AN ANALYSIS OF CHANCELLOR COLLEGE'S LANGUAGE AND
COMMUNICATION SKILLS COURSES IN RELATION TO THE CONCEPT OF
ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES

MASTER OF ARTS IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS

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DECLARATION

I the undersigned hereby declare that this thesis is my own original work which has not been submitted to any other institution for similar purposes. Where other people's work has been used acknowledgements have been made.

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Signature

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to the ones I dearly love: Lindirani, MulunguApatsa, Mphatso.

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ABSTRACT

The study aims at analyzing Language and Communication Skills (LAN) courses at Chancellor College and examine how they fit in the concept of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in which they are framed. The practicality of LAN courses is problematic in that EAP courses put discipline specificity English Language Teaching (ELT) ahead of all factors of language teaching considerations, however, the courses at Chancellor College are classified according to programmes, and they are taught to first years that are doing a varied combination of courses within the programmes. An evaluation of LAN courses in line with the language teaching situation at Chancellor College was therefore required and has been done by the study.

The study is based on results of a survey conducted on students, LAN lecturers and lecturers of mainstream courses. The research employed several tools: self administered questionnaires, oral interviews. Documents pertaining to the teaching and establishment of LAN courses were examined. The study revealed that LAN courses are not enjoyed by many students although the usefulness of the courses to the students' academics is acknowledged. The conclusion is that discipline specificity that is called for in EAP courses can not be easily achieved with grouping by programme of study in the Chancellor College situation. A strong collaboration between LAN and all subject departments of Chancellor College is recommended if teaching of language and communication skills, that are specific to programmes, is to be effective and motivating to the students.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACCRONYMS

BAH	Bachelor of Arts (Humanities)
BEDHUM	Bachelor of Education – Humanities
BEDS	Bachelor of Science – Education
BSc	Bachelor of Science
BSOC	Bachelor of Social Science
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EGAP	English for General Academic Purposes
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESAP	English for Specific Academic Purposes
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
GE	General English
LACS	Language and Communication Skills Department
LAN	Language and Communication Skills Course
MfD	Media for Development
PAS	Political and Administrative Studies

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The study is an analysis of Chancellor College's Language and Communications Skills courses which are rooted in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) concept. English for Academic Purposes is one arm of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), an aspect of English Language Teaching (ELT). The study aimed at assessing the current strategies and the concept of the course in relation to what happens in the courses of English for Specific Purposes at Chancellor College. The courses of ESP are branched into English for Academic Purposes and English for Occupational purposes. Language and Communication Skills (LAN, as it is popularly known and will hereafter be used) courses are geared towards English for Academic Purposes which entails teaching academic skills to specific disciplines with the aim to achieve the effect of ESP.

EAP is taught generally within educational institutions to students needing English in their studies, the teaching is based on particular disciplines at higher levels of education when the student is specialising or intends to specialise in a particular discipline. The demand for this has come from "groups of learners with no need for the 'general' English provided by a typical secondary school English course … learners wish to learn English for particular reasons connected with their studies" (Kennedy and Bolitho, 1984:1). LAN courses at Chancellor College are grouped according to programmes of study and they are taught only to the first years. Specific material is employed in EAP rather than general material, the viability of this arrangement is examined in this study.

1.1 Background of Language and Communication Skills courses

This section presents a background of Language and Communication Skills courses and the Department of Language and Communication Skills (LACS) which runs these courses. This is done by first of all describing it in the context of University of Malawi as a whole before narrowing down to the department of LACS and the LAN courses that it offers.

1.1.1 University of Malawi

The University of Malawi has five constituent colleges that offer different professional and technical programmes. Chancellor College, The Polytechnic, College of Medicine, Kamuzu College of Nursing, and Bunda College. English is vital in the Malawian academic setting, and it has taken an important place as a subject in the colleges. Malawi, being the former colonial territory of Britain uses English as a second language and it is a medium of instruction from Standard 5 of primary school to the university level. Thus every student at the university requires English competence to succeed in their pursuits. The interest of the paper is on Chancellor College, a constituent college of the University of Malawi.

1.1.2 Chancellor College

Chancellor College has five faculties: Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Science, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Law and Faculty of Social Science. Programmes of study are: Humanities, Science, Education Science, Education Humanities, Social Science, Law and Media for Development. Except for Law Programme whose in intake is for students who have already done first year in other programmes, the rest of the programmes have specific LAN courses. The programmes are further divided into subject departments, thus students in the various programmes have a choice to make from a range of subjects. For example, Humanities Programme has courses such as: English, Classics, Philosophy, African Languages and Linguistics, Fine Art, Drama, Music, Theology and Religious Studies. A student in the Humanities will have to select a course that they are going to

specialise by the end of four years. In the Social Science Programme, there are a number of courses as well the main ones being: Sociology, Psychology, Economics, History, Mathematics such that by the end of the day it is not just a degree of social science that the student has but a specific area of focus as well, be it Economics or Sociology, or both; where a student has a double major, or one being a major and the other being a minor. LAN courses are under Language and Communication Skills department within the Faculty of Humanities.

1.1.3   Language and Communication Skills Department

The Language and Communication Skills department (to be called LACS department hereafter) was formed in 1993 as a department responsible for the teaching of English language at Chancellor College. This was made to solve the problem of poor level of expression in English among students. Before this, the courses were offered by the English Department under the English Language Unit. There were English courses for all programmes (including English for Lawyers) and all were coded ENG 190. There are specific materials that were designed for the various groups under ENG 190, such as: "English for Sciences", "Language in Public Administration", and "Legal Language". These were designed to meet specific language skills needed for the different programmes.[1]   Although they were programme specific, there was a component of literature which was the same for all programmes, as a result, the course was perceived as a general English programme. Students were studying novels and plays in English as part of the course as well as being offered background in literary criticism to enable them complete book reports (Sharp, 1993). To develop the courses, a former expatriate lecturer of Chancellor College's Curriculum and Teaching Studies Department, Alastair Sharp conducted a research in the Faculty of Science and Faculty of Education. Initially the proposal to come up with the department was in response to the problems articulated by these two faculties, thus they were also the only faculties that were involved in Sharp's research.

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[1] Information sourced from a lecturer who was involved in teaching the previous English programme before LAN was implemented.

The problems that were associated with teaching of English to all students were: writing problems, particularly essays and lab reports. Lecturers were not in favour of teaching "General English", "English taught through the study of English language fiction" (Sharp, 1992, n.p.); as a result there was no motivation on the part of the students. The faculties in Sharp's research suggested that there should be specification according to subject areas. The language and communication skills courses therefore were streamlined as an improvement of the earlier English courses to suit students' needs. Although the department services all programmes (except Law programme) it is housed in the Faculty of Humanities. Among other purposes the course was proposed "to co-ordinate and service English courses… aimed exclusively at student needs within subject departments and student needs in their subsequent professional careers" (Sharp, 1993, n.p.).

Currently, the LACS Department offers the following courses: English for Humanities; English for Education Humanities; English for Science; English for Education Science; English for Social Science; English for Administrators; and English for Media (a recent programme which is currently interfaculty). The following is a statement summarising what goes into the LAN courses at Chancellor College and why the course name starts with the word English although the courses are not offered by the English Department:

>…Language and Communication courses are conceptually rooted in the academic tradition of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) which aims at teaching appropriate English language and communication skills for specific purposes in this case for academic purposes…. Each LAN course is designed to address specific English language and communication skills problems that tend to trouble students as they pursue their programme of study.[2]

The introduction of LAN courses as a breakaway from the previous general English courses that Chancellor College used to offer to all first year students is an indication of

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[2] Chancellor College's Language and Communication Skills Department's Orientation notes (2008).

the pursuit of the college towards achieving English for Specific Purposes, more particularly English for Specific Academic Purposes.

1.2   Statement of the Problem

The University of Malawi uses English as a medium of instruction for most of its courses, even those that are particularly to do with other languages, like African Languages and Linguistics which use English but simply draw examples from other languages like Chichewa. The exceptions to the use of English are French; as well as Language Education Methodology courses like: Introduction to Teaching of Chichewa in Secondary Schools, The Teaching of Chichewa Language in Secondary Schools, and The Teaching of Literature in Chichewa, which are taught in Chichewa.[3]

Many students have learnt LAN courses for the sake of achieving a grade and because the course is compulsory, but not because they see the need to learn English for purposes of their studies. From my experience as an instructor of LAN courses I observed that when taking lecture notes students struggle to write everything the lecturer says instead of applying the note-taking skills they learn from LAN. There is lack of application of LAN skills to their daily academic lives. Because of big classes and shortage of lecturers, the presentation of the course material is taking more of a lecture method rather than being an application course that offers a hands-on experience approach.

Consequently, there is a general outcry among lecturers that students are handicapped as far as English for their academic purposes is concerned. The observation made is that LAN courses are learnt for grades' sake and not actually regarded as essential for any student who is doing a programme at Chancellor College. This results in lack of motivation for both lecturers and students. There has been no systematic study to evaluate the LAN courses since they were instituted 15 years ago. Owing to their importance, the college deserves to know stakeholders' perceptions regarding whether the courses are accomplishing what they were established for, thus the analysis.

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[3] Information sourced from a Lecturer in Language Education Methodology, Faculty of Education, Chancellor College.

1.3   Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to analyse the Language and Communication courses at Chancellor College; specifically to assess the viability of making the courses programme specific. Specifically the study intends to answer the following questions:

1. How do students and academic staff perceive the role of LAN?
2. What are the current practices in the teaching and learning of Language and Communication courses?
3. What is the most effective way of implementing LAN courses? Should classes be centralised across the disciplines or subject specific?
4. What are the challenges and constraints in teaching and learning of language and Communication at Chancellor College?

1.4   Significance of the Study

The study is a form of evaluation and assessment of the LAN programme, because since the department of LACS' inception in 1993 no evaluation has been conducted. The evaluation is a good way of making progression for the department, lecturers and students since remedies to any problems observed are likely to be suggested and later on be put in place. Good approaches that are going to be identified will be highlighted and their application will be enhanced.

To Chancellor College as a whole, the study is particularly important because it will enable all members of the LACS department gain some insights on effective implementation of the course.

The outcome may also help other subject lecturers understand the indispensability of LAN courses in their own teaching thereby facilitating interaction between their departments and the LACS department. This will reinforce the teaching of English for Specific Purposes in the department, which will benefit Chancellor College students. The benefit of the course to the students has also been reflected in their specific courses thus easing the lives of all other course lecturers in that the students will develop better

communication skills. The results of the study will benefit other constituent colleges of the University of Malawi as well as any other universities within Malawi for whom communication skills is a crucial factor. All this will enable Malawian universities produce better graduates who can confidently communicate in English thereby developing the Malawi nation.

1.5   Limitations to the study

The study had one major challenge: the position of the researcher in the study. The researcher is a member of the department of LACS at Chancellor College and maintaining objectivity in the study was a big challenge. The researcher has experienced some challenges in teaching the course so surveying the same from colleagues in the department and from students, some of whom are from her previous classes, may have influenced the findings. All the questionnaires were sent to the students, to avoid handing them over to them personally, this was one way of eliminating any influence that the presence of the researcher would make on the students she taught. Further to this, colleagues were interviewed while maintaining objectivity in questioning as much as possible. Subsequently, having checked the limitations (see Chapter 3), the researcher is confident of impartial reporting of the findings in the study.

1.6   Definition of key terms

There are a number of terms that are very crucial to the understanding of the study and they have been defined in this section.

English for Academic Purposes (EAP): EAP is a division of ESP and is distinguished by the nature of the learner's specialism, for example, English for Science and Technology or English for Economics. EAP courses often have a study skills component (Dudley Evans and St John, 1998).

English for Specific Purposes (ESP): ESP consists of English Language Teaching which is designed to meet specified needs of the learner, it is related in content to particular disciplines, occupations and activities. (Dudley Evans and St John, 1998). ESP is an approach to language learning which is based on learner needs.

General English (GE): Teaching of English in common terms without reference to any specific subject, it is taught to students across the board.

English as a Foreign Language (EFL): This is a branch of English Language Teaching in which English is taught to all students for whom English is a foreign language (Hutchison and Waters, 1987).

English as a Second Language (ESL): This is another branch of English Language Teaching and it refers to teaching of English to a person whose native language or first language is not English. It is aimed at improving a student's level of English (Hutchison and Waters, 1987).

1.7 Thesis Structure

The report has 5 Chapters. Chapter 1 has outlined the context of the study, that is, background information of Language and Communication Skills department at Chancellor College, which is the subject of this research. The problem statement and significance of the research follow, including ethical framework of the research.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature on English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and the approaches therein. There are concepts like "common core" which is distinguished from "subject-specific" approach in EAP teaching. It puts LAN in the contexts of ESP and in relation to how different language specialists have incorporated ESP issues in language teaching.

Chapter 3 includes the description and justification of the data collection methods, together with an account of the procedures for analyzing the data. Furthermore, the problems that were faced during the research are also discussed.

Chapter 4 discusses the findings of the research. The findings are presented according to the research questions that were raised in Chapter 1, and the discussions are divided into four major sections.

In Chapter 5, concludes the findings of the research - particularly the main statements of the analysis of LAN courses. Recommendations towards improvement of some noted problems are also made in the same chapter.

1.8   Chapter Summary

The Chapter has given a background of the study by highlighting the context of LAN courses and the department of LACS at Chancellor College. A statement of the problem that prompted the researcher to embark on the analysis of the course has been given in the Chapter; this has been linked to the purpose of the study and its significance to the field of language teaching. The Chapter opens the study with an outline of research questions that it sought to explore. The next Chapter is a review of literature related to the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0   Introduction

The chapter brings together literature that is exploring the concept of English for Academic Purposes and as it is related to Language and Communications skills (LAN) teaching. The literature in question has helped to build together main ideas in the study by exposing the concepts of ESP and how it narrows down to English for Academic Purposes. Most of the related elements of the ESP concept are examined in the literature, like "common core approach" compared to 'subject-specific approach"; "specificity"; and "collaboration with subject specialists". Studies with particular cases portraying application of the concepts of ESP are also part of the reviewed literature.

2.1   English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

Language and Communication Courses (LAN) are conceptualized in the context of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). ESP is established in the contexts of English Language Teaching in which there is English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL). English as a Second Language (ESL) refers to teaching English to a person whose native or first language is one other than English. Some nations, for example, the United States of America, require schools to provide ESL instruction in the classroom to any student whose first language is not English (Hutchison and Waters, 1987). The goal of an ESL program is to improve a student's level of English, depending on student's English abilities, interests, and needs. English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is taught to all students for whom English is a foreign language; it branches into General English (GE) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

(Hutchison and Waters, 1987; Hyland, 2006). All the definitions of ESP are centred on the simple foundation question: why does the learner need to learn English (Kennedy and Bolitho, 1984; Hutchison and Waters, 1987)? This means that ESP is characterized as a course that is designed to meet specified needs of the learner, related in content (i.e. in its themes and topics) to particular disciplines, occupations and activities. It is also centred on the language appropriate to those activities in syntax, lexis, discourse, semantics, and analysis of the discourse (Strevens 1988). So, ESP's main concerns have always been and remain with needs analysis, text analysis, and preparing learners to communicate effectively in the tasks prescribed by their study or work situation (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001). In other words, ESP courses develop from a needs analysis, which "aims to specify as closely as possible what exactly it is that students have to do through the medium of English" (Dudley-Evans and St Johns 1998:3).

The demand for ESP has come from groups of learners with no need for the 'general' English provided by a typical secondary school English course. Teachers were faced with learners who already had some knowledge of English acquired but had to learn a special English in line with their specific language needs whether for studies or a particular job (Kennedy and Bolitho, 1984). ESP is quite broad and is subdivided into two main types differentiated according to why the learner requires English, whether they need it for academic study (English for Academic Purposes: EAP) or for work or training (English for Occupational Purposes/ English for Vocational Purposes).

2.2 English for Academic Purposes (EAP)

The main interest of the study is on EAP in whose context the objectives of LAN courses at Chancellor College are embedded. EAP is further distinguished by the general nature of learner's specialism, for example, English for Science and Technology, English for Business and Economics. EAP needs to prepare learners to read textbooks, listen to lectures, write essays, and do library research, among a range of other skills. There is a growing awareness that students, including native English speakers, have to learn specific language skills and engage with knowledge in new ways when they enter university,

hence the need for EAP. Dudley-Evans and St Johns (1996) make an important distinction between common-core English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) and English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP). The same distinction is made between English for General Business Purposes (EGBP) and English for Specific Business Purposes (ESBP). From these distinctions it is imperative to assess the direction to which courses at Chancellor College are tilting. According to Hutchison and Waters (1987), ESP should be seen as an approach to language teaching which is directed by specific and apparent reasons for learning. The main reason being: learning for communication. If the subject specific – English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) is adopted, in the situation where the courses are taught according to programmes of study, as is currently the case at Chancellor College, the choice of subjects in the application of context of communication will have to be done. This is so because the language teaching methodology favours that "the mastery of any language system, whether or not it is claimed to be part of the common core, must take place within the context of a specific variety or varieties" (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1996:6).

2.2.1 *Approaches to English for Academic Purposes*

The study lacks an underlying theoretical concept because it is said that there is no theoretical context in ESP but there are basically two approaches that are adopted, common core (use of general materials) and subject specific EAP approaches (Dudley Evans and St John 1996). One of the most persistent and controversial issues in second language writing is the debate over the purpose of EAP classes. Should teachers aim to develop generalized academic skills in their students – hoping the skills will be transferred to the subsequent tasks across the curriculum, or should they simply focus on specific discourse communities according to disciplines of specialization? EAP programmes are a move towards a view of language as not only a set of grammatical structures but also a set of functions (Kennedy and Bolitho, 1984). This means that EAP has a pragmatic function to perform.

Dudley-Evans and St John (1996) try to put ESP in a theoretical context because of the belief that ESP lacks an underlying theory. They believe that a theory of ESP could be outlined based on either the specific nature of the texts that learners require knowledge of, or on the basis of the needs-related nature of the teaching. This needs-related nature of teaching can be related to the need for specificity of the course or generalization, which is better summarised in a narrow or wide angle perspective in language teaching; whose concepts are somehow similar to common-core or subject specific approach in EAP, as discussed in the next paragraph.

The main consideration in teaching English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is what is given as a wide angle versus a narrow angle perspective. This is based on the question that often arises in the design of EAP courses concerning the "level of specificity" that should be adopted (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001:10). Flowerdew and Peacock (2001) present two arguments that arise from this; the first one says that "[a]t the lower levels of general English competence students are not ready for discipline-specific language and learning tasks" (p10). The second argument states that "the most cost effective teaching is that which focuses on the immediate specific needs   confronting learners in their disciplines" (p10). This issue relates to common core hypothesis in applied linguistics which stipulates that there is a common core of grammatical and lexical items that predominates in any linguistic register (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001). It is further stated that before embarking on any specific purpose course, learners may master the basic set of linguistic items which make up the common core. The "level of specificity" of the LAN courses at Chancellor College is presumably at programme level not at subject level. So to examine the way EAP courses are designed and implemented at Chancellor College it is vital to weigh the *pros* and *cons* of taking the common core approach (related to wide-angle perspectives) and subject-specific approach (related to narrow-angle perspective).

