RMIT UNIVERSITY

Graduate School of Business

Experiential learning for a globalised workforce:
Responses by Secondary Schools

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Business Administration

By Vivianne Nikou
Declaration – Certificate of Authorship

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made the work is that of the author above, the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of this thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; and any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged.

Vivianne Nikou
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To have undertaken this professional journey says more about the values and tenacity Vasilios and Theodora Nikou instilled in me than it says about me. I am indeed very privileged to have had the parents and family I was born into.
Abstract

The globalisation process and its impact on business and employability competencies have gained greater prominence in government agendas in the past decade. This is a study of how secondary schools in Australia have responded to the need for their students to have global skills and attributes as set out in National Schools’ Curriculum Agenda, formulated under the current Federal Government’s ‘Education Revolution’ Agenda alongside the expectations of Business and Industry. The rapid expansion of knowledge and access to information coupled with the complexity of issues facing young people, suggests that if the next generation is to succeed as a ‘knowledge nation’, young people must be equipped with appropriate global skills. Skills such as: habits of mind, flexibility, tolerance, creativity, diversity, as well as having a depth of personal development, social, spatial and temporal capacities. Without a well developed sense of civic beliefs, values and environmental awareness, young people will not have the desired multi-dimensional capabilities to be global citizens of the future and become adaptive and flexible employees in the ever changing marketplace.

In the 21st century, young people who understand the dynamics of global economic and intellectual relations and can develop the necessary skills and competencies to navigate that landscape will have a distinct advantage in securing good jobs. Business, education and political leaders are grappling with the question of how to produce workers and citizens who can remain competitive in a world that is becoming more globalised. Education is seen to be one of the key contributors to the nation’s economic, social and cultural development. In addition to the activities relating to teaching and learning and research, education also provides activities that have both economic and social benefits such as knowledge transfer and community engagement.

Educational providers play a key role in human capital development and innovation systems. Growth and innovation cluster in areas where there are concentrations of skilled and creative globally-aware workers who are able to engage in research and develop infrastructure for innovation. The nations that create the best conditions for growth and development of their resources increasingly have a competitive advantage.

The challenge for educators, therefore, is for them to create situations which replicate learning experiences that will relate to situations outside the classroom. Educational providers are considering learning as well as teaching, and are rethinking how people learn to develop learning approaches that will better match the skills and attributes needed for a mobile workforce of the future.

Using an Interpretivist research paradigm, the researcher conducted semi-structured and in-depth interviews with students from four different schools. The students in their years of schooling had
been provided with experiential learning programs which attempted to impart life-long learning skills and attributes preparing them for entering into a more globalised workforce.

According to the students’ accounts of their experience the most important findings from this research indicate that the experiential programs under examination all provided their students with global capabilities such as managing cross cultural ethics, managing change and uncertainty, thinking agility, conflict management, community building and negotiating skills which would better prepare them for the ever-changing global workforce of the future. While these capabilities could be acquired in a variety of ways, the experiential programs under consideration reflected their schools’ stated aims of preparing their students for a globalised workforce and the developing sustainable and life-long learning skills.

This study concludes that the young people in the sample had a positive and reaffirming exposure to their experiential learning program, where it would be reasonable to assume that experiential learning programs may be positively contributing to young people’s ability to acquire life-long global skill, competencies and attributes, that could enhance their entry into the workforce and may lead to a more able workforce in a globalised world.

The degree to which each school was able to directly contribute to their students’ skill acquisition suggests that experiential programs, similar to those under examination in this study, have a valuable role to play in the continuum of learning for young people. The programs also highlight that learning for sustainable development and life-long learning need to have a practical and active element for the learner.

The framework used to analyse the experiential programs under examination offered a basic design template for developing experiential learning programs suitable to the Middle Years of Schooling and which responds well to the Federal Government Curriculum Agenda as well as to business and industry needs.
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CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

The real object of education is to give children resources that will endure as long as life endures; habits that time will ameliorate, not destroy; occupation that will render sickness tolerable, solitude pleasant, age venerable, life more dignified and useful (Smith 1844).

1.1 Statement of the basic problem – background and context

This thesis is written at a time when there is a greater emphasis on the necessary skills and competencies young people entering the workforce will need in a more globalised world and the role education will need to play to better prepare them. The Australian Federal Government created a National Curriculum Board to examine the knowledge, understandings and skills that students will be expected to develop to become successful learners, confident individuals and active and informed citizens. – thus shaping the National Curriculum Framework against a changing education context and the role it plays in forming the young people who will take responsibility for Australia in the future. In building Australia’s future the Federal Government is articulating the need for schooling to change.

The National Curriculum Board’s remit requires it to develop a National Curriculum that sets core content and achievement standards that are expected of each student at each stage of schooling as defined in the current Australian Curriculum documents.

The educational goals for young Australians have been articulated within a global context which has examined the rapid expansion of knowledge and access to information. Coupled with the complexity of issues facing young people joining the workforce, they will need to have a range of attributes and skills to be able to live and work in an ever expanding, competitive, international workforce. To better position themselves in the workplace of the future, young people will need to receive and be involved in an education process that self-consciously extends beyond the experiences of a traditional classroom. If students are to be competitive in the employment market then their skills and credentials will need to have international currency and be transferable from one setting to another.

Leaders in government, education and the business world have articulated strongly that for the next generation of young Australians to succeed as a knowledge nation, young people may need to be equipped with skills such as habits of mind, flexibility, tolerance, creativity, diversity as well as have a depth of personal development, social, spatial and temporal capacities. Without a well developed sense of civic beliefs, values and environmental awareness, young people will not have the multi-dimensional requirements to operate globally. This context provides a backdrop to research what global capabilities students’ need to possess to enter and continue to work in
today’s mobile global workforce and how these capabilities are best acquired while young people are preparing to enter the workforce.

1.2 Motives and Goals

The motive behind this research was multi-dimensional. The researcher has twenty years experience as an educator and comes from a culturally diverse background, has studied foreign languages and lived and worked overseas. The researcher is passionate about preparing young people to perform capably, ethically and sensitively in professional and social contexts in both international and multicultural spheres.

The researcher believes in encouraging cross cultural competence, not just for Australia but for the world, where young people need an understanding and capability in more than just generic abilities such as how to identify historical sites and eat exotic food. This is in part driven by the researcher’s own experience of growing up in a predominantly Anglo-Saxon suburb where many people had a very limited understanding of the world beyond their immediate geographic proximity.

The researcher wanted to contribute to the debate around the impact of initiatives put in place by secondary schools in response to the anticipated attributes young people will need in order to be successful in positioning themselves in the workforce of the future.

