes really measure? A Theoretical view and Clarification. *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 63: 3-19.
- Biggs, John, B. 1993a. The Quality of Teaching and Learning in an Expanding Tertiary System. *New Horizons*, no. 34 (November): 102-104.
- Biggs, John, and Watkins, David. 1996. The Chinese Learner in Retrospect. In *The Chinese Learner: Cultural, Psychological and Contextual Influences*, 269-285. Cerc and Acer. Hong Kong.
- Biggs, John. 1994. Quality in Education: A Perspective from Learning Research and Theory. *Quality in Education: Insights from different Perspectives*, 49-68.
- Biggs, John. 1994a. What are Effective Schools? Lessons from East and West. *Australian Education Researcher* 21:19-39.
- Biggs, John. 1996. Western Misconceptions of the Confucian – Heritage Learning Culture. In *The Chinese Learner: Cultural, Psychological and Contextual Influences*, eds. Watkins, D.A. and Biggs, J.B., 45-68. Cerc and Acer. Hong Kong.
- Biggs, John. 1998. Language Policy and Practice: A Problem of Motivation or Priority? In *Language in Hong Kong at Century's End*, ed. Pennington, M.C., 419-424. Hong Kong University Press.
- Biggs, John. 1999. *Teaching for Quality Learning at University*. Suffolk: Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.
- Bligh, Donald. 1975. *Teaching Students*. Exeter University Teaching Services.
- Bond, Michael H. 1991. *Beyond the Chinese Face*. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press.
- Bottery, Mike, and Shun-Mei Siu. 1996. Empowerment, Participation and Democracy? – the Hong Kong 'Big Sister' Guidance Programme. *Compare*, 26(1): 61-72.
- Boud, David. 1986. Moving Towards Autonomy. In *Developing Student Autonomy in Learning*, 2nd ed., ed. Boud, D., 17-39. London: Kogan Page.

- Boud, David, Cohen, Ruth, and Walker, David. 1993. Introduction: Understanding Learning from Experience. In *Using Experience for Learning*, ed. Boud D., Cohen, R., and Walker D., 1-19. Great Britain: The Society for Research into Higher Education, Suffolk.
- Boyle, Joseph. 1997. Imperialism and the English Language in Hong Kong. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 18, no. 3 (1997).
- Boyle, Joseph. 1997a. The Use of Mixed-Code in Hong Kong English Language Teaching. *System*, 25(1): 83-89.
- Bray, Mark. 1992. Hong Kong Education in an International Context: The Impact of External Forces. In *Education and Society in Hong Kong: Towards One Country and Two Systems*, ed. Postiglione, G., 83-97. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Bray, Mark. 1997. Education and Colonial Transition: the Hong Kong Experience in Comparative Perspective. *Comparative Education*, 33(2): 157-169.
- Bray, Mark, and Lee, W.O. 1997. Editorial Introduction. *Comparative Education*, 33(2): 149-156.
- Bright, Barry P. 1991. Introduction to Research Methods in Postgraduate Thesis and Dissertation. Hull: University of Hull.
- Brockett, Ralf F., and Hiemstra, Roger. 1991. Self-Direction in Adult Learning: Perspectives on Theory, Research and Practice. London: Routledge.
- Brookfield, Stephen. 1985. Self-Directed Learning: A Critical Review of Research. In *Self-Directed Learning: From Theory to Practice*, ed. Brookfield, S., *New Directions for Continuing Education*, no. 25 (March 1985): 5-16. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers.
- Brookfield, Stephen. 1987. *Developing Critical Thinkers*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc. Publishers.
- Brookfield, Steven. 1986. *Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Brown, Hubert O. 1997. Teachers and Teacha *Teaching and Social Context*, eds. Postiglione, G., and Lee, W.O., 95-117. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Busato, Vittorio V., Prins, Frans J., Elshout, Jan J., and Hamaker, Christian. 1998. Learning Styles: a Cross-Sectional and Longitudinal Study in Higher Education. *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 68: 427-441.