2.2.2 Common-Core Approach in EAP

The common core approach can be related to English for General Academic Purposes because in both, general material and content is considered important. There is one study that favours an application of general material to enhance English for Academic Purposes. Kelly and Khrishnan (1995) tested the use of literature in the ESP classroom. This was to contend with those who objected that "literature is too difficult, unnatural in language content, and unrelated to ESL's students' learning objectives" thereby suggesting that literature in language classes "does little or nothing to help students to become competent users of the target language" (Kelly and Khrishnan, 1995:78). They report of a study that gave the experience of using literature and technical material in a first year engineering programme in a Singaporean University. After a year of English Proficiency which was designed as a general proficiency instrument, the course moved to an emphasis on English for Specific (academic) Purposes (ESP), as it is generally understood. To counteract the drift towards the narrower confines of ESP course design, a reading unit, unrelated to technical concerns was built into the language course. This was done because they strongly believed that "reading was one of the better ways to improve students' reading proficiency" and "the technical nature of the language materials confined their students to a narrow genre of communication" for the literature was useful for exposing students to other methods of communication and other bodies of knowledge (Kelly and Khrishnan, 1995:79). The result of this approach was that students were motivated and encouraged to study the EAP course. This is a significant case to EAP specialists desiring to find new approaches in EAP.

 Kelly and Khrishnan (1995) have given support to the use of literature in ESL teaching; they believe that the study of literature can stimulate a sharper awareness of the communicative resource of the language being learned. Those who favour general EAP see activities like questioning, note taking, summary writing, giving prepared presentations, reading texts, and so on, as generic academic practices (Hyland, 2006). It is further argued that students will encounter a variety of unpredictable assignments in their future courses; their interpretations of those assignments will be "unique and

idiosyncratic and academic work will be generally unimaginative and formulaic" (Benesch, 2001:38). In these cases, general EAP is favoured.

Generally ESP specialists are in favour of Specific EAP rather than teaching academic and language skills in the abstract as in general EAP. To move from the practice of learning language in the abstract, Chancellor College tried to move away from the approach when it broke away from the inclusion of literature in English for all programmes in 1993, so the extent to which such a move has achieved the intended objectives is central to the current study.

2.2.3   Subject- Specific Approach in EAP

The subject-specific approach can as well be related to English for Specific Academic Purposes because in both of them the specific context of teaching English is primary. Widdowson (1984) looks at EAP courses as the development of communicative competence rather than the development of linguistic competence. The ultimate goal of EAP is communicative competence which according to Widdowson (1984) includes discourse, strategic, linguistic (or grammatic) and sociolinguistic competence, and improved academic performance at the university level resulting from competence in English. This is in contrast to theoretical linguists who traditionally saw language as an abstract system, the applied linguists, under whom EAP is studied, started to consider it as a resource for communication, a resource which varied in its application according to the context or situation in which it is produced (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001). This means that EAP specialists are not in favour of learning general English, because it is strongly said that learning a language in the abstract would not enable one to use the language in specific situations.

Differences in academic requirements according to disciplines is one major reason of being specific in teaching EAP. A distinction is given between hard disciplines and soft disciplines (Neumann, Parry and Becher, 2002; Smeby, 1996). Smeby (1996) defines hard fields as those consisting of the natural sciences, medicine, and technology; while the humanities and the social sciences are characterised as soft fields. Furthermore,

communication language in the fields is distinguished, it may be characterised by a "stringent symbol system and heavy use of mathematics" for hard fields or research is reported in a more essay-like form in the soft fields (Smeby, 1996:69). A study was conducted by Hyland (1999) to exemplify academic differences in certain disciplines. In the study, Hyland (1999) investigated the contextual variability of citations in eight disciplines and concluded that writers in the Humanities and Social Sciences employ more citations than scientists and engineers, and they are more likely to use "integral structures, to employ discourse reporting verbs, and represent cited authors as adopting a stance to their material" than employed by the hard disciplines (pp. 343-344). In another study, in which he revises specificity of EAP, Hyland (2002) highlights another distinction in the disciplines; he shows that in the Humanities and Social Sciences analysing and synthesising multiple sources is important, while "in science and technology, activity based skills such as describing procedures, defining objects, and planning solutions are required" (p. 386). This means that assignment requirements differ in the disciplines as well; lab reports are common in chemistry and biology, program documentation in computer science, and article surveys in mathematics; while in the Humanities and the Social Sciences essays interpreting experiences are the most frequent type. (Hyland 2002, Shih, 1986). Thus, there are supposed to be distinctions in the EAP that is to be taught to the different disciplines.

Neumann, Parry and Becher (2002) also distinguish hard and soft disciplines and find that at closer analysis, even within the two groups, a number of exceptions can be found, for example, a given discipline may have two categories, within biology both hard and soft elements may be discerned. In all this, the implication is that to ignore disciplinary differentiation is a problem. There are subject specific literacies because disciplines have different views of knowledge (Hyland, 2002). So an approach to language teaching which is based on descriptions of language as it is used in specific target situations is considered appropriate. The same can therefore apply to academic settings, making the subject-specific approach the favoured one in this case.

2.2.3.1 Subject-Specific Approach and Content of Teaching Materials (Course

   Design)

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is different from teaching English in general, its courses are designed to a specification derived directly from a description of the required target repertoire. A key assumption of ESP is that the students' activities generate and depend on registers, genres and associated language that students need to be able to manipulate in order to carry out the activity (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998). Hyland (2002) emphasises the importance of context in language teaching as opposed to decontextualised forms because students cannot learn in cultural vacuum; their disciplinary activities ought to be a central part of the EAP lessons. Materials and course designing are very important in EAP for the discipline of specialisation is inevitably taken into consideration as it is stated that

> Every one of these specialised needs requires, before it can be met by appropriate teaching materials, detailed studies of restricted languages and special registers carried out on the basis of large samples of the language used by the particular persons concerned (Widdowson, 1984:175).

EAP means going beyond grammar and vocabulary to prepare students for their future academic experiences while, at the same time, recognising the importance of effective, personal and social expectations of learning (Hyland, 2006). This is an awareness of need and is the central element of EAP course design. Needs analysis distinguishes EAP from general language teaching. According to Hyland (2006) needs embraces many aspects, "incorporating learner's goals and background, their language proficiencies, their reasons for doing the course, their teaching and learning preferences, and the situations they will need to communicate in" (p.73). In agreement with this is Benesch (1996) who adds more activities on needs analysis: consulting different programmes of study about course requirements, observing students in naturalistic settings, such as lecture classes, and noting the linguistic and behavioural demands or combining a number of techniques to obtain a description of assignments, discourse, and classroom behaviour. These activities are what Benesch (1996) describes in an example of a needs analysis and EAP

curriculum development in a paired ESL writing and Psychology course at a U.S. college. She (Benesch, 1996) narrates her experiences in teaching an ESL writing class linked to a Psychology survey course. The result was that she identified elements of students' language situations in the psychology class and used them as a basis of EAP instruction. In another paper Benesch (2001) cites a practical study of linking EAP writing and an Anthropology course to show the application of needs analysis. About half the students enrolled in Anthropology were also taking her EAP writing class. To promote greater attention in the anthropology class, the EAP instructor asked students to work with each other in EAP class on reconstructing the previous lecture and to make connections with related readings.

The two examples show collaboration with other subject instructors and specificity helped students to have the skills learned in real situation, note-taking in this case was easier taught than having imaginary lectures. This can help to provide students with the specific language they need to succeed in their courses and future careers.

Related to needs analysis is a recommendation for EAP instructors to come up with a rights analysis. Hyland (2006) describes rights analysis as that which "involves evaluating the findings of needs analysis, recognising the challenges the students face and interrogating the results to create more democratic and participatory involvement by students in decision making" (p.73). This idea encourages students to assess their options and prioritise what they need for themselves as a way of taking an active responsibility in their learning. It is a way of allowing students' negotiation in the process of course design to motivate them. Needs and rights analysis are a basis of designing EAP courses and materials and they cannot be done without collaboration with other subject instructors.

2.2.3.2 Collaboration with Subject Specialists

A distinctive feature of EAP is increasing collaboration which ought to take place with subject specialists. This means that knowledge of subject is linked to knowledge of language. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) view EAP as a task or course that is multidisciplinary; "the openness to the insights of other disciplines is a key distinguishing feature of ESP" (p.1). The subject teacher ought to provide the "carrier content" for the

English course. In another study, Flowerdew and Peacock (2001) believe that the language teacher

> …needs to be able to grasp the conceptual structure of the subject his students are studying if he is to understand fully how language is used to represent that structure… and to observe where and how difficulties arise in order that he can attempt to help both student and subject teacher to overcome them. (p.18)

Putting specificity in practice involves the EAP specialists working closely with subject specialists to gain an understanding of other discourses. Furthermore, it is required that the EAP specialists educate not only the students but also orient subject teachers as to the nature of academic literacy, in other words, the EAP lecturer can teach the subject teacher how to apply certain academic skills.

Showing agreement with the importance of collaboration between EAP specialists and other subjects' teachers, Mustafa (1995) highlights one of the most important points of contact and consideration, that is, to include an agenda for agreeing with the features in the genres required from students and the criteria set for their evaluation. That the EAP specialist should know what is expected of students in their respective subjects, and the subject specialist should know what the EAP specialist is teaching the students. Besides collaboration, the EAP has the roles of a researcher, carrying research to understand discourse of the texts students use; as a course designer and materials provider; and as an evaluator (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998). This gave another dimension in the case study, for the perception and importance that EAP is put into has been evaluated.

A number of studies favour specificity in EAP courses, they support ESAP or the subject specific approach. Kasper (1995) reports of a study conducted on advanced English as a Second Language (ESL) course which was tilted towards ESAP. In the study it was found that content based instruction results in improved language and content performance. According to Kasper (1995), when ESL courses are structured around content-based readings, students experience several important linguistic and cognitive

benefits. From a linguistic perspective, the rationale of using academic readings is based on the principle that "successful language development occurs when students are presented with material in a meaningful, contextualised form in which the primary focus is on the acquisition of information" (Brinton, Snow and Wesche, 1989:223) Furthermore, the content based approaches allow students to practice language skills while enabling them to gain cumulative knowledge of a single subject area.

In another study, Mustafa (1995) proposed something beyond teaching language in context. His study has shown that it is necessary to provide explicit instruction on the constraints and the opportunities of the genre specific context. In his article, Mustafa (1995) considers a term paper a genre whose conventions students have to be aware of because it is the most challenging task assigned to university students. The conventions include the basic parts of a paper, the thesis statement, table of contents, introduction, body, conclusion, and the references and citations. Mustafa's study does not favour specificity at the initial level; it argues that formal instruction through a special course in writing (a general course) provides a good basis for modification into conventions in their specialization later on. This is a departure from the subject-specific approach, the introduction of specific material is preferred for the subsequent years other than the first year of college studies.

2.2.3.3 Level of specificity

Flowerdew and Peacock (2001) raise an important area of consideration in EAP by referring to the level of specificity. At what time should ESAP start? They suggest that in curriculum planning specifying has to start from the beginning because curriculum planners cannot wait until the mastery of the common core is complete before focusing on the discipline specific activities. They favour the idea of specifying EAP course right from the beginning of the courses, because problems of language are likely to arise but the EAP lecturer does not have to focus on language before other skills which are of more importance in EAP. So, one of their reasons is cost effectiveness that dealing with the problem of grammar (for example) is to delay the learning process (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001).

Dudley-Evans and St Johns (1998) look at the level of specificity differently. They consider EAP as a course that is studied in a specific discipline further classified as a pre-study, in-study and post-study course. A pre-study course will rule out any specific work related to the actual discipline or work as students will not yet have required familiarity with the content, while the courses that run parallel to the course of study (in-study) in the educational institution will provide the opportunity for integrated or specific work (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998). Shih (1986) presents a rationale for adopting a content based approach as an in-study EAP approach in which writing courses can be linked to a concurrent study of specific subject matter in one or more academic disciplines. According to Shih (1986), writing for example, can be integrated with reading, listening, and discussion about the core content and research growing from the core material. Linking writing to ongoing study of specific subject matter is viewed as a means to stimulate students to think and learn.

In response to the question of specificity, Hyland (2002) argues that students acquire features of the language as they need them, rather than in the order that teachers present them. He adds that by making contact with materials from their fields, students may more easily come to see that "communication does not entail adherence to a set of universal rules but involves making rational choices based on the ways texts work in specific contexts" (Hyland, 2002:392). This shows that it is possible to learn EAP along with other courses not necessarily as pre-study general course. Chancellor College EAP courses are the in-study type, this extent of specification will be assessed in line with Chancellor College's situation, where the course is taught to first year students only, who have not started specializing but are doing different courses within their programmes; moreover, there is a general outcry concerning depreciating standards of English language in the college (refer Chapter 4).

2.2.4   Problems with the Subject – Specific Approach

The main problem that the language specialist has to grapple with is the content of the EAP courses. If the courses have to be dealt with in context, then which ones will be the most appropriate ones to be applied? If the setup is that the courses be specific to programmes then the diversity of the subjects within the programmes is the one that the LAN lecturer at Chancellor College has to grapple with. In pursuing the argument of teaching writing in an academic context, Ferris (2001) and Hyland (2006) raise the argument that academic discourse communities are too diverse to cover adequately in a writing course. They cite Spank (1988 in Ferris, 2001; Hyland, 2006) who further points out that English language teachers are not equipped to analyse the content and discourse of various disciplines in order to teach their students how to write in those content areas; they lack the expertise and confidence to teach subject specific conventions. For instance, in Chancellor College's ENG 190, English for Lawyers was a challenge to teach. The English lecturer who taught it had to teach it along side a lawyer.[4] To achieve language needs of law students, despite being a language specialists, content was also vital hence the involvement of a subject specialist. This proved to be a major challenge and the course was eventually stopped; the law faculty did not need it anymore. Hyland (2002) responds by saying that it is possible to be specific because EAP specialists, through reading and research, can over time attain some knowledge and be in a better position to describe the literacy cultures of different academic majors with confidence.

Specification of courses is said to be restricting the competence of learners. By basing course content on the specific demands of particular disciplines EAP does not prepare students for unpredictable assignments (Hyland, 2006; Benesch, 2001). In looking at teaching methodology and its results in terms of efficiency, Widdowson (1983) argues that specific teaching is more restricting than general teaching. He looks at the efficiency in terms of the time that learners can put the learned material into use. He focuses on objectives and aims of English teaching by distinguishing them that "a course might specify objectives in terms of a set of lexical items or syntactic structures or notions or

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[4] From an interview with an English language lecturer who taught ENG 190.

functions, but its aims would be to develop an ability to exploit knowledge of these elements in effective communication" (Widdowson, 1983:7). In this case, it is not just a matter of developing linguistic competence in a target subject area but communicative competence for use in later life, beyond the area of specialisation. Inclusion of general material in EAP is not totally ineffective, rather, it aids in improving general communicative competency in students. With these considerations, aims and objectives of LAN courses have been examined.

2.2.5 *General Perception towards EAP*

To show the importance of EAP courses, Ferris (2001) reports results of two lines of research that examined the importance of student accuracy in EAP writing tasks: some instructors tolerated errors while other instructors and students perceive accurate writing to be important in academic settings. In a study conducted by Kapser (1995) in an EAP course, lack of motivation of students in English courses was cured by making the courses content-based. Using reading comprehension as a base, from a cognitive point of view, academic content in the courses was a critical factor in increasing reading comprehension because "it built, activate[d] domain related knowledge, or schemata, from which the reader [drew to aid in the comprehension of related text]" (Kasper, 1995).

In a Nigerian situation, a study was conducted to achieve a measure of success in establishing an effective EAP programme, despite multiplicity of adverse conditions in which the course is expected to thrive (Olaofe, 1992). According to Olaofe (1992), a test was made at Ahmadu Bello University in Nigeria whereby he had an EAP course planted in a situation where the awareness, status given to the course, trained EAP teachers and financial, material and physical resources were at their barest minimum. Both the students and the language teachers could not see the usefulness of the course. All this made effective implementation of the programme almost impossible in its inception.

In Olaofe's (1992) Nigerian case, students could not see the need for the course after twelve or more years of English language learning at the primary and secondary school

levels. They had a false impression about their communicative competence, that is, they felt that they were competent enough in English after success in secondary school English. In response, the course had to take a more communicative, functional and less "grammar-translation" base (Olaofe, 1992). Each lesson given to students had to achieve high value in terms of deployment of what was learnt in the EAP class to their academic content subject areas. Students started to see the relevance of the course to their academic subject areas, and their negative attitude was replaced with high motivation and readiness to learn.

Such a study offered insights to the present study because the analysis of LAN courses at Chancellor College had to include the perception of the students and subject lecturers. This is a good starting point for assessing the environment in which the courses are operating. That is, if students and lecturers of other courses see the importance of LAN courses, their suggestions and reactions about the content of the course had to be sought. This is assessment, something that has not taken place in LAN courses at Chancellor College. The assessment is one of the constituents of needs analysis, a very important step in course evaluation. Similar to what Jordan (1997) explains: "needs analysis should be the starting point for devising syllabuses, courses and materials and the kind of teaching and learning that takes place" (p. 22). Therefore, an assessment of the language courses in relation to the study demands of the different programmes at Chancellor College had to be done.

2.2.6   *Weighing Subject-Specific and Common-Core Approaches*

The two approaches are showing what EAP should do, the most favoured one being the Subject-Specific approach (also known as narrow angle perspective). And looking at the literature available it is the most favoured one, and no wonder, Chancellor College had to move from the General English courses to the more specific, which do not emphasise literature but are more skills oriented. However, the change that was made in 1993, from the general English courses and trying to make them more specific does not make the older system totally ineffective. Effectiveness of both is highly depended on the processes applied as well as evaluation. It was important to assess the situation at

Chancellor College by finding out what happens, in case of a wider angle, or programme specific, and also in the particular case of providing the course to first year's only who have not started specializing but have a diversity of courses. The assessment is important because according to Gimenez (1996) in "most ESP programmes students' performance has been evaluated following the well established practice for testing only students' end products, ignoring any assessment of the learning process" (p. 233). Gimenez (1996) outlines the importance of implementing process assessment in ESP courses, and the impact it may have on them as well as the results that can be achieved through a survey conducted at an institution in Argentina. The project was based on the premise "that assessing students' performance in an ESP course should consist of a thorough analysis of the input, a continuous assessment of the "throughput" variables and finally an evaluation of the output" (Gimenez, 1996:233). Gimenez (1996) includes the concept of "throughput" as those variables of assessment that involve the internal state and behaviour of both students and the institution (p. 234).

The main issue worth considering in EAP is the content, so in the EAP courses at Chancellor College it was imperative to analyse the content; and find out what can go into the content if the aims of the course are to be met. In Gimenez' (1996) study students were asked to participate in the learning process by suggesting activities and topics to be discussed, they usually favoured those topics that are also discussed in subject-matter classes and activities they believed were simulative of their future professional life. As a result of the involvement of students in the choice of activities and topics of discussion in the ESP classes, students felt deeply motivated and were actively participating. On assessment of performance, besides examinations, portfolio work was used and after students sat for the end of term exam, they went away not only with a score for their performance but also an assessment portfolio that reflected all they had done and still needed to do. This sounds important and is a good base for evaluating specifications that are currently used in the case of Chancellor College.