Further to this, having been heavily involved in the implementation of a unique experiential program, the researcher was intensely curious to see if the response to her own school initiative was having the desired impact and whether experiential programs in other schools, which are quite different in their nature, were having a similar impact.

1.3 The Need for Schooling to Change

The growth of globalisation has required educators and the business world to identify the skills and attributes that students must have to become well rounded citizens. Education plays an important role in shaping the young people who will take responsibility for Australia’s future. To engage in this role effectively, education must address the ‘intellectual, personal, social and economic development of young Australians’ and it must do so in circumstances where the national conception of the goals of education are changing and will continue to evolve (National Curriculum Board 2008, p. 1).

This has placed mounting pressure on schools to change outcomes from the demands of internal and external factors, as the following diagram illustrates.
Figure 1 – Pressure on Schools to Change (Degenhardt 2006, p. 47)

Degenhardt (2006) observes that schools are expected to fix the ever widening tear in the social fabric. They are expected not only to be the means of effecting social change but also to fix national and international areas of concern. There are increased expectations of what schools can and should do and they are progressively more held accountable for matters formerly outside the ambit of schools’ responsibility and which occur outside school hours. As families change and they become smaller, varying forms, and face different pressures, gender roles are also changing and work-life balance is becoming a major issue. All these issues impact not only on the parents of students but also on staff members within contemporary schools. Further, the needs of students are constantly changing, for example Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has changed the way that young people organise their lives, relate to each other, and learn. Schools are no longer deemed to have a monopoly on learning.

Degenhardt (2006) argues that schools need to move from a 19th century ‘one size fits all’ approach to learning and organisation to a model of schooling and education more appropriate for the knowledge society of the 21st century. To bring about effective change within such a system, a contemplative, holistic approach is sought where the approach combines flexibility, humility, collaboration, humour and mutual respect, and where students can build knowledge, skills and attributes which will contribute to a successful career and work environment in a globalised world. The globalisation of a student’s education is seen as an integral part of an education system that seeks to produce globally ready citizens.
1.4 Changes over the Past 20 years with Implications for Education

Prepared under the auspices of the Ministerial Council of Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), the draft National Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA 2008) nominated the following major changes that over the twenty years since the Ministers’ first collaborative statement on goals for schooling in their 1989 Hobart Declaration (MCEETYA 1989), have altered the way in which the citizens of the world interact with each other.

- Increasing global integration and interdependence, as well as increased mobility and migration, are driving the need for greater religious tolerance, an appreciation of cultural diversity and a sense of global citizenship and commitment to peaceful conflict resolution among all Australians.
- India, China and other Asia-Pacific nations are growing and strengthening their impact on the world, representing a huge shift in geopolitical power and sparking the need for all Australians to become ‘Asia literate’.
- Globalisation and technological change also place an ever increasing premium on successful education and skill development.
- Increasingly complex environmental pressures that extend beyond national borders – such as climate change – pose unprecedented challenges, requiring countries with different priorities to work together in ways never before achieved.
- Rapid and continuing advances in ICT are changing the way we share, use, develop and process information and technology, and there has been a massive shift in power – to consumers in general, and to learners specifically. (MCEETYA 2008, p. 3)

The challenge is that schooling must not only deal with these changes but also, to some extent, anticipate futures that are distant and seen only dimly. Almost all young Australians who begin primary school in 2011 will continue their initial education until 2022. Many will go on to post-secondary education and not complete their initial education until the mid-2020s and later. Curriculum influences how well young Australians are prepared for their futures as it sets the level of expectation of learning. High-performing countries will continue to set high expectations. They will need to support the fulfilment of those expectations with high-quality teaching, school and system leadership, and commitment and support from families, communities, business and industry.

1.5 Educational Goals for Young Australians

In Australia, the National Curriculum Board’s curricula for English, Mathematics, the Sciences and History has specific goals and is guided by the National Declaration on Educational Goals for
Young Australians adopted by Ministers. The National Declaration (MCEETYA 2008, p. 13) declares commitment ‘to supporting all young Australians to become successful learners, confident individuals and active and informed citizens’ and to promoting equity in education.

1.6 Dimensions of Citizenship

According to Tudball (2004) the dimensions of citizenship for the new century includes the following attributes:

- A personal capacity for and commitment to a civic ethic characterised by responsible habits of mind, heart and action
- The capacity to live and work together for civic purpose
- The capacity to see oneself as a member of several overlapping communities – local, regional, national and multinational
- The capacity to locate challenges in the past, present to future; a sense of heritage and an eye to the future, in touch with reality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSONAL</th>
<th>SOCIAL</th>
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<th>SPATIAL</th>
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Table 1.1 - Dimensions of Citizenship (Cogan & Derricott 2000, p. 258)

1.6.1 Contents of a Multi-dimensional Citizenship Education

The desired outcomes of the education process for young people according to Tudball (2004) should address:

- The building of a knowledge base for civic beliefs and skills for civic participation
- The acquisition of dispositions and predilections that provide the foundation for civic attitudes and beliefs
- The process of developing understanding, skills and values consistent with the notion of sustainable development
An education system that has as its core values a response to these challenges and provides the pillars for multi-dimensional citizenship to develop in its student community will, according to Tudball (2003), better equip students to fully engage and participate in their futures. Hence education will be the key to the new global economy, from primary school onwards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CIVIC EDUCATION</th>
<th>VALUES EDUCATION</th>
<th>ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION</th>
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*Table 1.2 - Contents of a Multi-dimensional Citizenship Education (Cogan & Derricott 2000, p. 258)*

1.6.2 Why do the times we are in necessitate global citizenship?

In the early 21st century new global realities call for a major reconsideration by educators and policy makers of how young people are prepared to participate in democratic societies. There are new challenges and opportunities for countries seeking to nourish and preserve democratic values and institutions. Castles (1997) discusses multicultural and multi-dimensional citizenship as being formed in a variety of social and cultural contexts. Cogan (2004) argues that multi-dimensional citizenship can only occur if a student becomes part of the globalisation process.

1.6.3 Why global citizenship? The nature of our school populations

- Students in Australian schools today are now more likely than ever before to be a mix of global nomads and ‘third culture’ citizens
- The flows of multi-ethnic and multi-lingual students are growing
- Students are also engaged in global flows through ICT, the media and consumerism
- A knowledge economy and knowledge society are increasingly a marketable commodity
- An ageing population is creating competition for workers in ‘the skills race’
- International mobility and flexibility is in demand and at the heart of the skills race
- Exchange, language learning, creativity, tolerance and integration of and with diverse populations is an essential attribute. (Cogan 2001)

Consequently it could be argued that the School sector is well positioned to provide an integrated experience across all its learning programs for all its students.

