

English language, academic support and academic outcomes: A discussion paper

DAVID HIRSH

The University of Sydney

ABSTRACT

This paper explores key issues associated with the admission of international students into university programs of study. It comes at a time when tertiary institutions in Australia and elsewhere are seeking to 'get it right' with English language admission requirements, and provide cost-effective support to students at need. The dual concerns of attracting the best possible student cohort while attending to the need, often critical, to maintain satisfactory student numbers, have largely overshadowed the reality on the ground of matching students with appropriate programs of study, and ensuring that those capable of succeeding are given the opportunity to. This paper looks to the literature as a starting point for identifying the important concerns, and then suggesting possible responses.

Address for correspondence: David Hirsh, TESOL Program, Faculty of Education and Social Work, The University of Sydney, NSW 2006, Australia. Email: d.hirsh@edfac.usyd.edu.au.

University of Sydney Papers in TESOL, 2(2), 193-211.

©2007 ISSN: 1834-3198 (Print) & 1834-4712 (Online)

INTRODUCTION

The large concentrations of international students in universities present challenges for receiving institutions in terms of:

- setting appropriate admission requirements
- identifying possible 'at risk' students
- providing timely and effective academic and language support when required
- tailoring course content for a non-local student audience
- responding fairly and appropriately to non-native-like language use in assessment tasks

The growing recognition of the importance of responding to such challenges is highlighted in discussion papers commissioned by Australian Education International on pre-admission language and academic pathways (Murray & O'Loughlin, 2007) and post-admission language development and support (Arkoudis & Starfield, 2007), in the Australian context, and a report commissioned by the New Zealand Ministry of Education on English language levels in tertiary institutions (see Read & Hirsh, 2005) in the New Zealand context.

Tertiary institutions have largely addressed these challenges alone, in the absence of meaningful studies of equivalence in the forms of English language evidence accepted by different universities and the associated programs of language needs diagnosis and support provided.

This paper draws on key studies in the recent literature to arrive at suggestions for appropriate means by which universities can accommodate international students. The discussion focuses on the role of international English proficiency tests such as IELTS (International English Language Testing System) and TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) tests as gatekeepers, the impact of academic pathway, the use of diagnostic tools to assess students' preparedness for academic study, the provision of academic and language support, and issues surrounding course content and assessment.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

A recurring question in both academic and wider circles is whether tertiary institutions are getting it right with their language requirements for international students who have not passed through local high school pathways. Adjusting entry requirements invariably impacts on the institution. If the benchmark is set too low, institutions can be faced with the prospect of falling academic standards within the student population. This can be accompanied with large investments of time, money and resources in providing remedial support. If the benchmark is set too high, otherwise suitable candidates may enrol elsewhere.

Language entry requirements for international students are typically presented as IELTS or TOEFL test scores. These tests are designed to assess English language proficiency at a given time. They have been adopted in a gate keeping role to determine if applying international students have met the minimum language entry requirements for admission to the selected programs of study.

The IELTS partners (see University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations, British Council and IDP IELTS Australia, 2007) provide guidelines for interpreting test scores, based on British Council recommendations. IELTS band 6.5 is recommended for linguistically less demanding academic courses (e.g., agriculture, mathematics), and IELTS band 7.0 is recommended for linguistically demanding academic courses (e.g., medicine, law). Below the recommended thresholds, the Partners indicate that English study would be required. Universities positioning themselves at the low end with language entry requirements may be accepting some international students who, in order to achieve satisfactory grades, are faced with considerably greater language burdens than other students may face.