2.2.7 EAP in the Malawian Situation

Most important in the consideration of the intended study is the study of ESP as it is in the Malawian situation. Ng'ombe (1981) conducted a study in which he investigated the communication syllabus for students of Bunda College of Agriculture, University of Malawi. The communication courses at the college are similar to those of Chancellor College whose aim is to teach students communicative acts in the academic circles as well as beyond college. Ng'ombe (1981) argues that, with the nature of the course at Bunda demanding them to meet farmers as extension workers, they should learn some of the communication skills in Chichewa. The target for the students at Bunda is farmers, most of whom are uneducated and do not understand English hence his argument to have Chichewa communication skills as well in order to transfer scientific knowledge to the largely uneducated rural farmers. He believes that ESP in the Bunda situation should be different from that of other countries like Britain and Nigeria where English is a medium of communication in the classroom and outside. "In Malawi situation the ESP course designer should reckon with the fact there are alternatives to English as a medium of communication in and outside the classroom" (Ng'ombe, 1981:49). ESP is meant to sharpen general skills in specific areas of education or profession, thus it has to be altered according to the Bunda situation to suit what the students actually need.

There is another study conducted by Musopole (2005) to investigate the effectiveness of The Malawi Polytechnic's Language and Communication department. The study mainly investigated "the extent to which the department at the Polytechnic can be said to be effective as a department through which the Language and Communication skills teaching activities of the Malawi Polytechnic are planned, organized, directed and controlled to achieve specific objectives" (Musopole, 2005:6). The study assessed the department and all the resources that can make a particular department stand and fulfill particular objectives. His study investigates all areas of the department from financial, human, physical and information resources. The findings of the study are that as a result of inadequate acquisition of these resources the department fails to build up capacity for effective delivery of its functions. The department recognizes that a communicative approach to teaching language is the most efficient but it fails to employ these because of

poor resources. Musopole (2005) has tackled almost all aspects of the department's function with an in-depth insight into the area of management.

From the two studies, the current study gained some insights in that there was a lot more that is to be assessed at Chancellor College, the course content, design and effectiveness of the current classification of LAN classes according to programmes, being the main issues. The dimension that the present study took is useful bearing in mind that there is a lot that is required in approaching English for Academic Purposes. In this case, the interest is on evaluating the approach of LAN courses at Chancellor College because since Language and Communication Skills (LACS) department's inception in 1993 this crucial activity has not been done and the two studies for Bunda College and the Polytechnic have not done an evaluation of the course with a case and focus that can be used to understand what is happening in the Chancellor College situation.

2.3   Chapter Summary

The Chapter has highlighted ideas from different writers in the area of ESP. The ideas of main ESP specialists in the chapter have helped in the exploration of the concept of EAP and aided in the analysis of LAN courses at Chancellor College. There are case studies that are related to Malawian situation and they pointed to a lot more work that has to be done to explore the field of EAP in the current case study. The next chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study in accordance to approaches of EAP.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The Chapter traces the research method that the study used to arrive at the findings. It describes the targeted sample, data collection techniques, the data analysis tools employed and limitation and constraints that were encountered in the study.

3.1 Research Strategy

The study used both qualitative and quantitative approaches, although with much leaning *towards* the qualitative approach because understanding of students and lecturers' perceptions was central to the study. It cannot be avoided to quantify the data where the data is mainly evaluated qualitatively; this is so because number of students, test scores and percentage computations, among other things, were valuable for the study. Furthermore, interviews, syllabus assessments, and evaluation of students and lecturers' perceptions were the main tasks of the analysis and those were sought qualitatively. Consequently, there is a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods as Jordan (1997) puts it, "the results of one method can often act as a check on, or explanation of [those of the] other methods" (p. 275). Similarly, it is said that "limitations in one method can be compensated for by the strengths of a complementary one" (Marshall and Rossman, 2006:131), hence quantitative data and qualitative data were combined to achieve a maximum effect in this kind of study

3.2 Sampling and Sample Population

All the respondents were drawn from Chancellor College because all the targeted respondents were there. The scope of the study drew all the respondents from the same area of Chancellor College. The targeted respondents included students, lecturers, and heads of departments.

3.2.1 Student Respondents

A large group of respondents were drawn from Chancellor College's continuing students in order to examine how they perceive the usefulness of LAN academically. Or to find out if they are putting the skills they learnt into use. Those that were in second and third year at the time of the study were targeted because they had a chance to apply what they learnt in LAN when they were in first year. These were drawn from all programmes. A sample of students in all categorisation of LAN courses, which is mostly by programmes of study, was sought to complete a questionnaire. A total of 240 students were sampled, using Proportional Stratified Sampling, a technique which provided an equal sampling to all classes regardless of class size, each member within the groups had to have an equal chance to be selected. With all class sizes stratified it did not allow disadvantaging the big classes by sampling more respondents from them or the small classes by including almost all of them (Neuman, 2003). To come up with a final sample, the researcher randomly selected students according to their proportion. Table 3.1 shows the number of sampled students per programme.

Table 3.1 Students' Sample

Year of Study	Programme of Study	Total no. of students	Sampled Students
Two	Social Science (BSOC)	106	26
	Bachelor of Science (BSC)	30	7
	Education Science (BEDS)	41	10
	Education Humanities (BEDHUM)	103	26
	Humanities (BAH)	143	36
	Media Studies (MFD)	21	5
	Political and Administrative Studies (PAS and PUB)	39	10
	Total	**483**	**120**
Three	Social Science (BSOC)	87	22
	Bachelor of Science (BSC)	53	14
	Education Science (BEDS)	32	8
	Education Humanities (BEDHUM)	145	37
	Humanities (BAH)	102	26
	Media Studies (MfD)	21	8
	Political and Administrative Studies (PAS and PUB)	31	5
	Total	**471**	**120**

Out of the sampled 240 students, only 194 responded to the questionnaires. The questionnaires that were filled and returned are distributed according to programmes as presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Student Respondents by Programmes of Study.

Programme of Study	Frequency	Percent
BSC	28	14.4
BSOC	45	23.2
PUB	8	4.1
BAH	36	18.6
BEDHUM	47	24.2
BEDS	21	10.8
MfD	9	4.6
Total	194	100.0

The questionnaire return rate was 81%. This was considered representative enough for it was not easy to have the questionnaires returned, several reminders had to be posted.

3.2.1   Lecturers

Various groups of lecturers were included in the sample. Lecturers are another group of stakeholders of the course.

3.2.1.1 LAN lecturers.

Because there were only four lecturers available, three were interviewed; the exclusion was made of the researcher who is the fourth member of the department. Due to shortage of staff, LACS department involves lecturers from other departments as well, that is to teach on part-time basis. Those who have taught before as well as those who were still teaching on such a basis were interviewed as well; there were two part-time lecturers in the sample. This led to a total of 5 LAN lecturers interviewed.

3.2.1.2 Lecturers who taught in previous programmes

The other group of lecturers was of those who taught the previous programme of General English; to hear their perception on the changes of the courses. Three lecturers from the past were available and all were targeted. Oral interviews were conducted with the lecturers.

3.2.1.3 Lecturers of other courses

Another group of respondents was lecturers of other courses. They were of great significance in this study because they gave their assessment of LAN courses from among other things, the communicative competence of the students as far as English for Academic Purposes is concerned. They were drawn from all the programmes at least two subject lecturers per department were requested to fill a questionnaire. Ten more lecturers were selected across the departments for oral interviews.

From the total of 21 departments at Chancellor College, two lecturers were sampled for interviews, making a total of 42 course lecturers sampled. Since it is not easy to get hold of them, the ones that were not available were sent a questionnaire. The questionnaires were supposed to be returned to the researcher, and in the end only 24 questionnaires were returned despite the numerous reminders that were sent around.

Another 10 lecturers, who were also Heads of departments, were selected for oral interviews. From these, only eight were available and were interviewed. The questionnaires were aimed at distancing the researcher, who is part of the community of lecturers, from influencing responses. On the other hand, an in-depth of responses was required; hence a few who were key informants were included for oral interviews. In total, there were 32 lecturers in the sample.

3.3 Data Collection Techniques

The study used three data collection techniques, namely: survey, in-depth interviews and documentation.

3.3.1 Survey

The main data collection tool used in the study was a self administered semi-structured questionnaire to both students and subject lecturers. A self administered questionnaire was an appropriate tool because it helped to eliminate bias which would occur if all of the interviews were conducted face to face while the researcher was part of the community under study. It is also a good tool because the questionnaires were administered on a larger scale, thus a big number of respondents were interviewed.

All the questionnaires were semi-structured, with both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The open-ended questions were included to give room for explanations. It is believed that when all the questions are closed-ended, something important may be lost when an individual's beliefs and feelings are forced into a few "fixed categories that a researcher created" (Neuman, 2003:278-279). This disadvantage of a question form was reduced by mixing open-ended and closed-ended questions in the questionnaire. In the end, there were some detailed answers from the open- ended questions and they formed part of the qualitative data.

Having sampled students from all programmes it was not easy to convene them and have them fill the questionnaires on the spot; and they may not have responded to the call positively. To overcome this, a list of the sampled students was posted in all notice boards requesting them to collect a questionnaire at a specified spot, they were asked to fill it at their convenient time and return them to the same spot they collected it. For the lecturers, the researcher went around the departments to distribute and later collect the questionnaires, simply to ensure that they return them all; however, some of the lecturers could not be found again for the responses.

3.3.2 In-depth Interviews

Oral interviews were also conducted with part of the sampled lecturers. This was done to get an in-depth perspective of the perceptions towards LAN knowing that sometimes in self-administered questionnaires people's responses are limited to the space and questions

given. This allowed for the "participants' perspective of the courses to unfold as the participants view[ed] them" (Marshall and Rossman, 2006:101) despite the structured questioning that was used to guide the interviews. Indeed, there were a lot more issues raised by the lecturers than what the questions demanded.

3.3.3   Document Review

The last data collection technique was document analysis in which course outlines and departmental documents concerning the establishment of the department of LACS were analysed. An examination of course outlines/ syllabuses of LAN courses for the various programmes was done with a focus on comparing the topics as well as the organisation of these topics.

3.3   Data Analysis

Since there was more of qualitative data drawn from the in-depth interviews and open-ended questions in the questionnaires, analysis was made by generating categories and themes, coding the data and coming up with interpretations. Basically all this entailed data condensation as "the reams of collected material [were] synthesised into manageable elements, and interpretation" (Rossman and Rallis, 2003:279) and derived meaning and insights from the words of the respondents. This resulted in a thorough analysis and interpretation of the data.

Quantitative data was coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS). This package helped in computation of the percentages and tabulation of the given data which could not be done manually.

3.4   Data Collection Challenges

Being a member of the department the researcher was faced with the challenge of interviewing her own colleagues in the department. As such, and some of the things may have been taken for granted, for example, assuming the researcher's knowledge of how

things are run and what is expected. This made the colleagues to find certain questions too obvious while assuming that the researcher knew the answers, but such questions were asked because people perceive things differently and opinions had to be sought. Additionally, the researcher has experienced some challenges in teaching LAN; it was a challenge to maintain objectivity in this case. However, the in-depth interviews and analysis were done with a constant consciousness of objectivity on the part of the researcher and the results reflect the respondents' opinions without any biases.

Although generally a questionnaire return rate of 81% (see section 3.2, Table 3.2) could be considered relatively high, there were challenges to achieve this as frequent reminders were made to the respondents.

3.5   Ethical Framework

The study had several ethical considerations borne in mind because, according to Neuman (2003), there should be a balance between two values: the pursuit of knowledge and the rights of those being studied, or of others in society. As such, an informed consent was sought from all the groups that were involved in the study. Ethically it is believed that it is not enough to get permission from people; "they need to know what they are being asked to participate in so that they can make an informed decision" (Neuman, 2003:124). All respondents were presented with notes about the researcher's intentions and what their responses will be used for.

The research protected privacy by not disclosing participants' identity after the information was gathered. The identities of the respondents were concealed by simply numbering the questionnaires. Those who were interviewed orally were also identified through numbers and not actual names (see Chapter 4).

3.6 Chapter Summary

The chapter has shown the path that the research took in terms of methods. Thus the chapter has outlined the general approach, techniques used and how the data were analysed. This has been given in line with the limitations and constraints that were experienced in the methodology of the study. Furthermore, ethical issues that were considered have been highlighted. In the following chapter, the researcher discusses the substantive findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0   Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the key findings of the study in response to the research questions that were raised in Chapter One. The findings are presented under the following categories: Perception of LAN courses by lecturers and students; Current Practices in teaching and learning of LAN courses; Effective ways of implementing LAN courses; and Challenges in Teaching and Learning of LAN courses.

4.1   Perspectives of LAN by Students and Lecturers.

Students and lecturers revealed different perceptions on the role of LAN at Chancellor College. This section is based on the views of students' learning experiences and subject lecturers' teaching experiences. What the students learn in LAN is reflected in their work in other subjects, thus, subjects lecturers' views on LAN is discussed in relation to students' perceptions.

4.1.1   Students' Perception on the Role of LAN

Students are the main stakeholders of LAN courses, and hence their views on various issues pertaining to the course were sought. Their views were drawn from their general evaluation of the course, their attitude towards the course, if the course was useful or not; which topics were particularly useful, and from their comments and suggestions towards the improvement of the course. All these led to an evaluation of the general perceptions that these students had towards the course.

4.1.1.1 Students' General Attitude towards LAN

Students' attitude towards the course is important to the evaluation of the course. Students' attitude towards the course is portrayed in Table 4.1 where they indicate whether they enjoyed the course or not.

Table 4.1 Students' general attitude towards LAN

Students' Attitude	Frequency	Percent
Enjoyed it very much	85	43.8
Enjoyed it a little	74	38.1
Never Enjoyed it	33	17.0
Cannot tell	1	.5
Total	193	95.5
Missing responses	1	.5

From the findings in the Table 4.1, there is a problem of attitude towards the course. The figures are towards the negative, the 38% who enjoyed it a little and the 17% who never enjoyed it are significant; it means that if such a percentage of students taking the course are available then the course will not achieve much. This is contrary to what is expected of the course. Students have to enjoy a course for it to fully achieve its aims. Attitude in this case is a problem. This question of attitude is serious in any course, if students have a negative attitude towards a course; it is very easy to miss the concepts that are being taught. Lack of enjoyment or minimum enjoyment of a course can lead to minimal participation and a negative response towards the course. This problem can only be solved if the students are also aware of the need of the course; and their attitude towards the course should be known.

Following the question of attitude, the students were asked to give their overall evaluation of the course. The results show an inclination towards the positive as 47% evaluated the course as very useful, 40% merely said it is useful. The total of this (87%) means, to a considerable extent, students found the course useful. While 13% rated it as slightly useful, interestingly, no respondent rated it as not useful. As can it be seen

from Tables 4.1 and from the figures above, the students realise the need and usefulness of LAN much as their responses show that attitude towards the course is a problem. It shows that students may have a negative attitude towards it but with a realisation of the importance of the course. Responses to open-ended questions showed a different dimension in terms of attitude towards the course in that the majority of the students had unkind words to say about LAN and the following quotations represent the many similar comments that students made:

The course does not have lots of significance (student 93)

The course is boring; however, it is very important (student 150)

It's not the lecturers' problem that the course is boring, but the course itself is actually not interesting. (student 39)

I didn't enjoy the course; it was a course that was endured not enjoyed (student 30)

In first year, where it ends, it is only learnt for grades and because it is a requirement, we find it boring (Students, 53 and 87).

It is not exciting and has been degraded by the college (student 39).

It is not interesting; students don't take the course seriously (Student 51).

These responses allude to a negative attitude that many students have towards the course. This negative attitude can arise because of lack of motivation in the course's approach which is checked by the students' response to lecturers' approach of the course, the teaching techniques that are employed; and the interest of the topics that are in the syllabus. All these factors are discussed later in the chapter.

4.1.1.2 Students' Programmes of Study and Perception towards LAN Course.

The study found that programmes of study do not influence students' perception of the course. LAN course is housed in the Faculty of Humanities although it is taken by students across the programmes. This may affect attitude, knowing that science students are supposed to take the course from the Faculty of Humanities. Table 4.2 shows the correlation of students' programmes to their attitude towards LAN.

Table 4.2 Programme of student versus general attitude towards LAN

		Enjoyed the course	Never enjoyed it	Total per programme
Programme of student	BSC	24	4	28
	BSOC	33	12	45
	PAS	7	1	8
	BAH	25	10	35
	BEDHUM	44	3	47
	BEDS	19	2	21
	MFD	7	2	9
Total		159	34	193

Table 4.2 shows that students' programmes did not play any role in the responses to the question of attitude. Testing the differences in frequency among programmes of study using *chi-square,* it was observed that the differences were not statistically significant (calculating chi-square: $\chi2 = 7.467$, $\chi_{0.05,192} = 43.773$). Since the calculated chi-square (χ) (7.467) is smaller than the critical value (43.773), the hypothesis of no difference between the observed and the expected is rejected. Therefore it is concluded that the differences among the programmes are insignificant in the question of attitude towards the course. A similar correlation is done in Table 4.3 which summarises the relationship between relevance of the course to students' programmes of study.

Table 4.3 Programme of student versus LAN's relevance to area of study

		Relevant	Not at all	Can't tell	Total per programme
Student's Programme	BSC	21	6	1	28
	BSOC	40	5	0	45
	PAS	8	0	0	8
	BAH	32	1	3	36
	BEDHUM	45	0	0	45
	BEDS	21	0	0	21
	MfD	7	0	2	9
Total		174	12	6	192

The above table (Table 4.3) is a summary of relevance of LAN in relation to programme of study. Testing the differences in frequenc y using *chi-square* the differences were also not statistically significant (calculating chi-square: $\chi2 = 3.193$, $\chi0.05,192 = 43.773$). By comparing the calculated value (3.193) and the critical value (43.773), it was found that the calculated *chi-square* (χ) was smaller than the critical value, therefore, the hypothesis of no difference between the observed and the expected is also rejected. This is indicating that there are no significant differences in relevance of LAN across the programmes. It means that the course is considered important by all the students regardless of their programmes of study.

The comments given by most of the students somehow give a different dimension to the whole issue of attitude and relevance. During the analysis of the data, it was discovered that there are disparities in the responses on attitude for the closed questions and those that were open-ended where, for example, students were asked to give what they

consider as strengths and weaknesses of the course; their general comments on the course and suggestions to the improvement of the course. There is an indication of negative attitude towards the course in the comments although the figures that are summarising responses to the closed-ended question indicate that there is a positive evaluation towards the course. The differences in responses to the open-ended and closed-ended questions are indicative of the fact that different formats of questions used in this methodology have complemented each other. The open ended questions called for deeper responses to the simple "yes" or "no" responses that are coded in the closed ended question approach. This refers back to what Neuman (2003) said about the advantages of open-ended questions that they "help respondents to answer in detail and qualify and clarify responses … permit creativity, self expression, and richness of detail" (p. 278). The comments helped the researcher to come up with the real underlying issues towards the students' attitude towards the course and not the positive evaluation that is portrayed in the figures.

4.1.1.3 Interest and Usefulness of LAN Topics

Interest and usefulness of the topics to students' studies are other factors that determine how the course is perceived by the students. The students were asked if they found the topics outlined in the course interesting. From the results, the majority (55%) of the students were satisfied with the topics with 26% rating it as excellent. On the other hand, 20% rated it as poor. This indication of interest in topics is very important in EAP, interest of topics will overcome boredom, consequently enhance students' attitude towards the course. Further to this, the students had to rate the topics that they found particularly useful when they did a LAN course and the responses to this multi response question are showing a preference towards the topic on referencing and citation (marked by 83% of the students), followed by writing (marked by 71%), next on the rank is study skills – listening and reading – finally there is speaking skills (41%).