1.6.4 How can we develop young global citizens in the future?

The Citizenship Education Policy Study project (Cogan 1997; 2001) – a four year, cross-national and cross-cultural study – solicited trends and opinions from policy shapers in nine nations. It
sought to discover what types of professional and social skills and understanding students will
need internationally as citizens in the future.

They concluded that students require the following skills and attributes (Cogan 2001):

- The ability to look at problems globally
- The ability to work cooperatively and take responsibilities for roles/ duties in society
- The ability to understand, accept and tolerate cultural differences
- The capacity to think in a critical and systematic way
- The willingness to resolve conflict in a non-violent manner
- The willingness to change one’s lifestyle and habits to protect the environment
- Think, reflect and act in rational, reasonable and ethically defensible ways
- Ability to be sensitive towards and to defend human rights
- Ability to participate in politics at local, national and international levels
- Have a sense of their own identity, encompassing multi-dimensional citizenship.

1.7 Purpose of this Study

1.7.1 Contribution to professional practice

In response to this challenge the researcher proposed to explore a variety of models implemented
by secondary schools that desired to develop young people holistically with the attributes of multi-
dimensional citizenship. Through this study the purpose was to gain greater knowledge of the
formal and informal learning process as it occurs in experiential programs relating to specific
themes of global capabilities. To enhance professional practice in secondary schools as they
prepare for the introduction of the Australian National Curriculum. A further search of the
literature refined the researcher’s knowledge in this area and developed specific skills and
capabilities that education, business and government wanted from graduates. This was done with
an examination of selected co-curricular programs in secondary schools to determine the ability of
these programs to meet the challenges in this area.

The main theme contemplated in the development of the research was the exploration and
interpretation made by a select number of secondary educational programs in Victoria and their
ability to deliver:

- requisite competencies (as perceived by the participants) and

- attributes for multi-dimensional citizenship necessary for flexible global employment

Subsequent questions which were also considered included:
What kinds of attributes are valued currently?
How are schools responding to the demand for developing these attributes?
Do the attributes have connections with the workplace of the 21st century?

In response to the first collaborative statement of goals for schooling in the 1989 Hobart Declaration (MCEETYA 1989), the changing emphasis promoted by educational institutions has been the acceptance that young people need a set of generic attributes which will better equip them for a globally mobile workforce. Emphasis on developing global citizenship is not new to the Education agenda as the following educators have noted.

‘Education should enable Australian citizens to participate in the present debates about our future with a better awareness of the legacy of the past...and it should assist them to act as informed, confident, tolerant citizens, secure in their rights and their responsibilities as members of a diverse and inclusive society’ (Civics Expert Group 1994, p. 27).

‘A future-focused curriculum demands approaches which see these interconnections and fosters knowledge, skills and values that equip young people to involve themselves in building solutions’ (Curriculum Corporation 2002).

‘Schooling should fully develop the talents and capacities of all students...they should understand and acknowledge the value of cultural and linguistic diversity, and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, such diversity in the Australian Community and internationally’ (MCEETYA 2000).

Educators are being asked to have a responsibility and to ensure that education contributes to the promotion of equity, peace, social justice and the universal realisation of human rights. Curricular and instructional programs are aiming to develop in every person: self-respect, social awareness and the capacity to participate at all levels of world society from local to global. Understanding national and international events such as the Bali bombings, international terrorism, wars in Afghanistan and Iraq illustrate the importance of global contexts. There appears to be a coalescence of momentum from grassroots levels in school communities, as well as by the National Goals for Schooling to build knowledge outcomes and broader social and equity outcomes for young people.

The tertiary sector has also responded and has made a commitment to the basic principles of developing successful learners. Teaching and Learning in many degree courses encompasses an international and culturally diverse curriculum and learning community, with an adaptive curriculum that will better prepare graduates for living and working in a global community.

Universities expect their graduates to have, amongst other attributes:

• well developed cognitive, analytical and problem solving skills
• the capacity for independent and critical thought, rational inquiry and self-directed learning
• an international awareness and openness to the world, based on understanding an appreciation of social and civic responsibilities and to speak out against prejudice, injustice and the abuse of power.

These attributes are well supported by the following comments from the Vice-Chancellor of Melbourne University Glyn Davis:

‘University educators are now realising that the students of today and tomorrow need to be able to handle more complex knowledge and concepts, and this can be done more successfully at graduate level. At undergraduate level, today’s students need to get deep discipline content and breadth of academic experience and develop the capacity to negotiate their way successfully in a world where knowledge boundaries are shifting and re-forming to create new frontiers and challenges almost daily’ (Fearn 2009).

Don Markwell, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Education at the University of Western Australia explained that ‘The focus on greater breadth and on skills that help students deal with rapid growth and change of knowledge is a response to the particular needs of the 21st century – a time of global forces and rapid change’ (Fearn 2009, p. 3).

Bryan MacGregor, chairman of the curriculum commission said ‘it’s our duty as university academics to review how and what we teach.’ The University of Aberdeen decided on the qualities it wanted to see in its graduates that cover four broad areas. One is a set linked to academic excellence; another is linked to critical thinking and effective communication; the third set is the openness to learning and personal development; and the fourth is about preparing for citizenship (Fearn 2009, p. 3).

Further to this, Don Barry, the new President of the University of Limerick said,

‘Today’s employers are looking for someone who has a very well-rounded skill set. They want people who can communicate effectively, can function at a high level, both while working alone and as a team player. An education for a constantly changing world has to train students in a special way of thinking: one that leads them to see connections across disciplines, to notice what the tradition has valued and what it has neglected and to challenge their own conclusions and commitments’ (Fearn 2009, p. 3).

1.8 Rationale

The broad research questions for this study were: in the context of the experiential programs of the Middle School years, where skill acquisition and multidimensional citizenship competencies are targeted by educators, what are the necessary global business capabilities students need to have to enter a mobile global workforce and how do they best acquire these capabilities? To answer these questions the initial research focussed on what capabilities are needed to work in the
multidimensional contexts according to schools, government and industry. The research then evaluated how these capabilities can be integrated into school programs through experiential programs.

The information available from schools about these programs reveals several strong congruent elements amongst them all. This research aimed to examine:

- The elements of the experiential programs which bring out the global skills and competencies required by the business world for future employability
- What elements of the programs might be incorporated into mainstream schooling.

This research aimed to add to the discussion about the wider employment of experiential learning programs as a means of addressing the disengagement and disaffection associated with the middle years of schooling and, as such, the contribution they can make to future educational outcomes.

