

# **Listening Needs of Distance Learners: A Case Study of EAP Learners at the University of the South Pacific**

Rajni Kaushal Chand

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Otago,

Dunedin, New Zealand

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> August 2007

## **Abstract**

This study focuses on student listening needs in the context of the English for Academic Purposes program taught by distance education at the University of the South Pacific. It explores the relationship between learners' awareness of the learning strategy they use for developing their listening skills and their teachers' knowledge of the strategy use and listening needs of learners.

Using an ethnographic case study approach, the study was conducted at various campuses and centres of the University of the South Pacific. Interviews were conducted with five EAP/study skills teachers; five subject/course teachers; 19 past learners and 10 present learners of the EAP/study skills course. Questionnaire data was also obtained from 19 past learners and 153 present learners. In addition, a course material analysis was carried out.

The study confirms and adds weight to the conclusions of earlier researchers such as Berne (1998), and Mendelsohn (2001) who explain that discrepancies exist between L2 listening research and practice. The findings of this research indicate that teachers differ from their learners in terms of learners' knowledge and understanding of listening skills and learning strategies in use. The findings also indicate that even though learning had taken place in this distance education context some face-to-face teaching would have been desirable. A combination of distance teaching with longer teacher–learner contact for distance teaching of listening skills is recommended, since regular contact between teachers and learners is seen by learners as very beneficial and more likely to lead to a better development of listening skills. It also helps create an awareness of learners' present and future listening needs. The nature of distance teaching at the University of the South Pacific, and the challenges faced by both teachers and learners are discussed in this study, and the requirement for further needs analysis in regard to distance EAP courses are noted.

The study concludes with recommendations for strategy training for distance learners as well as for raising teacher awareness about the importance of strategy teaching. It is also recommended that similar studies be undertaken in other language skills courses offered by distance at universities like USP such as reading, writing and speaking courses.

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to the late Pundit Ram Sewak, and Mrs Lalita Wati, my parents, who have always been the source of courage and inspiration for me.

*“The most basic of all human needs is the need to understand and be understood. The best way to understand people is to listen to them.”*

— *Ralph Nichols*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This thesis would not have been possible without the support and help of many individuals. I would especially like to thank the following people.

My husband, Biman, for being my mentor, and an inspiration during the period I was writing this thesis. My two beautiful children, Mayuresh and Namrata, who endured my absence for long hours and coped marvellously well with anything and everything that their mum could not do for them during this study period.

My deepest gratitude goes to my primary supervisor, Dr. Elke Stracke for her expert guidance, invaluable advice and continuous support, and for her patience in going through the drafts. Even after she left for Australia, distance did not seem to matter to her, and she continued the encouragement and insightful feedback that took place while at the University of Otago. As the mentor for the PhD Applied Linguistics Club of Otago, and now at the University of Canberra, she has inspired me and shown me what a good and devoted researcher and supervisor should be like. I am also truly indebted to my secondary supervisor, Dr Antonie Alm, for her encouragement, and intellectual contributions as well as for all those comments and questions that made me think again.

I am grateful to the University of the South Pacific for sponsoring my study at the University of Otago. I would like to thank the students and academic and administrative staff at the University of the South Pacific who participated in this research project.

Without their contribution this research would not have been completed. My sincere thanks to Ms Barbara Hau'ofa and Ms Beth Barber for their editorial assistance and advice, and to Mr. Sunil Kumar for his support with the statistics.

I would also like to thank the office staff members of the English Department, University of Otago for their administrative support throughout my time as a PhD student. And, to my colleagues in 1W7, thanks for making the room our second home. Linguistics academic staff at the University of Otago, John, Jae, Ann and Moyra and all the linguistics post graduate students at the University of Otago-thanks for listening patiently to the 'conference-runs', seminars and talks and for all the critical and humorous comments and dinner nights. Student life could not have been better because of your friendship and collegiality.

## CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENT.....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii
APPENDICES .....	x
TABLES.....	xi
FIGURES.....	xii
ABBREVIATIONS .....	xiii
CHAPTER ONE: An Introduction to the Study.....	1
1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background to the Study.....	3
1.1.1 Needs Analysis.....	3
1.1.2 English for Academic Purposes.....	4
1.1.3 Listening Skills .....	4
1.1.4 Language Learning Strategies.....	6
1.1.5 Distance Learning .....	6
1.2 Context of the Study .....	7
1.2.1 The University of the South Pacific and its Region.....	8
1.2.2 Development and Current Status of English for Academic Purposes at USP .....	12
1.2.3 Distance Learning at USP .....	18
1.3 Statement of the Problem.....	23
1.4 Purpose of the Study .....	25
1.5 Research Questions and Design.....	26
1.6 Significance of the Study .....	27
1.7 Development and Limitation of the Study.....	27
1.8 Conclusion and Overview of Remainder of the Thesis .....	29
CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review .....	33
2. Introduction.....	33
2.1 Needs Analysis and English for Academic Purposes .....	34
2.1.1 Needs Analysis.....	34
2.1.1.1 Types of Needs .....	35
2.1.1.2. Richard’s (1983) Listening Needs Taxonomy.....	37
2.1.1.3. Wong’s (1996) Needs Analysis Worksheet.....	38
2.1.1.4 Studies Using Needs Analysis .....	39
2.1.2 English for Academic Purposes.....	42
2.1.3 Studies in English for Academic Purposes .....	44
2.2 Second Language Listening and Language Learning Strategies .....	48
2.2.1 Second Language Listening.....	48
2.2.1.1. Studies in Second Language Listening.....	50

2.2.2 Language Learning Strategies.....	55
2.2.2.1 Classification of Language Learning Strategies .....	56
2.2.2.2 Factors Influencing Learning Strategies .....	66
2.2.3 Research in the Field of Listening Skills and Language Learning Strategies .....	70
2.3 Distance Education .....	75
2.3.1 Rationale for Distance Education .....	76
2.3.2 Levels of Distance Education .....	77
2.3.3 Theories of Distance Education .....	81
2.3.4 Barriers in Distance Education .....	84
2.3.5 Research in Distance Learning .....	87
2.4 Conclusion .....	92
CHAPTER THREE: Methods .....	94
3 Introduction.....	94
3.1 Ethnographic Research .....	94
3.1.1 Case Study .....	97
3.1.2 Reliability and Validity of the Study .....	98
3.1.3 Role of the Researcher .....	102
3.2 Selection of Research Methods .....	103
3.3 Selection of Participants .....	106
3.4 Data Collection Methods .....	108
3.4.1 Semi-structured Interviews .....	108
3.4.2 Survey Questionnaire.....	110
3.4.3 Course Material.....	113
3.5 Procedures in Data Collection .....	114
3.5.1 Semi-structured Interviews .....	117
3.5.2 Survey Questionnaire.....	119
3.5.3 Course Material.....	123
3.6 Data Management .....	123
3.7 Data Analysis.....	125
3.7.1 Semi-structured Interviews .....	125
3.7.2 Questionnaires.....	133
3.7.3 Course Material Analysis.....	140
3.8 Conclusion .....	140
CHAPTER FOUR: Results.....	142
4. Introduction.....	142
4.1 Themes from the Interviews .....	142
4.1.1 Views of Study Skills Teachers .....	149
4.1.2 Views of Course Teachers .....	160
4.1.3 Views of Past Learners .....	174
4.1.4 Views of Present Learners .....	183
4.1.5 Summary of Interview Data Analysis.....	192
4.2 Analyses of Questionnaire Data.....	197
4.2.1 Closed Questions .....	197
4.2.1.1.Past Learners' Responses to the Closed Questions.....	201



4.2.1.2 Present Learners' Responses to the Closed Questions .....	205
4.2.1.3 Discussion of Responses.....	207
4.2.1.4 Summary of Closed Questions.....	213
4.2.2 Open-ended Questions .....	214
4.2.2.1 Summary of Open-ended Responses .....	220
4.3 Course Material Analysis.....	221
4.3.1 Course Material Analysis (Mendelsohn's (1994) Criteria) .....	222
4.3.2 Summary of Course Material Analysis.....	229
4.4 Conclusion .....	231
CHAPTER FIVE: Discussion.....	233
5. Introduction.....	233
5.1 Distance Learners' Listening Strategies .....	233
5.1.1 Summary of the Results.....	233
5.1.2 Relevance to Past Studies on Listening Strategies .....	238
5.1.3 Discrepancies about Strategy Training.....	239
5.2 Distance Learners' Listening Difficulties.....	242
5.2.1 Summary of Results.....	242
5.2.2 Challenges Facing Distance Learners in Level 1 Areas of Distance Education....	243
5.3 Study Skills Course and the Listening Needs of Learners.....	244
5.3.1 Summary of Results.....	245
5.3.2 Implications of the Results.....	246
5.4 Conclusion .....	246
CHAPTER SIX: Main Findings, Implications, Recommendations and Conclusion.....	248
6. Introduction.....	248
6.1 Main Findings.....	249
6.1.1 EAP Learners' Views on Their Listening Needs at USP .....	249
6.1.2 Teachers' Views on Their Learners' Listening Needs .....	250
6.1.3 Listening Course Material Used by Distance EAP Course .....	250
6.1.4 Challenges Faced by Distance Learners and Teachers at USP.....	251
6.2 Theoretical Implications .....	253
6.3 Research Implications.....	254
6.4 Pedagogical Implications.....	255
6.5 Recommendations.....	255
6.6 Original Contribution to Knowledge and Conclusion .....	258
REFERENCES .....	260

## APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Map showing geographical location of USP countries .....	292
Appendix 2: Language and Communication Fact Sheet of USP Member Countries.....	293
Appendix 3: (Map of USP Region).....	295
Appendix 4: English Language Skills Assessment (ELSA).....	296
Appendix 5: Enrolment Figures for EAP Course at USP 1996–2004 .....	298
Appendix 6: Comparison Between On Campus and DFL Version of EAP Course at USP .....	299
Appendix 7: Table of Contents of Course book One & Two .....	300
Appendix 8: Study Skills Course Semester 2, 2005 Schedule.....	302
Appendix 9: O’Malley and Chamot (1990) Learning Strategies Classification.....	303
Appendix 10: SST Interview Guide.....	305
Appendix 11: CT Interview Guide .....	306
Appendix 12: Past Learners Interview Guide.....	307
Appendix 13: Present Learners Interview Guide.....	309
Appendix 14: Past Learners Questionnaire.....	311
Appendix 15: Present Learners Questionnaire .....	315
Appendix 16: Summary of Listening Course Framework (Mendelsohn (1994) .....	319
Appendix 17: Ethical Approval Form.....	320
Appendix 18: Consent Form for the Participants .....	321
Appendix 19: Correspondence Made Prior to the Data Collection .....	323
Appendix 20: Nvivo Documents Showing the Trees .....	325
Appendix 21: Tables Showing Details of the Past and Present Learners who Responded to the Questionnaires.....	330
Appendix 22: Excerpts from the Interviews (CD)	
Appendix 23: Transcripts from the Interview (CD)	

## **TABLES**

Table 1: Details of the Study Skills Teachers Selected for Interviews.....	128
Table 2: Details of Course Teachers Selected for Interviews.....	128
Table 3: Details of Present Learners Selected for Interviews.....	129
Table 4: Details of Past Learners Selected for Interviews.....	130
Table 5: Emerging themes from the interviews.....	147
Table 6: Past learners' questionnaire responses.....	199
Table 7: Present learners' questionnaire responses.....	203
Table 8: Past and Present learners' questionnaire responses.....	207

## FIGURES

Figure 1: The barriers to learning for distance learners at USP.....252

## ABBREVIATIONS

CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
CMC	Computer-mediated Communication
CTs	Course Teachers
DFL	Distance and Flexible Learning
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EEC	European Economic Community
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELSA	English Language Skills Assessment
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
LL114	EAP/Study Skills Course offered at the University of the South Pacific
LLS	Language Learning Strategies
NA	Needs Analysis
NS	Native Speaker
NNS	Non Native Speaker
PICs	Pacific Island Countries
PRLs	Present Learners
PSLs	Past Learners
SF	Halliday's (1985) theory of systemic-functional (SF) linguistics
SOH	School of Humanities
SSTs	Study Skills Teachers
TL	Target Language
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States of America
USP	University of the South Pacific
USPNet	University of the South Pacific Communication Network
WebCT	Web-based course management system

# CHAPTER ONE

## **An Introduction to the Study**

### **1. Introduction**

I began teaching the study skills course at the University of the South Pacific (USP) in 1998. Teaching this course meant teaching for two semesters face-to-face, as well as teaching by the distance mode. It also meant travelling to different towns, cities, islands and countries in the South Pacific region to conduct tutorials and lectures. While I was conducting a summer school in my hometown a student approached me and said that studying face-to-face was a first time experience for him. He had completed 17 out of the 20 courses required for his degree programme by distance. After the summer school he had to go on campus to complete the remaining courses. He expressed anxiety about coming to the city for the first time, and attending lectures for completion of his degree programme. His main concern was whether he would be able to cope with the different accents he would hear and all the academic demands he would have to meet for his 300-level courses. Already he was feeling diffident about what he would face. It then crossed my mind that I knew very little about the distance learners of the region that USP served.

It is an undeniable fact that, geographically, USP is a large university, covering vast ocean areas, many countries, languages, dialects and cultures. The distance learners who enrol at USP, thus, have cultural, ethnic, linguistic, religious and social differences.

However, that was where my knowledge of the learners ended. The course I was teaching had not had any needs analysis done. With so little interaction possible with learners, I

realised that I actually had very little knowledge of the distance learners. I did not know anything of how the learners were studying, what skills and knowledge they had or how they coped when studying. For instance, what was it like for those in the farthest removed village on one of the smallest of the 300 islands that make up the largest of the 12-member countries of USP?

When I was given the opportunity to pursue my doctoral degree, I decided to focus my study on the distance learners at USP in order to provide myself with answers to the many questions that had been teasing my mind for sometime. As I worked on my research proposal, I realised the importance of language learning strategies and their role in the development of language skills. I began to delve into how learning strategies were used for the development of different language skills, and decided to focus my research on listening skills. Listening skills is one of the language skills taught through the study skills program and delivered by distance at USP. I also wanted to find out how learners use learning strategies while learning listening skills and how proficient in listening skills the distance learners needed to be outside the academic context. Added to this, I felt that conducting a needs analysis would be a useful first step towards improving syllabus design and course development for the study skills course at USP.

This chapter provides the background of the study (Section 1.1). It also gives details of the University of the South Pacific, the context of the study (Section 1.2). It provides the statement of the problem (Section 1.3), the purpose of the study (Section 1.4), the research questions that guided the present study (Section 1.5), and the significance of the

study (Section 1.6). The limitations confronted in undertaking this study have been included in Section 1.7 and an overview of the remaining chapters of the thesis follows in Section 1.8.

## **1.1. Background to the Study**

This study covers five main areas of research in Applied Linguistics: needs analysis (NA), English for Academic Purposes (EAP), listening skills, language learning strategies (LLS), and distance learning. It also provides details of these five areas in relation to the topic of this study namely, the listening needs of distance learners. The next subsections describe each of the first four areas (Sections 1.1.1 to Section 1.1.4), before providing a brief definition of distance learning (Section 1.1.5). A more in-depth discussion of these five areas is in Chapter 2 titled ‘Literature Review’.

### **1.1.1. Needs Analysis**

In their discussion of NA different authors have attempted to identify perceived and/or actual needs of teachers and learners in order to find “why they are doing what they are doing” (Nunan, 1988, p.5). Needs analysis has also been an important but not exclusive (Long, 2005) component in learner training, being used as an aid for language learning. Needs analysis includes obtaining insights into the needs of learners from various sources and categorising them (Tarone and Yule, 1989, p. 37). Before the 1970s, NA was mostly used in regard to the area of foreign language learning (West, 1994, p. 1). In the 1970s, when EAP was introduced as a study skill course for learners of English as a Second Language in UK (Jordan, 1997), NA became a part of EAP courses. It was included in



order to find the needs of learners studying the four language skills, listening, reading, speaking and writing, that were taught in the course,.

### **1.1.2. English for Academic Purposes**

When English for Academic Purposes (EAP) developed as a field in the teaching of English as a Second/Foreign Language (ESL/EFL) in different parts of the world, programmes were designed specifically to prepare non-native English speaking students (NNS) who used English for their studies. This has been a helpful development for students in terms of their language learning, study skills and study competence, their self-confidence and, particularly in the case of foreign students, for their adjustment to a new academic environment (Jordan, 1997).

In most cases, EAP is a fixed period course, usually undertaken as a pre-session course or separate course, before students embark on their main academic courses. EAP involves teaching study skills and language skills for academic purposes. Most EAP learners are students over 18 years of age, studying the academic skills needed for higher education. It is also important to remember that for virtually all situations where EAP is mentioned, the learners are ESL or EFL learners.

### **1.1.3. Listening Skills**

For a long time it was assumed that listening skills were a passive activity. Now, they are recognised as being an active process. According to Vandergrift, listening is “the least explicit of the four study skills making it difficult to learn” (2004, p.1). Rankin (1930)

began the interest in listening as a field of study by commenting that listening is the most frequently used mode of communication amongst human beings. In the 1940s Nichols initiated the change to a communication programme with his article “Listening is a 10-part skill”, found in Brown’s (1984) book. From the 1950s until the late 1970s studies of listening focussed on the pedagogical and assessment aspects of listening, such as listening comprehension and critical listening (Feyten, 1991). In the 1980s studies relating to listening strategies began to emerge. O’Malley, Chamot and Küpper (1989), Oxford (1990) and Rubin and Thompson (1994) examined listening strategies in their discussions on learner strategies. The terms skills and strategies are sometimes used synonymously to describe complementary behaviours. However, skills are usually associated with behavioural psychology, in cases where skills are routine habits acquired through practice and repetition, whereas strategies are goal directed and deliberate behaviours. Thus, in order to become a good listener one has to first identify what is difficult, then turn to a range of answers and select one from a set of options. This can involve decoding, making inferences etc, depending on the needs and purpose of the listener. The action of turning to the range of responses to meet the need or purpose would then be the strategy the listener uses (Afflerbach, Pearson and Paris, 2008). In most cases, studies conducted on listening skills have been based on study skills courses for ESL learners in face-to-face situations. However, study skills courses are also offered as distance courses, such as, for example, the courses at USP.

#### **1.1.4. Language Learning Strategies**

Language learning strategies (LLS) have been described as the thoughts and actions taken by language learners in order to achieve a learning goal (Chamot, 2005). Although all learners are, to some degree at least, aware of their thinking and learning, more successful learners (so-called “good learners”) use learning strategies more consciously than others. In most cases, LLS are difficult to observe but they have been identified and discussed in descriptive studies. Research tools such as questionnaires, self-reports and interviews have been used to collect information on LLS and researchers have classified information collected from such studies. Three classification systems used in the field of LLS are those used by O’Malley and Chamot (1990), Oxford (1990) and Rubin (1981). Another aspect of LLS awareness is evident in the field of LLS instruction. This comes from studies have been conducted on teaching the language skills to less successful learners. Models developed for LLS instruction include those of Chamot et al. (1999); Cohen (1998); O’Malley and Chamot (1990) and Oxford (1990).

#### **1.1.5. Distance Learning**

Distance education and distance learning are interchangeable terms used to describe the teaching and learning that involves the separation of the teacher and learner across geographical distances and time (White, 2003; William, Paprock and Cavington, 1999). Over the years, distance learning has evolved through stages, beginning with the use of a totally print-based medium and progressing to the present stage of on-line and multimedia usage. The evolving stages have been classified by researchers as either generations (Rumble, 2001; White, 2003), or levels (Williams, Paprock and Covington,

1999). According to William, Paprock and Covington (1999) level 1 in distance learning consists of printed material, audio, video and radio transmission of information. Level 2 consists of two-way audio interaction, video broadcast combined with two-way audio interaction, and the use of computers. Level 3 consists of highly interactive virtual classrooms with hybrid networks. All these classifications indicate changes in terms of teacher–student interaction, time taken for material distribution, and the selection of course material and resources made available for learning. Interaction in distance learning has successively moved from a one-way, asynchronous process to a synchronous two-way interaction. While at first print material was sent by post, now material is sent or accessed on-line. Information is now disseminated and received instantly. It is even possible for teachers and learners to meet in a virtual environment.

Regardless of the progression in distance learning, not all learners can access all the facilities that are available today for distance learning; as a result, all the stages of distance learning are still in use depending on the technological accessibility of the learners and the socioeconomic environment of the education providers. As the section below shows, the socioeconomic environment of learners at USP plays an important part in determining their accessibility to the facilities and the opportunities available to them.

## **1.2. Context of the Study**

This section provides the context for this study. The first subsection (1.2.1) discusses the geographical location of USP and other pertinent issues such as the languages, and cultural, educational and socioeconomic background of the learners attending USP. The

second subsection (1.2.2) provides a historical background leading to the introduction of the EAP course at USP. It also provides a description of teaching EAP by distance at USP. The last subsection (1.2.3) discusses distance learning at USP.

### **1.2.1. The University of the South Pacific and its Region**

*USP: the geography, languages, culture and economy*

The University of the South Pacific (USP) is a public university owned by a dozen South Pacific island countries: Cook Islands, Fiji Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Its region is spread across 33 million square kilometres and five time zones, and it is approximately three times the size of Europe (see Appendix 1 for a map of USP countries geographical location). However, the total land mass is about the size of Denmark. The populations of the USP countries also range widely, with as few as 1,449 people in Tokelau and as many as 918,675 in Fiji. USP serves a total of approximately 1.3 million people who come from the markedly distinctive cultural areas of Melanesia, Polynesia, and Micronesia.

In serving these 12 countries, USP serves about 235 language groups and 60 different cultures. Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands alone have around 200 of these languages. In all countries English is used as either an official, or a commercial language alongside indigenous languages. English is, thus, a second, third or fourth language for the people of USP member countries. It also serves the 37.4 % of Fiji's population who are of Indian origin, but not the other 54.8 % of the population that is comprised of Indigenous Fijian and other non-Indian groups (World Factbook, 2007). Clearly, the countries of the

university region share no common vernacular language. The social systems of these countries are also very distinctive. For instance, Kiribati follows an egalitarian system where families are represented by *unimane* (old wise men); the Solomon Islanders are tribal with chiefly systems; the Samoans clannish with *matai* (leaders); and Tonga has a reigning King, nobles and commoners. Christianity is practised by around 95% of the region, although Fiji Indians also practise Hinduism and Islam (Va'a, 1998). (See Appendix 2 for more details on USP countries.)

Apart from these geographical, linguistic and religious differences, there also exists economic diversity within the region. The level of development differs from country to country, but it also differs from urban to rural or outer island, even within one country. In places like Suva (the capital of Fiji) telephones (landlines and mobile), electrical appliances, and computers and Internet connections are everyday items for many, yet they are nonexistent or extremely rare in rural Fiji and the outer islands or, they may be very few in countries like Tokelau. Electricity is unheard of in very remote areas, and motor vehicles are rare since most people still travel by bicycles, canoes, wagons or on foot. The outboard motor, however, is ubiquitous.

### *Socio-cultural context*

Language use in the South Pacific region is dependent on the social, cultural and racial makeup of the countries. In Samoa, a single language (Samoan) is usually spoken in the community (Lotherington, 1998). In other countries, where there is more than one language spoken, one language or a particular dialect of the language is usually given

national prominence or, it may be that code switching is practiced during conversations. For instance, Cook Island Maori is given prominence in the Cook Islands and the Bauan dialect is chosen for literacy in Fijian vernacular education. Code mixing and code switching have been recorded in studies conducted in Fiji (Tamata, 1996) and it is known that speakers alternatively use English, Fijian and Fiji Hindi during conversations, depending on the speakers' background. In most situations Pacific Islanders use vernacular rather than English for their everyday conversations. Often vernacular is also used in classrooms (Ielemia, 1996; Thaman, 1996). Thus English, although the official language for most USP countries, does not serve the same purpose as other languages. The social, cultural or racial situations usually decide the language used for conversations in these countries.

#### *Inception of education in the region*

In the early schools religious instruction took up most of the curriculum. "Most South Pacific island countries began formal schooling with educational institutes set up by Christian missions in the nineteenth century" (Crocombe and Crocombe, 1994, p. 11). With the establishment of colonial central governments, state schools began to appear as well. After World War II overseas scholarships were instituted for secondary and tertiary education. Initially very few students had the means or opportunity to attend primary school; and certainly secondary schooling was beyond most people's budget. However, things have changed and now primary education is available to all in most countries, and there is a range of secondary and tertiary options available. While vernacular languages are used at the early levels of education, English becomes the official language of

instruction in upper primary or in secondary schools in all USP countries (Gannicott and Throsby, 1992). It is also used as the language of instruction at USP, and at all other tertiary institutions in the South Pacific region.

### *USP's beginning – 1968*

The increase in the demand for qualified teachers underlay USP's beginning as an educational institute. It commenced in 1968 to develop the skills urgently needed for the South Pacific countries (Crocombe and Crocombe, 1994). By this time, some of the Pacific Island countries (PICs) had gained independence and were realising the need for their own skilled teachers. USP began to provide the teacher training and other related courses to the learners of these countries, using English as the language of instruction.

At the beginning, USP offered courses only at its main campus in Fiji. The campus occupies the site of the former Royal New Zealand Air Force base at Laucala Bay in Suva. The university began with three schools: Natural Resources (SNR), Social and Economic Development (SSED), and Education (SOE) (later widened to Humanities (SOH)). Subsequently, two more campuses were established, the Alafua Campus in Samoa as a home for the Schools of Agriculture and Food Technology; and the Emalus Campus in Vanuatu, housing the School of Law and the Pacific Languages Unit. At all these campuses, face-to-face lectures in specific disciplines are offered. In 2006, academic schools, departments, institutes and centres were restructured. Now, Deans lead the four faculties: Arts and Law (FAL), Business and Economics (FBE), Islands and Oceans (FIO) and Science and Technology (FST). Teachers from all over the world teach



at USP. The Suva Campus is also the headquarters for USP's on-campus and Distance and Flexible Learning (DFL) programmes, and the bulk of its academic, non-academic and administrative activities. Most of its institutes, centres and schools are based here as well. Apart from these three campuses, USP also has DFL Centres at the following locations: Cook Islands, Fiji (plus Northern and Western subcentres), Kiribati, Marshalls, Nauru, Niue, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga (plus Vava'u subcentre), Tuvalu and Vanuatu (plus Santo and Tanna Sub-centres) (see Appendix 3 for the geographical location of the USP campuses and centres.) These centres are pivotal for providing the learners with administrative and academic support, centre based tutorials and peer contacts, and for technical support such as satellite tutorials and Internet facilities. (The recent upgrades of USP's structure mean that these centres are classified as campuses as well (USP, 2007). For the purpose of this study, these places will be referred to as centres.)

### **1.2.2. Development and Current Status of English for Academic Purposes at USP**

#### *Genesis of EAP at USP*

After the university began operating, several factors became obvious regarding the needs of the region and those of the student population. As courses were being developed and offered face-to-face and, later, by distance mode, studies were conducted to find the problems that the learners enrolled at USP were facing (Elley and Thompson, 1978; Moag and Allen, 1978; Thaman, 1977). Reports prepared as a result of the studies highlighted the fact that learners coming to USP needed more than just subject courses:

They needed a broader foundation. The introduction of study skills courses seemed essential.

It quickly became apparent that language difficulties were one of the principal areas of weakness. Thaman (1977) pointed to the urgent need for scholarly research into problems of learners who study in a second language. A study by Elley and Thompson (1978) on the English language skills of USP Foundation Studies students indicated that nearly half of these learners (who later continue degree programmes at USP) had (or, could be expected to have) problems with university-level materials. In another study, Moag and Allen (1978) surveyed opinions of USP staff on the level of English at USP. Of the 49 staff members who responded to the survey, 44 (89%) felt that learners should be tested for English language skills prior to their entry to tertiary studies.

To combat the problem, a diagnostic test and the introduction of a remedial course were recommended. O'Sullivan (1978) conducted a survey to obtain the views of learners on English at USP. A sample of 156 learners enrolled in Preliminary, Foundation and Diploma and Degree studies were questioned on their views of English usage at USP. The majority indicated that they felt uncomfortable using English and wanted help in developing their oral skills. Additionally, the learners expressed the need for more time for English instruction. In 1999 the first English Language Skills Assessment (ELSA) was pilot tested. Since then, those who do not achieve above 2 out of 5 bands in the ELSA test have been required to enrol for a non-credit language skills course concurrent with their degree studies (see Appendix 4 for the details of ELSA test).

Benson (1982), in an internal memo to SOH colleagues, suggested continual surveys of learners enrolling at USP in order to identify their learning problems as well as find out how the teachers were dealing with these problems. Additionally, there was a suggestion for the development of a study skills course to help new learners entering the university: Deverell (1989) pointed that less than half of the learners at USP had a 50% chance of passing all foundation courses without any remedial help. Later, in an internal memo to select SOH colleagues (1991), she circulated a proposal for a 100-level credit course in academic writing, reading and seminar presentation skills. Past surveys and reports had shown that the level of language skills among learners entering USP was low enough to have a negative effect on their tertiary studies. Since nearly all learners entered the university with English as a second or third language, academic skills preparation was clearly necessary. The idea was accepted and the USP Senate approved the introduction of an EAP programme.

When EAP was introduced for the first time at USP in 1993, it was offered only to learners at the Fiji campus. The first group of learners who enrolled for the course were mainly students completing their Bachelor of Education programme. In 1995 the course was introduced to the distance learners. At this stage most schools had not made EAP compulsory for their programmes and student numbers were small. A discussion paper by Naidu, Van Trease and Mugler (1996) that looked at the issues of generic skills put literacy skills as the most important skills required for tertiary studies at USP. Additionally, the paper suggested that EAP be made compulsory for all learners entering

USP unless they had a very good pass in English in Form 7 or equivalent. Over the years EAP has become part of most degree programmes at USP (see Appendix 5 for EAP enrolment figures for 1996–2004).

### *EAP at USP at present*

EAP at USP—a one-semester course—is offered both face-to-face and by distance, in both semesters of the year, as a first year/100-level course. The semester runs for 15 weeks including a mid-semester break. On average, learners are expected to put aside four hours of study time per week for the course. The EAP course aims to develop learners' analytic, problem solving and critical thinking skills. Learners are required to submit written assignments, conduct an oral seminar and sit a mid-semester test; they must also do a final examination that requires them to brainstorm, plan and write a coherent abstract and essay. While both modes of course delivery aim to provide similar opportunities for the learners, there are marked differences between the two. The on-campus learners attend two two-hour tutorials and are able to contact the Suva based teachers in their offices by email and telephone. In comparison, distance learners attend either a one-hour or two-hour tutorial once a week, depending upon the availability of the centre tutor. There is an additional one-hour satellite tutorial aired from the Suva campus every three weeks. Attendance is not mandatory at either of these types of tutorial. Usually distance learners discuss their problems during the satellite tutorials, send emails or contact the tutors by telephone or mail. The centre based English tutors are graduates, have secondary as well as tertiary teaching experience in the region, and have some experience teaching English as a second language (ESL) learners. The teachers'

experience varies depending on their location. The centre-based tutors conduct only face-to-face tutorials, while the teachers based at the Suva campus conduct satellite tutorials, have occasional email communication with learners, and visit other centres to conduct tutorials. Sometimes learners from around the Suva area visit the campus-based teachers for consultation.

Apart from printed course material, DFL learners are provided with audiotapes for listening activities. There are also copies of videoed seminar presentations which learners can watch at the centre libraries. (See Appendix 6 for further comparison between on-campus and distance EAP course at USP.)

#### *EAP course materials*

As are most DFL courses at USP, the EAP course is mostly a print-based course. Learners are provided with two sets of course books and also an introduction and assignment booklet, and audio recordings for listening and speaking activities. The introduction and assignment booklet provides a study schedule, the times for the satellite tutorials and the due dates for assignments. (See Appendix 7 for the contents of the two course books; and Appendix 8 for the 2005 study schedule for the distance study skills course.) The course is divided into the four language skills areas of writing, reading, listening, and speaking. There are two course books: Course Book One contains units 1–5 and Course Book Two contains units 6–10. Each unit begins with an overview, notes on the topic that the unit is based on, activities relating to the topic, a summary and also answers to the activities for the unit. Not all units focus on listening activities.

Specifically, units five, nine, and ten include activities for which learners have to listen to the audiocassettes provided. For week 10, learners can view a videotape on seminar presentations at the local centre. In the listening section of the course, which takes approximately three weeks of the semester, the learners are expected to listen to segments of two audio tapes with or without pre-listening activities on the segments, and to answer questions to test their understanding. This is an overview of the course material that will be further discussed in the data analysis section of this thesis that comes later:

- For the first listening activity, done in week 5 of the semester, there is an audio recording of an article by Frank (1992) and a hard copy of the article is included in Course Book 1. The accompanying audio recording of the article also has a USP lecturer providing explanations and taking the learners through the article, paragraph by paragraph. This is a reading and interpreting text activity. There is also an associated reflective exercise in which learners are expected to predict and evaluate information found in the article. The activity lasts around 20 minutes.
- For week 11 of the semester, there is a videotape on seminar presentations available at the centre which learners can watch when they visit the centre. The tape is a recording of second-year management students' live seminar presentations and lasts around one hour.
- Week 12 of the semester includes a further two listening activities. The first is the recording of an actual lecture on *Pluralism and the Marxist Critique* presented by a lecturer in the History and Politics Department at USP. The second recording is of another actual lecture on the *Components of Pacific Literature in English* given by a lecturer in USP's Literature and Language Department. Learners are

expected to listen to these lecture recordings and practice note-taking, paying particular attention to transitional words or signals. There are pre- and post-listening activities based on these lectures. In total, the recordings last around 100 minutes.

Model answers to all these listening activities are provided as solutions at the back of the course books. There are no assignments, grading or tests specifically for the listening component of the course. However, learners are expected to submit a taped seminar presentation as part of their assessed course work. The listening component of the course will be discussed further in chapter 3: Methods (Section 3.7.3).

Section 1.2.2 has provided details of the EAP course at USP. The next section discusses distance learning at USP; it includes the historical background, description of the facilities at the centres and the communication system used for distance learning.

### **1.2.3. Distance Learning at USP**

USP's distance learning programme began in 1971 with print-based education courses. These early courses were for the Diploma in Education, a sub-degree programme and they were fully supported with sets of distance learning materials. At present there are more than 200 courses offered by distance mode that range from bridging and preparatory programmes such as Preliminary, Foundation studies, to programmes and courses from all departments and schools at all levels.. All first year courses from all the disciplines offered at USP are offered by distance (USP, 2007).

*DFL communication system*

The communication and information transfer between campuses and centres is carried out by what is commonly called USPNet, using the International Telecommunication Satellite Organisation (INTELSAT), facsimile, telephone and mailbags. Facsimile, telephone and mailbag services have been used at USP since the beginning of distance learning. These facilities have, in general, been very reliable and are still frequently used for communication between the campuses and the remote centres of the region.

USP began using satellite technology to bridge the vast distances between the main campus in Suva and other campuses and centres, and for educational support in 1974 (Anonymous, 2002). Public Service Telecommunications (PEACESAT) provided the initial network support. However, when its ATS-1 left its orbiting position and could not provide coverage to the Pacific region USPNet was established in 2000. USPNet uses the Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) telecommunication network funded by the Governments of Japan, New Zealand and Australia and USP Member Countries. The VSAT provides learners with opportunities to participate in audio and video tutorials, video conferencing and live coverage of lectures. Additional facilities provided by the system include transfer of information between computer systems throughout the USP campuses and centres, and the Internet service for learners and staff. Some courses, such as those in the Law programme, are offered on-line, with facilities for chat room and also a virtual interactive possibility by means of the computer conferencing facilities or videoconferencing method using USPNet (see Appendix 3 for a map of the location of the countries and satellite communication network).



*DFL support system*

DFL also provides student support for all its enrolled learners. All courses offered by DFL have provision for satellite tutorials on USPNet as well as tutorial visits and correspondence from campus-based teachers/tutors to regional centres. The on-campus course teachers voluntarily convene the satellite tutorials. The teachers thus commit themselves to a regularly scheduled one-hour session for 12 out of 15 weeks of the semester.

In the case of tutorial trips to the regional centres, cost plays an important part in planning for these trips. International air travel within the region is expensive and often irregular. Thus, tutors may have to stay at a regional centre for more than a week when going for a one-hour tutorial. Many tutors double-up to take tutorials for other courses in the same subject area to help save the cost and time spent on these trips. Usually there are more learners requesting tutorials than there are tutorial opportunities available. The on-campus lecturers and tutors based in Suva do the co-ordination of most DFL courses. Correspondence with learners is usually in the form of marking and commenting on the written assignments (providing feedback), replying to occasional letters written by learners, responding to reconsideration of marked assignments. In-country support services are provided by DFL as well. The local USP Centres are usually a hub of activity during the semester. Mostly these centres are the only place in the area or country with modern facilities and an up-to-date library. During the semester one can usually find one or some of the following activities occurring at a centre: centre-based face-to-face

tutorials, broadcast of audio and video tutorials, peer tutorials, teleconferencing within a country between sub-centres or between two or more countries, and circulation of centre-based bulletins and newsletters. A centre also provides learners a quiet study space with computer facilities, as well as course counselling, bridging courses, and practical laboratory services. In addition, the centre serves as the despatch section where the course material can be collected and the assignments submitted by students.

#### *Variety of levels of distance learning*

The learners enrolled in USP's DFL programme come from any of the 12 member countries. There are also learners from other parts of the world who enrol at USP for specific programmes, such as its Marine Studies, Pacific Law and Pacific Languages courses. Depending on the facilities available in their country and available to the learners, distance learners use printed course material and additional materials posted to them or use as much technical support as possible. This indicates the variety of levels of delivery in distance learning used at USP. Those learners who are staying near USP centres can attend satellite and centre-based tutorials. All centres have computer facilities, and learners can use WebCT to access course information and discuss information with other learners and course teachers. WebCT at USP is a Web-based course management system that enables teachers to post course related information that can be accessed by learners in their own time. If learners stay away from the centres they study in isolation. It needs to be noted that, while most distance courses at USP offer WebCT access, usage of on-line chatrooms, discussion boards and quizzes is not compulsory. It is recognized that some students live beyond the reach of these facilities.

Courses such as EAP are print-based, with centre-based and virtual support. As a result different learners can be enrolled in and using the distance learning mode at level 1, level 2 and level 3 at the same time.

It is crucial to point to the differences involved in learning EAP by distance between and within member-countries of USP. In ESL situations similar to USP, the teaching of language skills, such as listening, requires promotion of opportunities for language use. However, learners who study language skills in isolation do not get an opportunity to practice and use English for communicative functions. Contexts like those of distance learners at USP do not always provide opportunities for learners to share their views on learning strategies, their language needs and the problems they face while learning. It is thus useful to investigate the learning strategies distance learners use for developing their listening skills. It is also worthwhile to investigate the listening skills these learners need to have in order to perform appropriately in their academic and daily life.

A careful study of the strategies used by learners such as those at USP can provide teachers with beneficial information on how learners who are using a combination of distance learning levels both study and learn language skills. It is expected that through this study further information will be obtained on the language learning strategies used by distance ESL learners. This section has provided the context of this study. The next section introduces the statement of the problem as envisaged by the researcher.

### **1.3. Statement of the Problem**

During the past few decades a number of studies have been conducted in the field of language learning strategies (LLS) in second and foreign language learning. Studies have discussed the importance of LLS in general and some specific factors that are relevant such as learners' proficiency, learning styles, motivation, gender and learning environment (Bacon, 1992; Chamot et al., 1999; Chamot and Küpper, 1989; Dreyer and Oxford, 1996; Dornyei and Csizer, 2002; Green and Oxford, 1995). While studies have focussed on the use of LLS in language skills learning, most researchers have also taken an interest in studies of the learning of specific skills such as learning listening, reading, speaking and writing (Baker and Brown, 1984; Chamot, 1999; Chamot, Küpper and Toth, 1990; Chamot and O'Malley, 1994a and 1994b; Raimes, 1987). Studies that focus on both LLS and listening skills have also been conducted, although not in as much depth as has been undertaken for other language skills. Listening skills remain the least researched of the four skills (Vandergrift, 2006). While studies of listening skills have focussed on the product of listening, by such means as listeners' test scores and the recall protocols used, there has not been a great deal of investigation of the process of listening.

According to Vandergrift (2006), there is a need for further investigation of the cognitive processes that L2 listeners use for listening. The studies on the cognitive processes of listening that have been done discuss the use of metacognitive strategies used by both good and less successful L2 listeners (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Goh, 2002; Vandergrift, 2003). Except for the study conducted by Dreyer and Oxford (1996), studies on L2 learners from different ESL contexts seem to be needed as all the studies discussed above have been conducted in an NS context.

In the field of distance learning, there have been studies on the teaching of languages using traditional distance learning methods as well as using technology dependent distance methods. White (2007) provides an overview of the field of distance language learning and studies that have been conducted in the past decade. Using descriptive studies, researchers have investigated the processes involved in course material development for foreign languages including French (Strambi and Bouvet, 2003) and Spanish (Glisan, Dudt and Howe, 1998). Studies focussed on distance learning of English for Academic Purposes have investigated the use of English for specific purposes (Boyle, 1994), writing courses using the Internet (Catterick, 2001) and teaching using technology (Garing, 2002). However, no studies have focussed on listening skills taught using the distance mode and using its traditional learning methods. Also, there is an absence of studies looking at the strategies that ESL learners use when studying listening skills while undertaking EAP distance courses. Another aspect missing from studies in the field of distance learning is the needs of learners from low-technology environments, a particular problem in areas such as the South Pacific. USP is one of the three universities owned by multiple island countries (Wikipedia, 2007), the other two being the University of the West Indies and the University of the Aegean. Empirical studies that focus on the teaching and learning done in such geographically diverse areas are few in the literature. Hence, the present study is a major contribution to knowledge in this field in the context of Small Island States.

As noted, there are only a few studies that have focussed on the strategies used by distance learners learning listening skills. The few that have been undertaken are characterised by the lack of research specifically into:

1. EAP listening skills taught by low technology distance learning methods;
2. strategies used by distance ESL learners to develop their listening skills;
3. geographically challenging areas such as the South Pacific region;
4. the listening needs of distance learners;
5. the views of teachers on their distance learners' strategy use.

The current study fills the knowledge gap that exists in regard to the listening strategies used by distance learners in the South Pacific region who learn through a traditional distance EAP course by:

- including views of 211 research participants;
- covering 12 South Pacific countries;
- using different sources of data and methods;
- identifying the academic and everyday listening needs of learners from USP.

#### **1.4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the LLS used by distance learners for their listening skills. It is also an investigation into the learners' need of listening skills for their academic and non-academic activities. In addition, it is expected that the study will provide information on both the study skills of distance learners of listening and the course teachers' awareness of their learners' listening skills. It is anticipated that the

empirical evidence and findings provided by this study will have pedagogical implications for teaching of LLS to distance learners, especially those in low-technology areas of the world.

### **1.5. Research Questions and Design**

In order to achieve its purpose, the study is guided by the following research questions.

1. What are the listening strategies of distance learners enrolled in the study skills course at USP?
2. What listening difficulties do distance learners of the study skills course at USP experience?
3. What role does the distance study skills course at USP play in fulfilling the listening needs of its learners?

#### *Rationale for the research design*

This study uses both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods and it is descriptive in nature. It elicits teachers and learners perceptions of listening skills through interviews, questionnaires and course material analysis. Using recognised data collection and research methods, a reliable picture of the matters under investigation is developed. The researcher's roles in the study are as data collector and transcriber of the interview data, as well as analyst and presenter of the data and its interpretation.

## **1.6. Significance of the Study<sup>1</sup>**

The role of USP draws attention to the importance of distance teaching in Small Island States. Teaching of EAP at USP also shows how listening skills are taught using distance teaching. This study focuses on a new direction, that of LLS used by distance learners studying listening skills. In regard to their studies Chamot and O'Malley (1996) and Oxford (1990) discuss the importance and necessity of strategies for language learning. However, there has been little work done on distance learners' language learning strategies. As mentioned under the statement of the problem, this study intends to close this research gap. The study is conducted using needs analysis in a distance-learning context.

The study will also have implications for strategy instructions for teachers in ESL tertiary situations. Strategy instruction models have been created to help ESL teachers in their language classrooms (Chamot and O'Malley, 1994; Oxford, 1990), but strategy instructions can also help subject teachers who are not ESL teachers to better understand their students' language skills needs, and to realise the importance of these skills for the academic development of their learners.

## **1.7. Development and Limitation of the Study**

There are two issues related to the scope of this study: the first relates to the selection of the research methods, and the second to the selection of participants. At the beginning of the study the researcher had a focus on needs analysis, and the questionnaires were

---

<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this section of the chapter was presented at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Pacific Postgraduate Symposium (Chand, 2006b).



designed based on the needs analysis guidelines used for L2 studies (Richards, 1983; Wong, 1996). The questionnaires were intended to be the sources of data; it was not foreseen that learning strategies would emerge in the results. As the analysis of the data proceeded, learning strategies began to emerge as a major area of the study. Being data driven, the study therefore came to focus on learning strategies that the learners said they used for their listening skills. Nevertheless, needs analysis maintained its role in this study, since it was anticipated that its role would be to provide a basis for the curriculum development of the USP's EAP distance course and, in particular, for its listening skills section

The second issue concerns the limitation of this study that exists in relation to the selection of participants. It was anticipated at the outset that the past learners from all USP countries could be located and then requested to participate in the study. There was a plan to include book vouchers from the USP Book Shop as a prize for the earliest returned questionnaires from each country. It was also planned to mail questionnaires to the address given by past learners as their forwarding address after they completed their course. However, it turned out that it was difficult to locate many of the learners who had completed the course entirely by distance and without any support. Indeed, while some learners could be contacted, the distance, lack of communication and inability to locate the learners from their given address meant that not many past learners could actually be contacted for the study. The time constraints also made it impossible to contact such learners in some of the countries of the USP region, since they lived far from USP centres. Fifty questionnaires were posted to the addresses that the past learners had left

after completing their university studies. Only one of these was returned completed. Another 30 were returned to the sender due to the wrong address on the envelope and there still has been no contact with the remainder. It was decided to withdraw the idea of the book vouchers as prizes. These limitations, of course, are indicative of the type of problems that arise in the provision of distance education in the USP region.

### **1.8. Conclusion and Overview of Remainder of the Thesis**

This chapter has provided the background and the context for the study. It has also described something of the problems envisaged at the commencement of the project together with the rationale for using the triangulation of data and research methods that were employed. Also, the significance of the study has been stated, the purpose of the study specified, and the research questions that guide the study listed.

Chapter 2 provides a review of research conducted in the fields of needs analysis and EAP, L2 listening and LLS, and distance learning. Section 2.1 covers the literature on needs analysis and EAP. The discussions focus on the inception of needs analysis in the field of L2 and then studies that have been conducted in L2 situations around the world. In the course of the discussion, the need for studies that focus on the needs of ESL learners in particular, and those needs as perceived by their teachers is justified. Needs analysis as it has been used in EAP courses, and studies undertaken in this area are discussed as well. The review also discusses the needs analysis frameworks designed by Richards (1983) and Wong (1996) that have been adapted for the needs analysis conducted in this study. From the review of studies in the field of needs analysis and

EAP, the main concerns from these studies are identified and the results of the studies discussed. This also serves to justify the present study's research focus.

Section 2.2 reviews the literature in the field of L2 listening and LLS. After considering the definitions and methods used to classify L2 listening and LLS, studies in the field of listening that use LLS are discussed. The framework used for the present study is described and its use in this study is justified. The review also discloses certain gaps in the literature and provides the rationale for focussing this study on the learning strategies used by L2 learners studying in their own environment.

Section 2.3 examines the various definitions of distance learning and the various methods that are used in delivering this type of course. It also examines the difficulties that distance learners face while studying by the distance mode from remote and underdeveloped areas. There is a review of the literature in the field of language learning by distance that includes an examination of studies of both L2 and foreign languages taught by distance using level one to level three of distance learning methods. The review indicates there is a lack of studies in the field of needs analysis and EAP taught at level one, that is areas using low technology for distance learning. It also reveals a lack of studies from universities that are owned by multiple island countries and provides good justification for undertaking the present study.

Chapter 3 provides a detailed description of the methods used for this study. After the rationale for the data collection procedure used in the study, the data collection and data

analysis procedures are described. The information analysed in the study has been obtained from interviews, questionnaires and course material analysis as well as from such sources as study skills teachers, course teachers, past learners and present learners. The chapter provides reasons for collecting information from these sources, the methods used for obtaining the information from these sources, the procedures used for data management, and the data analysis methods employed.

Chapter 4 reports the results obtained from all the data collected for this study. The chapter firstly reports on the interview data, then the data obtained by the questionnaires and lastly the course material analysis. In the first section, interviews with the four groups of participants are discussed in detail. Excerpts from the interviews are included as well as participants' views in relation to the listening strategies explored. In the second section, questionnaire data obtained from the two groups of learners who participated in this study are explored. Using statistical procedures, a descriptive analysis was carried out and these are detailed in this section. In the third section, there is an analysis of the listening section of the course material. The course material analysis was carried out using the criteria used by Mendelsohn (1994) for a listening course analysis. Results from this analysis are in this section.

Chapter 5 provides the discussion of the results using the research questions (Question 1-3) as a framework. In each section, beginning with Section 5.1 to Section 5.3, a summary of the results as answers to the research questions are provided followed by the

interpretation of the results. The chapter ends with a summary of discussions in Section 5.4

Chapter Six summarises the main findings, discusses the implications and suggests recommendations for future studies based on the results. There are suggestions for L2 listening skills teaching done by distance learning based on this study. There are also suggestions on how future distance language-teaching curriculum and research at USP and elsewhere can benefit from the information provided by this study. A discussion of the researcher's original contribution to knowledge and a conclusion to the study has also been included in this chapter (Section 6.6).

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2. Introduction**

This chapter reviews the theory and research in the areas that underpin the present study. Altogether there are six areas covered: needs analysis, English for Academic Purposes (EAP), L2 listening, language learning strategies (LLS), listening strategies, and distance learning. For better linkage, the chapter is divided into three sections: needs analysis and EAP; L2 listening, LLS and listening strategies; and distance learning. The first section (Section 2.1) begins with an overview of needs analysis followed by a discussion of EAP. The second section (Section 2.2) reviews L2 listening and then examines LLS. It also examines listening strategies with particular emphasis given to studies conducted in that field. The third section (Section 2.3) looks at different theories of distance learning and reviews studies conducted on language teaching by distance. The chapter concludes with a noting of the research gap that exists in the literature and thus, the justification for the focus of this study. It needs to be mentioned at this stage that USP, EAP and study skills course are equated. EAP, study skills course, LL114 are all the terms used to refer to the EAP course which is a skill-based one semester course offered on-campus and by distance at USP.

## **2.1. Needs Analysis and English for Academic Purposes**

This section begins with an explanation of the background of NA (Section 2.1.1). It also provides views of educationists on the need for NA in curriculum development and discusses studies that have been conducted in NA. The studies discussed in this section have been selected because they focus on NA in English language courses. Later, EAP is discussed (Section 2.1.2) beginning with a discussion of its background and the way NA is conducted in EAP.

