In the current competitive market place, governments and private clients have become increasingly discerning and cost-conscious consumers of educational services. This competitive atmosphere challenges educational administrators to provide demonstrable evidence of course outcomes.

The tracer study is an ideal tool for use in this climate as it permits institutions to chart the pathways of their clients, enabling educational providers to evaluate the effectiveness of their courses against specific outcomes. The feedback yielded by a tracer study enhances an institution’s capacity to fine tune its courses and to meet client needs. The material in this publication is attuned to the needs of the AMEP but it can be readily adapted to meet the needs of any educational provider, in the private or public sector.

This publication describes the process of carrying out a tracer study and gives an example of a completed tracer study report. Sample case procedure and actual case studies are also provided. This very detailed background enables the reader to carry out a tracer study by providing a comprehensive range of theoretical and practical task-oriented materials, accessible to readers with little expertise in this area. In order to be of use to a wide range of readers, specialised terminology and technical jargon has been avoided to help those who do not have an academic/research background. For those with limited time, a summary is provided, while for those who seek an in-depth perspective, full procedural guidelines are presented.

Conducting Tracer Studies
in Adult Language and
Literacy Programs

Barbara Chapman and Sue Fisher

Sue Fisher has wide-ranging experience in the adult ESL area as a teacher, coordinator and cross-cultural trainer. She has recently taught EFL in Thailand and is currently working as a consultant in workplace communication.

Barbara Chapman has wide-ranging experience in teaching ESL. The tracer study project has enabled Barbara to put to practical use research skills gained while completing a Master of Education degree at the University of Melbourne.

Series Editor: Geoff Brindley
Conducting Tracer Studies in Adult Language and Literacy Programs

Barbara Chapman and Sue Fisher
## Contents

Acknowledgments ................................................................................................................................................................iv

*Chapter 1*
Introduction........................................................................................................................................................................1

*Chapter 2*
How to do a tracer study ..............................................................................................................................................5

*Chapter 3*
Example of a completed tracer study report ..........................................................................................17

*Chapter 4*
Case study procedures and sample case studies ..............................................................................27

*Chapter 5*
Survey forms ..........................................................................................................................................................................49

Glossary ......................................................................................................................................................................................61

Bibliography ............................................................................................................................................................................63
Acknowledgments

The assistance of the following AMES personnel is gratefully acknowledged:

Stan Angelidis  Regional Educational Counsellor
Jill Demytko  Regional Educational Counsellor
Heather Naylor  Regional Educational Counsellor
Liz Plummer  Regional Educational Counsellor
Heather Weaver  Regional Educational Counsellor
Yvonne Howells  Manager, Labour Market Services
Effie Renda  Office Manager, Community Program
Lorna Williams-Astley  Administrative Assistant
Chapter 1
Introduction

What is a tracer study?

A tracer study is a follow-up research tool which is able to establish outcomes for students who do a particular course of study. The tracer study technique is very flexible and can be conducted at any time after the students’ exit. Thus, it can be designed to reveal students’ short, medium or long-term pathways, identifying their involvement in employment, further study or other activities. The depth and type of information collected by the tracer study can be readily adjusted through modification of the questionnaire. If desired, the tracer study can also be modified to incorporate a survey of student satisfaction.

Who is the target population of a tracer study?

A tracer study can be carried out in any educational setting. This publication presents material directly attuned to the needs of the AMEP, and therefore references are included to DIEA and DEET funded students. However, the material has broad applicability and it can be readily modified to meet the needs of any educational provider.

Background to this publication

In 1993, AMES Victoria developed a tracer study procedure and conducted a centralised, statewide tracer study (Report on the Delivery and Outcomes for Trainees Achieving Awards under the Certificate in Spoken and Written English, AMES Victoria Labour Market Services, December 1993). From this successful trial, procedural guidelines were refined and issued to 13 participating AMES Victoria centres, which carried out local level tracer studies in 1994 (How to Do a Tracer Study, AMES Victoria, December 1994). The 1994 activity demonstrated the flexibility of tracer study research as the technique was applied discretely at centre level, and data were later collated centrally to provide broader insights.

Why do a tracer study?

Accountability and issues of educational quality

In the current competitive marketplace, governments and private clients have become increasingly discriminating and cost-conscious consumers of educational services. Institutions have consequently been called to account for funding allocations, and issues of quality arise ever more frequently as private and government funded institutions vie to attract clients on a value for money basis.
This competitive atmosphere challenges educational administrators to provide demonstrable evidence of course outcomes and, thus, to overcome the difficulties posed by subjective assessments of learner progress and course outcomes.

The tracer study is an ideal tool for use in this climate as it permits institutions to chart the pathways of their clients, enabling educational providers to evaluate the efficacy of their courses against specific outcomes. The feedback yielded by a tracer study enhances an institution’s capacity to fine-tune its courses and to meet clients’ goals. As such, the tracer study can play an invaluable role in enhancing both educational quality and the competitive edge of an institution. In addition, it provides a means of documenting objective outcomes for government funding/accountability purposes.

Professional interest and educator satisfaction

Teachers are dedicated to, and gain satisfaction from, their students’ progress. However, they may see only a limited part of the learner’s pathway. The teacher often does not witness a student’s educational background before his/her entry to the current class, and the teacher may well not know what happens to the student three, six, or twelve months subsequent to his/her graduation from the class.

It is clearly professionally desirable to eradicate, or at least minimise, the ‘process line’ factor in teaching. Execution of a tracer study, with feedback of the findings to teachers, constitutes an ideal means of combating the process line effect and of extending the vistas of teaching staff. As such, it may raise the level of teachers’ professional engagement through heightening awareness of their professional contribution to the ‘bigger picture’ of students’ overall educational pathways.

Tracer studies and the AMEP

The issues of course evaluation, accountability, quality assurance, and competitive orientation are of particular relevance to the AMEP, and, as such, tracer studies have a vital role to play in the AMEP’s future. It is therefore in the interests of all personnel committed to the AMEP’s continuing high standards and competitive success that tracer study techniques be mastered, and that tracer studies be carried out regularly.

Who can use the material contained in this publication?

Through the provision of a comprehensive range of theoretical and practical materials, this publication equips the reader to carry out a tracer study. Maximum accessibility has been sought, with the materials designed to fulfil the needs of readers in a variety of situations:
For the reader who does not have an academic/research background, jargon has been avoided and clear, user-friendly expression is used. This ensures that the study can be conducted by virtually any member of staff.

For the reader who is short of time, a short cut is provided. This reader need only use the Summary of Survey Procedure (pp 15–16) in conjunction with the appropriate questionnaire and other forms supplied. He/she is spared the necessity to read the gamut of more in-depth instructions and theoretical material prior to carrying out a tracer study. However, it is clearly desirable that his/her comprehension level is enhanced through reading the additional material at a later stage, as time permits.

For the reader who seeks a more in-depth perspective, full procedural guidelines are presented, together with discussion relevant to the development of these guidelines.

What this publication provides

- A schematic summary of survey procedure
- Detailed procedural guidelines for carrying out a tracer study
- A sample tracer study report
- Procedural guidelines for carrying out case studies
- Sample case study reports
- A supply of the documents required to carry out a tracer study:

**Questionnaires**

A double-sided document bearing a survey questionnaire for DIEA-funded CSWE (Certificate in Spoken and Written English) graduates on one side, and a letter of explanation to the student on the other.

A double-sided document with the questionnaire for DEET-funded CSWE graduates on one side, and a letter of explanation to the student on the other.

A double-sided document with the questionnaire for DEET-funded students who did not graduate on one side and a letter of explanation to the student on the other.

**Collation sheets**

- A collation sheet for the compilation of DIEA responses
- A collation sheet for the compilation of DEET graduate responses
- A collation sheet for the compilation of DEET non-graduate responses

**Consent form for case study candidates**

**Letters**

- A letter to prospective case study candidates
- A letter to thank case study subjects for their contribution
Chapter 2
How to do a tracer study

Preparing for a tracer study

Register maintenance

The keeping of accurate, regularly updated records greatly facilitates the task of doing a tracer study. In the absence of quality record-keeping practices, difficulties arise and time is unnecessarily lost.

An accurate register of Certificate in Spoken and Written English (hereafter CSWE) graduates/potential respondents should therefore be kept. This should record:

• Full name
• Identification number (AMES identification number (AMIS) — DIEA; Jobseeker identification number — DEET)
• Gender
• Age
• Years of education
• Funding body (eg DEET, DIEA)
• CES Office and DEET Region funding the student’s course (DEET clients only)
• Date of CSWE award
• Certificate number
• Further study/work obtained (record venue and name of course for clients who progress to further study)
• Change of address

Ensure that potential case study candidates are highlighted (see below).

Selecting case study candidates

It is desirable to alert all staff to the need to watch for potential case study candidates according to criteria determined at local and/or managerial level. For example, the decision may be taken to select case study candidates who represent typical learner profiles. Such broadly representative case studies may be used to enable staff and/or future students to witness the broader educational/vocational pathway, to which the present course is a contributory segment.
Alternatively, promotional purposes may be served by the selection of candidates who go on to achieve some degree of success subsequent to completing the CSWE/local benchmark award. For example, in the AMES tracer studies carried out in 1993 and 1994, case study candidates were students who proceeded to employment and/or further study (refer also Chapter 4).