In setting minimum language requirements for selected programs of study, institutions need to consider the degree of academic and/or language support they are able to provide to students in need. In their study of international students at the University of

Melbourne, Bayliss and Ingram (2006) compared academic staff perceptions of the language adequacy of their students with IELTS band scores. They found that students considered by academic staff to have adequate language also had the highest IELTS scores, while students whose language was assessed as being inadequate for academic study all had proficiency levels below the IELTS benchmark recommended by the IELTS partners (see earlier discussion). Similarly, Feast (2002), examining IELTS predictive validity at the University of South Australia, presented a case based on her findings for raising the existing IELTS requirement of band 6.0 for post-graduate studies, and called for requiring writing scores of IELTS band 6 for undergraduate students. Feast (2002) highlighted the concern about low IELTS writing scores in light of the central role played by writing in assessment tasks. In a New Zealand based study, Bellingham (1995) highlighted significantly higher rates of poor performing students for those with IELTS scores below the entry requirement. There is a need highlighted in the literature, then, to determine appropriate minimum language entry requirements.

A related question is whether receiving institutions could improve academic outcomes for international students by raising the language bar above the recognised minimum requirements. In answering this, it is important to indicate that neither the IELTS nor the TOEFL test claims or is designed to predict the subsequent academic performance for tests takers. Nevertheless, a series of studies in the U.K., U.S., Australia and New Zealand have investigated the predictive validity of IELTS and TOEFL.

In interpreting the findings of predictive studies, two possible shortcomings need to be recognized: (1) both IELTS and TOEFL undergo periodic revisions, and thus older studies may have questionable relevance today; and (2) most studies investigate only students who have satisfied the entry requirements for tertiary study, so the student samples are truncated. There is recognition of the limitations of predicting subsequent academic performance on the basis of truncated language proficiency test results (see Alderson, Clapham & Wall, 1995).

Nevertheless, the results are insightful. In the case of IELTS, the predictive validity of test scores is poor at around 9% (see Cotton & Conrow, 1998; Davies, 1988; Hill, Storch & Lynch, 1999; Kerstjens & Nery, 2000). In these studies, only the reading module of IELTS was a significant predictor of subsequent academic grades. The results for TOEFL are similarly poor (see Ayers & Quattlebaum, 1992; Hill, Storch & Lynch, 1999; Light, Xu & Mossop, 1987).

Woodrow (2006), in her study of international students enrolled in TESOL postgraduate units at the University of Sydney, Australia, investigated the predictive validity of IELTS scores in a masters program with an admission requirement of IELTS 6.5. Woodrow found that 22 students at IELTS band 6.5 and 21 students at IELTS band 7.0 had very similar grade point averages in their postgraduate coursework, yielding a predictive strength of 3%. This finding suggests that variations in IELTS scores above the admission threshold are not a significant determinant of subsequent academic outcomes.

The set language threshold should be regarded as a minimum, and not as a learning objective. Near the threshold, language proficiency would be expected to have some impact on academic success, and there is evidence of this in the literature, in terms of:

- difficulties understanding the language and structure of lectures (Nattinger & deCarrico, 1992);
- a pattern avoidance of oral participation in tutorial classes (Gravatt, Richards & Lewis, 1997), although this has also been variously associated with unfamiliarity with local turn-taking conventions (Scollon & Scollen, 1983), an unfamiliar learning culture (Ballard & Clanchy, 1991) and socio-cultural face-saving (Liu, 2000);
- the volume and time-consuming nature of academic reading, with reports of international students taking up to three times as long to complete set readings (Mulligan & Kirkpatrick, 1998);
- a slow process of learning the requirements of academic writing (Ballard & Clanchy, 1991).

As IELTS scores move above the threshold, while language concerns may decrease, other factors could still affect academic performance, including:

- familiarity with subject area, familiarity with academic expectations, ability to act on and incorporate the suggestions of teachers, working relationships with peers, and familiarity with local knowledge (Hirsh, forthcoming)
- maturity and motivation (Cotton & Conrow, 1998; Gue & Holdaway, 1973; Ho & Spinks, 1985; Jochems, Snippe, Smid & Verweij, 1996; Kerstjens & Nery, 2000)
- settling in difficulties such as finding suitable accommodation, social adjustment such as dealing with cultural issues, and welfare difficulties such as health problems, homesickness and loneliness (Cotton & Conrow, 1998; Elder & O'Loughlin, 2003; Hill, Storch & Lynch, 1999; Kerstjens & Nery, 2000)

Proposals to adjust the language requirements for courses of study probably need to take into account: (1) the language demands of the course readings, lectures, tutorials and assessment tasks; (2) the assessment criteria; and (3) the language demands associated with professional certification. Studies of the academic performance of students with different IELTS scores could indicate whether there is a case for raising the language benchmarks for a particular program of study.