### **2.1.1. Needs Analysis**

NA has been used in the field of curriculum development for many years, although its use in the field of language learning began in the 1970s (Nunan, 1988). It has been discussed under various names such as needs assessments and needs evaluation (Benesch, 1996; Brown, 1995; Jordan, 1997) and some writers have sub-categorised it as either strategy analysis or means analysis (West, 1994). The last decade has seen an increase in studies in learner strategies (e.g. Oxford, 1990, 1996; Nunan, 1988, Wenden, 1987, 1991) using NA. It has also been used as a method to differentiate the target needs from learners' needs, and needs from necessities, and lacks and wants (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). Nunan (1988, p. 5) discusses using NA to find the perceived and/or actual needs among teachers and learners and to raise the level of awareness of both groups, but also to find why they are doing what they are doing and to allow them to reflect on the usefulness of the means and ends of the course. It is argued that in the field of language learning, NA should be the first step in curriculum development, followed by five other components:

goals and objectives, language testing, material development, language teaching, and programme evaluation (Brown, 1995, p. 271). According to Brown (ibid.), the logical outcome of a NA conducted on learners' needs in a language programme will be specification of what the programme will accomplish. It will also indicate the content or skills students need to master in order to achieve those goals.

This section has provided a brief background on NA; the next examines the different types of NA that have been discussed in the literature.

#### **2.1.1.1. Types of Needs**

One of the main issues in NA is considering which types of need ought to be identified. Brindley (1989) and Robinson (1991) consider information about the learners' language proficiency, language difficulties, use of language in real life to be objective needs. Cognitive and affective needs of the learners in language learning, such as confidence, attitude, and expectations, are considered to be subjective needs. Brindley (1989) further discusses the need for a negotiation between teachers and learners in terms of the learners' needs. Usually the teachers and learners have different expectations of learning, which can lead to mismatches in the objective and subjective needs. Through needs analysis, negotiation, and compromise many of these mismatches can be overcome.

Richterich and Chancerel (1977) state that generally learners have little awareness of their needs and are usually unable to express the needs they recognise except in very vague terms. Knox (1990) also points out that adults may be unaware of some of their educational needs, which may be implicit in their attitudes and choices, but may also be



aware of some of their educational needs, which they can state explicitly in response to questions. Thus, needs assessment procedures are intended to confirm and discover both implicit and explicit needs that are important to adults.

In his discussion on the use of NA in L2 teaching, Richards (1990) states that for a successful educational programme, planning, development and implementation are necessary. According to Richards (*ibid.*), prior to the introduction of a language programme, the goals, objectives, syllabi and instructional materials have to be developed. Also, the other things necessary for a programme, such as teacher training, tests, assessments, and instructional strategies, all need to be selected before the programme begins. Once the programme has begun there is a need to monitor and evaluate it. For this purpose, NA provides a method for collecting information from learners, teachers, administrators and employers interested in the language curriculum. NA can also pinpoint general and specific needs and data, which can be used later to review and evaluate a language programme. Richards (*ibid.*) describes these general and specific needs in detail. According to him, general NA, referred to as situation analysis, focuses on the general parameters of a language programme. The questions under this form of NA are generally to do with the background of the learners, their goals and expectations, their learning styles, proficiency of the teachers, who the teachers are, and their experience, approaches and expectations. NA also includes the views of the administrators on the constraints, tests, and assessment procedures. In short, as with other curriculum developers before him (for example Munby, 1978; Richterich, 1983), he uses

a method of NA that includes obtaining information on the learners, teachers and administrators.

#### **2.1.1.2. Richards' (1983) Listening Needs Taxonomy**

The needs analysis carried out by Richards (1990) are very similar to Munby's (1978) Communicative Needs Analysis. Munby's (1978) taxonomy can be used to investigate the reason why a learner is learning a particular language and the communicative needs of the learner. Additionally, it looks at the particular context in which the language being learnt will be used. The point Richards (*ibid.*) makes in his description of NA is that, as in foreign language learning, in L2 learning NA plays a vital role. It is also of importance in general language courses. Richards (1983) also discusses taxonomy of listening sub-skills. The taxonomy of listening sub-skills for classroom teaching includes 33 micro-skills for 'conversational listening' and 18 micro-skills for 'academic listening' (*ibid.*, p. 228–230). According to Richards (*ibid.*), a learner's need for listening skills is dependent on the situations, activities, and tasks for which they use L2. A needs assessment using either interview, questionnaire, participant observation, target discourse analysis or literature survey can provide details of the learners' needs. It can then be used to create a profile of their listening needs. Earlier, Munby (1978) created a taxonomy of language skills. However, he was more concerned with describing the skills than with differentiating between the skills (listening skills and reading skills).

Powers (1986) used questionnaires based on Richards' (1983) taxonomy to survey 144 faculty members in the US to obtain their views on 21 academic listening sub-skills

useful for learners' success at tertiary level. The following nine were identified as important: 1) identifying major themes or ideas, 2) identifying relationships among major ideas, 3) identifying the topic of a lecture, 4) retaining information through note-taking, 5) retrieving information from notes, 6) inferring relationships between information, 7) comprehending key vocabulary, 8) following the spoken mode of lectures and 9) identifying supporting ideas and examples. Even though Powers' (ibid.) study was based on the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) exam, it still provides information on a taxonomy of listening that can be used for empirical study.

### **2.1.1.3. Wong's (1996) Needs Analysis Worksheet**

Another method to obtain learner needs was designed by Wong (1996). These self-access materials provide a collection of worksheets that can be used by learners to determine their language needs for a variety of skills. One of the worksheets requests learners to put a tick against a list of language skills based on a specific language focus such as reading, writing, listening and speaking. Items listed in these focus areas require the learners to provide, on a 5-point scale, the skills needed for now and the future. They are also requested to provide their proficiency on a similar scale. Items listed under the category of listening skills range from academic activities such as listening to lectures, conversations, discussions, to non-academic activities such as listening to radio, entertainment, and stories.

In the present study, Richards' (1983) taxonomy and Wong's (1996) NA framework are adapted to create the NA questionnaires. These are used to find the learners' present and

future listening needs for the following reason: both Richards (ibid) and Wong's (ibid) guidelines have been created with listening skills in mind, and both researchers have suggested its usefulness for finding NA information from L2 learners. So far, the discussion has provided details of the two frameworks that will be used as a guideline for the needs analysis for the study. However, other methods of undertaking a needs analysis have been discussed in the literature. A discussion of these frameworks is provided in the following section. This is due to their connection to the methods used to find learners' academic skills need for academic and non academic situations, the learners' perceived listening and speaking needs, and the perception of learners' needs from the coordinators', learners' and teachers' perspectives.

#### **2.1.1.4. Studies Using Needs Analysis**

This section discusses studies that have been conducted using NA in the field of language learning. A considerable number of NAs have been discussed in literature since the 1980s which look at the language needs of learners. Ostler (1980) discusses a study conducted at the American Language Institute at the University of Southern California, in which 133 graduate and undergraduate students were requested to complete questionnaires on their self-assessment of the academic skills needed in order to complete their studies, and their self-assessment of the use of English in a variety of social and business situations. The study revealed a distinction between academic skills needed by graduate and undergraduate students. It also showed that the students were not as capable in conversation skills as the American Language Institute academics had assumed they were. Additionally, the study revealed that students' confidence in language skills

decreased with an increase in the number of situations where their creative language skills were required.

Dooley (2006) reports on a four-part survey administered to 18 students studying at the English Language Bridging Course at Curtin University of Technology in Perth, Western Australia. The survey was conducted to find the perceived listening and speaking language needs of international students. Seven ESL lecturers also participated in the survey, to provide their impressions of the students' perceived needs. The results indicated a difference in the students and instructors perceptions of needs. While learners ranked general listening comprehension and pronunciation as most important skills, ESL lecturers supported the importance of general listening comprehension, class discussions and the ability to communicate with other students. However, both groups agreed on the importance of listening skills for academic success.

Kikuchi (2004) discusses a needs analysis conducted at Aoyama Gakuin University in Tokyo for an integrated English programme. Views on six aspects of the English language programme at the university were obtained from 585 students, 15 teachers and 2 programme coordinators using data triangulation (interviews, questionnaires and observations). The questions were related to the programme's curriculum goals, its salient problems, learners' preferences of materials, overall English level of students, students' attitude towards English, and ways of improving the programme. The research findings suggested that there was a difference in perception of learners' needs among programme coordinators, teachers and learners. Thus, multiple information sources in

designing needs analysis were considered important when undertaking needs analysis surveys.

In his state of the art article, West (1994, p.12) concludes with the statements made by Richterich (1983, p. 12) and Nunan (1988, p. 44) that needs analysis and syllabi planned on needs have been widely criticised. However, critics have ignored the importance of needs analysis in the education process. According to West (ibid.), NA is important for determining the objectives, contents, and the curriculum itself. NA is also useful for finding details of new materials, and for developing learner autonomy, since learner autonomy is a major goal of learner-centred curriculum. NA is equally useful for finding information on the learners, particularly for finding their preferred ways of learning, among other things. However, needs analysis is still seen as having limitations. The limitations, as discussed by West (ibid.), include applying the results of NA conducted on target language (TL) needs to learners of a different age group whose TL needs may be different. Another limitation may be that learners are unable to specify their needs. For this, NA questionnaires can help learners access the achievement of their objectives in language learning.

This section has provided a background of NA and the views of educationists on the importance of NA in language learning curriculum. Some studies that included NA to find the needs of learners were discussed. Two things stand out from these studies. First, there exists a mismatch between what learners understand and teachers perceive as being the learners' needs that will be met as a result of doing an English language or academic

English course (Dooley, 2006; Kikuchi, 2004; Ostler, 1980). Secondly, learners' confidence changes with the language use due to the creativity in language use, indicating the need for a NA prior to introducing creativity in courses (Ostler, 1980). Apart from being conducted in general English courses, NA has also been conducted in EAP courses. The next sections discuss EAP, its definition and the use of needs analysis in EAP, and reviews studies conducted in the field of EAP, some of which have used NA.

### **2.1.2. English for Academic Purposes**

According to Jordan (1997, p.1) English for Academic Purposes (EAP) as a term has been in use since 1974. Since that time it has helped students in terms of language, study skills and study competence, students' self-confidence and, in the case of foreign students, adjustment to a new academic environment. In EAP, learners are expected to acquire receptive and perceptive academic skills such as those for developing learning strategies and study skills (Jordan, 1997). Braine (1995), Horowitz (1986) and Ostler (1980) have also discussed EAP's emphasis on productive skills such as reading and writing in studies.

With EAP's diverse and complex objective, namely focussing on the acquiring of receptive, perceptive and productive skills, it then becomes necessary to conduct an in-depth needs analysis during the life of the EAP course. Johns and Dudley-Evans (1991) point out that EAP, as well as English for specific purposes (ESP), is guided by the learners' needs since these needs determine the learners' target English academic and situation skills. Chaudron (1988) identifies the role of NA in EAP/ESP instruction since it

plays a significant role in the identification and examination of needs of any educational institution. Chaudron (1988) further suggests its role in helping educators and administrators gain awareness of the context variable. It is thus suggested that programme designers can be provided with appropriate instructional input to foster effective learning. When NA is conducted on a regular basis, it can also provide reliable data on the changing academic needs of the learners and teachers. A number of NA in EAP contexts have been discussed in the literature where surveys have been conducted on learners' background (Tarone, 1989), the institutes' course requirements (Johns, 1981) and learners' behaviour (McKenna, 1987; Robinson and Prior, 1995). Hamp-Lyons (2001) draws our attention to the importance of having NA in EAP course design and teaching. An EAP course that uses a general approach usually teaches the four study skills, for example listening to lectures, speaking (as in discussion or making presentations), writing and reading.

However, if a NA is conducted, it can indicate the specific skills most necessary for the discipline in question. All the skills will still be taught but more attention will be paid to the specific need identified by the NA. Thus Hamp-Lyons (2001, p. 127) describes NA as the process that specifies the objectives of a course. The primary reason for conducting a NA in EAP is, then, to evaluate the effectiveness of the course, by examining the resources, syllabus and the methodology used for teaching.



### **2.1.3. Studies in English for Academic Purposes**

Over the years, EAP has developed into a study and research area of its own. While EAP began as a field to provide support to university-level learners, the present day EAP looks at teaching of English in an academic context at all ages and proficiency levels. Those studies in the field of EAP that use NA have mostly focussed on general academic literacy skills (Dooley, 2006; Ferris, 1998). Other studies in EAP include investigations into the influence of other disciplines on learning (Brumfit, 1993), experience and expectations (Furneaux et al., 1991; Jordan, 1993), and the learners' cultural and social influence (Ballard and Clanchy, 1984; Flowerdew and Miller, 1995). Specific language skills such as reading (Geoghegan, 1983; Hohl, 1982), listening (Johns, 1981), writing (Bloor and Bloor, 1991; Bridgeman and Carlson, 1984; Richards and Skelton, 1991), and speaking (Jordan and Mackay, 1973; Blue, 1991) in relation to EAP have also been researched.

Another focus in the field of EAP and NA has been on non-native speakers (NNS) in English speaking countries. In English speaking environments such as in the UK and the US, NNS students have to use English as a medium for most academic purposes. One of the earliest studies conducted in the field of EAP on NNS, which has been discussed widely in EAP literature, is the one conducted at Cambridge University in 1983 (Geoghegan, 1983). The aim of the study was to find the language difficulties of overseas students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels during their first semester at the university. The study skills areas in which the NNS found the most difficulty was listening and speaking in seminars, academic writing, listening comprehension, and note

taking. Jordan and Mackay conducted other studies similar to the Cambridge University study in 1973 at the University of Manchester and Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Blue conducted similar in 1991 at Southampton University (Jordan, 1997). In all studies, the results had a pattern similar to the Cambridge University study where students expressed speaking and listening in seminars as the areas in which they experienced the most difficulty. Even after being in the UK for over 6 months, most NNS surveyed by Jordan and Mackay (1973) found speaking the most difficult. To sum up, listening as well as speaking were the areas that NNS found most difficult. The students mentioned their inability to express themselves in spoken English. In addition, most NNS admitted spending very little time speaking in English and having very few native speakers (NS) of English as friends.

Blue (1991) collected information from overseas and European Economic Community (EEC) students at Southampton University. The overseas students were from other parts of the world, while the EEC students came from other countries of Europe where English was not a first language. Most students indicated that they spent less than one and a half hours speaking English with NS and had no British friends. This added to their difficulty in speaking in an academic context such as seminar presentations. In these studies, the students mentioned speaking and listening as the most difficult skills to learn, and the cultural differences were seen as a hindrance in the development of the target skill. This is also an area that will be further explored in the current study on USP.

MacDonald, Badger and White (2000) explored the usefulness of authentic EAP listening material for teaching undergraduates at a UK university. Their definition of authentic materials was similar to that of Nunan's (1989), and Hutchinson and Waters (1987) description of authentic material being those types of materials that have not been specifically prepared for language teaching but collected from target language situations. Using student questionnaires and the techniques of discourse analysis based on Halliday's (1978) concepts of field, tenor and mode, MacDonald, Badger and White's (ibid) investigation sought to establish the levels of difficulty and relevance of materials used. The researches used four forms of media for teaching EAP: published audio tapes, audio recordings of a live lecture, video recordings and a short simulated lecture. The study found that the texts that were related to students' experience, prior knowledge and interest and which, at the same time, allowed learner interaction (i.e. learner authenticity) had more potential for language learning than others that did not have these features. Media forms that only replicated the discourse of the target situation (such as recordings of simulated lectures) did not have the same potential.

Studies similar to those conducted at Cambridge University, the University of Manchester and the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Southampton University have also been conducted in the United States (Christison and Krahnke, 1986; Johns, 1981) and at Yarmouk University in Jordan (Zughoul and Hussein, 1985). These additional studies have reaffirmed the fact that seminar presentations, speaking, and listening are the areas NNS students find the most difficult. Johns' (1981) study in the US collected views from academic staff on the most important skill for university success

amongst NNS students. Fifty per cent of the staff ranked listening as the most important skill. Using open-ended interviews, Christison and Krahnke (1986) conducted a study of 80 NNS studying at five different universities in the US. The study was aimed at obtaining students' perception of their language learning experience and how they used English in academic settings. Students indicated the importance of reading and listening skills over those of speaking and writing. In Zughoul and Hussein's (1985) study, students and staff were requested to complete questionnaires on their views on the skill necessary for university success. The target-situational analysis conducted in this study found listening comprehension was considered the most useful skill for success at university level.

Braine (2002) argues that when NNS conduct research on their use of English for academic purposes whilst in NS countries, their studies lack authentic voice. Reasons given relate to the fact the students are usually "bound by the requirements and limitations placed on dissertation writing and writing for publication. As a result, they [were] ... unable to refer explicitly to their own experiences while they were reporting on other NNS graduate students" (ibid., p. 65). However, studies conducted by NNS in their own environment can provide that authentic view which is at present missing from the literature. Braine's (ibid) criticism of lack of studies conducted involving NNS students in their own environment draws our attention to the need for studies to be conducted in NNS students' own environments and justifies the conducting of this study in the South Pacific region.

This section has provided the theoretical background and an overview of research conducted in the field of EAP. In all the studies discussed above the importance of listening skills for academic success amongst NNS has been noted. The next section discusses the definition of listening, various theories on listening as well as research on L2 listening, all of which are important in the present study. It also examines LLS and studies conducted on listening strategies.

## **2.2. Second Language Listening and Language Learning Strategies**

This section explores the field of L2 listening. The definitions and methods used to classify L2 listening and language learning strategies (LLS) are discussed first. It needs to be noted that teaching of listening and learning listening skills are both discussed under this section. This discussion is followed by a discussion of studies in the field of L2 listening that have been concerned with LLS. It needs to be noted that studies in the field of L2 listening have been conducted using approaches other than focusing on LLS, but this section, because of the research agenda here, is primarily a review of studies related to L2 and LLS.

### **2.2.1. Second Language Listening**

While there has been a great deal of research on listening/deafness, it has taken a long time for listening as an area to gain recognition in L2 research. Studies in the field of listening have focussed on its teaching, skills used for listening as well as on strategies that are used for listening. One of the earliest works done by Johnson (1951) defines listening as “the ability to understand and respond effectively to oral communication” (p.

58). A year later, Rankin (1952) adds to the understanding of listening regarding it as “the ability to understand spoken language” (p. 847). Until the 1970s, research into listening had focussed mostly on first language (L1) learning, based on the belief that L2 listening was similar to L1 listening. Other assumptions about listening that existed until very recently were based on the belief that it is a receptive skill, similar to reading, and a passive skill. By the 1980s a slow progression can be seen in the importance given to studies on listening due to the development of the argument that listening plays an important role in academic and social life since 40–50% of adult communication time is spent listening (Gilman and Moody, 1984; Oxford, 1993; Rivers, 1981). Listening is also the primary medium of learning at all levels of education. Other analysts (for example: Brown, 1987; Coakley and Wolvin, 1997; Ferris, 1998; Ferris and Tagg, 1996a, 1996b; Feyten, 1991, 1998; Wolvin and Coakley, 1979) have drawn support for this argument because listening is central to the lives of learners throughout all levels of educational development. Listening is also the most frequently used language skill in classrooms. Their studies all clearly show that instructors as well as learners acknowledge the importance of listening comprehension for academic success. Studies by Brown (1987), Coakley, and Wolvin (1997) additionally show that listening skills are more important than reading skills when considering factors contributing to academic success. However, where learning using a traditional distance learning method is concerned, listening is not the primary medium of instruction.

Listening is also assumed to be closely associated with speaking. In the academic context, listening and understanding have been mentioned as the most important concepts

for verbal interaction (Rost, 1990). In a later publication, Rost (2001) defines listening as “not only a skill area in language performance, but also a critical means of acquiring L2 (p. 7)”. After the initial characterisation of listening as a passive activity (Bacon, 1989; Morley, 1991; Murphy, 1991), many theorists realised that listening is not passive but is an active process of constructing meaning from a stream of sounds (Berne, 1998; Murphy, 1991; O’Malley et al., 1985a, 1985b; Vandergrift, 1999). According to Purdy (1997) listeners actively attempt to grasp the facts and feelings in what they hear by focussing on what the speaker says and how it is said as well as the context in which the message is delivered.

It is noteworthy that, until recently, listening was not studied as a separate entity in L2 research. Oxford (1993) points to the lack of recognition given to listening in language learning. Before the 1970s research interest in L2 focussed mostly on reading (Miller, 2002). Additionally, it has been said that listening has been treated as the “Cinderella of the four study skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing” for a very long time (Flowerdew and Miller, 2005, p. xi; see also (Mendelsohn, 1994). Listening as a research subject has been the least studied of the four language skills (Vandergrift, 2007), thus further research on listening skills is necessary.

#### **2.2.1.1. Studies in Second Language Listening**

Since studies conducted on listening have been on either the product or the process of listening, both of these research focuses are discussed briefly below.

### *Product oriented research*

Studies that have focussed on the product of listening comprehension have mostly investigated the product or the level of success of listening comprehension. A survey of studies conducted on the product of listening comprehension shows that the studies focussed mostly on listening tests including, listening cloze, gap-filling activities, dictation and translation (Buck, 1992; Engleberg, 1990; Henning et al., 1995; Hughes, 1989; Lado, 1961; Spearitt, 1962; Templeton, 1977; Weir, 1983, 1990). One of the limitations with this kind of study is that product oriented studies do not provide details of the listeners' thinking processes, or the procedures they use in order to reach the answers. For this reason studies that focus on the listening processes have gained attention due to their association with the cognitive, inferential and affective approaches to listening. Each of the processes in listening will be discussed briefly, since the present study focuses on the listening process of L2 learners.

### *Process oriented research*

#### *Cognitive processes in listening comprehension*

The cognitive processes of listening comprehension include the belief that listening is an interactive process that involves both bottom-up processing and top-down processing. When listeners use bottom-up processing, they first focus on individual phonological units. Listeners decode larger units by moving from vocabulary to structures in order to arrive at the meaning of the discourse. Top-down processing, on the other hand, involves listeners making inferences based on their background knowledge, contextual information and expectations. Rost (1994, p. 32) and Nunan (1999, p. 221) discuss the



interaction of top-down and bottom-up processes depending on the language proficiency of learners. Similarly, O'Malley, Chamot and Küpper (1989) and Rost and Ross (1991), provide differences between good and less successful listeners depending upon the attention the listener gives to individual words for comprehension. When good listeners focus on language components of a discourse, they shift their attention to individual words if there is a comprehension problem. Less successful listeners, on the other hand, focus on individual words in order to construct meaning from the task. Anderson and Lynch (1988) further suggest that listeners below a certain level of language proficiency are unable to activate top-down processing. Thus, good listeners are most likely use both top-down and bottom-up processing.

Other forms of cognitive processes of listening comprehension include Anderson's (1985) sequential listening process. This model of listening comprehension includes the stages of perception (where listeners focus on the sounds of language and store them in echoic memory), parsing (where listeners use words and phrases to construct meaning), and utilisation (where listeners connect what they hear to what they already know).

#### *Inferential processes in listening comprehension*

According to Richards (1983), for listening comprehension L2 learners infer meaning from broad contextual clues and their background knowledge. Oxford (1990) lists a variety of clues that L2 listeners use to infer meaning. These clues include linguistic clues, for example suffixes, prefixes, word order; structural clues, for example use of words such as first, second, the most important; social context clues based on the social

situation; nonverbal clues, for example body movement; and general world knowledge of the listener. Taguchi's (2002) description of inference includes the assumptions made by the listener when the speaker says something. The listener assumes that the message is important to the context and thus seeks interpretation of meaning. The linguistic structure determines only a part of what the listener hears. Context plays a more important role than structure in the interpretation of meaning. Buck (2001) discusses context as sociolinguistic and cognitive environment. The sociolinguistic environment provides the pragmatics, the inferences that a listener is expected to make based on the experiences of the listener. However, the sociolinguistic understanding of the listener cannot be taken for granted since they may not have the same background knowledge as the speaker. The cognitive environment is related to the understanding that the listener makes of an utterance, which can also be difficult for an L2 listener since the listening, may be unaccompanied by visual knowledge. The listener may make a different interpretation and the listener's background knowledge may not be enough for a correct interpretation.

The discussions so far have shown the importance of listener's background knowledge for successful comprehension. The studies have also indicated the differences in the knowledge that listeners, especially L2 listeners, may bring into a learning environment. As a result, conclusions drawn from different studies cannot be used in all classrooms, and studies from different contexts then become necessary.

### *Affective processes in listening comprehension*

Affective factors in listening comprehension deal with psychological aspects of learners such as anxiety, levels of motivation, and self-confidence. According to Brown and Yule (1983), listeners' interest determines what they extract from what is said. Flowerdew and Miller (2005) extend the meaning of affective processes of listening to include the fact that comprehension cannot occur unless the listener is motivated. For listeners, a positive attitude towards listening, a desire to know and understand, feelings that contribute towards listening, and the physical presence of the speaker are factors that can also contribute to listening comprehension attitude. In the L2 situation, another factor that plays a major role for listening comprehension is the learning goal. Thus, in order to have a successful comprehensible input, learners' interest is important.

Mendelsohn (1994) has given an additional perspective to listening comprehension. For the effective teaching of listening, the listening courses need to contain certain features that would help learners develop their listening skills. Mendelsohn (*ibid.*, pp. 48-68) provides a total of 19 essential features that any listening course should have. There are further subsections included under these features. The features discussed by Mendelsohn (*ibid.*) are:

- a large amount of actual listening, which should include spoken language
- both monologue and dialogue
- a variety of listening activities
- speech recording that sound natural

- pre listening activities preceding the listening activities
- post listening activities to follow the listening
- listening activities that are a way to teach rather than test the learners
- listening tasks that have been chosen carefully and have clearly defined tasks and assignments.

For the analysis of the listening course material in this study, their features will be matched against those provided by Mendelsohn (1994).

Thus far in the section, discussion of the literature has looked at the category of listening skills, its definition, understanding as provided by researchers and factors that influence its learning. Discussion has also indicated that listening skills have not been studied much until recently; the area of listening skills remains the least studied of the four language skills. The next section examines learning strategies especially as they relate to learning listening. Research into listening strategies is also included since the language learning strategies that a learner uses for learning a language are applied for learning language skills such as listening.

### **2.2.2. Language Learning Strategies**

LLS have been referred to in the literature as learning techniques, behaviours, learning to learn, problem solving or study skills (Oxford and Crookall, 1989, p. 404). LLS have also been subcategorised by numerous names, which include cognitive, memory, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social (Oxford, 1990). Firstly, an examination of the different names given to LLS provides separate and at times

confusing definitions of learning and communicative strategies. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) differentiate learning strategies from communicative strategies by stating that, as a label, learning strategies focus on language acquisition, while communicative strategies focus on the language use. Tarone (1981) separates learning strategies from communicative strategies believing that learning strategies help learners attain the goal of acquiring language knowledge and skills while communicative skills help them to solve communicative problems. Later, Tarone (1981, 1983 and with Yule, 1989) argues that it is impossible to distinguish between learning strategies and communicative strategies because it is difficult to gauge whether the learner's purpose is to communicate or to learn especially in situations where the CLT approach is used for L2 learning. The learner might be using the language for both purposes, and even if the learner is using the language only for communication, learning occurs anyway. Willing (1988) and Mendelsohn (1994) agree with Tarone (1981, 1983) and with Tarone and Yule (1989). He states that although these terms have been discussed separately, in reality the terms often overlap. Thus, a number of separate and overlapping definitions of learning and communicative strategies can be found in the literature. With the aim of finding the listening strategies that learners use for their academic and non academic activities, this study will use learning and communicative strategies as two separate strategies.

#### **2.2.2.1. Classification of Language Learning Strategies**

Apart from the differences in definition, there are also various classification systems used for categorising LLS. According to Mendelsohn (1994), some of the most important classification systems identified by researchers in L2 learning include those by Murphy

(1987), O' Malley et al. (1985a and 1985b), O'Malley, Chamot and Kupper (1989), and Rubin (1987). Other classification systems found in recent studies include those by Bialystok (1978), Brown and Palicsar (1982), Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern and Todesco (1978), Oxford (1990), Stern (1975) and Vandergrift (1997a). A survey of the classification systems reveals that these systems were developed after the 1970s. As discussed in the review of literature on listening skills, studies prior to the 1970s were based on the assumption that L2 learning was similar to L1. However, with the belief that L2 learning is different, studies, definitions and classification systems such as those for LLS began to emerge after the 1970s. There follows a summary of some the LLS classification systems carried out, with examples of strategies found in them provided. The classification systems have been put in alphabetical order. After a brief description of the classification systems, their similarities and differences are discussed. Later, an argument for the system that is used for the study of listening strategies of learners at USP is carried out.

- Bialystok (1978) discusses a model that includes four types of strategies: functional, formal, monitoring and inferencing. She discusses how learners use learning strategies to promote language learning, particularly in situations such as going to movies or talking to a native speaker (functional), practising language in the classroom and noting errors (formal and monitoring), guessing meaning from context (inferencing). Her model provides details on the nature of the language learning that occurs in formal settings (academic) as well as in real-life situations.

- Brown and Palicsar (1982) describe metacognitive strategies as the knowledge about cognition and the regulation of cognition, such as planning, monitoring and evaluating a learning activity. According to Brown and Palincsar (ibid.), cognitive strategies are specific steps taken in learning such as inferencing, guessing meaning from context, elaboration and relating new information to concepts already in memory. Their model focuses mostly on language learning in formal (academic) situations.
- Murphy (1987) discusses metacognitive and cognitive strategies that can be useful for teaching listening. He proposes a series of strategic questions that learners can attend to and practice during classroom activities. These include recall and summarising, speculating, self-examination, probing the topic and interacting with others. Later, Murphy (1991) supports the use of strategies involving inferencing, self-monitoring and elaborating on the basis that researchers (Mendelsohn, 1994; Murphy, 1987; O'Malley, Chamot, and Kupper, 1989) have found that listeners use these strategies for listening and that good listeners make better use of these strategies than do less successful listeners.
- Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern and Todesco (1978) created a taxonomy of strategies that good language learners use. Their classification is derived from a study conducted on 34 proficient adult language learners. Strategies discussed by Naiman et al. (ibid.) include learners having an active task approach, realisation of language as a system as well as a means of communication and interaction, management of affective demands, and monitoring of L2 performance. According to Naiman et al. (ibid) good learners use “general, more or less deliberate approaches” (p.4) and

adapt learning styles to suit themselves while being actively involved in language learning.

- O'Malley et al. (1985a, 1985b), O'Malley, Chamot and Kupper (1989) and O'Malley and Chamot (1990), discuss a 3-part strategy taxonomy based on data collected from ESL young adult learners. O'Malley et al. (1985a, 1985b) interviewed 70 high school students and 22 teachers on their use of learning strategy activities used inside and outside the classroom. Their study revealed that even though learners at all levels reported using an extensive variety of learning strategies, higher level learners reported making greater use of metacognitive strategies. Using Palincsar and Brown's (1984) classification scheme that has an addition of a social mediation strategy, they subsumed a list of learning strategies which were identified and later classified into a taxonomy of metacognitive, cognitive and social mediation strategies. According to O'Malley, Chamot, and Küpper (1989), effective listeners listen to larger portions (chunks) of information and use top-down processing while ineffective listeners try to determine meanings from individual words and use bottom-up processing. In a later study, O'Malley, Chamot and Küpper (1989) discuss a strategy-based approach to teaching listening. They also discuss the strategies used by effective and ineffective listeners. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) made some changes to the learning strategies categories by dropping delayed production, self-reinforcement and directed physical response from their learning strategies classification. They also renamed advance preparation strategy as functional planning, and reclassified questions for clarification under social mediation. Additional cognitive strategies



- included were summarising and rehearsal. Self-talk was added to the social/affective strategy, and problem identification added to the metacognitive strategy.
- Oxford (1990, pp. 14–22) first divides strategies into two classes: direct and indirect. These are further subdivided into six groups: memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. Direct strategies, which involve dealing with new language, consist of memory strategies (remembering and retrieving new information), cognitive strategies (understanding and producing the language) and compensation strategies (using language despite knowledge gaps). The second group of strategies, known as indirect strategies, consist of metacognitive strategies (coordinating the learning), affective strategies (regulating emotions) and social strategies (learning with others). In total, Oxford (1990) has 62 strategies which are divided into 19 strategy sets. Oxford broke the social/affective strategy of O'Malley et al. (1985a) into two categories and included more strategies in each of these two categories.
  - Rubin's (1987) classification system distinguishes between direct and indirect strategies. In this scheme, direct strategies include activities such as seeking clarification/verification, monitoring, memorisation, guessing/inducing meaning, deducing reasoning, and practice, are all directly related to learners' language learning. Indirect strategies, on the other hand, are strategies that indirectly help in language learning and include creating opportunities for practice, and production tricks such as using circumlocutions, gestures and synonyms. Rubin's model is also based on observations of good language learners. Earlier, Rubin (1975) had

- defined good learners as those who have a strong desire to communicate, and are not afraid of being wrong and do not care about correctness.
- Stern (1975, p. 316) has produced a list of 10 language learning strategies based on observations and intuition. Meaningful observations of strategies used by learners in a classroom include activities such as cooperating with peers, asking questions for clarification, and gesturing to convey meaning. Other strategies, which Stern (ibid.) calls intuitional, include associating, using imagery and guessing intelligently. Using a relatively broader characterisation than Rubin (1975), he believed good learners have a personal learning style and positive learning strategies, including being tolerant and having an outgoing approach to learning. Learners also show, among other things, characteristics of having an active approach to learning, a technical understanding of how to tackle learning a language, a willingness to practise and to engage in experimentation, to use the language in real communication, to search constantly for meaning, to self-monitor, and to endeavour to develop language as a medium of thought.
  - Vandergrift (1997a) used the listening comprehension strategies of O'Malley and Chamot (1990) and Vandergrift (1996) to code the strategies discussed by learners during think-aloud sessions. Divided into three main categories: metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies and socio-affective strategies, 35 strategies were identified.

A survey of the strategy classifications indicates that most of these discuss the metacognitive, cognitive, and social/affective strategies. Even where these terms have not been used in the strategy description, the descriptions of the strategies include

descriptions similar to those generally used for metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategies. For example, direct (Rubin, 1981; Oxford, 1990), active (Naiman et al., 1978), observational (Stern, 1975), and formal (Bialystok, 1978) strategies contain descriptions similar to those of metacognitive and cognitive strategies. On the other hand, functions (Bialystok, 1978), realisation about language (Naiman et al., 1978), indirect (Rubin, 1981; Oxford, 1990), and intuitional (Stern, 1975) strategies show similarities with social/affective strategies.

Mendelsohn (1994, p. 24) however, criticises the fact that most of the classification systems found in the literature discuss ‘the good learner’ (Naiman, et al., 1978; Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975). He adds that all learners use strategies; it is just that some use them more successfully than others. Teachers should not then assume that learners do not know how to use strategies; rather, they should attempt to show learners how to use strategies for even better language learning. Further to this criticism, the classification systems mostly discuss the language use in academic situations and also in face-to face learning situations. Moreover, the studies used as the basis of these classifications were mostly conducted in NS countries with NNS learners, for example there were L2 learners in an EFL context. This fact re-emphasises the need for further studies on L2 learners’ use of LLS and the studies need to be conducted in different settings.

However, when one needs to apply such classification in a different context, such as language skills learnt by distance in small island countries, it becomes difficult to select a particular classification that is appropriate to the context. Since the present study is

investigating the LLS used for listening skills, a schema needs to be created that looks at the processes involved in listening. An observation of the classification systems discussed above indicates there is much overlap. For example, Bialystok (1978) provides a separate category for inferencing that is categorised under cognitive strategy in Brown and Palincsar (1982). Again, inferencing is discussed under compensation strategies that are covered under direct strategies by Oxford (1990). Such overlaps indicate that it is practical to find a classification system that unifies these inconsistencies. Vandergrift's list of listening strategies seemed the most suitable for categorising the listening strategies used by learners at USP. However, Vandergrift's (1997a) listening strategies focussed on think-aloud procedures and learners listening to texts. In a distance learning context such as that at USP, where there is little face-to-face teaching and teaching is not in a controlled environment, the implementation of such strategies can become difficult. On close inspection of the description of the strategies, it seems that none of the classification systems except that of O'Malley and Chamot (1990) provide much detail on the cognitive processes involved in language learning. O'Malley's theoretical bases and his definitions of the learning strategies involved make it possible to understand learning strategies better. Therefore, it seems reasonable to adopt the schema discussed by O'Malley and Chamot (*ibid*) for this study. The strategies are classified into three categories: metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies and social/affective strategies. (Appendix 9 provides the comprehensive list of all the strategies discussed by them.) The O'Malley and Chamot (1990) learning strategies are briefly described below.

### *Metacognitive strategies*

Of the three, metacognitive strategies are the highest and involve learners' planning, monitoring and evaluation of learning outcomes. These strategies also equip the learners with skills for self-management for the purpose of achieving desired learning outcomes. Metacognitive strategies also help modify cognitive and social/affective strategies such as gaining an understanding on how to organise learning material (cognitive strategy) for planning (metacognitive strategy). Altogether, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) discuss seven metacognitive strategies.

### *Cognitive strategies*

Cognitive strategies are related to the interpretation, understanding and gaining of knowledge from the learning material. For this reason such strategies are content based, task based or procedural by nature. Content based and task based strategies include activities that require learners to analyse, as they do in hypothesising, for example. Procedural strategies include such activities as rehearsal and elaboration. Altogether, there are eight cognitive strategies discussed by O'Malley and Chamot (1990).

### *Social and/affective strategies*

Social and affective strategies focus on the environmental management procedures used by the learners. These include the ability to interact with the learning environment (social) and of the learners to control their emotions, as well as learners' motivation (affective).

O'Malley et al. (1985a); and Richards (1987) discuss social strategies as social mediation strategies and include only cooperation within this classification. Ellis (1994) discusses these as social/affective strategies and includes cooperation and questions for clarification under this category. The adaptation that will be used in this study will include the O'Malley and Chamot (1990) classification which also discusses self-talk, questioning and cooperation as social and affective strategies.

### *Theoretical framework*

Investigations by Wenden and Rubin (1987), O'Malley and Chamot, (1990), Oxford (1996) and Cohen (1998) have shown the importance of language learning strategies in making language learning more efficient. Another thing which emerged from the literature includes the fact that there are numerous classification systems used for categorising learning strategies. Learners' perception and experience of strategy use has also been discussed in the literature. In most cases, the studies that discuss learning strategies have been conducted in face-to-face and controlled learning situations. The studies that discuss strategy use by distance learners have been conducted on foreign language learners only (White, 1995).

The plan in undertaking this study is to find whether distance study skills learners discuss using strategies for their learning. As previous studies have discussed the fact that learners perceive and use a variety of strategies for their language learning, this study aims to find if distance learners also refer to their perceptions and use of strategies for learning. Since past studies on language learning strategies refer to the strategies used by

learners regardless of whether the students have been taught learning strategies or not, the study hopes to show the use of strategy by distance learners for their listening.

Discussion so far has reviewed the classification of strategies developed by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) which will be adopted for the study. The classification generated by O'Malley and Chamot was based on studies conducted in a different setting. The study was conducted on learners of mostly Spanish background studying in high schools in the US as beginner and intermediate level ESL students. Learners and teachers in the O'Malley and Chamot study were in a face-to-face classroom situation and learners were directly observed. For this reason, the investigation of strategies used by distance learners for their listening skills may not provide discussions on all the strategies. There may be other factors in the study that do not fall in the classification of strategies discussed. Factors such as those discussed below can influence learners' learning strategies.

#### **2.2.2.2. Factors Influencing Learning Strategies**

Learners' use of LLS is dependent upon their personal and environmental influences (Biggs, 1984). Personal influences include learners' perception of learning strategies, their motivation for using learning strategies, and what learners perceive they should do and what they really do during the learning process (declarative and procedural knowledge). Environmental influences include the contextual influences such as the assessment methods used, the learners' perception of task difficulty and the learners learning environment.

### *Personal influences*

Personal factors that influence learners' use of strategies include their attitudes and motives towards learning as a whole and towards their choice of learning strategies. It can also include their perception of what they should be doing and what they are really doing for their learning.

#### *1. Perception of learning strategies*

Bacon and Finnemann (1990) discuss the relationship between learners' perceived strategies, motives and attitudes and their anticipated reactions towards authentic oral and written input. Their view is based on a study conducted to examine the learners' cognitive and affective responses towards authentic input. The results of this study indicate that learners' anticipated reactions to the listening component of the curriculum could indicate their potential success or failure. The implication of the study was that if a learner was not interested in listening to a particular component of the listening material, then the comprehension level would most likely be marred. Vogely (1995), who discusses learners' perceived use of strategies during an authentic listening comprehension task and compares it with their listening abilities, has put forward a similar view on learners' perception. The study concludes that those learners who perceived themselves as strategic listeners performed well. Findings indicated that students had, to varying degrees, the required knowledge and skills to listen, although they did not seem to use them effectively. "Being strategic is not simply a matter of knowing what strategy to use; it is also necessary to know how to use it successfully" (Vogely, 1995, p. 53). The study results suggest that the more strategic the learners, the better they perform in listening tasks.



## *2. Motivation for using learning strategies*

Based on learners' motivation and the role motivations plays in learners' initiative for using learning strategies, Ames and Archer (1988) present a discussion on the differences between performance goal oriented and mastery goal oriented classrooms. In performance goal oriented classes, learners focus more on out-performance, success, and being judged able, while in mastery goal oriented classes, the focus is on learning new skills, processing learning and using efforts. Ames and Archer (1988) investigated students' perception of classroom goals and its relation to their choice and use of learning strategies. In situations where emphasis was on mastery goals such as 'given opportunities to correct mistakes', 'working hard to learn', students reported using more learning strategies than for performance goal oriented classes. Hence, the results give an indication that when learners perceive that mastery goals are being emphasised, they use more learning strategies since they are more motivated.

## *3. Declarative and procedural knowledge*

On a similar note, Baker and Brown (1984) refer to 'knowing what' (declarative knowledge) and 'knowing how' (procedural knowledge) as the gap that exists between learners' beliefs on what they should do and what they perceive themselves doing. Learners' knowledge that a particular strategy is useful (awareness) precedes its routine use which, in turn, precedes the ability to describe how it is used. Thus, writers such as Oxford and Crookall (1989), Oxford and Nyikos (1989) and O'Malley (1987) suggest that including strategy training in such matters in a language curriculum is a way to close the gap between 'knowing what' and 'knowing how'.

### *Contextual/environmental factors*

Contextual or environmental factors that influence learners' use of strategies have both direct and indirect influences on the learners (Richardson, 2000). Direct influences include the types of assessment (Entwistle and Entwistle, 1997), types of learning environment (Vermunt, 2003) and the quality and method of teaching (Hodgson, 1997). Indirect influences having effect on learning strategies include the learners' learning environments (Ramsden, 1997) and their interaction with the contexts.

#### *1. Types of assessment*

According to Ramsden (1988) learners select learning strategies based on their interpretation of what is required by them in particular tasks and assessments. In addition, the perceived difficulty of the tasks is a deciding factor in the strategy used for completing the tasks. Schunk (2004) adds to this discussion that learners' decision of strategy use is dependent upon their perception of the difficulty level of tasks. When tasks are difficult they opt for metacognitive strategies, and they employ cognitive strategies for easy tasks. However, learners may also quit before completion if they are unable to cope with the difficult tasks.

#### *2. Learning environment*

Vermunt (2003) discusses the influence of the learning environment based on an earlier study conducted using the Inventory of Learning Style (ILS). Using ILS, Vermunt (1992) conducted a survey on learners with differences in age, study experiences, subject areas,

types of learning environment (on campus or distance education) and gender. ILS is based on a phenomenographic study that includes analysis of university students' views about learning, studying, motives and personal goals (Vermunt and Vermetten, 2004). The ILS contains statements that cover cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, conception and orientation towards learning. Students are requested to indicate, on a 5-point scale, their views on the usage of strategies, and their motives and views on learning. Vermunt's (1992) study found that older and distance learners indicated using more meaning directed learning than younger and on-campus learners. Thus, the influence of the environment was a strong factor in this case.

It is expected that some factors that influence learners' choice of LLS will be identified in this study, together with their perception of strategy use. The next section briefly examines studies that have been conducted in the field of listening skills using LLS.

### **2.2.3. Research in the Field of Listening Skills and Language Learning Strategies**

Studies on listening skills and LLS have discussed the importance of teaching listening strategies to learners. Berne (1995), for example, discusses ESL learners' performance after their involvement in pre-listening activities and its effect on listening comprehension. Another study by Berne (1998) also discusses the teaching of listening strategies as well as the attitude of teachers towards teaching listening, their knowledge of listening pedagogy and research on listening in L2 classrooms. Discussions parallel to Berne's (1995; 1998) are reflected in works of Mendelsohn (1994, 1995, 2001) and Vandergrift (1996, 1997a, 1997b, 1999). Mendelsohn emphasises the importance of

predicting, hypothesising and inferencing, as well as strategy teaching, while Vandergrift emphasises the importance of teaching metacognitive strategies to learners.

Field (1998, 2000, 2003), however, opposes the teaching of listening strategies, arguing (1998) that the role of strategy training in listening comprehension is inconclusive and that those learners who are weak in using strategies do not benefit from such activities. He adds that learners find the use of listening strategies non-beneficial in real life. Instead, he proposed the teaching of listening sub-skills including prediction, identifying key words, and recognising new information. Field (2000) discusses the fact that L2 teaching focuses “too much on the product of listening and too little on the process” (p. 117). Later Field (2003) suggests that in L2 listening learners need to be taught auditory phonetics in order to help them overcome listening problems, and this will help in their comprehension of the language. He suggest a “signal-based approach” (2003, p. 332) using bottom-up processing in listening activities. He comments on the lack of pronunciation in teaching in the early stages of L2 listening and believes that teaching through pronunciation can reduce the type of miscommunication that L2 listeners usually encounter.

White (1995, 1997, 1999a, 1999b) discusses the use of learner strategies by distance learners studying foreign language. Similar to studies conducted in conventional classroom environments, her studies aim to find the factors that influence the strategy choice of learners. Distance learners, being self-instructors, showed more awareness of metacognitive strategies such as self-management and advance organisation (White,

1997), and knowledge of self and knowledge of strategy (White, 1999a). Another study by White (1995) compared the use of learning strategies by classroom learners and distance learners of foreign language. Her study revealed that distance learners used more monitoring and evaluation dimensions of metacognitive strategies than their classroom counterparts.

### *Good vs. less successful learners*

One of the early criticisms of LLS studies was on the concentration on good learners. It is true that most studies conducted in this field have discussed good learners. However, some studies have examined the strategies used by less successful learners. One such researcher, who over the years has conducted studies in the field of listening strategies especially in the field of metacognitive strategies used by learners, is Vandergrift. In his studies, Vandergrift (1997a, 1997b) found that ineffective learners also use learning strategies, sometimes even as frequently as effective learners, though they use strategies differently. Later, in another study, Vandergrift (2003) compared the listening comprehension strategies used by more or less successful learners of French in Canada. The seventh-grade learners were prompted to use ‘think aloud’ during the process. Vandergrift found that successful learners use more metacognitive strategies than less successful learners do and less successful learners use more translation. His other studies have also focussed on raising the metacognitive knowledge of learners and helping them achieve greater success in L2 listening (Vandergrift, 2002, 2004, 2006; Vandergrift et al., 2006).

Other scholars such as Mendelsohn (1994), Chamot (1995), Rubin (1995) and Oxford (1990) have argued that good listeners use a variety of cognitive and metacognitive strategies and that they can be helped further by teaching them these strategies. These scholars' studies have also shown that learners use strategies since the nature of listening comprehension is such that the listeners will use hypothesis, predict and infer from what they hear. Thus, learners already use strategies for their first language, or when comprehending information, so what they need is help in using these strategies for their second language.

#### *Discrepancies in research*

A study conducted at USP (Chand, 2007) found differences between the researchers, teachers' and learners' perception of listening skills. There is indeed a need for further exploration of the various mismatches that have been indicated in the literature and are discussed below.

First, there exists discrepancy between L2 listening research, pedagogy theory and practice. Berne (1998) and Mendelsohn (2001, 2006) discuss the importance of listening strategies, and how they can be taught to learners. However, teachers are rarely seen discussing or referring to studies conducted on listening. Additionally, teachers rarely initiate research or researchers rarely teach in ESL classrooms. Nevertheless, studies such as those by Pica (1994) discuss how research conducted in classrooms can work in collaboration with the teachers. According to Pica (ibid.), most of the questions that teachers have regarding L2 teaching remain unanswered by the researchers. Thus, finding

answers to their questions, and working with teachers while researching L2 learners in the classroom can be beneficial for the researchers as well as the teachers.

Secondly, there is a mismatch between teachers' and learners' perceptions of learning strategies, as discussed in the studies by Griffiths (2007), Griffiths and Parr (2001), Hawkey (2006) and Nunan (1989). Ferris and Tagg (1996a, 1996b) and Ferris (1998) discuss surveys conducted in EAP, especially in listening and speaking skills. Their 1996a study obtained subject-matter on teachers' perception of their learners' communication needs and the implication of this need for EAP teaching. Ferris and Tagg (1996b) conducted a survey of ESL learners' difficulties with listening and speaking tasks based on the perception of their content-area instructors. Both surveys (1996a and 1996b) revealed a mismatch existing between what EAP teachers and what the subject-matter teachers (or content-area teachers) perceive as ESL learners' need. Ferris (1998) later surveyed ESL learners on their listening and speaking skills. The findings when compared with Ferris and Tagg (1996a, 1996b) studies showed mismatches in students' and teachers' views of the listening and speaking needs of learners.

Thirdly, the mismatch in NA has also been discussed. Masuhara (1998) discusses the manner in which teachers, administrators and researchers usually ignore when NA is conducted or when curriculum development is carried out. Lee (2002) gives suggestions on how needs analysis can be carried out to match the needs of learners with those of the curriculum, material and teacher training.

Studies have been conducted on listening strategies and on listening skills in EAP yet, findings from different stakeholders involved in education have not been compared. The present study seeks to investigate this area further. Since the study is seeking views from a group of ESL learners studying by distance and their teachers, there is a need for a brief discussion of the definitions, methods of teaching and theories used for distance education. The section that follows discusses studies conducted in the field of distance education, especially those involved in ESL.

### **2.3. Distance Education**

Distance education is not a new phenomenon. Institutes such as the International Correspondence School at the University of Wisconsin in the US have provided distance education since the 1890s (Gooch, 1998) and distance education has been offered in the form of correspondence courses in European countries from as early as the 1840s (FAQ, n.d.). It needs to be noted that the terms “distance education” and “distance learning” have been given to a variety of programmes, providers, audiences and media with the commonality of teacher and learner separation in space and/or time (Sherry, 1996, p. 338). This section begins with a rationale for distance education and then provides an explanation of the different levels of distance learning found around the world at present. This is followed by a discussion of the various theories and barriers that exist in distance education. The last section looks at studies that have been conducted in the field of distance learning and language learning.



### **2.3.1. Rationale for Distance Education**

Why is distance education being provided? Providers of distance education are in distance learning for various reasons. These types of programs can be for the purpose of providing particular opportunities, for example professional training, and a wider choice of learning opportunities for learners or, even aim to reduce education and training costs. In many developed and developing countries distance education is seen as the method to provide low-cost instruction for basic literacy and job training (McIssac and Gunawardena, 1996).

Distance education providers have also been divided into two different models.