Success is a relative and subjective phenomenon — it may be deemed to occur when a graduate obtains employment or achieves entry to an elected field of vocational training. Striking success may also be deemed to occur when a person achieves in the face of relatively greater odds, thus managing to achieve at a level commensurate with, or even beyond, his/her less disadvantaged classmates/counterparts. The term 'successful' is therefore open to broad interpretation.

The educational counsellor and/or the educational placement and referral staff at the centre are well placed to identify prospective case study candidates. However, not all nominees will be willing to participate in a case study so it is advisable to cast the net as widely as possible during and after the semester concerned. This will eliminate last minute problems in finding a candidate at the actual time of having to do the case study.

In summary, case study candidates can best be identified by:

- Alerting all staff to watch for potential case study candidates on an ongoing basis
- Alerting the counselling staff to pay particular attention to students’ exit pathways (since counselling staff usually have in-depth discussions with students about their future directions)
- Incorporating a mechanism whereby exit students notify the centre of achievements in obtaining employment and notify the centre of any subsequent change of address for questionnaire forwarding purposes. Ensure that these details are recorded in the register (refer p. 5)

**Tracer study staffing**

In order that virtually any member of staff (ie data processing officer, office manager, principal, teacher) can carry out the tracer study, the instructions for all aspects of the study have been designed to be as clear and ‘user-friendly’ as possible. Nevertheless, responsibility for carrying out the study for the first time is a not inconsiderable task. To ensure consultation with another informed person is possible, recommendation is therefore against sole reliance on one inexperienced person to execute the first local attempt of a tracer study.

It is desirable to staff the tracer study according to the following principles:

- If possible, assign two staff (eg teacher & office manager) to the tracer study the first time that it is undertaken;
- Thereafter, an experienced member of the original team should be able to manage alone:
To ensure multi-skilling, it may be desirable to train a number of centre staff to do the tracer study, with this preferably following the same format of pairing an experienced staff member with an inexperienced person.

Background factors: Aspects of questionnaire design

Questionnaire checklist

Bell (1987) provides the following excellent checklist as a guide to questionnaire design:

1. Decide what you need to know
   List all items for which information is required

2. Ask yourself why you need this information
   Examine your list and remove any item that is not directly associated with the task

3. Is a questionnaire the best way of obtaining the information?
   Consider alternatives

4. If so, begin to word questions
   Write questions on separate cards or pieces of paper, to help ordering later on. Consider question type (verbal, grid etc)

5. Check wording of each question.
   Is there any ambiguity, imprecision or assumption? Are you asking respondents to remember? Will they be able to?
   Are you asking for knowledge respondents may not have? Any double, leading, presuming, hypothetical or offensive questions?
   Keep language simple. Don't use words respondents may not understand (that includes technical language) unless you are dealing with a professional group all of whom understand your linguistic shortcuts

6. Decide on the question type
   Verbal, list, category, ranking, scale, quantity or grid. Each type requires a different analysis (see Chapter 11 for further information)

7. When you are satisfied that all questions are well worded and of the right type, sort them into order
   It is often best to leave sensitive issues until later in the questionnaire

8. Write out instructions to be included on the questionnaire
   Respondents must be quite clear on how they are to answer questions (ticks in boxes, yes/no etc)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9</th>
<th>Consider layout and appearance</th>
<th>Instructions must be clearly presented (perhaps different type face? displayed in a prominent position?). Decide whether you need a right-hand margin for coding.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Hand over your questionnaire for typing</td>
<td>Instructions to the typist must be absolutely clear. It is your job to decide how the questionnaire should be displayed, not the typist’s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Pilot your questionnaire</td>
<td>Ideally, it should be sent to people who are similar to your selected sample. However, if that is not possible, ask friends, family or colleagues to help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Try out your methods of analysis. <em>(Read Chapter 11 before you decide finally on format and analysis)</em></td>
<td>Even with five or six completed questionnaires, you will be able to see whether any problems are likely to arise when you analyse the main returns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Make any adjustments to the questionnaire in the light of pilot respondents’ comments and your preliminary analysis</td>
<td>Consider timing. If it took your guinea pigs too long to complete consider whether any items might be removed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Decide at an early stage how the questionnaires are to be distributed</td>
<td>By post? Internal mail? By you? If you decide on a postal survey, include a stamped addressed envelope. People are doing you a favour by completing the questionnaire. Don’t expect them to pay for the privilege.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Unless you are administering the questionnaire personally, include a covering letter and a self-addressed envelope</td>
<td>Explain the purpose of the study. If you have official approval to carry out the study, say so.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Don’t forget to say when you would like questionnaires to be returned</td>
<td>Keep a record of when questionnaires were distributed and when returned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Decide what you are going to do about non-respondents <strong>before</strong> you distribute the questionnaires</td>
<td>Remember you will not be able to send out reminders if all respondents are anonymous.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Do not distribute questionnaires before checking whether approval is required</td>
<td>Never assume ‘it will be all right’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
19 Begin to record data as soon as completed questionnaires are returned
   You have no time to wait for stragglers
20 Do not get involved with complicated statistics unless you know what you are doing
   It is perfectly possible to produce a good report without extensive statistical knowledge, as long as the structure of the questionnaire is well thought out


**Key factors in the design of the questionnaires presented in Chapter 5**

All questionnaires presented in Chapter 5 were designed according to standard research principles. The questionnaires were trialled at least once, and modified on the basis of the trial outcome(s).

The following is a sampling of factors which were considered imperative to the design of a successful research questionnaire, and which were involved in the construction of the questionnaires included in Chapter 5:

- A clear, logical, well-spaced and unambiguous layout, with use of boxes and arrows to guide the respondent through the questionnaire
- Use of mutually exclusive, exhaustive categories/options which ensure that all possible responses can be accommodated
- Close examination of all aspects of the language used, with particular effort to select words/terms which are clear, unambiguous, direct, free of unnecessarily negative/emotive connotation, and which are likely to be understood by second language learners of the respondents’ language level
- Minimal intrusion, with requests confined to information which is required and justified by the survey goals
- Recognition of the personal and time demands posed by the task, with effort to limit these
- Expressed appreciation of the participant’s co-operation and contribution through, for example, inclusion of ‘thank you’ in the letter and at the completion of the questionnaire

This sampling of guiding factors is not exhaustive and is included to highlight the rigour required in questionnaire design; and the broad spectrum of issues which must be taken into account.

A full discussion of the weaknesses of research tools such as the questionnaire, the face-to-face interview, and tape recording is beyond the scope of this document. However, it is important that personnel carrying out surveys are acquainted with the limitations and potential pitfalls involved. Further discussion of these issues can found in Walker (1985).
Cross-cultural issues

The selection of topics for inclusion in a questionnaire requires cross-cultural awareness. Reference to relevant issues is made in Chapter 4: Case Study Procedure (refer also Manidis and Prescott, 1994).

Potential problems associated with translation of questionnaires

On the basis of the tracer study surveys carried out by AMES Victoria, it is recommended that translation not be undertaken for any higher level students, and not at all for CSWE graduates. If translation is deemed desirable for lower level students, it is recommended that this be undertaken by an accredited translator, preferably with research training. (This recommendation is made in view of the necessity to minimise uncontrolled variables and to keep the data collection process as systematic and uniform as possible.)

Attention is also drawn to the potential difficulties involved in the translation of the responses back into English. Logistical difficulties are posed by the time and labour intensiveness involved. Also, problems with accuracy can result from the double translation (ie of both questionnaire and responses) undertaken.

Since cost would be involved for the original translation and for the back translation of responses, a cost-benefit analysis should be carried out.

The word processing difficulty posed by languages with non-Roman script further discourages translation. Effectively, the questionnaire has to be handwritten — which may lack professionalism, or sent for special printing — which is likely to involve both cost and time. In short, it is desirable that the impression of quality imparted by a well-designed and well-laid out questionnaire should not be compromised. Whatever decision is taken on translation, the resultant questionnaire should be professionally presentable.

Survey procedure

Survey procedure — Phase 1

When to do a tracer study

The survey should be scheduled at a locally convenient time, taking into account that it is advisable to:

- Allow sufficient time after the end of semester for graduates to become involved in another activity (eg vocational study; work etc) so that meaningful results are obtained
- Not delay the survey for too long after graduation as the student population is mobile and changes residence frequently
A happy medium must be found so that the survey is undertaken at a time which is neither too short nor too long after graduation.

To minimise ‘downtime’ and to therefore maximise the productive use of available resources, it is recommended that the tracer study survey be divided into two parts: Phase 1 and Phase 2.

**Duration of Phase 1**

The time required for Phase 1 is dependent on the number of survey participants and the expertise and experience of the personnel conducting the survey. As a guide, it is recommended that one week be allowed for Phase 1 the first time that the survey is attempted. This should be sufficient time for inexperienced survey officers to carry out the preparatory survey work for a medium to large population of potential respondents.

**Materials required in Phase 1**

Supplies of the following need to be in place when Phase 1 begins:

- Window envelopes*
- Opaque envelopes*
- Postage stamps*
- Sticky labels (where centre has the facility to computer generate address labels)

* The number required is equal to the number of survey clients.

**Phase 1 survey procedure**

**Response list**

Obtain the list of potential respondents/ register of graduates. Check that it is up to date and complete.

**Sticky label preparation**

Centres with appropriate facilities should prepare a sticky label for each respondent. The label should bear the **client’s name, address and identification number** (DIEA or DEET).

Centres without the facility to computer generate sticky labels will have to write the above information on each questionnaire.

**Questionnaire preparation**

Select letter marked **DIEA graduate, DEET graduate or non-graduate** as appropriate.