- Byron, Shelagh, and Macmillan, Matthew. 1990. The Role of the Language Teacher in Distance Education. In *English in China*, ed. Dzau Y.F., 193-202. Hong Kong: API Press Ltd.
- Calloghan, Patric, and Holroyd, Eleonor. 1997. Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Tutorials in a Post-Registration Nursing Degree Programme in Hong Kong. In *Case studies of Improving Teaching and Learning from Action Learning Project*, eds. 1997. Kember, D., Lam, B.H., Yan, L.Y., Jessie C.K. and Liu, S.B., 157-168. Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Educational Development Unit.
- Campbell, Donald T., and Stanley, Julian C. 1971. *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Design for Research*. Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Candy, Philip C. 1991. *Self Direction for Lifelong Learning: A Comprehensive Guide to Theory and Practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Cannon, Isodore Cyril. 1997. Higher Education in Hong Kong. *Higher Education Quarterly* 5, no. 4 (Oct 1997): 308-324.
- Chamot, Anna Uhl. 1987. The learning strategies of ESL students. In *Learner Strategies in Language Learning*, eds. Wenden, A. and Rubin, J., 71-84. Englewood Cliff, N.J.: Prentice Hall.
- Chamot, Anna Uhl, and O'Malley, Michael J. 1994. *The CALLA Handbook: implementing the cognitive academic language learning approach*. Addison-Wesley Publishing Co. Reading Mass.
- Chan, Alfred, Hoare, Philip, and Johnson, Keith. 1997. *English Medium of Instruction in Secondary 1 and 2 in Hong Kong Schools: An Evaluation of Policy Implementation*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute of Education.
- Cheng, Joseph Y.S. 1995. Higher Education in Hong Kong – the approach to 1997 and the China factor. In *Higher Education*, 30 (1995): 257-271.
- Cheng, Kai Ming. 1991. Educational Policy-making in Hong Kong: The Changing Legitimacy. In *Education and Society in Hong Kong*, ed. Postiglione, G.A., 97-116. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Chow Chung-yan. 1999. Students' Interest Stifled by Lessons, Survey Claims. *South China Morning Post*, 28 February 1999.
- Chu, Lina. 1998. An Investigation into Learners' Readiness for Autonomy and their Second Language Learning Beliefs and Strategies. *Occasional Papers in Applied Language Studies* 3 (July 1998): 1-20.
- Chung, Yulanda. 1999. A Classroom of Robots. *Asiaweek*, 2 April 1999, 52.

- Church, Robert. 1976. *Education in the United States*. New York: Free Press, quoted in *Schooling in Hong Kong: Organization, Teaching and Social Context*, eds. Postiglione G., and Lee Wing On. p.3. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Cohen, Andrew. 1997. Strategies – Based Instruction for Second Language Learners. Paper presented at *RELC Seminar: Learners and Language Learning* (21-23 April 1997).
- Cohen, Andrew. 1998. *Strategies in Learning and Using a Second Language*. London: Longman.
- Cortazzi, Martin. 1990. Cultural and Educational Expectations in the Language Classroom, 60. Quoted in Tudor, Ian. 1996. *Learner – Centredness as Language Education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 143.
- Cortazzi, Martin, and Jin, Lixian. 1996. Cultures of Learning: Language Classroom in China. In *Society and the Language Classroom*, ed. Coleman, H., 169-206. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cummings, William K. 1996. Asian Values, Education and Development. *Compare*, 26(3): 287-303.
- Dahlin, Bo, and Watkins, David. 2000. The Role of Repetition in the Process of Memorising and Understanding: A Comparison of the Views of German and Chinese Secondary School Students in Hong Kong. *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 2000, 70: 65-84.
- Dalin, Per. 1998. Developing the Twenty-First Century School: A Challenge to Reformers. In *International Handbook of Educational Change*, eds. Hargreaves, A., Liberman, A., Fullan M., and Hopkins, D., 1059-1071. Kluwer Academic Publishers. Dordrecht, The Netherlands.
- Dickenson, Lesley. 1987. *Self-Instruction in Language Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dimmock, Clive, and Walker, Allan. 1997. Hong Kong's Change of Sovereignty: School Leader Perceptions of the Effects on Educational Policy and School Administration. *Comparative Education*, 33(2): 277-302.
- Drew, Po Yin and Watkins, David. 1998. Affective Variables, Learning Approaches and Academic Achievement: A Causal Modelling Investigation with Hong Kong Tertiary Students. *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 1998, 68: 173-188.
- Dunbar, Robin. 1988. Culture based learning problems of Asian students: some implications for Australian distance educators. *ASPESA Papers*, 5.
- Entwistle, Noel. 1985. Student Learning and Adult Education. In *New Directions in Educational Psychology 1. Learning and Teaching*, ed. Entwistle, N., 139-153. London: The Falmer Press.