1.9 Literature Search

Prior to the collection of primary data, a comprehensive literature search was conducted to ensure enough relevant background material existed to develop the proposed line of thinking. One key element of the literature search was to determine an agreed set of attributes and skills required for multi-dimensional citizenship and global business competency. Following this approach the researcher accessed a selection of public domain documents published by secondary schools that provide co-curricular programs claiming to foster the agreed set of skills and attributes in young people. These were then compared against the needs of government and industry. These themes were then evaluated against the practice of established experiential programs in secondary schools.

1.10 Primary Data generation

1.10.1 Methodology

The research design used an Interpretivist paradigm with an inductive and abductive research strategy. Having been heavily involved with one school’s response to this theme the researcher was well placed to explore the interviewee responses from the ‘inside’ – a key characteristic of Interpretivism (Blaikie 2001, p. 25). The purpose of the various programs was explored further through personal accounts from participants in the various programs designed by their schools.

Using an abductive strategy in the final analysis, links were drawn from the public domain documents and the participants’ experiences to further validate the researcher’s perceptions of the students’ experiences and the schools’ responses in relation to global competencies needed in the future. The researcher wished to enter both the schools’ and the participants’ worlds to discover
the motives and reasons that underpinned the responses and activities and to draw meaningful conclusions (Blaikie 2001, p. 25).

1.10.2 Selection of data generation techniques

The researcher sought to gather first-hand information from the interviewees with respect to the perception of their experiences and what skills the participants believe they gained from the experience. While general theories about the nature of social phenomena can be developed as a result of interviewing as many participants as possible, for the purposes of this research the interviewees were studied in a semi-natural setting participating in focus group discussions about the activities in which they engaged. Given the time lapse necessary between most interviewees participation in their school programs and their ability to reflect with some meaning on their experiences, it was anticipated that focus group discussions of five to six people would both encourage memories and stimulate active discussion in this area.

Four secondary schools each with a focus group of up to six respondents took part in sharing their experiences. A total of twenty-one interviewees participated, with the discussion lasting for two to three hours. The nature of the interviewing was semi-structured so as to provide a common platform for analysis while leaving some scope for an open ended interview technique to be applied in order to explore the perceived benefits and outcomes of the individual experiences.

The scope of the research did not lend itself well to the collection of quantitative data and the nature of the questions being explained required more than an ‘agree strongly’ or ‘do not agree’ continuum type questionnaire.

Participants reflected on their experiences openly and used the discussion groups to compare and contrast their own perceptions of their experiences and intended outcomes to those of the other interviewees.

Further sets of follow-up interviews were conducted over the following six years as participants gained different perspectives of their experiences. Participants were asked to reflect of the initial experience and the subsequent growth.

1.10.3 Selection of interviewees

The research included interviews from young people who had undertaken co-curricular experiences provided by their secondary schools whilst they were members of that school community and who have subsequently completed their studies and/or are entering the workforce. The study followed their growth and development ages of 18 – 24 years old.

Interviewees included past participants from the following schools:
• Caulfield Grammar School - an International response – China (five week experience)
• Methodist Ladies College - a high country response – Marshmead (one term experience)
• St Joseph’s College Ferntree Gully - a discrete experiential response (one year experience)
• Lauriston Girls’ School – an outdoor highland outward bound response (one year experience)

Given that the programs in the above mentioned schools have been running for varying lengths of time, this sample was adequate to draw reasonable responses and be sufficiently representative for comparative analysis both within the same school experiences and across schools (Blaikie 2001, p. 30).

Recognising the qualitative nature of this research, the interviews were used to produce descriptions, establish and chronicle a range of perceptions across the various experiences. The researcher also analysed the content of reflective journals kept by the participants during the programs. From these results it was possible to make informed inferences from the population from which the sample was drawn. Further to this, the researcher conducted follow-up interviews with participants once they had entered employment or completed further studies. This was to compare longitudinally the relevance of their skills and attributes obtained during their participation in the experiential program.

1.11 Problems and Limitations

While this method of interviewing provided a diversity of experiences and responses from the interviewees there was be some cross fertilisation and collaboration of answers as respondents were influenced by the reflections and experiences of others in the discussion group.

Where this appeared to be surfacing in the discussions the interviewer recorded their impressions of what they saw developing from the interviews. Where the interviewer felt the answers of particular participants were being influenced then the interviewer explored issues further with specific individuals. Overall impressions and subsequent discussions constituted additional data.

1.12 Analysis of Findings

The aim of this research was to enter the debate about how schools have responded to the challenges of providing programs in their schools which best help prepare young people for multi-dimensional citizenship and be active participants in their employment futures. This approach compared the themes in the literature against the examination of the various schools’ responses to the challenges, coupled with the participants’ reflections. The analysis highlighted the range of attributes necessary for multi-dimensional citizenship and the typification of those best positioned to embrace the learning.
1.13 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a background to the study and outlined the context for educational change, the goals in National Curriculum Framework and the means by which successful learners can build their skills to be active participants in the learning process. The experiential programs, that were examined, aimed to allow students to apply their learning, skills and attributes to the multi-dimensional requirements of global citizenship which will better prepare them for the workforce of the future.

In the 21st century young people who have and who understand the dynamics of global economic and intellectual relations will have a distinct advantage in the workplace. Business, education and political leaders are grappling with the challenge of defining the key skills and competencies young learners will need and how best to prepare an educational pathway that will produce workers and citizens who can remain competitive in a world that is fast becoming ‘borderless’. The challenge, for educators particularly, is how they can create situations which replicate real life learning experiences which will prepare them for, and relate to, situations outside the classroom.

Educational academics (Andrews & Tyson 2004, Cerotti 2009) have begun the process of mapping key competencies and attributes onto employability skills and defining specific skills globally competent graduates should have. This chapter examined the context for change taking place in schools and the need for reframing how teaching can better prepare students for independent learning; and the foundations for preparing global skills and attributes.

A varied response to the challenges ahead will give flexibility and aid choices made by the parents and the students involved. The results of investigating these issues form the basis of this study’s contribution to the educational debate.

The following chapter will examine global business capabilities; the theories of learning; and the retention of life-long learning skills which will equip students for active engagement with the workforce of the future.
CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review

A Theory of Business – Theories of Educational Learning

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter examined the context for change in educational programs and the global competencies students will need to have to remain competitive in the employment market of the future. Educational reform has meant a move from a traditional teacher centred learning environment to a more experiential, collaborative and integrated student centred learning community that incorporates higher order thinking skills. These skills will ultimately develop more globally competent graduates, who will be ready for active engagement with the workforce of the future. This chapter will examine some of the definitions of global business skills and competencies, and the theories of learning that focus on experiential learning.

The rapid expansion of knowledge and access to information coupled with the complexity of issues facing young people has meant that they will need to have a range of attributes and skills to be able to live and work in an ever-expanding, competitive international workforce. To better position themselves in the workplace of the future, young people will need to receive and be involved in an education process that self-consciously extends beyond the experiences of a traditional classroom. Their skills and credentials will need to have international currency and be transferable from one setting to another if they are to enter the skills race that awaits them.