Richardson, Morgan and Woodley (1999) describe distance education as either external study or open learning. According to Richardson et al. (1999), external studies are those courses that are offered to both on-campus and distance-learning students by the same department in an institution. Thus, the aim in this study is to replicate the on-campus experience as closely as possible. Both courses have similar assessments and academic schedules although there are differences in the course delivery. The distance courses are provided with course notes and teleconferencing opportunities instead of lectures and tutorials. On the other hand, distance education as open learning offers courses as entirely separate courses from the campus-based courses. The courses are offered by separate institutions or by a separate faculty of the institution.

Learners in distance education have particular reasons for choosing distance education.

Distance learning serves those who cannot or do not want to make use of classroom

teaching. Many adults face professional and family commitments making it difficult for them to attend conventional, full-time, face-to-face courses with fixed timetables. Thus, reasons for distance education are primarily “the convenience, flexibility and adaptability of this mode of education to suit individual students’ needs” (Holmberg, 1988, p. 24).

Learners who have left secondary education and cannot afford full-time on-campus tertiary education can still study by distance. Hodgson (1993) adds to this view that distance learning is a good way to cope with the increasing demand for secondary and higher education. Further, it helps where there are chronic shortages of trained teachers, for example in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nigeria and, even where the introduction of western management education has been necessary, as is the case in Central and Eastern Europe.

Distance education at USP began for the same reasons as discussed by Hodgson (1993) that is when there was a shortage of trained teachers in the early 1970s. Secondly, the distance, financial status of potential tertiary students, and their professional, social, and family commitments indicates that distance learning is the most convenient option for many. The distance EAP course at USP also falls in the category of external course model as described by Richardson et al. (1999).

### **2.3.2. Levels of Distance Education**

Distance learning covers a wide spectrum of facilities. At one end of the spectrum, distance learning includes course material, study guide, feedback in the form of returned assignments, comments and suggestions. There is very little or no face-to-face contact. At

the other end of the spectrum, distance learning includes access to the Internet, course material and assessments provided on-line. There is opportunity to participate in live discussions. These differences in the levels of facilities and opportunities available in distance learning have been discussed in the literature under different names. White (2003) discusses them as generations and Williams, Paprock and Covington (1999) as levels. These are the two described below and will be discussed frequently in this study.

#### *White's generation model*

White (2003, 2006) further develops Wang and Sun's (2001) four-generation model by including as such:

- Generation 1: print-based courses. These are also known as correspondence courses, which were commonly used until the 1970s. Institutes in low technology areas still use this form for distance courses.
- Generation 2: print-based with the addition of television and in some cases telephones. After the availability of television, distance course began to be supplemented with audio and video cassettes in the 1970s. Radio and television broadcast courses and satellite communication was used.
- Generation 3: use of the World Wide Web and CD-ROM. Distance courses began using multimedia resources. They provided an opportunity for the learners to interact with each other and the teacher in real time. The communication is, however, of the asynchronous type such as emails.
- Generation 4: interactive synchronous learning. Teachers and learners can communicate in real time and have a real classroom type learning environment

with the use of the latest educational technology such as videoconferencing and chat.

White's generation model discusses in detail the advancement that technology has made possible in distance learning and, in particular, in language learning by this mode. She points out, however, that regardless of the advancement, low-technology learning environments still use the 1<sup>st</sup> generation model for distance learning. Additionally, institutions, teachers and learners all face constraints and challenges where the use of technology in distance learning is concerned (White, 2006).

#### *Williams, Paprock and Covington's 3 levels*

Williams, Paprock and Covington (1999) discuss the development of distance education from 1880s level 1 to the present time's level 3:

- Level 1, which has been in existence since the 1880s, consists of printed material, and audio, video and radio transmission of information. This is considered a passive form of distance learning since the learner has no opportunity to interact with the instructor. This type of learning is *asynchronous* because the learner and the instructor transmit messages one-way and receive responses after much delay (such as by mail) but can be accessed any time, anywhere.
- Level 2, in existence since the 1960s allows a passive to moderately active type of learning and is *synchronous*. This level has two-way audio interaction, video broadcast combined with two-way audio interaction, use of computers for all forms of message delivery and reception, CD-ROMs, discs, audio graphics etc.

This method of delivery allows transmission of messages simultaneously between the learner and the teacher.

- Level 3 has been in existence since the 1990s and is highly interactive with virtual classrooms and hybrid networks. Providers of distance education can be using any number of technologies to enable interaction.

Williams, Paprock and Covington's (1999) description of facilities and opportunities provided in distance learning is very similar to White's (2006) description of the four generations model of distance learning. Both descriptions show the advancement that has occurred in terms of communication, facilities and opportunities. It also provides us with an expectation of what distance learning may be like in the future. "The future of distance learning may see combining new technologies like animation and streaming video with older (relatively speaking) on-line media like e-mail, listservs, and chat rooms" (FAQ, n.p.).

Distance education has seen many changes in the last 150 years; however, the use of all forms of information delivery is dependent upon the learner characteristics and needs, learner equity of access to interactive delivery systems and cost/benefit tradeoffs (Sherry, 1996). With an overview of the varying facilities available for distance learning, there is a need to understand the constitution of distance education, which is closely related to the various theories on distance learning. The next section briefly discusses some of the most widely used theories on distance learning found in the literature, followed by a discussion of the barriers that teachers, learners and institutions face in distance education.

### **2.3.3. Theories of Distance Education**

According to Keegan (1990) there are four groups into which theories of distance education can be classified: theory of learner autonomy (Moore, 1972), theory of independence (Wedemeyer, 1981), theory of interaction and communication (Holmberg, 1988), and the theory of industrialisation of teaching (Peters, 1988).

In the early 1970s, Moore (1972) analysed descriptions of two thousand instructional programmes. This led to the development of his theory on dialogue, structure and learner autonomy. Although he later called it the theory of transactional distance (Moore, 1997) his theory examines two variables: the amount of learner autonomy and the distance between teacher and learner. Distance, according to Moore, is made up of two elements, both measurable: the provision of two-way communication (dialogue); and, the extent to which a programme is in response to the needs of the learner (structure). Moore (1997) also argues that distance education providers should give learners maximum independence in choosing the aims, objectives, study methods and learning activities; study pace and progression and evaluation (Moore, 1983). In a later discussion, Moore (1991) mentions computer conferencing, its effects on dialogue, structure and autonomy as well as the need for it to be analysed.

Wedemeyer's (1981) theory of distance education emphasises the importance of learner independence. He believes that institutes involved in teaching and learning are not utilising the modern technologies enough. He set up a system emphasising learner

independence and the use of technology as a way to implement independence.

Wedemeyer suggested four important elements of any teaching and learning situation: a teacher, learner(s), communication systems, and something to be taught. In order to provide learner independence, independent study systems need to display six characteristics:

- teacher and learner separation;
- mediation of the teaching and learning processes through writing/print or other media;
- individualised teaching;
- use of the student's own environment as the locus in which learning occurs;
- individual learner responsibility for the pace of his or her progress; and
- the learner's freedom to start and stop at any time.

Holmberg (1988) defines distance education as a study course with its non-contact communication system as a “conversation-like interaction between the student on the one hand, and the tutor counsellor of the supporting organisation administering the study on the other” (p. 115). Holmberg assumed that teaching is an interaction between the teaching and learning parties, and student motivation is supported by learning pleasure. Holmberg believes that distance education means providing the learners the opportunity to choose their own place of study, study terms and breaks, timetables and entry requirements. It thus promotes students' freedom and independence.

Peters (1988) develops a view of distance education as an industrialised form of teaching and learning. After an extensive analysis of distance education organisations of the 1960s, he proposed that distance education could be analysed by comparing it with the industrial production of goods, in particular with its principles of rationalisation, division of labour, and mass production. In distance education, teaching is usually reconstructed through increasing mechanisation and mass production. These changes, according to Peters, give way to the development of distance study courses.

This overview of these four theories on distance learning demonstrates that three of them emphasise learner autonomy, the separation between the teacher and learner, and learning occurring in the learner's own environment. Unlike these three theories, Peters' (1988) discusses distance learning as a business, with emphasis on a concentration of resources and centralised administration. The case of distance learning at USP shows the presence of all four theories of distance learning. Learners at USP face teacher and learner separation due to the geographical distances. Students study in their own environment and on their own. Conversely, learners studying the same courses have different resources. Urban students have greater access to resources and choices, a situation indicating a concentration of resources as mentioned by Peters (1988). However, there are also barriers that learners, teachers, and the institution face that can prevent successful distance learning from occurring. The next section examines these barriers as discussed in the literature.



#### **2.3.4. Barriers in Distance Education**

As discussed above, distance education provides opportunities to learners who do not have access to or cannot access education directly due to a number of reasons such as their work, family and financial constraints. Distance education, however, also contains barriers that are beyond learner control. According to Galusha (1997), distance learning is not without problems. The learners, teachers and institutions all face a number of barriers. These are discussed briefly below.

Learners who study by distance are usually of two specific groups. The first, group is comprised of adult learners, those who may have been trained for traditional face-to-face learning. Many have been out of the school system for a long time; have low confidence, are sceptical about a new style of learning and learning to use new technology. Yet, they are highly motivated and are willing to learn in order to improve their profession and social status. The second group of learners are younger and learners who have just moved out of school based learning. They are not the independent and motivated learners their older counterparts are and they are used to supervision and guidance. They are more able to adapt to new learning styles and technology. Both groups of learners thus face barriers of distance learning in various forms due to their personal backgrounds as well as barriers of isolation, alienation and limitation of resources and resource accessibility depending on their place of residence.

As do the learners in distance learning, teachers also face obstacles. According to Sherry (1996), traditional teacher-led presentation style teaching is impossible for distance

teaching. Teachers trained in this manner may find it very difficult to present information in a lecture-free style. The teachers' technological limitations puts pressure on them to focus on the technology of delivery rather than on the needs of the learners and this prevents them from permitting extra participation from students in an on-line environment. Teachers are unable to appropriately pace and respond to students' queries in a non-continuous communication environment (Wagner, 1993). Sherry (ibid) found that teachers might not always provide feedback to students' work in a timely fashion, even further reducing the opportunity for the two-way communication between teachers and students that is required for the educational process.

Universities or other the institutions offering distance courses also face problems. These can include lack of equipment and support, scheduling, resource availability, costs involved in distance education, technical and instructional concerns (Zirkle, 2002). Providing distance education is a cost-intensive business for institutions since there is usually the need to invest in computers, servers, networks, software, and technical staff. These can become costly which is a barrier for institutions engaged in distance education. Scheduling satellite time for the convenience of learners can also become another barrier. USP covers five time zones; as a result, teachers at the Suva campus (which falls on 180 deg longitude) provide satellite tutorials late in the evenings and on Saturdays to suit the times of other USP countries. Other aspects of distance education that are costly for education providers include purchasing and supplying textbooks, course materials, and library and reference materials.

Even though distance learning has developed through three levels, or four generations, providers everywhere do not have the most advanced forms of delivery system. Most of the providers in developing countries still have a limited capacity to use anything other than level 1 methods for their distance education programmes. Even those with the most advanced technology cannot deny the fact that they still use print based materials, indeed that they are still essential for some programmes in universities such as USP.

As we have seen in the discussion above the theories of distance learning have given much emphasis to learner autonomy in distance learning. Motivation, self-discipline and independence have been said to be reasons for success in learning. However, in distance learning these issues become even more important since the learner is mostly self-directed and unsupervised. According to Threlkeld and Brzoska, maturity, high motivation levels, and self-discipline are the characteristics for success and satisfaction amongst distance learners (1994, p. 53). For the providers, the responsibility task is even greater since there are many issues to consider. Apart from providing well-designed, learner-centred and clear self-instructional materials, appropriate media have to be chosen. An efficient administrative system for distribution and production of materials is needed. A support system for learners and a system to keep track of the learners is equally necessary. Most of the time distance education providers have to consider issues such as who their learners are, the characteristics of learners, what form of support system the learners might need and what additional assistance they will require.

This section has discussed the barriers faced in distance education that can hinder learning. It now is necessary to investigate barriers that learners from different contexts face for learning. In this study, an investigation of the barriers the distance learners at USP face will also be carried out. Studies have been conducted in the field of distance education looking at it from different perspectives. The following section discusses some of the studies that have been conducted.

### **2.3.5. Research in Distance Learning**

Studies in the field of distance learning have included investigating the use of various technologies used for teaching by distance (Burge and Howard, 1990; Clark, 1983; Wills, 1998). Comparative studies between distance and face-to-face teaching (Cheng, Lehman and Armstrong, 1991), feedback on learners' assignments (Egan, Sebastian and Welch, 1991) and learners' contact with teachers and others in learning groups (Coldway, MacRuly and Spencer, 1980) have also been studied. This list is just a sample of the studies conducted in this field. Since the study is directed to a particular field of distance learning, that of language skills taught by distance, literature in this field will be discussed briefly here.

Language teaching by distance, as with other subject areas using distance education, is offered using all the levels of distance education in most parts of the world. Thus, studies discuss development from level 1 to level 3 in their observations and cover language courses offered as print-based courses as well as on-line courses with differences in interaction, support and feedback.

Hampel and Hauck (2004) studied the Open University's on-line tutorials offered for a level 2 German course. The students' need for more flexible speaking practice prompted the Department of Languages of the Faculty of Education and Language Studies at the Open University, UK to investigate the benefits of using an Internet-based, real-time audio conferencing application. In 2002, audio-graphic conferencing was introduced as a tuition tool for German courses at the Open University. Fifteen students gave feedback through questionnaires, and other methods of multiple data collection were also used to find out the effectiveness of audio-graphic conferencing as a language learning and teaching instrument for distance learning. The results indicated an interest among learners to use the technology to help in their language learning. However, the training of teachers and other staff was also seen as crucial.

Flexibility and interaction for language learning at a distance were key for courses offered to learners at beginning levels of competence, as found by Strambi and Bouvet (2003). Learning materials and tasks were designed, developed, and distributed on CD-ROM and Web-CT for courses in Italian and French. The use of new technologies in language teaching made these researchers aware of the fact that there are many issues to be considered when designing courses. Apart from designing the course, a reliance on ICT and the reduction in direct contact with learners were evident. While technology does play an important role in distance learning nowadays, the attitude of learners and the teachers' and learners' competence in using such tools is equally important. Other studies, according to Strambi and Bouvert (2003), should focus on the students' learning processes and outcomes and on the effectiveness of technologically enhanced material.

Much of the recent study conducted in the field of distance learning focuses on the use of technology. In her review of foreign language learning offered by distance, White (2006) discusses aspects of foreign language teaching around the world using different technologies. These include studies conducted on peer learning amongst on-line learners of French (Lamy and Hassan, 2003). In another study, Lamy (2004) explores the use of synchronous voice tools by distance learners of French. Tudini (2003) discusses the use of authentic material in the form of native speaker chat rooms used for the teaching of Italian by distance. The list goes on, showing the range of technology used for teaching foreign languages in both asynchronous and synchronous environments. There exists much literature on the present use of computer-mediated communication (CMC) tools for teaching by the distance (see White 2006).

Investigations of study skills taught by distance also cover similar areas, although fewer studies are found discussing level 1 and more discuss level 2 and level 3 in regard to distance learning. A critical survey of literature on distance EAP studies revealed the following areas covered in the studies: asynchronous voice conferencing used for teaching EAP (McIntosh, Brault and Chaou, 2003), use of CMC for EAP (Xiao and Ruhua, 2006), blended versus distance teaching of a web-based EAP course (Harker and Koutsantoni, 2005) and computer-conferencing used for teaching (Giourolou and Economides, 2001).

Other areas covered under the umbrella of EAP by distance look at such issues as contextual factors, for instance identity (Demirkan-Jones, 2006). To find studies specifically investigating the teaching of language skills by distance EAP courses in level 1 seemed impossible. This fact provides the rationale for this study. Regardless of this fact, a brief review of studies on EAP by distance is carried out below. The aim of this review is to find the recommendations and suggestions provided for teaching EAP by distance.

In their discussion relating to a pilot project of an EAP course at the University of Alberta, McIntosh, Braul and Chao (2003) discuss the inclusion of Wimba (a web based software product) to provide the on-line speaking and listening exercises. Initially, the institute had difficulty in finding an easy-to-use conferencing tool for this purpose. However, surveys of students' attitudes towards the activities and interactions provided by the technology indicate that they can be useful in resolving student access and limitations to classroom facilities used for large university based courses.

Harker and Koutsantoni (2005) discuss results from a comparative study conducted on the effectiveness of blended learning and a web-based EAP course at the University of Luton. Results on student retention, achievement levels and satisfaction between the two forms of the course show that learners prefer the addition of a blended learning environment on top of the web based course. They found that, on their own, web based courses did not provide enough incentive for learner retention; additional support in the form of classroom support was desired.

Giouroglou and Economides (2001) argue for the inclusion of asynchronous over synchronous computer conferencing for EAP courses. In their view, the time delay of asynchronous communication provides time for reflection and interaction in language learning. It also provides flexibility and autonomous learning, and enhances the aptitude and motivation of EAP learners. Chen, Belkada and Okamoto (2004) in their study describe the investigation of the effectiveness of learning EAP using “a web-based course called Academic English” (ibid. p. 34). The course was designed to support distance learning as well as provide a supplement to classroom-based activities. Twenty Chinese EFL learners from Southwest Normal University in China enrolled in the course participated in the study via the Internet. The results showed that computer-based language learning activities could be used successfully if they are used creatively to maximise students’ language learning experience.

The studies discussed above provide some key suggestions for the teaching of EAP by distance. These include the fact that high technology use may not always be the solution to cope with the needs of distance learners. Access to the Internet, on-line chat rooms and web based resources are not enough to guarantee learner retention and providing these may not meet their needs. The institution’s ability to offer the facilities for learning, the learners’ ability to access the necessary technology and the learners’ technical literacy are important as well. Also important are the teachers’ attitudes toward the innovations entering the classrooms. The fact that asynchronous communication was supported for



EAP over synchronous shows the understanding required when teaching L2 learners courses.

#### **2.4. Conclusion**

The review of the literature on needs analysis and EAP (Section 2.1), listening skills and language learning strategies (Section 2.2), and distance learning (Section 2.3) has shown the following limitations:

- There appears to be a mismatch in the needs indicated by learners and the perceptions of the learners' needs as discussed by their teachers. There is need for further studies to support this view.
- There are limited studies conducted in NNS countries where L1 is still used.
- There are limited studies conducted on listening as an area of research in the field of L2 language skills.
- Language learning strategies studies have shown mismatches between researchers', teachers and learners' views on learners' listening strategies. There is need for further studies to support this view.
- There is need for more studies to be conducted on listening skills in EAP from different perspectives such as from small island universities and in self-instruction contexts.
- There is a need to further explore the barriers faced by learners using different levels of distance education.

- CMC, ICT, and other forms of level three type distance courses may not solve the problems faced in distance learning.

These issues support the research focus for this study. The framework derived from the studies on needs analysis and learning strategies will be applied to interpret and analyse the data collected for this study. The study is double faceted: needs analysis (Section 2.1) and learning strategy use for listening skills (Section 2.2). The investigation is carried out in the distance-learning context (Section 2.3).

Needs analysis is carried out in courses to find the subjective and objective needs of learners (Brindley, 1989). It is also intended to find the present and future needs of language skills such as listening skills of learners (Richards, 1983; Wong, 1996). The section on learning strategy contains three categories: metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies and social/affective strategies. These strategies include a number of specific strategies divided into subcategories. Use of learning strategies allows learners to become more autonomous. Learner autonomy is also one of the aims of distance learning. Given the fact that previous studies on learning strategies have been conducted on language skills taught in face-to-face teaching, this study aims to cover an area of research not carried out before, namely, that conducted in the distance-learning context of a university owned by small island countries.

The next chapter discusses the methods and procedures used for conducting the present study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Methods**

#### **3. Introduction**

This chapter begins by providing the theoretical framework used for this study. The reasons for using an ethnographic research method for this study are discussed in Section 3.1 and this is followed by descriptions of the methodology used in the study. Details of the selection of participants are provided, the research design, the instruments used for the study, the data sampling and collection procedures, and also data management, data analysis and interpretation procedures are then detailed. The chapter is then concluded in Section 3.8.

#### **3.1. Ethnographic Research**

Ethnographic research is scientific study that is both qualitative and quantitative by nature. It is theoretical since meaning and contextual experiences are retrieved in order to explain and understand particular social behaviours (Pole and Morrison, 2003).

According to LeCompte and Preissle (1993) when ethnographic research is used in an educational setting, it provides a description of the context in which learning is occurring, and generates theory. Ethnographic research is also holistic since it is not possible to record every detail of interactions, behaviour of participants and events. For this reason,

interviews are recorded in order to verify the details obtained as well as to compare the results with data obtained from other sources such as questionnaires. Another function of ethnographic study in an educational context is that it provides opportunity for evaluation of the existing programmes. Three kinds of data provided by ethnographic research are useful when assessing existing programmes. These are baseline data (information about the human and technological context of the research setting), process data (information on the innovation or intervention in the programme and the impact and success of that intervention), and values data (information about whose values or opinions did the intervention support: participants, administrators, policymakers) (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982).

In the present study at USP, ethnographic research is used to find information from the research population and the programme setting that is, information on the context. This is followed by an evaluation of the existing EAP course through interviews, questionnaires and analysis of course material. Studies in the field of education have used ethnographic research methods in varying ways. Goetz and Hansen (1974) used the term ethnoscience to describe studies conducted in schools. The researcher, known as an ethnoscientist (ibid., p. 3) studies the individuals who are connected with the school, such as teachers, students, administrators, parents. As Goetz and Hansen explain, “a teacher categorises his students, how he defines his tasks with respect to them, what he perceives as appropriate behaviours on their part. These might be contrasted with the way other teachers, or administrators, or students view these same topics ...” (1974, p. 6). In ethnographic studies where the ethnoscientist’s linguistic approach is used, the research may

investigate aspects of the study such as the interaction, perception and expectation of certain communication patterns in the classroom (ibid., p. 7). Goetz and Hansen (ibid.) have defined a linguistic approach in ethnoscience as analysing the process of interaction. The ethnoscienceist investigates how a participant communicates his/her perspective to those he/she is interacting with, and how they perceive this interaction. It examines the teacher's verbal and nonverbal signals, as well as how the students understand and interact due to these signals. In addition, the mutual adjustments made by the students, their reaction and resolving of conflict related to the interactions are also examined (ibid., p. 7).

The present study investigates the perception and expectation of learners of listening skills in the EAP classroom. The study is based on the theoretical models widely used for needs analysis and the taxonomy used for identifying the language needs (Richards, 1983, 1990; Mendelsohn, 1994; and Wong, 1996). To identify language needs, information is sought from a number of sources such as the setting, teachers, learners, the institution and the target use of the language under study. Ethnographic research method makes it possible to collect the relevant information on these. Additionally, research using ethnographic method for data collection expects the study to be applied, in a local setting, for the researcher to discover what and why people do certain things, and assign meaning and beliefs to such behaviours. The researcher's views on these behaviours then form the foundation for building local theories that can be tested later, linked to literature and adapted for use elsewhere (Schensul et. al., 1999).

Ethnographic research can be used together with other methods for finding information. For this reason the case study approach, discussed briefly in the next section, seems to be a natural choice for this study.

### **3.1.1. Case Study**

A case study becomes ethnographic in nature when the observation of the unit under study (in this case the listening skills taught by a distance study skills course at USP) is used to find the shared beliefs of the members of the unit by directing specific how and why type of questions to them. According to Stake (2003), the case study is not a choice of methodology but a choice of what is to be studied. Any method or approach can be used to study the case: triangulation, analytical, holistic, or cultural. Whatever the method, the focus is always on the case. A case study is specific, and has a bounded system (ibid.), which means that in any study, there are certain features that are found within a system, within the boundaries of the case, and there are features outside these boundaries. In this study, the boundary that defines this case is the EAP course offered by distance at USP.

Yin defines the case study as:

an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. (1984, p. 23)

The case study has also been used in situations where there is a need to test existing theories or when a theory is being sought (Basse, 1999). In this study, the learners and the teachers were surveyed for their views on the listening needs of the users by questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, and their shared beliefs were used to find the listening needs of distance learners and how these needs can best be met by the study skills course taught in the particular context. As Yin (1984) discusses, investigations in case studies can use multiple sources of evidence. For this reason, a selection of data and research methods were used in this study. The next section begins with the details of procedures taken for reliability and validity of the study. It also introduces the role of the researcher in this study. This is followed by the discussion of method of research used for this study, which in this case was data and methods triangulation.

### **3.1.2. Reliability and Validity of the Study**

#### *Reliability*

Although the term ‘reliability’ is a concept mainly used for evaluating quantitative research, it is also applicable to qualitative research when the quality of the study is related to its reliability. According to Stenbacka (2001), the quality concept in qualitative research has the purpose of “generating understanding” (p. 551). Lincoln and Guba (1985) then state that in qualitative research reliability and validity are essential criteria for a study’s quality. In order to achieve these, the qualitative study should be credible, confirmable, dependable and applicable.

### *Credibility*

According to Patton (1990), credibility in qualitative research does not depend on the sample size, but rather on the richness of the information gathered. This can be enhanced through triangulation of data. In order to increase that credibility of the study, triangulation of data and method has been selected, details of which will be discussed in section 3.2.

### *Confirmability*

Confirmability in research refers to the susceptibility of its results to confirmation. For this, an audit trail, which includes descriptive details of data collection, categorisation of ideas and methods employed to reach conclusions, has to be present in the text. An audit trail involves selecting some raw data and finding what has been done with them. The data will be transformed, summarised and combined with other information to contribute to a substantive conclusion. In this study, methods of data analysis, data coding procedures and their interpretations are present together with copies of interview transcripts. These form part of the audit trail (see Appendix 22 for copies of excerpts from the interview and Appendix 23 for interview transcripts).

### *Validity*

In order to have correct operational measures for the concepts being studied (construct validity), one needs to ask the question: “Are you measuring what you think you are measuring?” (Kerlinger, 1979, p. 138). The first stage of validity is dependent on the use of appropriate theoretical presuppositions for a study (Kvale, 1996). Other ways to



construct validity in a study require the ability to produce good, trustworthy and accurate data. This is followed by an analysis and reporting of the main findings of the study. In this study, all attempts have been made to use the appropriate procedures, and to produce good, trustworthy and accurate data. Samples of the transcripts and recordings of the interviews are provided along with the analysis, interpretation and findings of the study in the following chapter.

### *Dependability*

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), in qualitative research dependability can be achieved by inquiry audit where the process and product, of the research is examined for its consistency. This involves using the same data analysis method that was used for the analysis to another set of data at a different time to check if the results are similar. In this study, the interview transcripts were recoded after a few weeks, to see if the coding patterns were similar.

### *Peer Debriefing*

Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend a variety of strategies for improving the likelihood that findings and interpretations produced through qualitative inquiry methods will be credible. Peer debriefing is one such strategy. According to Lincoln and Guba, peer debriefing is “a process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytic session and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer’s mind” (ibid., p.308). The peer debriefing for this study was conducted with the members of the Post Graduate Applied

Linguistics Club (PALC) at the University of Otago in 2004–2005. PALC met on a regular basis to discuss the work of PhD students enrolled for Applied Linguistics studies, who shared a common supervisor. This study's methodology, the data, and the framework of the study were also frequently discussed in this group.

#### *Internal and external validity*

For internal validity, in order to reduce any confusion among participants from concepts in the questionnaires, a pilot study was carried out prior to the distribution of the questionnaires. The aim of a pilot study is to try out the procedure to be used in the study. A group of five past learners and a group of five present learners at the Suva centre were requested to participate in the pilot study of the questionnaires. Revisions were made to the questionnaires based on the suggestions provided by these groups. Some of the suggestions included changing the verb form of the statements. This involved, for example, including past tenses for the past learners' questionnaire, and present and future tenses for the present learners' questionnaire. All interview guides and both sets of questionnaires were also sent to the study skills course coordinator at USP for content validity. The suggestions provided by him on the questions in the interview guides and organisations of questionnaires were taken into consideration.

External validity relates to the ability of the findings of a study to be applicable to a larger group of the population. In order to make the results as externally valid as possible, a selection of the study population from different regional countries, different locations, different programmes and different language backgrounds was randomised. Thus, the

study's result is likely to be applicable to all the regional countries of USP, as well as to other similar contexts that use similar print-based course material for distance teaching of EAP courses. Additionally, to make the study as applicable as possible to other settings and contexts, it has to provide detailed descriptions so that readers can relate it to their own situations as well as decide if the findings can be transferred to their context. Details of those who participated in the interviews can be found in Tables 1-4 on pages 128-130 in this chapter. Other details of the study have been included in Sections 3.3 and Section 3.5. (Details of the participants for the questionnaire survey can be found in Tables 1-4 in Appendix 21.)

### **3.1.3. Role of the Researcher**

Since qualitative research involves a process of interpretation by the researcher, the researcher must make explicit the reasons for the choice of research focus, what the researcher's views are regarding that study and what relationships exist between the researcher and the participants in the study (Schram, 2003). The researcher in the present case was both an insider and an outsider in this study. On the one hand, she is a teacher of the study skills course at USP. She coordinated the distance mode of the course from 1999 to 2003. She also travelled to the regional centres for summer schools and tutorials during the same period, and is familiar with the technological facilities and learning opportunities of the learners. This gives the researcher an insider's knowledge about what happens in the classrooms at USP. In spite of the researcher's inside knowledge of the context, all attempts have been made to make the results and interpretations as

trustworthy as possible. On the other hand, the following factors made her role in the study that of an outsider:

1. The participants did not know the researcher since she had been away from USP for the previous 2 years. Also, the researcher had not taught any of the past learners who participated in the study in the past.
2. The researcher knew that there were study skills teachers based at the centres but had not met them prior to this study. None of these teachers knew the researcher personally.
3. The coordinator of the study skills course was a new person and the researcher did not know him either.
4. The researcher did not know the course teachers personally.

### **3.2. Selection of Research Methods**

Since this study is focussed on language learning strategies, a review of research methods used for LLS research will be put forward first, and then followed by a discussion on the most suitable method for this study.

According to Chamot (2005, p. 113) even though self-report has been criticised for not being error-free, no other methods have been devised that can provide a better picture of the mental processes and techniques used by learners for completing a learning task.

Since learning strategies are, in most cases, unobservable, the only way to find the learners' strategy use for a listening comprehension task, for example, is by asking them for a response to the task. Thus, self-reports such as interviews, questionnaires, written

diaries and think-aloud protocols have been the usual methods to find the unobservable learning strategies used by learners. One of the few observable learning strategies is note taking (Chamot, 2005).

Self-reports on learning strategies have also been of two types. One is where self-reporting has been requested after language learning strategies have been instructed to learners. Thus learners recall their use of strategies for learning. The second type of study has been where the learners have not been instructed on learning strategies but have been requested to recall their perception and use of learning strategies. In such cases, the learners have mostly been autonomous.

Instructed language learning strategies have been studied by Chamot and El-Dinary (1999), Goh (2002), and Rubin and Thompson (1994). After learners were instructed on learning strategies, they were requested to record their views on these strategies in questionnaires. Most of these studies were descriptive in nature and had developed the questionnaires based on Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL).

Other methods of data collection used after strategy instruction were written diaries, journals (Rubin, 2003; Takeuchi, 2003); and think-aloud protocols (Chamot and Keatley, 2003; Cohen et al. 1998; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Vandergrift, 2003).

In cases where learners have been requested to indicate their perception and experience of strategy use, studies have been conducted by Hurd et al. (2001) and White (1995,

1999a). Learner autonomy in these cases was because the learners reported in these studies were all self-instructed distance learners. In the studies, learners of foreign languages, for example Spanish and Japanese, were the subject for the study, strategy instructions were implicit, embedded and contextualised in the courses. Hurd et al. (2001) used learner dairies as a method of self-reporting by learners on their strategy use. White (1995) distributed questionnaires designed along O'Malley and Chamot (1990, pp. 137-139) classification and a form of self-report; that is, a yoked-subject technique where learners provided verbal reports that included instances of strategy use. The participants in her study were classroom and distance learners. The fact that emerges from all these studies, whether from a controlled teaching environment (such as classrooms or where learners are autonomous that is. distance learners), instructed strategy teaching or implicit strategy teaching, accessibility to the learners is important for research purposes.

In the case of distance learners at USP, locating the distance learners was not easy. As discussed in Chapter 1, the learners who did the EAP course either at USP or by distance, were spread all over the South Pacific region. Additionally, those learners who did the course without any face-to-face support did not come to the regional centres, thus making it even more difficult to contact them. In order to make the study as viable as possible, decisions were made to collect data from as many sources as possible.

Since the learners of the EAP course were, self-instructed learners and without any contact with the teachers it would be very difficult to give them instructions on learning strategies and expect them to recall their use of strategies. Thus, it was decided to collect

learners' perceptions and experiences of strategy use. Questionnaires were designed in order to collect information from those learners who did not attend centre-based tutorials. Interviews were to be conducted with those who could be contacted. The next section provides details of the participants selected for the study.

### **3.3. Selection of Participants**

After deciding on the research methods, the next step in this study was the selection of participants from registered students of USP. (See Tables 1, 2, 3 and 4 for details of all participants interviewed.) The boundaries for the case study had been decided earlier; since the overall study was focussed on a particular course and on a particular mode of delivery, the selection of participants had already been narrowed and it was easier to implement.

#### *Teachers*

The choice of the teachers (SSTs and CTs) was made in terms of their experience of teaching the learners. At this point, it is worthwhile to distinguish between them. Those teachers classified as SSTs are ESL lecturers/tutors specially trained to teach ESL students at the campuses and centres of USP. They usually teach the EAP course as well as other English, Education and Linguistics courses. The CTs are qualified in their own discipline area; some may have no formal teacher training and/or no specialised knowledge of teaching ESL learners.

- The selection of SSTs was based on the fact that they were teaching the study skills course by distance. They were located at the various centres of USP. The course coordinator was also selected since he conducted satellite audio tutorials for the distance learners and had also visited some centres for tutorials and summer schools.
- CTs' selection was based on the fact that they were teaching other courses by distance. These teachers were located at USP's Laucala Campus in Suva or at the Law School on the Emalus Campus in Vanuatu.

### *Learners*

Two groups of learners were selected for the study. Past learners who had previously completed the study skills course by distance, and present learners who were enrolled for the course at the time of data collection in Semester 2, 2005.

- The past learners had the experience of completing the study skills course by distance. There were no limitations set for the programme and the centre of their enrolment.
- The present learners were selected based on their enrolment for the course in Semester 2 of 2005. This was the phase of data collection for this study. There was no limitation based on the programme or the centre where they were enrolled for the course.

There was no prior decision made on the number of participants to be contacted for the study. The number of participants selected for the interviews depended solely on how



many agreed to participate in the study at the time the researcher was at the different USP centres.

The next section provides details of the data collection method. A discussion on the semi-structured interviews is followed by an analysis of the questionnaires, and lastly there is a course material analysis.

### **3.4. Data Collection Methods**

This section provides the theoretical framework for the different data collection methods used in this study, beginning with the theoretical argument for using semi-structured interviews (Section 3.4.1). This is followed by a discussion of the necessity for using questionnaires (Section 3.4.2) and for a course materials analysis (Section 3.4.3). The actual procedures employed for the data collection will be discussed under Procedures of data collection, which constitutes section 3.5.

#### **3.4.1. Semi-structured Interviews**

Moser and Kalton describe the interview as “a conversation between interviewer and respondent for the purpose of eliciting certain information from the respondent” (1971, p. 271). Kvale describes the purpose of interview as that of “obtaining thoroughly tested knowledge” (1996, p. 6). Additionally, interviews, whether structured or unstructured, have been described by Anderson (1990, p. 220) as probably the most widely used method of data collection in educational research. Interviews provide researchers with an incomparably rich source of data if used with care. The advantages of interviews are that they promote high response rate and allow researchers to respond to questions from the

respondents and probe for adequate answers from the respondents (Savenye and Robinson, 1996; Schensul et. al, 1999). Kvale (ibid.) adds that interviews should be clear, precise, unambiguous and intelligent; and should not be leading or hypothetical.

Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) discuss the principal advantage of interviews for data collection being that it provides information on learners' language learning history and beliefs as well as samples of learner language. The main function of the interview in this research was to obtain the perception and experience of listening needs from SSTs, CTs, past learners and present learners. Therefore, it was necessary to organise a discourse with the interviewees in order to obtain a rich discussion of thoughts and feelings. For the depth of response from the participants, there was no reliance on a standard list of questions. Initial questions were based on guiding questions already noted, and further questions relating to the study were asked as opportunity arose. Four interview guides were prepared, one for each group of participants. The interview guides were prepared in such a way that they would provide learners' own listening skills experience as well as answers to more specific questions related to how the learners listened in a second language. The ideas for the interview guides were adapted from Naiman et al's (1978) study. (See Appendices 10, 11, 12, and 13 for the interview guides prepared for the study.) The interview was mainly informal conversation and included spontaneous unbiased discussion.

Interview sessions need to be planned and designed in order to explore specific topics according to Merriam (1998); Johnson and Christensen (2000). In order to obtain as

much information on individuals' needs and perceptions of needs, the semi-structured interview was the best to employ since it permitted the interviewer to probe as deeply as possible to get an individuals' subjective experiences. The use of interviews also enabled the researcher to obtain information in retrospect on experiences that could not be observed directly. Throughout all interviews, special efforts were made to ensure that the interviewer used the skills necessary to guarantee that the interviews were as productive as possible (Anderson, 1990, p. 228). Johnson and Christensen mention that:

the interview should be friendly. At the same time, the interviewer must be impartial to whatever the interviewee says to the interviewer. If the interviewer reacts positively or negatively to the content of the interviewee's statements, the interviewer may bias the responses. It is important that the interviewee trusts the interviewer because without trust the interviewer is likely to obtain biased research data (2000, p. 280).

Hence, semi-structured interviews were used in this study to obtain in-depth understanding of the listening needs of learners.

### **3.4.2. Survey Questionnaire**

A survey questionnaire is an instrument of self-reported data collection. It is also "concerned with facts, opinions, attitudes, respondents' motivation, and their level of familiarity with a certain subject" (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1981, pp. 209--210). According to Schensul et al. (1999), a survey questionnaire offers a way to measure

relationships among domains and variables qualitatively, and to test their relationships with a representative sample of the population. Data collection by this method helps to avoid bias and can provide a thorough description of participant experiences.

The main aim of the survey questionnaire in this study was to obtain the self-perception and self-evaluation of listening needs from past and present learners of the EAP course. Flowerdew and Miller (2005, p. 70) mention the importance of understanding the listening needs of learners. One method that can help identify these needs is the use of a questionnaire designed to find the learners' listening needs. As discussed in Chapter 2: Richards (1983) designed a listening needs taxonomy to find the listening needs of learners. Wong (1996) prepared a needs analysis worksheet which requested learners to include information on their present and future listening needs. These have been adapted for this study to obtain the learners' self-assessment or self-evaluation of their proficiency in the various tasks involving listening. Adaptations made to Richards (1983) and Wong's (1996) needs analysis framework included adding questions on language use for specific social activities such as for socialisation, listening to radio programmes, watching films and videos. Thus, activities and functions for which Pacific Islanders used English were selected in the questionnaire. Although interviews were useful for this study, there was also a need to obtain more information from other students situated in all the countries of USP. Thus, questionnaires seemed the best method to obtain information from this latter type of learner. Questionnaires need to translate the research objectives into specific questions; so that answers to the questions will provide data for hypothesis testing. Thus, maximum effort was made to obtain as many completed questionnaires as

possible from students from the whole region, and from participants with as many differences in background, programmes, profession, age and language as possible.

The questionnaire included open-ended and closed questions and information was requested on students' academic background, listening experiences, views about the existing listening activities offered by the course, and views on the listening needs for distance learners. (See Appendices 14 and 15 for the questionnaires used for this study.) Initially, decisions had to be made on what type of questions should be included in the questionnaire. After a literature survey and brainstorming, a set of questions were created. These were discussed with peers and supervisors after which the selection of questions from a bank was made. The questionnaires were designed to expand the learners' views on the specific resources and facilities provided by USP. They gave the learners opportunity to reveal the reasoning behind their answers, and thus provide more insight into their views. An important aspect of the use of open-ended questions was their underlying ability to "elicit unanticipated and insightful replies from respondents that enhance (d) the ... understanding of what is going on and why" (Black and Champion, 1976, p. 387). The closed questions were easy to score, code and analyse. They required little writing from the respondents and alternatives were presented to the learners. Thus, the flexibility of open-ended questions gave the learners the opportunity to express their experiences and perception of the listening needs, whereas the closed questions gave them an additional method to complete the questionnaire.

### 3.4.3. Course Material

Course material analysis (or document analysis as it has been described in literature on qualitative research methods) is an unobtrusive method of data collection (Savenye and Robinson, 2004). Artefact interest researchers in the field of ethnography since these artefacts provide details of human behaviour. In educational settings, examples of artefacts that can provide further information include textbooks, media material, memos, letters, and e-mail records (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984). In this study, the artefact for document analysis was the course material that is used for the study skills course. Firstly, these are the audiocassettes supplied with the course material. The sections of the course material that focus on listening skills are analysed in this study. There are no textbooks used for the course. According to Goetz and LeCompte, (ibid.) artefacts are only useful in research when the researcher is well informed about the subjects and the setting. This means the artefacts will be easily identified and the researcher will have easy access to these artefacts. As discussed in Section 3.1.1, the researcher here is very familiar with the subjects and the setting of the study. This assisted in identification and gaining access to the documents for analysis. Goetz and LeCompte (ibid.) provide further guidelines for collection of artefacts: locate the artefacts, identify the material, analyse it and evaluate it (p. 155). As mentioned in Section 2.2.1.1 Mendelsohn (1994) provides a list of criteria for listening material analysis. These criteria are used for the analysis and further evaluation that is carried out later.

This section has looked at the choice of data collection methods for this study. The next section discusses the procedures employed to collect the data using these methods.

### **3.5. Procedures in Data Collection**

The planning and carrying out of research for this study required a very well planned procedure with rigid schedules and limited flexibility. The data collection for the study was carried out between July and August of 2005. The factor governing the selection of timeframe was that the study had to be conducted during the teaching semester in order to collect information from the present learners. Planning for the data collection began from the beginning of the year, work was carried out designing the various tools for data collection, getting ethical approval at the University of Otago (See Appendix 17 for Ethical Approval details and Appendix 18 for the Consent Form for the participants) and contacting the various people necessary for the study. Additionally, staff members in the various sections at USP were contacted for their assistance and the semester was the most suitable time for contacting them. The second semester at USP began on 11 July 2005. It seemed appropriate to collect data in the first eight weeks of the semester, and before the mid-semester break, which was from 29 August to 2 September 2005. After ethical approval was granted, details of the study were sent to the staff and learners at the University of the South Pacific. (See Appendix 19 for two samples of the correspondence made prior to the data collection at USP.)

Thus, the whole data collection had to be done in a limited period and all activities had to be well planned and organised in order to collect as much information as possible. The course material analysis was conducted after the data collection was completed.

As already mentioned in section 1.2.1, USP is a regional university with campuses and centres in 12 countries. Communication within and between these countries is mostly carried out by satellite, Internet, intranet, the mail delivery system, telephones and faxes. These communication systems were used for sending the information and for the delivery of data collection instruments to the different groups for this study. Since the communication systems are accessible to the whole region, learners from the 12 regional countries could be contacted for the survey. Similarly, all the regional staff could be contacted for information on centre-based administration and tutorial details. However, it would have taken a very long time if all the regional centres had had to be visited for the survey; and for that reason only two sub centres in Fiji and the regional centre in Vanuatu were visited for interviewing the staff and learners.

The following timeline provides the chronology for the data collection procedure:

<b>2005 Data Collection Timeline</b>	
January–May:	Planning for data collection Designing of research questions
April	Ethical Approval given
May–June	Contact made with USP Centre staff
July–August	Data Collection
July	Week 1 July: Travel to USP for data collection (July 9) Week 2 July: Copies of all questionnaires made Mailbag delivery schedule collected



	Arrangements made for questionnaire delivery to regional centres
	Week 3 July: Arrangements made for interview trips
	Week 4 July: Questionnaires posted to remaining USP centres (Fiji)
August	Week 1 August: Additional questionnaires given to tutors travelling for tutorial trips to centres
August 2–4	Interviews (Vanuatu) and collection of completed questionnaires
August 5–7	Interviews (Labasa, Fiji) and collection of completed questionnaires
August 12–14	Interviews (Lautoka, Fiji) and collection of completed questionnaires
August 15–25	Interviews (Suva, Fiji) Collection of returned questionnaires from USP mail centre Collection of course material for later analysis
August	Back to University of Otago

The section below provides details for the data collected from teachers and learners interviews, learners' questionnaires and course material.

### 3.5.1. Semi-structured Interviews

There were different methods of contact made for the interviews with participants at USP. The departmental staff members were initially contacted for details of all tutorials held at the Vanuatu, Lautoka and Labasa centres.

#### *Teachers*

The researcher made requests for interviews with SSTs and CTs personally. Emails were sent to centre directors to inform the centre tutors about the study, and the researcher's schedule. The Suva campus teachers were sent emails via the departmental heads. The teachers who volunteered their time were then approached for the interview. Interviews with the regional staff were held during the time the researcher was at the centre in 2005 (see the timeline on the previous page). The Suva based teachers were interviewed later, in August 2005, during the time the researcher was based at the Suva campus of USP. One SST and two CTs were interviewed in Vanuatu, two SSTs were interviewed in Labasa, and one SST was interviewed in Lautoka. One SST and three CTs were interviewed in Suva. The data collected yielded 10 interviews: five with SSTs teachers and five CTs.

Teachers provided details of the courses they were teaching by distance, their years of experience of teaching by this mode and the methods they used to contact their learners (see Appendices 11 and 11: Interview Guide- Background Information Questions 1–3). Teachers additionally provided their views on the listening skills needed in their courses. SSTs gave their views on listening skills taught by the distance version of the EAP course

(see Appendix 10: Interview Guide Questions 7–10) and CTs provided their views on the listening skills required in their courses (Appendix 11: Interview Guide Questions 6–10).

### *Learners*

Learners were contacted based on the tutorial schedule provided by the centre. This was the most suitable time to contact both past and present learners since it had become very difficult to contact them without their USP contact. It turned out that the correspondence address given by most learners at USP was that of their nearest USP centre, rather than a private address. On the day of the tutorial, the researcher was present at the centre.

Learners present were then approached for the interviews. Those who volunteered for the interview were selected. In Labasa and Lautoka, the centre had already been informed about the research and they, in turn, informed the researcher of the time and venue for the tutorials; thus, the interviews could be conducted with those who volunteered. In this way, 13 past learners were interviewed in Fiji, 5 in Labasa, 5 in Lautoka and 3 in Suva later in August. Six past learners were interviewed in Vanuatu, giving 19 past learners interviewed. For present learners, nine were interviewed in Fiji, 5 in Labasa and 4 in Lautoka. One present learner was interviewed in Suva later in August giving 10 present learners interviewed. Thus, 29 learners were interviewed for the study. No present learners could be interviewed in Port Vila, Vanuatu. The researcher's flight to Port Vila was delayed by six hours and this meant that the students went back home after waiting for nearly half a day for their interviews. Contacting them to come the next day was futile since most of them lived far from the centre and had no telephone at home.

The first part of the interviews with both groups of learners obtained demographic details from the learners such as their profession, and the centre they were registered with (see Appendix 12 and Appendix 13: Interview Guide - Background Information Questions 1-3). In the case of past learners, information on their profession, time of enrolment in the EAP course and the centre of registration were obtained. The remainder of the questions in the interview guide included questions for the purpose of obtaining the participants' views on listening skills (see Appendices 12 and 13: Interview Guide Questions 5–11), perception of listening skills that they used, and their views on the listening material provided by the EAP course (see Appendices 12 and 13: Interview Guide Questions 12–17). Learners also gave their views on distance learning at USP (see Appendices 12 and 13: Interview Guide Questions 18-21).

The researcher decided to tape record all the interviews using a Sony audio cassette recorder. Each tape was labelled with the pseudonyms that had been selected for the participants. During the interviews, notes were also made of the additional information provided by the interviewees. All notes, audiocassettes and consents given by the interviewees were kept in a secure place for later analysis.

### **3.5.2. Survey Questionnaire**

In all, 500 questionnaires were sent to all centres within three weeks of the researcher's arrival at USP in July 2005, using either USP's mail delivery system, or accompanying tutors travelling to the centres for tutorials (250 for past learners and 250 for present learners). The centre staff had already been emailed to ask for assistance with the distribution and collection of these questionnaires. Teaching staff from the Suva campus

also volunteered to take questionnaires with them either when they went for tutorial trips for their courses, within Fiji or when travelling to other centres in the region.

The two sets of questionnaires that were prepared (See Appendices 14 and 15 for samples of questionnaires designed for the two groups of learners) were labelled with the group by specifying in the header on all pages of the questionnaires. This meant it was easy to identify which group the questionnaire was meant for. The questionnaires used in this study requested similar information from past and present learners, and sought their self-perception of use of English for various academic and non-academic tasks. The first part of the questionnaires requested the learners' background information (Appendices 14 and 15: Questionnaire Questions 1–11). The second part requested learners' self-perception of listening needs for daily life activities (Appendices 14 and 15: Question 12) and for academic activities (Question 14). Their self-evaluation of proficiency when using English for various daily life activities (Appendix 14 and Appendix 15: Questions 13 and 15) and for academic activities (Question 16). Questions 18–32 requested learners to provide information on their experience of using the facilities, and on the opportunities for the EAP course at USP. The selection of these questions was based on the needs analysis criteria that have been discussed in Chapter 2. Further reasons for asking these questions are provided below.

The decision to seek information on the participants' English use for daily life and academic activities was made based on the theoretical frameworks for objective, subjective and situational needs analysis as discussed by Brindley (1989), Richards

(1990) and Robinson (1991) and as discussed in Section 2.1.1.2 of Chapter 2: Literature Review.

In the study, learners were asked to provide their perception of English language used for various daily-life or non-academic and academic activities (see Appendices 14 and 15: Questions 12, 14, and 17). For example, respondents were asked how frequently they used English when communicating with family members (daily life activity) or how frequently they used English when discussing academic work with colleagues (academic activity). An additional item included in these questions was one that allowed the respondents to comment on the use of listening skills when communicating with domestic helpers, the term widely used in the Pacific for house cleaners. In multicultural countries such as Fiji where working couples employ domestic helpers, in most cases the helpers are from different ethnic groups, creating the necessity to use English for conversation. Self-evaluation (see Appendices 14 and 15: Questions 13, 15 and 16) on the other hand, is assumed to be the learners' views of their own proficiency in using English for daily life and academic activities. For example, the questions focus on the learners' beliefs about their proficiency when communicating with family members (daily life activity) or how good their proficiency is for discussing academic work with colleagues (academic activity).

Distance learning experience questions (see Appendices 14 and 15: Questions 18, 19, 23, 24, 27 and 28) involved seeking learners' views on various facilities and opportunities

provided by the EAP course in regard to listening skills, such as listening to the audiocassettes, participating in the tutorials, discussions and seminars.

Some grammatical changes were made in the questionnaire for the present learners since it requested their perceived needs because these learners had not completed the course when the survey was conducted. For example: past tenses were used in the past learners' questionnaire e.g. "used", "attended", "participated", "contacted"; and present tenses used in the present learners' questionnaires e.g. "use", "attend", "participate", "contact".

Since the questionnaires were sent prior to travel, when the researcher visited the centres for the interviews she was able to collect the completed questionnaires. The centre staff, as well as the teaching staff who went for tutorial visits, circulated the questionnaires during the tutorials held at the various centres during the first half of semester 2, 2005.