- Entwistle, Noel. 1990. Teaching and the Quality of Learning in Higher Education. In *Handbook of Educational Ideas and Practices*, ed. Entwistle, N., 669-681. London: Routledge.
- Entwistle, Noel J., and Ramsden, Paul. 1983. *Understanding student learning*. London Croom Helm.
- Entwistle, Noel J. and Waterson, S. 1988. Approaches to studying and levels of processing in university students. *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 58: 258-265.
- Evans, Stephen. 1996. The Context of English Language Education: The Case of Hong Kong. *RELC Journal* 27, no. 2 (December 1996): 30-55.
- Evans, Stephen. 1997. Communication in the classroom: A Hong Kong Perspective. In *Applying Linguistics: Insights into Language in Education*, eds. Berry, V., Adamson, B., and Littlewood, W., 37-54. Hong Kong: The University of Hong Kong.
- Falvey, Peter. 1998. Establishing English Teacher Language Benchmarks in Hong Kong. Conference Paper presented at *Language Testing/Assessment: Issues and Strategies – Inaugural Seminar*. Hong Kong Polytechnic University. (16-17 January 1998).
- Falvey, Peter. 1998a. ESL, EFL & Language Acquisition in the Context of Hong Kong. In *Teaching Language and Culture: Building Hong Kong on Education*, ed. Asker, B. Hong Kong: Addison Wesley Longman China Ltd.
- Farmer, Richard. 1994. The Limits of Learner Independence in Hong Kong. In *Directions in Self-Access Language Learning*, eds. Gardner, D., and Miller, L., 13-28. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Flowerdew, Lynne. 1998. A Cultural Perspective on Group Work. *ELT Journal* 52, no. 4 (October 1998): 323-329.
- Forestier, Katherine. 1999. Young Learners caught in a rut. *South China Morning Post*, 4 March 1999. p.17 Focus.
- Foster, Peter. 1996. Observational Research. In *Data Collection and Analysis*, eds. Sapsford, R. and Jupp, V., 57-94. London: Sage Publications.
- Foster, Peter. 1996a. Observational Research. In *Evidence in Data Collection and Analysis*, eds. Sapsford, R., and Jupp, V., 57-93. London: Sage Publications.
- Fullan, Michael G. 1992. *Successful School Improvement – The Implementation Perspective and Beyond*. UK: Open University Press, Buckingham.
- Fullan, Michael. 1993. *Change Forces Probing the Depths of Educational Reform*. London: The Falmer Press.

- Fung, Alex C.W. 1998. Review of Public Examination System in Hong Kong. Conference Paper. Presented at *Hong Kong Educational Research Association Annual Conference 1998*. 21 November 1998. Hong Kong
- Fung, Eva Kuen Lai. 1996. Language and Attitudes in the Transitional Period of Hong Kong. *New Horizons in Education*, no. 37 (1996): 39-45.
- Garner, Ruth. 1990. When Children and Adults do not Use Learning Strategies Towards a Theory of Setting. *Review of Educational Research* 60, no. 4 (Winter 1990): 517-529.
- Gay, L.R. 1992. *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Application*. Singapore: Macmillan Publishing Company.
- Genesee, Fred, and Upshur, John A. 1996. *Classroom-based Evaluation in Second Language Education*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ghadessy, Mohsen. 1999. Language Learning Strategies and Classroom Anxiety. *HKBU Papers in Applied Language Studies*. Language Centre 4: 1-21.
- Gow, Lyn, and Kember, David. 1990. Does Higher Education promote independent learning? *Higher education*, 19: 307-322.
- Gow, Lyn, Kember, David, and Chow, Rosalia. 1991. The Effects of English Language Ability on Approaches to Learning. *RELC Journal* 22, no. 1: 49-68.
- Gow, Lyn, Kember, David, and Sivan, Atara. 1992. Lecturers' Views of their Teaching Practices: Implications for Staff Development Needs. *Higher Education Research and Development* 11, no. 2:135-149.
- Hammond, Meryll, and Collins, Rob. 1991. *Self-Directed Learning: Critical Practice*. London: Kogan Page.
- Hamp-Lyons, Liz. 1998. Expectations of Exit Language Proficiency of University Graduates in Hong Kong. Conference paper. Presented at *Language Testing/Assessment: Issues and Strategies Inaugural Seminar*. Hong Kong Polytechnic University, 16 January 1998.
- Hamp-Lyons, Liz. 1998a. Implications of the examination culture for language education in Hong Kong. A keynote address. Presented at *International Language in Education Conference*, Hong Kong, 18 December 1998.
- Hargreaves, Andy. 1994. *Changing Teachers, Changing Times: Teachers Work and Culture in the Postmodern Age*. Great Britain: Cassell.
- Henderson, Norman K. (undated) Educational Problems and Research: A Hong Kong Introduction. *Educational Studies and Research Papers No. 1*. University of Hong Kong. Department of Education Research Unit.