International mobility is at the heart of the skills race. If Australia wishes to succeed as a knowledge nation, young people will need to be equipped with skills such as flexibility, tolerance, creativity, diversity as well as have a depth of personal development, social, special and temporal capacities. Without a well developed sense of civic beliefs, values and environmental awareness, young people may not have the multi-dimensional requirements to be global citizens of the future.

Secondary school experiential learning programs have become a relatively widespread phenomenon in Australian schools. Experiential learning has a rich and successful history in Australia and in particular, Victoria. Many schools have established specific facilities or separate campuses across Australia and overseas to offer learning based on the themes of adventure, self-discovery, and life-skills development (Pritchard 2011). These programs are aimed at both single-sex male or female groups as well as co-educational groups. While the programs are across a number of year levels it is typically used in the middle years of secondary schooling, usually in the Year 9 curriculum.

The concept of experiential learning in the Year 9 curriculum also fits within the context of the middle years of learning theory and offers diversity to students who have conceivably been in
traditional education for ten years. The schools offering these programs promote the benefits derived from student participation through their websites and printed materials such as handbooks and prospectuses. Often they emphasise the intended learning outcomes and the unique nature of the learning environment. Many emphasise a set of skills and attributes that will have applicability well beyond the years of formal schooling.

The literature available from schools about these programs reveals several strongly similar fundamentals:

‘the choice of target year level; the focus on unusually distinctive settings, allied with claims of vivid, lifelong memories of the experience itself; and the promotion of a common set of skill outcomes, such as independence, self-reliance, tolerance, teamwork, and decision-making. However, there is also a significant absence of information provided by the schools on the theoretical bases underpinning their program which might justify their claims and support the specific means by which the outcomes are expected to be achieved’ (Pritchard 2011, p. 11).

Despite their popularity, the programs have remained largely unexamined in educational research. Yet their continuation and development suggest that staff, students and parents believe the programs are valuable. To make a valid assessment of the effects of these programs one must spend some time digesting the literature that looks at the theoretical models of education and learning.

This research begins by introducing definitions of global business competencies and the generic capabilities, skills and attributes employers are seeking in their labour hire. The research then examines the response by the Australian Government to the challenges of supporting young Australians to acquire these necessary global skills and attributes. From there the research maps the key competencies into employability skills, and confirms skills and attributes essential for the workforce of the future. The research then reviews the learning theories of Dewey (1909, 1921, 1938, 1997, 1998a, 1998b), Vygotsky (1978; 1986) and Piaget (1952) to reveal the elements of experiential learning which helps learners acquire lifelong learning habits. The research then identifies the elements of developing student Independent learning using the middle years of schooling philosophy as a framework for imbedding independent learning skills. It then examines the emergence of experiential programs as a means of further developing the global skills and competencies sought by the business community. This chapter then examines the importance of the learning environment as a determinant of cognitive, affective and social outcomes.
2.2 Exploration of Literature

2.2.1 Overview

This chapter will firstly look at definitions of global competencies, skills and attributes for multidimensional citizenship before focusing on contemporary theories of learning, key concepts of learning, the theoretical foundations of experiential learning, and the role of episodic memory and semantic memory in learning. The introduction of key concepts of learning traces the development of constructivism, commencing with Piagetian constructivism, before moving on to a review of the literature associated with the social constructivism of Lev Vygotsky. The review of the literature dealing with experiential learning also traces the historical development of experience as a form of education, with due emphasis placed on the concepts of experiential education developed by Dewey.

2.3 Introduction to Definitions of Global Business Competencies

While there have been numerous definitions of globalisation over particular periods of history, globalisation has been used to describe the political, economic and cultural atmosphere of the day. The era of globalisation is now increasingly being referred to as the period from the early ’90s to the present. The opinion coming through the research is that globalisation is about being connected by systems, transportation, communication technology, ecology, culture, politics and social interactions which in turn creates layers of interdependencies and exchanges which deepen connection between us all locally, nationally and internationally.

Corbitt (2007) states that globalisation should be viewed in conjunction with its partner: technological innovation. Change is occurring more rapidly as a result of innovative technologies and globalisation. New technologies have changed the nature of work and how we work together. In this information age, employees, irrespective of their physical location, are now working virtually, becoming global team members, working on projects, sharing ideas and research for global companies with offices and branches around the world. The process has meant that technological change is accelerating. Technology has enabled organisations to capture economies of scale by going global, to access the best talent and to enhance their capabilities, reshape whole economies and reengineer everything we do. This reengineering is evident in the workplace, industry, universities, schools, hospitals, banks, retail, primary industries and research laboratories. This constant redefinition and referring process is in response to the demands of globalisation (Cerotti 2009, pp. 28-29).

The globalisation of ideas, information, trade, goods and services will continue. In the area of globalisation, we will witness further change (Drucker 1985) and more facets of our lives, business
and academia will become globalised. The concept of a global mindset has been incorporated quite quickly into educational agendas. Employment trends indicate a need for workers who are globally aware, able to collect and analyse information and trends from all over the world and are able to work in a culturally sensitive cross-disciplinary way. Globalisation requires empowered business teams to work globally and the soft skills in dealing with people from different cultures is one of the most important aspects of global work, particularly as teams are no longer homogenous. Andrews and Tyson (2004) and Cerotti (2009) discuss the importance of globalisation in everyday interactions and how it has changed the way individuals work, no matter what size the organisation.

The internationalisation of education is significant for many institutions who acknowledge that to work effectively around the world people require capabilities that enable cross-cultural common flows and a global understanding of the new work environment.

The mission statement of Caulfield Grammar School, one of the schools under examination in this research, aims at dealing with the changes that have occurred in the workforce over the past generation.

‘Through learning which is active and experiential, in a range of learning environments both in the classroom and beyond, students will develop an understanding of the interrelatedness of knowledge and learning experiences which will promote a respect for other cultures and develop a sense of personal identity through understanding more clearly their place in the world’ (School A, 2010).

This mission requires participatory programs, courses and learning activities that enable the students to transition through the internationalisation process. This mission raises the expectation that the curriculum teaching and learning opportunities in that school will have real life applicability. The expectation from this school’s offerings is that their programs will offer a globally ready education that is transferable anywhere in the world. This is particularly important as the concept of ‘a job for life’ is no longer a guarantee.