This shows that the topic of referencing and citation is highly preferred. This topic is applied in writing skills, the second on the rank. The students write assignments and examinations most of the times and in such cases, the need of LAN is readily apparent.

This is why even in their comments students are concerned with the time when writing skills is taught, showing that listening skills and reading skills are of secondary importance. Some of the students even consider some topics, like listening, of less importance, they feel that it is better to emphasise writing skills than those topics. The statement below exemplifies students' preferences on the topics offered.

> *The very first topic was supposed to be "referencing" not "listening and hearing" because the former is the one that is more useful and applicable than the latter which is not useful at all. ...some topics need to be removed e.g. "listening and hearing" it does not make any sense for a person like me to be taught how to listen to a lecturer in class ... I have been doing this since I was born. (Student 96)*

All this relates to awareness of students needs which is of importance in ESP. The ESP practitioner / specialist has to be aware of what students needs are rather than just teach them anything as presented in the syllabus. The practitioner has to respond to students' needs and be flexible with the topics in accordance to what the students need at a particular time. The order of the topics is a challenge to LAN lecturers as they are better judges on what is essential, and how the topics should be ordered depending on understanding of concepts at different levels. That is, one may feel that students need to learn reading skills (note making) before they can use the materials read in their writing; or they have to learn listening skills (particularly, note taking) first because they start listening to lectures before they write any assignments. However, students' needs are supposed to override any other factors that are put into consideration when deciding what is taught in EAP, this involves needs analysis (see Chapter 2). Although teachers may not always have complete freedom to choose what their courses will include, since they may just receive the syllabus, their expertise and personal beliefs about learning, planning and implementation of a course are crucial. This calls for flexibility to a certain extent; it allows students' negotiation in the process. This is what is termed as "rights analysis" in EAP (see Chapter 2), the notion of rights encourages students to assess their options and prioritise what they need for

themselves (Hyland, 2006). It supports them in taking an active responsibility in learning; this is important, otherwise what is forced on them is not positively received.

From the above is can be deduced that despite putting the usefulness of some topics on the bottom of the ladder, the students rate the overall interest of the topics as satisfactory. The usefulness of some of the topics, like reading and listening, though of interest, may not be clear at a certain point when students would prefer learning more pressing topics like writing, referencing and citation. Writing, referencing and citation are perceived as very important because they are more practical and their use is readily seen unlike listening and reading. Listening and reading skills seem like skills that are obviously known yet they still deserve a place in the syllabus. Below is a statement made by one student admitting the importance of the topic of writing:

> *I learnt the format of writing laboratory reports which includes abstract, introduction, materials and methods, results, discussion and conclusion and what should be contained in each. (Student 59, science student)*

Another student puts the usefulness of the topics in general:

> *LAN topics are very useful without them other courses cannot be dealt with appropriately. Generally, as a Humanities student I always go back to my LAN notes whenever the need arises, even in my third year. (Student 69, Humanities student)*

The importance of LAN is shown by the students, they are admitting that they need the course. The major problem is lack of interest, it remains the duty of LACS department to realise students' needs in its approach. Reinforcement of relevance of the course to students' programmes of study is one way of achieving this.

4.1.1.4 Relevance of LAN to Students' area of study

Besides the importance of topics and usefulness, knowledge of the relevance of the course to students' studies is vital to EAP. From the findings it was shown that 45% of the students found the course absolutely relevant to what they are studying, another 45% found it useful to some extent, this is against 10% who did not find it relevant. The other 45% who found it relevant to some extent still adds to the relevance of the course, meaning that at least 90% found it relevant. This means that to the students, who have undergone the course, the course has been of help to their studies and they were able to link it to the courses they were doing. This implies that every course of LAN is relevant to the studies of students in that group. Thus, the classification according to programmes is a good way of tackling English language issues for academic purposes in the Chancellor College situation. If the students do not find LAN of relevance to the courses they are studying in their respective departments they will lose interest. Classification of LAN by programmes aims at making the course relevant, as best as it could be, to what students are doing.

In contrast to the figures, students' comments show that there is some irrelevance to their studies. In a comment one science student showed how irrelevant some of the things learnt were to their studies.

> *I did a book critique which I don't know where I am going to apply it in my field of study… therefore, some measures should be taken in order to make the course more interesting and students should take it seriously. (Student 149)*

> *It is not course specific, assumes that all courses should be presented in the same manner, and disregards specific lecturer requirements. (Student 72)*

Further comments made towards the irrelevance of the course by more students are summarised in Box 4.1.

Box 4.1 Problems on relevance, specificity and application

- It lacks practical skills in its approach; some of the things that were learnt were never applied to any specific course or subject (some were not even applicable).
- In a science group students felt that more of humanities than science material was covered.
- Some science students found the material to be too general.
- Study skills (especially note taking) are difficult to apply.

Source: Students' questionnaire

The comments summarised in Box 4.1 show that there are some problems in finding relevance and application of the materials learnt in LAN. The course is said to favour the Humanities than the Sciences. This could be because of the background of LAN lecturers, almost all of them are of the Humanities background, thus to really find science material and apply it to the lessons is a problem. This is what one LAN lecturer commented about:

> *For me teaching of English for the Sciences was the worst, because I didn't know a lot in the area. (LAN lecturer 1)*

This means that if the lecturers themselves do not have sufficient background in the subjects it will not be easy to teach it. The students themselves alluded to this by suggesting that:

> *Lecturers need to specialize in different subjects for efficient delivery of the material in the specific programme. (Student 27)*

> *The department should consider lecturers who have undergone the same course to teach a specific LAN course. (Student 10)*

Lecturers' qualifications are a challenge to the methods of EAP. If lecturers are to specify according to students' disciplines of study, what level of knowledge will they display when they tackle materials from those disciplines? Lecturers who have

undergone the same course cannot easily be available in the Chancellor College situation as well as in ESP. So far no lecturer at Chancellor College has specialised in a specific discipline apart from having an English Language Teaching background. All of the LAN lecturers are from the Humanities Programme and the Education Humanities background, and the course itself is housed in the Faculty of Humanities, this poses a major challenge to the lecturers. And this has resulted in a low perception of the course by the students.

4.1.2   Subject Lecturers' Perception on the Role of LAN.

Lecturers who teach the mainstream subjects (herein referred to as subject lecturers) were interviewed to get their views on the course. They were asked if they have any knowledge of what is taught in LAN, how they rate students' current language performance, how they tackle problems of language in their students' work and their opinions on LAN as a subject. The evaluation of all these led to a general opinion of their perception of the course.

4.1.2.1 Subject Lecturers' Knowledge of the Nature of LAN Taught to the Students

When subject lecturers were asked if they are aware of the things that LAN teaches to students the following were the responses: 42% said that they have knowledge of the nature of LAN that is taught, interestingly 39% of the lecturers interviewed did not have any knowledge of the nature of LAN taught, with another 25% indicating a partial knowledge. This is very significant considering that their subjects are supposed to be serviced by this course. Mostly, subject lecturers are not aware of what their students are required to do in accordance with what they are taught in LAN. This is due to lack of collaboration between the subject lecturers and LAN lecturers.

Their comments further show that even those who claimed to have some knowledge of the course do not adequately know it. The lecturers are not fully aware of what LAN teaches; some are basing their knowledge on what they learnt as students. Most of them underwent a General English course while few did LAN when it was newly introduced.

Those who seemed to have a slight knowledge based it on what they did in college as students.

> *Of late I am not quite aware, but only what I did when I was a student in first year. I remember there are issues of academic writing, essay and lab report for the sciences. (Lecturer 1)*

> *I know it partly – I just think they do something on note-taking, essay writing, grammar, (just what I expect). (Lecturer 4)*

> *Yes, basing on what I learnt when I was in first year. I learnt something that was not relevant, I had a nasty experience. In our course, the title English for Administrators was irrelevant and from there I thought it was not important   (Lecturer 7)*

> *Yes, from the time it was introduced, as a change from ENG 190. It was about how students should communicate in English. It was to remedy the deficiencies of secondary school English in the 1980's; there was an inability to communicate in the English language. (Lecturer 8)*

It was observed that there is insufficient knowledge, a negative perspective, and indifference to the aims and objectives of LAN. Lecturers' knowledge is very important to the purposes of the course; they are supposed to take it seriously as a link to their own subjects. Knowledge of what LAN is there to teach can help them to pass on whatever academic problems they encounter in students' performance to this relevant department. The department is ideally supposed to service all other departments at Chancellor College and to curb the problem of poor English "the other way of ensuring this is to approach it collectively, and colleagues in other departments should provide their support" (Minutes of 2nd meetings of Academic Courses Committee on ESP, 12th March, 1993). Subject lecturers' lack of knowledge of the course led to a negative

perception of the course and the following statement exemplifies such perspectives on LAN.

> *What does the department teach? What sort of things do they teach? Our students just don't like the courses, it just doesn't appeal to them, and so the communication in the LAN classroom tends to be poor. I would think I it is better with the Humanities. I remember as a science student, doing ENG 190, it was very boring, I didn't like it. (Lecturer 3)*

The lecturer quoted above thinks LAN is not doing anything; it is not helping at all. She relates it to her experiences as a science student and how they perceived LAN, then ENG 190. To this lecturer the course is the same and nothing has changed. Another lecturer explained it this way:

> *There is a problem; and when students don't show that they are learning something we get surprised. Students are expected to have been taught essay writing, at least a structured one. (Lecturer 5)*

The above comment means that students' performance does not reflect what LAN is about. Their work reflects that they are not acquiring any skills at all as there are still glaring deficiencies in students' work despite undergoing the course; it is as if there is no LAN course.

All this shows that lack of knowledge about what the course is about has led to a downgrading of the course at Chancellor College. This has created a difficult environment for realisation of the aims of the course. The students' negative attitude towards the course, coupled with lack of encouragement from subject lecturers due to their lack of knowledge, has led to the current low status of the course.

Only two lecturers had kind words for the LAN programme; their perspective is positive but there is a lot that is desired by the lecturers. Comments on what they

perceive as strengths were combined with suggestions of what could make the course better than what it is today. There are strong indications from the rest of the lecturers that the course is far from the desired; but the idea that LAN is needed and useful is not denied:

> *We really need the LAN courses; it's unfortunate that it is only first years that are doing it. It has to run up to 4th year. The students need grounding in writing and presentation. This is a strength – unfortunately many don't take the courses seriously; they do it for grades sake. (Lecturer 4)*

> *The fact that the department recognizes that students have different needs based on their programmes is strength; but to see whether what they are learning is fruitful, some feedback to see what they are taught is needed. There is no collaboration (Lecturer 1).*

That the department is teaching students according to their programmes is a welcomed classification, however, collaboration with other subjects' lecturers is called for. Furthermore, learning LAN in first year alone is deemed inadequate for the students, and that if it went beyond the first year its application and use may be apparent.

The major problem that was noted in the study is that there is lack of collaboration between subject lecturers and LAN lecturers. Collaboration with other subject lecturers is very important in EAP, as already stipulated in Chapter 2. Apparently LACS is teaching English or language for academic purposes just as a frame in which the students will fill in substance from the subject courses In the end this raises problems of attitude and lack of motivation as outlined by the students and lecturers. LAN lecturers' teaching practices, subject lecturers' views and students' experiences in the course will highlight the current practices in the next section.

4.2   Current Practices in the Teaching and Learning of Language and
**   Communication Courses.**

The current practices in the teaching and learning of LAN are discussed in this section. The section encompasses responses concerning what is currently happening in teaching and learning of LAN from those with a direct concern to the department of LACS, students and lecturers' (i.e. both subject lecturers and LAN lecturers).

4.2.1   Views on the current language proficiency status

There is an outcry over students' language performance, that most of the students were not competent with their English language. The questionnaire for subject lecturers differentiated spoken and written English performance, this is so because sometimes students are said to be fluent in spoken English but poor in written English or vice versa. Subject lecturers' rating of students' language has 54% of the lecturers indicating satisfaction in students' spoken English while 46% rated it as poor. On the other hand, written work is rated as poor by 67% of the lecturers while 33% think it is satisfactory. Thus, written English is poorer than spoken English. In general, English is a problem among students especially that most of their academic work is written even though it may sound good orally.

The general comments made demonstrate that the problem is in both oral and written English. One comment made by a lecturer serves to emphasise the problem of English among students:

> *I have been teaching for years, I can actually see how the graph has*
> *gone down. The ability of the students to communicate is a big problem.*
> *They insist on speaking Chichewa. The problem starts a long way.*
> *(Lecturer 8)*

The standards of English are said to have gone down. Some lecturers think that LAN alone is not to blame because the problems are deeper; they can be linked to problems

from secondary school and students' lack of general language knowledge. These lecturers are worried that most of the students do not read widely, and hence believe that reading, even novels, widens students' English language competence and general knowledge. They think that the problem originates from secondary school. LAN is taught for only a year, there is not much that can be taught apart from academic skills, thus, the assumption is that, at first year, their level of English competence is higher. One lecturer explained that

> *… The problems are not coming from LAN, it is the history; the changes in the Secondary School English Curricula are behind this. For example, I observed during first year registration, students were failing to speak English. (Lecturer 4)*

Most of the lecturers, however, are blaming it all on LAN courses saying that it is not performing its duties as commented by one lecturer: *"it is not helping students to improve accuracy in the use of grammar in their academic essays"* (Lecturer 7). These lecturers being ignorant of the nature of the course, think that LAN courses are supposed to teach grammar and that the LACS Department is not doing its job. Another lecturer expressing similar concerns said:

> *From studies conducted earlier I learnt that there are some problems with our students English. They are from secondary school but here there is a whole department which has to deal with that. (Lecturer 3)*

It is shown that there are problems that have to be rectified before LAN lecturers go deeper into the skills outlined on the syllabus. The problem of English language may affect the content of the course, in this case, there is an inclusion of grammar, provided as an extra lesson to cure this. Dudley-Evans and St Johns (1998) state that any course that runs parallel to the course of study will provide an opportunity for integrated specific work where even language issues can be taught. In addition, Flowerdew and Peacock (2001) realise that problems of language are likely to arise but the EAP lecturer

does not have to focus on language before other skills which are the essence of EAP. Level of students' academic and language competence poses big challenges to LAN lecturers. Students are taught common skills with an assumption that they know grammar. One LAN Lecturer stated: *"You would wish you taught them at a higher level. Because there are some problems brought in from secondary school"* (LAN lecturer 1). Another LAN Lecturer *(LAN lecturer 4)* added: *"there are bad writing skills, poor punctuation, and poor grammar; their writing doesn't give you strength".* One LAN lecturer indicated that with the levels of English gone down, it was not easy to go straight to teaching academic problems without tackling problems of grammar. The lecturer stated this:

> *Lately I consider the level of understanding, English has gone down. We are a bit slow. There's more teaching than lecturing – I have to offer remedial grammar classes at the beginning. (LAN Lecturer 2)*

LACS department teaches language and communication skills at a higher level because students are supposed to have mastered English grammar at secondary school. However, from the researcher's experience, the recurrence of poor grammar in students' work challenges the focus of LAN courses. This problem of language relates to the question of level of specificity raised in Chapter 2 and leads to the following question: When should EAP specialist start focusing on the specific requirements of the academic work when there are problems of language to be remedied? Ideally, EAP's focus should be mainly on academic skills and not grammar, but in the current case, grammar has to be fully integrated to LAN courses or else separating it and teaching it as a topic will lead to a delay in other functions. Lecturers cannot spend time teaching grammar; in that case, academic skills which are the essence of LAN will not be fully covered within a year.

4.2.2   Subject lecturers' focus when marking students' work.

With lecturers complaining of poor language skills, their current focus on students' work is affected. To find out if lecturers were interested in certain aspects of students' work, not just the content, they were asked to indicate what they focus on when marking students' work. Table 4.4 shows lecturers' focus areas in students' work:

Table 4.4 Focus when rating writing

Area of Focus	Percent
Content	100
Organisation of the essay	83
Grammar	71
Referencing and citations	50
Bibliographic Presentations	42

(Note: multiple responses were allowed for this question, thus, some marked more than one response).

According to Table 4.4, content and organisation of work is of great importance to the lecturers. 50% of the lecturers care about proper referencing while only 42% are concerned about bibliographic presentations. This means that even when LAN puts emphasis on these matters, not all lecturers care about referencing and bibliographic presentations. Most lecturers (71%) showed that they also focus on grammar when marking students' work; the researcher considers this a good development, for ignoring grammatical mistakes in students' work can contribute to the deterioration of the language standard. Some however admitted that particular attention to organisation is not of concern to them:

> *Personally I'm not an essay person; I just look for a good introduction. I am interested in the body, the listing. I go straight to the main points if they are coming out. No matter how much is written. (Lecture 1)*

The attention paid to LAN varies from course to course because there is a difference in courses requirements. Some lecturers assign essay questions while others, because of the nature of their course, do not look for any exposition organised in an essay form in

the students' papers but simply look for outlined points. Table 4.5 details the areas that lecturers consider as serious mistakes in marking students' work.

Table 4.5 What is considered a serious mistake in marking

Serious mistakes in writing	Percent
No link between ideas	71
Poor essay/report Organisation	67
Improper referencing	50
Grammar	42

(Note: multiple responses were allowed for this question, thus, some marked more than one response).

Table 4.5 shows that improper referencing and language (particularly grammar) seems to be of lesser importance to most of the lecturers. In Table 4.4, 71% of the lecturers indicated that they focus on grammar accuracy in rating students' work whereas in Table 4.5 only 42% have shown that they consider grammar a serious mistake. This means that somehow, grammar is not given the required attention in marking as they do to content. On the contrary, some do not even care about the grammar; they just look for the points as commented on by some two lecturers:

> *Most of my questions are not essay oriented. I don't mark anything apart from the points. (Lecturer 1)*

> *I do not focus much on the language used, but the calculations and technical words. And they have to show understanding of the issues. (Lecturer 6)*

It is the case, therefore, that the focus varies from course to course. From the interviews, one major point the researcher observed was that those in the Faculties of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences are more concerned with grammar, but those in the Sciences seem to not mind about it, they are more concerned with technical issues and calculations. The nature of the course has a role to play in this

case. This means that even students from such programmes may enjoy this laxity in terms of lecturer's marking; and eventually consider LAN useless to their needs.

4.2.3 Subject Lecturers' knowledge of LAN components – Referencing Conventions

Knowledge of what kind of referencing style to use in a course is a way of citing an example of lecturers' knowledge of their course's requirements. Referencing is one of the topics from LAN that students are likely to start using right from the beginning. It is regarded as essential to academic writing hence it was singled out in the interviews. Preference of referencing conventions was sought by asking if the lecturers have a particular requirement that they tell the students before they start a course or before they give them an assignment. Table 4.6 shows the percentages of lecturers who indicated their preferred conventions.