These were later collected by the centre staff and/or the teaching staff, and then sent back to the researcher by the USP mail delivery system.

The difficulty in contacting the past learners of the course, those who had graduated and moved on to other parts of their country, was becoming apparent after a few weeks.

Those who came to the centre for tutorials for other courses were easy to contact. By visiting tutorials and lectures, the researcher attempted to contact past learners who were now on-campus, and a few learners were contacted in this manner. None of the learners who had participated in the interviews was requested to fill the questionnaires. In the end, 19 past learners and 153 present learners responded to the questionnaires. This constitutes a total response rate of 61.2% for the present learners and 7.6% for the past learners.

### **3.5.3. Course Material**

When the researcher returned to the University of Otago at the end of August, after the data collection, she brought back from USP a set of the course materials used in the EAP course in Semester 2, 2005. These items were analysed for the listening activities present in them. This section has provided details of the data collection procedures used for this study. The next section describes the data management used for the data obtained for the study.

### **3.6. Data Management**

After all data had been collected, it was necessary to sort data in order to make the analysis easier. Two sets of data; interviews and questionnaires, needed sorting prior to the analysis procedure. The management required for these data is discussed below.

#### *Interviews*

The researcher transcribed all the interviews, using the *Word* programme. A Sony audiocassette made it possible to reduce the speed of the tape during transcribing, making the task of transcription easier. All participants were given pseudonyms in order to provide confidentiality in the records.

The transcripts were written using the following conventions:

- The first letter of the pseudonym selected for the participant was used. Thus, for participant Uma, U has been used in the transcript, R refers to the researcher;



- Each turn taken by a speaker has been numbered. For example, when referring to the comments made by Sahil the following details are included in the bracket (Sahil, turn 12). This refers to the 12<sup>th</sup> turn taken in the interview;
- Wherever possible the transcription is verbatim, although in cases where grammatical correction has seemed necessary for a clearer understanding, correction has been done. (See Appendix 22 for audio excerpts and Appendix 23 for samples of the transcripts).
- Pauses have been ignored, although laughter has been shown in brackets. (In cases where names of teachers and other USP staff were mentioned, these have been deleted from the transcript.)

### *Questionnaires*

As mentioned in Section 3.5.2, questionnaires were provided with separate headings to make it easier to identify the questionnaires from each group of learners. The questionnaires were first sorted into two groups one for the past learners and the other for the present learners. Responses from the Likert scale items from each group of the questionnaires were then stored in data files, using *Excel*<sup>TM</sup> software. The Likert scale responses from both groups of learners were converted to *Excel*<sup>TM</sup> spreadsheet format and analysed.

After going through the responses to the open-ended questions, it was obvious that 68 learners out of the 172 (153 present learners and 19 past learners) had written some comments for these questions. Because the number of responses given to open-ended

questions was limited, and at the same time to provide some details of the responses given by the learners, analysis of this section of the questionnaire was carried out together rather than as separate responses from both groups. These items were typed out in a separate *Word* file and kept for analysis.

At the end of the data management process, the data was ready for the analysis. The next section provides details for the data analysis procedure employed in this study.

### **3.7. Data Analysis**

There were three types of data for this study: data obtained from the semi-structured interviews with four groups of participants, data from questionnaires responses by two groups of learners, and data from the analysis of the listening section of the course material. The data analysis used for each of these data is described below.

#### **3.7.1. Semi-structured Interviews**

After all interviews had been transcribed, they were closely read several times to obtain the sense of the ideas expressed by the interviewees. The research methodology used was similar to that of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), which was useful in this case since it allowed the “researcher to develop a theoretical account of the general features of a topic while simultaneously grounding the account in empirical observations or data” (Martin and Turner, 1986, p. 141). At this stage it was decided to use the computer software package, NVivo (computer assisted qualitative data analysis software) to help manage and code the data.

All transcripts were initially saved as *Rich Text Format* (RTF) and then moved into separate files in the Nvivo programme. Nvivo uses the term ‘project’ for these files. Altogether four groups of projects (one for each of the groups of the participants) were created. All transcripts were then read on the computer screen and coded. The steps involved in the coding process are provided below:

*Step 1:* This is called open coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) and produces numerous open codes. Single words, phrases and even lengthy discourses were highlighted when they showed some form of behaviour, thought, feeling, view, opinion or theme. Letters and mnemonics were assigned for these words and phrases. Nvivo has a term known as free nodes for these codes. A set of codes that had some similarity were put together into a category. The functions in Nvivo programme can be later used to link these free nodes into what is called “trees”, which are the main groups into which these free codes (nodes) can be linked. Thus, the categories from the transcripts of Study Skills teachers had the following categories: culture shock; distance teaching; English use; expectations from learners; listening skills; and suggestions. (See Figure 1 in Appendix 20 for the free nodes created after coding the SSTs transcripts).

*Step 2:* After the free nodes were created, they were then linked to different trees depending on the similarities each of the codes had. (See Figure 2 in Appendix 20 which shows the trees and the codes that were linked to these trees.) Thus, for Study Skills teachers the category or the tree (Nvivo term) ‘distance teaching’ included statements

from the interview data which discussed centre tutoring, distance teaching experience, distance learners-problems, satellite tutorials.

During the analysis of the transcripts of past learners, it became apparent that the learners were discussing similar things. After analysing nine transcripts, no new ideas or views could be found. The following issues kept appearing in all the transcripts:

- Out of the four participants who did not attend any of the DFL learning support facilities e.g. centre tutorials, satellite tutorials, two did not discuss anything about the problems they faced while studying in isolation. Neither learner had listened to the audio cassettes and no reason was provided for not doing so.
- The remaining seven participants were from Fiji (either Labasa or Lautoka centre) and attended centre based tutorials and/or satellite tutorials. Again, they discussed similar issues to the other participants e.g. centre tutorial was useful but they did not listen to the audio cassettes and did not indicate facing any problems with the course.

It was obvious that ‘data saturation’ had been reached with regard to the views expressed by this group of participants. According to Merriam, data saturation is the phase in data collection when the researcher sees or hears the “same things over and over again, and no new information surfaces as you collect more data” (2003, p. 26). With no new ideas emerging from the data analysis, the rest of the transcripts were not analysed. All interviews from present learners, CTs and SSTs were analysed. (See Tables 1- 4 below for details of all participants interviewed and those that were also analysed.)

**Table 1: Details of the Teachers of Study Skills Course Selected for Interview**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Teaching Exp</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>DFL teaching</b>
1	Judy	Female	10 years	Vanuatu	Centre tutorial
2	Morgan	Male	3 years	Labasa	Centre tutorial
3	Sahil	Male	4 years	Suva	Centre/satellite tutorials, tutorial visits
4	Uma	Female	5 years	Lautoka	Centre tutorial
5	Wendy	Female	3 years	Labasa	Centre tutorials, tutorial visits

There were three female and two male teachers interviewed. Four of the teachers were from Fiji (one from Suva, one from Lautoka and 2 from Labasa), and one teacher was from Vanuatu. The teachers' teaching experience ranged from three to ten years. All the teachers had centre based teaching experience, two had visited remote areas to conduct tutorials, and one teacher had conducted satellite tutorials.

**Table 2: Details of Course Teachers Selected for Interview**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Teaching Exp</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>DFL Teaching</b>
1	Fiona	Female	Linguistics	34 years	Suva	Tutorial visits,
2	Bimal	Male	Education	15 years	Suva	Tutorial visits
3	Anthony	Male	Theatre Arts	4 years	Suva	Online, satellite,
4	Edwin	Male	Law	9 years	Vanuatu	on-line, satellite, centre tutorials
5	Ann	Female	Law	5 years	Vanuatu	On-line, satellite and centre tutorials

There were two female and three male course teachers interviewed. Three of the teachers were based in Fiji (Suva) and two in Vanuatu. Their teaching experiences ranged from four to 34 years. All but one teacher had travelled to remote areas to conduct tutorials; two had on-line as well as centre based teaching experience.

**Table 3: Details of Present Learners Selected for Interview**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Programme</b>	<b>Profession</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>DFL Learning</b>
1	Mathew	Male	BA	Estate Officer	Labasa	Centre and satellite tutorials
2	Aaron	Male	LLB	CID Officer	Labasa	Centre and satellite tutorials
3	Emily	Female	BA	Tax Officer	Labasa	Centre tutorials
4	Yvonne	Female	BEd	School Teacher	Labasa	Centre and satellite tutorials
5	Shelly	Female	Unclassified	Student	Labasa	Centre and satellite tutorials
6	Lizzie	Female	BSc	Student	Lautoka	Centre and satellite tutorials
7	Betty	Female	BEd	School Teacher	Lautoka	Centre tutorials
8	Lily	Female	BEd	School Teacher	Lautoka	Centre tutorials
9	Arun	Male	BTech	Mechanical Supervisor	Lautoka	Centre and satellite tutorials
10	Ravi	Male	LLB	Student	Suva	Centre and satellite tutorials

Of the ten present learners interviewed, four were male and six female. All were based in Fiji and had participated in centre-based tutorials. Seven of these had also participated in satellite tutorials. These learners provided a range of programmes and professional background.

**Table 4: Details of the Past Learners Selected for Interview**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Programme</b>	<b>Profession</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>DFL Learning</b>
1	Pravin*	Male	Dip Legal Studies	Prosecution Office	Suva	Centre and some satellite tutorials
2	Tevita*	Male	BEd Primary	Teacher	Suva	None
3	Francis*	Female	Bed Primary	Teacher	Suva	None
4	Vidya	Female	BA	Domestic Duties	Labasa	Centre and satellite tutorials
5	Thelma*	Female	LLB	Journalist/student	Labasa	satellite tutorials
6	Priya	Female	BA GCE	Student	Labasa	Centre and satellite tutorials
7	Una	Female	BEd	Student	Labasa	Most centre and some satellite tutorials
8	Lote*	Female	BA	Student	Labasa	Centre and satellite tutorials
9	Kamal	Female	BA GCE	Student	Lautoka	Centre and satellite tutorials
10	Nisha	Female	BA	Student	Lautoka	Centre tutorials
11	Nita	Female	BEd	Teacher	Lautoka	Centre tutorials
12	Sheena	Female	BEd	Teacher	Lautoka	Centre tutorials
13	Kumar	Male	BEd	Teacher	Lautoka	None
14	Jane*	Female	BA	Library Assistant/student	Vanuatu	Some centre and some satellite tutorials
15	Albert*	Male	LLB	Student	Vanuatu	Centre and satellite tutorials
16	Martin	Male	LLB	Student	Vanuatu	Centre and satellite tutorials
17	Ian*	Male	MBBS	Student	Vanuatu	Centre tutorials
18	Leni*	Male	LLB	Church Minister/student	Vanuatu	Centre and satellite tutorials
19	Luke	Male	LLB	Student	Vanuatu	None

\* Further analysed for the study

Of the 19 past learners interviewed, eight were male and 11 female. Thirteen were from Fiji (three from Suva; five from Labasa and five from Lautoka), and six from Vanuatu. The learners provided a range of programmes and were associated with various professions. Ten learners had experience of both centre based and satellite tutorials, three knew only centre based tutorials, one knew only satellite tutorials, and four learners had not attended any centre based or satellite tutorials.

The analysis was an inductive exercise since no pre-existing conceptual framework was used as a guide. As the analysis progressed, the names of codes, categories and themes were decided. After the initial open coding of all the transcripts, 106 codes were identified, which were later grouped into 30 categories based on recurring ideas or themes identified (see Appendix 20 for Nvivo documents showing all the themes identified from the four groups of participants.) These 30 ideas were then categorised into six main themes. Listening skills were divided into three: definition of listening; expectations and experiences of listening skills, and uses and needs of listening skills for learning at USP. Strategies were divided into perception and use as discussed by teachers and learners. Similarly, distance experiences were divided as those discussed by teachers and by learners. For example:

- Definition of listening skills
- Listening skills: expectations (from teachers) and experiences (from learners)
- Listening skills: needs and uses
- Strategies: perceived (teachers), and used (learners)
- Distance experience: teaching and learning



- Other issues.

Brief descriptions of the themes are given below:

*Definition of listening skills*

During the analysis of the interview transcripts, it emerged that the participants had provided differing definitions of listening skills. Due to this difference, their definitions were put into different groups, those that were closely related to the definitions given in the literature, and those that were only remotely linked to these definitions. The definitions used as the guideline were those already discussed in Section 2.2.1.

*Listening skills (expectations and experiences)*

Analysis on the transcripts showed differences in the responses given by the teachers and the learners in terms of what listening skills was expected (by teachers) and what the learners discussed as using in academic situations.

*Listening skills (needs and uses)*

Participants made reference to the various activities for which they needed listening skills. Teachers discussed the different activities for which they thought the learners needed listening skills, while the learners provided details of their use of listening skills. The views of the groups have been discussed separately.

*Strategies (perceived and used)*

In the course of the analysis of the interview transcripts, it emerged that participants were referring to learning strategies. This observation is what led to focussing the study on

both the needs analysis and on the perceived and described learning strategies used to develop listening skills. The strategies that the teachers perceived their learners use for listening, and those that the learners described themselves as using, have been discussed using the classification of language learning strategies developed by O'Malley and Chamot (1990). These metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategies as described by O'Malley and Chamot (ibid.) have already been discussed in Section 2.2.2.1 of Chapter 2.

#### *Distance experience (teaching and learning)*

Teachers and learners at USP provided different experiences of distance. They have also provided additional information on these matters such as the differences in the teaching experiences among the teachers, as well as the differences in learning experiences of the learners.

#### *Other issues*

Analysis of the transcripts provided additional information about USP, the region and other closely related issues. Since the information provided was related to the study, they have been included under this category.

### **3.7.2. Questionnaires**

The first section of the questionnaire (Q1–Q11) included demographic information of the informants such as their gender, age, country of origin, programme they were enrolled in, and their employment details. This section also requested learners to provide their first

language(s) as well as their experience of English language before enrolling at USP. A summary of the information provided is in Tables 1–4. As discussed in Section 3.5.2 the main part of the questionnaire (Q12–32) contained Likert scale (closed questions) and open-ended questions. The analysis used for Likert scale questions is discussed first followed by a discussion of the method of analysis used for open-ended questions.

#### *Closed questions*

The method of analysis used for this study was similar to the analysis of an NA questionnaire Iwai et al. (1999) conducted at the University of Hawaii. The analysis, which included such descriptive statistics as means and standard deviations, employed the following steps:

*Step 1:* Analysis of the Likert scale questions required calculating the means, which in this case was the arithmetic average of the responses with 5 points assigned. This point scoring system was based on the calculation system used for assigning values in the Likert scale as discussed by Colosi (2005) for measuring evaluation using Microsoft Excel. The standard deviation in this case was then an average of the distance of each response from the mean. In this case, the standard deviation was calculated from the Likert scale's mean. The following criteria were used for assigning points to the responses:

- strongly agree
  - always
  - excellent
  - very useful
  - very good
  - very important
- 5 points were assigned
- strongly disagree
  - never
  - very poor
  - totally useless
  - unimportant.
- 1 point was assigned

The remaining scores in the middle were assigned two, three or four depending on whether the response was positive (4), neutral (3) or negative (2).

*Step 2:* After the mean for each response was calculated, a criterion for selection of responses for discussion was made. Oxford (1990, p. 300) in her discussion of a strategy inventory for language learning (SILL) uses the following criteria for understanding the calculation of average (mean) retrieved from Likert scale items:

High	Always or almost always used	4.5 to 5.0
	Usually used	3.5 to 4.4
Medium	Sometimes used	2.5 to 3.4
Low	Generally not used	1.5 to 2.4
	Never or almost never used	1.0 to 1.4

It was decided to use the criteria similar to Oxford's (1990) for the analysis. However, a minor alteration was made. A calculation of the mean of all the questions provided the following details:

#### *Past learners*

Out of 51 questions (i.e. the total of all closed questions), only one response from past learners yielded a mean above 4.5 (Question 14a). There were 38 questions with the mean between 3.5 and 4.4. The remaining 12 questions had the mean below 3.4.

#### *Present learners*

Similarly, responses from present learners showed that only three questions (Question 14e, Question 17a and Question 23a) had a mean above 4.5; 41 questions had a mean between 3.5 and 4.4. The remaining 7 questions had a mean of below 3.4.

It was decided to make adaptations to Oxford's (1990) criteria as follows:

Instead of a range between 3.5 and 5.0 for high, a range of 4 to 5 was used. This provided fewer issues to discuss but also provided a narrower view presented by the learners (i.e. extreme end of the high responses).

Instead of a range between 2.1 to 3.4 for medium, the range used covered 2.1 to 3.9. This meant more responses were included in this range, which would have otherwise been included under high (between 3.5 and 3.9).

The range covering low now was 0 to 2.0. Thus, instead of having five groups (as divided by Oxford, 1990), there were now only three groups.

Since the questionnaire was to find the frequency of listening skills used for different activities, extremely high usage of listening skills will be discussed. The means between 4 and 5 indicated a higher level of agreement to the items in the questionnaire. The standard deviation indicates the average of the distance of the response from the mean. Only in situations where the standard deviation indicated a very high deviation was it included in the discussion. Wherever the mean and standard deviation is used in discussions, the figure will be rounded to 2 decimal places.

*Step 3:* The next step in the analysis involved grouping the question items under different themes. Details of the grouping process are provided below.

*Closed questions*

Altogether 13 questions with Likert scale items were analysed separately. Each of these questions had subsections or items and needed further analysis. These questions are categorised as follows:

**1. Self-perception**

- (a) Usage of English in daily life (Q12: five items )
- (b) Usage of English in academic situations (Q14: five items)
- (c) Usage of English after university study (Q17: four items)

**2. Self-evaluation**

- (d) Proficiency for everyday communication (Q13: six items)
- (e) Proficiency for daily life (Q15: five items)
- (f) Proficiency for academic situation (Q16: five items)

**3. Distance learning experience**

- (g) Use of DFL material (Q18: six items)
- (h) Use of EAP audio material (Q19: one item)
- (i) Listening skills used during DFL tutorials (Q23: five items)
- (j) DFL tutorial experience (Q24: one item)
- (k) Level of confidence during EAP tutorial (Q27: six items)
- (l) Level of confidence during tutorials for other courses (Q28: one item)
- (m) Perception of listening skills taught by EAP (Q30: one item).

Results of these questions are discussed in Section 4.2.1 of Chapter 4: Results. Responses obtained from past learners have been put in a table (Table 6), followed by the responses from present learners (Table 7). Next, a table has been created including responses from both groups (Table 8) that had high mean. The reason for selecting these was to find the situations for which the learners had showed a very high degree of perception of using English for daily, academic and distance learning.

### *Open-ended questions*

Altogether, there were nine open-ended questions included in the questionnaire. After examining the typed open-ended written comments produced by both groups of learners, the responses were firstly grouped into the following workable categories:

Distance learning experiences (Q22, 26, 29)

Listening skills (Q20a and b, 21, 25, 31)

Other issues (Q32)

The analysis of the responses required reading the responses and interpreting their meaning in relation to the distance learning and listening skills at USP. The title of the question acted as a guide to sort the responses under the three main categories displayed above. For example:

Question 22 requested learners' reasons for attending EAP tutorials. Two types of responses were given: one where learners indicated attending tutorials for obtaining



further information on course assessments, and two: learners attending sessions for interaction with other learners and the tutor.

These responses are discussed in section 4.2.2 of Chapter 4: Results.

### **3.7.3. Course Material Analysis**

Using Mendelsohn's (1994) criteria for analysing listening material, the third source of qualitative data for the study came from the course material analysis. The listening section of the course material was analysed to check for listening skill. The material was also checked for authenticity, monologue and dialogue, length of the listening material, and whether the material was used for teaching or testing. The steps taken to analyse the material were as follows:

The listening sections of the two course books were checked for the requirements of the listening course as discussed by Mendelsohn (1994). A descriptive table was created to find what criteria the listening section of the course met.

Further discussion of the results of this analysis appears in section 4.3 of Chapter 4: Results.

## **3.8. Conclusion**

This chapter began with a discussion of the theoretical framework used for the data collection for the study (Section 3.1). Ethnographic case study has been used in the field of educational research where studies investigate learning occurring in a particular context. This study focuses on learning taking place in a particular place, namely USP.

Another feature of ethnographic studies is the use of multiple sources for data collection. Data for this study came from four groups of participants: two groups of teachers and two groups of learners (Section 3.3). The data collection method for the study involved sourcing the data through interviews, questionnaires and course material analysis. Discussion of data collection from these sources was carried out in Section 3.4. The procedures involved in the data collection were discussed in Section 3.5. Data collected for research needs to be managed prior to its analysis; and the way this was done was described in Section 3.6. The interpretation and analysis of the data have been described in Section 3.7. All efforts have been made to make the study as unbiased as possible. Especially by keeping reliability, validity and the role of the researcher as the transcriber and the analyst for the data in mind. The next chapter discusses the results that this study has produced.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Results

#### 4. Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the data obtained from the semi-structured interviews with two groups of teachers and two groups of learners at USP, statistical analysis of questionnaires from the two groups of learners, and the analysis of the listening section of the course material used for teaching a study skills course at USP. In the first section of there is a (Section 4.1), discussion of the themes which emerged during the data analysis of the interviews. These themes are then tabled with brief descriptions of what was discussed under this theme by each group. Subsequently, each of these themes is explored in detail, with samples of interview extracts from each of the groups of participants. Views from study skills teachers can be found first; followed by those of the course teachers, then the past learners and finally, the present learners. The second section of the chapter (Section 4.2) discusses the results obtained after statistically analysing the questionnaire data. The results of the past learners are discussed first followed by those of the present learners. The last section of the chapter (Section 4.3) examines the interpretation of the course material analysis based on the framework of Mendelsohn (1994). The chapter ends with a conclusion (Section 4.4).

#### 4.1. Themes from the Interviews<sup>2</sup>

The major part of this section is a detailed discussion of the 6 themes that emerged after the analysis of the interview data. The six themes are: 1) definition of listening skills; 2)

---

<sup>2</sup> An earlier version of this chapter was presented at the 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Applied Linguistics, Chiayi, Taiwan (Chand, 2006a).

listening skills: expectations (teachers) and experiences (learners); 3) listening skills: needs and uses; 4) strategies: perceived (teachers) and used (learners); 5) distance experience: teaching and learning; and 6) other issues. These themes are first introduced, then put in a table (Table 5), followed by their detailed discussion with extracts from the transcripts.

### *1. Definition of listening skills*

By discussing issues in the interviews the participants had opportunities to give their understanding of listening skills. Analysis of each group's description of the listening skills shows differences in their descriptions. As mentioned in Section 3.7.1 the definitions of listening skills given by the participants were matched against the definition discussed in literature. The definitions given by the participants that were closely related to these definitions were categorised as specific definitions and those that did not, as broad or remotely linked to the definitions. For example, "the ability to understand what the speaker is saying and being able to transfer it into written form" was categorised as specific definition, and "interested in topic, having a message to listen to..." was categorised as broad definition.

### *2. Listening skills: expectations and experiences*

Teachers and learners who were interviewed provided their expectations and experiences of listening skills. The interview gave the participants opportunities to express their views in relation to academic listening. The teachers provided their expectations from the learners in terms of listening skills required in their courses. These were related to what

skills they actually thought their learners should be using for listening in their courses. The learners discussed their experiences in terms of listening skills and what they were expected to do while listening in an academic situation. There were differences noticed in terms of the expectations from the teachers and the experiences of the learners of listening skills. For example, “think being able to communication in small groups...and large groups”, “able to listen to a 50-minute lecture” are samples of expectations that the teachers had. Learners on the other hand discussed e.g., “I take down notes... and at the end of it I collate what I had listened together and get out what is important out of it”.

### *3. Listening skills: needs and uses*

Teachers provided their views in terms of the listening skills that were needed in their courses. From the interviews with the teachers, it emerged that varying amounts of listening and certain requirements of listening were expected from their learners. Interviews with the learners showed their views on the use of listening skills while enrolled at USP. Learners from each group, who were in a profession, also discussed how much listening was needed for their work.

### *4. Strategies: perceived and used*

During the interview, teachers discussed what they wanted their learners to do in terms of listening skills such as listening to the radio for developing their listening skills, and understanding what was being discussed in lectures and tutorials. In other words, it involved the assumptions or beliefs that the teachers had about their learners’ use of

learning strategies for listening. These have been categorised as the perception of listening strategies discussed by the teachers.

During the interviews, learners discussed what strategies they used for listening. These responses were interpreted by analysing the transcripts and selecting examples of description that the learners gave about their listening. These strategies have been categorised as the strategies used by the learners for facilitating their listening skills. As discussed in the Section 2.2.2.1 of Chapter 2: Literature Review, and in Section 3.7.1 of Chapter 3: Methods, discussion of the strategies perceived by the teachers and those used by the learners will be classified using the classification system of O'Malley and Chamot (1990).

##### *5. Distance experience: teaching and learning*

Teachers who were interviewed had all had the experience of teaching by distance at USP. They provided their views on distance teaching and their views of distance learners. Learners who were interviewed provided details of their experience of learning by distance at USP.

For example, teachers mentioned the lack of interaction and contact with the distance learners: "you don't get to see them all the time. So you don't get to really form that rapport with them." Learners on the other hand discussed isolation and differences in learning experiences when coming on-campus: "When I did my other courses...cannot come to weekly tutorials because it is so far and so expensive and most courses didn't even have any tutorials. It was difficult."

### 6. *Other issues*

During the analysis of the interview data, it emerged that there were issues discussed by the teachers and learners that were not associated with any of the 5 categorised mentioned above. Since they were related to issues peculiar to USP, these have been included into this category.

Table 5 shows the themes after the data analysis, with a brief preview of the views expressed by each group of participants for each of the themes. The first column on the left (A 1–6) shows the themes that will be used for the discussion of the results from the interviews. The remaining four columns (B–E) summarise views expressed by the four groups of participants. For discussion, the cells in the table will be referred to as follows: e.g. B1– for discussion on the views of Study skills teachers on the definition of listening skills.

#### **Table 5: Emerging themes from the interviews**







#### **4.1.1. Views of Study Skills Teachers**

Themes emerging from the interviews with five study skills teachers at USP showed their definition of listening skills (B1), their listening skills expectations from the learners (B2), listening skills needed in the course (B3), their perception of learning strategies the learners use for listening (B4), their views on distance teaching at USP (B5), and other issues that they discussed (B6). Each theme is discussed in detail below.

##### *Definition of listening skills (B1)*

One of the first questions asked during the interviews with study skills teachers was about their understanding of listening skills. This was associated with their understanding of the definition of listening skills.

All study skills teachers provided similar views about listening skills. Sahil stated listening skills as the technique learners needed to understand the message being conveyed to them. “I think listening skills should not just include listening to somebody but also understanding what one is saying and also what the person is not saying” (Sahil, turn 10).

Similarly, Uma linked listening skills to comprehension. “Listening skills would involve learners’ listening to a particular extract or things related to their academic work and being able to understand it; it is their ability to comprehend and so on” (Uma, turn 6).

Judy linked learners’ listening skills to message understanding and transferring it into written form. “Listening skills are the ability of the learner to be able to understand what

the speaker is saying, understand and in the academic situation of course, it means understanding and being able to write down information at the same time” (Judy, Turn 22).

The understanding of listening skills given by the study skills teachers was very similar to the definitions of listening skills found in the literature (see Johnson’s 1951 definition in Section 2.2.1 in Chapter Two: Literature Review). For this reason, their descriptions of listening skills were categorised as skill-specific meaning.

*Listening skills: expectations (B2)*

In response to the question: “What are some of the listening skills that the learners should bring to the course?” the study skills teachers discussed that the learners were expected to comprehend in terms of written–read and spoken–heard information while taking the course. For instance: “I think the learners should be able to get things at the same time as they are listening” (Judy, turn 24). Similarly, Morgan expected the learners to bring certain skills to the course with them. “They should be able to comprehend, that is very important because without that ability to comprehend we will not be able to listen well, and secondly, they have to be attentive” (Morgan, turn 10). Directing attention was also discussed by Sahil during the interview: “I think they should first of all be able to listen, have that capacity to be able to listen to a 50-minute lecture, or a one-hour lecture” (turn 12).

Hence, study skills teachers expected the learners to bring certain skills such as comprehension, interest, directing attention with them to the course; the purpose of the course would then be the development of this repertoire of listening skills for tertiary studies.

*Listening skills: needs (B3)*

During the interviews the teachers discussed the amount of time spent teaching listening skills to the distance learners. Commonly associated with time spent on teaching listening skills was the issue of the amount of contact they had with learners and how the lack of time spent with the learners hindered their teaching.

Not so much emphasis on listening though I would say ... but speaking, yes certainly, and as far as listening is concerned, when they are doing the last assignment, the seminar presentation may be where it could count ... like when students are doing their presentations. (Uma, turn 8)

Wendy, who travelled to remote areas to conduct tutorials using school classrooms hired for the purpose faced lack of time and facilities when she conducted tutorials.

You cannot conduct these listening classes with them because there is this lack of the facilities that you need. The only listening they do is when I talk to them and they write down whatever they can. That is the best they can do. And our time factor because we have to cover six, five to six schools in a day we can't ... It's

quite difficult but we make the most of it. Listening, well we do not have too much of it. Even speaking we do not have too much of that really ... if we do, maybe 10%. (Wendy, turn 14)

Morgan, who taught at a centre, discussed lack of time for tutorials as a problem for teaching listening skills.

Well we only have one hour for the tutorial and basically we have group activities and there are times where they are sitting in groups and they exchange ideas, lecture methods but we are not doing much as far as listening is concerned.

(Morgan, turn 12)

Thus, the teachers suggested a limitation to the teaching of listening skills because of such factors as lack of time and facilities, and limited contact with the learners. The teachers compared the contact they had with the centre tutorial attendees and those who did not. The centre attendees could have discussions, practice note taking, participate in seminar preparation and presentations. Those who studied on their own missed these opportunities. Teachers felt they could not teach listening skills to non-attendee students, while those who attended centre tutorials had the opportunity to develop their listening skills.

#### *Strategies: perceived (B4)*

Analysis of the study skills teachers' transcripts provided their perception of the learning strategies they thought that their learners should be using to develop their listening skills.

These were categorised as the teachers' perception of strategies into metacognitive,

cognitive and social/affective strategies (see Appendix 9 for details of O'Malley and Chamot (1990) classification and descriptions of the learning strategies).

### Metacognitive strategies

Out of the seven metacognitive strategies discussed by O'Malley and Chamot (1990), one study skills teacher referred to one metacognitive strategy. He perceived his learners to be using advance preparation to develop their listening skills. An excerpt from his interview is provided below:

- Advance preparation

“In order to come to this 100-level course they have to have an understanding of the concept of English, they have to know grammar and vocabulary too.”

(Morgan, turn 10)

According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990) metacognitive strategies include knowing the stages for learning, scrutinising one's comprehension and production, and assessing how well one has achieved a learning objective. The teacher in this instance was implying the knowledge that will be necessary for a learner to possess in order to understand and learn at tertiary level.

### Cognitive strategies

Out of the 10 cognitive strategies discussed by O'Malley and Chamot (1990), the study skills teachers referred to three of them. They perceived their learners to be using

deduction, note taking and resourcing in order to develop their listening skills. Excerpts from their interviews are included below:

- Deduction

I think listening skills should not just include listening to somebody but also understanding what one is saying and also what the person is not saying. (Sahil, turn 10)

- Note-taking

“Listening skills ... to be able to understand what the speaker is saying, understand well in the academic situation. Of course it means understanding and being able to write down information at the same time” (Judy, turn 22).

- Resourcing

When I come away they come with requests and I go on the Internet to get as much resources as I can ... What they need is resources. They don't have libraries; all their libraries are primary schools so that's what we offer them. That's the best we can do, download the resources from the Internet and give it to them. (Wendy, turn 8)

SSTs also referred to suggestions they gave to the distance learners with regards to resourcing or obtaining information from their surroundings. Jane (turn 44, turn 50) suggested to her learners to use the church services that they attended as a note-taking

activity. She also recommended they listen to BBC radio programmes for developing their listening skills

According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990), cognitive strategies refer to instances where the learners interact with the learning material either mentally or physically in order to learn. Note taking and resourcing would then be the physical interactions that teachers expected their learners to make. Deduction would be the mental interaction necessary for achieving a learning outcome.

### Social and affective strategies

Out of the three social and affective strategies, one study skills teacher made reference to the strategy of cooperation, which he perceived to be helping the learners for their listening skills.

- Cooperation

“Basically we have group activities and there are times where they are sitting in groups and they exchange ideas.” (Morgan, turn 12).

According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990) social and affective strategies are situations where learners interact with other learners in order to assist in learning. Thus, group work and exchanging ideas were perceived by teachers to help in a learning task.

To sum up, the interviews with study skills teachers discussed their expectations of learning strategies that learners should be using in order to develop their listening skills.



These expectations were based on the teachers' beliefs on what learners needed to do in order to develop their learning and listening skills.

The study skills teachers also discussed their experiences of distance teaching at USP, and these are discussed below.

*Distance experience: teaching (B5)*

Since all study skills teachers were selected because of their distance teaching experience, they were expected to have a fair idea about the nature of distance teaching at USP, in terms of contact with the learners, the uniqueness of teaching in the region, and the opportunities and facilities available to the learners. Their experience of distance teaching at USP was linked to the lack of interaction with distance learners, the nature of Pacific Islands students, and the support provided for distance learners. Excerpts from their interviews are included below.

*Lack of interaction*

Wendy linked the lack of interaction to the limitation of time that she had for tutorials:

Very little interaction because the most you can spend is one hour. That is how much they allow us. (Wendy, turn 16)

Sahil conducted satellite communication with learners and saw the lack of interaction due to the isolation of the learners as a problem:

The distant learners are a different breed of students altogether; you don't get to see them all the time. Therefore, you do not get to really form that rapport with them and when you conduct the satellite tutorials there is very little interaction from students. (Sahil, turn 8)

#### *Nature of Pacific Islands learners*

According to Judy, who is a Pacific Islander herself, this lack of interaction was associated with the perceived passive nature of Pacific Islands learners.

I encourage them to speak actively but I find that the Melanesian students are very passive listeners, they absorb everything you say, hold on tightly to it and they don't think around it. (Judy, turn 28)

Study skills teachers at USP discussed the lack of contact, lack of interaction and limitations in resources and facilities. They felt hindered by these factors when teaching distance learners. All of these teachers felt that listening skills could be taught better with face-to-face contact, which they could not have with all students. Even when they contacted the learners, the limited resources, time and also the nature of Pacific Islanders hindered their teaching. Implications of these issues will be discussed in Chapter 5.

#### *Support for learners*

The study skills teachers also mentioned what they knew about the distance learners in the study skills course. They discussed this in relation to the support provided for

distance learners and what they did in order to help with their listening skill development. Support provided for learners differed from centre to centre.

Wendy, the tutor based at the Labasa centre in Fiji, travelled to remote areas and outer islands to conduct tutorials, while in Lautoka, the other centre in Fiji, the learners travelled from nearby towns to attend the tutorials.

Judy, the tutor based in Vanuatu, conducted tutorials only for the learners in the Port Vila area and did not travel to the outer islands. Those learners who attended centre-based tutorials were the ones the teachers knew better. The rest of the learners who used printed and audio material had no contact with the teachers and thus there was little mentioned about these learners during the interview. However, the teachers were very much aware of these learners' situations, as was apparent from their views.

“But we also have those policemen posted in these areas. We have agricultural officers, prison officers, army officers, and policemen round the region in the police posts.” (Wendy, turn 8)

“The types of learners we get are the ones who are fresh from the high schools, those working, mature students. I get that range.” (Judy, turn 16)

#### *Other issues (B6)*

During the interview, study skills teachers mentioned issues that seemed important but they were not related to the five themes already discussed. SSTs teachers mentioned the differences in academic level due to the differences in learners' past educational level,

and difficulties they faced in understanding different accents heard at USP. Excerpts from one SST's interview are mentioned here.

#### *Accent and academic level*

Judy conducted tutorials for the learners staying in Port Vila, Vanuatu. The learners who took the course came from different backgrounds. Some learners had left high school after year 10, completed the pre-degree courses and were enrolled for the course. She also had learners who were enrolled for the Law programme by the distance mode, or enrolled in other programmes and were mature learners. She felt that the learners faced problems with their listening due to the difference in their academic levels.

“Sometimes they probably don't understand because of accent perhaps; depends on who is speaking and the level of language that we are using so they don't understand and that is maybe why they can't take notes.” (Judy, turn 38)

#### *Summary of study skills teachers' interviews*

Interviews with the study skills teachers teaching by distance at USP revealed their understanding of listening skills (B1). These teachers were able to provide specific definitions of listening skills. Study skills teachers also discussed their expectations of their learners in terms of learners' listening skills (B2). It was clear from the interviews that they expected their learners to bring some skills for their course. Teachers provided their views in terms of listening skills needed in the course (B3). It was apparent from their discussions that they expected the learners to bring some listening skills and some awareness about listening skills, which could be then developed in the course. Thus, strategies for them were the techniques that could be taught to the learners. However, it was difficult for them to teach the strategies to the learners studying by distance. The lack

of contact and their inability to know what the learners' weaknesses were was also discussed. During the interview, a teacher's opinion on what the learners should be doing to develop their listening skills also emerged. These were classified as the perception of listening skills discussed by the study skills teachers (B4). Teachers also provided their experience of teaching the distance learners at USP (B5) and included their concerns in relation to their lack of interaction with learners. Other issues relevant to teaching at USP were also discussed; these included the academic levels of the learners and different accents learners have to get used when listening to lectures and tutorials at USP.

The next section examines the views expressed by the five course teachers who were interviewed.

#### **4.1.2. Views of Course Teachers**

The issues discussed by course teachers during the interviews reveal their understanding of listening skills (C1), their expectations of the learners in terms of listening skills (C2), and the type of listening skills needed in their courses (C3). The learning strategies they thought the learners should be using for developing their listening skills have been classified as perceived listening skills (C4). Their views associated with distance teaching at USP are also discussed (C5) followed by their explanations of other issues of importance at USP (C6). The following section, illustrated by salient quotations from the interview data, provides details of the teachers' views on these themes.

*Definition of listening skills (C1)*

One of the first things that the course teachers were asked to do was to provide a definition of listening skills. Initially, two course teachers had difficulty in providing this definition. One course teacher needed further explanations saying, "...it's an odd question sorry but that question means nothing to me" (Ann, turn 10). Later she described listening skills as a process of receiving what the speaker actually says and related its importance to the course she was teaching. "I teach note-taking in the first year law skills course so in that sense listening skills is important for taking notes" (Ann, turn 12).

Another course teacher described listening skills as follows:

I am not aware of how listening skills break down into groups of other skills but I suppose being interested in the topic, having a message to listen to... (Edwin, turn 12)

The other three teachers' definitions were more skill-specific, such as association of listening to understanding what was said in class, ability to follow cues or the inferences made during tutorials and lectures (Anthony, turn 10). Fiona associated listening skills to reading and interpreting of information and linked listening skills to the comprehension skill and interaction in classrooms such as those required during pair or group discussion (turn 28). Similarly, Bimal associated listening to the processing of information the learners heard: "Listening is one skill which is important but then being able to process what they heard and then understand it and then being able to apply some of these things"

(Bimal, turn 12). Thus, course teachers provided both broad as well as specific definitions for listening skills.

*Listening skills: expectation (C2)*

The interviews with course teachers revealed that they expected their learners to be able to listen, read, write and speak well in English, make notes and do the tasks required for the course. Ann, who teaches on-line courses, expected the learners who attend the centre based lectures to do tasks such as posting notes on-line:

First I want the learners to be able to do note-taking, second I want on-line learners to be able to access the lecture notes as well in order to check their note taking skills. Thirdly, there is community kind of an approach where they have to take notes of one lecture and one tutorial and then take part in on-line discussion groups. (Ann, turn 12)

Anthony, who taught theatre arts, expected his learners to understand the responsibilities involved in stage performance and expected his learners to do accordingly (turn 22).

Bimal, who taught education courses, expected his learners to be more actively involved during tutorial discussions (turn 8). Hence, there were certain task activities for which course teachers expected their learners to use listening skills in order to complete the tasks in the course.

*Listening skills: needs (C3)*

None of the teachers specifically taught listening skills in their course even though they expected the learners to use the skill, as became clear in the section above. Fiona, who

taught linguistics, wanted her learners to participate in class discussions. Her comments on the learners were linked to the demands of tertiary study.

they need all of the skills that a person going from high school to university needs so they need good listening skills, good note-taking skills, they need to be able to write fairly well; they need to be able to speak fairly well also so that they will be able to present. (Fiona, turn 18)

In Theatre Arts, distance learners were sent copies of the lectures on video tapes, and they were required to practise the performance skills. Later, when they came on-campus to continue their studies, the skills the students learnt earlier were useful for their stage performances. Anthony, who teaches these courses, thus felt that they needed listening skills in these courses:

Therefore, they need to spend a lot more time with individual students and groups unlike most of the other classes. They need to spend a lot more time on this one-to-one basis and a lot of them do not understand the need of these skills and that they need to spend a lot of time practising and performing things. They need to spend a lot of time rehearsing, doing stints speaking and listening to others.

(Anthony, turn 12)

Similarly, in Legal Studies courses, learners needed a great many listening skills when they were doing their legal practicum:

I also teach Law Clinic which is a practical course involving the practice of law at the Community Legal Community Centre at USP Legal Centre and in that context



students have to listen not only to me, in a very informal one-to-one basis but they have to deal with clients, they have to deal with other lawyers, they have to deal with various people as you would expect to be involved in a law practice so there is a variety of listening skills. (Ann, turn 14)

Listening was needed in the courses these five course teachers were teaching. The requirements for the courses differed depending on the activities that were required for the courses. While Theatre Arts required learners to participate in skits, thus listening, speaking, performing in front of an audience, memorising dialogues were accepted practices, writing and reading skills were also necessary. In legal practice learners participate in mock court cases, deliberate cases, undertake note taking and reading and these were considered essential skills. Listening skills was an essential component for these courses.

#### *Strategies: perceived (C4)*

The course teachers' transcripts provided references to the learning strategies they thought the learners should be using. The strategies they mentioned are discussed below.

#### Metacognitive strategies

Out of the seven metacognitive strategies, course teachers referred to two metacognitive strategies described by O'Malley and Chamot (1990). Excerpts of these are provided below:

- Advance preparation

I think that is very important if you are able to listen and not only listening is one skill which is important but then being able to process what they heard and then understand it and then being able to apply some of these things. (Bimal, turn 12)

Other course teachers also mentioned their expectations of the learners in terms of coming prepared for the class and having read the related material beforehand. For example,

I expect to them to come to class having read the material so that in class we actually have quite a bit of interaction...and there will be notes or examples whatever on the hand-out and then I will speak to the hand-out. (Fiona, turn 28).

The course teachers thus expected the learners to be using strategies to attend to specific components of the tasks in order to carry out the upcoming tasks.

- Self-monitoring

When they come to 1<sup>st</sup> year degree course, we assume that they should have all these skills from secondary school. But unfortunately we do not find that some of them don't seem to be able to interpret even simple sentences, they are not able to write a complete sentence, they are not able to search for materials. These are very important skills. (Bimal, turn 12)

The course teachers expected their learners to use strategies to reach the appropriateness necessary for the course. However, it also points to the fact that the learners were not using these strategies.

### Cognitive strategies

Course teachers referred to three cognitive strategies (auditory representation, note taking and resourcing) during the interviews. The course teacher involved in the teaching of Theatre Arts courses made the most references to the strategies. Excerpts of these interviews are included below:

- Auditory representation

“So ... yes listening and speaking is very important since it involves how things work knows the cues and the last thing you want is someone not listening to you on the stage” (Anthony, turn 22).

In Theatre Arts courses, the course teacher expected the learners to know the strategies to help them retain long language sequences.

- Note-taking

They get they should be able to understand what is said in the class and keep making notes while being spoken to whether it is on the screen or just lectured to them. (Anthony, turn 10).

Thus, the course teacher expected the learners to use the strategy to develop their skills of writing main points, ideas and outline.

- Resourcing

We put all the lectures on video tapes. All lecture notes are available on the web and so the tapes are available at all the centres and during the lectures, here all they do is view the tapes. (Anthony, turn 26)

The Theatre Arts courses provide video recordings of the on-campus lectures at all distance centres of USP. The course teacher believes that the learners are making use of these reference materials to assist their skills development.

#### Social and affective strategies

Out of the three social and affective strategies, two course teachers referred to the strategy of cooperation.

- Cooperation

When they come to the tutorial, these questions form the basis for discussion. That is the strategy I am trying instead and I normally break them into little groups of 3 or 4 and get them to discuss and then at least through that way they are talking to each other and at least you can get some feed back from each of the groups. (Bimal, turn 8)

Course teachers expected the learners to work in groups, for performances and tutorial activities. Similar views on cooperation were indicated by Anthony (turn 12), Ann (turn, 12).

The course teachers also encouraged the learners to use strategies to work with peers in obtaining information.

To sum up, interviews with the course teachers showed their expectations of the learners in terms of strategy use. They expected their learners to use these strategies to develop their listening skills

The course teachers also provided details of distance teaching experiences that they had at USP. These are discussed below.

*Distance experience: teaching (C5)*

Because the selection of course teachers had been due to their distance teaching experience, all the teachers presented useful information on distance teaching at USP. Feelings of anonymity, inability to know whether the learners comprehended what was being discussed in the course and isolation faced by learners were the issues discussed by the course teachers. In fact, two course teachers discussed these issues in relation to each other. Bimal thought that due to the anonymity and isolation faced by the learners, interaction with learners was difficult. This made it difficult for teachers to know the learners' understanding of the subject matter and thus made distance teaching very challenging. Anthony, who felt that distance learners did not have the same amount of motivation as on-campus learners, expressed similar feelings. Contrary to this, two course

teachers felt that the isolation made learners eager to have some form of contact, and learners were more attentive when given opportunities. According to them, distance learners were better stimulated to perform well. Excerpts detailing these views are provided below:

*Lack of contact as a negative factor*

Very challenging I think you know sometimes when an unfortunate thing is that these students are just like identity numbers and you really do not know whom you are talking... So you really do not know what is happening either they are following, understanding, or processing the information. You really do not know so it is very difficult. (Bimal, turn 6)

“Well, the distance learners may feel isolated, distanced and not have the same kind of motivation as the on campus learners, I feel” (Anthony, turn 6).

Added to this was an implication of lack of overall academic skills amongst them, as mentioned by Bimal. He felt that the whole distance learning system was a very depersonalised experience and in some cases the learners were not able “to interpret even simple sentences” (Bimal, turns 6; 8; 12).

*Lack of contact as a motivating factor*

“They’re very enthusiastic and very keen and I think they’re kind of relieved to have finally a teacher that they can interact with.” (Fiona, turn 14)

They are much better listeners actually, because they know that they have you for a very short period. Everything you say they write down. They are not at that stage where they can distinguish between what is important and what is not important as well and so they are not necessarily good at selection of information.

(Ann, turn 24)

Thus, course teachers saw the lack of contact as a positive as well as a negative factor. The lack of contact with learners, the inability to put a face to the identification numbers, the inability to know the learners all made distance teaching seem to be not a very caring mode of study. On the other hand, some course teachers felt that the lack of opportunity to have regular contact with teachers created eagerness amongst distance learners, thus learners had opportunity to contact their teachers, they were very attentive.

#### *Other issues (C6)*

Similar to the views expressed by study skills teachers, course teachers' views included discussion of issues that were not directly related to listening skills but to the importance of this study on USP. These were related to the use of English amongst learners at USP, the academic skills of learners, problems associated with distance tutorials and the responsibilities of course teachers. These are discussed below.

#### *English as a second, third or fourth language*

Course teachers showed their awareness of the fact that English was not the first language for learners at USP. During the interview, it emerged that they also knew about the amount of exposure to English that the learners had.

English is their second, third or fourth language and sometimes they are not really exposed to much English outside of the school system and in their daily lives.

Therefore, it is understandable that many of them have problems and still need to work on these skills at University level like all students at other universities.

(Fiona, turn 18)

### *Academic skills*

A matter that is closely associated with the status of English in USP countries is the dependency on the study skills course (LL114) and this matter also was discussed:

We think that LL114 is the saviour of all other things and as soon as they move to the other courses, we really do not do any requirement analysis, you know, what are the needs, so there is no needs analysis done. (Bimal, turn 16)

### *Limitation of time*

As did the study skills teachers, the course teachers who had travelled to centres for tutorials or had conducted satellite tutorials expressed concern about the amount of time set aside for these tutorials:

“These are the students whom we see at least once or twice in a semester” (Bimal, turn 8).

An hour, ... I have increased my tutorials to 2 to 3 hours so that gives a lot of time for some of these kinds of activities but I know other visiting tutors would possibly stay an hour or an hour and a half. (Bimal, turn10)



Similar views on limitations to tutorial time were expressed by Fiona (turn 14), Anthony (turn 6).

#### *Class size*

Apart from limited time spent with distance learners, the teachers also mentioned the class size they had to cope with during centre-based tutorials or when they visited centres for occasional tutorials. “But then some of the classes are very large you know on a face-to-face tutorial like 50 students so it’s very difficult” (Bimal, turn 8). “In big classes it may not be possible to go adjust to every single individual but you at least try” (Fiona, turn 32).

#### *Responsibility of course teachers*

Fiona, felt that teachers had a responsibility towards their learners and should be helping them in developing all the academic skills if they found the learners lacking them (turn 32). Bimal mentioned the lack of resources and facilities at USP and thought that more could be done in this area to improve the teaching at USP. He also mentioned the responsibility of teachers to view their learners as individuals rather than a collective group and to see to the weaknesses that these learners had (turn 14). These two course teachers suggested that subject teachers should also be teaching skills necessary for their courses.

*Summary of course teachers' interviews*

This section began with looking at the views provided by course teachers at USP. The course teachers gave both specific as well as broad definition of listening skills (C1). Their expectations from the learners in terms of listening skills (C2) were similar to those of the study skills teachers, since they expected the learners to bring some skills to their course as they would be needed for activities such as for performance, mock court cases, seminar presentations and class discussions. Course Teachers also showed awareness of the listening skills needed in their courses (C3). The need differed with courses since there was more listening skills needed in participatory courses such as Theatre Arts and Law courses. Thus, a course teachers' perception of which learning strategies their learners should be using in order to develop their listening skills was also discussed (C4). Course teachers articulated their beliefs about distance learning at USP and how distance learning at USP affected the learners at USP (C5). These teachers believed that distance learning was a positive as well as a negative factor where learning was concerned. Some teachers felt that they were unable to know their learners due to the learners' isolation, other teachers felt that whenever there was any contact with the learners, there was enthusiasm on the part of the learners, which a positive factor for learning. They also discussed the status of English in USP countries, the dependence on the study skills for teaching the academic skills, and problems the course teachers faced during distance tutorials. Additionally, responsibilities as teachers were also expressed (C6). It was apparent from their responses during the interview that the course teachers' understandings of listening skills were not as specific as those given by the study skills teachers. Course teachers also expected the learners to bring the skills to their courses; it

was a requirement because there were activities carried out in the course for which listening skills were necessary. No teaching of skills was carried out in the courses.

The next section will discuss views expressed by the past learners during the interview.

#### **4.1.3. Views of Past Learners**

Themes emerging from the interviews with the nine past learners at USP revealed their definition of listening skills (D1), their experience of listening skills (D2), the uses of listening skills in their academic and daily life (D3), and strategies they used for facilitating listening (D4). The past learners also provided details of their distance learning experiences at USP (D5) as well as other issues of importance about studying at USP (D6). Each of these themes is discussed in detail below. A case study of two distance learners is also included in this section.