Andrews and Tyson (2004) discuss the idea that, in the previous generation, the workforce required a technically competent and functionally-oriented executives who were monocultural, communicated locally and used their personal style to get ahead. The new workplace demands employees to be experienced in a number of global markets, experienced in all aspects of the business including marketing, operations, finance, and information technology, to be able to lead, adapt and motivate, who are adept at applying analytical skills and have emotional competencies to deal with people from a range of cultural backgrounds; while dealing with market forces, trends and strategic planning (Cerotti 2009, p. 36).
Educational institutions, like all businesses have needed to change and adapt to the evolving workplace. Whether independently or as a result of the Australian Federal Government Education Agenda, educational institutions have participated in major reforms and changes to their curriculum and course offerings so they can better meet the needs of students who face the changes and demands of the new workplace.

Defining global capabilities is a complex task, with interchangeability and overlap being prevalent in the terminology. Words such as global skills, global competency, global citizenship, multidimensional citizenship, globally ready workforce emerged from the literature to have common features and understandings.

Gallie (Hunter, White & Godbey 2006) argues that a final and complete definition of global capabilities is almost impossible as every person interviewed has a different definition and every piece of literature proposes a different definition. Hunter, White and Godbey (2006, p. 268) argue that ‘there is little commonality and, in almost all cases (global capabilities) are presented as an American derivative and US-centric’. Despite the challenges in gaining a common definition for the purposes of this research, the definition that arose out of an international meeting of experts from the United Nations (UN), embassy officials, intercultural specialists, senior international educators, multinational businesses and human resource managers from transnational companies has been used as a framework. The definition is ‘having an open mind, while actively seeking to understand cultural norm and expectations of others leveraging this gained knowledge to interact, communicate and work effectively outside one’s environment’ (Hunter, White and Godbey 2006, p. 270).

Resourcefulness and adaptability are the two most important generic capabilities and attributes of competent graduates according to a study by Michigan State University (Willard 2008). The complete list of skills is summarised below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Independence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiasm</td>
<td>Appreciation of Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquisitiveness</td>
<td>Perseverance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in continuous learning</td>
<td>Creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courage</td>
<td>Flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-reliance</td>
<td>Comfort with uncertainty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence</td>
<td>Open-mindedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-control</td>
<td>Language and communication skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-knowledge</td>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive outlook toward adversity</td>
<td>Sense of humour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2.1 - What specific skills do globally competent graduates have?*
2.4 The Corporate Sector and Global Competency

Vivien Stewart (2007, p. 8), Vice-President of Education, Asia Society argues that ‘business, education and political leaders are grappling with the question of how to produce workers and citizens who can remain competitive in a world that seems to be shrinking before our very eyes’. Further to this, Levine (2005) stresses globalisation is causing policy and business leaders to call for new competencies to advance competitiveness, leadership in global markets, scientific innovation, security and proactively improve international relations. These new realities demonstrate that future workers seeking careers in business, government, health care, law enforcement and a wide variety of other jobs will require global knowledge and skills.

Levine (2005) argues that the following skills will be considered valuable by managers:

- Thriving in diverse environments
- Eagerness for challenge, change, and life-long learning
- Awareness, understanding and empathy for different ideas and ways of doing things
- Comfort interacting in multiple, often challenging contexts.

For individual managers, this means that as their primary role they have to spend time working on change management, quality improvement or process redesign teams. Most, if not all, work is now done in teams. Roles are becoming more fluid and less structurally defined. To assist in the search for such capabilities, recruiters are looking for people who can not only do the job but and fit within the company’s culture but also relate well to other employees. Building multicultural companies is a relatively new phenomenon. Managers are seeking to know the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce and find others to help. Working as a team or in a partnership will be the way forward. Militaristic command and control – the root of much of the historical theorising – is fast disappearing (and has disappeared completely from many successful organisations).

Gratton (2003) observes that over the last decade, the forces of globalisation and competition, as well as more demanding customers, have made companies flatter, less hierarchical, more fluid and more virtual. This suggests that leaders will be required to take on radically new roles. These new roles require new skills and competencies. London Business School (Andrews & Tyson 2004) research has identified the following Global Business Capabilities as critical to enabling executives to quickly assess changing situations, to make good and timely decisions, to communicate clear goals, directions and expected results, and then drive effective action that delivers the desired results.

From the literature it appears that there are three elements to Global Business Capabilities: knowledge, skills, and attributes.
Knowledge is the starting point of any executive career. It covers the basic functional areas of macro and micro economics; finance; supply chain management; organisational structures and dynamics; sales and account management; accounting; marketing and brand management; strategy; human resource management; technology management; decision sciences; and corporate governance. Each of the subject areas has a global perspective dedicated to ensure its preparation for a global workforce.

The second element to global capabilities evident in the literature is the acquisition of skills. These management skills tend to be acquired during the middle career period when people move into general management roles and include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessing skills</th>
<th>Decision skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managing diverse cultures</td>
<td>Decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with ambiguity, uncertainty and paradox</td>
<td>Accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Managing performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Project management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication skills</th>
<th>Action skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The ability to make the complex simple</td>
<td>Teambuilding and teamwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation skills</td>
<td>Talent assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening and observation</td>
<td>Interpersonal skills/giving feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking and collaboration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2 – Global skills

The third element in Global Business Capabilities emerging in the literature is the acquisition of leadership attributes. These include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessing attributes</th>
<th>Decision attributes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unyielding integrity</td>
<td>Judgment and intuition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possessing a moral compass</td>
<td>Demanding excellence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worldly awareness</td>
<td>Perseverance and tenacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thriving on change</td>
<td>Adaptability and responsiveness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication attributes</th>
<th>Action attributes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passion and persuasiveness</td>
<td>Boundless energy to motivate and energise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curiosity and creativity</td>
<td>Judging performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self awareness</td>
<td>Capacity and desire to learn; coachable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self confidence to involve others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.3 – Leadership attributes (Andrews & Tyson 2004, p. 3)

The research suggests that executives require, and will require in the future, a daunting array of capabilities. The broad ranging nature of these is reflected in the work of business thinkers. Warren Bennis (2003) states that the next generation of business leaders will be more broadly educated than their predecessors. They will have to possess boundless curiosity, limited
enthusiasm, have faith in people and in teamwork, have a willingness to take risks, remain
devoted to long-term growth rather than short-term profit, be committed to excellence and display
readiness, virtue and vision.

According to Andrews and Tyson (2004) senior executives were not daunted by the list and they
were comfortable with the complexity with which they had to contend. Complexity is seen as a
part of global business life and accepted as such. One of the unanswered questions is - how do
executives build judgment and intuition, the essential attributes for leadership? When it comes to
integrity and having a moral compass the literature suggests the issues have only begun to be
explored.