Table 4.6 Preferred Referencing Conventions

Referencing Convention	Percent
American Psychologists Association (A.P.A)	54
Harvard style	29
Modern Language Association (M.L.A)	17
Chicago Style	8
Other Styles	17
Do not know	71

(Note: multiple responses were allowed for this question, thus, some marked more than one response)

It was realised from the results in Table 4.6 that there is no clear departmental preference. Several choices were made by one lecturer, and 71% showed that they do not know their department's preferred convention. It was found that most of them do not really know what kind of conventions students should use. They have an idea of how it is to be presented, usually mentioning "author – date" as a convention, but not really sure of the rest of the requirements in that convention. Mostly, it is just what the students present to them that they accept. Some lecturers were honest to say that there is no specification in their course, as long as students are consistent with whatever style they choose, as one lecturer explained:

Any referencing styles in the assignments I accept. I am not strict, and it doesn't matter. As long as they have acknowledged the book. Which ever they use it doesn't matter and how they do it doesn't matter either. (Lecturer 11)

Students observed that there is lack of collaboration between LAN lecturers and lecturers of other subjects concerning students' requirements. They argued that sometimes the styles of writing and citation learnt in LAN are not what other lecturers recognize; it disregards specific requirements. The students express their disappointment over this:

In most cases what we learn from the course contradicts what some lecturers require. If it can be possible each programme should have its specific style in terms of citation, referencing; and lecturers across that programme should be constrained to it. (Student 57)

The student's comment is alluding to the fact that some matters are not considered serious by subject lecturers, and what a LAN lecturer emphasised is disregarded in other subjects. The students therefore emphasised the importance of collaboration between LACS department and other courses:

Multidisciplinary course combinations departments should present their different styles to students that have applied for their courses and the LAN lecturers should address this timely. (Student 60)

It is frustrating for students if they use a certain style of referencing as taught in a LAN course but find out that it is not preferred by a lecturer in a particular subject. The researcher's observation is that, usually, LAN lecturers teach students several styles and tell them to check preferences in their respective departments. So to find out that there are no particular departmental preferences can cause students to take what LAN teaches them lightly. As reported in the students' comments (see section 4.2.5), referencing is

one of the matters that confuse students in their work when they are marked wrong. One major lesson that can be drawn here is that there is some importance in linking LAN lessons with respective departments; in which case, LAN lecturers should orient subject lecturers on particular areas of focus in students' work, for instance referencing conventions. This is also suggested by one lecturer below:

> *There is need for clear directives in terms of which style of referencing should students use, they learn one convention and other lecturers will prefer another convention.   (Lecturer 13)*

The study singled this particular component of LAN that students can readily display in other subjects and checked if subject lecturers pay attention to them. Therefore, in marking students' essays most of the lecturers do not know the preferred referencing conventions in their disciplines, and some do not consider a lot in the students papers apart from outlining of points. Subjects lecturers do not try to find out what the students are taught or what is it that they are taught to do when presenting their work. In worst cases lecturers may quash students' organisation of papers and style of writing regardless of where they learnt it, which is obviously from LAN. The students may in turn lose trust in LAN courses along the way, and later on speculate about it as being unimportant. This is why students complain that they are marked wrong in other subjects what they were taught as a correct approach in LAN. In the end, what may happen is that lecturers will require their students to use a style which they themselves were required to use where they did their postgraduate studies. For indeed where there is proper organisation, disciplines are supposed to specify a standard convention which all students are to use. LACS can even help on this as is required in a proper collaborated EAP setup.

In the current situation, despite the classification of LAN according to programmes, there are no programme-specific nor discipline specific referencing conventions. Students are taught a number of them, with an emphasis on what LAN lecturers think are recurrent in the programme. This arises due to the diversification of courses within the programmes.

For instance, within the department of English, the language component usually requires A.P.A. style while the literature component usually requires the M.L.A. style. In first year, Humanities students may be required to take both components of English and other courses too. In those other courses they may be required to use a different referencing style altogether. This problem can only be solved if LAN and faculties or programmes of study, and more particularly, disciplines agree on a standard convention to use. There can also be an agreement on writing styles that are to be followed.

4.2.4   Handling of Language Problems in students' work

Lecturers observed that students and lecturers alike are not taking the course seriously and they think that this is a big problem. With this problem in mind, lecturers were asked if they do anything to help their students or share certain language requirements, specific to their courses, with their students to avoid such situations. The results confirm that most of the lecturers (71%) take some time to teach students some writing requirements in their courses while the rest (29%) do not do so. These lecturers say that they give students the requirements of their assignments and how to approach questions. However, there are some who think that it is not their job to do that; there is LACS department which is supposed to handle that. The following statement by one lecturer exemplifies the comments made about this:

> *I specify the things that I require. It is not something I emphasise. It's not my job. (Lecturer 3)*

Teaching these requirements is indeed an extra job for subject lecturers which would otherwise be avoided if LAN's task was clearly displayed. A question that called for multiples responses to find out the areas that subject lecturers emphasise when teaching students certain language requirements was asked. For those who teach students certain requirements, the areas that are mostly emphasised are structure of essays or reports (indicated by 67% of the lectures) followed by referencing conventions (marked by

59% of the lecturers), then development of arguments (46%), incorporation of theories (30%) finally grammar (8%).

According to the results, the majority selected elements pertaining to organization of written work as per assignment requirements, essays or reports. The requirements vary from course to course; some courses require students to write essays, some reports, and some require short answers. In some courses students are not told the requirements; they are just given the work and they are expected to present what they are taught in LAN.

Whether lecturers specify requirements or not there is still a problem; there is an extra task that lecturers are meant to handle which would be eased if they collaborated with LAN lecturers. Ideally, the subject lecturers should go straight to teaching the subject matter while LAN courses should be left with the job of dealing with those problems. Since the lecturers are not aware that LACS department is there to help them with such areas of students' skills and handling of academic work, they simply take sometime to address such issues to the students. They take note of some problems in the students work and see the need to address them along with the content. LACS department should source the department's requirements on students' assignments and present the requirements to the students as part of the LAN course. It is a good way of being specific to the needs of the students.

4.2.5   *Collaboration between Subject Lecturers and LAN Lecturers*

The need for collaboration was raised by all the participants: students, subject lecturers and LAN lecturers. Students observed that there is lack of collaboration between LAN lecturers and lecturers of other subjects concerning students' requirements. Sometimes the styles of writing and citation learnt in LAN are not what other lecturers recognise. The students express their disappointment over this:

There is general resentment towards the importance of LAN, that the same structure as given in a LAN course is being marked wrong in different courses… this dilutes the whole essence of LAN. (Student 72)

At programme level, the LAN lecturer should take the individual course requirements of different course lecturers and incorporate them into LAN. This would include the structure and the layout of essays in different courses. (Student 174)

They should take a more practical form, lecturers from different departments in the respective programmes should hand in, to the LAN lecturer class exercises   (Student 55).

From the students' comments, it is clear that there is no evidence of collaboration between LACS department and other departments. As discussed in Chapter 2, collaboration is of essence in EAP, thus LAN should do the same to get good results of what it teaches. Many students mentioned this need and their suggestions to means of collaboration are summarised in Box 4.2 below.

Box 4.2 Students' suggestions on collaboration

- Collaboration with other lecturers should be pursued. Otherwise when there are new developments and LAN is not incorporating these developments, it dilutes the whole essence of LAN.
- LAN lecturers should collaborate with other lecturers of specific courses for modes assessment; sometime, they should even get work from other departments to use it to illustrate the LAN skills.
- It must relate to other courses in the programme, more techniques should be added to make it more relevant.

Source: Students' questionnaire

Evidence of lack of collaboration is further confirmed from lecturers' interviews when they were asked if they had any discussions about students' problems with LAN lecturers, bearing in mind that these are people who are responsible for solving some of

the language problems that these lecturers perceive in students' work. The responses are indicating that 92% of the lecturers never approached any LAN lecturer, and only 8% approached at least one LAN lecturer to discuss students' problems.

This is evidence that, generally, there are no discussions done, those who said they had, indicated that the discussions were informal. One lecturer from the department of Political and Administrative Studies reported to have had a discussion with a LAN lecturer; it was actually the LAN lecturer who consulted him. It is an odd case because the mentioned LAN lecturer, who consulted the above lecturer's department, was a part time lecturer from the English Department; she was assigned to teach English for Administrators for a while. She may have consulted the department because she had no idea of what the course is supposed to tackle. She wanted to be sure how teaching English for Public Administrators can be done and what should go into the content. What she did was commendable for this could help the lecturer to have the right and relevant material included and emphasised. This is a good procedure which every LAN lecturer was supposed to follow, whether experienced or not. As discussed in Chapter 2, the ESP teacher is supposed to be a collaborator; he is required to find out about the other subjects' syllabus in an academic context; for "the subject teacher provides the 'carrier content'" for the ESP course (Benesch, 2001; Dudley-Evans and St Johns, 1998).

Another lecturer had a chance to informally discuss students' needs with a LAN lecturer; but because this was so informal it was not seriously considered by the concerned parties. Informal discussions were made about the students' problems. It means that something discussed informally is not considered fruitful here, because whatever was discussed has not been followed up and rectified. Mostly, there is no collaboration up to now as commented by the rest of the lecturers. According to one lecturer what prompted the discussion was cited as follows:

> *I marked grammar and students went to complain to a LAN lecturer,*
> *that's how we got to talk about it.* *(Lecturer 2, oral interview)*

Students' work led to a consultation in this case; this is supposed to be the case always. While most of the lecturers indicated lack of realisation that they can consult with LAN lecturers about students' problems there were others who had interesting reasons spelt out. Two lecturers stated that no discussions were made because they think that the problem is not with LAN courses, they feel it starts from secondary school, and that there are other solutions to the problem than that which can be solved by LAN courses.

Fear is one reason stated by another lecturer. The lecturer feels that she cannot be free to relate to LAN lecturers' problems that are noted concerning LAN's handling of the courses. According to the above lecturer, that…

> *…can cause a misunderstanding, it can be as if you are undermining/belittling the LAN lecturers. I do not think I have the authority to do it" (lecturer 5).*

Similar to this is the following quotation from another lecturer who is expressing some fear on such a procedure:

> *It is very tricky to approach a LAN lecturer; it may seem like challenging the LAN lecturer. Like you are thinking they are not performing. (Lecturer 7)*

These comments are valid to some extent. With the problem of language at Chancellor College attributed to LAN, some caution has to be followed in the consultations for these misunderstandings are bound to arise. However, awareness of the need for collaboration to all concerned lecturers can help clear these misunderstandings. All lecturers will know that it is a normal procedure to be approached concerning students' problems.

Other lecturers showed that they did not consult with LAN lecturers because they do not have any knowledge of the duty of LACS department in relation to other departments. According to one lecturer "*if asked to, I [he] will happily do that*" (lecturer 8). The lecturer above was not consulted but would be willing to share ideas if consulted as this will be a chance to share what the departments' needs are. The department of LACS has this responsibility to initiate collaborative efforts for other departments are not aware of its aims. As shown earlier (section 4.1.2.1) there is no awareness on the function of this department and this has to be done to bring these lecturers to an understanding.

In trying to examine this issue from a different angle the study looked at the issue from LAN lecturers' perspective. LAN lecturers were asked if they consulted respective departments concerning students' academic requirements. Two lecturers reported that they had attempted before. One LAN lecturer reported that he once tried to find out what is expected of students in the respective courses, but he realised that most of the lecturers do not know. For example, on preferred referencing conventions per course; he did not have a single response. Those who seemed to know had different views, that is, members of a single department had conflicting recommendations, and they may vary according to where the lecturer studied. He observed that mostly, subject lecturers do not know the writing conventions that are appropriate in their field. One LAN lecturer cited how he handles it in relation to students' other courses:

> *I asked different lecturers what they need. In terms of assignments I obtain essay questions from lecturers e.g. from History, Literature. When I had smaller groups, it was easy. I would give them a chance to work on a topic from their respective departments as they work on the skills. To be developed throughout the semester, and let them do a bit of research through the holiday. Now I don't do it because of numbers. (Lecturer 11)*

The said group is the Education Humanities group, and they have indicated that they found the courses very relevant to their courses (see section 4.1.1.4) This may have contributed to the needs of the students' in other courses in relation to LAN.

As already stated, two out of four LAN lecturers did not consult any department. Their statements are as follows:

> *No, but I get it through conversations with fellow lecturers. (LAN lecturer 3)*

> *No, it's difficult to do that. May be with Media [group] because it is not multidisciplinary it's possible; but for the others it's impossible. (LAN lecturer 4)*

In general there were no consultations done, or they were done very informally as in "conversations". A reason for lack of consultations as given is that there are a lot of courses per programme grouping, if the lecturer is to consult lecturers it may mean going to as far as nine departments (as in the Humanities case) or more than 5 departments (in the case of Social Sciences). The multidisciplinary classes can pose a challenge to the LAN lecturer in this case. However, this can be pursued if some balance in LAN and other courses is reached; there has to be some relevance to the other courses no matter how many they are.

Further to this, the lecturers were asked if they followed up their students' progress in the respective courses just to be sure that what is taught in LAN is being applied. One lecturer said that he attempted to follow up his LAN students' progress in a Philosophy course before, but he admits that it was all done informally. He further reported that this was done because students complained to him that sometimes they are marked wrong in their respective courses when they tried to apply a skill that a LAN lecturer instructed. This is the case that relates to lack of collaboration as has been earlier cited by students that a LAN lecturer taught them a style according to what is the right or expected writing convention and they were marked wrong. As a LAN lecturer he realises the need for collaboration with other subject lecturers, something which is currently lacking and he suggests:

The department of LACS should invite stakeholders to a round table conference – students and lecturers. To look at the problems that people have with the syllabus. (LAN lecturer 2)

This particular LAN lecturer strongly recommends that the system should have a way of monitoring students' progress to check if they apply what LAN teaches them. This is a good suggestion that calls for reinforcement of cooperation with other subject lecturers to ensure that discipline requirements are really taught in LAN courses. This is a hint that the department of LACS has no guidelines to LAN lecturers in terms of approaches, especially concerning consultations and collaboration with other departments as is required in EAP. So far it is not recorded as an important aspect in the teaching of LAN and this is the problem of the department and not the individual lecturers.

Collaboration has proven to be of a major help in institutions where EAP is taught alongside other courses (see Chapter 2). It is an important practice if relevance and application of LAN to what students are doing is to be achieved. Lack of seriousness towards the course, shown by both students and subject lecturers in this study, is highly attributed to this lack of association between what is taught in other courses and what LAN teaches, which can be achieved only if LACS department initiates collaboration.

4.2.6   Teaching Techniques of LAN

Lecturers' style of teaching and modes of teaching that are used can affect students in different ways. Students' perception of lecturers' style can vary from student to student just like lecturers teaching techniques vary. However, appropriate teaching techniques can aid in bringing a positive response as much as possible.

4.2.6.1 Consideration of Teaching Material and Notes

LAN lecturers were asked to mention factors that they consider when preparing teaching notes for their courses. All the LAN lecturers stated that their preparation of notes considers the courses that students are pursuing. Since LAN is mainly academic skills that are taught to different programmes, the approaches may differ depending on programme and lecturers handling the courses. Some LAN lecturers think that use of general material is good while others have declared the use of specific material better. One LAN lecturer firmly explained:

> *I don't think they [LAN courses] are content courses, they are skills courses. I simply make them practical (LAN Lecturer 1).*

This lecturer has pointed out that he tries to make everything general for the Education Humanities group that he taught. For this group, he thinks the courses they are taking are mostly similar: for example, Literature, TRS, Classics all deal with moral issues in their content so it is easy for them to understand issues from a broader spectrum. In contrast, another lecturer showed that content is of importance in English for Media course and English for Administrators course that she taught before:

> *In the Media and Political Administration LAN courses that I taught... I go for the specifics, I check on the internet for certain information on common topics in the course, for example, 'governance'. I do some research. I read. I go to the library to read on media, politics, and the like. Even when reading newspapers, I pick issues, I read a lot and widely. (LAN lecturer 4).*

This is an indication of how challenging the content of the courses can be to the LAN lecturer; it requires the LAN lecturer to read on the subjects that the students are doing so that some knowledge is gained. Preparation of teaching material in LAN calls for reading and researching of the subjects that students of a particular group are doing. The LAN lecturer is required to do wide research and read about a lot of issues pertaining to

the content of the other courses that students are doing so that they become the content of the skills that he/she teaches (Dudley-Evans and St Johns, 1998; Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001; Hyland 2006). Analysts have concluded that "ESP teachers generally need to be able to carry our research to understand the discourse of the texts that students use" (Dudley-Evans and St Johns, 1998:15). The EAP teachers have to be aware of what is happening in the other courses.

Additionally, the lecturers were asked how they adapt their notes when they have to change from one course to another since sometimes LAN lecturers can move from one LAN group to another. In these situations where needs of different groups differ, handling of content is likely to be affected. The lecturers indicated that mostly it is the illustrations and the examples that change but the form of the skills taught remains the same, as described below:

> *Social science is the only different group e.g. discusses social issues; Education: issues of teaching or education. The skills are the same but I just bring issues of relevance. (LAN lecturer 1).*

> *In writing for example, I cannot teach all the styles, but the writing style that is common. I simply indicate that different departments require different styles. (LAN lecturer 3)*

The heterogeneity of the courses calls for preparation that will still make the course relevant to all the students. The only way to make the courses relevant to the various groups is by using the closest material possible. One LAN Lecturer gave an example of his attempt to be specific when he taught the Social Science group. He usually used the only book that has most relevance to Social Science, *The Language of Economics* by F.I. Nixon and R.R. Jordan (1986) which is available in the departmental library. He once used the book for this group knowing that almost all students in this group are likely to study Economics. This was simply an attempt to make the courses more specific, the assumption made (that almost all the students in the Social Science group

are doing Economics) shows how much of a challenge teaching the course is. If not properly checked, only one course can predominate.

In other cases, the lecturer is likely to bring different points of relevance from various courses of a particular programme, such that at one point students will just pick what they know better according to its relevance to their respective courses. This approach handles the courses as generic, and the rest of the applications are decided by the students as described in the following scenario:

> *In LAN 150, there are variations in writing styles because of the different departments. But the choices depend on the department; even in the departments, there are variations. I teach them all of them and the differences that are there and that they should check with their departments. (LAN lecturer 4).*

For a particular programme of study, the examples given during the lessons have to be applicable. LAN, although it is a skills course, cannot be taught without materials of illustration and reference to practical materials, it has to be taught in a context, that is what will comprise the content of the course.

4.2.6.2 Students' Views on Teaching Techniques

Lecturers' approach to the course is influential to students' perception of the course. One important factor in the students' perception of LAN is teaching techniques and lecturer's organisation of teaching materials. Organisation of materials is related to lecturer's style and motivation. Students were asked how they perceived their LAN lecturer's style of teaching 28% rated it as excellent, 51% indicated that it was satisfactory, while 21% indicated that it was poor. These are details from students of different groups, so with 28% rating organisation of teaching material as excellent, and 51% ranking the organisation of teaching material as satisfactory. This suggests the material is organised in such a way that students follow what is happening and get some satisfaction with the presentations. This is a good development in terms of appreciation of LAN techniques by students.

Similarly, when asked about lecturers' presentation of lessons it shows that 49% the students found the presentations excellent, 46% of them perceived it to be satisfactory and 6% of them found it poor. This indicates that lecturers' presentation of the lessons was not a major problem. Nevertheless, some students identified some weaknesses on how lecturers presented lessons, which most of the students linked to lack of motivation in the course (Box 4.3).

Box 4.3 Problems concerning lectures

- The pace of the lessons was fast, a lot was covered in s short time making the course uninteresting and hard to follow.
- Lecturer did not follow the course outline, and not everything on the course outline was covered.