##### *Definition of listening skills (D1)*

The past learners who were interviewed defined listening skills in relation to academic activities, that is with a skill-specific meaning. However, there was a broad meaning such as in relation to one's auditory level also given.

“It is basically the ability one has when one is attending lectures or interacting or any situations where it is very critical to make good notes or something.” (Albert, turn 8)

Listening skills is to observe to absorb what is being taught. It is on concentration. I think that it is of fundamental importance. As for me, I think I

have to take the front seat too as I am getting older I need to. My hearing is not bad but you know sometimes I feel that. (Leni, turn 8)

*Listening skills: experiences (D2)*

The past learners responded to the question on listening skills experiences in relation to the study skills course. Their answers covered a range of differences they felt existed in their listening skills experiences, and what experiences they felt they had gained from the course:

“My own listening skills after completing the course I find myself in a better position than before.” (Albert, turn 10)

I listened to the cassette on interpreting texts and I am glad because when you interpret text and it is all very complicated and jumbled, I am now able to jot down the points, link ideas. I manage to interpret text and get down basically what it is all about and try not to be overwhelmed by all the big words. (Thelma, turn 20)

*Listening skills: uses (D3)*

Responses from the past learners' uses of listening skills pointed to the fact that they used listening skills for academic and daily life activities. Since the learners were in different professions, their use of listening skills differed as well:

In the workplace and during my lectures I need to listen very effectively to the lecturers. During lectures and classes, to be able to pick out the points that I need to take note of as well as to listen very carefully to my work colleagues around here to communicate to each other in work terms etc. (Jane, turn 8)

“I am a journalist and I have been practising for some years and taking down notes of what I hear, to be there and listening always” (Thelma, turn 6).

*Strategies: used (D4)*

Past learners discussed listening strategies based on their experiences of learning the study skills course, as well as on their everyday experiences of listening. As mentioned in the previous section, depending on their profession varying degrees of listening skills were required of them. Those who needed to interview people, or had jobs that required interacting with others mentioned the extensive use of listening skills. Those who were still studying required listening skills for their study purposes.

Metacognitive strategies

During the interview past learners spoke of using four out of the seven metacognitive strategies for their listening skills. Four learners discussed the use of metacognitive strategies in terms of academic use. Another learner related listening skills in terms of auditory perception of listening skills. Excerpts of these are provided below:

- Advance organiser

I think before I go to or have to listen to any topic I do a bit of research on the topic and then I listen so that when I am listening I am able to pick out what is important and what's just the additional, so I take down notes at the same time. (Thelma, turn 10)

- Selective attention

I listen specifically to what the lecturer is saying. What I have learnt is to listen for example first of all, so I think oh I see that is one of the points then I need to take note of that. And then they say secondly the other point, I take note of that. (Ian, turn 10)

- Self-management

“I now know when someone speaks I turn to listen attentively to be able to get what they are saying” (Jane, turn 14).

- Self-evaluation

When I am listening to someone talking, I pick out what I can remember and what I think is the key point they are trying to say, and then later, when I sit back by myself, I try to analyse and remember or recall. (Jane, turn 10)

One past learner provided the strategy of self-evaluation, with a different perspective on auditory perception:

“I have to take the front seat too as I am getting older” (Leni, turn 8).

Past learners showed awareness of metacognitive skills for learning even when they were not particularly discussing them as strategies they used.

### Cognitive strategies

Of the ten cognitive strategies past learners identified, there were three strategies that they used to develop their listening skills. In all cases their strategy use was associated with academic activities.

- Imagery

“I would pick up specific words; create an image for what the person is saying” Albert, turn 14).

- Note-taking

Note taking is one of the techniques, which I use almost every day. For instance, I have classes almost every day so that is one of the techniques I use every day. (Ian, turn 24)

- Resourcing

“I improved my English by speaking with my friends and telling stories whenever time permits. Or even watching videos or films and then to listen to what they say” (Ian, turn 20).

Past learners referred to a variety of cognitive strategies that they used for listening.

These strategies included using tactics that required their knowledge of second language (note-taking and resourcing).

### Social and affective strategies

Use of two social and affective strategies was mentioned by the past learners during the interview.

- Seeking clarification

“If I was given the opportunity I would ask straight after the talking. If I didn't get the time I think I will have to sit back and think” (Jane, turn 12).

- Cooperation

“I ask my class mates or the one sitting beside for what the lecturer is saying” (Ian, turn 12).

Past learners' use of social and affective strategies depended on their opportunities to use the facilities available for distance learning at USP. All the learners who had enrolled in the study skills course at the Vanuatu campus attended the centre based and/or satellite tutorials there. Thus, a tutor was available to discuss their problems with them. They also practiced and presented their seminar presentations during these sessions. Learners in urban areas in Fiji had similar facilities where they could attend centre-based tutorials, or satellite tutorials or experience the visit of a tutor from the Suva campus. Learners in other parts of Vanuatu and in remote areas of other countries that USP serves did not have such opportunities. However, regardless of the differences in the facilities, opportunities and use of the course material, all past learners showed awareness of listening skills and discussed using listening strategies that helped them in their learning.



Two past learners used the interview setting to discuss the issue of the remoteness distance learners face. The details they provided are mentioned below as a short case study, under the section on distance experience: learning.

*Distance experience: learning (D5)*

Tevita and Francis (See Table 3), a couple, were enrolled at USP's Suva campus in Semester 2, 2005 and about to complete their Bachelor of Education (Primary) degree. In order to qualify for the in-service scholarship, they completed most of their courses by distance and came on campus to complete those courses that were not offered in the distance mode. They had enrolled for the study skills course very early in the programme, while still in Samoa. They taught at a primary school on a remote island. The island does not have electricity or regular telephone connections. Weekly or fortnightly boat trips are made to collect mail, food and other material. The school they taught in had a generator that could be used to supply electricity if it was working or had the fuel. When these two were enrolled for the course, they were the only two on the island doing the study skills course, thus they had just each other to rely on in case of doubts. The Samoa centre director used to send videos and audio copies of the satellite tutorials but hearing or viewing these materials depended on the availability of the electricity or fuel. Not having anyone else to share their views or others to talk to on course related matters meant they felt very isolated. When asked how different learning at the Suva campus for them was, both had similar things to say:

The first thing that I noticed was all these different accents. I find it very hard to understand, especially if he talks very fast, but now I am sort of getting used to it

... It is just the matter of getting to know them and understand the way they talk  
 ... I never had the chance to speak to one before. It was mostly *faaSamoans*<sup>3</sup> that  
 I speak to and we understand each other very well. Now I am here and listen to all  
 the different accents. (Francis, turn 4)

“Yes and probably when we come here then when we actually faced the tutor and the  
 lecturer it would not have been so difficult” (Tevita, turn 16).

On the other hand, distance learning was not any different from on-campus learning for  
 those in town areas, since they had all the facilities and resources at hand. (See Table 3.)  
 The initial analysis of 19 past learners’ interview transcripts showed that 14 of them had  
 participated in either one or both the centre and satellite tutorials. Yet, four learners  
 (including the two discussed above) had not been able to participate in any of the satellite  
 and centre tutorials, due to their remoteness. Learners who attended tutorials were able to  
 use social and affective strategies for peer discussions, and also direct queries and  
 questions to their teachers.

The past learners also commented on other issues at USP such as those related to distance  
 tutorials, importance of academic skills and the format of the listening material supplied  
 for the course. These are discussed below:

---

<sup>3</sup> *faaSamoans* (those who do things in the Samoan way, who follow Samoan custom).is the term used to  
 discuss the indigenous group from Samoa.

### *Other issues (D6)*

Issues related to the importance of study skills and the EAP course for effective learning across all programmes at USP were also discussed by the past learners during their interview. Three of these issues have been included below:

#### *Length of centre tutorials*

Those learners who attended the weekend tutorials at the centres felt that travelling to the centre for just a one-hour tutorial was not viable. Many felt that instead of a one-hour weekly tutorial, a longer fortnightly tutorial would be better for those who had to travel long distances.

#### *Importance of study skills at USP*

Jane, a student from Vanuatu, felt that the study skills tutors should include the importance of the skills taught by the course for general tertiary study. She felt that the learners did not realise the importance of these skills while taking the course and thus did not take learning the skills seriously enough.

#### *Listening material*

Other comments made by the past learners included making the audio material also available in compact discs, since most learners used computers at the centres and could use these for listening to the course material.

#### *Summary of past learners interviews*

Analysis of interview transcripts of nine past learners at USP revealed their understanding of listening skills (D1). They were able to provide specific definition of listening skills. Past learners were also able to discuss their experiences of listening skills (D2). Past learners responded to the experience of listening skills in terms of differences they felt in their listening skills after completing the study skills course. The past learners, in terms of their academic and professional needs, discussed the use of listening skills (D3). Those who were working referred to the use of listening skills in their work, such as for reporting news (Thelma) or in court cases (Pravin). The strategies that past learners used for their listening skills (D4) were closely related to their professions and the demand for listening skills that their job required. However, a past learner (Leni) also discussed the skills necessary for auditory perception. The distance learning experiences (D5) mentioned by the past learners can be associated with the facilities and opportunities they had access to at USP. Those learners who were able to visit the centre used more facilities and opportunities than those who stayed in remote areas. Their use of social and affective strategies for tutorial activities was also evident. Other issues provided by the past learners were similar to suggestions for improvement of facilities and learning by distance at USP (D6).

#### **4.1.4. Views of Present Learners**

The themes emerging from the interviews with ten present learners at USP showed the present learners' definition of listening skills (E1), their experience of listening skills (E2), and their use of listening skills (E3). The present learners referred to the strategies they used to develop their listening skills (E4) as well as their experiences of learning by

distance at USP (E5). Other issues mentioned by the present learners during the interviews included their suggestions for the listening material and comments on tertiary level study. These suggestions have been included under this section (E6). Each of these themes is discussed below.

### *Definition of listening skills (E1)*

In no case did present learners' proffer a definition relating to academic activities. Thus, the present learners' definition has been categorised as a broad definition of listening skills.

“The ability to communicate confidently” (Betty, turn 4).

Aaron discussed listening skills including non-verbal expressions as well: “I think listening needs a lot of concentration, 100% concentration, what a person is saying, actually noting down what he is saying and gestures he is making you know, expressions that all is what listening is” (Aaron, turn 6).

According to Arun, listening is related to understanding: “The ability to grasp what someone is saying, trying to understand it” (Arun, turn 4).

Yvonne linked listening to “paying attention to the person talking, and trying hard to understand what that person was saying” (turn 4).

Emily related it to “trying to capture the mood to the maximum from the presenter” (turn 4).

Thus, the present learners had a variety of understandings of listening skills and responded to the questions on this matter with a broad definition's. The past learners had provided definitions that were more specific.

*Listening skills: experiences (E2)*

Present learners provided their views on their experiences of listening skills, including their perception of how good their listening skills are. The learners' self-perceptions of listening skills included the beliefs that their listening skills were not very good, good or average; none of the learners felt that their listening skills were excellent: "It's not very good but the tutorials are helping me" (Arun, turn 6).

"In fact I am not a very good listener. Sometimes I have ideas of my own and then I compare it with the ideas of the tutor and then I try to configure them" (Mathew, turn 6).

Lily provided a scale out of 100 for her listening skills: "Seventy to eighty percentage" (turn 10) and felt that she was a good listener most of the time.

"I have really improved on it because with this course I have to capture as much as possible to help with my written work" (Emily, turn 6).

All the learners felt that the course was helping them and they expected to become better listeners by the time they completed the course.

*Listening skills: uses (E3)*

Depending on the learners' profession, a variety of responses was given on how much listening was required on a daily basis.

Aaron felt he needed many listening skills for his job:

A lot, and non-verbal expression too. You have to ask him again what he is saying. Sometimes the person is saying something but his facial expression is not consistent with what that person is saying. (Aaron, turn 10)

Similarly, Mathew felt he needs to listen at his job:

During my tutorial and in my job situation and in all the kinds of situations, like the cases which are coming in since I am an estate manager, and since it deals with land, you have to get to the bottom of the story and you really need to listen very attentively to it. (Mathew, turn 8)

Present learners who were schoolteachers expressed similar needs for using listening for their profession. A present learner addressed the use of listening skills in an auditory perception context. According to Arun, when he had to listen to problems discussed by clients and co-workers associated with mechanical problems, he had to listen to them and listen to the sound of the machines in order to understand what the problem was. He worked in a very noisy environment and felt that he had to listen very hard when talking to people.

*Strategies: used*

Interviews with the present learners revealed that they used a variety of strategies for listening. Their responses ranged from activities such as note taking, visualising the information with something, going through the information mentally afterwards, and preparing oneself before the classes.

### Metacognitive Strategies

Present learners referred to three out of the seven metacognitive strategies during their interview. Three of these were discussed in relation to their academic uses, while the other two were for general or professional use.

- Advance organiser

“I try to follow what someone is saying, in tutorials, I revise beforehand to help me follow” (Lizzie, turn 12).

- Self-evaluation

“Sometimes I have ideas of my own and then I compare it with ideas of the tutor and then I try to configure them” (Mathew, turn 6).

- Selective attention

Sometimes you have to go down, break down the words and then understand what the other person is trying to tell. Therefore, if your listening is good then you will be able to understand what this person is trying to tell you. (Yvonne, turn 10)

“First you have to pay attention to the person and try hard and understand what that person is saying. I mean make your own decision, listening to what a person is talking about” (Yvonne, turn 4).



Present learners provided details of the metacognitive strategies that they used for their listening skills. A mixture of academic, general and professional uses was discussed. Unlike the past learners, the present learners did not indicate much academic use of metacognitive strategies.

### Cognitive strategies

Present learners referred to three of the ten cognitive strategies during their interviews. The most common strategy mentioned was note taking. Other strategies included reference to the use of imagery, resourcing and repetition as strategies used for developing their listening skills.

- Note-taking

“Sometimes I ask them to repeat and also by noting down the key points of what they are saying” (Mathew, turn 10).

“Sometimes I write down reminders and notes of what I am listening to” (Diana, turn 8).

“I ask them to stop and repeat what they are telling me” (Betty, turn 16).

One learner discussed how he listened to tape recordings for another course and did note taking from them. He wrote notes while listening to the recordings and when faced with difficulties, he would rewind the tape to listen again. “If I did not understand any portion I would just rewind it, go back to listen to that again” (Aaron, turn 24).

- Imagery

I try to visualise it. Sometimes I put it in perspective such as maybe something funny associated with whatever was going on then. That is how I remember or may be I try to remember different words and that is how I recall things. (Betty, turn 12)

- Resourcing

“I have used the cassettes and as I go by it like listening to that, and reference materials are there which is very useful” (Yvonne, turn18).

Present learners implied that using note taking was a cognitive strategy. In most situations, they referred to cognitive strategy use for academic purposes.

### Social and affective strategies

All the present learners who were interviewed attended tutorials. Probably based on this fact, the learners mentioned the use of cooperation between other members of a tutorial.

- Cooperation

“Ask questions. I am not that confident and I am shy so if I cannot ask the tutor, I ask my friends” (Lily, turn 18).

I have to see what others are trying to express like what they are trying to say. If I do not understand, I ask some of my friends and others and if I am not able to listen then I ask the person to repeat whatever he is saying.  
(Shelly, turn 14)

Present learners discussed using social and affective strategies for their listening skills. However, the learner who referred to the use of questions for clarification was discussing a lack of confidence

The next section discusses the learners' distance learning experiences.

#### *Distance experience: learning (E5)*

Since all of the present learners interviewed attended either/or both centre based and satellite tutorials, their experience of distance learning was very different from some of the past learners who were interviewed. As a result, no comments about remoteness, isolation or lack of interaction were mentioned during the interviews. These learners hinted at their satisfaction of attending centre and satellite tutorials. There was an eagerness for attending tutorials, and participating in discussions during the tutorials.

#### *Other issues (E6)*

Comments of general importance concerning studying at USP were discussed during the interviews with the present learners. Three present learners mentioned the level of satisfaction derived from tertiary studying.

#### *Satisfaction of tertiary studying*

Lily, who was teaching in a primary school, felt that the course was helping her: "I am happy and satisfied that I am working on improving myself to become a better person."

(Lily, turn 38). Arun, who works in a non-academic environment, also expressed similar views: “I am enrolled for a university course now so I expect the course will help me more when I have to attend lectures” (Arun, turn 24).

Other learners mentioned the usefulness of the course, especially for improving their writing skills and building their confidence for tertiary studies. Another point made by a learner was the importance of the course being done in the early stages of one’s study: “It’s a good course; I should have done it before my law courses” (Aaron, turn 30). Thus, personal variables such as confidence and usefulness of listening skills for different purposes were discussed.

Shelly discussed contextual variables in the form of the quality of the audio material during the interview. She found the quality of the listening material poor and was unable to get a replacement so gave up on the listening activities altogether.

#### *Summary of present learners’ interviews*

The interviews with the present learners of the study skills course highlighted their definition of listening skills (E1). Unlike the past learners, their definitions were not specific. Their explanations of experiences of listening skills (E2) were also not as definitive as those of the past learners. Present learners’ use of listening skills in their academic and daily life (E3) were similar to those of the past learners since most of were also working and expressed similar uses of listening skills. The strategies they used for listening were also mentioned (E4). Both groups of learners referred to a similar number

of learning strategies. The present learners' distance learning experience (E5) was very different from that of past learners who were interviewed. Unlike the past learners, none of these learners studied in isolation. All present learners had the experience of either or both centre and satellite tutorials. The other issues (E6) that present learners discussed were related to the positive attitude they had towards tertiary studies and indicated satisfaction with their learning experience.

#### **4.1.5. Summary of Interview Data Analysis**

The summary of the results from the four groups of participants are discussed according to the six themes yielded from the data analysis.

##### *1. Definition of listening skills*

All the four groups of participants were able to provide definitions of listening skills but the definitions differed in precision. Study skills teachers and past learners were able to give definitions of listening skills that were more closely associated with the definitions given in the literature on listening skills, such as listening skills relationship with comprehension of heard information. Their definitions were also closely related to their use in an academic context. Course teachers and present learners needed more probing by the interviewer in order to provide a specific definition of listening skills. One course teacher and one present learner were initially unable to provide a definition of listening skills.

##### *2. Listening skills expectations and experiences*

Both groups of teachers (study skills teachers and course teachers) expected their learners to bring listening skills for their courses. Both groups of teachers specified the activities for which listening skills would be necessary such as for note-taking, seminar presentations, and discussions. Study skills teachers discussed how they developed their learners' listening skills. However, course teachers did not develop their learners' listening skills to match the needs of their courses even though they expected their learners to use these skills in their courses.

Both past and present learners provided details of their experiences of listening skills. Their experiences differed since past learners were able to compare their listening skills before and after completing the course. Present learners showed optimism that their listening skills would improve during the course. They did not indicate as much confidence in their listening skills as the past learners.

### *3. Listening skills: needs and uses*

That listening skills are needed in study skills as well in other courses, was mentioned by both groups of teachers. For courses that required more aural and oral activities, such as Theatre Arts and Law courses, there was a need expressed for more use of listening skills. These included discussions on more interaction with learners, practice of subject specific skills such as for performances and court cases, and note taking practice. Study skills teachers knew that the learners needed to be taught listening skills; however, they attributed their inability to teach listening skills to the lack of contact and limited

interaction time with the learners. For them, teaching listening skills could be made easier by more face-to-face contact with the learners.

Both groups of learners discussed their use of listening skills in relation to their academic and daily life, such as for studying and working in their profession. Those who were studying by distance and who had less contact with other learners and teachers made less use of listening than those who were working or were able to attend tutorials

#### *4. Strategies: perceived and used*

It was noticed that out of a total of 20 learning strategies, five were referred to by the study skills teachers and six strategies were referred to by the course teachers. Both groups of teachers referred to one metacognitive strategy (advance preparation) while CTs also referred to self-monitoring. Study skills teachers additionally mentioned three cognitive strategies: deduction, note taking and resourcing; and one social and affective strategy: cooperation. Course teachers referred to three cognitive strategies: auditory preparation, note taking, repetition and resourcing; and to the same social and affective strategy (cooperation) as the study skills teachers. It needs to be noted that the study skills teachers referred to their responsibility of teaching the strategies to the learners. Course teachers thought that their learners should be using the learning strategies but they gave no implication that they actually taught these strategies at any time.

Altogether, past learners referred to nine learning strategies and the present learners to seven. Past learners discussed four metacognitive strategies: advance organiser, selective

attention, self-management and self-evaluation. They also referred to three cognitive strategies: imagery, note taking, and resourcing. Two social and affective strategies: seeking clarification and cooperation were also mentioned. Present learners discussed three metacognitive strategies: advance organiser, self-evaluation and selective attention. They also referred to the same three cognitive strategies note taking, imagery and resourcing that past learners had discussed. Present learners mentioned only one social and affective strategy: cooperation. Therefore, the learners discussed using more learning strategies than what their teachers perceived and expected them to be using.

##### *5. Distance experience: teaching and learning*

Even though the selection of both groups of teachers was based on their distance teaching experiences, differences in their experiences were evident. All teachers used a variety of facilities for teaching. Study skills teachers raised concerns about the lack of interaction they had and how it was related to their inability to teach listening skills to the learners. Course teachers provided views on both motivational and non-motivational factors of lack of contact with the learners. The study skills teachers discussed the nature of Pacific Islands learners.

Both groups of learners discussed their experiences of studying by distance at USP. The case study of two past learners highlighted the remoteness and isolation faced by distance learners. Since all the present learners interviewed had the experiences of centre and satellite tutorials, they raised no concerns in this regard. However, there were other



present learners enrolled for the course in similar situations as the one identified by remote past learners.

#### *6. Other issues*

All the groups of participants discussed issues that were closely related to distance learning and to learning in the region more generally. The teachers discussed the way English is used as a second, third or fourth language in the region. Differences in the accents of teachers that learners met were also raised as a concern. Another concern that both groups of teachers had was related to the differences in the academic level of learners at USP. When conducting distance tutorials, limitations of time and the class sizes for the distance tutorials were also mentioned. Course teachers referred to the teachers' responsibilities in relation to skills necessary in the courses that they taught; however, it was evident that no skill teaching occurred in these courses.

The learners provided their views on the importance of having study skills for studying at tertiary level. The learners also discussed the quality and format of the audio material provided by the course.

This section of the chapter discussed and illustrated the six themes that emerged from the interview analysis. The next section explores the questionnaire data followed by the results revealed by the course material analysis.

## **4.2. Analyses of Questionnaire Data**

This section of the results will be in two parts. The first part provides details of the analysis of the closed questions (Section 4.2.1) and the second part the results of the open-ended questions (Section 4.2.2) of the questionnaire completed by the two groups of learners.

### **4.2.1. Closed Questions**

This section serves as a statistical explanation of the results derived from the closed questions. As discussed in the data analysis section (Section 3.7.2.) 13 questions were listed under three main categories: self-perception, self-evaluation and distance learning experience. The statistically analysed results obtained from these questions have been included in Tables 6, 7, and 8 below. The past learners' responses have been included in Table 6, and the present learners' responses in Table 7. The third table (Table 8) shows the results of the responses from both groups that had a mean of above four. In each of these tables, the mean and standard deviation for all items have been included.

A discussion based on the categories under which the results have been organised, is then carried out in four sections: Section 4.2.1.1 to Section 4.2.1.4.

#### *1. Self-perception*

Earlier, in Section 3.4.2 the content of the self-perception questions included in the closed questions were discussed. These questions provided both groups of learners' self-perception of English use in academic, daily and in future pursuits. For each question, there were several items within each question. For example, Question 12 had 5 items.

## 2. *Self-evaluation*

Questions 13 and questions 15–16 required the informants to provide personal ratings of their proficiency in English use in terms of everyday communication, daily life activities and academic activities.

## 3. *Distance learning experience*

The activities in the study skills course for which listening is required were selected for the questions in this section. Informants were requested to provide their self-perception as well as self-evaluation for activities such as listening to the audiocassettes, participating in centre and satellite tutorials and discussions.

The following tables show the learners' responses for various activities listed under each question. The questions are listed under the three categories discussed above rather than in the order, they appeared in the questionnaires. Table 6 containing the results of the past learners can be found first and then Table 7 which has the results of the present learners.

To read the tables, scan from left to right and each row will tell the question for a particular category. For example, Category 1 (Self-perception) has three questions. These questions have several items included. The main ideas of these items have been written in columns next to the question. The mean and standard deviation for each item can be found in the rows below these questions. For example, for Question 12 past learners had to provide their responses to using English for watching TV/video/films (Q12a); for

listening to radio (Q12b), communicating with family member (Q12c), communicating with domestic helpers (Q12d), and socialising with friends and colleagues (Q12e). (The three main categories used for the analysis and the mean over four have been highlighted in the table.)

**Table 6: Past learners' questionnaire responses (n = 19)**

<b>Self-perception</b>						
<b>Q12 English use (Daily life)</b>	a. Watching TV/Video/ Films	b. Listening to radio	c. Communicating with family members	d. Communicating with domestic helper	e. Socialising with friends/ colleagues	
<b>Mean score</b>	4.157895	3.842105	2.894737	3.368421	3.368421	
<b>StDev</b>	1.30227	0.898342	1.559727	1.256562	1.256562	
<b>Q14 English use (academic)</b>	a. Participating in lectures	b. Participating in extra-curricula activities/ functions	c. Participating in panels/meetings	d. Discussing academic work with colleagues	e. Listening to lectures, discussions or seminars	
<b>Mean score</b>	4.578947	3.368421	3.701926	3.894737	4.421053	
<b>StDev</b>	0.837708	1.42246	1.474937	1.100239	1.070607	
<b>Q17 English use after university-</b>	a. Helped in my profession	b. My note-taking is better now	c. My listening skills are better	d. I can follow conversations better		
<b>Mean score</b>	4.473684	4.473684	4.157895	4.210526		
<b>StDev</b>	0.772328	0.696692	0.83421	0.854982		
<b>Self-evaluation</b>						
<b>Q13 Proficiency for everyday communication</b>	a. Reading	b. Listening	c. Speaking	d. Writing	e. Grammar	f. Vocabulary
<b>Mean score</b>	4.473684	4.105263	3.789474	3.842105	3.578947	3.684211
<b>StDev</b>	0.696692	0.737468	0.713283	0.83421	0.901591	0.945905
<b>Q15 Proficiency for daily life activities</b>	a. Watching TV/videos/ films	b. Listening to radio	c. Communicating with family members	d. Communicating with domestic helper	e. Socialising with friends/ colleagues	
<b>Mean score</b>	4.421053	4.105263	3.421053	3.736842	4	
<b>StDev</b>	0.692483	0.936586	1.121298	0.733493	0.816497	
<b>Q16 Proficiency for academic activities</b>	a. Participating in lectures	b. Participating in extra-curricula activities/ functions	c. Participating in panels/meetings	d. Discussing academic work with colleagues	e. Listening to lectures, discussions or seminars	
<b>Mean score</b>	4.157895	3.842105	3.736842	3.789474	4.263158	
<b>StDev</b>	0.764719	0.688247	0.733493	1.031662	0.653376	

<b>Distance learning experience</b>						
<b>Q18 Use of DFL Facilities</b>	a. Used course material	b. Used audiocassettes	c. Attended centre tutorial	d. Attended satellite tutorial	e. Participated in discussion	f. Contacted the course tutor/lecturer
<b>Mean score</b>	4.578947	3.052632	4	3.842105	3.157895	2.052632
<b>StDev</b>	0.606977	1.508262	1.290994	1.462994	1.384965	1.352926
<b>Q19 Audio Cassette evaluation</b>						
<b>Mean score</b>	3.157895					
<b>StDev</b>	1.30227					
<b>Q23 Listening activities during tutorials</b>	a. For note-taking activities	b. For listening to (satellite) tutorial	c. For listening to seminar presentations	d. For listening to Q&A between centres/tutor/other learners	e. Participating in discussion/seeking clarification from tutor	
<b>Mean score</b>	4.315789	4.052632	4	3.842105	4.210526	
<b>StDev</b>	1.249561	1.352926	1.290994	1.258887	1.228321	
<b>Q24 Tutorial experience</b>						
<b>Mean score</b>	4.210526					
<b>StDev</b>	0.976328					
<b>Q27 Confidence for LL114</b>	a. When listening to others	b. When taking notes	c. When participating in discussions	d. When giving presentations	e. When asking questions and seeking clarifications	f. When talking to someone
<b>Mean score</b>	3.736842	3.894737	3.421053	3.210526	3.578947	3.789474
<b>StDev</b>	1.097578	1.242521	1.261207	1.357242	1.169795	1.228321
<b>Q28 Confidence in other courses</b>						
<b>Mean score</b>	3.526316					
<b>StDev</b>	1.306753					

#### 4.2.1.1. Past Learners' Responses to the Closed Questions

Table 6: Past learners show the following details:

##### 1. *Self-perception*

For the three questions under the category of self-perception: seven out of 14 items had a mean of above four. Brief details of the results are as follow:

- Past learners implied that they used English most for listening in one daily life activity, which was when watching TV, video and films (Q12a).
- For academic activities, past learners used listening most for two activities, namely when participating in lectures (Q14a) and when listening to lectures, discussions and seminars (Q14e).
- Past learners also believed that the listening skills learned from the study skills course were useful for each of the four activities, i.e. for their profession (Q17a), and specifically for note-taking (Q17b), general listening (Q17c) and following conversations (Q17d). None of the responses had a mean below two.

##### 2. *Self-evaluation*

For the three questions in the category of self-evaluation: seven out of 16 items had a mean of above four. Brief details of the results are as follows:

- Past learners showed that they had a high proficiency in reading (Q13a) and listening (Q13b).

- In the case of daily life activities, the past learners showed that they had a high proficiency for watching TV, videos and films (Q15a), for listening to radio (Q15b), and for socialising with friends and colleagues (Q15e).
- For academic activities, the past learners showed that they had a high proficiency for participating in lectures (Q16a), and for listening to lectures, discussions and seminars (Q16e).

The rest of the responses had a mean of above three.

### *3. Distance learning experience*

For the six questions under the category of distance learning experience: seven out of 12 items had a mean of above four. Brief details of the results are as follows:

- With regard to the distance learning facilities, past learners showed that they used the course materials more than other resources for their study skills course (Q18a) and attended centre tutorials (Q18c).
- The past learners showed that they most frequent use of listening skills was during tutorials for note-taking activities (Q23a), listening to satellite tutorials (Q23b), listening to seminar presentations (Q23c) and participating in discussions, and seeking clarification from the tutor (Q23e).
- Past learners also showed that they had good experience of the tutorials (Q24).

Four other questions had a mean over three. There was only one instance where the mean was around two (Q18f).

Table 7: Present learners' questionnaire responses (n = 153)

<b>Self-perception</b>						
<b>Q12 English use (Daily life) (n=153)</b>	a. Watching TV	b. Listening to radio	c. Communicating with family members	d. Communicating with domestic helper	e. Socialising with friends /colleagues	
<b>Mean score</b>	3.980392	3.718954	3.143791	3.143791	3.633987	
<b>StDev</b>	0.983218	1.126578	1.279485	1.193305	1.011458	
<b>Q14 English use (academic)</b>	a. Participating in lectures	b. Participating in extra-curricula activities /functions	c. Participating in panel /meetings	d. Discussing academic work with colleagues	e. Listening to lectures, discussions or seminars	
<b>Mean score</b>	4.470588	3.928105	4.078431	3.960784	4.51634	
<b>StDev</b>	0.858846	0.967257	1.205958	0.945087	0.744317	
<b>Q17 English use after university- (n=19)</b>	a. Helped in my profession	b. My note-taking is better now	c. My listening skills are better	d. I can follow conversations better		
<b>Mean score</b>	4.601307	4.084967	3.928105	3.915033		
<b>StDev</b>	0.691488	0.850292	0.903972	0.972975		
<b>Self-evaluation</b>						
<b>Q13 Proficiency for everyday communication</b>	a. Reading	b. Listening	c. Speaking	d. Writing	e. Grammar	f. Vocabulary
<b>Mean score</b>	4.222222	3.993464	3.843137	3.69281	3.470588	3.614379
<b>StDev</b>	0.84466	0.790542	0.744432	0.788745	0.811584	0.828157
<b>Q15 Proficiency for daily life activities</b>	a. Watching TV/video/films	b. Listening to radio	c. Communicating with family members	d. Communicating with domestic helper	e. Socialising with friends /colleagues	
<b>Mean score</b>	4.196078	4.091503	3.54902	3.54902	3.869281	
<b>StDev</b>	0.786889	0.701122	1.075695	0.979669	0.92972	
<b>Q16 Proficiency for academic activities</b>	a. Participating in lectures	b. Participating in extra-curricula activities /functions	c. Participating in panel /meetings	d. Discussing academic work with colleagues	e. Listening to lectures, discussions or seminars	
<b>Mean score</b>	4.091503	3.895425	3.803922	3.934641	4.202614	



<b>StDev</b>	0.746567	0.804293	0.960118	0.775218	0.701122	
<b>Distance learning experience</b>						
<b>Q18 Use of DFL Facilities</b>	a. Used course material	b. Used audiocassettes	c. Attended centre tutorial	d. Attended satellite tutorial	e. Participated in discussion	f. Contacted the course tutor/lecturer
<b>Mean score</b>	4.470588	2.830065	4.117647	3.535948	3.712418	2.48366
<b>StDev</b>	0.735015	1.260696	1.208202	1.460111	1.127837	1.219925
<b>Q19 Audio Cassette evaluation</b>						
<b>Mean score</b>	3.542484					
<b>StDev</b>	1.180917					
<b>Q23 Listening activities during tutorials</b>	a. For note-taking activities	b. For listening to(satellite) tutorial	c. For listening to seminar presentations	d. For listening to Q&A between centres/tutor/other learners	e. Participating in discussion/seeking clarification from tutor	
<b>Mean score</b>	4.627451	4.411765	4.228758	4.24183	4.699346	
<b>StDev</b>	0.724409	0.854781	1.085168	0.873786	0.501117	
<b>Q24 Tutorial experience</b>						
<b>Mean score</b>	3.542484					
<b>StDev</b>	1.180917					
<b>Q27 Confidence for LL114</b>	a. When listening to others	b. When doing note-taking	c. When participating in discussions	d. When giving presentations	e. When asking questions and seeking clarifications	f. When talking to someone
<b>Mean score</b>	4.091503	4.058824	3.901961	3.660131	3.797386	3.888889
<b>StDev</b>	0.772551	0.779974	0.894168	1.095225	1.002362	0.921637
<b>Q28 Confidence in other courses</b>						
<b>Mean score</b>	4.065359					
<b>StDev</b>	0.950576					

#### 4.2.1.2. Present Learners' Responses to the Closed Questions

Table 7: Present learners show the following details:

##### 1. *Self-perception*

Out of the three questions under the category for self-perception: five out of 14 items had a mean of above four. Brief details of the results are as follows:

- Present learners did not give a high self-perception for any of the daily life activities.
- For academic activities, present learners showed that they used most listening skills for participating in lectures (Q14a), participating in panel discussions and meetings (Q14c), and when listening to lectures, discussions or seminars (Q14e).
- Present learners believed that the listening skills learned from the study skills course would be useful for two types of activities, i.e. for their profession (Q17a), and specifically for note taking. (Q17b).

None of responses had a mean below 2 and all other responses had mean above three.

##### 2. *Self-evaluation*

Out of the three questions selected under the category of self-evaluation: five out of 16 items had a mean of above four. Brief details of the results are as follows:

- Present learners felt that they had high proficiency for only one language skill, reading (Q13a).

- In the case of proficiency for daily life activities, the present learners showed they had a high proficiency watching TV, videos and films (Q15a), and for listening to radio (Q15b)
- For academic activities, the present learners showed that they had a high proficiency for participating in lectures (Q16a), and for listening to lectures, discussions and seminars (Q16e).

The rest of the responses had a mean of above three. None of the means were below two.

### *3. Distance learning experience*

Out of the six questions selected under the category of distance learning experience: 10 out of 12 items had a mean of above four. Brief details of the results are as follows:

- With regard to the distance learning facilities, present learners showed that they used the course materials more than other resources for their study skills course (Q18a), and attended centre tutorials (Q18c);
- The present learners showed that they mostly used listening skills for all the activities conducted during tutorials: note-taking activities (Q23a), listening to satellite tutorials (Q23b), listening to seminar presentations (Q23c), listening to questions and answers between centres/tutors and other learners (Q23d), and participating in discussions, and seeking clarification from the tutor (Q23e).
- Present learners also showed that they felt very confident when listening to others (Q27a) and when note-taking (Q27b).

- Present learners also showed they felt a lot more confident during tutorials for other courses (Q28).

Seven other questions had a mean over three. There were two instances where the means were below three (Q18b) and (Q18f).

#### 4.2.1.3. Discussion of Responses

As discussed earlier in Section 3.7.2, a table was created from those questions for which both groups of learners showed a mean of more than four. Table 8 below summarises these responses. Mean<sup>1</sup> in the table refers to the response from the past learners and mean<sup>2</sup> to present learners. The discussion of each group of questions can be found after Table 8 with the interpretation of past learners responses first followed by the interpretation of their responses of the present learners.

**Table 8: Past and Present learners questionnaire responses (mean = >4)**

<b>Self-perception</b>					
<b>Q12 English use (Daily life)</b>	a. Watching TV/Video /Films	<b>(rest of the items had mean below 4)</b>			
<b>Mean score<sup>1</sup></b>	4.157895				
<b>Q14 English use (academic)</b>	a. Participating in lectures	c. Participating in panel /meetings	e. Listening to lectures, discussions or seminars	<b>(rest of the items had mean below 4)</b>	
<b>Mean score<sup>1</sup></b>	4.578947	(below 4)	4.421053		
<b>Mean score<sup>2</sup></b>	4.470588	4.078431	4.51634	<b>(rest of the items had mean below 4)</b>	
<b>Q17 English use after university-</b>	a. Helped in my profession	b. My note-taking is better now	c. My listening skills are better	d. I can follow conversations better	<b>(rest of the items had mean below 4)</b>
<b>Mean score<sup>1</sup></b>	4.473684	4.473684	4.157895	4.210526	
<b>Mean score<sup>2</sup></b>	4.601307	4.084967	(below 4)	(below 4)	
<b>Self-evaluation</b>					
<b>Q13 Proficiency for everyday communication</b>	a. Reading	b. Listening	<b>(rest of the items had mean below 4)</b>		
<b>Mean score<sup>1</sup></b>	4.473684	4.105263			

<b>Mean score<sup>2</sup></b>	4.222222	(below 4)			
<b>Q15 Proficiency for daily life activities</b>	a. Watching TV/videos/films	b. Listening to radio	e. Socialising with friends/colleagues	<b>(rest of the items had mean below 4)</b>	
<b>Mean score<sup>1</sup></b>	4.421053	4.105263	4		
<b>Mean score<sup>2</sup></b>	4.196078	4.091503	(below 4)		
<b>Q16 Proficiency for academic activities</b>	a. Participating in lectures	e. Listening to lectures, discussions or seminars	<b>(rest of the items had mean below 4)</b>		
<b>Mean score<sup>1</sup></b>	4.157895	4.263158			
<b>Mean score<sup>2</sup></b>	4.091503	4.202614			
<b>Distance learning experience</b>					
<b>Q18 Use of DFL Facilities</b>	a. Used course material	c. Attended centre tutorial	<b>(rest of the items had mean below 4)</b>		
<b>Mean score<sup>1</sup></b>	4.578947	4			
<b>Mean score<sup>2</sup></b>	4.470588	4.117647			
<b>Q19 Audio Cassette evaluation</b>	<b>(rest of the items had mean below 4)</b>				
<b>Q23 Listening activities during tutorials</b>	a. For note-taking activities	b. For listening to (satellite) tutorial	c. For listening to seminar presentations	d. For listening to Q&A between centres/tutor/other learners	e. Participating in discussion/seeking clarification from tutor
<b>Mean score<sup>1</sup></b>	4.315789	4.052632	4	(below 4)	4.210526
<b>Mean score<sup>2</sup></b>	4.627451	4.411765	4.228758	4.24183	4.699346
<b>Q24 Tutorial experience</b>		<b>(rest of the items had mean below 4)</b>			
<b>Mean score<sup>1</sup></b>	4.210526				
<b>Q27 Confidence for LL114</b>	a. When listening to others	b. When doing note-taking	<b>(rest of the items had mean below 4)</b>		
<b>Mean score<sup>1</sup></b>	4.091503	4.058824			
<b>Mean score<sup>2</sup></b>	4.065359	<b>(rest of the items had mean below 4)</b>			
<b>Q28 Confidence in other courses</b>					
<b>Mean score<sup>1</sup></b>	(below 4)				
<b>Mean score<sup>2</sup></b>	4.065359				

### *1. Self-perception*

#### Question 12: English use in daily life

This question required learners to provide their perception of English use for daily life activities. Past learners showed that they used English for watching TV/Video/Films (Q12a). They did not show high self-perception for any other items for daily life activities. Present learners did not show high perception of English use for any of the daily life activities.

#### Question 14: English use in academic activities

Question 14 required learners to provide their perception of English use for academic activities. Out of the five items under this question, there was high perception shown for three items. Both groups showed a high perception of English use for participating in lectures (Q14a), and when listening to lectures, discussions and seminars (Q14e). Additionally, present learners showed a high perception of English use for participating in panel discussions and meetings (Q14c).

#### Question 17: English use after university study

This question required learners to provide their perception of English use after university study. Out of the four items that came under this question, high perception was shown for all these items, although not equally by the two groups. While past learners showed a high perception of English use for all the items, present learners showed a high perception for the importance of listening skills' for their profession (Q17a) and for note-taking only (Q17b).

Out of the 14 items under the three questions in this section, past learners showed high perceptions of English use for seven items while the present learners for five items. Thus, past learners showed more perception of English use, for academic and after university study activities. However, there was only one item under daily life activities where they perceived themselves to be using English more; it was for watching TV/video and films.

## *2. Self-evaluation*

Under this category of questions, learners provided their self-evaluation of proficiency for a number of daily life and academic activities.

### Question 13: Proficiency for daily life communication

Out of the six items under this question, a high evaluation of proficiency was given for only two items. Past learners showed that they had a high proficiency for both reading (Q13a) and listening (Q13b) while present learners showed a high proficiency only for reading (Q13a).

### Question 15: Proficiency for daily life activities

Out of the five items under this question, a high proficiency was shown for three items. Past learners showed a high self-evaluation of proficiency for watching TV/Video/Films (Q15a), listening to radio (Q15b), and for socialising with friends and colleagues (Q15e). Present learners also showed a high proficiency for the first two items specified by the past learners but this was not the case not for the latter.

#### Question 16: Proficiency for academic activities

Of the five items under this question, high self-evaluation of proficiency was shown for two items. Both groups of learners felt that they had a high proficiency for participating in lectures (Q 16a) and for listening to lectures, discussions or seminars (Q16e).

Of the 16 items for which self-evaluation of proficiency was requested, high means were shown for seven items. Past learners felt they had a high proficiency for all these seven items, while present learners felt they had a high proficiency for five items. Thus, past learners showed a slightly higher self-evaluation of proficiency than present learners for everyday communication, daily life activities and academic activities.

### *3. Distance learning experience*

Under this category of questions, learners provided their perception of listening skills used for distance learning. As mentioned in Section 4.2.1, in designing the questions, only those resources and facilities were selected for comment for which listening skills were required.

#### Question 18: Use of DFL facilities

There were six items under this question and two of them had a mean of over four. Both groups of learners discussed using the course material (Q18a) and centre tutorial (Q18c).



#### Question 19: Audiocassette evaluation

Neither group of learners showed a high mean for the usefulness of the audiocassettes.

That is, neither group considered the audiocassettes of much use for listening activities in the study skills course.

#### Question 23: Listening activities during tutorials

There were six items under this question out of which high mean was shown for five items by the past learners, and high means for all six items by the present learners. The item which past learners did not indicate a high mean was for listening activities during centre tutorials such as question and answer sessions between centres, with the tutor and with other learners (Q23d).

#### Question 24: Tutorial experience

For this question, learners discussed their experiences of attending the study skills course tutorials. Past learners showed that they had had good tutorial experience while present learners provided a medium (below 3.5) response for their tutorial experience.

#### Question 27: Confidence for LL114

There were six items under this question, and past learners showed they had a high confidence for two of these: these were for when listening to others (Q27a) and for note-taking (Q27b). Present learners showed a high mean for only one item, i.e. when listening to others.

#### Question 28: Confidence for other courses

In this question, learners discussed their confidence for tutorials that they attended for other courses. Past learners showed that they did not feel very confident while present learners showed a high mean, thus signifying their confidence for attending tutorials held for other courses.

#### **4.2.1.4. Summary of Closed Questions**

In total, there were 20 items for which learners were to express their views. Nine items had a high mean for both past and present learners even though both groups did not indicate similar views about their distance learning experience at USP.

Altogether, past learners showed a higher self-perception and self-evaluation of English use for daily life, academic and after university study than present learners. Both groups had similar perceptions of listening skills use for distance learning at USP. The past learners' results also showed English use for daily life activities and a high self-evaluation of proficiency for daily life, academic and after university study activities. The fact that they are now working and know about the use of English for these activities may have been influential in this self-evaluation.

Both groups showed similar views for the resources and facilities used for distance learning of listening skills at USP. In most cases, the limited use of listening material provided by the study skills course was discussed. This listening material will be further discussed in section 4.8 where the course material and audiocassettes will be analysed

and discussed. Below, excerpts of the open-ended questions that were included in the questionnaires are discussed.

#### **4.2.2. Open-ended Questions**

This section serves as a descriptive explanation of the results obtained from the open-ended questions included in the two sets of questionnaires. As discussed in the analysis section (Section 3.7.2.) nine questions were further listed under three main categories: distance learning experience, listening skills and other issues. In the following section some of the more salient examples from these categories will be provided together with the interpretations made of the responses.

##### *1. Distance learning experience*

Learners were requested to provide further details for three questions. These were to find their reasons for using the facilities provided at USP, for attending EAP tutorials at the centre (Q22), reasons for contacting the EAP tutor (Q26), and in relation to their confidence during other tutorials (Q29).

- Reasons for attending EAP tutorials

Sixteen past and present learners gave comments on their reasons for attending the course tutorial. There were two reasons why the learners attended the tutorials. The first was for seeking clarifications and for obtaining further details on the assignments, mid-semester tests and final examination. Since all these responses referred to a course's procedural requirements, they have been categorised as course assessment requirements. The

following are some of their comments: “It helped a lot in doing my assignment”, “To better understand course and exam”, “Discussion with the tutor regarding the assignment”.

The second reason given for attending EAP tutorials was for opportunities to discuss and share information with other learners. This was categorised as the need for cooperation by the learners. The following is an example of their comments: “I find tutorials more useful, i.e. there is more involvement and interaction between students and lecturers, unlike lectures”.

- Reasons for contacting the EAP lecturer/tutor

The learners were also asked to provide further details on why they contacted the course lecturer or tutor. The main reason given was similar to their reasons for attending the tutorials, i.e. for coursework related issues. Thus, their responses were interpreted as relating to details of course assessments. The following are examples of their comments:

“For help to do my assignments and research”, “To help me explain more about the assignment”, “Approval for late submission of assignment”.

It needs to be noted that an earlier question, 18f had sought respondents’ views on contacting the lecturer/tutor. A very low number of respondents from each group had contacted them (mean<sup>1</sup> 2.05; mean<sup>2</sup> 2.48), thus very few provided any reason for contacting the lecturer/tutor for this question.

- Further explanation related to the experience of attending tutorials for other courses.

The learners' views for this question were to find their preparedness for attending the tutorials. The learners showed that they had gained the confidence to communicate in other courses from the study skills course. The following are some of their responses: "I was confident because I learnt a lot through LL114", "LL114 provided, prepared myself with better communication skills", "I understand the course and it gives me the confidence to ask questions and express myself to clarify doubts", "I am shy to ask questions because all the students are not confident in asking questions and discussions. So this lessens my confidential ability to speak out".

## *2. Listening skills*

The interviewer required further information from the learners on listening skills matters, particularly in relation to the listening material supplied with the study skills course material (Questions 20a, Q20b and Q21). Question 25 required further details with regard to development of listening skills as perceived by the learners. Question 31 requested the learners' self-perception on the importance, in the context of other courses, of listening skills taught by the study skills course.

The first three questions were analysed together in relation to the listening material.

- Listening material

A number of learners indicated that they had not listened to the audiocassettes, although few gave reasons why they had not listened to the tapes. Their responses were interpreted as relating to use of listening material. These were associated with its usefulness, its quality and information about the listening material. Only one learner who mentioned listening to the audiocassettes discussed the usefulness of the listening material: "Have listened to the cassettes and found them useful".

Learners who discussed that they had not listened to the audiocassettes gave their reasons in relation to the quality of the listening material, due to lack of information on the listening material, administrative problems and personal reasons. Those reasons given in relation to the quality of the listening material included "Listened to one cassette but did not listen to the other since was unable to understand the content of the cassette". In this case, the comments were related to the quality of the recording rather than the comprehension of the listening material. (The actual words written in the questionnaires were as follows: the audio cassette could not play properly and the taping was unclear thus could not understand it. Cassettes were not clear-cannot get the message across.) These were summed as the inability to understand based on the quality of the cassettes.

The responses given for not listening to the audiocassettes were due to lack of information on the listening material, administrative problems and personal reasons: "Not aware that the course material package included cassettes", "There were not any left in the supply at the centre", "I did not think about them or felt the need to use them",

“Did not have a cassette player to listen with”, “Not yet reached that stage of the course”.

- Development of listening skills

This question was linked to attendance at EAP tutorials and listening skills development as perceived by the learners. The learners who had responded to this question pointed to the fact that the tutorials had helped in the development of their listening skills. The tutorials were seen as places for providing “opportunity for interacting and discussing with the tutor and other learners”, as opportunities to listen to others, for practising and presenting seminars and for comparing views with other learners.

The last question that sought learners’ views on the usefulness of the listening skills taught by the course was associated with the usefulness of listening skills to other courses. For this question, learners provided more or less useful application of the listening skills taught by the study skills course.

Reasons for its usefulness were associated with note-taking skills, listening to seminars or lectures:

“Some of my courses involved long lectures with much information to consider. This course enabled me to analyse the presentation as it proceeds and then take notes”.

“The course helped me to pick up important points while listening to seminar or lecture”.

“The course helps me with relevant listening skills needed for other courses”.

Reasons for the course not being useful for other courses included its lack of teaching specific skills needed in other courses, and not teaching new skills e.g.:

“It was irrelevant for my programme since there was nothing which can go with the field of engineering that I am doing”.

“I have done other courses before this one, had no problems in listening to presentations and feel that some units in this course are a repetition of what I have learnt in high school”.

### *3. Other suggestions (Q32)*

For this question, learners provided responses on both course content as well as course-material related issues. Apart from referring to the lack of listening skills’ usefulness to other courses, learners referred to the better use of the whole study skills course to other courses. This was categorised as a course content issue. Other suggestions were related to the distance course material quality, and the format of the listening material. These were categorised as those associated with course material. Excerpts of both types are provided below:

- Course content

The need for study skills course to teach more subject specific material was suggested:

“More subject specific material so that the units can be useful for other subjects and not only English”.



- Course material

Suggestions for better quality course material were given: “The course material should be bound properly since it ‘wears and tears’ before reaching the centre”.