- Heuring, C., and Zhou, Rong. 1995. Distance Learning Strategies in China: Using the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning to Compare Distance and Classroom Learners in China. Hong Kong Polytechnic University: Working Papers in *ELT and Applied Linguistics*, 1/2:95-110.
- Higgs, Joy. 1988. Planing Learning Experiences to promote Autonomous Learning, 40-59. In *Developing Student Autonomy in Learning*, 2nd ed. ed., Boud, D. London: Kogan Page.
- Holec, Henri. 1981. *Autonomy and Foreign Language Learning*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Holliday, Adrian. 1994. *Appropriate Methodology and Social Context*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hong Kong Education Commission. 1990. *Education Commission Report No. 4*. Hong Kong: Government Printer.
- Hong Kong Education Commission. 1994. *Report of the Working Group on Language Proficiency*. Hong Kong: Government Printer.
- Hong Kong Education Commission. 1995. *Education Commission Report No. 6*. Hong Kong: Government Printer.
- Hong Kong Education Commission. 1996. *Education Commission Report No. 7*. Quality School Education. November 1996. Hong Kong: Government Printer.
- Hong Kong Education Commission. 1999. *Education Blueprint for the 21st Century Review of Academic System: Aims of Education*. January 1999 (pamphlet, pages not numbered).
- Hong Kong Education Commission. 2000. *Excel and Grow. Review of Education System: Reform Proposal*. May 2000. Hong Kong.
- Hong Kong Government. 1973. *Green Paper: Report of the Board of Education on the Proposed Expansion of Secondary School Education in Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Government Printer.
- Hong Kong Education Department. 1998. *Hong Kong Public Examination System – the Interim Report*. <http://ropes.hkbu.edu.hk/Int.Report>. 30 November 1998.
- Hylang, Ken. 1997. Is EAP Necessary? A survey of Hong Kong Undergraduates. *Asian Journal of English Language Teaching* 7, (1997): 77-99.
- Jin, Lixian, and Cortazzi, Martin. 1993. Cultural Orientation and Academic Language Use. In *Language and Culture*, eds. Graddol, D., Thomson, L., and Byram, M., 84-97. Clevedon: BAAL and Multicultural Matters.
- Johnson, Robert Keith. 1994. Assessment, Examination and the Medium of Instruction. In *English Language Testing in Hong Kong*, eds. Boyle, J., and Falvey, P., 126-144. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press.

- Kai, Ming Cheng. 1997. The Education System. In *Schooling in Hong Kong: Organization Teaching and Social Context*, eds. Postiglione, G., and Lee, W.O., 25-43. Hong Kong University Press.
- Kaplan, Robert B. 1986. Culture and the written language. In *Culture Bound*, ed. Valdes, J.M., 8-19. Cambridge University Press.
- Kember, David. 1994. *Action Learning Project Manual*. The Hong Kong Polytechnic University.
- Kember, David. 1996. The Intention to both Memorise and Understand: Another Approach to Learning? *Higher Education* 31:341-354.
- Kember, David, and Gow, Lyn. 1989. Cultural Specificity of Approaches to Study. *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 60: 356-365.
- Kember, David, and Gow, Lyn. 1991. A Challenge to the Anecdotal Stereotype of the Asian Student. *Studies in Higher Education* 16, no. 2:117-128.
- Kember, David, Lam, Bick-har, Yan, Luisa, Yum, Jessie C.K. and Liu, Susan Blumberg, eds. 1997. *Case studies of Improving Teaching and Learning from Action Learning Project*. Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Educational Development Unit.
- Kember, David, and Kelly, Mavis. 1994. *Improving the Quality of Teaching through Action Learning Projects*. Hong Kong Polytechnic University.
- Kennedy, Christopher. 1998. Internationalism, Change and Teacher Associations. Conference paper (Keynote address) *English in Southeast Asia ASEAN Perspective*. November 1998. University of Brunei, Derussalam.
- Kenning, Marie-Madeleine. 1996. Creating an Infrastructure for Autonomous Learning: The Resource Catalogue. *System* 24, no. 2: 223-231.
- Kidd, James R. 1973. *How Adults Learn*. Chicago: Association Press.
- Knapper, Christopher K., and Cropley, Arthur J. 1991. *Lifelong Learning and Higher Education*. 3rd ed. London: Kogan Page Ltd.
- Knowles, Malcolm. 1975. *Self-directed Learning: a guide for learners and teachers*. New York: Association Press.
- Knowles, Malcolm. 1988. Preface, Introduction to the Second Edition of *Developing Student Autonomy in Learning*, 1986. 2nd ed., ed. Boud, D., 4-7. London: Kogan.
- Kreber, Carolin. 1998. The Relationship between Self-Directed Learning Critical Thinking and Psychological Type and Some Implications for Teaching in Higher Education. *Studies in Higher Education* 23(1): 71-86.