Source: Responses to Students' questionnaire

Contrary to the fair rating of lecturers' presentations the comments in Box 4.3 show that there is a problem. Students usually refer to the course outline as the course progresses, thus, when there is no proper order or when spontaneous material is used they get confused. Students pointed out that the lecturers were not motivating while some of them pointed out that the course itself is not motivating. With this less satisfaction, and more seriously, no satisfaction at all in lecturers' organisation and presentation of material, it is likely that a good number of students may have rendered the course not useful. This is related to the negative evaluation of the course that students made where there is a disparity with the figures (see section 4.1.1.1). Further to this, students have suggested possible ways of curbing the problem of lack of motivation and these are summarised in Box 4.4:

Box 4.4 Suggestions on improving students' motivation by lecturers' delivery

- Lecturers should be lively, motivating, students should be told LAN course's importance.
- Attach more seriousness to it e.g. all topics on course outline should be tackled.
- Thorough and regular assessment of the course should be made to students to enhance seriousness.
- The course has to be more of skill imparting than assessment/exam oriented.

Source: Students' questionnaire

It is deduced that lecturers' style of teaching directly affects students' attitude towards the course. EAP is supposed to take a special delivery; it is not supposed to be lectured. Where the lecture method is used, and the skills are presented theoretically, students are likely going to miss the essence of the course. A question on students' views on appropriate teaching techniques – where students were allowed to select more than one technique – fetched the results that are detailed in Table 4. 7.

Table 4.7 Appropriate Teaching techniques according to students

Teaching Technique	Percent
Pair work	25
Small group work	67
Individual work/exercises	63
Students' presentations	76
Work involving specialist subject matter	34
Lecturer just presenting the material	21
Class discussions	50

(Note: multiple responses were allowed for this question, thus, some marked more than one response)

From the results in Table 4.7, it shows that the majority of the students would enjoy the course if they are mostly involved in the learning process through presentations, small groups work and individual exercises. Only 21% will love that the lecturer should just present the material. Students want to be involved in the learning process by doing the work with teacher's facilitation as some students explained:

> *Delivery of the course should be made exciting; students should look forward to these classes because there can be some fun in learning the materials, because seriously, LAN becomes a torture when it is just the class materials and no time for some exciting exercises and activities. (Student 46)*

Students have to participate fully throughout the course. They shouldn't be spoon-fed much, they have to search for materials for some topics and learn on their own. (Student 21)

The students expressed the need to make the course participatory and exciting. Students will enjoy the course more if the lecturers' approach requires them to do the work, not just presenting to them the material in the form of a lecture. Results where students were asked if they had practicing opportunities in their lessons were that 23% found it to be excellent, 38% found it satisfactory and 39% thought it was poor.

From the figures, it can be concluded that students found participation in LAN classes to be minimal. This means that opportunity to practice is low. This can be attributed to several factors: large number of students in the classrooms thereby having a large lecturer - student ratio; and the nature of the lessons themselves. Confirming this, from the interviews, LAN Lecturers pointed out that class size determines the style of teaching besides the consideration of teaching material (see section 4.2.6.1). The size of the class is said to influence the amount of material and content, in a small class it is easy to be interactive and work on exercises than a big class. It is also easy to share examples from students' courses in a small class than in a big class. The size of the class is a factor that is contributing to the current failure of LAN as a course: instead of bringing in so many activities and small exercises, lecturers tend to simply deliver by lecture method.

The matter of participation relates to Gimenez' (1996) suggestion on the importance of participatory approach in EAP that students should participate in the learning process by suggesting activities and topics for discussions; they may favour topics that are discussed in subject matter classes and activities that are more simulative to their learning. Further to this, Ferris and Taggs (1996) point out that class size may determine the degree and types of interaction. They observe that interaction is lower in large classes, but it is possible to interact if classes are conducted in a highly interactive style-

a model they characterize as "report and discuss". Students' participation is very important in EAP and makes the course interesting.

4.2.6.3 ..Assessment Practices in LAN

The way the course is assessed can affect students in different ways, and will show the importance of the course. Currently LAN is assessed continuously by periodical assignments, mid-semester examinations (optionally), and end of semester examinations. Some may wonder if it is necessary to assess such a course, whose aim is to service other courses. Gimenez (1996) believes that even in EAP, assessment is important and will help with students' seriousness, and encourage them to work hard**.** Students' responses to a multiple response question on the best ways of assessing LAN showed that the most preferred assessment mode is oral presentations (marked by 69%), followed by end of term examinations (marked by 60% of them). Class exercises, as a mode of assessment, was selected by 58% of the students with the least (46%) choosing periodical essays. This could be because students have expressed concern over poor emphasis on speaking skills in LAN courses, most of them commented on how they would like to be given a chance to learn oral presentation skills; a topic which is there on the course outline but not fully tackled or sometimes not tackled at all. As remarked by one of the students:

> *The course should aim at teaching all skills, with emphasis on speaking*
> *skills. I finished the course and still felt deficient on my speaking skills*
> *because it was not tackled. (Student 185)*

Gimenez's (1996) reports how students are motivated by being assessed when they are actively participating; he narrates how motivating it is after students sit for end-of-term examinations to also walk away with an assessment portfolio of all the activities done in the course of the term. Assessment in EAP courses can differ from the assessment in other courses because it does not test knowledge of content but integration of skills. In EAP "it consists of a thorough analysis of the input, a continuous assessment of the

throughput variables and finally an evaluation of the output" (Gimenez, 1996:234) (also see Chapter 2).

The researcher noted that the kind of assessment used differs from lecturer to lecturer. End of term examinations are a must for all courses but the mode of continuous assessment varies from lecturer to lecturer. Some assign students to write essays, some just group assignments, some mid-semester examinations, and those who manage it, may even assign students to present on certain topics orally (mostly when dealing with the topic of oral presentations). In all this, the choices depend on lecturers' approach and teaching style; and how organised the lecturer is; but it is shown here that students would want to fully participate in class and even base their assessments on class activities. This implies that students do not get motivated with the current modes of assessments and teaching styles; there is room for motivation if they are directly involved, otherwise, their attitude towards the course is affected.

The way the course is taught can motivate or demotivate students. The students' have to find the topics interesting, lecturers' style of teaching has to be motivating, the organization of the lecture has to be clear for the students to follow, and the assessment of the course has to be challenging. These, examined in line with LAN lecturers' experiences of teaching in the current situation, have shown that there is a lot more that has to be done to improve the teaching and learning of LAN. What some LAN lecturers have given as their practices in handling LAN courses are good methods but those are not reflected in the students' responses. There is a big gap in terms of students' expectations and the current practices.

4.3 Effective Ways of Implementing LAN Courses – Generalised for All Disciplines or Specific?

Timing of LAN lessons, applicability of LAN to students' studies; and the classification of LAN according to programmes in the Chancellor College situation were examined to

comprehend how an improvement of these can help to establish an effective implementation of LAN at Chancellor College.

4.3.1 Timing of LAN lessons

Students were asked when they think is the right time to learn LAN. This was a way of finding out if they think that it is important to extend it to other years, or that they would opt for specific years to learn it. Table 4.8 summarises the findings.

Table 4.8 Students' Opinion on the Right Time to learn LAN

	Frequency	**Percent**
in First year	129	66.5
in second year	12	6.2
in third year	1	.5
in all the years (1st to 4th yr)	43	22.2
No idea	5	2.6
Missing Responses	4	2.1
Total	194	100

The figures in Table 4.8 are evidence that to the students, learning LAN in first year alone is alright. Most of these students claim that they started applying the skills learned in LAN from the very beginning. On the other hand, 22% of them think that it is good to have it up to fourth year. It is captivating to note that most students who indicated that the course should continue to be taught in first year alone also suggested the need to extend. Most of these students' comments favour the provision of services by LACS to those beyond first year as well. There were a lot of suggestions pertaining to extending the course to other years as listed in Box 4.5.

Source: Students' questionnaire

Box 4.5 is a summary of comments and suggestions that allude to the need to offer LAN services beyond first year. The suggestion can be identified by those that require LAN courses to be taught up to either second year, third year or up to fourth year; and there are those suggestions that are simply requesting a remedial or refresher course that will be optional. The other possible work of LACS is given as well, that is to screen all projects and dissertations for language standards. As has earlier been established, all these suggestions relate to the fact that the usefulness of LAN is not denied although there is currently some negative perception of the course by students and staff.

The reasons that students have given as to why the course has to be extended are given as follows:

> *Language courses should be learned throughout the years since the need to apply the skills increases as one goes up the ladder. (Student 69)*

> *It should be taught to all classes not first years only since you never stop using or writing English in the courses that are taken. (Student 3)*

LAN courses should be taught from first year up to third year as in some constituent colleges of UNIMA. By the time one reaches third or fourth year most of the material learned at first year is forgotten, when it is needed most when writing proposals and dissertations and the like. (Student 45)

Language should be done in first and second years because there is just so much to learn that needs more practice and also to understand not just memorising for examinations. (Student 3)

The reasons given show that LAN is indeed useful but there is an indication that the need for application is mostly in later years. Thus, students suggest LACS' provision of services beyond first year. When in first year the students are not specialising yet, and they have a combination of up to four subjects. With LAN being learnt as one of the five courses, with its need not very apparent, they may just learn for the sake of it. It means the department is deemed essential though not acknowledged by many because of the level of students taught.

4.3.2   *Application of LAN to Students' Other Courses*

The response to when students think is the right time to learn LAN is related to when they actually started applying the skills that they learnt. Table 4.9 details responses to the issue of application of LAN to students' respective subjects.

Table 4.9 The time when LAN material was applicable

Time of application	Frequency	Percent
from the beginning	153	78.9
In second semester of first year	22	11.3
In second year	11	5.7
In third year	2	1.0
Never applicable	1	.5
Not sure	5	2.6
Total	194	100

The details in Table 4.9 indicate that the majority (79%) of the students found the material applicable from the beginning. It is clear from the above statistics that the applicability of LAN is not denied. As it has already been discussed in section 4.1.1.3, students acknowledge the usefulness of LAN regarding the topic of writing, which is applicable to all levels of study. At first year level the needs are higher because the students are getting introduced into a new academic system; they are just coming from secondary schools or high schools where the writing style tends to be different from college writing. Development of opinion, argumentation and documentation of borrowed materials are some of the concepts that put a challenge to their basic writing skills, thus the need for a course that addresses such needs is essential and LACS has a duty to help them improve that. With this, the practicality of LAN is clear but when they have other topics like reading where they have to analyse texts and write a book review, the students showed some dislike and lack of application for such topics.

One LAN lecturer observed a lack of immediate application for some of the topics learnt in LAN and commented that he *"always think of what they will do in future. Much as it's only done in first year"* (LAN lecturer 2). Without such considerations of time the course cannot be motivating to the learners, however, students have to be told the importance of the topics for their future endeavours much as they may not need them at the present time.

Subject lecturers have also expressed concern about the application of the course to students' studies. They realise the importance of the course to the students, but the evidence of its application in students' work is not there. They attribute this to students' lack of preparation on what they are learning and are about to learn, as well as lack of connection of LAN material to their main courses. Lecturers' expression of the current lack of application of the course are summarised in Box 4.6.

Box 4.6 Subject Lecturers opinions on the Practicality of LAN

1. It handles material which course lecturers still later on teach their students and emphasise.

2. After their first year, students forget all that they learnt.

3. It is not helping students to improve accuracy in the use of grammar in their academic essays.

4. They start some of the important topics later, after the other courses have already been taught

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Source: Subject Lecturers' questionnaire

From the comments above, it can be concluded that some lecturers think that they can do without the course because the skills can easily be handled by them in class. This comment may arise due to frustrations towards the course as evidenced in the previous sections. Some lecturers teach their students certain writing requirements (see section 4.2.4), after they perceive problems in students' work. To them, this may mean that LAN is not important; it is not performing any function. To some, the practicality of LAN is denied because it is taught at a lower level when the need for application is not there, when the need arises, in the subsequent levels, students forget what they learnt. With these instances, such lecturers may not accept the necessity of LAN. Thus its practicality is denied by the majority of lecturers. To improve the situation, a suggestion is given below:

> *Increase students' motivation by showing the need to learn the skills. They ought to know that LAN is not a content course, but a skills course. Students should learn to acquire the skills that can later be applied to their respective courses.   (Lecturer 15)*

It is generally agreed that students learn LAN for the sake of grades and not for the skills. It may be true that students are not enjoying the course and that it has to be improved by adding motivation and interest. As it has been discussed in the previous sections, one way of improving motivation is by making the course specific to students' needs. Thus, the issue of specificity of materials used is very central to EAP, and the idea of specificity seems to be an endless debate in EAP (see Chapter 2).

4.3.3 Subject-Specific Approach or Wide Angle/ General Approach?

The problem of application and practicality of LAN courses is directly linked to the kind of material that is used in teaching the courses. In EAP, material can be subject-specific or general. In the Chancellor College situation, the classification is by programme. This led the researcher to assess students and lecturers' opinions on the preferred material in LAN courses. The material used in the course will determine the applicability and relevance of the course to students' studies. Students' opinions on the kind of material to use in teaching LAN courses was sought and Table 4.10 summarises the results.

Table 4.10 Opinion on the content organisation for LAN

	Frequency	Percent
Using materials from students' specific courses	89	45.9
By general material	13	6.7
Combining specific and general material	84	43.3
No idea	8	4.1
Total	194	100

According to Table 4.10, the majority of the students prefer specific material; and a combination of specific and general material, it means that students would like to at least have references made to subjects' specific material. Use of such material enhances their interest and motivates them to study the course, because its relevance to their academic work cannot be questioned. Specificity in the course will make LAN a course indispensable to students' day to day academic work; they will get motivated, thereby reducing boredom.

LAN lecturers were asked if they have any preferences on the two approaches. Two lecturers pointed out that the subject specific approach would be preferable. Because then they would really be helped in a specific area. According to one LAN lecturer, same programme groups can be categorised according to relatedness of the group. If classified in narrower field, it will help them much better. It will have a special focus. Another LAN Lecturer gave an example of further grouping in the Humanities as follows: English language and ALL; TRS, Classics and Literature; and Fine and Performing Arts.

Other two lecturers stated that they would prefer the wide-angle, or start with the general and move to the specifics. They think that there are not too many variations in the courses but there are others which have specifics. An example was given of the concept of "arguments" from logic, a component of Philosophy, which can be brought in a LAN class as points for discussion of "principles of argumentation"; those who do not do the course will have a chance to learn. The idea here is that, the wide angle approach has a function of widening students' knowledge. This advantage was also mentioned by students who favour the inclusion of general material while those who do not, think that it is an absolute waste of time.

Apart from the cost effectiveness of making the courses general, one LAN lecturer was of the opinion that argumentation does not differ across the disciplines: *"Writing a sociology paper will not differ from writing a philosophy one. The presentation of arguments doesn't differ." (LAN Lecturer 4)* He agrees that being programme specific

is good, but it can be better with sizeable groups; having some of the programme courses with same content combined.

Combining general and specific material was preferred just like using specific material. This means that students and lecturers are aware of the need to learn general material besides specific material. There are some general skills, besides specific skills, which can be applied on whole range of academic experiences, even life beyond the academics. It means that there is a balance in function between general and specific material. The way in between could be the best approach in this situation. Both general and specific material can be handled in classrooms and strike a balance in the students' needs.

4.3.4 Views on the Classification of LAN at Chancellor College

Chancellor College has LAN courses classified according to programmes. To get opinions on the viability of this classification, all the respondents were asked to give their opinions on what they would consider the best classification of the course. Students' responses to this were as follows: 56% would prefer the classification by programmes as it is currently; 34% would like them to be classified by students' specific courses; 9% would like them to be generalised for all programmes and another 1% were not sure. Although the majority of the students (56%) are of the view that it is okay to have the students grouped by programme as it is now, 34% of the students who would prefer that it be grouped according to specific courses is quite significant. This is so in that there is a general outcry that the material be as specific as possible to students' subjects of study. The majority of the students commented that the classification by individual subjects would be ideal but it would be difficult to manage. The reasons given by students for each of these responses are summarised in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11 Students' reasons for selected LAN classification

Category	Reasons
a. Generalised by programme of study	1. It allows for specialization in the given programmes, an example being that teachers and administrators are different as such, they cannot learn same things. 2. Some cited management as the reasons for their choice of classification by programme. This makes it easier to manage than further dividing them according to courses (tiresome and difficult); it may require more LAN specialists. 3. The classification according to programmes broadens understanding of issues; students are able to learn more than they would if one subject was used. 4. A programme has subjects/courses which have many similar language skills requirement; students basically do the same courses at programme level. 5. In the programme of study grouping, incorporation of content from specific courses will make it relevant and motivating.
b. Specify by students' specific subjects	1. By programme, many principles do not apply in specific courses. Certain things (styles of writing, presenting) differ from course to course. For example, writing a history essay can be learnt and never applied to Geography or Home Economics). 2. It will help students learn specific requirements for the courses being done. 3. There is not enough time to learn everything but what pertains to one's study area. 4. Students sometimes take courses outside their programmes of study, with this they will still know the requirements of the particular courses when they take LAN courses that are particular to those subjects. 5. Classes can be smaller and manageable hence increasing

	students' participation.
c. Generalised for all programmes	1. There are many generic elements that are applied to every course. 2. LAN skills are also essential to life after college not just for academic subjects; because of the current specification some students finish college without general (important) writing speaking and reading skills, especially science students. 3. There are some students that take courses outside programme so general courses will help these as well.

The general idea from Table 4.11 is that students have no problems with the classification by programme, however, the inclusion of specific material and general material is vital. All the reasons presented in Table 4.11 are valid and noteworthy, and the debate on these has remained open. It means that striking a balance between material from students' subjects and general material in every programme can be the ideal situation.

LAN lecturers were also asked to give their views on the preferred classification of LAN. All LAN lecturers, but one, responded that the programme specification is appropriate. According to one LAN lecturer, every programme has its own language needs, and programme of study grouping is ideal in the Chancellor College situation. He emphasised that grouping the courses is for "focus and manageability". Furthermore, the timetable is better followed and planned this way. Given the large number of students and the low staffing levels of the department of LACS, such an argument makes a lot of sense.

The lecturer who viewed the classification differently wished for another kind of grouping, social sciences and natural sciences:

Social sciences (Humanities included), and Natural Sciences because people write different papers, all other courses are social science. The other group of natural science are far removed from these. (LAN lecturer 2)

This classification may be workable when the distinction of disciplines, into hard and soft disciplines, as presented in Chapter 2, is observed. This can also be another way of classifying them, but besides difficulty in manageability, this can pose a lot more challenges in terms of choice of what to include in the content. This grouping would be a lot more diverse than the current one. It will not solve the problem that is experienced in the current classification by programme. The programme grouping is the closest specification that one can get in the Chancellor College case, thus, all the courses in the programme have to be considered and a balance has to be reached.

Subject lecturers' preferences of classification of LAN were as follows: 63% think it is okay by programme as they are; 21% would prefer classifying them by students' specific courses; and 16% think it would be better if generalised regardless of programme and course. This shows that most of the lecturers think the best classification is by programme, just as is currently the case. Besides the reasons of management, they cite that LAN cannot manage to teach language courses specific to each department, and they think classification according to the programmes is closer to the ideal. One of those who think that classification by programme is appropriate had this to say:

This classification is okay because, within the programmes, there are diverse departments. There are generic skills that cut across the programmes. Otherwise we'll have English for Home Economics. It's okay. But if one does another course from another programme he has to learn something from that course as well. (Lecturer 1)

Each programme has its own language needs. (Lecturer 2)

Classification by programme is mostly preferred than by subject or general material. Lecturers cited this as the best when it comes to manageability of the courses, otherwise, specific subject would be too cumbersome; and general material will be not be motivating to the students. If the specifics in every programme are to be followed and presented to the students it will be more motivating than general material.