Write the **date** and the **centre’s name** on letter.

Select the matching questionnaire marked **DIEA graduate, DEET graduate or non-graduate** as appropriate.
Back-to-back photocopy the questionnaire and letter to student.

Affix a printed sticky address label (or write addressee’s details) to the letter to student, ensuring that placement on letter will allow details to be read through window envelope.

Return envelope preparation

Write or stamp the centre’s address on opaque envelopes and affix a postage stamp to each envelope.

Tally and posting

In each window envelope, place one labelled letter to student (with questionnaire on reverse), ensuring that address details are visible and one stamped, return address envelope for the questionnaire to be sent back.

Post out the window envelopes.

Keep a tally of the number of questionnaires sent out so that the response rate can be calculated later.

Phase 1 demographic data collection

The type of demographic data that are required should be determined at the outset of the tracer study. Selection of demographic variables should be made in consultation with the appropriate management personnel, and with a view to the purpose of the study. The following are guidelines:

- Having determined what you want to find out (as per Bell, 1987), keep the objective of the tracer study in mind
- Identify the specific biographical details you may need

The AMES tracer studies of 1993 and 1994 used the following variables (refer Chapter 3) for sample tracer study:

- Gender
- Age
- Years of education
- Learner pathways through AMES (eg number of courses, entry/exit levels etc)

Other approaches are also possible. For example, it would be possible to conduct a tracer study to establish the pathways of female students only, and the demographic data collection would be targeted accordingly.

After selecting the type of data required, AMES centres are able to arrange for extraction of the selected information from the AMIS system (eg provide DPO with client identification numbers and request individual client profile for each client). If the register referred to on page 5 has been maintained accurately, this task can be minimised because a considerable amount of data would be immediately available.
Survey procedure — Phase 2

A period of three weeks can be scheduled for the return of the questionnaires. That is, tracer study staff return to regular duties for this period and do not undertake any tracer study activities. Phase 2 then commences.

Receipt of questionnaires

Office/registry staff should be asked to date stamp the questionnaires (i.e. as opposed to date stamping the envelope). This will assist in checking that only questionnaires received prior to the cut-off point (see below) are included in the compilation of results.

To ensure that individual questionnaire sheets are not mislaid, all questionnaires should be filed in a ring binder upon their return. They should be retained in the binder until the tracer study is completely finished.

Cut-off point for questionnaire return

The period for questionnaire return should be set at strictly three weeks from the date of dispatch. That is, the tracer study staff should work only with the questionnaires received in that three-week period and disregard those that arrive later. Experience in undertaking these tracer studies shows that the bulk of responses arrive within three weeks, with smaller numbers arriving periodically thereafter, sometimes up to months later. It is therefore necessary to have a fixed cut-off point because, without this, analysis will be suspended and/or disrupted indefinitely.

Compilation of data from questionnaires

The following steps for data compilation were developed from the tracer studies undertaken by AMES Project Officers in 1993 and 1994. These could be modified to suit future client/survey population needs (e.g. a DIEA non-graduate collation sheet could copy the format of the DEET non-graduate sheet if desired).

- Collation sheets are supplied in three types labelled: DIEA Collation Sheet; DEET Graduate Collation Sheet; and DEET Non-Graduate Collation Sheet
- Each collation sheet can only be used with the matching questionnaire as the boxes at the top of the collation sheet directly correspond to the sections and questions of the corresponding questionnaire
- Select the appropriate collation sheet (e.g. select DIEA Collation Sheet for questionnaires marked DIEA graduates)
- Transcribe the respondent’s name, identification number and all responses, being careful to ensure that responses are accurately recorded in the appropriate column. Each collation sheet accommodates the questionnaire responses of 9 clients

Bell (1987) provides additional examples of techniques for data analysis.

Size of collation sheet

In the 1994 trial, some concern was expressed that the A4 size collation sheet was too small to accommodate data without excessive cramping and/or abbreviation.
To prevent such problems arising, the A4 size collation sheets in Chapter 5 can be photocopied on x1.4 magnification for ready conversion to A3 size.

**Use of abbreviations in transcribing responses**

It is recommended that particular care be taken if responses are abbreviated when they are transcribed to the collation sheets. This is to ensure that abbreviations (a) do not omit any important data; and (b) can be readily understood by any other person reading the collation sheet.

**Compilation of data**

**DEET collation sheets**

The completed DEET collation sheet(s) should be given to the appropriate person. In the AMES Victoria 1994 tracer study, this person was the centre’s DEET co-ordinator who then wrote a report for the DEET office in fulfilment of needs determined at local level.

**DIEA collation sheets**

Each centre should forward the completed DIEA collation sheet(s) to the responsible person. In the AMES Victoria 1994 tracer study, these data were forwarded to the AMES Manager, Settlement Services for centralised collation.

**Interpretation of response outcomes**

The tracer study stands alone and is effectively concluded with the completion of the collation sheet. However, the raw data yielded by the tracer study can be used for a variety of additional purposes.

One such purpose would be identification of trends in the data (eg x% of respondents are employed; y% of respondents are now doing vocational TAFE courses).

**Analysis/inclusion of demographic data**

It is possible to examine trends identified in the data relative to a range of demographic variables (eg x% of female respondents are enrolled in TAFE courses; y% of respondents with 15+ years of education are now employed). Straight demographic analysis can also be performed (eg z% of respondents are aged 18 to 24).

The type and direction of analysis is to be determined at local level in consultation with the appropriate manager.

**Response rate**

The response rate is the percentage of completed questionnaires returned relative to the number of questionnaires sent out. It is necessary to take care if different groups of respondents are involved. If, for example, DIEA-
and DEET-funded students are surveyed, separate tallies should be kept so that ultimately a DIEA and a DEET response rate are produced.

Note that the response rate strongly influences the generalisability of the findings and can therefore greatly limit the conclusions which can be drawn from the data. As the response rate for mail questionnaires can be low, every effort should be made to maximise the response rate by, for example, follow up requests by phone for questionnaires which are not returned.

**Summary of survey procedure**

**Ongoing measures**

- Maintain an accurate register of CSWE graduates, recording:
  - Full name
  - Identification number (AMES identification number (AMIS) — DIEA; Jobseeker identification number — DEET)
  - Gender
  - Age
  - Years of education
  - Funding body (eg DEET, DIEA)
  - CES office and DEET region funding the student’s course (DEET clients only)
  - Date of CSWE award
  - Certificate number
  - Further study/work obtained (record venue and name of course for clients who progress to further study)
  - Change of address

- Ensure that potential case study candidates are highlighted

- Allow sufficient time after the end of semester for graduates to become involved in another activity (eg vocational study, work etc) so that meaningful results are obtained

- Do not delay the study for too long after graduation as the student population is mobile and changes residence frequently.

- A happy medium must be found so that the survey is undertaken at a time which is neither too soon nor too long after graduation.

- Ensure that all staff are alerted to the need to watch for case study candidates (ie students who obtain employment or otherwise achieve successful post-CSWE outcomes). It is advisable to invite graduating students to notify the centre of success in obtaining employment etc

- Obtain stocks of:
  - Window envelopes
  - Opaque envelopes
  - Postage stamps
Summary of survey procedure

**Questionnaire procedure**

Photocopy questionnaire **back to back** with letter to student

Use sticky label or write graduate’s name, address and AMES ID (DIEA grads) or Jobseeker ID (DEET grads) on letter in a position that will allow details to be read through window envelope

Fold letter so addressee’s name and address will be visible through window envelope

**Return envelope procedure**

Clearly write/stamp Centre’s name on opaque envelope for student to return completed questionnaire

Put stamp on envelope

Place in window envelope

Post envelopes

Receive completed questionnaires

**Record numbers of completed questionnaires**

- Record number of completed questionnaires marked DIEA
- Record number of completed questionnaires marked DEET graduate
- Record number of completed questionnaires marked DEET non-graduate

**Record incoming data**

- Record incoming data for DIEA students on DIEA collation sheet
- Record incoming data for DEET graduates on DEET graduate collation sheet
- Record incoming data for DEET non-graduates on DEET non-graduate collation sheet
Chapter 3
Example of a completed tracer study report

Background information

The following tracer study report presents the combined findings of tracer studies undertaken at local level by participating Victorian AMES centres.

The centres were issued procedural guidelines on how to conduct a tracer study in September, 1994. The guidelines were provided by centrally located project officers who, in November, 1994, collated the local results.

The 13 individual tracer studies involved a total population of 255 DIEA-funded students who graduated with the CSWE in Semester 1, 1994. The graduates were traced via the mail questionnaire presented in Chapter 5 to which the overall response rate was 60%.

The survey revealed that a total of eight respondents had gained employment while 128 respondents had proceeded to further study. A total of 22 respondents were engaged in activities other than study or employment. These activities included job search, voluntary work and family care.

The results indicated that 94% of all respondents who proceeded to employment and/or study found the material covered in the CSWE helpful.

Biographical data of questionnaire respondents relative to total graduate population

From the data provided on AMES generated individual client reports, biographical profiles were developed for:

- The total population of Semester 1, 1994 CSWE graduates
- The sub-population of questionnaire respondents

The biographical profiles listed the following for the respective populations:

- Gender
- Age
- Years of education
- Entry ASLPR level
- Number of completed courses
Table 1 Number of questionnaire respondents relative to total semester 1 CSWE graduate population

Table 1 shows that 255 clients graduated with the CSWE in Semester 1, 1994 from the AMES Centres participating in the tracer study. AMIS information was unavailable on seven of these clients as they had moved interstate, or they were registered with other providers. Thus, a total graduate population of 248 is referred to in Tables 2 to 7, which present biographical information.