There is an American view, an Asian view and a European view of how the skill of managing can
and should work globally. Companies throughout the world are consequently attempting to
become global from different cultural roots. Understanding the influence of those roots is critical to
understanding the dynamics at work in the global economy. From the literature it appears that the
challenge for companies is to determine which capabilities are of greatest value in their particular
industry and situation. Alignment around values and competencies will be the key to organisation
and effectiveness. The literature suggests this is seen in the growing number of companies which
are identifying key capabilities; and assessing or profiling individuals and jobs against them.

Another challenge for companies, which emerges from the research, is to ensure that executives
retain a commitment to learning and development. Global business capabilities clearly require
education with a global outlook. The research suggests that there is little doubt that education is
now truly global. The challenge for educators is to rethink the learning experience. The question
for educators, therefore, will be how do they create situations which replicate learning experiences
in the world of executive education? Is it possible to create a compressed virtual learning
experience? And, can 20 years of experience be put on fast forward?

The research argues that educational institutions will need to create multiple learning experiences
related to cases outside the classroom. They will need to consider learning as well as teaching,
reThinking how people learn so as to develop learning approaches which better match the skills
and aptitudes identified in the generic competency list.

**2.5 Identifying Global Competency: Some Definitions** (Willard 2008)

**2.5.1 Internationalist**

An internationalist has excellent intercultural communication skills, learns through listening and
observing, thrives in multicultural settings with a diverse range of personalities and learning
styles, and is able to establish rapport quickly. They can work effectively as part of a
multinational/multicultural team, is effective and knowledgeable in working in cross-cultural settings and learns quickly.

### 2.5.2 Comfort with Dissonance

The subject has the capacity to adapt and be flexible in new and changing situations, can handle difficult situations, is extremely adaptable and resourceful in new and challenging environments, able to function well in multiple, dissonant environments and is capable of working in difficult, ambiguous settings.

### 2.5.3 Multicultural Leadership

The leader is an effective and cooperative team player who also works well independently, takes initiative and risks, communicates despite barriers, understands cultural differences and similarities, handles stress, identifies problems and utilises available resources to resolve them and has highly developed cross-cultural communication skills combined with ability to motivate others to excel (Willard 2008).

Mendenhall (2006) suitably defined the Global Competencies necessary for leading in a global environment while Douglas (2006) defined the characteristics of entrepreneurs in the following way.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Global Business Savvy</th>
<th>Global Organisational Savvy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>Establishing Close personal Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing Change/Uncertainty</td>
<td>Maturity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balancing Global versus Localisation tensions</td>
<td>Inquisitiveness/Curiosity Self Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking Agility</td>
<td>Conflict Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change Agentry [sic]</td>
<td>Community Building/Networking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating Learning Systems</td>
<td>Stakeholder Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivating employees</td>
<td>Improvisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial Spirit</td>
<td>Expertise in Negotiation Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>Courage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2.4 - Global Competencies* (Mendenhall 2006)
Table 2.5 - Characteristics of Entrepreneurs (Douglas 2006)

These definitions illustrate the changing nature of how young people will need to interact with the rest of the world and the attributes they will need to have to function competently. Jobs of the future will not necessarily be in one’s own country of origin. The best of the job market will be mobile with a cross-cultural competence, a comprehension of global scale and a mastery of languages other than English. Higher education will drive the demand for other sectors. Schools, however, are well placed to respond to those challenges vis-à-vis developing student independent learning, integration, greater participation in real life experiential programs, co-curricular programs such as outdoor education programs, sport, music, clubs and societies as well as leadership and citizenship programs.

Like the tertiary sector and the business communities, Australian schools have also responded to the challenges of supporting young Australians to become successful learners. In the National Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA 2008), the schools provided the following skills and attributes. The board has described the knowledge, understandings and skills that students will be expected to develop in order to be able to contribute to a high performing workforce.

Successful Learners

- have the essential skills in literacy and numeracy as a foundation for success in all learning areas
- are creative and resourceful and are able to think critically
- analyse information and solve problems
- are able to learn and plan activities independently, collaborate and communicate ideas
- are motivated to reach their full potential
• have the capacity to make sense of their world and think about how things became the way they are
• are on a pathway towards further education, training or employment, and acquire the skills that support this
• have an appetite for life-long learning.

Confident Individuals

• have a sense of optimism, self-esteem and are able to manage their emotional, mental and physical wellbeing
• have a sense of respect for others, control over their lives and are well prepared for their potential life roles as family, community and workforce members
• value their culture and place in Australia and have a strong sense of identity
• are creative and productive users of technologies, particularly information and communication technologies
• have the knowledge, skills and attitudes to establish and maintain healthy, satisfying lifestyles
• are able to embrace opportunities, make rational and informed decisions about their own lives, and accept responsibility for their own actions.

Active and Informed Citizens

• have the capacity and inclination to act with moral and ethical integrity
• have an understanding of Australia’s system of government and civic life and appreciate its diversity of culture and history, including the special place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures
• are able to relate and communicate across cultures, especially in relation to cultures and countries of the Asia-Pacific
• have a desire and capacity to work for the common good, including stewardship of the natural environment
• are responsible global and local citizens.

(MCEETYA 2008, pp. 5-10).

2.6 Intended Educational Outcomes for Young Australians

The National Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA 2008, pp. 5-10) identifies three broad categories of outcomes that the curriculum should deliver for students:
• a solid foundation in skills and knowledge on which further learning and adult life can be built
• deep knowledge and skills that will enable advanced learning and an ability to create new ideas and translate them into practical applications
• general capabilities that underpin flexible and critical thinking, a capacity to work with others and an ability to move across subject disciplines to develop new expertise.

2.7 Mapping Key Competencies into Employment Skills

Various discussions on the nature of work in the 21st Century by the National Curriculum Board (2008) have identified a number of important generic capabilities that schools should be assisting students to develop. For example, in 1992, the Mayer Committee nominated seven key competencies (Australian Education Council - Mayer Committee 1992) and further to this the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry & Business Council of Australia (2002) created a list with eight competencies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key competencies</th>
<th>Employability skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicate ideas and information</td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with others in teams</td>
<td>Teamwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solve problems</td>
<td>Problem solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use technology</td>
<td>Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collect, analyse and organise information</td>
<td>Planning and organising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan and organise activities</td>
<td>Initiative and enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use mathematical ideas and techniques</td>
<td>Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contained in descriptions of several of employability skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.6 – Key Competencies and Employability Skills (National Curriculum Board 2008, p. 8)