The format of the listening material was also included in other suggestions. Learners suggested that listening materials should come in both video and CD format instead of as audiocassettes. Those learners who had access to computers at home and at the centres suggested CDs: “Video tapes will be great for interior areas”.

“CDs instead of cassettes since we have access to computers and CD players rather than cassette players”.

#### **4.2.2.1. Summary of Open-ended Responses**

The open-ended questions were more exploratory and provided further details on the issues discussed in the questionnaire. These questions were divided into three main categories: distance learning, listening skills and other issues.

Where distance learning experience was concerned, both groups of learners implied that they attended the tutorials mostly for course assessment details, and for cooperation (Q22 and 26). The tutorials also developed their confidence (Q29).

Listening skills related questions were associated with the listening material, development of the listening skills and of the usefulness of listening skills in other courses. While one learner discussed the usefulness of the listening material, other

learners provided details of their negligence towards the listening material. Reasons for not listening to the listening material were linked to its poor quality and lack of availability of the audio material (Q20a, Q20b, and Q21). Learners also discussed the progress they felt in their listening skills (Q25). All the learners who had responded felt that their listening skills had developed from participation in the tutorials. The usefulness of the listening skills for other courses was discussed from two perspectives: its usefulness and its being of not so much use (Q31). Similar numbers of learners provided views on both sides of the issue.

Other issues discussed by the learners (Q32) were associated with the course content and the course material. Suggestions for changes to the course content and for its relevance to other courses were provided. The quality of the course material and the format of the listening material were discussed in relation to the course material.

This section has provided the statistical and descriptive results obtained from the questionnaire data. The next section looks at the results obtained from the third method, used for data analysis in this study.

### **4.3. Course Material Analysis**

Steps taken for the listening material analysis are discussed below.

#### **4.3.1. Course Material Analysis (Mendelsohn's (1994) Criteria)**

Steps in the course material analysis involved analysing the listening material referred to in the two course books to assess the amount of listening skills taught by the course. This was carried out according to the requirements of listening comprehension course material as discussed by Mendelsohn (1994) (see Appendix 16 for the list of the requirements summarised from the discussion by Mendelsohn, 1994). To follow the analysis, the numbered statements provide the gist of the discussion of Mendelsohn's criteria. The bullet points below these provide details of the features found in the listening material used for the study skills course at USP. There are more than 19 criteria and sub criteria summarised from Mendelsohn's discussion. However, to avoid repeating the responses, only criteria that cover new ideas have been included in the analysis that follows. Details of the content of the listening material have been included in Section 1.2.2.

##### **1. The material should include a large amount of listening.**

According to Mendelsohn (1994), the listening course should include a large amount of actual listening rather than providing only information or discussion on listening.

- There are 180 minutes of listening activity for the whole semester. The first listening tape is about 20 minutes long and the second listening tape about 100 minutes.
- There is a videotape at the centre that learners can view when they visit the centre. This is about 60 minutes long and viewing this is mandatory.

- The semester runs for 15 weeks with supposedly 4 hours per week required for the studying the course. In total, this equals to 60 hours of learning time. In that sense, 180 minutes of semester time spent for listening is not a large amount.

## **2. The material should be spoken English.**

Mendelsohn suggests that listening material should include spoken rather than recordings of “reading of written English” (Mendelsohn, 1994, p. 48).

- Week 5 listening material used for the study skills course at USP is a reading of written English. The other two pieces of listening material (Week 11 Seminar presentations and Week 12 recordings of lectures) are examples of spoken English.

## **3. The material should include dialogue and monologue.**

Most of the L2 listening material contains monologue. This is inconsistent with what L2 learners listen to in real world i.e. interactive dialogue.

Mendelsohn suggests that listening material should include both monologue as well as dialogue and be based on learners’ listening needs.

- All listening material (i.e. Week 5, Week 11 and Week 12) is monologues. All material is for academic listening rather than for real world listening. No needs analysis had been conducted for the course.

#### **4. The content should be appropriate.**

Apart from finding reasons for listening after a needs analysis, Mendelsohn discusses four more features. These include the appropriateness of the listening material to the age of the learners, matching the listening material with the tasks given, checking the style and speed of listening material (if it is spoken), and including a variety of listening material.

- All listening material has been put together with tertiary learners in mind.
- Tasks for the listening activity in Week 5 include a reflective exercise; there are pre and post listening activities for Week 12 listening. No activities are mentioned for Week 11's listening activity.
- The speed of Week 5 listening material is slow since it has been read from written script. Week 11 and Week 12 listening materials are samples from academic situations and are spoken at a natural speed of delivery.

#### **5. The level of difficulty should be carefully set.**

Mendelsohn believes there are 10 features that need to be considered for the level of difficulty: 1) comprehension level; 2) length of the listening passage; 3) organisation of a listening text; 4) skills of the speakers; 5) explicitness of information; 6) familiarity with the speaker's dialect; 7) speed of delivery; 8) amount of extralinguistic and paralinguistic features; 9) familiarity with the topic; and 10) level of interest.

- Week 5 and Week 12 listening material are subject specific (topics discussed at tertiary level), as a result the comprehension level is appropriate for that level.
- As discussed under question 1, the listening passages total 180 minutes of listening time, thus they are not very lengthy. The listening material however has been put in chunks. Apart from one listening material for Week 12 (lecture on Pluralism and Marxism) there are no instructions for stopping, doing activities and then continuing with the listening.
- The passages are well organised with the speakers using cue words, cohesive devices, signal words, and vocabulary appropriate for the level of the listeners.
- The speakers of both Week 5 and Week 12 listening materials are clear and well organised. Week 12 listening materials contained paralinguistic features. All listening materials were easy to comprehend. The information provided in all these listening materials was also explicitly put. There was little redundancy, all necessary information was included.
- The speakers were three teachers from USP based in Fiji; the learners would be familiar with their dialects. However, teachers from all over the world teach at USP. There will be other dialects that learners will be unfamiliar with in real learning situation at USP.
- Since the two listening materials are audiocassettes, learners are unable to see extralinguistic features. There are, however, paralinguistic features such as changes in the tone present in the recordings. Learners can see

some extralinguistic features when they view the video recording of the seminar presentation.

- Not all learners will be familiar with the topics discussed in the listening materials since the topics are very subject specific.
- Related to the learners' familiarity with the topics, the level of interest with the listening material amongst the learners will also differ. Those who are familiar with the topics will find the listening material interesting.

#### **6. Attitude and motivation should be considered.**

Mendelsohn suggests that listening material should interest the listeners and contain activities and tasks that are motivating.

- The activities for the listening section of the course are for practice purposes only. There are no listening tests, yet as a skill developing exercise, they are interesting. Learners who are used to tests and problem solving activities may not find these very motivating or stimulating. All listening material used for the study skills course can be categorised as passive listening material.

#### **7. Listening course should account for different types of listening.**

Mendelsohn suggests the inclusion of a variety of types of listening passages in a listening course; in academic context, these include note taking, listening for gist and grasp of crucial details

- The listening activities have been selected with academic listening in mind, thus note-taking activity, listening for gist, crucial details are included.

**8. A listening course should recognise the importance of prior knowledge.**

Mendelsohn suggests that listening activities should be selected with listeners' prior knowledge in mind. There can be prelistening activities included to allow learners to become aware of what they will be listening to. Listening activities should also enable listeners to hypothesise, predict and infer from what they hear.

- Week 5 listening activity includes making hypotheses, predictions and inferences. There are pre and post listening activities included for Week 12 listening materials.

**9. The students should know what they will be listening for.**

“Students should be aware of questions and tasks in advance of listening” (Mendelohn, 1994, p. 57). Have the students been provided with guidelines and objectives for the listening activities?

- Both Week 5 and Week 12 listening activities have accompanying objectives listed in the course books. There are also lists of questions given that listeners have to answer after listening to the second lecture in Week 12.



### **10. Listening activities should teach, not test.**

Mendelsohn argues that listening courses need not contain tests, but should rather train listeners how to use strategies for listening.

- None of the listening materials used for the study skills course contains comprehension questions.

### **11. The listening tasks should be chosen carefully.**

Mendelsohn provides suggestions on what the listening activities should contain. He includes features such as clearly defined tasks, passage not read but more authentic, different kinds of activities and listening that is interactive. Interactive activities in this instance are defined by Mendelsohn as those where listeners can stop and start listening.

- Apart from Week 12's first listening activity, there are none where learners can stop and start listening again.

### **12. Training should be given in recognising and interpreting the linguistic features.**

Mendelsohn suggests the inclusion of information on linguistic systems, signals, rules of stress/unstress syllables in English and training learners about the linguistic, extralinguistic and paralinguistic signals of English.

- The coursebooks contain notes on transitional words and signals (Khan, 1995, pp. 251-252). However there is no additional information

on rules of stress/unstress, extralinguistic and paralinguistic signals given.

This analysis was based on Mendelsohn's (1994) listening comprehension course criteria. It needs to be noted that no needs analysis had been carried out prior to the development of the study skills course at USP. As a result, learners' needs, ability, proficiency level and level of world knowledge had never been assessed.

This section has provided results of the methods of analysis of listening material used for the study skills at USP. A summary of the course material analysis based on these is discussed below.

#### **4.3.2. Summary of Course Material Analysis**

An analysis based on Mendelsohn's (1994) listening material analysis found the following features:

The course contains very little listening material. The listening for Week 5 was a reading of an article included in the course book. The listening materials especially designed for teaching listening skills were those used for Week 12. The video tape was an optional listening material and could only be viewed at the centre. This limitation may have lead to fewer learners viewing the tape. In addition, as discussed in the interviews with teachers and learners of the study skills course at USP, not all learners may receive the audio tapes at the outset, due to administrative problems such as inadequate stocks, delay

in delivery and poor recording quality. Secondly, it cannot be assumed that learners in remote areas have access to facilities to listen to the tapes. Thirdly, tutors do not get time to focus on the listening component of the course, thus they are unable to use the material as a tutorial activity.

Overall, there were two issues that emerged from the analysis of the listening materials used at USP. The first relates to the content of the listening material, and the second to the availability of the listening material as a resource. These issues are discussed below:

1. The listening materials are monologues and do not contain interactive dialogue.
2. Since the listening materials are ‘content-based’ or subject specific, learners who are starting out with a low level of proficiency and/or limited knowledge on the topics will find the listening materials difficult and uninteresting.
3. The course has been designed without any needs analysis. As a result, learners’ preferred strategies and styles for listening have not been identified. No assessment has been carried out on the learners’ level of world or general knowledge.
4. The listening materials lacked changes in tone, variation in stress and rhythm and visuals for body language.
5. Given the fact that teaching listening skills is only a section of the study skills course, the listening component does not cover all the requirements of a listening comprehension course. However, it does include information required for academic listening discourse such as information for note-taking, seminar presentations, listening to lectures. The course is an EAP course rather than an ESP course, and the

selection of listening material is based on its purpose so it is too specific for a general academic course such as EAP.

6. The availability of the listening material as a resource is an administrative issue.
7. Needs analysis and surveys can provide choices of listening materials that learners prefer.

#### **4.4. Conclusion**

This chapter was divided into three main sections, one each for the three sources of data obtained in the study. The first section began with the discussion of results obtained from the interview data (Section 4.1). The six themes identified for the analysis were first described, followed by excerpts from interviews with each group of participants (Section 4.1.1 to Section 4.1.4). A summary of all the results obtained from the interview data was then provided (Section 4.1.5).

The second section looked at the results obtained from the questionnaire data (Section 4.2). This section was further divided into two parts, one to examine the statistical results from the closed questions (Section 4.2.1) and two, to provide descriptive analysis of the open-ended questions (Section 4.2.2). Section 4.2.1 began with a description of the three categories into which the closed questions were divided for analysis. The responses from both groups of learners were then provided in Section 4.2.1.1 and Section 4.2.1.2. A discussion of the combined results from both groups of learners were presented in Section 4.2.1.3 followed by a summary of results of closed questions in Section 4.2.1.4. The second part of this section (Section 4.2.2) provided the descriptive analysis of the

open-ended questions that were included in the questionnaires. Since the responses for these questions were not very high, a combined analysis of responses obtained from both groups of learners was carried out. The open-ended questions were divided into 3 workable categories and interpretations of each question discussed.

The last section of this chapter (Section 4.3) looked at the course material that is used for the study skills course at USP in 2005. The method of analysis carried out on this material involved checking the content of the listening material against the criteria discussed by Mendelsohn (1994). A summary of the course material analysis was provided in Section 4.3.2.

So far, the three sections of the chapter have examined the results from the interviews, questionnaires and course material. Before ending the chapter, a summary of all results is necessary. The reason for this is to create a link between all the results before generating answers to the research questions used for the study. This is the first such summary of results where responses from teachers and learners will be put together. It will also include the main issues emerging from the course material analysis. Further discussion of the results will be carried out in the next chapter: Chapter Five: Discussion.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Discussion

#### 5. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the results of the study were reported. To begin the discussion of those results, the chapter returns to the research questions with which the study began. Since there are four research questions, the chapter is divided into four sections (Section 5.1 to Section 5.4). In sections 5.1 to 5.3, a summary of the results related to the research question will be provided first. An interpretation of the results, with reference to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, follows for each question. The chapter ends with a conclusion in Section 5.4.

#### 5.1. Distance Learners' Listening Strategies

*Question 1: What are the listening strategies of distance learners of the study skills course at USP?*

##### 5.1.1. Summary of the Results

Regardless of geographical distances and lack of contact with teachers, past and present learners of the study skills course at USP showed knowledge and use of learning strategies for their listening skills. The overall results from interviews and questionnaires revealed the fact that the learners at USP were aware of learning strategies. Learners, especially past learners, provided a high perception of listening use in their daily, academic and after-university life. This indicates that they need to use listening strategies for these activities. All learners discussed procedures they used for listening, including

strategies such as selective attention, advance organisation, directed attention, seeking clarification, and self-evaluation. These procedures when later categorised according to the framework developed by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) provided details of how many of the metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategies the learners used for learning. A statistical analysis of the learners' use of learning strategies found that past learners discussed 45% of the strategies (i.e. 9 out of 20 learning strategies) and present learners discussed 35% (7 out of 20 learning strategies). Clearly, a lot of learning strategies were not referred to at all. Further consideration of the strategies within each category as discussed by both groups of learners is provided below.

### *Metacognitive strategies*

Past learners discussed four metacognitive strategies while present learners referred to three metacognitive strategies. In the following, I will first examine the metacognitive strategies that have been referred to. After this, the specific metacognitive strategies that were referred by each group will be provided followed by a discussion of metacognitive strategies that have not been referred to by any of the learners.

1. Advance organisation: Both groups of learners referred to the use of advance organisation before the listening activity that was to be carried out for academic activities. Its use in daily life and profession was not referred to.
2. Selective attention: Both groups of learners referred to the use of selective attention for academic activities.
3. Self-evaluation: The use of self-evaluation was discussed by the learners but in different contexts. While the past learners referred to this strategy in a more

- general way and in relation to their profession, present learners referred to the use of self-evaluation in an academic context only. The general reference of self-evaluation was discussed in the area of auditory perception, i.e. the strategy used by the learners to make them listen better, such as sitting nearer to the speaker.
4. Self-management: Only the past learners referred to this strategy in the context of academic activities.
  5. Advance preparation: None of the learners referred to this during the interviews.
  6. Self-monitoring: The learners did not discuss this strategy in their interviews.
  7. Organisational planning: None of the learners referred to this strategy during the interviews.

According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990), metacognitive strategies are the tools that equip learners to manage, evaluate and regulate their learning. Knowledge of these strategies help the learners judge whether the desired learning has occurred or not. Thus metacognitive strategies make learners able to self-reflect, become self-responsible, initiative, set personal goals and possess time management skills. As a result learners who use metacognitive strategies, know how to learn and which strategies work best for them. In tertiary learning situation, especially studying by distance, learners need these strategies to become successful learners. The three metacognitive strategies that were identified by Pintrich (1999) for having effect on other cognitive and social and affective strategies were identified by the learners at USP. Learners discussed using advance organisation that include planning, and referred to self-evaluation and self-monitoring. Hence, distance learners at USP showed knowledge of metacognitive strategies during



their interviews. The next section looks at the cognitive strategies discussed by the learners.

### *Cognitive strategies*

As for the metacognitive strategies, there was no difference in the number of cognitive strategies that both groups of learners referred to. Three cognitive strategies were discussed by both groups (imagery, note taking, and resourcing). The discussion first examines the cognitive strategies that have been referred to by all learners, followed by those that were not referred to by any group.

1. Imagery: This strategy was discussed by both groups of learners. The use was related to visualising while listening to something in order to remember what they were listening to.
2. Note taking: all learners discussed use of this strategy. They mentioned making notes while listening to tutorials and lectures.
3. Resourcing: Learners discussed what types of material they used in order to develop their listening skills.

None of the following seven cognitive strategies have been referred to by any of the learners during the interviews: 1) auditory representation, 2) deducing, 3) elaboration, 4) grouping, 5) inferencing, 6) summarising, and 7) transfer.

According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990), cognitive strategies are used for understanding and interpreting of information from the learning material. Learners need

to be taught the usefulness of these strategies when they are involved in task based and procedural activities. Learning at tertiary level requires both content based and task based activities. As a result, knowledge and teaching of all the 10 cognitive strategies is important. Cognitive strategies can increase the efficiency and confidence with which learners conduct learning tasks, as well develop their skills. The lack of reference to seven of these cognitive strategies clearly indicates a lack of awareness of the usefulness of strategy among the learners. Below, the social/affective strategies referred by the learners are included.

### *Social and affective strategies*

Social and affective strategies are useful for learners in their social and affective environment. The discussion will focus on the strategy that was discussed by most participants and then on the least discussed strategy.

1. Cooperation: All participants discussed the use of cooperation for listening. Learners mentioned discussing academic material with their colleagues to understand what was being discussed during lectures and tutorials. The open-ended questions in the questionnaires also found incidences of learners referring to cooperation as a reason for attending the tutorials.
2. Questions for clarification: only the past learners discussed the second strategy. Their reference to this strategy was in relation to asking their teachers for repetition and explanations. The use of this strategy reflects on their indication of confidence in the questionnaires.

Distance learners indicated their learning in isolation, without peer and teacher support for assistance in learning. As a result, the use of social and affective strategies was limited. However, once the learners began attending centre tutorials, studying on-campus or working, they realised the amount of listening skills they needed. Nevertheless, the learners discussed and showed knowledge of social/affective strategies.

Distance learners at USP showed awareness of learning strategies and were using these strategies for their listening. Their responses also indicated that they were using the strategies on their own. The learners discussed three important metacognitive strategies; however, the uses of cognitive strategies were very little. Use of social and affective strategies depended upon their location. Those who interacted with their peers and teachers used these more.

### **5.1.2. Relevance to Past Studies on Listening Strategies**

According to Chamot (2005), examination of the learners' learning strategies provides educationists information on how to help less successful learners learn new strategies and become better learners. Using self-report procedures to find the strategies that learners use for leaning also helps them reflect on strategies they think they use for learning or which they think they should use in particular situations (Wenden, 1987). Thus, learners in this study were able to reflect on their strategy use and realise which strategies they should be using for their listening. However, it also reflects on the need for further studies on learning strategy teaching and learning at USP.

Tertiary students are increasingly required to participate in seminars and oral discussions in their academic work (Mason, 1994). Even distance courses are nowadays using more audio-visual material for teaching. Synchronous teaching environment means that learners can now experience the feeling of real classroom teaching even in remote but accessible areas. For this reason, students' awareness of techniques to help in their learning is important. The results from the study at USP have shown that learners showed an awareness of listening strategies and knew situations in which they need to use these strategies. It also indicates their positive attitude towards learning. However, these learners were studying by distance, and in some cases were located in very remote and inaccessible areas. Results from this study indicated that those learners who were studying in isolation used fewer strategies than those who attended centre tutorials. Since learners need to use aural and oral skills for tertiary study, they need to be made more aware of the importance of learning strategies. The learners at USP require further training in their use of language learning strategies.

### **5.1.3. Discrepancies about Strategy Training**

Learners at USP showed awareness of listening strategies, though their awareness of these strategies was not discussed much by their teachers. Course teachers gave priority to cognitive strategies and felt that these skills were necessary for successful learning. This co-relates to the results of the study conducted by Griffiths and Parr (2001) in which teachers had given more importance to cognitive strategies than the learners do.

It can also be inferred from these results that there exist discrepancies between the teachers' expectation and learners' perception of listening strategies. Ferris and Tagg (1996a) additionally discuss assumptions that course teachers have regarding their students. Course teachers assume that students are fully equipped with the necessary English skills needed to cope with their course. As a result, they do not accommodate students' needs in this regard. Mason (1994) discusses the problems faced by learners studying in an English medium environment. Similar to the views of Ferris (1998), she found that the lecturers' manner of speaking and lack of understanding of ESL learners' comprehension problems lead to learners' inability to use the appropriate strategies for listening to lectures, note-taking and other lecture related activities.

As seen from this study, course teachers do not spell out or teach the strategies they want their learners to use, making it difficult for the learners to use the appropriate strategies and leading to the teachers' conclusion that the learners do not use strategies for learning. According to the teachers, isolation and lack of opportunities to practice learning strategies make it difficult for learners when they come on campus later, to complete their studies. However, there are also ways to help learners use the strategies they learn from study skills courses and not abandon them.

EAP at USP is a study skills course similar to bridging courses or intervention programmes elsewhere. The aim of the study skills course at USP is to teach the required academic skills to learners. Strategy learning may not have lasting effect if the classrooms do not support the targeted outcome of strategy learning courses (Ames and

Archer, 1988). Learners need to be taught the outcome of the learning strategies, such as how to use the strategies in order to learn concepts in subject specific courses. This is linked to the issue of what the course teachers can do to prevent learners from abandoning the strategies they have been introduced to through courses like EAP.

With the need for tertiary students to participate more in lectures and seminars, Thompson (2003) discusses the need for lecturers to help their listeners to process information efficiently. According to Dooley (2006), for learners who are still developing their English proficiency in listening, course teachers can be offered professional development that focuses on the problems that ESL learners encounter. She also suggests specific listening skills teaching in EAP courses with the use of model lectures from a range of disciplines. By these methods, learners can become familiar with the tasks they have to encounter in subject specific courses, and learn to use strategies to assist their learning. McKeachie, Pintrich and Lin (1985) discuss the benefits of teaching learning strategies to learners together with teaching them how and why learning strategies will improve their learning in the study skills and other courses. According to Vandergrift et al. (2006), learners possess knowledge about listening processes of varying amount as confirmed in this study, and that is reflected in their listening abilities. However, learners need to explore these skills for their skills development.

The differences in the views of listening strategies by the learners and teachers reflect the discussions by Berne (1998) and Mendelsohn (2001), and those in the studies on aural and oral skills by Ferris and Tagg (1996a, 1996b) and Ferris (1998). These researchers

have found differences existing between teachers and learners' views on the importance of listening skills. Similar results were already highlighted in Chand (2007). The results of this study also show that there exist discrepancies between teachers and learners about listening strategies that learners use for their listening skills.

## **5.2. Distance Learners' Listening Difficulties**

*Research question 2: What listening difficulties do distance learners of the study skills course at USP experience?*

### **5.2.1. Summary of Results**

Learners at USP were facing difficulties with their listening skills due to the challenges they faced as distance learners. Results from the interviews, closed and open-ended questions and the course material analysis indicated a number of interrelated issues for the difficulties they faced. These issues are detailed below.

During the interviews, learners indicated lack of contact with their peers and teachers, thus lack of interaction was found. Even though the present learners who were interviewed did not discuss lack of interaction as an issue, there were other learners enrolled in Semester 2, 2005 who stayed in remote areas. Their lack of interaction can be associated with lack of practise in listening. Teachers as well as learners referred to difficulties faced by learners in understanding different accents the learners heard at USP. Since the learners did not have contact with other learners and teachers, they did not get opportunities to listen to different accents. Learners did not use the listening materials

provided for the study skills course for a number of reasons. These were related to the content as well as the availability of these materials as a resource. This added to the problem of listening skills since the learners did not see the purpose of using the material, and did not find them useful and interesting enough. Additionally, the materials were not available to them on time and in desirable format or quality. Thus, the main conclusion that can be drawn from this study is the difficulties distance learners faced with their listening skills. These difficulties are associated with distance learning situation at USP.

### **5.2.2. Challenges Facing Distance Learners in Level 1 Areas of Distance**

#### **Education**

Most developed and developing countries provide distance education since it seems to be the best way to provide literacy and job training for many people (McIssac and Gunawardena, 1996). Distance education is also the only option for many people staying in remote areas, facing family responsibilities, and job and financial commitments. Also, some students choose to study by distance since they have certain personal characteristics, such as autonomy, independence, self-confidence and the capability of deal with uncertain situations (Peters, 1992).

However, learners at USP are studying with limited resources. This hinders with their learning, in particular with the development of their listening strategies. Their background of learning English as a second, third or fourth language and their varied academic backgrounds and achievement mean that they may not yet be ready for independent learning as expected of distance learners. As the course material analysis



shows, there were limited activities on listening and even fewer opportunities for learners to practise these skills. Another fact noted was the limited use the learners made of the listening materials that were provided. As previously discussed, reasons for not using the material include its subjectivity, as well as the lack of teaching of the importance of listening skills for other courses at USP. These are related to the lack of strategy teaching at USP. Thus, learners at USP were working on learning listening strategies on their own, with little or no guidance. The difficulties they mentioned with regard to the course material are similar to those discussed by a number of studies in distance education.

Purnell, Cuskelly and Danaher's (1996) study found that distance learners wanted to receive their study material a week prior to the commencement of the semester.

Additionally, there is a need for courses to cater for the range of students who do distance courses, since they may have limited resources and being distance learners, they probably have other commitments. Learners at USP also showed similar views since at times they faced problems such as delays in study material arrival and technical problems with audiocassettes, as well as geographical and financial difficulties in meeting the requirements of the course, such as in attending centre and satellite tutorials. Thus, listening difficulties faced by EAP distance learners at USP were mostly due to challenges they faced as distance learners.

### **5.3. Study Skills Course and the Listening Needs of Learners**

*Research question 4: What is the role of the distance study skills course at USP in fulfilling the listening needs of its learners?*

### **5.3.1. Summary of Results**

A study skills course helps learners in their language, study skills and study competence. It also helps learners develop their self-confidence and adjust to a new learning environment when the learners study in a different academic setting (Jordan, 1997). The specific needs of EAP learners can be found through regular needs analysis and updating to meet the learners' needs. A needs analysis can also be conducted to find the different language skills that learners need for their other courses, and future profession. The distance EAP course at USP has been offered since 1995. There is no evidence there was any course revision until 2005, the time of this study. Additionally, learners', teachers' and employers' perspectives on learners' academic and non-academic language needs have not been considered before. Whether the course fulfils the listening needs of its learners is doubtful. Learners' have indicated their perception of strategy use for their future; course teachers, on the other hand indicated that the distance learners lacked the skills needed for their courses. Study skills teachers discussed what they did to help the learners in their skills development. It was clear from the results that facilities and opportunities were available to those learners who had access to them. Thus, the distance EAP course was fulfilling the listening needs of those learners who had access to facilities and resources, but not those of the geographically unreachable learners. This factor directs attention to the challenges distance education providers in developing and low technology areas face. Further discussion of this is carried out below.

### **5.3.2. Implications of the Results**

White (2006) discusses the challenges faced by institutions, teachers and learners using low technology distance learning. USP faces many difficulties in reaching the last remote learner on the farthest island. Students still face problems in terms of attending tutorials, contacting tutors and even receiving course materials. The distance learners at USP need more assistance with regard to their listening strategies. While other courses at USP have begun using more technology to teach distance courses, the study skills course remains print material based. In order to assist learners with their learning and listening strategies, some changes to the distance courses will need to be made. The course does not meet all the listening needs of the learners and further recommendations are necessary in Section 6.5 (Chapter 6).

### **5.4. Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the key findings of the study by answering the four research questions used. Answers to questions 1 showed differences in awareness of learning strategies at USP. While learners indicated awareness of metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategies for their listening, their teachers discussed fewer of these strategies. Question 2 focussed on the distance learning of listening skills at USP. Learners discussed problems they faced while learning listening skills by distance at USP. The problems they faced were closely related to the challenges distance education providers from developing and low technology areas faced. Question 3 was related to the role of study skills course at USP in fulfilling the listening needs of its learners at USP. The study found that the lack of needs analysis at USP, and the distance education

problems faced there were hindering the provision of providing full support to the distance learners at USP. Thus, the study skills course was not fulfilling its role in meeting the listening needs of all its learners.

The next chapter discusses the conclusion for this study together with implication and recommendations in the field of research.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **Main Findings, Implications, Recommendations and Conclusion**

#### **6. Introduction**

This study has taken its lead from my observation that little is known about the learning strategies that distance EAP learners use for learning listening skills. Using the framework of needs analysis, the research methodology focussed on examining the experiences of the learners and teachers from a particular context. The findings of the learners' and teachers' views on the learners' listening skills lend support to the studies that argue that all learners use learning strategies (Mendelsohn, 1994) and those that argue for further contextually driven studies on listening skills (Vandergrift, 2007).

The main findings of this study will be discussed in Section 6.1. This is followed by the Theoretical Implications in Section 6.2, Research Implications in Section 6.3, Pedagogical Implications in Section 6.4, and Recommendations in Section 6.5. The chapter ends with this study's Original Contribution to Knowledge and a Final Conclusion in Section 6.6.

## **6.1 Main findings**

### **6.1.1. EAP Learners' Views on Their Listening Needs at USP**

Focussing on the objective, subjective and situational listening needs of the learners at USP, the results obtained from the interviews with learners and analyses of their questionnaire responses showed that the learners at USP had listening skills and were aware of their listening needs. The learners at USP also showed an identity for themselves as distance learners. These qualities are desirable for distance learners since they meet many challenges while studying in low-tech language learning contexts (White, 2007). However as individuals, the learners showed differences in their preferences of learning strategies and selection of learning materials. The learners also showed differences in their listening skills needs and perceptions of listening skills. These personal differences determined the particularity of distance learners at USP.

This study explored the distance learners' needs of listening skills for their academic, daily and professional activities. It also revealed the language learning strategies that distance learners used for their listening skills. In general, the learners who stayed nearer to the university centres tended to use more strategies and showed more awareness of their listening needs for different purposes such as for academic and non-academic purposes. By contrast, the learners who stayed in remote areas showed less use of strategies and less awareness of listening needs for academic and non-academic purposes.

This study showed that these learners applied a variety of learning strategies to attain their learning goals. Although they shared similarities in terms of their strategy

knowledge, differences were observed in choice of specific strategies that were influenced by the personal and contextual factors affecting their choices and perception of learning strategies for listening. Personal variables such as confidence, need of listening skill for different purposes, assessment methods used for listening activities were influential in their choice of strategies. Contextual variables such as the learning environment and the quality and method of teaching were also influential in their choice of strategies.

### **6.1.2. Teachers' Views on Their Learners' Listening Needs**

Teachers felt that learners at USP needed a lot of listening skills and felt that their learners were not using enough strategies for their learning. The teachers' assumption about strategy use can be linked to the following factors. Firstly, teachers were not teaching strategies nor referring to the strategies they expected their learners to use in the courses. This co-relates to the arguments of Waters and Viches (2001) where lack of teacher learning was seen as a reason for lack of strategy teaching. Secondly, the teachers did not get opportunities to discuss the strategies with their learners due to lack of contact with them. Suggestions related to this issue will be discussed in this chapter under Recommendations.

### **6.1.3. Listening Course Material Used by Distance EAP Course**

The listening section of the course material used in the EAP course at USP had limited authentic listening material. Since the listening materials did not contain any assessment, most learners did not use these materials much. Administrative and technical problems

such as limited stock of listening material and poor quality of listening material hindered in learners' learning as well. These results co-relate to the discussions of MacDonald et al. (2000) regarding scrutinising the EAP listening material for authenticity and usefulness of subject specific material.

#### **6.1.4. Challenges Faced by Distance Learners and Teachers at USP**

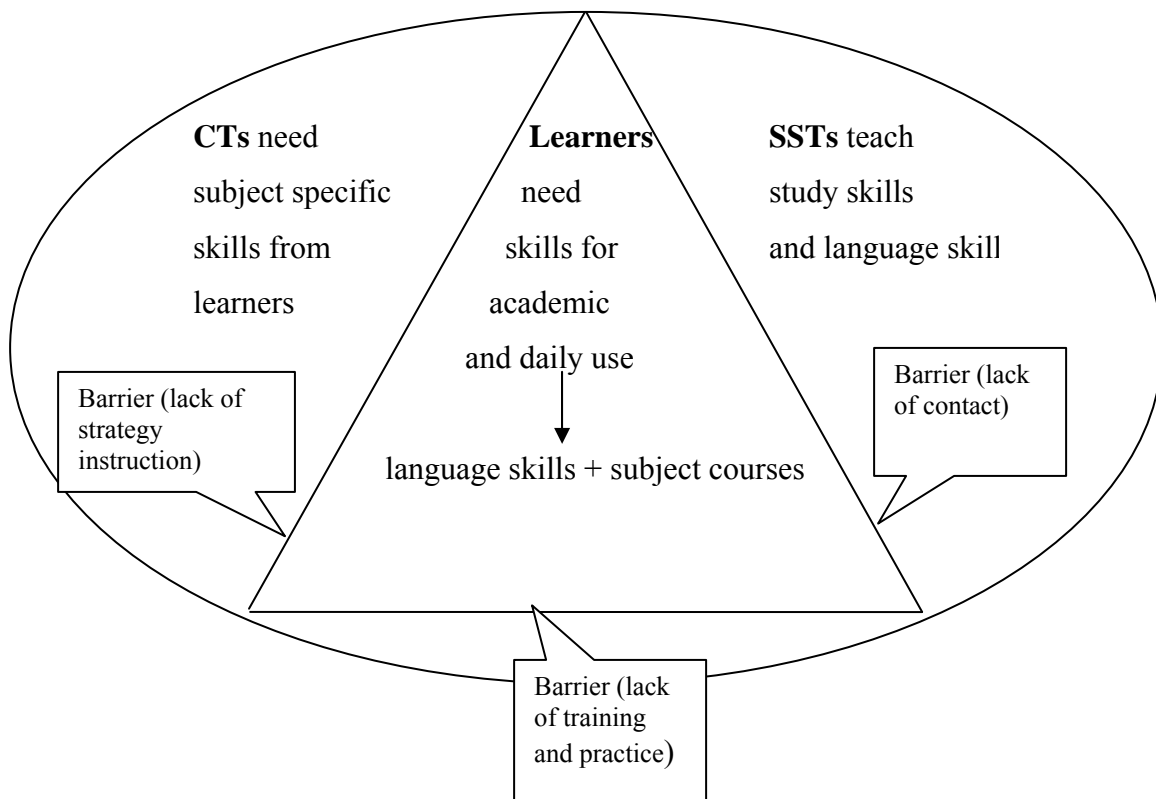
USP covers five time zones and two days, millions of kilometres of sea area and 12 Pacific Island countries. Most learners who come to USP use English as a second language while, some learners use English as a third or fourth language.

While investigating the listening needs of learners at USP, the uniqueness of learners at this university emerged. Distance learners at USP are studying in isolation. The barriers to learning they face are multifaceted. These barriers include the learners' lack of contact with teachers, lack of instructions from course teachers with regard to which strategies to use in their courses and learners' own barrier of geographical isolation. All these barriers prevent them from training and practising the skills they learn. Thus, the learners' learning sphere may look like what is revealed in Figure 1. All the stakeholders at USP are included in the cycle of learning, yet the barriers that stakeholders face prevent them (course teachers, study skills teachers and the learners) from gaining a better understanding of the learners' listening strategies. The barriers of learning as discussed in previous literature (Galusha, 1997: Section 2.3.4) include barriers limiting the learners, teachers and universities from successful implementation of distance education. However at USP there are barriers in addition to the ones already discussed in literature. These



barriers are the lack of instruction by the course teachers; lack of contact with study skills teachers; and the barrier of lack of training and practice. Since the learners are unable to cross these barriers, they are unable to learn, train and practise strategies and use them in other courses.

The barriers that learners at USP face have significant implications for the theoretical, research and pedagogical aspects of needs analysis, listening needs and learning strategies. Each of these is discussed in detail below.



**Figure 1: The barriers to learning for distance learners at USP**

## **6.2. Theoretical Implications**

As discussed in Chapter 2, an understanding of the needs of all stakeholders is important for course implementation, including those involved in EAP courses. Brown (1995) points out that outcome of needs analysis in language programmes can specify what has been accomplished by a course as well as the skills that learners need to master. The needs analysis conducted at USP's distance EAP course revealed learners' listening needs. It showed learners' knowledge of listening skills and pointed to their inability to practise listening due to circumstances beyond their control. The study showed USP teachers' views of their learners' listening skills. Since no prior needs analysis had been conducted at USP of this nature, this can be used as a step in the direction of what Richards (1983) believes can lead to the success of an educational programme. This study also revealed the barriers of learning that distance learners face that are different from those found in distance education literature. Strategy teaching has not been discussed in studies conducted on traditional distance learners. This study also suggests the need for an understanding of strategy teaching by study skills as well as course teachers. In Level 1 distance learning situations where there is limited contact between teachers and learners, a needs analysis is even more desirable. Needs analysis can then provide an assessment of skills potential of distance learners, their capability of self-instruction and continuing with their studies. Distance learners are supposed to be autonomous in their learning; however, the barriers they face need to be identified and needs analysis can provide the information needed on these barriers.

### **6.3. Research Implications**

Conducting a study in geographically diverse situations requires a lot of time. In the case of studies on learning strategies, there are two methods used: before and after views of learners while participating in strategy training sessions (Berne, 1995), and self-observations of learning experiences written in the form of diaries and journals by learners. Most of these can be easily investigated in real classroom situations where the learners can be observed and approached to participate in studies.

For distance learners who are difficult to contact, longitudinal studies may be more beneficial. Distance learners like those at USP rarely come to centres. The limitation in contacting learners was evident during the data collection for this study. Various attempts were made but those who did not come to the centre were impossible to contact. To conduct research with them requires time, hence studies of longer duration are recommended. This study examined the listening strategies used by distance learners and their self-perception and self-evaluation of listening skills. Studies in the field of distance learning had not been conducted on learners studying listening skills using level 1 of distance education. There is thus a recommendation for studies to be conducted on language learning strategies and learners' needs for other language skills such as reading, speaking and writing skills taught through EAP by distance.

#### **6.4. Pedagogical Implications**

The findings of this study suggest that it is essential for learners at tertiary level to be taught learning strategies in order to make them more autonomous and confident learners of L2. The findings also suggest the need for teachers to become aware of the importance of strategy training of their learners. Learners, whether studying by face-to-face, using advanced technology, or studying in low technology areas need to be taught these strategies to enable them become better learners.

Needs analysis when included as an on-going process of the curriculum will provide details such as those found by this study. Learners were not using the listening material provided by the study skills course and still felt that they were good listeners and had good listening skills. The learners indicated that they had the strategies necessary for listening. However, their teachers had different views on the learners' listening skills and strategy use. The learners indicated the lack of usefulness of the audio material. In the fields of needs analysis, learning strategies and learning skills there is need for more research on distance education studies. In line with this, the next section outlines recommendations for future research.

#### **6.5. Recommendations**

##### **1. Needs analysis to be made part of curriculum in distance courses**

Needs analysis needs to be made part of the planning process since it can then provide details of the learners' needs, the resources available to them and the significance of a

study skills course in the whole learning process of the learners. As the findings from this study demonstrate, not all learners at USP have access to similar facilities, opportunities and resources; however, all of them were enrolled in the same course. For a course, that teaches study skills, there is a need to provide learners with more options and opportunities so that everyone enrolled completes the course with similar experience. These options can be revealed from a needs analysis prior to the course being offered.

## **2. Study skills and course teachers need to work in collaboration**

The discrepancy found in the views of study skills teachers, course teachers and learners at USP have shown one fact: there is a need for more collaboration between all the stakeholders at USP. As discussed in the study, it seems that the learners are abandoning the strategies they learn from the study skills course. To understand why learners first show perceptions of the listening skills yet abandon them when they study subject specific courses, there is a need to find out what the study skills course is teaching and what the subject specific course requires from the learners. There is a need for study skills teachers and course teachers to collaborate in designing and teaching of study skills course since it is supposed to teach the skills necessary for subject specific course.

## **3. Upgrade needed of the facilities available in the region and using them as teaching tools**

The findings for this study showed that almost all learners use media tools such as radios, which broadcast programmes in English. Learners have exposure to English in their environment since nearly all Pacific Island countries use English as the language of

instruction and as a lingua franca. This fact can be exploited as a tool for distance teaching at USP, which still uses level 1 of distance learning facilities. One study skills teacher also discussed the use of radio programmes for developing listening and note-taking activities. Radios are one of the cheapest, more easily accessible forms of communication tool and can be used for dissemination of information to remote students. It is still a very useful resource.

#### **4. Need for Studies on Other Language Skills Taught by Distance**

This study focussed only on listening needs of distance learners; there are three other language skills, which need to be further explored in this field. In the field of EAP, limited studies have focused on distance learners using level one methods of learning. Regardless of advancement in the world of distance education, there are still learners who study using the most basic distance education material. Studies need to focus on how these learners study and develop their language skills for learning.

#### **5. Introduce in-house training for teachers who teach ESL distance learners**

One of the suggestions in the field of language leaning strategy research has been the need to train teachers on teaching learning strategies to their learners (Ferris and Tagg, 1996a). It was obvious from this study that there is some discrepancy between what the course teachers expect their learners to do in their courses and what the study skills course is teaching. As suggested in studies on learning strategies, an ideal situation would be one where teachers in all subject areas teach learning strategies so that learners can transfer strategies learnt in one course to the next (Ferris and Tagg, 1996a). Studies have

shown that through the process of professional development of teachers, students' overall achievement also improves (Sherry and Morse, 1995). It seems reasonable to speculate that in distance education as well, these types of professional development will show similar results.

## **6. Further studies on barriers distance learners face to be conducted**

Barriers to learning by distance education have discussed the hindrances that learners face in distance learning, such as lack of motivation, lack of teacher contact, limited student support, isolation and lack of experience and training. However, as discussed in this study, strategy training is also an important fact, that needs to be considered when researching on barriers that distance learners face, this speaks for a need for more studies in this area.

### **6.6. Original Contribution to Knowledge and Conclusion**

This study began with a personal note at the beginning of Chapter 1. It began as a personal interest to find out more about the distance learners at USP. USP is a multiple island owned university. It also uses a selection of low to high technology for distance education for different courses. To learn more about the distance learners, the study on the 'Cinderella of the four skills' (Flowerdew and Miller, 2005, p. xi) i.e. listening, was planned. During the study, the use of learning strategies emerged as a major finding for this study. The study has thus contributed to knowledge in the following ways:

- It has provided information on EAP listening skills taught at (low-technology) Level 1 of distance education
- It has made available information on the learning strategies used by distance learners for their listening skills

- It has given details of learners from geographically finite areas of the South Pacific region
- It has supplied details of the listening needs of distance learners
- It has offered insights into the perception of teachers of their learners' use of learning strategies
- It highlights the importance for teachers and learners to know about language learning strategies
- It has added to the research by its focus on listening skills from the perspective of NNS in their own countries.

This final chapter concludes the current study, but also begins a new chapter for further investigations.



## References

- Afflerbach, P., Pearson, P., and Paris, S. G. (2008). Clarifying differences between reading skills and reading strategies. *The Reading Teacher*, 61(5), 364-373.
- Ames, C. and Archer, J. (1988). Achieving goals in the classroom: Students' learning strategies and motivation processes. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 80, 260-267.
- Anderson, G. (1990). *Fundamentals of educational research*. London: Falmer Press.
- Anderson, J. R. (1985). *Cognitive psychology and its implications* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). NY: Freeman and Company.
- Anderson, A., and Lynch, T. (1988). *Listening*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Anonymous, 2002. *International cooperation forum on telecommunications and broadcasting*. [Keynote speech]. Retrieved July 20, 2007 from <http://www.usp.ac.fj/fileadmin/files/academic/pdo/speech.pdf>
- Bacon, S. (1989). Listening for real in the foreign-language classroom. *Foreign Language Annals*, 22, 543-551.
- Bacon, S. (1992). Authentic listening in Spanish: How learners adjust their strategies to the difficulty of the input. *Hispania*, 75, 398-412.
- Bacon, S. M. and Finnemann, M. D. (1990). A study of the attitudes, motives, and strategies of university foreign language students and their disposition to authentic oral and written input. *Modern Language Journal*, 74, 459-472.
- Baker, L. and Brown, A. (1984). Metacognitive skills and reading. In D. Pearson (Ed.), *Handbook of reading research*. (pp. 353-394). New York: Longman.

- Ballard, B. and Clanchy, J. (1984). *Study abroad: A manual for Asian students*. Kuala Lumpur: Longman Malaysia.
- Bassey M. (1999). *Case study research in educational settings*. Buckingham: Open University Press).
- Benesch, S. (1996). Needs Analysis and Curriculum Development in EAP: An example of a critical approach. *TESOL Quarterly*, 30, 723-738.
- Benson, C. (1982). *Data relevant to evaluation of USP teaching-learning*. [Research report]. Suva: University of the South Pacific and the SOE.
- Berne, J. (1995). How does varying pre-listening activities affect second language listening comprehension? *Hispania*, 78(2), 316-329.
- Berne, J. (1998). Examining the relationship between L2 listening research, pedagogical theory, and practice. *Foreign Language Annals*, 31(2), 169-190.
- Bialystok, E. (1978). A theoretical model of second language learning. *Language Learning*, 28(1), 69-83.
- Biggs, J. B. (1984) Learning Strategies, student motivation patterns, and subjectively perceived success. In J. R. Kirby (Ed), *Cognitive strategies and educational performance* (pp.111-134), Orlando, FL: Academic Press.
- Black, J. A., & Champion, D. J. (1976). *Methods and issues in social research*. New York: Wiley.
- Bloor, M. and Bloor, T. (1991). Cultural expectations and socio-pragmatics failure in academic writing. In P. Adams, B. Heaton and P. Howarth (Eds.) *Developments in ELT: Socio-cultural issues in EAP* (pp. 1-12). Hemel Hempstead: Phoenix ELT.

- Blue, G. M. (1991). Language learning within academic constraints. In P. Adams, B. Heaton and P. Howarth (Eds.). *Socio-cultural issues in English for Academic Purposes: Developments in ELT* (pp. 100-116). London: Macmillan.
- Boyle, R. (1994). ESP and distance learning. *English for Specific Purposes*, 13(2), 115-128.
- Braine, G. (1995). Writing in the natural sciences and engineering. In D. Belcher & G. Braine (Eds.), *Academic writing in a second language* (pp.113-134). Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Braine, G. (2002). Academic literacy and the non-native speaker graduate student. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 1(1), 59-68.
- Bridgeman, B. and Carlson, S. B. (1984). Survey of academic writing tasks. *Written Communication*, 1, 247-280.
- Brindley, G. (1989). The role of needs analysis in adult ESL program design. In R. K. Johnson (Ed.). *Second language curriculum* (pp. 63-78). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brown, J. D. (1995). *The elements of language curriculum: A systematic approach to programme development*. Boston, MA: Heinle and Heinle.
- Brown, J. I. (1984). *Efficient reading* (6<sup>th</sup> ed). Minnesota: D.C. Heath.
- Brown, J. I. (1987). Listening-unique yet obscure. *Journal of the International Listening Association*. 1, 3-14.
- Brown, A.L., & Palincsar, A.S. (1982). Inducing strategies learning from texts by means of informed, self-control training. *Topics in Learning and Learning Disabilities*, 2, 1-17.

- Brown, G. and Yule, G. (1983). *Teaching the spoken language: An approach based on the analysis of conversational English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brumfit, C. (1993). Culture and success: A general model, and its applicability for EAP learners. In G. M. Blue (Ed.) *Language, learning and success: Studying through English. Developments in ELT* (n.p.). Hamel Hempstead: Phoenix ELT.
- Buck, G. (2001). *Assessing listening*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Buck, G. (1992). Listening comprehension: Construct validity and trait characteristics. *Language Learning* 42, 313-349.
- Burge, E. J. and Howard, J. L. (1990). Audio-conferencing in graduate education: A case study. *The American Journal of Distance Education*, 4(2), 3-13.
- Carter, R. and Nunan, D. (2001). *Cambridge Guide to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Catterick, D. (2001). An academic writing course in cyberspace. In L. E. Henrichsen (Ed.) *Distance learning programs* (83-94). Alexandria, Virginia: TESOL.
- Chamot, A. (1995). Learning strategies and listening comprehension. In D. Mendelsohn and J. Rubin (Eds.). *A guide for the teaching of second language listening* (pp. 13-30). San Diego: Dominic Press
- Chamot, A. (1999). How children in language immersion program use learning strategies. In M.A. Kassen (Ed.), *Language learners of tomorrow: Process and promise* (pp.29-59). Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.
- Chamot, A.U. (2005). The Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA): An update. In P.A. Richard-Amato & M.A. Snow (Eds.), *Academic success for*

- English language learners: Strategies for K-12 mainstream teachers* (pp. 87-101).  
White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Chamot, A. U., Barnhardt, S., El-Dinary P.B., and Robbins, J. (1999). *The learning strategies handbook*. White Plains, NY: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc.
- Chamot, A. U. and El-Dinary, P. B. (1999). Children's learning strategies in immersion classrooms. *The Modern Language Journal*, 83 (3), 319-341.
- Chamot, A. U. and Keatley, C. W. (2003). Learning strategies of adolescent low-literacy Hispanic ESL students. Paper presented at the 2003 Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL.
- Chamot, A. U., & Küpper . L. (1989). Learning strategies in foreign language instruction. *Foreign Language Annals*, 22, 13-24.
- Chamot, A. U., Küpper, L., & Toth, S. (1990). *Learning strategy instruction in the foreign language classroom: Writing*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 343440). McLean, VA: Interstate Research Associates.
- Chamot, A.U., & O'Malley, J. (1994a). Language learner and learning strategies. In N.C. Ellis (Ed.), *Implicit and explicit learning of languages* (pp. 371-392). London: Academic Press.
- Chamot, A. U., & O'Malley, J. (1994b). *The CALLA handbook: Implementing the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Chamot, A.U., & O'Malley, J. M. (1996). Implementing the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA). In R.L. Oxford (Ed.), *Language*

- learning motivation: Pathways to the new century* (pp. 167-173). Manoa: University of Hawaii Press.
- Chand, R. (2006a). *Listening needs of distance learners: Are we listening?* Paper presented at the 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Applied Linguistics, 2<sup>nd</sup> April, Chiayi, Taiwan.
- Chand, R. (2006b). *Reflection on research procedure: Researching in the South Pacific*. Pacific Postgraduate Symposium, 29<sup>th</sup> September, Dunedin.
- Chand, R. (2007). Same size doesn't fit all: Insights from research on listening skills at the University of the South Pacific (USP). *International Research and Reflection in Open and Distance Learning Journal (IRRODL)*, 8(3). Website: <http://www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/index>.
- Chaudron, C. (1988). *Second language classrooms: Research on teaching and learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chen, J., Belkada, S., & Okamoto, T. (2004). How a web-based course facilitates acquisition of English for Academic Purposes. *Language Learning & Technology*, 8(2), 33-49.
- Cheng, H-C., Lehman, J., & Armstrong, P. (1991). Comparison of performance and attitude in traditional and computer conference classes. *The American Journal of Distance Education*, 5(3), 51-64.
- Christison, M. A. and Krahnke, K. J. (1986). Students perceptions of academic language study. *TESOL Quarterly*, 20(1), 60-80.
- Clark, R. E. (1983). Reconsidering research on learning from media. *Review of Educational Research*, 53 (4), 445-459.