Table 1 also shows that a sub-set of 158 of these graduates responded to the questionnaire survey. Hereafter, these graduates are referred to as the respondents. AMIS-generated information was available for all respondents.

Gender

Table 2 presents comparative gender data for the respondent sub-population relative to the total population of Semester 1 CSWE graduates.
The data presented in Table 2 are particularly interesting in that the proportional gender make-up of the total population (females: 68.5%; males: 31%) is almost identically reflected in the respondent population (females: 69%; males: 31%).

**Age**

Table 3 presents comparative age data for the respondent sub-population relative to the total graduate population.

From Table 3, it is apparent that the age distribution of the respondents generally mirrored that of the total population of graduates.

**Years of education**

Table 4 presents comparative data on years of education for respondents relative to the total graduate population.
Table 4 indicates that the educational background of respondents was generally similar to that of the total population of graduates. However, the data presented in Table 4 also indicate that respondents of 15+ years of education were, in relative terms, most represented (56/81; 69%).

**Learner pathways**

*Entry ASLPR level*

Table 5 presents the entry ASLPR level of all graduates and Table 6 presents the relevant entry data for the respondents.

![Graph](image1.png)

**Table 5** Entry ASLPR level of Semester 1, CSWE graduates

![Graph](image2.png)

**Table 6** Entry ASLPR level of respondents to questionnaire

Tables 5 and 6 indicate that for the total population of graduates and for the respondent group, similar trends existed. Notably, the most frequent entry level relative to all four macro-skills was ASLPR 1+.

*Number of classroom-based courses*

Table 7 presents the number of classroom based courses completed by the total graduate population, and by the respondent sub-group.
Table 7 Number of courses undertaken by (1) total population of Semester 1 CSWE graduates and (2) respondents to questionnaire

The data presented in Table 7 indicates that the bulk of graduates and respondents completed two classroom based courses, with three completed courses representing the next most frequent occurrence. It is notable that most classroom based courses are ten to fifteen hours per week.

Findings of tracer study survey

The results presented in this section refer to 158 responding DIEA graduates, as surveyed by the participating AMES Centres in Victoria. The individual centres collected and collated the data, which was later collated by centrally located project officers.

Respondents’ situations as of October 1994

Table 8 presents the situation by gender of respondents in late October, 1994.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Studying</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying and working</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not studying and not working</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 Respondents’ situation by gender in late October 1994

Situations of respondents who are neither studying nor working

Table 9 presents a detailed breakdown by gender of the situation of the 22 respondents (Table 8) who reported neither studying nor working.
**Table 9** Situations by gender of respondents who reported neither studying nor working

**Respondents engaged in further study**

**Educational provider attended**

Table 10 presents a detailed breakdown by gender of the providers with whom the relevant respondents were studying.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROVIDER</th>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMES</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other provider of ESL</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE vocational</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skillshare</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>*128</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Total of respondents studying (122) and respondents studying and working (6)

**Table 10** Situations by gender of respondents engaged in study

It is apparent from Table 10 that most relevant respondents were engaged in further English language study, with only a small number undertaking TAFE vocational, university or Skillshare courses.

The concentration of respondents in English courses may be explained by the fact that the respondents finished their CSWE courses at mid-year. These respondents may be seeking to improve their language in the time available before the bulk of mainstream courses commence next January or February.

**Respondents’ intended undertakings upon completion of their present study course**

Table 11 presents the pathway by gender which respondents wish to take upon the completion of the course in which they are presently involved.
Table 11 indicates that the majority of respondents presently studying intend to pursue further study in the short to medium term future.

Preferred fields of study nominated by respondents seeking immediate further study

As reported in Table 11, 105 respondents expressed the intention to undertake further study upon completion of the present courses. The fields of study which these respondents wish to enter are listed in Table 12.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Next Field of Study</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English for nursing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical laboratory technology</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountancy/business</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painting and design</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social work</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking/food preparation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community justice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music/art</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architectural drafting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretarial studies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking/finance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Respondents Listed in More Study/Training Column of Table 11

Table 12 Preferred fields of immediate further study by gender
Long-term plans of respondents presently engaged in study or in study and employment

Table 13 lists the long-term plans by gender of respondents who are presently studying, or studying and working.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>LONG-TERM PLAN</strong></th>
<th><strong>GENDER</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study general English</td>
<td>Female: 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University level undergraduate course</td>
<td>Female: 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male: 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University level postgraduate course</td>
<td>Female: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE level course</td>
<td>Female: 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study not specified</td>
<td>Female: 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Study sub-total</strong></td>
<td>Female: 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male: 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific professional employment</td>
<td>Female: 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male: 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific skilled/semi-prof. employment</td>
<td>Female: 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male: 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employment</td>
<td>Female: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male: 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment not specified</td>
<td>Female: 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male: 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment sub-total</strong></td>
<td>Female: 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male: 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Female: 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>Female: 89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male: 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total: 128</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 29%; 2 36%; 3 31%; 4 62%; 5 59%; 6 61%; 7 9%; 8 5%; 9 8%  
*Total of respondents studying (122) and respondents studying and working (6)

Table 13 Long-term plans by gender of respondents presently studying or studying and working

Table 13 indicates that employment was the favoured long-term goal among respondents now studying, or studying and working. Employment was nominated by 62% (55/89) of female respondents and 59% (23/39) of male respondents.

Male and female response trends were similar in that unspecified employment was the most frequently nominated option (females: 27/89, 30%; males: 15/39, 38%).

The gender response trends differed with respect to the goal of specific professional employment. While this was the second most frequent response among females (22/89; 25%), surprisingly few males (4/39; 10%) followed suit.

Entry to university undergraduate and postgraduate courses was nominated by similar numbers, but different relative proportions of female and male respondents (university undergraduate: females 10/89, 11%; males 8/39, 20%; university postgraduate: females 1/89, 1%; males 2/89, 5%).
Employed respondents

Time fraction of employed respondents

Table 14 records the participation by gender of employed respondents in full-time and part-time work respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME FRACTION</th>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>*14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Total of respondents working (8) and respondents studying and working (6)

Table 14 Time fraction of employed respondents

Level of satisfaction with part-time work

Of the nine respondents who are working part-time, six reported wanting to work full-time.

Type of employment in which respondents are engaged

Table 15 lists the type of employment in which respondents are engaged by gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT</th>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F/T Instrument technician</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F/T Mechanic</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F/T Personal care worker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F/T Pastor</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F/T Automotive engineer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P/T Pizza delivery/takeaway</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P/T Factory hand</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P/T Mathematician</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P/T Dental technician</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P/T Presser</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P/T Teacher</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P/T Production planner</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>*14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Total of respondents working (8) and respondents studying and working (6)

Table 15 Type of employment in which respondents are engaged by gender

While the number of respondents in Table 15 is small, it is interesting to note that a broad spectrum of employment categories is represented, with reasonable representation of skilled/professional work.
**Reported helpfulness or otherwise of the CSWE in further study and/or employment**

Table 16 presents the extent of helpfulness of the CSWE reported by respondents engaged in further study and/or employment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Helpfulness of CSWE</th>
<th>Present Situations</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Studying</td>
<td>Working</td>
<td>Studying and working</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSWE not helpful</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSWE a little helpful</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSWE helpful</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSWE very helpful</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>*136</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Total of respondents studying (122), working (8) and studying and working (6)

**Table 16** Reported helpfulness of CSWE to respondents now working and/or studying
Chapter 4
Case study procedure and sample case studies

What is a case study?
In the tracer study context, a case study is an in-depth study of an individual’s situation. It is essentially a detailed profile arising from a face-to-face interview.

Why do a case study?
Among other useful purposes, case studies can be used for publicity and/or to enrich and substantiate otherwise quite sterile statistical data. The decision of whether to do a case study should be made in consultation with the relevant management personnel. It is recommended that staff be alert for candidates as subjects who are willing, suitable and available can prove difficult to find, and substantial difficulties may arise when subjects are sought at the last minute with no prior planning (refer also page 5).

Background to the case study procedure
In the centralised tracer study carried out by AMES Victoria in 1993, 14 CSWE graduates were interviewed by two project officers. Interviewees were selected from different DEET regions and, in general, they were graduates who had proceeded to employment or further study (refer also page 5).

In the 1994 AMES Victoria tracer study, AMES centres carried out tracer studies at local level using the procedural guidelines developed from the 1993 study. These guidelines were further refined. The resultant procedure is detailed below.

A sampling of the case study profiles arising from the 1993 and 1994 tracer studies is presented later in this section.

Pre-interview procedure
Following the determination of selection criteria, and the selection of candidates (refer page 5), it is imperative that candidates receive a clear briefing on the case study and provide informed consent.
Obtaining informed consent

In Macquarie University’s *Guidelines for the Preparation of Informed Consent Forms*, the Ethics Review Committee (Human Subjects) stresses that the attainment of informed consent is essential to conform with established research guidelines, and to protect the researcher and the institution he/she represents.

The Committee notes that all points contained in the Guidelines are not necessarily applicable to all research projects, but that the relevance of all points ought to be considered in the formulation of informed consent forms. *The following is an excerpt from these Guidelines, which should be complied with in the carrying out of a case study:*

**General features**

1) *Investigators proposing to conduct research involving humans should prepare an appropriate consent form for*
   
   a) the participant involved (or his or her guardian);
   
   b) the institution the participant is in (if any).