A decision to raise a language threshold would not necessarily attract a more successful cohort of international students, though, and could at the same time deny entry to suitable students. Anecdotal evidence (see Hirsh, forthcoming) suggests that high academic grades can be linked to a high degree of specialization in subject areas, and, although this can be reflected in a strong technical competence, it may not be equally well reflected in IELTS or TOEFL test scores.

ACADEMIC PATHWAYS AND ACCULTURATION

International students enter universities on a range of pathways. These pathways provide variable opportunities for students to academically and socially acculturate prior to university admission. The duration and nature of pre-sessional studies in an English-speaking country can impact on the academic performance of international students, particularly for the first year of tertiary study (Read & Hirsh, 2005).

Academic and language programs offered by or in association with a receiving institution can provide direct pathways into university for students who have not yet satisfied the academic and/or language admission requirements. There is scope within such programs to address acculturation issues. However, not all international students attend pre-sessional programs. For some students, the first formal learning experience in an English-speaking country occurs as an enrolled undergraduate or graduate student at university.

At an academic level, international students may undergo an adjustment period at university during which they gain an increasing appreciation and understanding of the requirements and expectations of academic study. Guidance with accessing and communicating with academic staff could be beneficial to newly enrolled students. At a practical level, this could take the form of guidelines on and modelling of how to approach a lecturer for a range of requests including clarifications on assessment task specifications.

Tinto (1987), in reference to local students in U.S. colleges, sees a link between levels of integration in academic life and patterns of attrition among the student population. According to Tinto (1987), students in 'isolation' are at higher risk of dropping out of their studies than are students with strong social and academic links. At the same time, Tinto (1987) warns against reading too much into first year grades, as some students are in a transition process in their first semesters of study, and may become strong performers in subsequent years if given the opportunity to continue unhindered.

At a social level, studies indicate that, although international students generally desire close contacts with local students (Ward, 2001), they generally have low levels of intercultural friendships (Bochner, Hutnik & Furnham, 1985; Trice & Elliott, 1993), and that this could in part be due to difficulties for international students in meeting and developing friendships with local students (Lewthwaite, 1996). This may not be an issue for international students with strong social links to co-nationals, but it could be critical for students arriving without well-established friendships.

A related issue for non-local students is their degree of familiarity with the local context in a broad sense. Within a course of study, historical, cultural, social, political, economic and sporting references may be included as assumed knowledge. For international students, these references may present themselves as an additional learning demand or even distraction from the core ideas (Hirsh, forthcoming).

Universities need to take some account of academic pathways into tertiary study when determining the likely levels of assistance or support students may need or benefit from, and when determining an appropriate framework for provision of that support.

IDENTIFICATION OF 'AT RISK' STUDENTS

A related issue within this discussion of international students is the identification of students at risk, and associated interventions. One approach is to rely on academic staff to report on students in need, based on patterns of attendance and/or academic performance. Fox (2004) has shown that attendance can be a strong indicator of academic success. A second approach is to identify weak students from academic grades. A third approach is to introduce a diagnostic assessment tool around the time of admission to assess performance on a series of academic tasks mirroring the demands of entry level courses of study at the university.