- Coakley, C. and Wolvin, A. (1997). Listening in the educational environment. In M. Purdy and D. Borisoff (Eds.). *Listening in everyday life: A personal and professional approach* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (pp. 179-212). Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Cohen, A. D. (1998). *Strategies in learning and using a second language*. NY: Addison Wesley Longman Limited.
- Cohen, A. D., Weaver, S. and Li, T-Y. (1998). The impact of strategies-based instruction on speaking a foreign language. In A. D. Cohen, *Strategies in learning and using a second language* (pp. 107-156). London: Longman.
- Colosi, L. (2005). *Measuring evaluation results with Microsoft Excel*. Retrieved May 12, 2007 [http://www.parenting.cit.cornell.edu/Excel%20Tutorial1\\_RED3.pdf](http://www.parenting.cit.cornell.edu/Excel%20Tutorial1_RED3.pdf)
- Crocombe, R. G. and Crocombe, M. (1994). *Post secondary education in the South Pacific*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat.
- Demirkan-Jones, N. (2006). Exploring the importance of ‘identity’ for the East Asian students in an EAP context: a case study, Paper presented at the BALEAP PIM: The East Asian Learner, 25<sup>th</sup> February, University of Winchester: Essex.
- Deverell, G. (1989). The relationship between English proficiency and academic success at USP. *Directions*, 2 (1), 10-17.
- Deverell, G. (1991). *Proposal for new 100-level credit course in academic writing, reading and seminar presentation skills*. [Internal memo]. Suva: University of the South Pacific and the SOE.
- Dooley, P. (2006). Identifying the listening and speaking needs of international students. In *Experience of Learning*. Proceedings of the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Teaching Learning

- Forum, 1-2 February 2006. Perth: The University of Western Australia.  
<http://lsn.curtin.edu.au/tlf/tlf2006/referred/dooey.html>
- Dörnyei, Z. and Csizer, K. (2002). Some dynamics of language attitude and motivation: Results of a longitudinal nationwide survey. *Applied Linguistics*, 23(4), 421-462.
- Dreyer, C. and Oxford, R. (1996). Learning strategies and other predictors of ESL proficiency among Afrikaans speakers in South Africa. In: R. Oxford (Ed.) *Language learning strategies around the world: cross-cultural perspectives* (pp. 61-74). Honolulu: University of Hawaii: Second language teaching and curriculum center.
- Egan, M. W., Sebastian, J. and Welch, M. (1991). *Effective television teaching: Perceptions of those who count most distance learners*. Proceedings of the Rural Education Symposium. March. Nashville. TN. (ED 342 579).
- Ellis, R. (1994). *The study of second language acquisition*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Elliis, R. and Barkhuizen, G. (2005). *Analysing learner language*. Oxford; Oxford University Press.
- Elley, W. and Thompson, J. (1978). *The English language skills of USP foundation learners*. [Research report]. Suva: University of the South Pacific and the SOE.
- Engleberg, I. N. (1990). Listening research and instruction in Australia. *International Journal of Listening*. 4(1), 105-115.
- Entwistle, N.J. and Entwistle, A. (1997). Revision and the experience of understanding. In F. Marton, D. Hounsell and N.J. Entwistle (Eds). *The experience of learning*



*Implications for teaching and studying in higher education* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. pp. 145-154).

Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press.

Ferris, D. (1998). Students' views of academic aural/oral skills: A comparative needs analysis. *TESOL Quarterly*, 32(2), 289-318.

Ferris, D. and Tagg, T. (1996a). Academic oral communication needs: What subject-matter instructors actually require. *TESOL Quarterly*, 30(1), 31-55.

Ferris, D. and Tagg, T. (1996b). Academic listening/speaking skills for ESL students: Problems, suggestions and implications. *TESOL Quarterly*, 30(2), 297-317.

Feyten, C. M. (1991). The power of listening ability: An overlooked dimension in language acquisition. *Modern Language Journal*, 75, 173-180.

Feyten, C. (1998). Economics of education delivery via ICT: Reasons to invest in ICT for education from a business perspective. In R. Dillemans, J. Lowyck, G. Van der Perre, C. Claeys, & J. Elen (Eds.). *New technologies for learning: Contribution of ICT to innovation in education* (pp. 102-108). Leuven: Leuven University Press.

Field, J. (1998). Skills and strategies: Towards a new methodology for listening. *ELT Journal*, 52(2), 110-118.

Field, J. (2000). Finding one's way in the fog: listening strategies and second-language learners. *Modern English Teacher*, 9(1), 29-34.

Field, J. (2003). Promoting perception: Lexical segmentation in L2 listening. *ELT Journal*, 57(4), 325-335.

Flowerdew, J. and Miller, L. (1995). On the notion of culture in the second language lectures. *TESOL Quarterly*, 29(2), 345-374.

- Flowerdew, J. and Miller, L. (2005). *Second language listening: Theory and practice*.  
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Frank, A. G. (1992). Revolution in Eastern Europe: Lessons for Democratic Socialist  
Movements (and Socialists). In C. K. Wilber and K. P. Jameson, (Eds.) *The  
Political Economy of Development and Underdevelopment* (5th edition) (pp. 209-  
225). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- FAQs support document*. (n.d.) Retrieved June 15, 2007, from  
<http://virtual.cpcc.edu/support/faq/details.asp?faq=whatdistancelearning>
- Furneaux, C., Locke, P., Robinson, P. and Tonkyn, A. (1991). Talking heads and shifting  
bottoms: The ethnography of academic seminars. In P. Adams, B. Heaton and P.  
Howarth (Eds.) *Socio-cultural issues in EAP* (pp.75-88). London: Modern English  
Publications.
- Galusha, J. M. (1997). Barriers to learning in distance education. Retrieved 27 May  
2007 from <http://www.infrastructure.com/barriers.htm>
- Gannicott, K. and Throsby, D. C. (1992). Educational Quality in Economic  
Development: Ten Propositions and an Application to the South Pacific.  
*International Review of Education*, 38(3), 223-239).
- Garring, P. (2002). Adapting and developing e-learning courses: The challenges of  
keeping the quality. Conference Proceedings DEANZ April 2002. Evolving e-  
learning, Wellington, New Zealand.
- Geoghegan, G. (1983). *Non-native speakers of English at Cambridge University*.  
Cambridge: Bell Educational Trust.

- Gilman, R. A. and Moody, L. M. (1984). What practitioners say about listening: Research implications for the classroom. *Foreign Language Annals*, 17, 331-334.
- Giourogrou, H., and Economides, A. (2001). Computer conferencing in EAP in the threshold of the multicultural higher education. 4th Annual Conference for the use of technology in the classroom “*Tech Tactics Across the Curriculum*”, CD-ROM, Koc University 2001.
- Glisan, G., Dudd, K., & Howe, M. (1998). Teaching Spanish through distance education: Implications of a pilot study. *Foreign Language Annals*, 31, 48-66.
- Glaser, B. G. and Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory*. Chicago, IL: Aldine Publishing Company.
- Goetz, J. P. and Hansen, J. F. (1974). The cultural analysis of schooling. *Council on Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 5(4), 1-8.
- Goetz, J. P. and LeCompte, M. D. (1984). *Ethnography and qualitative design in educational research*. Orlando, FL: Academic Press.
- Goh, C. (2002). Exploring listening comprehension tactics and their interaction patterns. *System*, 30, 185-206.
- Gooch, J. (1998). They blazed the trail for distance education. *Distance Education Clearinghouse*. Retrieved June 15, 2007, from <http://www.uwex.edu/disted/gooch.cfm>
- Green, J. M. and Oxford, R. (1995). A closer look at learning strategies, L2 proficiency, and gender. *TESOL Quarterly*, 29(2), 261-297.
- Griffiths, C. (2007). Language learning strategies: Students’ and teachers’ perceptions. *ELT Journal*, 61(2), 91-99.

- Griffiths, C. and Parr, J. M. (2001). Language-learning strategies: Theory and perception. *ELT Journal*, 55(3), 247-254.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1978). *Language as a social semiotic*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Hampel, R. and M. Hauck, (2004). Towards an effective use of audio conferencing in distance language learning. *Language Learning and Technology*, 8(1), 66-82.  
Retrieved April 6, 2004 from <http://llt.msu.edu/vol8num1/hampel/default.html>
- Hamp-Lyons, L. (2001). English for academic purposes. In R. Carter & D. Nunan (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages* (pp. 126-130). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Harker, M. and D. Koutsantoni (2005) Can it be as effective? Distance versus blended learning in a web-based EAP programme, *ReCALL*, 17(2): 197-216.
- Hawkey, R. (2006). Teacher and learner perceptions of language learning activity. *ELT Journal*, 60(3), 242-252.
- Henning, G., Schedl, M. and Suomi, B. (1995). *Analysis of proposed revisions of the Test of Spoken English*. TOEFL Research Report 48. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.
- Hodgson, B. (1993). *Key terms and issues in open and distance learning*. London: Kogan
- Hodgson, V. (1997), Lectures and the experience of relevance. In F. Maton, D. Hounsell & J. Entwistle (Eds.) *The experience of learning Implications for teaching and studying in higher education* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (pp.145-154). Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press.
- Hohl, M. (1982). *Necessary English at the University of Petroleum and Minerals, Dharhnan, Saudi Arabia: A faculty survey*. TEAM, no. 42.

- Holmberg, B. (1988). Guided didactic conversation in distance education. In D. Sewart, D. Keegan and B. Holmberg (eds.), *Distance education: International perspectives* (pp: 114-122). London: Croom Helm.
- Horowitz, D. (1986). What professors actually require: Academic tasks for the ESL classroom. *TESOL Quarterly*, 20, 445-462.
- Hughes, A. (1989). *Testing for language teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hurd, S., Beaven, T. and Ortega, A. (2001). Developing autonomy in a distance language learning context: Issues and dilemmas for course writers. *System*, 29, 341-355.
- Hutchinson, T., & Waters, A. (1987). *English for specific purposes: A learner-centred approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ielemia, K. (1996). Tuvaluan in the schools. In F. Muglar and J. Lynch (eds.) *Pacific languages in education* (pp. 102-110). Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies and Department of Literature and Languages/Vanuatu; Pacific Languages Unit.
- Iwai, T., Kondo, K., Lim, D. S., Grace, E. R., Shimizu, H. and Brown, J. D. (1999). *Japanese language needs analysis*. Retrieved May 12, 2007 from <http://www.nflrc.hawaii.edu/networks/NW13/NW13.pdf>
- Johns, T. F. (1981). Necessary English: A faculty survey. *TESOL Quarterly*, 15(1), 51-57.
- Johns, A. M. and Dudley-Evans (1991). English for specific purposes: International in scope, specific in purpose. *TESOL Quarterly*, 25, 297-314.

- Johnson, K. O. (1951). The effects of classroom training upon listening comprehension. *Journal of Communication*, 1, 57-62.
- Johnson, B. and Christensen, L. (2000). *Educational research: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Sydney: Allyn and Bacon.
- Jordan, R. R. (1993). Study skills: Experience and expectations. In G. M. Blue (Ed.) *Language, learning and success: Studying through English. Developments in ELT* (n.p.). Hamel Hempstead: Phoenix ELT.
- Jordan, R. R. (1997). *English for Academic Purposes: A guide and resource book for teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jordan, R. R. and Mackay, R. (1973). A survey of spoken English problems of overseas postgraduate students at the University of Manchester and Newcastle upon Tyne. *Journal of the Institutes of Education of the Universities of Newcastle upon Tyne and Durham*, 25(125), n.p.
- Keegan, D. (1990). *Foundations of distance education*. London: Routledge.
- Kerlinger, F. N. (1979). *Behavioural Research: A conceptual approach*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Khan, V. (1995). *English for Academic Purposes, Course Book 1*. Suva: University of the South Pacific.
- Khan, V. (1995). *English for Academic Purposes, Course Book 2*. Suva: University of the South Pacific.
- Kikuchi, K. (2004). Triangulating perceptions of learners' needs: An alternative way of

- conducting needs analysis. Proceedings of the 2004 JALT Pan- SIG Conference, 22 -23 May, 2004. Tokyo: Keizai University. Retrieved April 10, 2007, from <http://www.jalt.org/pansig/2004/HTML/Kikuchi.htm>
- Knox, A. B. (1990). *Helping adults learn*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Brass Publishers.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. London: Sage Publications.
- Lado, R. (1961). *Language testing: the construction and use of foreign language tests; a teacher's book*. London, Longman.
- Lamy, M-N. (2004). Oral conversations online: Redefining oral competence in synchronous environments. *ReCall*, 16(2), 520-538.
- Lamy, M-N. and Hassan, X. (2003). What influences reflective interaction in distance peer learning? Evidence from four long-term online learners of French. *Open Learning*, 18(1), 39-60.
- LeCompte, M. D. and Goetz, J. P. (1982). Ethnographic data collection in evaluation research. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 4(3), 387-400.
- LeCompte, M. D., and Preissle, J. (1993). *Ethnography and qualitative design in educational research*. (2nd ed). San Diego: Academic Press.
- Lee, S. L. (2002). *Matching teachers' needs and learners' needs*. Retrieved April 23, 2004, from <http://www.councilnet.org/papers/Lee.doc>
- Lincoln, Y. S. and Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Long, M. (2005). Methodological issues in learner needs analysis. In M. Long (Ed.). *Second language needs analysis* (pp. 19-78). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Lotherington, H. (1998) Trends and tensions in post-colonial language education in the South Pacific. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*. Vol.1 (1), 65-75.
- MacDonald, M., Badger, R. and White, G. (2000). The real feeling?: Authenticity and academic listening. *English for Specific Purposes*, 19, 253-267.
- McIntosh, S.; Brault, B. and Chao, T. (2003). A Case Study in Asynchronous Voice Conferencing for Language Instruction, *Educational Media International*, 40(1), 63-74.
- McIssac, M. S. and Gunawardena, C. N. (1996). Distance education. In D. H. Jonassen (ed.), *Handbook of educational communications and technology-a project of the association for educational communications and technology*, (pp.403-437) New York: Simon and Schuster Macmillan.
- McKeachie, W. J., Pintrich, P. R. and Lin, Y-G. (1985). Teaching learning strategies. *Educational Psychologist*, 20(3), 153-160.
- McKenna, E. (1987). Preparing foreign students to enter discourse communities in the US. *English for Specific Purposes*, 6(3), 187-202.
- Martin, P. Y., & Turner, B. A. (1986). Grounded theory and organisational research. *Journal of Applied Behavioural Science*, 22, 141-157.
- Mason, A. (1994). By dint of: Student and lecturer perceptions of lecture comprehension strategies in first-term graduate study. In J. Flowerdew (Ed.). *Academic listening*, (pp. 199-218). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Masuhara, H. (1998). What do teachers really want from course books? In B. Tomlinson



- (Ed.), *Materials development in language teaching* (pp. 239-260). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mendelsohn, D. J. (1994). *Learning to listen*. San Diego: Dominic Press.
- Mendelsohn, D. J. (1995). Applying learning strategies in the second/foreign language listening comprehension lesson. In D. J. Mendelsohn and J. Rubin (Eds.). *A guide for the teaching of second language learning* (pp. 131-150). San Diego: Dominic Press.
- Mendelsohn, D. J. (2001). Listening comprehension: We've come a long way, but.... *Contact*, 27(2), 33-40.
- Mendelsohn, D. (2006). Learning how to listen using learning strategies. In Us'ó, Juan & Mart'inez, Flor (Eds.), *Current trends in the development and teaching of the four language skills* (75–90). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research in education: A qualitative approach*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Merriam, S. B. (2003). Assessing and evaluating qualitative research. In S. B. Merriam (Ed.), *Qualitative research in practice: examples for discussion and analysis* (pp.18-39). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Miller, L. (2002). Towards a model for lecturing in a second language. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 1(2), 145-162.
- Moag, R. F. and Allen, F.M. (1978). *A survey of faculty attitudes and practices with respect to the level of English at USP*. [Research report]. Suva: University of the South Pacific and the SOE.

- Moore, M. G. (1972). Learner autonomy: The second dimension of independent learning. *Convergence*, 5(2), 76-97.
- Moore, M.G. (1983). On a theory of independent study. In D. Sewart, D. Keegan, & B. Holmberg (Eds.), *Distance Education: International Perspectives* (pp. 68-94). London: Croom Helm.
- Moore, M. G. (1991). Editorial: distance education theory. *The American Journal of Distance Education*, 5(3), 1-6.
- Moore, S. (1997). *The role of the teacher in distance education: The teacher perspective*. Proceedings of the Annual International Conference of the Chair Academy (6th, Reno, NV, February 12-15, 1997). ED407022.
- Morley, J. (1991). Listening comprehension in second/foreign language instruction. In M. Celce-Murcia (Ed.). *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). (pp. 81-106). New York: Newbury House.
- Moser, C. A. and Kalton, G. (1971). *Survey methods in social investigations* (2nd ed.), London: Heinemann.
- Munby, J. (1978). *Communicative syllabus design*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Murphy, J. M. (1987). The listening strategies of English as a second language college students. *Research and teaching in developmental education*, 4(1), 27-44.
- Murphy, J. M. (1991). Oral communication in TESOL: Integrating speaking, listening, and pronunciation. *TESOL Quarterly*, 25(1), 51-75.
- Nachmias, D. and Nachmias, C. (1981). *Research methods in the social sciences* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: St. Martin's Press.

- Naidu, V., Van Trease, H. and Mugler, F. (1996). *Integration of pre-degree and undergraduate programmes, introduction of 24-unit degree (s) and common platform of courses for degree studies*. [Discussion paper]. Suva: University of the South Pacific and the SOE.
- Naiman, N., Frohlich, M., Stern, H. and Todesco, A. (1978). *The good language learner*. Research in Education Series No. 7. Toronto: The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.
- Nichols, R.G. (1957). Listening is a 10-part skill. *Nation's Business*, 45(7), 57.
- Nunan, D. (1988). *The Learner-Centred Curriculum: A study in second language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nunan, D. (1989). Hidden agendas: the role of the learner in programme implementation. In R. K. Johnston (Ed.). *The second language curriculum* (pp. 176-186). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Nunan, D. (1999). *Second Language Teaching and Learning*. London: Newbury House. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Oller, J. W. (1979). *Language tests at school*. London: Longman.
- O'Malley, M. (1987). The effects of training in the use of learning strategies. In A. Wenden and J. Rubin (Eds.), *Learner strategies in language learning* (pp. 133-143). New York: Prentice Hall.
- O'Malley, J. and Chamot, A. (1990). *Learning strategies in second language acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- O'Malley, J., Chamot, A., and Küpper, L. (1989). Listening comprehension strategies in second language acquisition. *Applied Linguistics*, 10(4), 418-437.

- O'Malley, J., Chamot, A., Stewner-Manzanares, G., Küpper, L. and Russo, R. (1985a). Learning strategies used by beginning and intermediate ESL student. *Language Learning*, 35, 21-46.
- O'Malley, J., Chamot, A., Stewner-Manzanares, G., Russo, R. and Kupper, L. (1985b). Learning strategy applications with students of English as a second language. *TESOL Quarterly*, 19(3), 557-584.
- O'Sullivan, P. (1978). *English at USP: student view*. [Research report]. Suva: University of the South Pacific and the SOE.
- Ostler, S. (1980). A survey of academic needs for advanced ESL. *TESOL Quarterly*, 14(4), 489-502.
- Oxford, R. L. (1990). *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know*. New York: Newbury House.
- Oxford, R. L. (1993). Research update on L2 listening. *System*, 21, 205-211.
- Oxford, R. L (1996). Employing a questionnaire to assess the use of language learning strategies. *Applied Language Learning*, 7(1), 25-45.
- Oxford, R. and Crookall, D. (1989). Research on language learning strategies: Methods, findings, and instructional issues. *Modern Language Journal*, 73(4), 404-419.
- Oxford, R. and Nyikos, M. (1989). Variables affecting choice of language learning by university students. *Modern Language Journal*, 73, 291-300.
- Palincsar, A. S., & Brown, A. L. (1984). Reciprocal teaching of comprehension-fostering and monitoring activities. *Cognition and Instruction*, 1, 117-175.
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park.: Sage Publications.

- Peters, O. (1988). Distance teaching and industrial production: a comparative interpretation in outline. In D. Sewart, D. Keegan and B. Holmberg (eds.) *Distance Education: International Perspective*. (pp.95-111). London: Croom Helm.
- Peters, O. (1992). Some observations on dropping out in distance education. *Distance Education*, 13(2), 234-269.
- Pica, T. (1994). Questions from the language classroom: Research perspectives. *TESOL Quarterly*, 28(1) 49-79.
- Pintrich, P.R. (1999). The role of motivation in promoting and sustaining self-regulated learning. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 31, 459-470.
- Pole, C. and Morrison, M. (2003). *Ethnography for education*. Berkshire: Open University Press.
- Powers, D. E. (1986). Academic demands related to listening skills. *Language Testing*, 3(1), 1-38.
- Purdy, M. (1997). What is listening? In M. Purdy and D. Borisoff (Eds.). *Listening in everyday life: A personal and professional approach* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (pp. 1-20). Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Purnell, K., Cuskelly, E., Danaher, P. (1996). Improving Distance Education for University Students: Issues and Experiences of Students in Cities and Rural Areas, in *Journal of Distance Education*, 11(2), 75-101.
- Raimes, A. (1987). Why Write? From Purpose to Pedagogy. *English Teaching Forum*, 36-41.

- Ramsden, P. (1988). Context and strategy: Situational influences on learning. In R.R Schmeck (Ed), *Learning strategies and learning styles* (pp.159-184), New York: Plenum Press.
- Ramsden, P. (1997). The context of learning in academic departments. In F. Marton, D. Hounsell and N. J. Entwistle (Eds.) *The experience of learning: Implications for teaching and studying in higher education* (pp. 198-216). Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press.
- Rankin P.T. (1930). Listening ability. Its importance, measurement, and development. *Chicago School Journal*, 12, 177-179.
- Rankin, P. T. (1952). The measurement of the ability to understand spoken language (Doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, 1926). *Dissertation Abstracts*, 12, 847-848.
- Richards, J. C. (1983). Listening comprehension: Approach, design, procedure. *TESOL Quarterly*, 17(2), 219-240.
- Richards, J. C. (1987). Beyond methods: Alternative approaches to instructional design in language teaching. *Prospect*, 3(1), 11-30.
- Richards, J. C. (1990). *The Language Teaching Matrix*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. & Rodgers, T. (2001). *Approaches and methods in language teaching: A description and analysis* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, K. and Skelton, J. (1991). How critical can you get? In P. Adams, B. Heaton and P. Howarth (Eds.) *Socio-cultural issue sin English for Academic Purposes. Developments in ELT* (n.p.). Hamel Hempstead: Phoenix ELT.

- Richardson, J.T.E. (2000) *Researching student learning: Approaches to studying in campus-based and distance education*, Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.
- Richardson, J.T.E; Morgan, A. and Woodley, A. (1999) Approaches to studying in distance education, *Higher Education*, 37, 23-55.
- Richterich, R. (1983). *Case studies in identifying language needs*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Richterich, R. & Chancerel, J. (1977). *Identifying the Needs of Adults Learning a Foreign Language*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Rivers, W.M. (1981). *Teaching foreign language skills* (2nd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Robinson, P. (1991). *ESP today*. UK: Prentice Hall.
- Robinson, B. Prior, M. (1995). *Systems Analysis Techniques*. London: International Thompson Computer Press.
- Rost, M. (1990). *Listening in language learning*. London: Longman.
- Rost, M. (1994). *Introducing listening*. London: Longman.
- Rost, M. (2001). Listening. In R. Carter & D. Nunan (Eds.), *Teaching English to speakers of other languages* (pp. 7-13). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rost, M. and Ross, S. (1991). Learner use of strategies in interaction: Typology and teachability. *Language Learning*, 4(2), 235-273.
- Rubin, J. (1975). What the 'good language learner' can teach us. *TESOL Quarterly*, 9(1), 41-51.
- Rubin, J. (1981). Study of cognitive processes in second language learning. *Applied Linguistics*, 11, 117-131.

- Rubin, J. (1987). Learner strategies: theoretical assumptions, research history and typology. In A. Wenden and J. Rubin (Eds.) *Learner strategies in language learning* (pp.15-30). New York: Prentice Hall.
- Rubin, J. (1995). The contribution of video to the development of competence in listening. In D. Mendelsohn and J. Rubin (Eds.). *A guide for the teaching of second language listening* (pp. 151-165). San Diego: Dominie Press.
- Rubin, J. (2003). Diary writing as a process: Simple, useful, powerful, *Guidelines*, 25(2), 10-14.
- Rubin, J. and Thompson, I. (1994). *How to be a more successful language learner*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Boston: Heinle and Heinle.
- Rumble, G. (2001) Re-inventing distance education, 1971-2001. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*. 20(1/2), 31-43.
- Sameer, M. (2005). *English for Academic Purposes: Introduction and Assignments, Semester 2, 2005* Suva: University of the South Pacific.
- Savenye, W. C. and Robinson, R. S. (2004). Qualitative research issues and methods: An introduction to educational technology. In D. A. Jonassen (Ed.), *Handbook of research for educational communicational communications and technology: A project of the association for educational communications and technology* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (pp.1045-1071). London: Simon and Schuster Macmillan.
- Savenye, W. C. & Robinson, R. S. (1996). Qualitative research issues and methods: An introduction for educational technologists. In David H. Jonassen (Ed.). *Handbook of Research for Educational Communications and Technology*. New York: Macmillan.



- Schensul, S. L., Schensul, J. J. and Le Compte, M. D. (1999). *Essential ethnographic methods: Observations, interviews and questionnaires*. New Delhi: Altmira Press.
- Schram, T. (2003). *Conceptualising qualitative inquiry*. New Jersey: Pearson Education.
- Sherry, L. (1996). Issues in distance learning. *International Journal of Educational Telecommunications*, 1(4), 337-365.
- Sherry, L., & Morse, R.A. (1995). An assessment of training needs in the use of distance education for instruction. *International Journal of Telecommunications*, 1(1), 5-22.
- Schunk, D.H. (2004) *Learning theories: An educational perspective* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Spearitt, D. (1962). *Listening comprehension: A factorial analysis*. Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research, #76.
- Stake, R. E. (2003). Case studies. In N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). (pp. 134-164). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing.
- Stern, H. H. (1975). What can we learn from the good language learner? *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 34, 304-318.
- Stenbacka, C. (2001). Qualitative research requires quality concepts of its own, *Management Decision*, 39(7), 551-555.
- Strambi, A. and Bouvet E. (2003). Flexibility and interaction at a distance: a mixed-mode environment for language learning. *Language Learning and Technology*, 7(3), 81-102.

- Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Newbury Park: Sage
- Takeuchi, O. (2003). What can we learn from good language learners: A qualitative study in the Japanese foreign language context. *System*, 31, 385-392.
- Taguchi, N. (2002). An application of relevance theory to the analysis of L2 interpretation processes: The comprehension of indirect replies. *IRAL*, 40(2), 151-176.
- Tamata, A. (1996). Code-switching in Fiji's schools. In F. Muglar and J. Lynch (eds.) *Pacific languages in education* (pp. 92-101). Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies and Department of Literature and Languages/Vanuatu; Pacific Languages Unit.
- Tarone, E. (1981). Some thoughts on the notion of communication strategy. *TESOL Quarterly*, 15, 285-295.
- Tarone, E. (1983). On the variability of interlanguage systems. *Applied Linguistics*, 4(2), 142-163.
- Tarone, E. (1989). Teacher-executed needs assessment: Some suggestions for teachers and program administrators, *MinneTESOL Journal* 7, 39-48.
- Tarone, E., & Yule, G. (1989). *Focus on the Language Learner*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Templeton, H. (1977). A new technique for measuring listening comprehension. *ELT Journal*, 31(4), 292-299.
- Thaman, K. (1977). Some Expectations for Tertiary Teachers: the Case of the University of the South Pacific. *South Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 5 (1), 22-28.

- Thaman, K. H. (1996). The Tongan studies programme. In F. Muglar and J. Lynch (eds.) *Pacific languages in education* (pp. 120-136). Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies and Department of Literature and Languages/Vanuatu; Pacific Languages Unit.
- Thompson, S. (2003). Text-structuring metadiscourse, intonation and the signalling of organisation in academic lectures. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 2, 5-20.
- Threlkeld, R., & Brzoska, K. (1994). Research in distance education. In B. Willis (Ed.), *Distance Education: Strategies and Tools*. Englewood (pp. 41-66). Cliffs, NJ: Educational Technology Publications, Inc.
- Tudini, V. (2003). Using native speakers in chat. *Language Learning and Technology*, 7(3), 141-159.
- USP (1998). *University Extension Annual Report 1998*, University of the South Pacific: Suva.
- USP (2004). Enrolment figures for EAP course at USP 1996-2004. Retrieved March 10 2005 from <http://www.usp.ac.fj/fileadmin/files/pdo/stats/2004/2004.pdf>
- USP (2005). Graduate destination survey (2004 graduates). Retrieved May 12, 2007 from [http://www.usp.ac.fj/fileadmin/files/academic/pdo/Planning/2005\\_Graduate\\_Destination\\_Survey\\_final.pdf](http://www.usp.ac.fj/fileadmin/files/academic/pdo/Planning/2005_Graduate_Destination_Survey_final.pdf)
- USP (2007). Distance and flexible learning, an overview. Retrieved June 3, 2007 from [http://www.usp.ac.fj/index.php?id=aboutus\\_overview](http://www.usp.ac.fj/index.php?id=aboutus_overview)
- USP (n.d.). *Map of the USP Region*. Retrieved October 30, 2002 from <http://www.usp.ac.fj/uspnet>

- USP (n.d.) Map showing geographical location of USP countries. Retrieved April 10, 2007 from [http://www.usp.ac.fj/index.php?id=usp\\_region](http://www.usp.ac.fj/index.php?id=usp_region))
- USP (n.d.). *English language skills assessment (ELSA)*. Retrieved May 12, 2007 from <http://www.usp.ac.fj/index.php?id=4546>
- Va'a, R. (1998). Cross cultural distance education in the South Pacific. *Long Distance Education, CAAMA Conference*, Alice Spring 28-31 March.
- Vandergrift, L. (1996). The listening comprehension strategies of core French high school students. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 52(2), 200-223.
- Vandergrift, L. (1997a). The comprehension strategies of second language (French) listeners: A descriptive study. *Foreign Language Annals*, 30(3), 387-409.
- Vandergrift, L. (1997b). The Cinderella of communication strategies: Reception strategies in interactive listening. *Modern Language Journal*, 81(4), 494-505.
- Vandergrift, L. (1999). Facilitating second language listening comprehension: Acquiring successful strategies. *ELT Journal*, 53(3), 168-176.
- Vandergrift, L. (2002). It was nice to see that our predictions were right: Developing metacognition in L2 listening comprehension. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 58(4), 555-575.
- Vandergrift, L. (2003). From prediction through reflection: Guiding students through the process of L2 listening. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 59(3), 425-440.
- Vandergrift, L. (2004). Listening to learn or listening to listen? *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 24, 3-25.
- Vandergrift, L. (2006). Second language listening: Listening ability or language proficiency? *Modern Language Journal*, 90(1), 6-18.

- Vandergrift, L. (2007). Recent developments in second and foreign language listening comprehension research, *Language Teaching*, 40, 191-210.
- Vandergrift, L., Goh, C. M., Mareschal, C. and Tafaghodtari, M. (2006). The metacognitive awareness listening questionnaire: Development and validation. *Language Learning*, 56(3), 431-462.
- Vermunt, J. D. (1992). *Learning styles and regulation of learning process in higher education- Towards process-oriented instruction in autonomous thing*, Amsterdam: Swets & Zeitlinger.
- Vermunt, J. D. (2003). The power of learning environments and the quality of student learning. In E. DeCorte, L. Verschaffel, N. J. Enstwestle and J. van Merriënboer (Eds.) *Powerful learning environments: Unravelling basic components and dimensions* (pp. 109-124). Amsterdam: Pergamon.
- Vermunt, J. D. and Vermetten, Y.J. (2004) Patterns in student learning: relationships between learning strategies, conceptions of learning, and learning orientations, *Educational Psychology Review*, 16(4), 359-383.
- Vogely, A. (1995). Perceived strategy use during performance on three authentic listening comprehension tasks. *Modern Language Journal*, 79(1), 41-56.
- Wang, Y. and Sun, C. (2001). Supporting synchronous distance education: Enhancing speaking skills via Internet-based real time technology. In X. Zhou, J. Fong, X. Jia, Y. Kambayashi and Y. Zhang (Eds.) *Proceedings of the first international*

- conference on Web information systems engineering*. Los Alamitos, CA: IEE Computer Society, 168-172.
- Wedemeyer, C. A. (1981). *Learning at the back door*. Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Weir, C. J. (1983). The Associated Examining Board's test of English for academic purposes: An exercise in content validation events. In: A. Hughes and D. Porter (Eds.) *Current developments in language testing* (pp. 147–153). London: Academic Press.
- Weir, C. (1990). *Communicative Language Testing*. New York: Prentice Hall.
- Wenden, A. (1987). Conceptual background and utility. In A. Wenden, and J. Rubin, (Eds.). *Learner strategy in language learning* (pp. 3-13). New York: Prentice-Hall.
- Wenden, A. (1991) *Learner Strategies for Learner Autonomy*, Hemel Hemstead: Prentice Hall.
- Wenden, A. and Rubin, J. (Eds.). (1987). *Learner strategies in language learning*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- West, R. (1994). Needs analysis in language teaching. *Language Teaching*, 27, 1-9.
- White, C. (1995). Autonomy and strategy use in distance foreign language learning: Research findings. *System*, 23(2), 207-221.

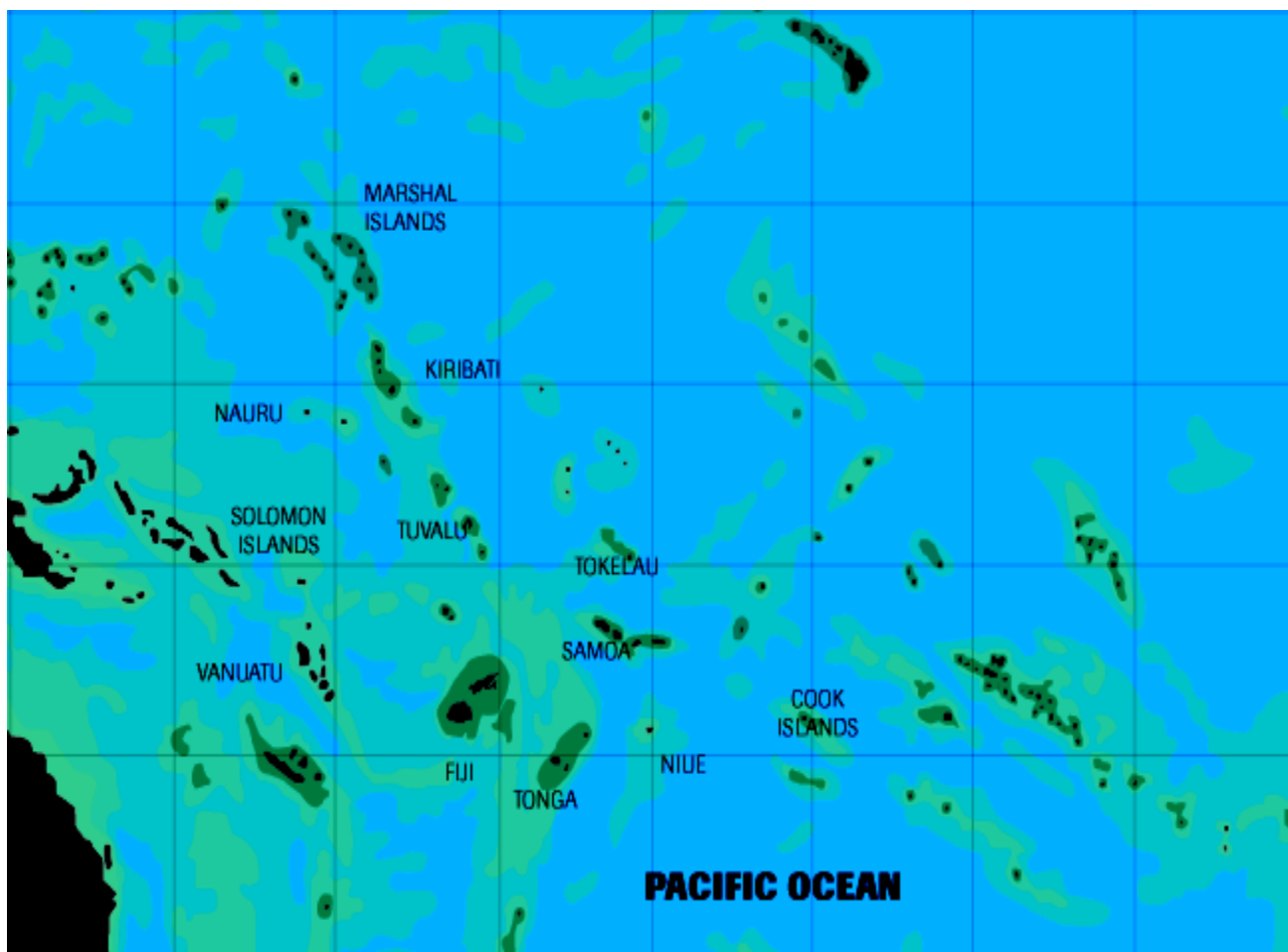
- White, C. (1997). Effects of mode of study on foreign language learning. *Distance Education*, 18(1), 178-196.
- White, C. (1999a). Expectations and emergent beliefs of self-instructed language learners. *System*, 27(4), 443-457.
- White, C. (1999b). The metacognitive knowledge of distance learners. *Open Learning*, 14(3), 37-47.
- White, C. (2003). *Language learning in distance education*. Cambridge, UK : Cambridge University Press.
- White, C. (2006). Distance learning of foreign languages. *Language Teaching*, 39, 247-264.
- White, C. (2007). Innovation and identity in distance language learning and teaching. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 1(1), 97-110.
- Wikipedia (2007). University of the South Pacific. Retrieved June 6, 2007 from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University\\_of\\_the\\_South\\_Pacific](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_the_South_Pacific)
- Williams, M. L., Paprock, K., and Covington, B. (1999). *Distance learning: the essential guide*. London: Sage.
- Willing, K. (1988). Learning strategies as information management: Some definitions for a theory of learning strategies. *Prospect*, 3(2), 139-156.
- Wolvin, A. D., & Coakley, C. G. (1979). *Listening Instruction*. Falls Church, VA: Speech Communication Association. (ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills. Stock No. 29463).
- Wong, M. C. P. (1996). Prioritising language needs. In D. Gardner and L. Miller (Eds.), *Tasks for independent language learning* (pp.12-14). Alexandria: TESOL.

- World Factbook (2007). *Language and communication fact sheet*. Retrieved May 12, 2007 from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>
- Xiao, L. and Ru-hua, C. (2006). Integrating Computer-Mediated Communication into an EAP course. *Frontiers of Education in China*, 1(4), 589-600.
- Yin, R. (1984). *Case study research: Design and methods* (1st ed.). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publishing.
- Zirkle, C. (2002). Identification of distance education barriers for trade and industrial teacher education. *Journal of Industrial Teacher Education*, 40(1), 20-44.
- Zoghoul, M. R. and Hussein, R. F. (1985). English for higher education in the Arab world: A case study of needs analysis at Yarmouk University. *ESP Journal*, 4(2), 133-152.



## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Map showing geographical location of USP countries



(Source: USP (n.d))

### Appendix 2

### Language and Communication Fact Sheet of USP Member Countries

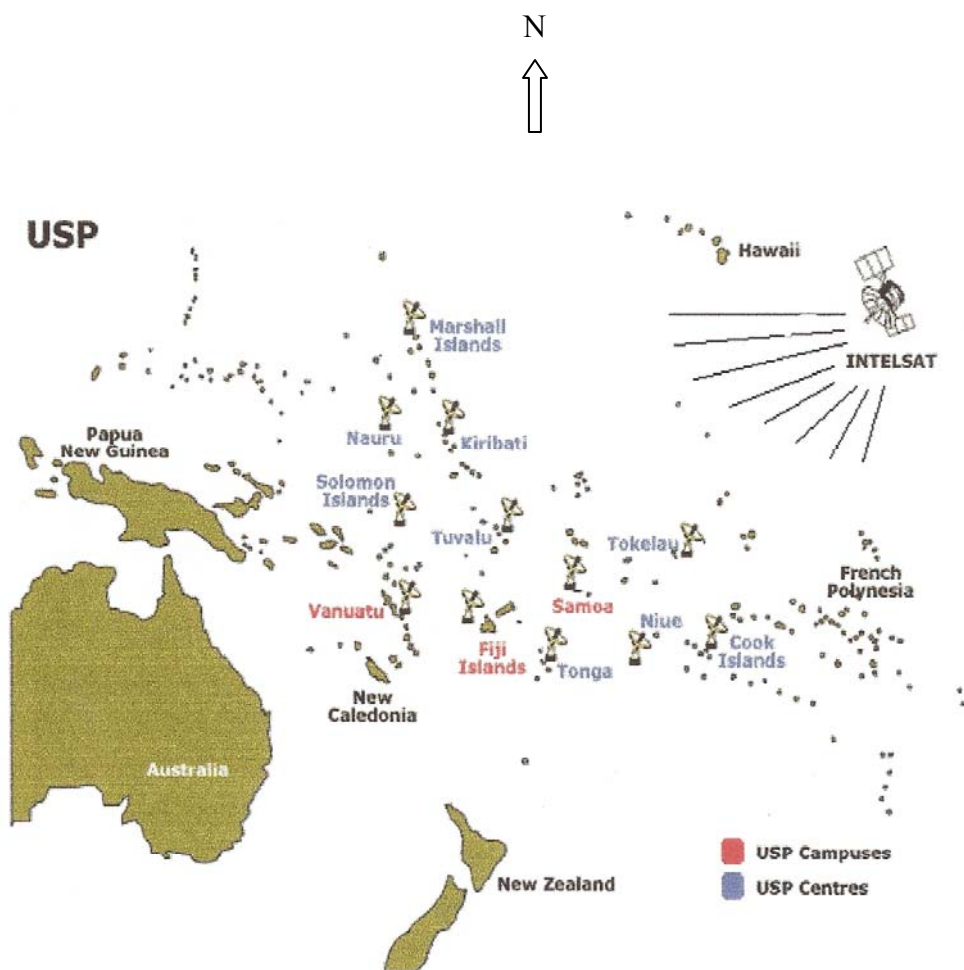
Member Countries	Land area (sq. km.)	Est. July 2007 Population	Literacy Rate	Languages	Ethnic Groups	Telephone users (main/mobile)	Internet users	Radio stations	TV stations
Cook Islands	236.7	21, 750	95%	English (official); Maori	Polynesian (87.7%); Part Cook Island Maori (5.8%); other (6.5%)	6, 200/ 1, 500	3, 600	1 AM; 1 FM	1
Fiji	18, 270	918, 675	93.7%	English (official), Fijian (official), Hindustani	Fijian (54.8%); Indian (37.4%); other 7.9%)	102, 000/ 142, 200	61, 000	13 AM; 40 FM	1
Kiribati	811	107, 817	NA	English (official); I-Kiribati	Micronesian (98.8%); other (1.2%)	4, 500/ 600	2, 000	1 AM; 2 FM	1
Marshall Islands	181.3	61, 815	93.7%	Marshallese (official); English (official)	Micronesian	5, 510/ 1, 198	2, 000	1 AM; 3 FM	2
Nauru	21	13, 528	NA	Nauruan (official) English (govt and commercial purposes)	Nauruan (58%); other Pacific Islander (26%); Chinese (8%); European (8%)	1, 900/ 1, 500	300	1 AM	1
Niue	260	1, 492	95%	Niuean, English	Niuen (78.2%); Pacific Islander (10.2%); European (4.5%); mixed (3.9%); Asian (0.2%); unspecified (3%)	1, 100/ 400	900	1 AM; 1 FM	1
Samoa	2, 944	214, 265	99.7%	Samoaan; English	Samoaan (92.6%); Euronesians (7%); Europeans (0.4%)	13, 300/ 24, 000	6, 000	2 AM; 5 FM	2
Solomon	28,	566, 842	NA	Pidgin;	Melanesian	7, 400/	8, 400	1 AM;	NA

Islands	450			English (official); 120 indigenous languages	(94.5%); Polynesian (3%); Micronesian (1.2%); other (1.1%); unspecified (0.2%)	6, 000		1 FM	
Tonga	748	116, 921	98.9%	Tongan, English	Polynesian, European	11, 200/ 16, 400	3, 000	1 AM; 4 FM	3
Tokelau	10	1, 449	NA	Tokelauan; English	Polynesian	300	NA	1 radio station	NA
Tuvalu	26	11, 992	NA	Tuvaluan; English; Samoan; Kiribati	Polynesian (96%); Micronesian (4%)	700	1, 300	1 AM; 1 FM	NA
Vanuatu	12, 200	211, 971	74%	Pidgin; English; French, more than 100 local languages,	Ni-Vanuatu (98.5%), other (1.5%)	6, 800/ 12, 700	7, 500	2 AM; 4 FM	1

Source of information: World Factbook (2007)

### Appendix 3: (Map of USP Region)

USP Member Countries: Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.



Source: (USP, n.d.)

## Appendix 4: English Language Skills Assessment (ELSA)

### *Purpose of ELSA*

*USP requires all new students to sit for an English proficiency test, English Language Skills Assessment (ELSA). The purpose of ELSA is to find out if students have the English language skills needed for successful university study.*

### *Structure of ELSA*

There are three sections. Each student is awarded a band score of 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 for each section. In calculating the candidate's overall band score, Section 1 is weighted 1, while Sections 2 and 3 are each weighted 2. In other words, Sections 2 and 3 are each worth twice as much as Section 1.

### *Interpretation of ELSA Bands*

Band	Candidate Profile	Implications for USP study
<b>5</b>	Complete proficiency in all academic skills tested	High level of English skills should be a great advantage in degree studies.
<b>4</b>	Good proficiency in most academic skills tested	Good English skills should be an advantage in degree studies.
<b>3</b>	Adequate proficiency in most academic skills tested	English skills are adequate to commence degree studies, and students will benefit from any explicit teaching in academic English (eg. LL114).
<b>2</b>	Limited proficiency in some academic skills tested	Modest skills may affect success in degree studies; concurrent semester course in English language skills required (EL001).
<b>1</b>	Limited proficiency in all academic skills tested	Limited skills will probably lead to difficulties in meeting course requirements. Extensive concurrent individual support is required.

*Section 1 Vocabulary and Grammar (20 items)*

Item types may include:

- Sentence completion

*Section 2 Reading (30 items)*

There are two reading texts, each from 350 to 450 words in length. Texts are chosen from books, magazines and journals and are written at an introductory undergraduate level, requiring no previous knowledge of the topic.

There are 15 items following each text.

Item types may include:

- Matching paragraph titles/statement parts/words/phrases
- Multiple choice
- Identification of information in the text
- Identification of the writer's opinions

*Section 3*

There are two writing tasks weighted equally: a report on given information, and an essay.

*Report (minimum 150 words)*

Students are presented with information in a diagram, graph or table and asked to write a report. This task requires accurate interpretation and organisation of the data, and clear factual writing. Students are assessed on the criteria of text structure, content and language accuracy and range.

*Essay*

The essay topic will require students to argue a point of view on a topic of general interest to students beginning university studies. No specialist knowledge of any subject is required. Students are assessed on the criteria of overall communicative effectiveness, text structure, content, and language accuracy and range.

### Appendix 5: Enrolment Figures for EAP Course at USP 1996-2004

#### EAP Course Registrations by Term and Mode: 1996 – 2004

Term/Year	On campus		DFL		Summer School	Total	Total USP Enrol	EAP % of USP enrolment
	1st Sem	2nd Sem	1st Sem	2nd Sem				
1996	130	176	0*	127	35	468	9381	4.98
1997	186	178	0*	176	27	567	9208	6.15
1998	240	225	0*	386	16	867	9653	8.98
1999	443	220	0*	595	86	1344	10137	13.25
2000	302	0#	435	768	141	1646	11671	14.1
2001	187	225	637	625	137	1811	12324	14.69
2002	197	173	744	806	247	2167	14324	15.12
2003	217	184	720	635	92	1848	15393	12
2004	353	293	616	573	93	1928	16444	11.72

Source: USP (2004)

\*1996-1999 : EAP was offered only one semester per year

# Due to the political coup in Fiji there were no on-campus courses offered in Semester 2, 2000

**Appendix 6: Comparison Between On Campus and DFL Version of EAP Course at USP**

<b>On Campus</b>	<b>DFL</b>
Assignments: 7 Assignment 1: Narrative essay Assignment 2: Argument essay Assignment 3: Discussion paper Assignment 4: Mid semester test Assignment 5: Causal Analysis Assignment 6: Oral seminar paper Assignment 7: Major research paper Continuous assessment: (60%)	Assignments: 4 Assignment 1: Long Essay Assignment 2: Mid semester test Assignment 3: Report Assignment 4: Seminar Continuous assessment: (60%)
Contact Hours: 4 hours/week : Two x 2hr workshops	Contact Hours: 1 hour every week (centre tutorial); 1 hour every 3 weeks (satellite tutorial); no language laboratory (learners supplied with audio recordings of lectures for note-taking and listening activities)
Mid semester exam: Marks included in continuous assessment	Mid semester exam: Marks included in continuous assessment
Final exam: 40% Essay writing	Final exam: 40% Essay writing



## Appendix 7: Table of Contents of Course book One & Two

### CONTENTS

Page

How to use this *Course Book*

**Introduction to the Course 5**

**UNIT ONE: WRITING I .GETTING STARTED 9**

Overview j1

Academic writing 12

The first essay .how do I star12 25

Analysing the topic 27

Generating ideas 30

Drafting the initial plan 34

Researching the topic 37

Reflning the initial plan 38

Summary 41

Answer key to activities 43

**UNIT TWO: CONTINUING THE PROCESS 45**

Overview 47

How do I begin writing? **48**

Writing the first draft 59

Evaluating and editing the draft 75

Re-writing the essay 76

Summary 78

Answer key to activities 79

**Additional reading**

Kierzrk “**A** guide to usage.” 83

**UNIT THREE: RESEARCH AND THE LIBRARY 95**

Overview 97

How do I research my assignment topic? 98

Flow is a library organised? **10!**

What services does a library offer? 106

How are library reseources organised? 121

Summary 153

Answer key to activities 154

Appendices 155

Appendix 1 Example of a library guide 157

Appendix 2 CD-Rom databases 161

Appendix 3 How to use chemical abstracts 163

**UNIT FOUR: READING 165**

Overview 167

Reading material 168

Reading skills 171

Reading non-verbal text 200

Summary 228

Answer key to activities 229

**UNIT FIVE: READING AND INTERPRETING TEXTS 231**

Overview 233

Reading and interpreting texts 234

**Reading**

Frank ‘Revolution in Eastern Europe 240

lessons for democratic social  
movements (and socialists?)”