Some of the lecturers who think the courses should be generalised across the programmes had these reasons to give:

> *They have to be generalized regardless of programme and course. I don't know why they are classified that way. I hear there is English for Social Sciences but nobody has ever approached me as a lecturer in the Social Sciences. I think classifying is unimportant but what's important is for them to learn generic skills of communication. In social science, communication is similar to that of education – argumentation is similar, development has to be the same. This can be done generically. What is meant by developing an argument? A conclusion has to match with what has been said earlier. (Lecturer 8)*

> *The skills of communication are regardless of course (lecturer 6)*

The lecturers quoted above think that generalization is the best approach to the courses. There is a need for material that will cut across the disciplines. In the current case the purpose of LAN according to programmes is diluted when LACS department teaches the programmes independent of the input which lecturers within the programmes may give. In this particular case, there is no consultation done, thus it will be just fine to teach the general material, rather than specifying, for example "English for Social Sciences". The ideal situation is where LACS works closely with lecturers of particular programmes in relation to the skills that are to be taught. Without collaboration, the current classification will remain as it is for the sake of manageability while the material

that is taught will be an attempt by LAN lecturers to be specific. In this case it is better just to teach general material within the programme grouping than try to be specific according to programmes without consulting the concerned programme about their needs.

4.3.5   *The Viability of Making the Course Programme Specific*

From the students' and lecturers' data it is apparent that a certain amount of specificity is imperative. Students have acknowledged that there is some relevance of LAN to the courses they are doing, at the same time the applicability of the taught skills to their academic endeavours is not denied. On the same note, LAN lecturers have stated that they draw examples from different subjects of a programme to illustrate and reinforce certain skills. In all this there is an indication of some specificity of the course besides the fact that all the skills are generic. The polarity of the courses in some programmes may prove hard to handle in LAN courses, for example, the distinctiveness of History and Economics subjects in the Social Sciences as well as Home Economics and Mathematics in the Sciences. This diversity is noted by one subject lecturer who said that:

> *…the classification of courses by programme, as they currently are, is okay. But in the programme of social science, there are different needs for example in History there is lots of quoting; in Economics there are lots of graphs and formulas. If you copy a formula, how do you cite or refer to it? (Lecturer 7)*

This is a challenge that a LAN lecturer has to grapple with. Hyland (2006) has highlighted that by encouraging students to explore the ways meanings are expressed in texts and compare similarities and differences, teachers can help satisfy students' demands for personal relevance while revealing to them the "multiliterate nature of the academy" (p14). This problem, of diversity of courses per group, if properly handled, can help in increasing students' knowledge as well.

It can therefore be inferred that the idea of making the courses specific is workable than making it general. LAN has managed to impart the required skills to students; there is some success in this even though it still leaves a lot to be desired. There are limited human resources, large number of students, and large number of subjects that cannot be handled separately as in EAP subject specific courses. The viable approach in the Chancellor College situation is the programme specific one where specifics of all the different subjects in the particular programme are tackled. In this approach lecturers have to read widely, conduct intensive research to learn applications of different subjects within the specified programmes. Partial knowledge of the content of other subjects besides EAP is crucial to all LAN lecturers.

There are generic skills that cut across the disciplines; these will be taught with reference to material within the programme's subjects. There are some skills that are specific to courses within one programme; these will continue to be taught within the programme groupings. Students take diverse subjects within one programme, but for the sake of manageability, they cannot be split further. The classification by programme looks alright; it simply needs LAN lecturers' realisation of the needs of the different students attending the course at a particular time. Without such a realisation the idea of classifying them by programme will be meaningless.

4.4   Challenges in Teaching and Learning of LAN at Chancellor College.

From the current practices of the course, perceptions of the course and suggestions on effective implementation of the course that were presented by all the respondents, the researcher noticed some major challenges that LACS department has to grapple with. Some challenges were gradually hinted in the course of the previous sections and are elaborated in the current section. LAN lecturers have outlined their challenges in teaching the course, which are coupled with the rest of those that culminate from students and other lecturers' views, and they are summarised into several major challenges namely; timing of lessons, insufficient teaching and learning resources, large number of students, lack of specialisation by LAN lecturers, low level of students, lack

of collaboration with other subject lecturers, poor English expressions by students, the classification of LAN groups, students' negative attitude towards the course, the nature of the course, and dealing with students with special needs. Each one of these challenges is discussed in more detail.

4.4.1   Timing of the Lessons

At Chancellor College, there is a concern that some of the topics are ill timed. Students and subject lecturers alike are of the view that there is a delay in the teaching of certain important skills like writing. The current syllabus starts with listening skills, reading skills, followed by writing skills and lastly speaking skills. Because of this order of topics, so far, writing skills is taught in the second semester unless the lecturers order it otherwise. According to the students' comments, the skill that is needed earlier is writing. They say that from the beginning they are given writing assignments, but the topic on writing skills comes later when they have already done them. This causes problems as they get challenged to realise the mistakes that they make, which if learnt earlier, could have been avoided.

4.4.2   Teaching/ Learning Resources Vis-À-Vis Large Number of Students

The course is said to have insufficient learning and teaching resources. Students were asked about the availability of learning resources for the course, their responses indicate that the majority (54%) of the students feel that there are insufficient learning resources for the course, 33% stated that it is satisfactory and 13% indicated that it was excellent. According to the researcher's experience, the resources in the LACS department are indeed limited; there are some books available for students to borrow in the departmental library. Statistically, the course is servicing an average of 480 students[5] per year and there are few books available for students to borrow. Most of the books do not directly provide the lessons taught in class and they lay idle on the

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[5] An average of first year students' statistics of classes 2006/2007 and 2007/2008.

departmental shelves. The available resources are somehow limited to reading and writing skills, and there are very few on listening and speaking skills.

LAN Lecturers have also found the unavailability of resources very challenging. According to them, the books are not enough, even when placed on the reserve counter of the main Library, to be borrowed on short loan, they are not sufficient. Moreover, technical resources are hard to get, especially photocopying handouts, sometimes it is considered wasteful because they become a daily necessity in the courses, which is impossible to do in the current situation.

All lecturers (subject lecturers and LAN lecturers) have expressed a need for more human resources in LACS department. There is a need for more lecturers supported by tutors who can help with practical work. The problem raised here is credible as there is a large number of students handled by only five lecturers. The proposal for the establishment of LACS had a good proposition concerning staffing: "The department would require at least ten members of staff to ensure effective teaching and follow-up sessions. The optimum number of students per group should be around 15-20" (Minutes of First Academic Courses Committee's (ACC) sub-committee on ESP, 1993).

According to the proposal, smaller number of students per group would facilitate the accommodation of students' subject specialism. Courses could be designed to meet the students' real academic needs. This is not what is happening on the ground, there are some classes of 150 students and when lecturers split them into half for efficiency they get to 75. This is an instance of how the quality of the course has been highly compromised.

LAN lecturers emphasised the problem that there are large numbers of students per class. They are worried that in a large class there are difficulties in drawing students' attention. Much as they are grouped according to programmes, they are still big. Not much help is given to the slow learners; lecturers just proceed with the lessons.

4.4.3   Lack of Specialisation of LAN Lecturers in Particular Fields

Subject lecturers and students have shown that specialising of students' courses is an important element for EAP to succeed. This is a challenge that is faced mostly by LAN lecturers; what is mainly lacking is LAN lecturer's knowledge of specifics from students' courses. For instance one LAN lecturer admitted that LAN may have a challenge to face because of lecturers' knowledge in relation to the courses they teach. She stated that much as she would want to make them practical by drawing examples, it is not always easy because of the diversity of departments:

> *Drawing examples from different departments is a problem; for media [programme] there is not much of a difference because they have same course combinations; but for the others, they come from as far as nine departments. (LAN lecturer 3)*

The choice of which material to include in a lecture is not easy to come by. This particular lecturer taught English for the Media, but does not have a solid background in it. For instance, she taught "writing for the newspaper" something that is not reflected in her Education Humanities qualifications. This is considered a major challenge. This problem has risen because of lack of specialisation of the lecturers; the proposal to establish the department included specification of qualifications of lecturers each with different groups to teach. Positions that were particularly interesting to note were:

> Senior Lecturer/lecturer in Language with particular experience in Language methodology to teach language method courses within the school of education" and "Senior Lecturer/ Lecturer in English Language with Particular Experience in the writing of Specific Purposes English for Public Administration, Legal and Social Science courses; to service immediately the needs of undergraduates course in the mentioned disciplines (Memo from The English Language Unit, 23 Jan, 1991).

This is a suggestion that there is a need in the area of specialisation regarding the LAN courses that one is to teach. LAN lecturers may be required to specialise in certain fields for easy understanding of what goes on in the LAN material. This is not currently the case and this is a major constraint on the course and in the end the lecturers are likely to teach more general material than the specifics.

4.4.4   Level of Students

As the course is taught to first years only, the application of LAN to other courses that students are doing may not easily be noticed. Some students commented that some of the materials learnt were unnecessary and were never applied at all, for example, writing book reviews. This poses a major challenge to the lecturers and students as well, it may not be very motivating when few of the topics learnt are readily applicable and the rest are learnt in the abstract, that is, not fitting in the immediate context. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) suggest that teachers should first help students develop generic academic skills and the specifics should be taught later. Generic skills are, among others, listening to lectures; reading textbooks, articles; and writing essays or reports. On the other hand, Hyland (2006) highlights that to ESAP the mentioned skills are not generic, they are taught in relation to the demands of a particular discipline or department. In this case, the time when students need generic skills and when they need specific skills is not easily discerned. Furthermore, LAN lecturers are concerned that the courses are only taught in first year and stop and there is no follow up on how the students fair in later years. Course evaluation is not done at the end of every year. Thus the applicability of the lessons in terms of students' work remains unclear.

4.4.5   Lack of Collaboration with Other Subject Lecturers

The majority of the respondents have observed that there is lack of collaboration between LAN lecturers and lecturers of other subjects concerning students' requirements. The programme assumes that lecturers from other departments know what is taught but they do not and therefore lower standards. One LAN lecturer gave an

example of an essay graded at 80% but could deserve 60%. Sometimes the styles of writing and citation learnt in LAN are not what other lecturers recognize. The problems that are perceived in the course are a result of LACS department's lack of collaboration with other departments. It means that students' needs, in terms of their subject requirements and academic requirements as presented by LAN syllabus, are not shared to all the stakeholders. A suggestion relating to this is that LAN lecturers should go to departments and ask needs as one lecturer suggested:

> *May be this can be done annually because needs keep on changing. Every year, departments should submit reports to LAN departments. LAN should get feedback and suggestions". (Lecturer 7)*

It is suggested that LAN as a servicing course should report to and get some input from the various departments under the classified programme. This is the ideal situation as far as the EAP concept, from which LAN is drawn from, is concerned. This can require a lot of time and resources on the LACS department and it is a labourious task. Moreover, the cooperation of other subject lecturers is not totally guaranteed. However, without such collaboration the context of LAN courses is fuzzy.

4.4.6   Problem of Poor Expressions

The majority of the respondents admit that there is a problem of language among the students. Level of students' academic and language competence pose challenges to the lecturers. There are a lot of problems to be dealt with in students' work. They are taught common skills in LAN with an assumption that they know grammar. Although some lecturers attribute the problem to the deteriorating standards of English Secondary School curricula, most of the lecturers blame it all on LAN. At Chancellor College people think that LAN teaches grammar. One LAN lecturer expressed disappointment in that "when students are performing poorly the blame is on LAN" (LAN lecturer 2). Most subject lecturers say they do not know what LAN is doing. In response to this, one LAN lecturer attempted to teach a grammar component but the students expressed

boredom and it was stopped. This was done to remedy the language problem. Generally, this problem is greatly attributed to a number of factors including lack of reading culture among students, and weak language background from secondary school. It should be acknowledged that LAN cannot rectify this in a year's lesson, while at the same time it is teaching academic skills. Grammar cannot easily be taught at this level, it will be a strain to the LAN lecturer as well as tiring to the students. Remedial grammar classes can be made optional.

Lecturers are of the opinion that certain policies should change. For example, the separation of language and literature in the Secondary School curriculum eroded English of its importance in education[6]. The importance of reading materials of literature regardless of the course that one is doing is emphasised strongly by two professors at Chancellor College:

> *I believe that language and literature cannot be separated. Literature is "language in action". For anybody who wants to master the language, literature is important. Linguistics is a science of language but language is something that everybody has to learn and literature is a vital to teaching of English language.*[7]

> *Go back to the English as it was before (ENG 190);*[8] *practice speaking skills. Let them struggle with English but let them practice. Literature gave students an ability to be exposed to English language .... Their vocabulary is very low "decimally low" – I don't know how you can help them. In fourth year one accused me of using big words. I taught English*

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[6]The Malawian Secondary Schools English curricula has a combination of language and literature, for a period of five years this was changed, language and literature were separated into two subjects where language was compulsory and literature was optional. This made many students elude the challenges of literature and opt for language only. In 2008 the Ministry decided to revert to the old system of combining language and literature.

[7] A comment made by one of the pioneers of LAN who taught ENG 190 before LAN was introduced as a breakaway from the English department.

[8] ENG 190 is a code for a General English course that was taught to all first years before the introduction of LAN and LACS department.

at secondary school before, one thing I used to enjoy is to let them learn
from their mistakes, build confidence, practice speaking, make them read
*a lot of literature. That is how I taught my English students.*9

The two comments are comparing earlier experiences of teaching to the current standards. Poor English competence amongst students is a major concern. Both of them link this to lack of literature component in LAN courses. They expect students to learn general things, regardless of course just to increase their exposure to English language. One of the Professors pointed out that

The ESP one is good but it can be improved by adding literature
components, the general component. From literature, one learns
something, it exposes the students to language in action.

An action has already been taken by the Ministry of Education, they have considered it by bringing the two components of English subject together again. However, the opinion of these professors is that even in LAN, literature should be used. This was what used to be the case in ENG 190, but it was stopped because literature dominated (see chapter 2). The importance of English literature cannot be denied; neither can the emphasis in the way it is taught in secondary and tertiary levels. The ideal situation is where it is used with caution, as one of the ways of getting practical with the skills, especially reading skills. LAN lecturers sometimes bring the component of literature back by assigning students to do a book critique. This is a way of bringing a reading spirit in students so as to improve their language skills. However, as presented in the earlier sections, students of science and social science have objected to the inclusion of book critiques: *"We don't know where we will apply them" (Student 33).* Some subject lecturers also objected to this; for instance one lecturer commented about it and is quoted below:

9A comment by one of the two professors, he taught English in Secondary School before joining the University of Malawi.

Focus should be on construction of paragraphs, kinds of paragraphs, structuring an argument, sourcing information as opposed to analyzing authors (novels) as if they are English programme students. (Lecturer 11)

The inclusion of literature is challenging to the LAN lecturer. Teaching of language is workable when taught in context as in the use of literary texts. Literature as was included in Eng 190 (the previous programme) is important; it helps students to build vocabulary. Literary texts are an example of general materials. This leads the issue back to the question of what material to use in teaching of LAN, use of general material or specific material. As observed earlier on, both are important, thus, a middle position can be the best option; where the LAN lecturer recognises both the general and specific material in the LAN class. In both cases language problems can be remedied because the language will be taught in context; the context may be in either fiction or material from students' subjects.

4.4.7   Classification of LAN Groups

The classification of courses by programme poses challenges to the LAN lecturer on the material to use in the classroom. One subject lecturer commented that "*[she] thought that the classification according to programme would be specific indeed, apparently, it is not" (Lecturer 7*). According to this particular lecturer the idea of specifying them into programmes is to teach materials from one programme to students of that particular programme, but the results are not matching this idea. The specification of LAN courses by programmes is ideal, but there is some scepticism if students are learning programme specific material indeed. If they were really specific by programme, lecturers believe it would be perceived in the students work, but this is not so. They think that the level of specificity by programme needs to be improved to some degree. This is indicative of the fact that the classification according to programmes is the most feasible one in Chancellor College situation but it remains a challenge to LACS department.

4.4.8 Negative Attitude towards the Course

The biggest challenge is students' attitude towards the course. Attitude is usually a problem when courses are compulsory, especially in Chancellor College situation where it was felt that students would take the course more seriously if a number of conditions were imposed: that students repeat the course if they fail (Minutes of first Academic Courses Committee meeting, 23rd January, 1991). This has not helped rectify the attitude rather it has intensified it by making students learn for the sake of passing the course. One LAN lecturer pointed out that having taught all groups of LAN he only perceived a positive attitude Humanities and Education Humanities classes; *"[t]he rest don't think they are here to learn English" (LAN lecturer 3).* According to most of the lecturers, students have a *laiser faire* attitude towards LAN course; they think they are being bothered. Moreover, other course lecturers mostly do not care what is taught in LAN courses, they overlook some language mistakes in students' work. When the LAN lecturer teaches those language aspects that are overlooked by other lecturers with emphasis, and consider them in marking students' work, it erodes students' confidence in the course. Eventually the link between LAN courses and other subjects is lost and it encourages lack of seriousness in the students.

4.4.9. The nature of the course

The nature of the course itself is a challenge to those who teach it. It basically teaches language skills in relation to academic skills. The skills are writing, listening, reading and speaking. The skills are supposed to be taught in a very practical way as opposed to presenting them theoretically, and not in a lecturing style. This makes the course to be very involving. It takes a lot of time, preparing for the courses, activities and marking. With large classes, there is need for lots of exercises, but marking is not easy. This was stressed by one LAN lecturer who was teaching in the department on a part time basis. The said lecturer seemed to have followed the practical part of the course very closely but could not fully do it. Her comments confirmed that there was a desire to apply participatory approaches but the large numbers frustrated this. The inability by most

lecturers to fully use the approaches of LAN dilutes the essence of the course and makes it hard to teach, and it becomes uninteresting to learn (see section 4.3.6.2)

4.4.10 Special Needs

The course should incorporate special needs because those with special needs (the deaf and the blind) do not benefit fully. There have been students who are blind, partially blind, deaf and partially deaf. These have required special treatment where lecturers require provision of material to be transcribed into brail, for the blind; and provision of most of the lecture material for the deaf as they could not follow everything in class. Thus the teaching of some of the topics like listening to the deaf, and reading for the blind, becomes challenging to both the students with special needs and LAN lecturers.

The aforementioned challenges and constraints are all based on what students and lecturers think of LAN. The magnitude of the challenges threatens the course in that what made the English Language Unit and its course ENG 190 to be restructured may be recycled in LACS if the constraints are not checked. The advocates in establishment of LACS may have envisioned it when they said:

> There was an English language Unit which broke up some years ago. It would be advisable to study the reasons for its demise before we create a similar unit. There is need to plan the Unit properly and once introduced, make it work, which requires the support and co-operation of every programme at Chancellor College. (The Principal's Response To the Introduction of LACS, 6th Jan, 1993)

With the current lack of support (arising due to lack of collaboration), and with the negative attitude of the course still there, the course may face something similar to what the initial one faced. The need of the course to the students has been clearly given; something has to be urgently done to continue the course and achieve its objectives

4.5   Chapter Summary

The chapter has examined the data that was sourced from students and lecturers. It has reported students' perspective of LAN and concluded that, on the overall, there is a negative attitude towards the course; however, quantitatively the attitude is positive. Moreover, it has been shown that students of all programmes had similar attitude towards the course. Similarly a discussion of data from subject lecturers by analysing their knowledge of the nature of LAN courses indicates that they have no knowledge of what the course is all about; thereby making them unsupportive to the objectives of the course.