2) *A copy of the consent form should be given to the participant (or his or her guardian) and institution (if any).*

3) *The consent form should be written in a way that is intelligible to the average lay person.*

4) *The consent form should be written in a friendly rather than formal manner.*

**Specific features**

*The consent form should normally include comment on:*

1) *The general area being studied.*

2) *The broad aims of the study.*

3) *The people responsible for and involved in the study.*

4) *The general procedures of the study.*

5) *Any discomforts, inconveniences, or risks particularly associated with the study.*

6) *Any payment of money or other reward for participation in the study.*

7) *The freedom to withdraw consent and discontinue participation at any time without prejudice.*

8) *The confidentiality of information obtained in the study.*

9) *In the case of a younger child, the consent of a parent or guardian should be obtained.*

10) *Particular care should be taken with institutionalised participants. In such cases, individual consent should be obtained as far as possible, in addition to the consent of the person legally responsible for their welfare.*
Identifying information

The consent form should include:

1) An explicit statement that the participant is willing to participate in the study.
2) A space for the participant’s signature.
3) A space for the investigator’s signature.
4) The name and telephone number of the principal investigator.

(Ethics Review Committee (Human Subjects), Macquarie University, Sydney)

Additional issues: Obtaining informed consent from individuals of non-English speaking background

Attention is drawn to the need to ensure that the candidate fully understands the nature and conditions of the study, as per the Guidelines listed above. Depending on the candidate’s level of English, it may be necessary to have the information and consent form translated into the candidate’s first language.

Determination of interview questions

As with the questionnaire, the nature of the questions to be asked will be determined in the first instance by:

- The purpose of the case study (eg publicity; feedback; program monitoring; client satisfaction etc)
- The audience (eg AMES, NCELTR, DEET etc)

As such, centres take responsibility for defining the purpose and audience involved, and for developing questions accordingly.

The third key fact of determining the nature of the questions to be asked is the case study subject in that:

- The questions should be relevant to the subject’s circumstance (eg a fast learner now in a professional employment course versus a learner in a literacy course)
- The questions should be limited to those which are required for the purposes of the case study. Unnecessary intrusiveness should be eliminated, and the dignity of the case study subject should not be compromised.
- The soliciting of information on a ‘speculative’ basis (ie such that it may or may not be used) is unacceptable and, as a basic tenet of research design, the researcher is confined to asking only questions to which he/she needs to know the answer. As such, sufficient prior consideration needs to be given to the design of questions to ensure that the information solicited is both useful and used in the final product (In the event
that material is either inadmissible or later excluded, a courtesy explanation to the client should be provided — see below).

It is necessary to trial the questions with a student(s) of comparable level who is not a case study candidate in order that any unforeseen problems with question type, structure or language can be rectified before the case study proper commences.

**Cross-cultural issues in question formulation and face-to-face interview contexts**

Manidis and Prescott (1994) present extensive discussion on cross-cultural communication affecting interview dynamics and question selection. While a full examination of this material is beyond the scope of this document, these authors report cross-cultural factors to operate in the relevant contexts, warranting the awareness of researchers. As an example of these factors, Manidis and Prescott (1994) report that ‘Talking about their country of origin, or giving opinions on Australia...may be seen by some learners as closed areas of discussion’ (Manidis and Prescott, 1994, p. 17). Also, these authors cites Locke’s (1984) research findings of ‘significant differences in learners’ performances when interacting with a female interviewer on one hand and a male interviewer on the other’ (Locke, 1984, cited by Manidis and Prescott, 1994, p. 16). Given that it is imperative for the role of cross-cultural factors to be taken into account, the full discussion presented by these authors is recommended reading.

**The advantage and disadvantage of inviting open comments**

At the discretion of the centre/interviewer, the case study subject may be invited to provide free comments at the conclusion of the formal questioning. The advantage of this is that interesting and unpredictable material of value may be volunteered. The possible disadvantage bears on the fact that in presenting an unstructured situation, the interviewer inevitably surrenders some degree of control of the interview situation.

The interviewer who invites open comments therefore needs to be aware that material may be presented which is not consistent with the purpose of the case study, or which is otherwise unsuitable. In this scenario, the dilemma is posed of whether to include the material despite its unsuitability; or whether to selectively ‘edit’ it out in spite of its importance to the client, and at the risk of offending the client when he/she views the finished product. The ethics of excluding particular material are a prime consideration, an issue raised in the section ‘Determination of interview questions’ (refer above).

At minimum, the client is due an explanation as to why the material could not be included, which may be difficult to justify if he/she has been extended free rein to comment. In all, the dimensions of the dilemma posed should not be underestimated and need to be considered and resolved to the centre’s satisfaction prior to the interview taking place. This underscores the need for thorough planning. It also underscores the imperative role played by clear briefing and informed consent.
Sample questions trialed by AMES Victoria

The following questions were used successfully in the 1993 and 1994 case study profiles. These are provided for sample purposes only, for as noted above, the development of questions rests with the initiative and circumstance of individual centres.

• How did you get your job or present course?
• What things or people helped you?
• Is it easy or difficult for unemployed migrants to get information about courses of study or training courses? What makes it easy or difficult?
• What problems do newly-arrived* migrants face in attempting to enter their chosen field of employment? (*The term ‘newly-arrived’ may be omitted if inapplicable)
• What advice would you give to the government about how better to help migrant job-seekers?

Initial contact by letter with case study subject

Contact a suitable subject (eg employed or undertaking vocational study subsequent to AMES course). The recommended contact method is via a letter which:

• Advises of the nature and purpose of the case study
• Explains why he/she has been selected as a possible case study candidate
• Requests permission to interview him/her under conditions where:
  - The interview is audio-taped
  - A photo is taken
  - The interview, including the client’s name, is publishable by AMES
• Adheres in all other respects to the principles of informed consent and its associated procedures
• Presents the interview questions in advance (preferably photocopied on the back of the letter)

A sample of a letter to prospective case study candidates is presented in Chapter 5. Note that the letter is proactive in that the interviewers take responsibility for ringing the subject, and are not passively reliant on the subject responding to the letter.

Selection of an interviewer

A host of interviewer characteristics, including gender, dress and voice, are readily able to influence the interviewee. While it is impossible to eliminate these factors entirely, effort should be made to minimise their intrusion wherever possible. Cultural factors should be taken into account.
To facilitate the interview procedure, the following factors merit consideration:

- It is advisable to do some ‘homework’ on the client in order that his/her characteristics are established, and a suitable interviewer can be selected.
- It is desirable for the Centre to have a bank of suitable, competent interviewers who can be matched to prospective case study interviewees as appropriate.

(Refer also Manidis and Prescott, 1994)

**Length, location and surrounds of the interview**

Considerable flexibility may be required in the case of employed interviewees and, in general, the interview can be carried out at any time and in any location which are mutually convenient. Notwithstanding this comment, it is ideal if the interview is conducted under conditions whereby:

- Both parties are comfortable and relaxed
- There is little or no distraction (ie in quiet surrounds, without telephone interruptions or children requiring attention)
- There is sufficient privacy for the interviewee’s comfort
- Both parties are reasonably fresh (ie not too tired or hungry)
- Sufficient time should be set aside for the interview to ensure that it is not rushed, and full contemplation can be given to the responses. However, the client’s time must be respected, and the interview should not be unnecessarily long. A maximum of 45 minutes should be ample for a successful interview.

**Interview procedure**

**Warm-up**

As per normal interview procedure, the usual courtesy of warming up with casual conversation or small talk should be observed to put the subject at ease.

*The recording equipment should be visible and tests made to ensure the audibility of both voices.*

**Question delivery**

The questions should be presented in a relaxed and professional manner, without rushing or exerting undue influence on the subject. The interviewer should be aware that his/her manner and presence can influence the respondent in a myriad of ways, and he/she should strive to eliminate controllable influence (refer Manidis and Prescott, 1994).
The interviewer should be satisfied that the client fully understands each question, which should be greatly facilitated by the provision of written questions in advance (refer above).

The interviewer should be satisfied that he/she fully understands the subject’s responses. In the event that the interviewer is not certain, he/she should take steps to clarify the responses beyond doubt. This is imperative to avoid misquoting the interviewee.

Photo of case study subject

A black and white photo should be taken, and the negative should be retained for possible use in publication. Scanning photos into the text is advantageous for higher quality reproduction.

Undertaking to provide a copy of case study report to interviewee

It is incumbent on the interviewer to guarantee access to all material deriving from the data supplied by the subject of the case study. Access to this material, which includes notes, cassette recordings and computer records, must be provided on request.

Rather than allow the onus to rest on the interviewee to request a copy of the completed study, it is desirable prior to the conclusion of the interview for the interviewer to undertake to forward a copy of the finished product.

Two imperatives apply here:

• For ethical reasons, and because the case study subject must have access to the finished work, it is crucial that the material presented is a faithful, accurate and comprehensive account of what was said in the interview situation.

Attention is again drawn to the consequent need to clarify beyond doubt responses made in the interview situation; and the need to ensure that all of the material solicited from the interviewee is included (or, as a second best option to ensure that he/she has been given an explanation as to why material has been excluded).

• When an offer is made or an undertaking is given to provide the interviewee with a copy of the finished product, it is crucial that this is followed through.

Conclusion of the interview

As far as possible, the interview should be contained within the 45-minute limit and it should be wound down naturally as the conclusion approaches.