Summary 268

Answer key to activities 269

**CONTENTS Course book Two****Page****UNIT SIX: TAKING NOTES FROM WRITTEN SOURCES**

Overview 3

Steps in taking notes from written notes 4

Taking notes from written text 23

Summary 41

Answer key to activities 42

**UNIT SEVEN: WRITING III .PRESENTATIONS 43**

Overview 45

Presentation 46

Writing an abstract 46

Acknowledging sources 55

How do I compile a bibliography 67

Preparing appendices 78

Preparing the preliminary pages 81

The final check 82

Summary 85

Answer key to activities 86

**Appendix One: Computers for academic writing 87****UNIT EIGHT: REPORT WRITING 99**

Overview 101

What is a report 102

Characteristics of report writing 104

The purpose of reports 110

Preparing to write a report 112

Flow to write a report 118

What language do I use when writing a report? 149

Presenting numerical information in a report 164

Summary 181

Answer key to activities 182

Examples of reports 189

**UNIT NINE: SEMINAR PRESENTATION 229**

Overview 231

How do I present a seminar? 232

Preparing 232

Delivering the seminar 239

During the presentation 241

Evaluating a seminar 241

The role of the audience 242

Summary 245

**UNIT TEN: LISTENING TO LECTURES AND  
TAKING NOTES 247**

Overview 249

Listening to lectures 250

Summary 258

Answer key to activities 259

**BIBLIOGRAPHY 267**

### Appendix 8: Study Skills course Semester 2, 2005 Schedule

Week No. and date	Unit	Assignments and tutorials
1: 11-15 July	1: Writing I: Getting started	
2: 18-22 July	2: Writing II: Continuing the process	Satellite tutorial: Thursday 21 July 2005-6-7 pm
3: 25-29 July	3: Research	
4: 1-5 August	4: Reading	
5: 8-12 August	5: Reading and interpreting texts (Listen to Tape 1: Reading and interpreting text)	
6: 15-19 August	6: Taking notes from writing sources	Satellite tutorial: Thursday 18 August 2005: 6-7 pm
7: 22-26 August	7: Writing III: Presentation	Assignment 1 due: 26 August 2005
29 August- 2 September	<b>Mid-Semester Break</b>	
8: 5-9 September	Mid-Semester Test: 7 September	5.00 pm local time
9: 12-16 September	8: Report writing	Satellite tutorial: Thursday 15 September 2005: 6-7 pm
10: 19-23 September	8: Report writing	
11: 26-30 September	9: Seminar presentation (View videotape available at USP Centre). Use the blank tape for recording your seminar presentation.	
12: 3-7 October	10: Listening to lectures and taking notes (Listen to Tape 2: Listening to lectures)	Assignment 2 due: 3 October 2005 Satellite tutorial: Thursday 6 October 2005: 6-7 pm
13: 10-14 October	Revision	Assignment 3 due: 14 October 2005
14: 17-21 October	Revision	Satellite tutorial: Thursday 20 October 2005: 6-7 pm
15: 24-28 October	Study Break	
16: 31 October- 4 November 17: 7- 11 November	Examinations: Check with your USP Centre for the examination exact time and date of your	

Material supplied for the course: Course Books 1 and 2, 3 Audio tapes, video tape (available at the USP Centre) Source: Sameer, M. (2005) *English for Academic Purposes, Introduction and Assignments, Semester 2, 2005*, p. 4

## Appendix 9: O'Malley and Chamot (1990) learning strategies classification

- A. Metacognitive strategies:** 'higher order executive skills that may entail planning for, monitoring, or evaluating the success of a learning activity' (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, 44)
- advance organisers:* planning the learning activity in advance - "You review before you go into class".
  - selective attention:* deciding to pay attention to specific parts of the language input or the situation that will help learning.
  - self-management:* trying to arrange the appropriate conditions for learning - "I sit in the front of the class so I can see the teacher".
  - advance preparation:* planning the linguistic components for a forthcoming language task
  - self-monitoring:* checking one's performance as one speaks - "Sometimes I cut short a word because I realize I've said it wrong".
  - Organisational planning:* planning the parts, sequence, and main ideas to be expressed orally or in writing.
  - self-evaluation:* checking how well one is doing against one's own standards
- B. Cognitive strategies**
- resourcing:* making use of language materials such as dictionaries.
  - grouping:* organising learning on the basis of 'common attributes'.
  - note-taking:* writing down the gist etc of texts.
  - deduction:* conscious application of rules to processing the L2.
  - imagery:* visualising information for memory storage - "Pretend you are doing something indicated in the sentences to make up about the new word".
  - auditory representation:* keeping a sound or sound sequence in the mind - "When you are trying to learn how to say something, speak it in your mind first".
  - elaboration:* 'relating new information to other concepts in memory'.
  - transfer:* using previous knowledge to help language learning - "If they're talking about something I have already learnt (in Spanish), all I have to do is remember the information and try to

put it into English"

*inferencing*: guessing meanings by using available information - "I think of the whole meaning of the sentence, and then I can get the meaning of the new word".

*Summarising*: making a mental or written summary of information gained through listening or reading

**C: Social and Affective strategies:**

*question for clarification*: asking a teacher or native for explanation, help, etc.

*cooperation*: working with fellow-students on language

*Self-talk*: reducing anxiety by using mental techniques that make one feel competent to do the learning task.

(Source: O'Malley and Chamot (1990, pp. 198-199).

## **Appendix 10: SST Interview Guide**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Background Information**

1. Present profession
2. Number of years in this profession
3. Campus/centre where employed

### **Expectations of Listening Skills of learners**

#### **Part 1: Experience**

4. You teach LL114. For how long have you taught the course by the distance mode?
5. Have you conducted satellite tutorials, visited centres for tutorials, or been in contact with the distance learners?
6. Can you describe your experience of teaching the distance learners of the course?

#### **Part 2: Techniques used for teaching**

7. Let us now talk about listening skills. What do you understand about listening skills?
8. What are some of the listening skills that you think the learners should bring with them to the course?
9. How do you teach additional listening skills to the distance learners?
10. Do you feel the course does enough to develop the learners' listening skills, if not how can these skills be developed?

Thank you.

## Appendix 11: CT Interview Guide

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Background Information

1. Present profession
2. Years of experience
3. Country where employed

### Part 1: Experience in DFL

4. You teach a course at USP. Have you taught courses by the distance mode? If not, have you taught learners who did courses by the distance mode prior to coming on campus?
5. Have you conducted satellite tutorials, visited centres for tutorials, been in some form of contact with distance learners?

### Part 2: Perception of skills needed by learners

6. What do you think are important academic skills for learners at USP?
7. What do you think are important listening skills that the learners should bring to your class?
8. What are the listening skills used for in your course? Which activities in your course will require the listening skills?
9. If the learners do not have the required listening skills do you teach these skills to them? Yes-how, No-why not, what do you do to help these learners?
10. Any other comments and/or suggestions?

Thank you.

## Appendix 12: Past Learners Interview Guide

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Background Information

1. Present profession
2. Position
3. Country of residence

### Reason for distance learning

4. You enrolled for LL114 by the distance. What were the reasons for you to do the course by this mode?

### Listening Skills Related Questions

5. Let us now talk about listening skills. What do you think listening skills are?
6. What can you say about your listening skills?
7. Do you think you are a good listener?
8. Where do you need to use your listening skills?
9. Let us now discuss the skills and techniques that you use for listening. When you are listening to something, which strategies or techniques if any at all do you use?
10. Do you have any strategies to remember, memorise or follow what you are listening to?
11. If you have any difficulty in understanding something you listen to, how do you overcome this problem?

### LL114 Related Questions

12. Has LL114 helped you in any way with your listening skills?
13. Let us now talk about LL114 course material. You were provided with course material and other resources. Which of these did you use when studying?
14. Can you provide your views on these materials and resources?
15. Let us now discuss the audiocassettes provided for the course. What are your views on these?
16. Have you used any of these audiocassettes? If so, how much time have you spent listening to these?



17. When you faced any problems listening to these audiocassettes, how did you overcome these problems?

**Other Listening Resources**

18. Apart from listening to these audiocassettes, there are other opportunities and resources provided for the course such as a video on seminar presentations in the centre library, centre based and satellite tutorials, visiting tutors. How many of these opportunities did you take advantage of and how frequently?

19. What are your views on these facilities and resources? Are there any other ways you developed your listening skills?

20. Do you feel that you are becoming a better listener?

21. Do you have any other comments/suggestions for the course?

Thank you.

## Appendix 13: Present Learners Interview Guide

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Background Information

1. Present profession
2. Position (if employed)
3. Country of residence

### Reason for distance learning

4. You enrolled for LL114 by the distance. What is the reason for you to do the course by this mode?

### Listening Skills Related Questions

5. Let us now talk about listening skills. What do you think listening skills are?
6. What can you say about your listening skills?
7. Do you think you are a good listener?
8. Where do you need to use your listening skills?
9. Let us now discuss the skills and techniques that you use for listening. When you are listening to something, which strategies or techniques if any at all do you use?
10. Do you have any strategies to remember, memorise or follow what you are listening?
11. If you have any difficulty in understanding something you listen to, how do you overcome this problem?

### LL114 Related Questions

12. Has LL114 helped you in any way with your listening skills?
13. Let us now talk about LL114 course material. You have been provided with course material and other resources. Which of these do you use when studying?
14. Can you provide your views on these materials and resources?
15. Let us now discuss the audiocassettes provided for the course. What are your views on these?
16. Have you used any of these audiocassettes? If so, how much time have you spent listening to these?

17. When you face any problems listening to these audiocassettes, how do you overcome these problems?

**Other Listening Resources**

18. Apart from listening to these audiocassettes, there are other opportunities and resources provided for the course such as a video on seminar presentations in the centre library, centre based and satellite tutorials, visiting tutors. How many of these opportunities do you take advantage of and how frequently?
19. What are your views on these facilities and resources? Are there any other ways you are developing your listening skills?
20. Do you feel that you are becoming a better listener?
21. Do you have any other comments/suggestions for the course?

Thank you.

## Appendix 14: Past Learners Questionnaire

### Experience of listening needs

#### Background information

Please provide some information about yourself.

Please tick (✓) the appropriate space (s) and write in the space (s) provided.

1. Sex: Male  Female  2. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Country of origin: \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Year enrolled for LL114 \_\_\_\_\_
5. Programme of study completed from USP \_\_\_\_\_
6. Year completed the study at USP \_\_\_\_\_
7. How would you describe your USP programme? Please choose one of the following options. Write the number in the box provided. 

1 = totally by distance                      2 = some by distance, others on-campus  
 3 = some by distance, others on-campus and by summer school  
 4 = very few by distance, mostly on-campus
8. Present profession \_\_\_\_\_
9. Years of professional experience \_\_\_\_\_
10. Native language (s) \_\_\_\_\_
11. English language experience *before* USP. (You may choose more than one option).
 

I studied English as a subject at school.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I attended an English-medium school.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I lived in an English speaking country.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	
12. English use in daily life. Please choose one of the following options. Write the number in the box provided.
 

Always = 1                      Usually = 2                      Sometimes = 3                      Seldom = 4  
 Never = 5

**How often do you use English for the following activities in your daily life?**

Watching TV/videos/films	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listening to radio broadcasts	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communicating with family members	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communicating with domestic helpers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Socialising with friends/colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. How do you rate your English language proficiency in everyday communication? Please indicate using the following scale. Write the number in the box provided.
 

1 =excellent                      2 =good                      3 = adequate                      4 = less than adequate  
 5 = poor

Reading <input type="checkbox"/>	Listening <input type="checkbox"/>	Speaking <input type="checkbox"/>	Writing <input type="checkbox"/>	Grammar <input type="checkbox"/>
Vocabulary <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
14. Using English for your study at USP. Please choose one of the following options. Write the number in the box provided.
 

Always = 1                      Usually = 2                      Sometimes = 3                      Seldom = 4  
 Never = 5

**How often did you use English for the following academic activities?**

Participating in lectures	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participating in extra-curricula activities/functions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participating in panel/meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Discussing academic work with colleagues   
 Listening to lectures, discussions or seminars

**15. How do you rate your English language proficiency for the following activities?** Please indicate using the following scale. Write the number in the box provided.

1 = excellent      2 = good    3 = adequate      4 = less than adequate  
 5 = poor

- Watching TV/videos/films   
 Listening to radio broadcasts   
 Communicating with family members   
 Communicating with domestic helpers   
 Socialising with friends/colleagues

**16. How do you rate your English language proficiency for the following academic activities?** Please indicate using the following scale. Write the number in the box provided.

1 = excellent      2 = good    3 = adequate      4 = less than adequate  
 5 = poor

- Participating in lectures   
 Participating in extra-curricula activities/functions   
 Participating in panel/meetings   
 Discussing academic work with colleagues   
 Listening to lectures, discussions or seminars

**17. Here are some ideas about English language use after university study.** Please indicate how far you agree with each idea. Write the number in the box provided.

1 = strongly agree    2 = agree    3 = undecided      4 = disagree  
 5 = strongly disagree

- i. Skills learnt from LL114 have helped me in my profession after USP.   
 ii. My note-taking skills are now better than before I did LL114.   
 iii. I am now more attentive when listening to others than before I did LL114.   
 iv. I am now able to follow conversations better than before I did LL114.

#### Yourself As An LL114 Distance Learner

**18. How would you classify yourself as an LL114 distance learner?** Please tick the options which best describe you and number the frequency:

- Always = 1      Usually = 2      Sometimes = 3      Seldom = 4  
 Never = 5
- I used LL114 course material for my study.   
 I used audiocassettes for my study.   
 I attended centre-based tutorials for my study.   
 I attended satellite tutorials for my study.   
 I participated in discussion groups.   
 I contacted the course tutor/lecture in-person or by telephone, emails and letters.

**If you utilized the audio-cassettes provided for LL114 please answer**

**Question 19.**

**If you didn't utilize the audio-cassettes, please go to Question 21.**

**19. How would you evaluate these audiocassettes?** Please indicate using the following scales:

1 = very useful      2 = useful    3 = acceptable      4 = useless  
 5 = totally useless

**20. There were audiocassettes provided for the course.**

Please indicate how many of these you listened to/used and what were your views on each of them:

- One cassette for reading and interpreting texts. (Course Book 1 Unit 5: Dr. Mugler's discussion).

---



---

- One cassette for listening to lectures and taking notes. (Course Book 2: Unit 10: Mrs Slatter's discussion on listening and focussing on main points and Professor Subramani's talk for listening skills and note-taking).

---



---

**21. Please provide reasons for not using the audiocassettes for LL114**

---



---



---

If you attended LL114 tutorials please answer question 22.  
If you did not attend LL114 tutorials please go to question 26.

**22. Please provide reasons why you attended LL114 tutorials?**

---



---



---

**23. How would you describe the listening skills required for the following activities during these tutorials?**  
Please indicate using the following scale. Write the number in the box provided.

1 = very important    2 = important    3 = moderately important  
4 = of little importance    5 = unimportant

- |      |   |                          |
|------|---|--------------------------|
| i.   | note-taking activities  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ii.  | listening to satellite tutorials  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iii. | listening to seminar presentations  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iv.  | listening to question and answer sessions between other centres/ tutor and other learners | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| v.   | participating in discussions, asking questions, seeking clarifications from the tutor     | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**24. How would you describe your experience of these tutorial sessions?** Please indicate using the following scale. Write the number in the box provided.

1 = very good    2 = good    3 = barely good    4 = poor  
5 = very poor

**25. Please provide details if your listening skills developed from these tutorials**

---



---

If you contacted LL114 tutor/lecturer please the following question.

**26. Why did you have to contact the tutor/ lecturer?**

---



---

**27. How would describe your confidence during the sessions for LL114?**  
Please indicate using the following scale. Write the number in the box provided.

1 = a great deal confident      2 = much confident      3 = somewhat confident      4 = little confident  
5 = never confident

- i. When you had to listen to others
- ii. When you had to make notes
- iii. When you had to participate in discussions
- iv. When you had to give presentations
- v. When you had to ask questions and seek clarifications
- vi. When you had to talk to someone

**28. How would you describe your experience when attending tutorials for other courses?** Please indicate using the following scale. Write the number in the box provided.

1 = always confident      2 = usually confident  
3 = about half the time confident      4 = seldom confident  
5 = never confident to speak/listen/discuss

**29. Could you describe the reasons for your choice for Question 28?**

---



---



---

**30. Would you agree that LL114 provided you with the relevant listening skills for taking other courses?**

Yes  No

**31. Please give reasons for your choice in Question 30** \_\_\_\_\_

---



---

**32. Any other comments** \_\_\_\_\_

---

Thank you  
Rajni Chand

## Appendix 15: Present Learners Questionnaire

### Perception of listening needs

#### Background information

Please provide some information about yourself.

Please tick (✓) the appropriate space (s).

1. Sex: Male  Female  2. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Country of origin: \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Year enrolled for LL114 \_\_\_\_\_
5. Programme of study enrolled at USP \_\_\_\_\_
6. Expected year for completion of study at USP \_\_\_\_\_
7. How would you describe your USP programme? Please choose one of the following options. Write the number in the box provided. 

1 = totally by distance      2 = some by distance, others on-campus  
 3 = some by distance, others on-campus and by summer school  
 4 = very few by distance, mostly on-campus
8. Expected profession \_\_\_\_\_
9. Years of professional experience (if employed in the past) \_\_\_\_\_
10. Native language (s) \_\_\_\_\_
11. English language experience *before* USP. (You may choose more than one option).
 

I studied English as a subject at school.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I attended an English-medium school.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I lived in an English speaking country.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	
12. English use in daily life. Please choose one of the following options. Write the number in the box provided.
 

Always = 1	Usually = 2	Sometimes = 3	Seldom = 4
Never = 5			

**How often do you use English for following activities in your daily life?**

Watching TV/videos/films	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listening to radio broadcasts	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communicating with family members	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communicating with domestic helpers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Socialising with friends/colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. How do you rate your English language proficiency in everyday communication? Please indicate using the following scale. Write the number in the box provided.
 

1 = excellent	2 = good	3 = adequate	4 = less than adequate
5 = poor			

Reading <input type="checkbox"/>	Listening <input type="checkbox"/>	Speaking <input type="checkbox"/>	Writing <input type="checkbox"/>	Grammar <input type="checkbox"/>
Vocabulary <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
14. Using English for your study at USP. Please choose one of the following options. Write the number in the box provided.
 

Always = 1	Usually = 2	Sometimes = 3	Seldom = 4
Never = 5			

**How often do you use English for the following academic activities?**

Participating in lectures	<input type="checkbox"/>
---------------------------	--------------------------



- Participating in extra-curricula activities/functions
- Participating in panel/meetings
- Discussing academic work with colleagues
- Listening to lectures, discussions or seminars

**15. How do you rate your English language proficiency for the following activities?** Please indicate using the following scale. Write the number in the box provided.

- 1 = excellent      2 = good    3 = adequate      4 = less than adequate  
5 = poor
- Watching TV/videos/films
- Listening to radio broadcasts
- Communicating with family members
- Communicating with domestic helpers
- Socialising with friends/colleagues

**16. How do you rate your English language proficiency for the following academic activities?** Please indicate using the following scale. Write the number in the box provided.

- 1 = excellent      2 = good    3 = adequate      4 = less than adequate  
5 = poor
- Participating in lectures
- Participating in extra-curricula activities/functions
- Participating in panel/meetings
- Discussing academic work with colleagues
- Listening to lectures, discussions or seminars

**17. Here are some ideas about English language use after university study.** Please indicate how far you agree with each idea. Write the number in the box provided.

- 1 =strongly agree      2 = agree    3 =undecided      4 =disagree  
5 = strongly disagree
- v. Skills learnt from LL114 will help me in my profession after USP.
- vi. My note-taking skills are now better then before I enrolled for LL114.
- vii. I am now more attentive when listening to others then before I enrolled for LL114.
- viii. I am now able to follow conversations better then before I enrolled for LL114

#### Yourself As An LL114 Distance Learner

**18. How would you classify yourself as an LL114 distance learner?** Please tick the options which best describe you and number the frequency:

- Always = 1      Usually = 2      Sometimes = 3      Seldom = 4  
Never = 5
- I use LL114 course material for my study.
- I use audiocassettes for my study.
- I attend centre-based tutorials for my study.
- I attend satellite tutorials for my study.
- I participate in discussion groups.
- I contact the course tutor/lecture in-person or by telephone, emails and letters.

**If you utilized the audio-cassettes provided for LL114 please answer the question 19.**

**If you did not utilize the audio-cassettes provided for LL114 please go to question 21.**

**19. How would you evaluate these audiocassettes?** Please indicate using the following scales:

- 1 = very useful      2 =useful    3 = acceptable      4 = useless  
5 = totally useless

**20. There are audiocassettes provided for the course.**

Please indicate how many of these you listen to/use and what are your views on each of them:

- One cassette for reading and interpreting texts. (Course Book 1 Unit 5: Dr. Mugler's discussion).

---



---

- One cassette for listening to lectures and taking notes. (Course Book 2: Unit 10: Mrs Slatter's discussion on listening and focussing on main points and Professor Subramani's talk used for listening skills and note-taking).

---



---

**21. If no, please provide reasons for not using the audiocassettes for LL114**

---



---

If you attended LL114 tutorials please answer the following questions. If you did not attend the tutorials, please go to question 26.

**22. Please provide reasons for attending the LL114 tutorials?**

---



---

**23. How would you describe the listening skills required for the following activities during these tutorials?** Please indicate using the following scale. Write the number in the box provided.

1 = very important    2 = important    3 = moderately important  
4 = of little importance    5 = unimportant

- |       |   |                          |
|-------|---|--------------------------|
| vi.   | note-taking activities  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| vii.  | listening to satellite tutorials  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| viii. | listening to seminar presentations  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ix.   | listening to question and answer sessions between other centres/ tutor and other learners | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| x.    | participating in discussions, asking questions, seeking clarifications from the tutor     | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**24. How would you describe your experience of these tutorial sessions?** Please indicate using the following scale. Write the number in the box provided.

1 = very good    2 = good    3 = barely good    4 = poor  
5 = very poor

**25. Please provide details if your listening skills developed from these tutorials**

---



---

**26. If you contact LL114 tutor/lecturer please give reasons why you have to contact the tutor/ lecturer**

---



---

**27. How would you describe your confidence during the sessions for LL114?** Please indicate using the following scale. Write the number in the box provided.

1 = a great deal confident    2 = much confident    3 = somewhat confident    4 = little confident  
5 = never confident

- |      |                                  |                          |
|------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| vii. | When you had to listen to others | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|

- Viii. When you have to make notes
- ix. When you have to participate in discussions
- X. When you have to give presentations
- Xi. When you have to ask questions and seek clarifications
- Xii. When you have to talk to someone

**28. How would you describe your experience when attending tutorials for other courses?** Please indicate using the following scale. Write the number in the box provided.

1 = always confident    2 = usually                      3 = about half the time confident  
4 = seldom confident    5 = never confident

**29. Could you describe the reasons for your choice for Question 28?**

---



---



---

**30. Would you agree that LL114 helped you with the relevant listening skills needed for other courses?**

Yes                          No   

**31. Please give reasons for your choice in Question 30** \_\_\_\_\_

---



---

**32. Any other suggestions** \_\_\_\_\_

---

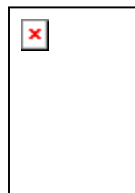
**Thank you**  
Rajni Chand

### Appendix 16: Summary of Listening Course Framework (Mendelsohn (1994))

1. The course should include a large amount of listening.
2. The material should be spoken English.
3. The material should include dialogue and monologue.
4. The content should be appropriate.
5. The level of difficulty should be carefully set.
6. The delivery (recording) should be natural.
7. Attitude and motivation should be considered.
8. Listening courses should account for different types of listening.
9. A listening course should recognise the importance of prior knowledge.
10. Prelistening should precede the listening.
11. The students should know what they will be listening for.
12. Postlistening activities should follow the listening.
13. Listening activities should teach, not test.
14. The listening tasks should be chosen carefully.
15. Training should be given in recognising and interpreting the linguistic features.
16. Attention should be given to extralinguistic and paralinguistic clues.
17. A listening course should include training in hypothesis formation, prediction, and inferencing.
18. Initial analysis of needs and ability.
19. The central, organising pattern of a strategy-based listening course.

(Source: Mendelsohn, 1994, pp. 48-68).

## Appendix 17: Ethical Approval Form



Form devised May 1995; updated May 1997; June 1998; May 1999, Dec 2000, June 2002

### ETHICAL APPROVAL AT DEPARTMENTAL LEVEL OF A PROPOSAL INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS (CATEGORY B)

**NAME OF DEPARTMENT:** *Linguistic Programme, School of Language, Literature and Performing Arts.*

**TITLE OF PROJECT:** *Listening needs of distance learners*

**PROJECTED START DATE OF PROJECT:** *May 2004*

**STAFF MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR PROJECT:** *Dr Elke Stracke*

**NAMES OF OTHER PARTICIPATING STAFF:** *Dr Antonie Alm*

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT:** *This project is being undertaken as part of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy for Mrs Rajni Chand in the Linguistics Programme. The aim of the project is to investigate the listening needs of learners who enrol for the study skills course through the University of the South Pacific's distance learning programme. The study will combine multiple data collection methods:*

- *Class observations*
- *Interviews*
- *Questionnaires*

*Feedback on the questionnaires will be collected and interviews and classroom observations will be recorded and transcribed as raw data to be analysed. This in turn will serve as the basis to form the ideas for the investigation of learners' listening needs for study skills course offered by the distance.*

*The interview will involve an open-questioning technique, so that the precise nature of the exact questions which will be asked of participants have not been determined in advance, but will depend on the way in which the interview develops.*

#### **DETAILS OF ETHICAL ISSUES INVOLVED:**

*It is envisaged that questionnaires will be administered by the researcher to past and present learners of study skill course offered by the distance at the University of the South Pacific. Interviews in person will also be conducted by the researcher on a sample group of past learners, course teachers, teachers of other courses which share the programme with the study skill course, distance learning administrators and centre and local staff. The data collected by these methods will be used to investigate learners' experience of listening needs, their perception of listening needs and the teachers' perception of learners' listening needs. Consequently, personal information and opinions will most likely be gathered and/or identified in the process, which may rise to ethical concerns.*

*Two measures that will be taken to deal with these ethical issues are:*

1. *For all participants who will be asked the questionnaires, be observed during class and /or be interviewed for the project, an information sheet about the project (Appendix 1) will be provided and written consent (Appendix 2) will be sought in advance.*
2. *For all personal information and opinions, which will constitute data for qualitative study and analysis, the identities of the individuals involved must not be included or deduced in the final thesis.*

#### **ACTION TAKEN**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Approved by Head of Department                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Approved by Departmental Committee                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Referred to University of Otago Human Ethics Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Referred to another Ethics Committee<br>Please specify:<br>..... |

**DATE OF CONSIDERATION:** .....

**Signed (Head of Department):** .....

**Encl:**

**Appendix 1: Information Sheet**

**Appendix 2: Consent Form**

## Appendix 18: Consent Form for the Participants

### *Listening needs of distance learners.* **INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS**

Dear.....

First of all, let me express my sincere gratitude for your showing an interest in this project. I am a lecturer from the University of the South Pacific currently studying for the PhD degree in the Linguistics Program at the University of Otago, New Zealand.

As part of the requirements for this degree I have proposed to conduct a project concerning the listening needs of distance learners.

The purpose of the project is to collect views from those learners who were/are enrolled for the distance mode of the study skills course (LL114) offered by USP as well as from the staff involved in its delivery. To do this I need to collect relevant information and opinions in the form of questionnaires and interviews from learners and the staff involved in the distance mode of LL114 course.

Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate I thank you. If you decide not to take part there will be no disadvantage to you of any kind and I thank you for considering my request.

Should you agree to take part in this project, you will be asked to answer a questionnaire and/or be interviewed for your views concerning the listening skills needs of learners. Your views will be of great importance and value to my research.

The questionnaire and/or interview will be conducted in English. The questionnaire will take you approximately 15 minutes. The interview may last from 15 to 30 minutes.

Feedback on the questionnaires will be collected and interviews will be recorded and transcribed as raw data to be used for the analysis, which in turn will serve as the basis to form the ideas for future development of the study skills course at USP.

The interview will involve an open-questioning technique in which the interview develops. Consequently, although the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee is aware of general areas to be explored in the interview, the Committee has not been able to review the precise questions to be asked.

In case you are asked questions which you feel uncomfortable with, you will have the right to decline to answer them as well as to withdraw from the project at any stage without any disadvantage of any kind to yourself.

I, the researcher, am the only person who will have access to the feedback of the questionnaires and tapes of the interviews. It may also be necessary for the supervisors to inspect some part of the data.

Results of this project may be published but any data included will in no way be linked to any specific participant.

You are most welcome to request a copy of the results of the project should you wish.

The data collected will be securely stored in such a way that only those mentioned above will be able to gain access to it. At the end of the project any personal information will be destroyed immediately except that, as required by the University's research policy, any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for five years, after which it will be destroyed.

If you have any questions about our project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:

Rajni Chand (researcher)

or

Dr Elke Stracke (primary supervisor)

Linguistics Programme

Linguistics Programme

University ph: 64 3 479 8952

University ph: 64 3 4798637

Email: [chand\\_rks@usp.ac.fj](mailto:chand_rks@usp.ac.fj)

[chara004@student.otago.ac.nz](mailto:chara004@student.otago.ac.nz)

Phone (Fiji): 679 3340640

679 3212568

Thank you again for showing interest in this project and reading this lengthy information sheet.

Additional information: The number on your questionnaire entitles you an entry for the \$50.00 gift voucher from the University Bookshop if the questionnaire is returned before 12<sup>th</sup> of August 2005. Please return the completed questionnaire in the self addressed envelop to your USP Centre before the due date. The four winning numbers, (2 for past learners and 2 for present learners) will be announced in the September edition of USP Bulletin.

Thank you very much for your time.

## CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

I ..... (name in capital letters) have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:

1. my participation in the project is entirely voluntary;
2. I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage;
3. the data [*audio-tapes/questionnaires*] will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project but any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for five years, after which it will be destroyed;
4. this project involves an open-questioning technique in which the interview develops and that in the event that the line of questioning develops in such a way that I feel hesitant or uncomfortable I may decline to answer any particular question(s) and/or may withdraw from the project without any disadvantage of any kind.
5. the results of the project may be published and available in the library but every attempt will be made to preserve my anonymity.



I agree to take part in this project.

.....

.....  
(Signature of participant)

(Date)

### Appendix 19: Correspondence Made Prior to the Data Collection

**Date:** Thu, 2 Jun 2005 11:54:14 +1200  
**From:** [Rajni K Chand <chara004@student.otago.ac.nz>](mailto:chara004@student.otago.ac.nz)  
**To:** [####@usp.ac.fj](mailto:####@usp.ac.fj)  
**Subject:** request for data collection-Rajni Chand  
**Part(s):**  2 [usp funding proposal.doc](#) application/msword 46.53 KB 

Hello ###, as you may know I am currently pursuing my PhD studies at University of Otago . I am coming to Suva from the 11th of July till 29th of August for data collection. My study is titled: Listening needs of distance learners: A case study of distance learners at USP. I am attaching my proposal and travel plan for your information. My study includes interviewing, evaluation of course material and sending questionnaires to past and present learners of LL114 students. I plan to also travel to Vanuatu at the beginning of August for data collection there.

My request is to have access to contact details of past and present learners of LL114 from the region. I will also need approval to use the despatch for distribution and collection of the questionnaires. I plan to send the questionnaires out to present learners of LL114 with their returned 1st assignment and expect them returned through the despatch mail delivery if possible. I will be with the Literature and Language Department and can sort the questionnaires there. For the past learners too, if they can send the returned questionnaires to LL114 mail delivery it will be of great help to me. I will be attaching self-addressed postage paid envelopes with these questionnaires however if the despatch mail system could be used, it will mean getting the questionnaires back quicker.

Secondly, if the Vanuatu Centre, Labasa, Suva and Lautoka Centre can be notified about my study they can help me getting the students for the interviews.

I have great hopes of getting the support and approval for this study that I am doing.

Looking forward to a reply soon

See you in July in Fiji

Rajni



**Date:** Mon, 06 Jun 2005 14:31:04 +1200  
**From:** ###@usp.ac.fj  
**To:** [Rajni K Chand <chara004@student.otago.ac.nz>](mailto:chara004@student.otago.ac.nz)  
**Cc:** [222@usp.ac.fj](mailto:222@usp.ac.fj), [333@usp.ac.fj](mailto:333@usp.ac.fj), [444@usp.ac.fj](mailto:444@usp.ac.fj), [555@usp.ac.fj](mailto:555@usp.ac.fj),  
[666@usp.ac.fj](mailto:666@usp.ac.fj), [777@usp.ac.fj](mailto:777@usp.ac.fj), [888@usp.ac.fj](mailto:888@usp.ac.fj), [999@usp.ac.fj](mailto:999@usp.ac.fj),  
[1111@vanuatu.usp.ac.fj](mailto:1111@vanuatu.usp.ac.fj), [12121@samo.usp.ac.fj](mailto:12121@samo.usp.ac.fj), [131313@usp.ac.fj](mailto:131313@usp.ac.fj),  
[141414@usp.ac.fj](mailto:141414@usp.ac.fj), [151515i@usp.ac.fj](mailto:151515i@usp.ac.fj), [161616h@usp.ac.fj](mailto:161616h@usp.ac.fj), [171717@usp.ac.fj](mailto:171717@usp.ac.fj),  
[18181@usp.ac.fj](mailto:18181@usp.ac.fj), [191919@usp.ac.fj](mailto:191919@usp.ac.fj), [202020@usp.ac.fj](mailto:202020@usp.ac.fj), [212121@vanuatu.usp.ac.fj](mailto:212121@vanuatu.usp.ac.fj),  
[22222@usp.ac.fj](mailto:22222@usp.ac.fj), [232323@usp.ac.fj](mailto:232323@usp.ac.fj), [242424@usp.ac.fj](mailto:242424@usp.ac.fj), [252525@usp.ac.fj](mailto:252525@usp.ac.fj),  
[262626@vanuatu.usp.ac.fj](mailto:262626@vanuatu.usp.ac.fj), [272727@usp.ac.fj](mailto:272727@usp.ac.fj), [282828r@usp.ac.fj](mailto:282828r@usp.ac.fj), [292929@usp.ac.fj](mailto:292929@usp.ac.fj),  
[303030@samo.usp.ac.fj](mailto:303030@samo.usp.ac.fj), [313131@usp.ac.fj](mailto:313131@usp.ac.fj)  
**Subject:** Re: request for data collection-Rajni Chand

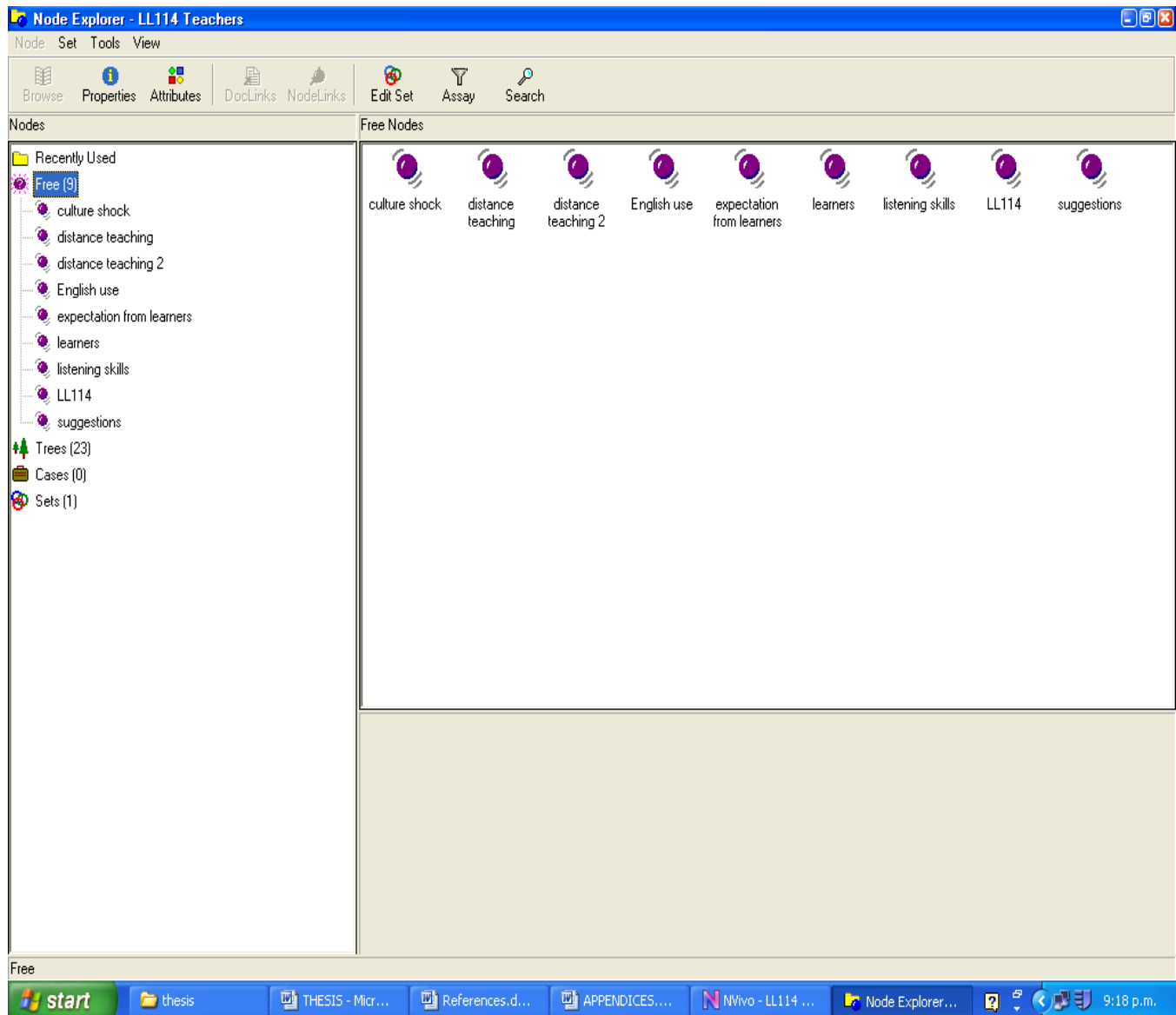
Hello Rajni, many thanks. I replied to you from Niue, but this is a longer reply. I think it would be good now that Dr XXX is in post as the Head, D&FL Unit, for you to establish contact with her; I am copying this email reply to her as well. Here are my comments: I will email those CDs of the centres you mention, and ask if they would be so kind to give you all the help you need for the research. The Despatch section is now no longer part of DFLSC, and you will have to contact the BookCentre Manager, Mr % about your request in this area; &&&& anyway is always very helpful. I will copy this email to him as well. When you arrive in Suva in July, pop over to my office (XXX is right next door) and we can chat further. I am forwarding this reply also to the Centres asking them kindly if they will help you in whatever you need.  
 Cheers,  
 ###

Please Note: CDs in the email refers to Centre Directors.

(All email addresses and names have been removed for confidentiality purposes)

**Appendix 20:** Nvivo Documents Showing the Trees (themes) from interviews with participants.

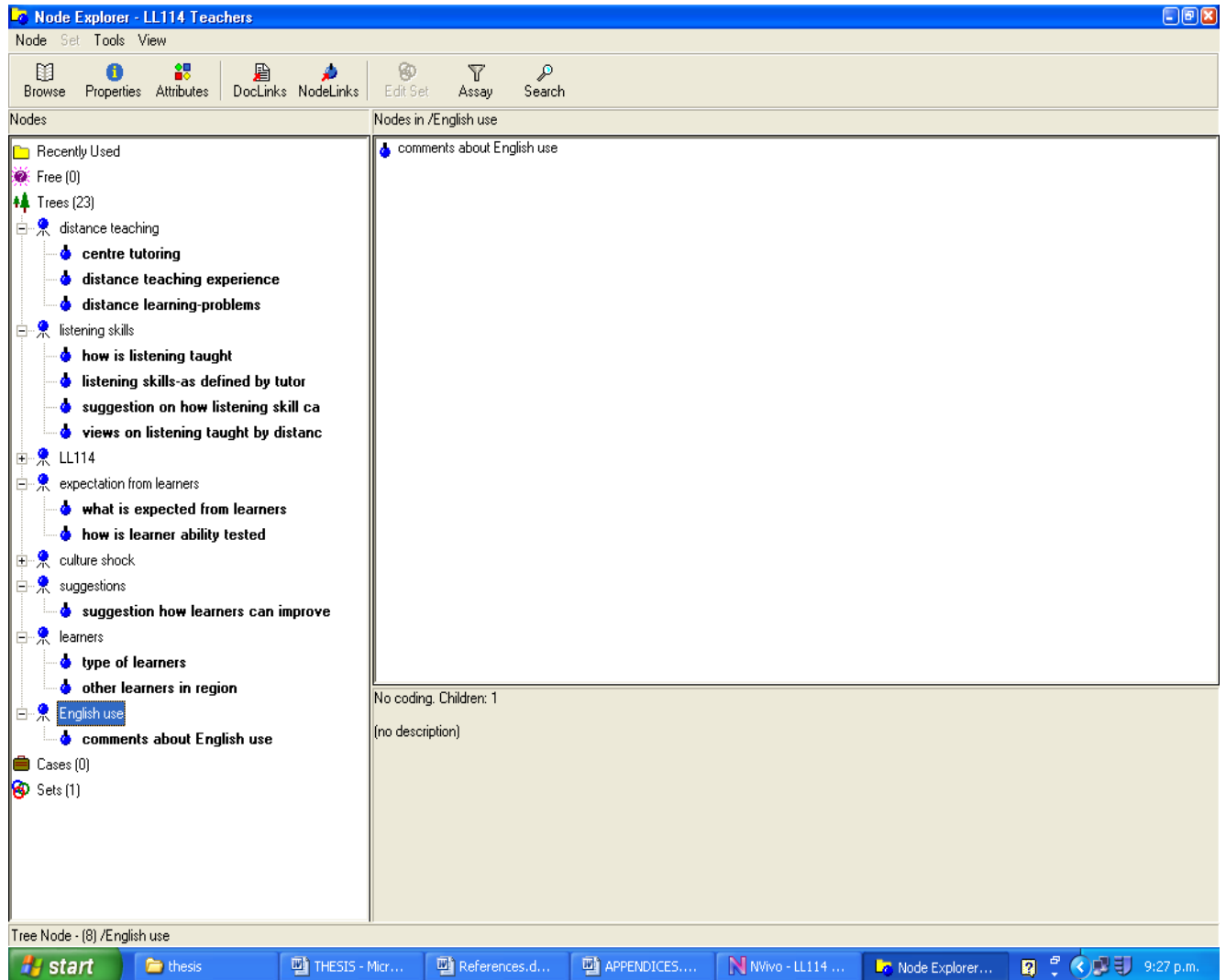
Figure 1: Free nodes



(The left side of the Nvivo screen shows the names chosen for the different free nodes.

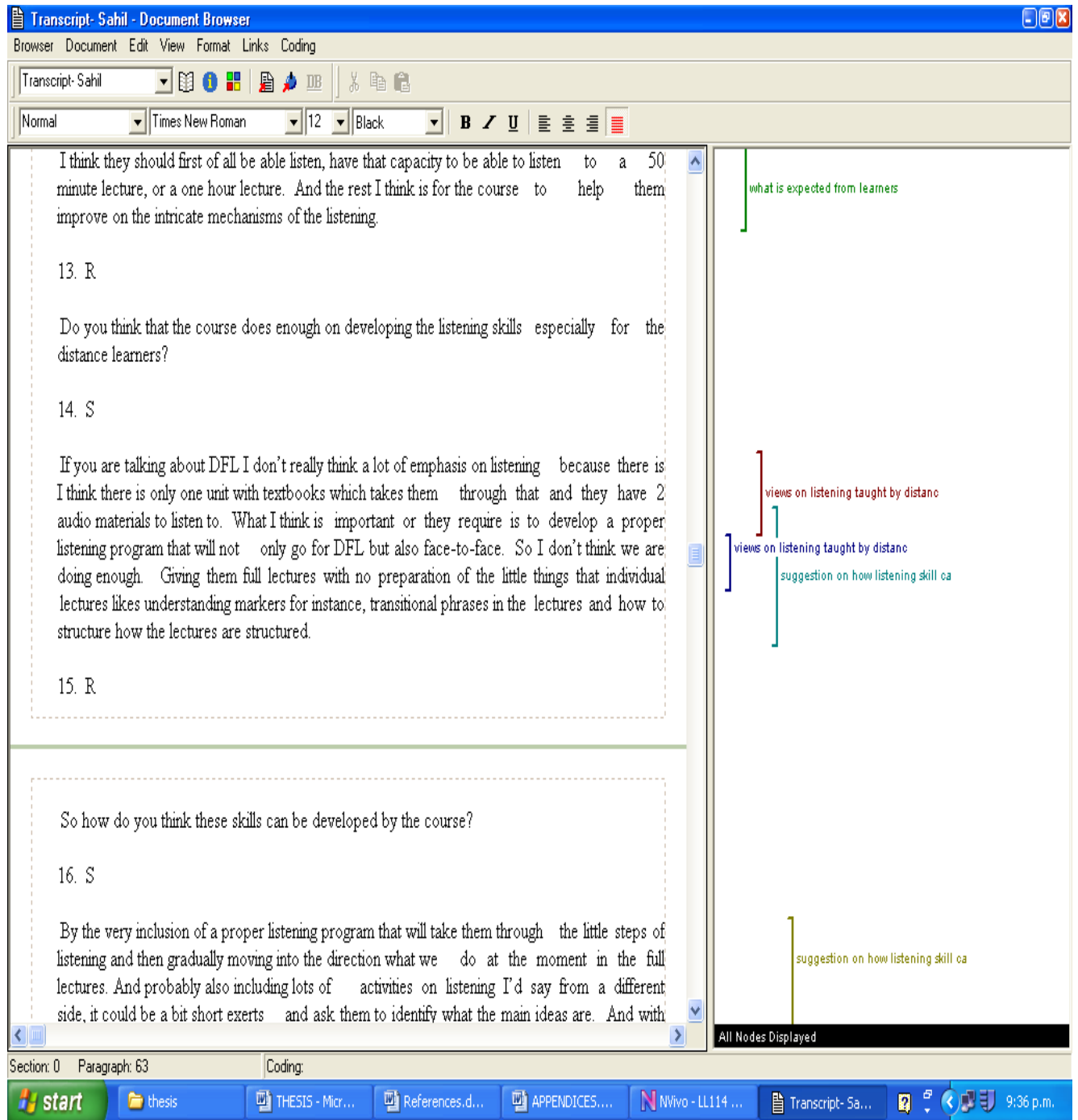
The right side of the screen shows a bigger image of these nodes.)

Figure 2: Trees showing the various nodes



(The left side of the Nivo screen shows all the trees that were created, with the subcategories or the codes that were selected to go under these trees.)

Figure 3 shows how a transcript looked while being coded as.



(The left side of the Nvivo screen above shows the transcript. The brackets on the right side of the screen show the various codes that were written while the transcript was read.)

Figure 4- 7: Coding pattern of a transcript Screen 1: SSTs

Node Explorer - LL114 Teachers

Nodes in /English use

Title	No.	Passages	Created	Modified
comments about Engl...	1	1	8/03/200...	8/03/200...

No coding. Children: 1  
(no description)

Tree Node : (8) /English use

## Screen 2: CTs:

Node Explorer - Other teachers

Nodes in /learners

Title	No.	Passages	Created	Modified
unclearly about the L...	1	4	14/12/20...	21/02/20...
anonymity of learners	2	3	14/12/20...	21/02/20...
assumption about lear...	3	4	14/12/20...	21/02/20...
diferance with onca...	4	8	14/12/20...	21/02/20...
suggestion on how to...	5	4	14/12/20...	21/02/20...
expectation from lear...	6	9	14/12/20...	21/02/20...
how learners cope	7	1	14/12/20...	21/02/20...
need to see learners ...	8	5	14/12/20...	21/02/20...
nothing done to help L...	9	1	14/12/20...	21/02/20...
on campus learners	10	1	14/12/20...	21/02/20...
reason for coming to t...	11	1	14/12/20...	21/02/20...

No coding. Children: 11  
(no description)

Tree Node : (6) /learners

## Screen 3: Past learners

Node Explorer - Past learners

Nodes

Nodes in /accents etc

Title	No.	Passages	Created	Modified
accents and problem...	1	3	14/12/20...	1/03/200...

No coding, Children: 1  
(no description)

Tree Node - (4) /accents etc

## Screen 4: Present Learners

Node Explorer - Present learners

Nodes

Nodes in /how is listening problem solved

Title	No.	Passages	Created	Modified
what is done during c...	1	10	8/03/200...	8/03/200...

No coding, Children: 1  
(no description)

Tree Node - (10) /how is listening problem solved

**Appendix 21: Tables Showing Details of the Past and Present Learners who Responded to the Questionnaires**

**Table 1: Past Learners (Age)**

	Country	Fiji	FSM*	Samoa	Solomon Islands	Total
Age	<b>15-20</b>	1	0	1	0	2
	<b>21-25</b>	3	1	0	5	9
	<b>26-30</b>	3	2	0	2	7
	<b>31-40</b>	1	0	0	0	1
	<b>Over 40</b>	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	8	3	1	7	19

FSM\*: Federated States of Micronesia

**Table 2: Past Learners First Language/ English Learning Experience**

1 <sup>st</sup> Language		English Learning Experience*			
		As a subject	Attended English Speaking School	Lived in an English Speaking Country	Other experience
<b>Fijian</b>	3	3	2	2	Used at home
<b>Pidgin</b>	5	5	2	1	
<b>Hindi</b>	5	5	1	1	Used at home/work
<b>Samoan</b>	1		1		
<b>Kwaraae</b>	1		1		
<b>Choiseui</b>	1		1	2	
<b>Marshallee</b>	3				
<b>Total</b>	19	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	

\* Multiple responses given

**Table 3: Present Learners (Age)**

	Country	Fiji	FSM*	Kiribati	Niue	Rotuma	Samoa	Solomon Islands	Tonga	USA	Vanuatu	Total
<b>Age</b>	<b>15-20</b>	21	0	2	2	0	6	0	4	1	6	42
	<b>21-25</b>	33	0	7	0	0	3	0	3	0	4	50
	<b>26-30</b>	22	0	1	0	0	2	0	1	0	2	28
	<b>31-40</b>	14	1	2	0	0	2	2	0	0	3	24
	<b>Over 40</b>	4	0	0	0	1	0	1	3	0	0	9
	<b>Total</b>	94	1	12	2	1	13	3	11	1	15	153

FSM\*: Federated States of Micronesia

**Table 4: Present Learners First Language/ English Learning Experience**

1 <sup>st</sup> Language		English Learning Experience*			
		As a subject	Attended English Speaking School	Lived in an English Speaking Country	Other experience
<b>Bislama</b>	15	13	0	2	
<b>English</b>	2	1	0	1	
<b>Fijian</b>	43	39	2	2	Used at home
<b>Hindi</b>	51	49	2	0	
<b>Kiribati</b>	11	11	0	0	
<b>Lengo</b>	1	1	0	0	
<b>Niuean</b>	2	2	0	0	
<b>Paamese</b>	1	1	0	0	
<b>para'o</b>	1	1	0	0	
<b>Pidgin</b>	1	1	0	0	
<b>Pohnpeia</b>	1	1	0	0	
<b>Rotuman</b>	1	1	0	0	
<b>Samoan</b>	13	13	0	0	Used at home/work
<b>Tongan</b>	10	0	0	0	
<b>Total</b>	153	144	4	5	

\* Multiple responses given