An example of a diagnostic tool used at the point of entry is the Canadian Academic English Language (CAEL) Assessment. CAEL

test scores are used at Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada to determine the requirement, if any, for each student to take credit-bearing ESOL courses as part of their studies. CAEL is designed to mirror closely the academic language demands of first year introductory courses through use of an integrated test approach. Test-takers are required to utilize notes and sources from the listening and reading parts of the test when attempting a related writing task.

The nine CAEL band descriptors range from 10-Non User through to 90-Expert User, with results generated for the reading, listening, writing and speaking subtests, and an overall band score.

The use of the CAEL and ESOL support measures at Carleton University has highlighted areas of concern. Fox (2004) observed that 'superficial fluency' in writing was a recurring issue, where test-takers could attain high test scores without exhibiting a strong ability to synthesize substantive information from the readings and lecture. Another concern was the incidence of benevolent passes in ESOL courses in spite of known weaknesses, resulting in subsequent failure or poor passes for some affected students (Fox, 2004: 459-461). In spite of these weaknesses, which have since been addressed at Carleton University, Fox (2004) concludes that use of CAEL test results has been an effective means of identifying students at risk of failure, and the early intervention provided has been instrumental in turning around academic outcomes.

A different approach has been adopted at the University of Melbourne, Australia with the Diagnostic English Language Assessment (DELA) and at Auckland University, New Zealand, with their corresponding Diagnostic English Language Needs Assessment (DELNA). Used in a low stakes capacity, the DELNA provides feedback after the point of admission on students' academic language use.

DELNA is fully funded by the university with no cost to students. It works in two stages:

- Screening: vocabulary task (7 mins), and text-editing task (10 mins)
- Diagnosis: reading task (50 mins), listening task (30 mins), and writing task (30 mins)

While all targeted students take an on-line screening, only those who fall below a threshold continue with the diagnosis section. Students taking the diagnosis section receive feedback in the form of a band score and, where appropriate, advice regarding language support. Results from the diagnosis section are reported in bands from 4 to 9. Guidelines on interpreting results are provided in a DELNA handbook (Elder & von Randow, 2002) as follows:

- **Bands 4 & 5:** Students 'at risk' of failing courses and having difficulty with their studies: EAL students are advised to take ESOL credit courses and are made aware of the language support services available at the English Language Self Access Centre and the Student Learning Centre.
- **Band 6:** Students will experience difficulty with their studies and still need further instruction: EAL students are advised to take ESOL credit courses complemented with self-study through either the English Language Self Access Centre and/or the Student Learning Centre.
- **Band 7:** EAL students are recommended to make use of the support at the English Language Self Access Centre and the Student Learning Centre.
- **Bands 8 & 9:** Students unlikely to require English language support: Students advised of the programs at the Student Learning Centre and the support they can get from the English Language Self Access Centre.

Elder (2003) indicates that most international students taking the assessment at the University of Auckland are identified as being in need of language support. Issues regarding up-take of DELNA feedback are important, and are discussed in the next section.

Another approach to diagnostic assessment would be to provide responsibility for determining suitability for a selected program

with the students. In such an approach, prospective students could perform a series of on-line assessment tasks, and receive individual feedback on their linguistic preparedness for academic study. This could be modeled on the DIALANG project (see www.dialang.org).

DIALANG is a web-based on-line assessment tool based on the Council of Europe's Common European Framework (Council of Europe, 2001). Individuals select a language, and then complete a self-assessment questionnaire which provides some initial tailoring of the subsequent items to increase the suitability of question difficulty. Sections for reading, listening and writing are provided. After completing the tasks, results and feedback are provided indicating an individual's level on the Council of Europe scale, an indication of what results mean for individual skills, descriptions of performance abilities of individuals at different levels, strategies for improving language, and some clarifications on interpreting task results. In adopting this approach, universities would be enabling prospective students to better assess their suitability for different programs of study.

PROVISION OF ACADEMIC SUPPORT

A central question in any form of diagnostic assessment is how task results will be used. At one end, results can be used as a gatekeeper. At the other end, they can be used for student self diagnosis. If task scores are used to identify students in need of support, then the links between the assessment program and support programs need to be strong and visible and attractive for students to follow.