The case study subject should be thanked in person for his/her cooperation.
Formal letter of appreciation

A letter outlining the interviewee’s contribution and formally thanking him/her is a courtesy, and may also supplement a migrant’s portfolio of local references. A sample letter of appreciation is provided in Chapter 5.

This letter should be sent as soon as possible after the interview is completed. If its dispatch is delayed for any reason beyond this, it may appear an afterthought. This would counteract the goodwill intended by the forwarding of the letter.

Write-up of the case study report

The interview should be written up into a one to two page summary. Depending on the purpose and audience involved, the report can be written in a variety of ways. It can include direct quotations from the subject, but should not be written verbatim in question and answer style. The issue of writing style should be decided on at local level. The following completed case studies provide examples written by a variety of authors.

The audio-cassette should be used to ensure factual accuracy, and should be retained in case checking is necessary in the future.

The completed case study and the photo should be treated for publication at local level, or sent to the relevant Manager/Publicity Officer as appropriate.
Sample case studies

Table 17 presents a composite data profile for the subjects whose in-depth case studies are presented over.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AMES Centre</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years of education</th>
<th>Occupation in country of origin</th>
<th>Present situation in Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Myer House</td>
<td>Nguyen Duc Loc</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Fitter and turner</td>
<td>Photographic plate maker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Albans</td>
<td>Natasha Stenkovoi</td>
<td>Former USSR</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>Trainee sales representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Springvale</td>
<td>Adam Michaleczyk</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>University lecturer</td>
<td>Engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noble Park</td>
<td>Lam Due Chiev</td>
<td>Kampuchea</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Baker</td>
<td>Factory hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footscray</td>
<td>Mary Li</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Maths teacher; import/export business</td>
<td>Supervisor of housekeeping at motel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Oakleigh</td>
<td>Mona Noweir</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Designer</td>
<td>Student: advanced CSWE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadmeadows</td>
<td>Rufino Vergara</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Refrigeration technician</td>
<td>Refrigeration technician (self-employed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>Dijana Rikalo</td>
<td>Former Yugoslavia</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Music teacher</td>
<td>Student: advanced general English (DEET course)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitcham</td>
<td>Eunjoo Cho</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Business woman</td>
<td>Student: English for business La Trobe Univ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malvern</td>
<td>Nipa Dutta</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Physician</td>
<td>Student: English for health professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dandenong</td>
<td>Zhang Jian Ping</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>Engineer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17 Composite data profile of case study subjects
Nguyen Duc Loc

Myer House AMES

'Every time she talked, I felt more positive like [the teacher] woke up something in me which had been sleeping so long... The main thing is you have to believe in yourself and also try to make the best of each day... you have to be active yourself... don't be afraid to do this or that'

Loc has faced and successfully overcome an array of formidable challenges in his 28 years. Not the least of these has been physical survival in a hazardous exit from Vietnam by crowded fishing boat, and tenure in a Thai refugee camp. Ultimately, his adopted country was to offer a palette of peace, opportunity, joy, depression, alienation and discrimination. Beyond learning the language and establishing employment, the challenge was — and is — to navigate the inconsistency of a society variously experienced as kindly and accepting in some quarters, and hostile and rejecting in others.

Loc had 12 years of education and training as a fitter and turner when he came to Australia in 1989. He had a brother here but his brother’s own settlement responsibilities left him little time to be with Loc. On arrival English classes provided Loc with the opportunity to learn the language and, importantly, to start making friends. The classes thus served to help fill a social and emotional void and were a significant first step in rebuilding contact systems.

Relative to attempts to secure employment and in aspects of everyday life, Loc reported perceiving a dislike of Asian people, especially from teenagers and young people in their 20s. While stressing the relatively small incidence of this phenomenon, Loc suggested that education could be used to reduce racism. Juxtaposed with this unpleasantness, Loc reported receiving kindness from other sections of the population, including the CES and teachers.

He related details of the emotional bleakness and depression accompanying unemployment, and the sapping effects of this on motivation. Loc’s ultimate triumph over this unhappy period and his striking change of attitude resulted from a communications teacher who ‘woke something in [him] that had been sleeping so long’. She motivated him to think positively, to believe in himself, to be active and to try to achieve his goals. He reports that this also occurred with his classmates, and was a formative experience which transformed his attitude and inspired him to ‘make the best of every day’. He felt that this attitudinal transformation was a key contributing factor to his success in attaining employment.

Loc gained employment as a photographic plate maker, having been introduced to the company manager by a friend. He reported that his CSWE classes at AMES had been helpful in equipping him with more confidence, and job application and interview techniques. He found particular benefit from classroom role plays of interviews. Loc hopes to take up part-time study in the area of his present employment to enhance his skills.
He extends his thanks ‘to the government, also to all the staff, and all the teachers who have helped [him] to come to this point of having a job’. He recommends that courses seek to incorporate the motivational element which transformed his life. He feels that provision of bilingual literature on available courses may also be helpful. Loc also suggests that the assignment of migrants to skills training courses after they have studied English to a sufficient level would be preferable to further classes.
Natasha Stenkovoi

St Albans AMES

Natasha came to Australia one year ago from the Ukraine, and commenced her studies at St. Albans AMES in January, 1994. She completed two DIEA funded classes, graduating with the Certificate in Spoken and Written English in July. She continued her studies in a DEET funded class until October, when she gained employment as a trainee sales representative.

Natasha was referred for an interview for this job by the CES. She was called back for a second interview and consequently offered a trainee position. She feels that the manager of the company was the person who most helped her to get the job, as he fought for her to be employed against the wishes of the other three members of the management committee who believed that she should not be employed because of her language difficulties.

Natasha thinks it is easy for unemployed people to get information about study, training courses and so on because everybody is willing to help. Also, there is a lot of written information available. She found that the teachers and counsellors at St Albans AMES and at the CES were very helpful. She commented that even if the people she consulted did not have the necessary information at their finger tips, they would find it for her.

According to Natasha, the major problem facing migrants when they are trying to break into their chosen field of employment is lack of proficiency in English. She also believes that many employers are prejudiced against migrants and prefer to employ Australians. Finally, she referred to the problem of getting overseas qualifications recognised in Australia. She had completed a Diploma in Medical Nursing in her country before coming to Australia, but because she is under 21 years of age, she found that to qualify to work as a nurse here, she would have to embark on another three year course with the possibility, though no guarantees, of exemptions from some subjects along the way. She did not want to have to study for another three years before she could work, so she decided to try to break into another field of work.

Natasha feels that the government should urge employers not to give such high priority to employing people with experience. As the present situation stands, she believes young people, in particular, do not have a chance to gain experience, and so they are effectively locked out of the work force. She thinks that the government should set down some affirmative action type guidelines requiring employers to give work opportunities to young people without work experience.
Adam Michalczyk

Springvale AMES

Mr Adam Michalczyk, an electronics engineer, worked as a design engineer, university lecturer and research assistant in Poland. He came to Australia in 1992, and is now working as an engineer in a small electronics company where he designs specialist equipment for various companies. Adam started working in May 1993 and transferred from day to evening classes at Springvale AMES, where he completed the Certificate in Spoken and Written English.

Although he had studied English in Poland, Adam explains that he had only a passive knowledge of the language and his vocabulary was largely limited to technical English. Consequently, on arrival in Australia he had problems understanding English and lacked the confidence to use the language he did have. Adam had received information about English classes before leaving Poland, and Polish friends in Australia introduced him to Springvale AMES. He appreciates the care of the AMES teachers who assisted in the development of his confidence to use English. He feels that they did not overemphasise the correction of pronunciation and grammar, leading to greater confidence and fluency in the language learners.

While he has opportunities to practise English at work, Adam feels he still needs to study the language in a classroom situation. However, since he completed his entitlement through the DIEA Adult Migrant Education Program, he has had difficulty in finding a suitable part-time English class.

Adam identified written English — in particular written technical English — as a barrier to migrants in accessing work in their professions.

The advice Adam would offer to the government is to extend the entitlement of 510 hours of language tuition for all migrants. He believes this is not sufficient time to acquire the language skills necessary to function in the professional workplace. He is also concerned about possible gaps in learning pathways between general English courses and specialised courses such as English for Professional Employment.

Adam is pleased and surprised by the progress he made at AMES. He enjoyed the classes and appreciated being with students from many other countries. He believes his progress was assisted by being in mixed nationality classes. He wasn't afraid to talk and, because there were no other Polish speakers, he could forget about the Polish language. He had to switch his mind to English: 'For me it was the best. It was a time when I learned a lot'.
Lam Due Chiev

Noble Park AMES

Mr Lam Due Chiev was born in Cambodia and at the age of 13 he moved to Vietnam where he completed his schooling. He worked as a baker for two years in Vietnam.

Upon arrival in Australia in 1992, Chiev immediately tried to find work. He found this difficult because of the language barrier and his lack of local experience. Having seen a notice advertising AMES at his local CES office, he enrolled in an English class at Noble Park AMES. Chiev completed the Certificate in Spoken and Written English in March 1994. In consultation with the AMES educational counsellor, Chiev identified opportunities in the plastics industry and was referred to the Certificate in Occupational Studies (Polymers) at a TAFE college. On completion of this ten week training course, he applied for a job and is currently employed in a plastics factory in Dandenong.

Chiev was assisted in his job seeking by the teachers and educational counsellor at Noble Park AMES and the staff at TAFE, but he believes that his own motivation played a part in his success. He believes that it is not difficult for migrants to access information about courses if they actively seek the information.