- Kwok Keung Ho. 1996. The Past, Present and Future of the Religious Schools in Hong Kong. *Compare*, 26(1): 51-58.
- Kyokai, Bukkyo Dendo. 1966. *The teaching of Buddha*. Japan: Toppan Printing Co., 675 ed., 1991.
- Law, Wing-Wah. 1997. The Accommodation and Resistance to the Decolonization, Neocolonization and Recolonization of Higher Education in Hong Kong. *Comparative Education*, 33(2): 187-209.
- Lee, Icy. 1998. Supporting Greater Autonomy in Language Learning. *ELT Journal* 52, no. 4 (October 1998): 282-290.
- Lee, Icy. 1998a. Writing in the Hong Kong Secondary Classroom: Teachers' Beliefs and Practices. In *Hong Kong Journal of Applied Linguistics* 3, no. 1 (June 1998): 61-76. The University of Hong Kong.
- Lee, Icy, and Falvey, Peter. 1996. Coherence in Writing: Views, perceptions and judgements of tertiary students and secondary teachers of English in Hong Kong. In *Issues in Language in Education*, eds. Storey, P., Berry, V., Burton D., and Hoare, P., 17-33. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute of Education.
- Lee, Kwok-sung. 1997. The Medium of Instruction Policy in Hong Kong and Strategy for Implementation, 25-26 June 1997. Conference paper presented at *International Conference of Language Education and Culture*. Lingnan College, Hong Kong.
- Lee Wing On. 1996. The Cultural Context for Chinese Learners: Conceptions of Learning in the Confucian Tradition. In *The Chinese Learner: Cultural, Psychological and Contextual Influences*, ed. Watkins, D.A., and Biggs, J.B., 25 - 42. Cerc and Acer. Hong Kong.
- Leong, Che Kan. 1997. Relating Language Education and Culture, 25-26 June 1997. Paper presented at *International Conference on Language, Education and Culture*. Lingnan College, Hong Kong (unpublished).
- Li, Shuyun, and Munby, Hugh. 1996. Metacognitive Strategies in Second Language Academic Reading: A Qualitative Investigation. *English for Specific Purposes* 15, no. 3: 199-216. Great Britain: The American University.
- Littlewood, William. 1996. Autonomy: An Anatomy and a Framework. *System* 24, no. 4: 427-435.
- Littlewood, William. 1998. Questioning some Assumptions about Southeast Asian Students, November 1998. Conference paper presented at *English in Southeast Asia ASEAN Perspective*. November 1998. University of Brunei. Darussalam.
- Littlewood, William. 1999. Defining and Developing Autonomy in East Asian Context in *Applied Linguistics* 20, no. 1: 71-94.

- Littlewood, William, and Ngar-Fun Lin. 1996. *LEAP: Hong Kong students and their English*. The English Centre, University of Hong Kong.
- Littlewood, William, Ngar Fun Lin, and Yu, Christine. 1996. Hong Kong Tertiary Students' Attitudes and Proficiency in Spoken English. *RELC Journal* 27, no. 1: 70-87.
- Llewellyn, John, Hancock, Greg, Kirst, and Michael, Roeloffs, Karl. 1982. *A Perspective on Education in Hong Kong Report by a Visiting Panel*. Hong Kong: Government Printer.
- Lord, Robert. 1987. Language Policy and Planning in Hong Kong: Past, Present and (Especially) Future. In *Language Education in Hong Kong*, ed. Lord, R., and Cheng, H., 3-26. Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong.
- Maley, Alan. 1986. Xanadu – A miracle of rare device: the teaching of English in China. In *Culture Bound*, ed. Valdes, J. M., 102-112. Cambridge University Press.
- Marsh, Robert. 1963. *Report of Education in Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Government Printer.
- Marton, Ference, and Saljo, Roger. 1976. On qualitative differences in learning – Outcome and Process. *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 46: 4-11.
- Marton, Ference, Dall'Alba, Gloria, and Tse Lai Kun. 1996. Memorizing and Understanding: The Key to the Paradox. In *The Chinese Learner: Cultural, Psychological and Contextual Influences*, eds. Watkins, D., and Biggs, J., 69-84. Cerc and Acer: Hong Kong.
- Martyn, Elaine. 1994. Self-Access Logs: Promoting Self-Directed Learning. In *Directions in Self-Access Language Learning*, eds. Gardner, D., and Miller, L., 65-78. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Mezirow, Jack. 1985. A Critical Theory of Self-Directed Learning. In *Self-Directed Learning: From Theory to Practice*, ed. Brookfield, S., New Directions for Continuing Education, no. 25 (March 1985): 17-30. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers.
- McDonough, Steven. 1986. *Psychology in Foreign Language Teaching*, 2nd ed. London: Routledge.
- Morris, Paul. 1992. Preparing Pupils as Citizens of the Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong: An Analysis of Curriculum Changes and Control During the Transition Period. In *Education and Society in Hong Kong: Toward One Country and Two Systems*, ed. Postiglione, G., 117-149. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Morris, Paul. 1996. Asia's Four Little Tigers: a Comparison of the Role of Education in their Development. *Comparative Education*, 32(1): 95-109.