The chapter has also discussed subject lecturers, LAN lecturers and students' views on the current practices of LAN courses in terms of the English language status and how it is handled by LAN courses. It has been assessed that there is not much done to improve the language problems because of lack of support from subject lecturers; and there is a need for LACS department to improve its teaching techniques. In relation to this, it has examined the most effective ways to implement the course in terms of the content and materials to use. From the teachers' and learner's perspective, the general suggestion is that there is need to use both general and specific material. There is no answer to the issue of the right perspectives to LAN, both wide angle and subject specific perspectives are preferred. Challenges to the course have been highlighted, with the programme specificity and level of students undergoing the course in the Chancellor College situation being the common denominator of most of the challenges. The next chapter wraps up the discussions with recommendations and suggestions that are drawn from assessment.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.0   Introduction

At the beginning (in Chapter 1), the study raised major questions that it purported to answer in an attempt to analyse LAN courses at Chancellor College in relation to the notion of EAP, which is the model of the LAN courses. The key research questions have specifically been answered in Chapter 4. Section 4.1 has specifically discussed the perception of students and academic staff towards the role of LAN; Section 4.3 has examined the current practices in the teaching and learning of LAN courses; section 4.4 has discussed effective ways of implementing LAN courses; and section 4.5 has investigated the challenges and constraints in teaching and learning of LAN courses at Chancellor College. The key finding is that discipline specificity required in the EAP courses cannot be easily achieved with programme grouping in the Chancellor College LAN courses. The diversification of courses within the programmes cannot easily lead to specificity although this is the ideal grouping of the courses in the current situation. Moreover, the course is only taught to first year students who are not yet specialising in particular disciplines, in this case the specificity of the courses is negatively influenced. Major issues raised from the study findings are outlined in this Chapter.

5.1   Key Issues

The analysis has revealed that there is a commendable effort by the department of LACS in imparting academic skills to students; however, there are some major problems in LAN courses that are hindering its objectives. Programme grouping is too diverse and the level of students (being first year) calls for greater attention to the need of specificity for LAN courses. The study concludes that without immediate attention of

the problems the course will not achieve anything and will not develop to suit the needs of the academy.

The course has tried to incorporate all academic skills. Students have expressed satisfaction with the course for they learn important academic skills like writing. However, the study revealed that there are so many topics in LAN courses that are useful but are taught without a chance for students to practice. The nature of the course demands a lot of practice because it is meant to be applied in other courses yet it has been handled like any other course where theories are presented, and this has not motivated the students.

The classification of the courses by programmes is a challenge in that programmes have diverse courses that have to be taken on board when teaching. However, the study established that the categorisation of the courses according to programmes is ideal because the situation cannot allow a further splitting of the groups into subject-specific groups. Specificity according to subjects, in the situation of Chancellor College where there are large numbers of students and low numbers of teaching staff in LACS Department, will be impossible. Programme grouping is the right way to handle the courses but LAN lecturers are not conscious of the heterogeneity of the groups they are dealing with. Incorporation of subject material from the various disciplines within the programmes and exploration of language elements in those disciplines to enhance interest in the courses is lacking.

LAN courses at Chancellor College are geared towards specificity but they have not proven to be so. There is a gap that is to be filled to meet the standards of specific EAP set by the literature on EAP. The study has shown that LAN courses use specific material from various disciplines that are in the programmes very minimally, rather, they tend to employ use of more general material. Students are not comfortable with the current content of the courses because it is somehow too general to readily meet their academic needs. Nevertheless, it was noted that the use of general materials is not totally overruled much as the desire for specific material is there. Students and lecturers

alike appreciate the importance of general material as it opens one's mind to a wide range of language skills. A fair inclusion of general material, is requested but with much emphasis on specific material because apparently it is not fully explored. A mid position between ESAP or subject specific approach, and EGAP or common core approach, is the option that is implied. In the situation of Chancellor College, EAP (in this case LAN) has to be taught in the context of both discipline specific and general material.

In line with problems of specificity, the major problem noted is that there is no collaboration between subject lecturers and LAN lecturers. The teaching of LAN by programmes is meaningless as far as programme needs are concerned because there are no consultations. In the end, what makes English for Social Science, for example, is not what the Faculty of Social Sciences contributes to, hence there is little relevance.

Relevance and application is a problem because of the level of students. Applicability of the course is not there because some of the topics taught were not readily needed by the students. The course is taught to students of first year who start seeing relevance of some of the topics at a later stage. It is therefore deduced that the need of LAN is not readily apparent, its importance is mostly not realised until later, mostly in the third year, probably because at this level they write a lot of papers and are faced with a challenge of writing proposals in preparation for their final year dissertations and projects. Furthermore, speaking skills are demanded when they are faced with oral presentation tasks in the later years, not while in first year.

Apparently students are not taking the course seriously and this is a threat to the course. There is a negative attitude towards LAN courses, students do readily see the application of the courses and why they are taught. Students do not link what they learn in LAN to their other courses because LAN does not properly link the courses. Since they are compulsory, students have no choice but to attend the classes and work on all assessment work. This lack of appreciation has downgraded the course. Similarly some subject lecturers do not see the need of the course because it has not improved anything in the students' language needs. Students' work is getting poorer while there is a

department that is meant to reduce that problem; this has resulted in lack of appreciation to the duties of the department. In the end, subject lecturers find themselves teaching students some academic skills, something which was to be handled by a LAN lecturer; this would not be the case if there was collaboration.

Furthermore, LAN lecturers are faced with an attitude problem from students and sometimes subject lecturers. What they teach is undermined by students who do not see a need of the course; and lecturers who overlook what LAN courses require of the students in marking students' work.

The study has highlighted some challenges that have contributed to the failure of the course. It is hard to be specific to needs of disciplines without LAN lecturers' specific training in the discourse of particular disciplines. There are problems of poor English that have lowered the current standards of education and the department of LACS is faced with this major challenge. The level of students is low for the LAN lecturers to tackle academic skills that are to be applied in first year and beyond without dealing with the problem of grammar. Teaching of academic skills without dealing with the problem of grammar has made LAN course not to fully achieve its aims; eventually, there is a lack of appreciation of the course by the majority of the stakeholders.

The study has therefore drawn some recommendations (implications) from the analysis which, if considered in one way or another, will help in the achievement of the course's aims. More importantly, these can help to limit the problem of negative attitude towards the course.

5.2   *Implications of the Study*

1. There is need for LAN to incorporate students' needs in developing the outline of the topics on the syllabus. After the course is taught, what is important and what is not can be checked. EAP must take into account what students need first; not just anything. Students have complained that writing is taught very late (in the second semester) when they have already written a number of

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assignments. Writing skills should be taught first to motivate the students. Writing skills should be taught in the first weeks of first semester not in the second semester as it is now. Some of the topics like reading and listening skills should be taught briefly during orientation week – and more elaborately later on to give room for writing as the first skill on the course outline. Furthermore, speaking skills should be prioritised throughout the course.

2. The course should aim at making students participate fully throughout, by making it practical. More practice based teaching techniques should be used to make the course more relevant. It should aim at developing all language skills with a lot of practice thereby making it more of skill-imparting than examination-oriented as it is currently perceived by students.

3. LACS Department should make considerations about the attitudes of students towards LAN courses: it should not just be learnt for grades' sake. This is a response to students' negative attitude towards the course; they are just learning because it is compulsory. Although first year students are told the importance of the course during orientation, there is still need to keep on emphasising this during the course in order to enhance seriousness towards the course. They have to be motivated, only then will they learn the course with an open mind. One way of achieving this is use of specific subject material as the content of LAN courses in which case the department of LACS has to know what the needs of students regarding the various courses are, and bring them into the LAN classroom. This may help to correct the current lack of interest towards LAN courses.

4. There is need for the course to pay special attention to students with special needs in terms of its approach to ensure that the concerned students benefit fully from the course. The department should as well as the College should explore appropriate approaches to teaching students with special needs.. This can be done with an aim of also orienting other subject lectures on handling students

with special needs. An effort was made by the department of LACS to link with teachers of school for the blind and deaf at Montfort, this was commendable and can be pursued further.

5. LACS department should consider issues of grammar. Remedial measures should be introduced to overcome poor English speaking among students. One of these measures might be the production of English language through a lot of speaking and writing exercises. Secondly, there should be an inclusion of basic grammar component in the syllabus which would encompass topics where common mistakes can be remedied by content based readings and exercises. The latter can be optional to the students. Further to this, LAN lecturers have to liaise with the Ministry of Education so that secondary school teachers should emphasise teaching of language in context to tackle grammar problems and repair the damage done to education by poor teaching of English.

6. LAN courses should be extended to fourth year and remain compulsory; or one or two topics of LAN carried on to the second year or third year research methods. LACS department should also teach some topics at an advanced level as a way of following up its students' performance up to the project presentation level in fourth year. This is because at first year they learn in a vacuum but if it will be taught in the subsequent years as well, when the skills are actually applied, it may arouse students' interest in the course.

7. There is a great need for collaboration between the departments of LACS and respective students' departments. LACS department should conduct seminars with lecturers and students to discuss LAN skills that are applicable; and, programme-specific needs. Another suggestion relating to this is that LAN lecturers should regularly consult with departments to identify their needs in relation to LAN (a needs analysis). The starting point can be where the department of LACS invites stakeholders to a round table of students and lecturers and look at the problems they have with the syllabus.

8. The department of LACS should improve its capacity and mobilize its resources. It should aim at increasing staff numbers to reduce lecturer: student ratio; and employ tutors who can help with checking of students' work during class exercises and practical work. Additionally, the department should aim at sourcing an increase in resources like, teaching materials and equipment, photocopying paper, and photocopying services, because the course demands that student learn with a lot of visual and audio aid.

9. LAN lecturers need to undergo specialised training in different disciplines for efficient delivery of the material in the specific programmes. Knowledge of what goes on in other courses is vital. General language teaching training and a background in English is not sufficient in the case of Chancellor College, where discipline specific language skills are required. LAN lecturers need an access to specialised training to enable them to effectively teach language with a disciplinary content.

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APPENDIX 1: STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

University of Malawi

Chancellor College

Students' Questionnaire on Teaching of English for Academic Purposes at Chancellor College.

My name is Rachel Chimbwete Phiri, I am doing postgraduate studies in the English Department. My area of concern is analysing the current approaches in teaching of Language and Communications Skills at Chancellor College. I therefore seek your participation in this study as you fill in this questionnaire. Your answers/responses will help in my evaluation of the courses, and perhaps in future, contribute to better teaching methodologies. Therefore, I count on your help, without your participation my objectives will not be fulfilled. **Your participation, however, is entirely at will**, **you are free not to participate.**

It's Important to Note: Filling in this questionnaire means that you are willing to participate in this study.

PERSONAL DETAILS

1. Age: _____

2. Sex: Male [ ]   Female [ ]

3. Programme:_____

4. Course Combination: _____

        _____

   1. In your opinion, when is the right time to learn Language and Communication Skills? (tick appropriate box)

In First Year, as is currently the case. [ ]

In second Year [ ]

In third Year [ ]

In fourth Year [ ]

In all the years (first to fourth year) [ ]

Other (specify)_____

2. At what point have you found Language and Communication material applicable?

From the beginning [ ]

In the second semester of first year [ ]

In second Year [ ]

In third year [ ]

In fourth year [ ]

Never [ ]

3. How can you describe your general attitude towards LAN courses?

I enjoyed it very much [ ]

I enjoyed it a little [ ]

I never enjoyed it [ ]

Other (specify)_____

4. Which topics did you find useful in the course? (tick all that apply)

Study Skills (Listening and Reading) [ ]

Speaking Skills [ ]

Writing [ ]

Referencing and Citations [ ]

None [ ]

Other (specify)_____

5. Did you find the material used in the course (e.g. comprehension, summary passages) relevant to your area of study?

        Absolutely Yes   [ ]

        To some extent   [ ]

        Not at all   [ ]

        Can't tell   [ ]

6. How should content of the course be organized throughout the course?

➢ By using materials from specific subjects that students are doing?   [ ]

➢ By general material   [ ]

➢ By combining from students' specific subjects and general material[ ]

➢ I don't have an idea   [ ]

6b. Explain the reason for your choice above

_____

_____

_____

7. In your opinion, what is the best way to classify LAN courses?

        By programme (- as they currently are)   [ ]

        By specific courses/subjects that students are doing   [ ]

        Generalised for all programmes   [ ]

        Other (Specify)_____

7b. Explain the reason for your choice

_____

_____

8. In your opinion, what are the appropriate teaching or learning techniques for LAN courses? (tick all that apply).

        Pair work   [ ]

        Small group work   [ ]

        Individual Exercises   [ ]

        Students' presentations   [ ]

        Work involving technical subject matter   [ ]

        Lecturer just to present the material   [ ]

        Class Discussions   [ ]

        Other(specify)_____

9. What do you think is the best way of assessing LAN courses? (tick all that apply)

        Class exercises   [ ]

        Periodical Essays   [ ]

        End of term Examinations   [ ]

        Oral Presentations   [ ]

        Other (specify)_____

10. How can you rate your overall evaluation of the LAN course that you did while in first year?

        Very useful   [ ]

        Useful   [ ]

        Slightly useful   [ ]

        Not useful   [ ]

        Other(specify)_____

11. What can you comment on the delivery process of the LAN course that you did, in terms of the following?

Please give your views by ticking a box for each point

	Excellent	Satisfactory	Poor
Organisation of the content			
Lecturer's presentation of the lesson			
Availability of resources/ materials			
Opportunity to practice during the course			
Interest of the topics			
Pace of the lessons			

12. What would you consider to be one major strength in the LAN course that you did?

_____

_____

_____

13. What would you consider to be one major weakness in the LAN course that you did?

_____

_____

_____

14. What is your suggestion on how LAN courses should be handled?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

15. Any additional comments about LAN courses?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for Your Help

APPENDIX 2: SUBJECT LECTURERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

University of Malawi

Chancellor College

Lecturers' Questionnaire on Teaching of English for Academic Purposes at Chancellor College.

My name is Rachel Chimbwete Phiri, I am doing postgraduate studies in the English Department. My area of concern is teaching of English for Academic Purposes and I am analysing the current approaches in teaching of Language and Communications Skills at Chancellor College. I therefore request your participation in this study by filling this questionnaire. Your answers/responses will help in my analysis of the courses, and perhaps in future, contribute to better teaching methodologies. Therefore, I count on your help; without your participation my objectives will not be fulfilled. **Your participation, however, is entirely at will**, **you are free not to participate.**

It's Important to Note: Filling in and returning this questionnaire means that you are willing to participate in this study.

PERSONAL DETAILS

1. Sex   Male   [   ]   Female   [   ]

2. Faculty: _____

3. Course(s) taught:

_____

_____

4. Position:_____

1. Do you have knowledge of the nature of Language and communication Skills that are taught to students here at Chancellor College?

     YES   [ ]

     NO   [ ]

     Partly   [ ]

2. How can you rate the overall performance of your students in terms of English language competence in their speech?

     Excellent   [ ]

     Satisfactory [ ]

     Poor   [ ]

     Other (specify)_____

3. How can you rate the overall performance of your students in terms of English language competence in their written work?

     Excellent   [ ]

     Satisfactory [ ]

     Poor   [ ]

     Other (specify)_____

4. Have you ever approached a LAN lecturer to present what you would like your students to learn, or discussed any students' needs in accordance to what you require in your respective subject?

     Yes   [ ]

     No   [ ]

     Other (specify) _____

     If Yes, Go to 4a.

4a. When did you do that?

_____

5. Do you teach your students what they are required to do in their academic writing for example, referencing conventions, essay/report structure etc?

        Yes   [ ]

        No.   [ ]

        Some of them [ ]

5b. If Yes: What areas do you emphasise? (Please, tick all that apply)

        Referencing conventions   [ ]

        Structure of essays/ reports   [ ]

        Development of arguments   [ ]

        Incorporation of theories   [ ]

        Other (specify)_____

6. In evaluating students' work (i.e. essays and reports) what do you focus on to rate an academic essay/ report as "good" or "successful"? (*Please tick all that apply*)

        Grammar accuracy   [ ]

        Use of Citations/ Proper referencing   [ ]

        Bibliographic Presentations   [ ]

        Content   [ ]

        Organisation of the essay   [ ]

        Other (specify)_____

7. What are the mistakes that you consider serious when marking students' work? *(Please tick all that apply)*

Improper referencing   [ ]

Poor essay/report organization   [ ]

No link between ideas   [ ]

Other (specify)_____

8. Which is (are) the preferred referencing conventions in your subject?

      American Psychologists Association (A.P.A) Style [   ]

      Modern Language Association (M.L.A.) Style   [   ]

      Harvard Style   [   ]

      Chicago Manual Style   [   ]

      I don't know   [   ]

      Other (Specify)_____

9. In your opinion, what is the best way to classify LAN courses?

      By programme, as they currently are   [   ]

      By students' specific courses   [   ]

      Generalised regardless of programme and course   [   ]

      Other (specify)_____

10. Overall, what do you consider to be the major strengths of the LAN programme here at Chancellor College?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

11. Overall, what do you consider to be the major weaknesses of the LAN programme here at Chancellor College?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

12. What suggestions can you give to the improvement of the LAN courses?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

13. Any additional comments?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for Your Help.

APPENDIX 3: LAN LECTURERS' INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS LECTURERS

Sex: Male [   ]   Female [   ]

Position:_____

Course:_____

Other Courses taught:_____

Qualifications:_____

1. What are the main factors that you put into consideration when preparing your notes for teaching?

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

2. How do you handle content when teaching the following skills?

   Listening?

   _____
   _____

   Writing?_____

   _____
   _____

   Speaking?_____

   _____
   _____

Reading?_____

_____

_____

3. What makes the content of your course relevant to the students' programme?

_____

_____

_____

4. How do you adapt your teaching content to the specific programmes of study?

_____

_____

_____

5. Have you ever produced your material for teaching?

_____

_____

_____

6. Have you ever found out what writing conventions are required in particular courses that your students are taking? / Are you aware of the writing conventions or what is expected of students in the particular programmes that you teach?

_____

_____

_____

7. Apart from assessing them in your course, have you ever followed up the progress of your students' work in the other courses?

_____

_____

_____

8. What do you think is the best way of grouping/classifying the LAN courses?

By programmes of study, as they currently are	[ ]
By course	[ ]
Generalised for all	[ ]
Other?	[ ]

8b. What is the reason for choosing that one?

_____

_____

_____

9. What do you think is the best approach to teaching LAN, the subject-specific approach or the wide angle/ general approach?

_____

_____

_____

10. Do you face any challenges in teaching the course?

_____

_____

10a. So far, what are the challenges that you are facing in teaching LAN?

_____

_____

_____

_____

11. What would you consider the major strength of the LAN programme?

_____

_____

_____

_____

12. What would you consider the major weakness of the LAN programme?

_____

_____

_____

_____

13. Any additional Comments?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for Your Help.