Bright and von Randow (2004), reporting on students taking the DELNA, found that less than 25% of students identified as in need of support actually receive support. Hirsh (forthcoming) found that students most in need are also least able or willing to access support measures, and this is in part due to the high demands on time and emotional effort associated with core courses of study. Bright and von Randow (2004) indicate that the response at the University of Auckland has been to provide face-to-face counseling sessions for at

risk students, in the hope of raising the number of students taking up the advice. The researchers have not, to date, reported on the success of this additional stage in the diagnostic-support program. Issues of timetabling constraints and heavy demands on time may be contributing factors in the reported low uptake of support courses (see Bright & von Randow, 2004). The reality is that support courses are most likely to be effective if they are required credit-bearing components of a student's program of study, designed and delivered at the faculty or program level.

It is clear, then, that an effective diagnostic-support program needs to be well-supported by key players at a high level within the university to ensure a well-funded, integrated and enduring program.

A different approach to the provision of academic support is the provision of an academic pathway into the main program. At the University of Sydney, Australia, students can staircase into a Masters level TESOL program through a Graduate Certificate program which has a lower language entry requirement. The rationale behind this approach is that preparation for subsequent studies can be tailored so as to attend to language, academic and discipline-specific aspects. As a credit-bearing program of study, there is also scope for satisfactory levels of attainment on the first program to count towards some of the credit requirements in the subsequent program, providing enhanced incentives for students to enrol.

ACCOMMODATION OF LANGUAGE

So far, the discussion has not dealt with academic staff perceptions of international students, and how this impacts on course content and assessment tasks. Yet, this is another important piece of the puzzle in terms of academic experiences of international students.

In a study conducted at the University of Auckland, New Zealand, Gravatt, Richards and Lewis (1997) investigated the extent of modification to course context, assessment tasks and marking criteria to accommodate the language needs of English as Second

Language (ESL) students. Their finding was that modifications do occur in course content in response to observed difficulties experienced by ESL students in the form of more overheads in lectures and more photocopied notes in the case of 68% of arts courses, 53% of commerce courses, and 48% for science. Less commonly reported modifications include more summaries of material, additional tutorials and simplification of materials. In the case of final examination papers, the researchers found modifications for 7% of arts courses, 24% of commerce courses, and 7% for science. The researchers also investigated the incidence of leniency with marking, and determined that it is confined to grammatical and structural aspects, reportedly occurring in 52% of arts courses, 15% for commerce, and 33% for science. The extent of modification required to accommodate international students is likely to be affected by the language demands of the course of study and the number of international, or ESOL, students enrolled.

A concern is that international students may face very different experiences with regard to the acceptability of their language use as they progress through their academic studies. Universities have a responsibility to clearly communicate course requirements, learning outcomes and assessment criteria with their students. Programs of study which attract large concentrations of international students may need to arrive at guidelines for assessing student performance in terms of language use, and apply these consistently. This is to ensure that differences between academic staff about what is and is not critical in language use do not result in unacceptable levels of inconsistency in judgements and assessment decisions within a program.

CONCLUSIONS

Drawing on the discussion so far, a series of summative points can be offered as a starting point for developing or evaluating policy with regard to international students.

Admission

Universities need to admit international students with a language knowledge and competence appropriate for the language demands of the selected study program and any associated certification procedures required for entry into professional work, as may be required for Nursing or Education. An analysis of the subsequent academic performance for students entering the university with variable IELTS or TOEFL scores could indicate if the language entry requirement is set too low.