- Morris, Paul. 1996a. *The Hong Kong School Curriculum: Development Issues and Policies*. 2nd ed. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Morris, Paul. 1997. School Knowledge, the Status and the Market: an Analysis of the Hong Kong Secondary School Curriculum. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 29(3): 329-349.
- Morris, Paul. 1999. Final Report: The Project on Feedback and Assessment Funded by the Education Department, January 1999. Hong Kong: Curriculum Development Institute, Hong Kong Education Department.
- Morris, Paul, and Chan, K.K. 1997. The Hong Kong School Curriculum and the Political Transition, Politicization, Contextualization and Symbolic Action. *Comparative Education*, 33(2): 247-264.
- Murphy, David. 1987. Offshore Education: A Hong Kong Perspective. *Australian Universities Review* 30, no. 2: 43-44.
- Murphy, John. 1996. Integrating Listening and Reading Instruction in EAP Programs. *English for Specific Purposes* 15, no. 2: 105-120.
- Nunan, David. 1992. *Research Methods in Language Learning*. USA: Cambridge University Press.
- Nunan, David. 1995. Closing the Gap Between Learning and Instruction. *TESOL Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 133-158.
- Nunan, David. 1996. Towards Autonomous Learning: Some theoretical, empirical and practical issues. In *Taking Control: Autonomy in Language Learning*, eds. Pemberton, R.L., Edward S.L., Or, Winnie W.F., and Pierson, H.D., 13-26. Hong Kong: University Press.
- Nunan, David. 1998. Teaching Grammar in Context. *ELT Journal* 52, no. 2 (April 1998): 101-109.
- Nutty, Duncan D., and Barrett, Mary A. 1996. Transitions in Students' Learning Styles. *Studies in Higher Education* 21(3): 333-345.
- O'Malley, Michael J., and Chamot, Anna Uhl. 1990. *Learning Strategies in Second Language Acquisition*. England: Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Or, Winnie W.F. 1994. Helping Learners Plan and Prepare for Self-Access Learning. In *Directions in Self-Access Language Learning*, eds. Gardner, D., and Miller, L., 45-58. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Oxford, Rebecca. 1989. Use of language learning strategies: A synthesis of studies with implications for strategy training. *System* 17: 235-247.
- Oxford, Rebecca. 1990. *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*. Heinle & Heinle Publishers.

- Ozog, Conrad K. 1990. The English Language in Malaysia and its Relationship with the National Language. In *Planning Language and Education in Australasia and the South Pacific*, eds. Baldauf, R.B. Jr., and Luke, A. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Peer Review Report. 1995. B.A. (Hons) in Arts and Social Sciences and the inclusion of the Government and International Studies Major, Hong Kong Baptist University (March 1995).
- Pennington, Martha C. 1994. Forces shaping a dual code society: An Interpretive review of literature on language attitudes and language use in Hong Kong. *Research Report No. 35*. Department of English, City University of Hong Kong.
- Pennington, Martha C., and Balla, John. 1998. Our Future English Teachers: Language Use Among Graduate and Undergraduate TESL Students in Hong Kong. In *Language in Hong Kong Century's End*, ed. Pennington, M.C., 243-264. Hong Kong University Press.
- Pierson, Herbert. 1992. Cantonese, English or Putonghua – Unresolved Communicative Issue in Hong Kong's Future. In *Education and Society in Hong Kong*, ed. Postiglione, G.A., 183-203. Hong Kong University Press.
- Pierson, Herbert D. 1996. Learner Culture and Learner Autonomy in the Hong Kong Context. In *Taking Control: Autonomy in Language Learning*, 49-58. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Poon, Anita Y.K. 1998. Bilingualism and monolingualism: A shift in Hong Kong's language in education policy. In *Policy and Practice in Language Education*, eds. Berry, V., and McNeill, A., 89-105. Department of Curriculum Studies, The University of Hong Kong.
- Postiglione, Gerard A. 1992. The Decolonization of Hong Kong Education. In *Education and Society in Hong Kong: Toward One Country and Two Systems*, ed. Postiglione G., 3-39. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Postiglione, Gerard A. 1997. Schooling and Social Stratification. In *Schooling in Hong Kong: Organization Teaching and Social Context*, eds. Postiglione G.A., and Wing On Lee, 1-23. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Postiglione, Gerard A., and Lee Wing On. 1997. Schooling and the Changing Socio-Political Setting: An Introduction. In *Schooling in Hong Kong: Organization, Teaching and Social Context*, eds. Postiglione G., and Lee, W.O., 1-23. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Pow Kar Po, Grace. 1994. *What is Missing in the Jigsaw Puzzle? An Examination of the Professional Training of Hong Kong Teachers and their Perception of Communicative Language Teaching*. MA dissertation in Language Studies. Hong Kong Baptist University.