The difficulties which Chiev identifies as confronting new arrivals in Australia include problems with accommodation, language and understanding government departments. He strongly believes people should be proactive in their job seeking and canvass potential employers. He identifies private transport as an advantage in obtaining work.

Chiev’s advice to the government is to offer ‘the foundations of English’ at AMES centres to all new arrivals; to assist migrants in identifying their interests and skills; and to provide information on current employment conditions and opportunities. He again emphasises the importance of the active commitment of the migrant in this process.
Mary Li

Footscray AMES

Mary Li arrived in Australia in February 1988. As she had studied Japanese and Russian in China and not English, she found she had difficulty understanding people.

Mary had 18 years of education in China and worked for five years as a maths and science teacher, and for over three years in an import and export business.

In 1991, Mary answered a newspaper advertisement and obtained casual employment as a motel housekeeper. Early in 1993, because of that previous experience and the help of a friend, she gained a casual full-time position as a housekeeper at a large Melbourne motel. In October 1993, the boss approached her about taking over the supervisor’s job — a role which involved computer work and coordination of the housekeeping staff.

Mary says that the teachers and counsellor at Footscray AMES, where she had studied and gained the Certificate in Spoken and Written English, really helped her obtain that job. Also, she says she believed in herself. ‘My qualifications from China gave me confidence — my own attitude helped me get the job. I think the boss offered me the job as supervisor because when I was a housekeeper I often talked to him about improvements that I would make — I had an opinion on my work.’

Mary believes it can be ‘a little bit difficult for migrant job seekers to find information about study and training courses because of limited English. You can’t understand everything, but the teachers and the CES help you.’

She regards the biggest problems in gaining employment as firstly, getting local experience and secondly, competing with Australians for jobs.

Mary believes there should be more learning opportunities for migrants aged 30–45 who want to study English for Special Purposes — more short courses in how to start a small business, for example.
Mona Noweir

South Oakleigh AMES

‘It is easy for migrants to find out about courses if they get themselves on the move, not being shy or embarrassed, going and asking…’

Getting people ‘on the move’ is what Mona Noweir, an experienced graphic designer from Egypt, feels is of vital importance. She believes that often migrants lose self-confidence and hope of finding a job if they are out of the work force for too long and tend to gravitate to their ethnic community.

Mona completed the Certificate in Spoken and Written English at South Oakleigh AMES in June 1994.

Having applied for several jobs in her field and having had a few interviews, Mona, a fairly confident communicator, felt she still needed to improve her language skills. Through the Placement and Referral Service at AMES and her contact with the CES, she found that she could continue her studies in a DEET funded course. Consequently, she is currently working towards the vocational focused Advanced Certificate in Spoken and Written English.

As part of the course, Mona recently completed a very successful two weeks of work experience in the graphics division at a paint manufacturer, where there is a possibility of employment in the future. This experience has also assisted her to expand her network.

Mona sees the opportunity of work experience as one of the best ways to get migrants ‘on the move’, to keep them in touch with their field, to make them aware of work place culture, and thereby increase their self-confidence.

Mona stressed that opportunities to do voluntary work experience should be given to migrants as soon as possible. She believes that the English learnt as a result would complement and extend that learnt in the classroom, and that the confidence gained would be invaluable.
Rufino Vergara

Broadmeadows AMES

‘I tried to borrow money from the Credit Union and some banks, but because I am not working they said that I couldn’t.’ This was the experience that confronted Rufino Vergara when he began to set up his own business.

In addition to having an extremely positive and determined attitude, Rufino has enrolled in several courses in an attempt to achieve his goal of self-employment.

Rufino, a refrigeration mechanic from the Philippines, studied at Broadmeadows AMES and gained the Certificate in Spoken and Written English in July, 1993. Following this, he enrolled in a four week, part-time course to develop skills in starting a small business at Preston TAFE. During the same period, he embarked on an Introduction to Certificate Course in Refrigeration and Air Conditioning at RMIT. Rufino plans to continue this course concurrent with expanding his own business. His 12 years of education and his work experience as a refrigeration mechanic and building electrician in the Philippines now seem a long time ago.

He used the knowledge and experience he had gained overseas and from a previous job in Melbourne, from which he was retrenched, to go out on his own. ‘Because it is so difficult to get a job here, one way around this problem of not having local experience is to start up your own business.’ Advertisements in the local paper, signs on his truck and on the fence of his rented house, building his own equipment and seeking his own registration are some of the necessary steps Rufino Vergara has taken in an attempt to ensure his future success. He wishes all migrant job seekers and himself good luck in their small business ventures.
Dijana Rikalo

Preston AMES

Dijana is currently doing an Advanced English Course with AMES at Myer House.

She got into her course on recommendation from the Educational Counsellor at Preston. She also visited Myer House on Open Day, an excursion arranged by her teacher.

Dijana said it was easy for unemployed migrants to get information about courses of study or training courses because their teachers at AMES and the Education Counsellor gave them information.

She said the main problem faced by migrants in attempting to enter their chosen field of employment was that employers required local experience. She said this was more of a problem than language. Dijana said she thought that field placement would help a little with this. In fact, she knew some people who went on field placement last year who were subsequently employed by the company.

She said that she thought the government was doing enough to help newly-arrived migrant job seekers in that they received English classes for a year paid for by DIEA, and then another year paid for by DEET.

When asked if she had any further comments she replied that she would like to thank the Government and the teachers at AMES for the help she had received.
Eunjoo Cho

Mitcham AMES

‘In Korea I had six jobs operating at the same time. I managed a dairy farm, was a veterinary medicine wholesaler, a building sub-contractor, a swimming teacher, a teacher of floral arrangement and a Member of Parliament.’

Mrs Eunjoo Cho, from Seoul, is, in her own words, ‘a good business woman. I had my first business going by the time I was 18…’ Eunjoo arrived in Melbourne in April, 1991. ‘I thought my English was quite good when I was in Korea but when I arrived here I was like deaf and dumb. It was terrible, I couldn’t listen, I couldn’t speak.’

After spending two years studying English at Mitcham AMES, Eunjoo graduated with the Certificate in Spoken and Written English in July, 1993. Immediately after this, she passed the ‘very hard exam of grammar listening writing’ and was admitted to the English for Business course at LaTrobe University. ‘Of course the teachers, educational counsellor and the other students in AMES helped me get into the course… they encouraged me and the Certificate in Spoken and Written English gave me confidence.’ Eunjoo believes it is easy for migrants to get information about training and study courses in Melbourne. ‘The CES interview gives you the information and then you can decide in your own mind… it’s a very good system’

Eunjoo had previously leased a shop and tried to start a takeaway food business in Australia. She is now working voluntarily in another food business to gain necessary experience and improve her English. She recommends voluntary work to all migrants who need to get local experience.

‘How to live without money especially if unemployment continues… This is the biggest problem migrants have here’. Lack of English was also cited by Eunjoo as a problem facing migrant job seekers. She believes it is especially difficult for older migrants, who have not studied formally for some time, to pick up English quickly enough. In her opinion, they need more courses and more hours under the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs entitlement, which is currently 510 hours.
Nipa Dutta

Malvern AMES

Nipa Dutta, a 28-year-old doctor from Bangladesh, came to Australia in 1993. She attended English classes at Malvern AMES for two terms in 1994 and completed the Certificate in Spoken and Written English. Her class teacher helped her and provided invaluable general vocational information which is included in the CSWE.

On arrival, a friend gave her information which prompted her to send her medical papers to Canberra for assessment. At Malvern AMES, she was helped by the educational counsellor who was able to check that the recognition process had begun and assist her with information about the next steps to be taken.

Nipa had an interview at Moorabbin TAFE and was selected for the English for Health Professionals course. She found the course useful because of the specific medical material and access to the medical library. She is now awaiting results of her Occupational English Test. Her next step is to complete the multiple choice questionnaire, and then a course from the Victorian Medical Postgraduate Foundation. However, there are limited places and the cost is $1,500.

Nipa found it easy to gain access to information relating to her profession as Malvern AMES had pamphlets and information on notice boards. She also found the Victorian Job Guide useful. Specific professional information was gained through the Health Professionals Course.

In terms of problems confronting job seekers, Nipa cited the long, expensive process to gain recognition as creating the most difficulties. Exams were difficult to pass and some people needed to attempt these two or three times: ‘Many people lost all their hope’.

Nipa is concerned about the quota system for medical professionals. Although many doctors pass the examination, only a small quota are accepted. Another concern is the availability of access to examinations for medical professionals. The reduction in the number of examinations means that many medical professionals may have to wait a long time.
Zhang Jian Ping

Dandenong AMES

Jian’s pathway to his present job began in August 1992 when he attended the International Federation of Automation Control seventh symposium in Beijing, and made contact with a senior BHP researcher.

After he migrated, he studied English at Dandenong AMES and contacted the BHP researcher he had previously met in Beijing, and he was referred to the manager. Although no job was available, Jian Ping wrote a canvassing letter with a resume, which gained him an interview with BHP and a job in his area of expertise.

A number of background factors helped Jian obtain this position. First, his knowledge, expertise and experience helped him. Second, his English skills had improved, particularly his speaking and listening. He learnt to write his resume and an application letter at AMES. He praised his teachers for being very warm and friendly, and for treating him as an equal. He found the settlement information and the tuition in general English invaluable.