Specialised language needs

The IELTS and TOEFL tests are not sensitive enough to indicate language preparedness for specialised uses. In some courses, specific language criteria may need to be developed against which prospective students could be assessed. In these cases, students would need to be made aware of any specific language requirements associated with their selected field of study prior to admission. Options for assessing students against specific language criteria at an early stage are (a) pre-entry as an additional entry requirement; or (b) post-entry as a diagnostic tool. Issues of who bears the cost of the assessment process, who assesses the students, and how results are used all need to be considered. Where specific language criteria are developed within a program of study, these could provide a basis for arriving at a standardised, principled and coherent approach to assessing language use in assessment tasks.

Support

Options for providing academic and/or language support include (a) one-on-one sessions with a designated academic staff member to provide targeted guidance; (b) faculty-based orientation programs; (c) faculty-based ESOL courses, ideally with a credit-weighting and structured into a full-time program of study; (d) more generalised courses offered to enrolled students, possibly targeting ESOL students. The development of on-line support programs which students

can access from home or university is another means of catering to student needs. The *WriteSite* at the University of Sydney is one such program.

While the focus can be remedial, there is a compelling case for also providing 'value-added' support to enrich the learning process, and cater then for all students.

Tracking

Aside from various measures that could be instituted to improve academic outcomes for enrolled students, universities need also to consider the potential benefits of tracking the academic performance of different cohorts of students in general (see Cave, Hanney & Kogan, 1991; Robinson, 2004; Tinto, 1987) and of international students in particular (see Auditor General Victoria, 2002; Fox, 2004) to inform long-term decisions made with regard to setting appropriate minimum admission requirements, identifying at-risk students and the factors contributing to failure, and providing appropriate contexts for academic and language support when required.

The underlining objective in developing cost-effective guidelines pertaining to international students should be to ensure that admitted students have the entry capability and subsequent opportunity to engage meaningfully and effectively with academic subject matter for the duration of their tertiary studies.

THE AUTHOR

David Hirsh is Lecturer in TESOL in the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney, where he teaches on the postgraduate TESOL program. His main research interests are language assessment and support, vocabulary learning, and English for academic purposes in a broad sense.

REFERENCES

- Alderson, J.C., Clapham, C., & Wall, D. (1995). *Language test construction and evaluation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Arkoudis, S. & Starfield, S. (2007). In-course language development and support. A discussion paper prepared for the National Symposium: English Language Competence of International Students, Sydney, August, 2007.
- Auditor General Victoria. (2002). International students in Victorian universities. *Performance Audit Report 76*, Victoria, Australia.
- Ayers, J. & Quattlebaum, R. (1992). TOEFL performance and success in a masters program in engineering. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 52, 973-975.
- Ballard, B. & Clanchy, J. (1991). *Teaching students from overseas: A brief guide for lecturers and supervisors*. Melbourne: Longman Cheshire.
- Bayliss, A. & Ingram, D.E. (2006). IELTS as a predictor of academic language performance. Australian International Education Conference. Available at <<http://www.idp.com/aiec>>. Accessed 27 March, 2007.
- Bellingham, L. (1995). Navigating choppy seas: IELTS as a support for success in higher education. *TESOLANZ Journal*, 3, 21-28.
- Bochner, S., Hutnik, N., & Furnham, A. (1985). The friendship patterns of overseas and host students in an Oxford student residence. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 125, 689-694.
- Bright, C. & von Randow, J. (2004). Tracking post test consequences: The student perspective, *CLESOL Conference*, Christchurch.
- Cave, M., Hanney, S., & Kogan, M. (1991). *The use of performance indicators in higher education: a critical analysis of developing practice* (2nd ed). London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