- Powell, John. 1985. The Residues of Learning: Autobiographical Accounts by Graduates of the Impact of Higher Education. *Higher Education* 14: 127-147.
- Ramsden, P., Martin, E. and Bowden, J. 1987. Approaches to Studying in Different School Environments. *Research Working Paper* 87.12. Centre for the Study of Higher Education, the University of Melbourne.
- Ramsden, Paul. 1992. *Learning to Teach in Higher Education*. London: Routledge.
- Reid, John. 1993. *Teaching ESL Writing*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall Regents.
- Richards, Jack, Tung, Peter, and Ng, P. 1992. The Culture of the English Language Teacher: A Hong Kong example. *RELC Journal* 23: 81-102.
- Riley, Phillip (ed.). 1985. *Discourse and Learning*. Harlow. Essex: Longman
- Rubin, Joan. 1987. Learner strategies: theoretical assumptions, research history and typology. In *Learner Strategies in Language Learning*, eds. Wenden, A. and Rubin, J., 15-30 . Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.
- Rudowicz, Czeslaw, and Wu, Donna. 1997. Improving Teaching of a University Module – Application of Action Learning Methodology. In *Case studies of Improving Teaching and Learning from Action Learning Project*, eds. 1997. Kember, D.L., Yan, B.H., Yum, L., Jessie C.K. and Liu, S.B. 141-156. Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Educational Development Unit.
- Rudowicz, Elizabeth, and Hui, Anne. 1996. Creativity and a Creative Person: Hong Kong Perspective. *The Australian Journal of Gifted Education* 5, no. 2: 5-11.
- Rudowicz, Elizabeth, Kitto, Joanna, and Lok, David. 1994. Creativity and Chinese Socialisation Practices: A Study of Hong Kong Chinese Primary School Children. *Australasian Journal of Gifted Education* 3, no. 1: 4-8.
- Saddler-Smith, Eugene, and Tsang, Florence. 1998. A Comparative Study of Approaches to Studying in Hong Kong and United Kingdom. *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 1998, 68: 81-93.
- Saliger, Herbert, and Shohamy, Elana. 1989. *Second Language Research Methods*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Salili, Farideh. 1996. Accepting Personal Responsibility for Learning. In *The Chinese Learner: Cultural, Psychological and Contextual Influences*, eds. Watkins, D., and Biggs, J., 85-106. Cerc and Acer. Hong Kong.
- Samovar, Larry A., and Porter, Richard, E. 1991. *Communication between Cultures*. Wadsworth Publishing Co. Belmont C.A.
- Sapsford, Roger, and Jupp, Victor. 1996. Validating Evidence. In *Data Collection and Analysis*, eds. Sapsford, R., and Jupp, V., 1-23. London: Sage Publications.

- Scarino, Angela. 1994. Towards Target-related Assessment. In *English Language Testing in Hong Kong*, eds. Boyle J., and Falvey, P., 145-172. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press.
- Scollon, Ron, and Scollon, Suzanne Wong. 1994. Post-Confucian Confusion. *Research Report No. 37*. City Polytechnic of Hong Kong. Department of English.
- Simmons, Diana. 1996. A Study of Strategy in Use in Independent Learners. In *Taking Control*, ed. R. Pemberton, 61-77. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University.
- Sin-ming Shaw. 1999. It's True. Asians Can't Think. *Time*, 31 May 1999, 23.
- Smelby, Jens-Christian. 1996. Differences in University Teaching. *Studies in Higher Education* 21(1): 69-79.
- So, Daniel, W.C. 1987. Searching for a Bilingual Exit. In *Language Education in Hong Kong*, eds. Lord, R., and Cheng H., 249-268. Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong.
- So, Daniel, W.C. 1992. Language-based Bifurcation of Secondary Schools in Hong Kong: Past, Present and Future. In *Into the Twenty First Century: Issues of Language in Education in Hong Kong*, ed. Luke Kwong, K., 69-95. Hong Kong: Linguistic Society of Hong Kong.
- Squires, Geoffrey. 1987. *The Curriculum Beyond School*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Squires, Geoffrey. 1990. *First Degree: The Undergraduate Curriculum*. Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press.
- Swain, Merrill. 1997. The output hypothesis, focus on form and second language learning. In *Applying Linguistics: Insights into Language in Education*, eds. Berry, V., Adamson, B., and Littlewood, W. Hong Kong: The University of Hong Kong.
- Sweeting, Anthony, E. 1992. *A Phoenix Transformed: The Reconstruction of Education in Post-War Hong Kong*. The Asian Historical Monographs. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press.
- Sweeting, Anthony. 1997. Educational Policy and the 1997 Factor: the Art of the Possible Interacting with the Dismal Science. *Comparative Education*, 33(2): 171-185.
- Tan, Jason. 1997. Education and Colonial Transition in Singapore and Hong Kong: Comparisons and Contracts. *Comparative Education*, 33(2): 303-312.