Third, while attending his AMES courses, he joined two Dandenong Job Clubs where he received further help with editing his resume. and the Job Club interview practice was extremely helpful, because he was asked almost identical questions at his BHP interview.

Jian Ping said if people were motivated, they could find information about study or training courses. For him it was not difficult because he had received information leaflets about DIEA English classes from the Australian Consulate in China, and he found many sources of information in Australia: AMES, CES, MRC, TAFE and DIEA.

Jian said that the biggest problem facing newly-arrived migrants in attempting to enter their chosen field of employment is the lack of English skills. The recession has made it difficult with fewer jobs available, and also there are cultural differences in the system of looking for and obtaining jobs in Australia compared to China.
Dear Former Student,

Follow-up Survey from AMES (Adult Migrant Education Services)

In Semester — 199 — you did an English Course(s) at this Centre and we would like to know what you are doing now.

Could you please fill out the survey over the page and return it in the postage paid envelope tomorrow. We need everyone to return the survey.

* You do not have to use a stamp
* Your answer will be confidential
* The information you give us will help us plan and improve future courses

Thank you for your co-operation.

AMES Centre Principal
**INSTRUCTIONS:Tick correct box ☑**

DIEA GRADUATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are you doing now?</th>
<th>→</th>
<th>Do Section A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Studying</td>
<td></td>
<td>Do Section B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Working</td>
<td></td>
<td>Do Section A + B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Studying and working</td>
<td></td>
<td>Do Section C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Not studying and not working</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SECTION A**

1. What is the name of the course you are doing?
   ____________________
   ____________________

2. Where are you doing this course?
   □ TAFE
   □ AMES (Adult Migrant Education Services)
   Which Centre? __________
   □ Skillshare
   □ University
   □ Secondary School
   □ Other: ____________________

3. When does this course finish? ______
   What do you want to do NEXT (when this course finishes?)
   □ More studying/training
   What field? ____________________
   □ Get any job
   □ Get a job you really want
   □ Other. What? ____________________

4. What is your long-term plan?
   ____________________
   ____________________

5. Is what you learnt in the Certificate in Spoken and Written English helpful in your course?
   □ YES  □ NO
   How helpful?
   □ A little helpful
   □ Helpful
   □ Very helpful

**SECTION B**

1. Are you working:
   □ Full time (35 or more hours per week)
   □ Part time (less than 35 hours per week)
   ↓
   Do you want to work full time?
   □ YES  □ NO

2. What job are you doing now? (eg book keeper, cook, computer programmer, sewing machinist)

   ____________________

3. Is what you learnt in the Certificate in Spoken and Written English helpful in your job?
   □ YES  □ NO
   How helpful?
   □ A little helpful
   □ Helpful
   □ Very helpful

**SECTION C**

1. What are you currently doing? (eg looking for a job; having a holiday; trying to start your own business; caring for your family)
   ____________________

Thank you. You have now finished the questionnaire.

Are there any comments you would like to make?
   ____________________
   ____________________
Dear Former Student,

Follow-up Survey from AMES (Adult Migrant Education Services)

In Semester — 199 — you did an English Course(s) at this Centre and we would like to know what you are doing now.

Could you please fill out the survey over the page and return it in the postage paid envelope tomorrow. We need everyone to return the survey.

* You do not have to use a stamp
* Your answer will be confidential
* The information you give us will help us plan and improve future courses

Thank you for your co-operation.

AMES Centre Principal

Please continue over ☞
What are you doing now?

☐ Studying ➔ Do Section A
☐ Working ➔ Do Section B
☐ Studying and working ➔ Do Section A + B
☐ Not studying and not working ➔ Do Section C

SECTION A

1. What is the name of the course you are doing?
   ________________________________
   ________________________________

2. Where are you doing this course?
   □ TAFE
   □ AMES (Adult Migrant Education Services)
   □ Skillshare
   □ University
   □ Secondary School
   □ Other: ________________________________

3. When does this course finish? ______
   What do you want to do NEXT (when this course finishes?)
   □ More studying/training
   □ Get any job
   □ Get a job you really want
   □ Other. What?
   ________________________________

4. What is your long-term plan?
   ________________________________
   ________________________________

5. Is what you learnt in the Certificate in Spoken and Written English helpful in your course?
   □ YES    □ NO
   ↓
   How helpful?
   □ A little helpful
   □ Helpful
   □ Very helpful

SECTION B

1. Are you working:
   □ Full time (35 or more hours per week)
   □ Part time (less than 35 hours per week)
   ↓
   Do you want to work full time?
   □ YES    □ NO

2. What job are you doing now? (eg book keeper, cook, computer programmer, sewing machinist)
   ________________________________

3. Is what you learnt in the Certificate in Spoken and Written English helpful in your job?
   □ YES    □ NO
   ↓
   How helpful?
   □ A little helpful
   □ Helpful
   □ Very helpful

SECTION C

1. What are you currently doing? (eg looking for a job; having a holiday; trying to start your own business; caring for your family)
   ________________________________
   ________________________________

Thank you. You have now finished the questionnaire.
Are there any comments you would like to make?
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
Dear Former Student,

Follow-up Survey from AMES (Adult Migrant Education Services)

In Semester — 199 — you did an English Course(s) at this Centre and we would like to know what you are doing now.

Could you please fill out the survey over the page and return it in the postage paid envelope tomorrow. We need everyone to return the survey.

* You do not have to use a stamp
* Your answer will be confidential
* The information you give us will help us plan and improve future courses

Thank you for your co-operation.

AMES Centre Principal
INSTRUCTIONS: Tick correct box ✔

What are you doing now?
☐ Studying ➔ Do Section A
☐ Working ➔ Do Section B
☐ Studying and working ➔ Do Section A + B
☐ Not studying and not working ➔ Do Section C

SECTION A
1. What is the name of the course you are doing?
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
2. Where are you doing this course?
☐ TAFE
☐ AMES (Adult Migrant Education Services)
   Which Centre? __________________
☐ Skillshare
☐ University
☐ Secondary School
☐ Other: _______________________
3. When does this course finish? ______
   What do you want to do NEXT (when this course finishes)?
   ☐ More studying/training
   ☐ Get any job
   ☐ Get a job you really want
   ☐ Other. What?

SECTION B
1. Are you working:
   ☐ Full time (35 or more hours per week)
   ☐ Part time (less than 35 hours per week)
   ❌
   Do you want to work full time?
   ☐ YES ☐ NO
2. What job are you doing now?
   (eg book keeper, cook, computer programmer, sewing machinist)
   _______________________
3. Is what you learnt in the Certificate in Spoken and Written English helpful in your job?
   ☐ YES ☐ NO
   ❌
   How helpful?
   ☐ A little helpful
   ☐ Helpful
   ☐ Very helpful

SECTION C
1. What are you currently doing?
   (eg looking for a job; having a holiday; trying to start your own business; caring for your family)
   _______________________
   Thank you. You have now finished the questionnaire.
   Are there any comments you would like to make?
   _______________________
   _______________________

54 Conducting Tracer Studies in Adult Language and Literacy Programs
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Next</th>
<th>Y/N Comments</th>
<th>FT/PT</th>
<th>Y/N Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter 5 Survey forms
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Date Next Y/N Comments FT/PT Y/N Y/N Comments Comments
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I ____________ am willing to participate in the Case Study component of the AMES (Name of Client) Tracer Study project for the Certificate in Spoken and Written English.

I agree to:

• the interview being audio taped YES/NO
• my photo being taken YES/NO
• a report of the interview being published as part of the AMES Tracer Study YES/NO

AMES will provide you with a copy of the finished report.

You will be free to withdraw from the study at any time.

**Interviewee**

__________________________
Signature

Please print name

**Case Study Coordinator**

__________________________
Signature

Please print name

Phone No.___________________
LETTER TO PROSPECTIVE CASE STUDY CANDIDATES

Re: A short meeting with Semester—199—graduates in the Certificate in Spoken and Written English

Thank you for your recent responses to the AMES survey for graduates of the Certificate in Spoken and Written English.

*As part of this survey, we would like to interview some graduates about the questions printed on the back of this letter.

AMES wishes to interview graduates to ensure that feedback from them is taken into account in planning future English language programs for migrants.

The interview would take approximately 45 minutes and could be arranged at any time and place convenient to you.

To ensure accurate information is collected, the interview would be audio taped. We would also like to include photos of the interviewees in this report.

Our Centre will contact you shortly to discuss this further with you. Please feel free to contact (Name of Case Study Coordinator) on (Phone No. .............) if you have any questions.

We look forward to meeting with you.

Yours sincerely,

AMES Centre Principal

Please continue over ⇩

*Ensure questions are listed on back of letter (refer Chapter 4)
Letter of Appreciation to Case Study Participants

Dear ________________.

Re: Appreciation of your participation in our research study

We wish to thank you for your contribution to our recent case study research. We appreciate your generosity in participating in the interview and agreeing to the conditions which we requested.

The outcomes of the research project should be of benefit to all concerned with English as a Second Language courses for migrants and especially to future language students and job-seekers.

May we take this opportunity to wish you every success in your future.

Yours sincerely,

AMES Centre Principal
Glossary

AMEP  Adult Migrant Education Program
AMES  Adult Migrant Education Services
CES   Commonwealth Employment Service
CSWE  Certificate in Spoken and Written English
DEET  Department of Employment, Education and Training
DIEA  Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs
ESL   English as a Second Language
MRC   Migrant Resource Centre
NCELTR National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research
TAFE  College of Technical and Further Education
Bibliography