- Cotton, F. & Conrow, F. (1998). An investigation of the predictive validity of IELTS amongst a group of international students studying at the University of Tasmania. In S. Wood (Ed.), *IELTS research reports 1* (pp.72-115). Canberra: IELTS Australia.
- Council of Europe. (2001). *The Common European Framework for Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Davies, A. (1988). Operationalizing uncertainty in language testing: An argument in favour of content validity. *Language Testing*, 5, 32-48.
- Elder, C. (2003). The DELNA initiative at the University of Auckland. *Language Testing Update*, 33, 38-42.
- Elder, C. & O'Loughlin, K. (2003). Investigating the relationship between intensive English language study and band score gain on IELTS. In R. Tulloh (Ed.), *IELTS research reports 4* (pp.62-87). Canberra: IELTS Australia.
- Elder, C. & von Randow, J. (2002). *Diagnostic English Language Needs Assessment Handbook for Candidates*, University of Auckland.
- Feast, V. (2002). The impact of IELTS scores on performance at university. *International Education Journal*, 3, 70-85.
- Fox, J. (2004). Test decisions over time. *Language Testing*, 21, 437-465.
- Gravatt, B., Richards, J. & Lewis, M. (1997). *Language needs in tertiary studies: ESL students at the University of Auckland*. Occasional Papers No. 10. Auckland: Institute of Language Teaching and Learning, University of Auckland.
- Gue, L. & Holdaway, E. (1973). English proficiency tests as predictors of success in graduate studies in education. *Language Learning*, 23, 89-103.

- Hill, K., Storch, N., & Lynch, B. (1999). A comparison of IELTS and TOEFL as predictors of academic success. In R. Tulloh (Ed.), *IELTS Research Reports 2* (pp.53-63). Canberra: IELTS Australia.
- Hirsh, D. (forthcoming). Tracking academic performance: a qualitative approach. In N. Tarling (Ed.), *Value of English for Asian students* (awaiting publisher details).
- Ho, D. & Spinks, J. (1985). Multivariate prediction of academic performance by Hong Kong university students. *Contemporary Education Psychology*, 10, 249-259.
- Jochems, W., Snippe, J., Smid, H., & Verweij, A. (1996). The academic progress of foreign students: study achievement and study behaviour. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 31, 325-340.
- Kerstjens, K. & Nery, C. (2000). Predictive validity in the IELTS test. In R. Tulloh (Ed.), *IELTS Research Reports*, 3 (pp.85-108). Canberra: IELTS Australia.
- Lewthwaite, M. (1996). A study of international students' perspectives on cross-cultural adaptation. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 19, 167-185.
- Light, R., Xu, M. & Mossop, J. (1987). English proficiency and academic performance of international students. *TESOL Quarterly*, 21, 251-261.
- Liu, J. (2000). Understanding Asian students' oral participation modes in American classrooms. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*, 10, 155-189.
- Mulligan, D. & Kirkpatrick, A. (1998). University lecturing styles and NESB students' comprehension. Report to Curtin University's Committee on Equity and Access. Perth: Curtin University Centre for Literacy, Culture and Language Pedagogy.
- Murray, D. & O'Loughlin, K. (2007). Pathways - preparation and selection. A discussion paper prepared for the National Sympo-

- sium: English Language Competence of International Students, Sydney, August, 2007.
- Nattinger, J.R. & DeCarrico, J. (1992). *Lexical phrases and language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Read, J. & Hirsh, D. (2005). English language levels in tertiary institutions. Export Education Levy Project E4. Wellington: Education New Zealand.
- Robinson, R. (2004). Pathways to completion: patterns of progression through a university degree. *Higher Education*, 47, 1-20.
- Scollen, R. & Scollen, S. (1983). Face in inter-ethnic communication. In J. Richards & N. Schmidt (Eds.), *Language and Communications*. London: Longman.
- Tinto, V. (1987). *Leaving college: rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition* (2nd ed). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Trice, A. & Elliott, J. (1993). Japanese students in America: II. College friendship patterns. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, 20, 262-264.
- University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, British Council & IDP Education Australia. (2007). *IELTS handbook 2007*. Cambridge: UCLES.
- Ward, C. (2001). The impact of international students on domestic students and host institutions. Contract report. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- Woodrow, L. (2006). Academic success of international postgraduate Education students and the role of English Proficiency. *University of Sydney Papers in TESOL*, 1, 51-70.