- Tang, Catherine, and Anderson, Sheilagh. 1997. *How Do Students Analyse Assessment Questions?* In *Case studies of Improving Teaching and Learning from Action Learning Project*, eds. 1997. Kember, D.L., Yan, B.H., Yum, L., Jessie C.K., and Liu, S.B., 11-16. Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Educational Development Unit.
- Tang, Catherine, and Biggs, John. 1996. How Hong Kong Students Cope with Assessment. In *The Chinese Learner: Cultural, Psychological and Contextual Influences*, 159-182. Cerc and Acer. Hong Kong.
- Teather, David. 1998. Review of Public Examination System in Hong Kong. Conference Paper. Presented at *Hong Kong Educational Research Association Annual Conference 1998*. 21 November 1998. Hong Kong
- Thumb, Jenny. 1997. Language Choice: English, Cantonese, or Mix? In *Linguistics in ESL and Text Analysis. Working Papers in ELT and Applied Linguistics 2*, no. 2., 37-56. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Polytechnic University Department of English.
- Tong, Jimmy Woo-man. 1997. Hong Kong Chinese Students' Approach towards English Language Learning Revisited. In *Pedagogic Development Learning and Work*, eds. Burnett, M.L., Terrence, P.J., and Wong, C. Working Papers in *ELT and Applied Linguistics 2*, no. 1 (1996/97): 71-87. Hong Kong Polytechnic University.
- Tough, Allen. 1979. *The Adult's Learning Projects*. 2nd ed. Austin: Learning Concepts.
- Tsui, B.M., Amy. 1992. Using English as a Medium of Instruction and English Language Acquisition. In *Into the Twenty First Century: Issues of Language in Education in Hong Kong*, ed. Kwong, K.L., 135-146. Hong Kong: Linguistic Society of Hong Kong.
- Tudor, Ian. 1996. *Learner-Centredness as Language Education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tun, Peter, Lam, Raymond, and Wai King Tsang. 1997. English as a Medium of Instruction in post-1997 Hong Kong: What students, teachers, and parents think. *Journal of Pragmatics* 28 (1997): 441-459.
- Tung Chee Hwa. 1997. *A Future of Excellence and Prosperity for All*. Speech by the Chief Executive the Honourable Tung Chee Hwa at the ceremony of establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, 1 July 1997, Hong Kong. Hong Kong Information Services Department.
- Tung, Peter. 1997. A Framework for Considering Medium of Instruction Policy Issues in Hong Kong – a conference paper presented at the *International Conference on Language, Education and Culture*, 25-27 June 1997. Hong Kong: Lingnan College.

- University Grants Committee. 1998. *Report on Higher Education in Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Government Printer.
- Walberg, Herbert J., and Haertel, Geneva D. 1992. Educational Psychology's First Century. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 84: 6-19.
- Walters, Steve, and Balla, John. 1998. Medium of Instruction: Policy and Reality at One Hong Kong Tertiary Institution. In *Language in Hong Kong Century's End*, ed. Pennington, M.C., 365-390. Hong Kong University Press.
- Watkins, David. 1992. Evaluating the Effectiveness of Tertiary Teaching: A Hong Kong Perspective. *Educational Research Journal* 7: 60-67.
- Watkins, David. 1996. Hong Kong Secondary School Learner: a Developmental Perspective. In *The Chinese Learner: Cultural, Psychological and Contextual Influences*. eds. Watkins, D., and Biggs J., 107-120. Cerc and Acer The Central Printing Press Ltd. Hong Kong.
- Watkins, David. 1996a. Learning Theories and Approaches to Research: A Cross-Cultural Perspective. In *The Chinese Learner: Cultural Psychological and Contextual Influences*, eds. Watkins, D., and Biggs J., 3-24. Cerc and Acer The Central Printing Press Ltd. Hong Kong.
- Watkins, David, and Regmi, M. (In press) Towards the cross-cultural validation of a Western model of student approaches to learning. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*.
- Weaver, Gary R. 1993. Understanding and Coping with Cross-cultural Adjustment Stress. In *Education for the Intercultural Experience*, ed. Paige, M.R., 137-167. Intercultural Press.
- Wehmeyer, Michael. 1997. Student-Directed Learning and Self-Determination. In *Student-Directed Learning: Teaching Self-Determination Skills*, ed. Agran, M., 28-60. USA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.
- Weistein, Claire F., and Mayer, Richard F. 1986. The teaching of learning strategies. In *Handbook of Research on Teaching*, 3rd ed. ed. M. Wittrock, 315-327. New York: Macmillan.
- Weizheng, Zhu. 1992. Confucius and Traditional Chinese Education: An Assessment. In *Education and Modernization: The Chinese Experience*, ed. Hayhoe, R. Exeter: Pergamon Press.
- Wenden, Anita. 1987 *Learner Strategies for Learner Autonomy*. Prentice Hall.
- Wenden, Anita L. 1987a. Conceptual Background and Utility. In *Learner Strategies in Language Learning*, eds. Wenden A., and Rubin J., 3-14. Cambridge: Prentice Hall International.
- Wilcox, Susan. 1996. Fostering Self-Directed Learning in University Setting. *Studies in Higher Education* 21(2): 165-176.

- Williams, Marion, and Burden, Robert. 1997. *Psychology for Language Teachers: A Social Constructivist Approach*. UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Witrock, Merlin C., ed. 1977. *The Human Brain*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Yee, Albert, H. 1992. *A people misruled: The Chinese Stepping-Stone Syndrome*. Singapore: Heinemann Asia.
- Yee, Albert, Hoy. 1995. Higher Education in Hong Kong. In *East Asian Higher Education: Traditions and Transformations*, ed. Yee, A.H., 36-55. UK: Pergamon.