Based on the literature above a list of common skills and attributes necessary for young people to have in order to enhance employability in the work force of the future can be summarised in the following table.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills and attributes</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to get along with people</td>
<td>Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to influence others</td>
<td>Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to learn from mistakes</td>
<td>Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to make decisions quickly</td>
<td>Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to trust workers</td>
<td>Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy</td>
<td>Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressiveness</td>
<td>Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciation of diversity</td>
<td>Willard (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
<td>Willard (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balancing global versus localisation tensions</td>
<td>Mendenhall (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity for enjoyment</td>
<td>Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change agentry</td>
<td>Mendenhall (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collect, analyse and organise information</td>
<td>Australian Education Council - Mayer Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1992)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort with uncertainty</td>
<td>Willard (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>Mendenhall (2006); Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate ideas and information</td>
<td>Australian Education Council - Mayer Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1992)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry &amp;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community building/networking</td>
<td>Mendenhall (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict management</td>
<td>Mendenhall (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contained in descriptions of several of employability skills</td>
<td>Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry &amp;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperativeness</td>
<td>Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry &amp;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Business Council of Australia (2002) ;Douglas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courage</td>
<td>Willard (2008); Mendenhall (2006); Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating learning systems</td>
<td>Mendenhall (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Willard (2008); Mendenhall (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determination</td>
<td>Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diligence</td>
<td>Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamism</td>
<td>Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficacy</td>
<td>Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egotism</td>
<td>Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>Levine (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiasm</td>
<td>Willard (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial spirit</td>
<td>Mendenhall (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing close personal relationships</td>
<td>Mendenhall (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expertise in negotiation process</td>
<td>Mendenhall (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Willard (2008); Mendenhall (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foresight</td>
<td>Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global business savvy</td>
<td>Mendenhall (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global organisational savvy</td>
<td>Mendenhall (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty</td>
<td>Mendenhall (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imagination</td>
<td>Mendenhall (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvisation</td>
<td>Mendenhall (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Willard (2008); Mendenhall (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative</td>
<td>Willard (2008); Mendenhall (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative and enterprise</td>
<td>Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry &amp; Business Council of Australia (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>Levine (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquisitiveness/curiosity self learning</td>
<td>Willard (2008); Mendenhall (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrity managing cross-cultural ethics</td>
<td>Mendenhall (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence</td>
<td>Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interacting in multiple and challenging contexts</td>
<td>Levine (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language and communication skills</td>
<td>Willard (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Mendenhall (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing change/uncertainty</td>
<td>Mendenhall (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maturity</td>
<td>Mendenhall (2006); Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivating employees</td>
<td>Mendenhall (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for achievement</td>
<td>Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-mindedness</td>
<td>Willard (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimism</td>
<td>Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oriented to clear goals</td>
<td>Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptiveness</td>
<td>Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perseverance</td>
<td>Willard (2008); Mendenhall (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan and organise activities</td>
<td>Australian Education Council - Mayer Committee (1992)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and organising Initiative and enterprise</td>
<td>Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry &amp; Business Council of Australia (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasant personality</td>
<td>Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive outlook toward diversity</td>
<td>Willard (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive response to challenges</td>
<td>Mendenhall (2006); Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profit orientation</td>
<td>Mendenhall (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resourcefulness</td>
<td>Willard (2008); Mendenhall (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responds to suggestions and criticism</td>
<td>Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>Mendenhall (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence</td>
<td>Willard (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-control</td>
<td>Willard (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-knowledge</td>
<td>Willard (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-reliance</td>
<td>Willard (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of humour</td>
<td>Willard (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of power</td>
<td>Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity to others</td>
<td>Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solve problems</td>
<td>Australian Education Council - Mayer Committee (1992)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder orientation</td>
<td>Mendenhall (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry &amp; Business Council of Australia (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking agility</td>
<td>Mendenhall (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoroughness</td>
<td>Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time competence</td>
<td>Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toleration for ambiguity</td>
<td>Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use mathematical ideas and techniques</td>
<td>Australian Education Council - Mayer Committee (1992)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use technology</td>
<td>Australian Education Council - Mayer Committee (1992)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Versatility</td>
<td>Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to take calculated risk</td>
<td>Douglas (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with others in teams</td>
<td>Australian Education Council - Mayer Committee (1992)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.7 - Summary of skills and attributes from the literature as identified by Mendenhall (2006), Levine (2005), Willard (2008), Australian Education Council - Mayer Committee (1992) and Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry & Business Council of Australia (2002)

2.8 Eleven core capacities: global skills and attributes

By analysing the extended list provided above in the literature, the table below shows that there are 11 core areas where young people need to demonstrate capacity in order to better meet the demands of the future workforce. The following table highlights the key personal qualities, skills and attributes being nominated by the business world, academia and the Federal government for future graduates.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Qualities</th>
<th>Understanding of self</th>
<th>Adaptability</th>
<th>Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pleasant personality</td>
<td>Self-control</td>
<td>Challenging contexts</td>
<td>Life long learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamism</td>
<td>Self-management</td>
<td>empathy for different ideas and ways of doing things</td>
<td>Interest in continuous learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>Self-reliance</td>
<td>Managing change/uncertainty</td>
<td>Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
<td>Self-knowledge</td>
<td>Comfort with uncertainty</td>
<td>Inquisitiveness, curiosity self learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imagination</td>
<td>Personal balance</td>
<td>Improvisation</td>
<td>Use technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Self-confidence</td>
<td>Positive outlook toward diversity</td>
<td>Use mathematical ideas and techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courage</td>
<td></td>
<td>Appreciation of diversity</td>
<td>Numeracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty</td>
<td></td>
<td>Versatility</td>
<td>Scientific innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td></td>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Thoroughness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enthusiasm</td>
<td></td>
<td>Resourcefulness</td>
<td>Accuracy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sense of humour</td>
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<td>Toleration for ambiguity</td>
<td>Time competence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perseverance</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to learn from mistakes</td>
<td>Efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determination</td>
<td></td>
<td>Responds to criticism and suggestions</td>
<td>Efficacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity for enjoyment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Collect, analyse and organise information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Optimism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Planning and organising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Plan and organise activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open-mindedness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Creating learning systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diligence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initiative and enterprise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maturity</td>
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<td>Intelligence</td>
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<td>Egotism</td>
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<td>Aggressiveness</td>
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<td>Self-control</td>
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<td>Self-confidence</td>
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<td>Confidence</td>
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<td>Self-control</td>
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<td>Confidence</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Thinking and Problem solving</th>
<th>Sense of global community</th>
<th>Communication skills</th>
<th>Teamwork and collaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solve problems</td>
<td>Leadership in global markets (Levine 2005)</td>
<td>Ability to influence others</td>
<td>Commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict management</td>
<td>Security and improved international relations</td>
<td>Expertise in negotiation process</td>
<td>Cooperativeness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking agility</td>
<td>Thriving in diverse environments</td>
<td>Establishing close personal relationships</td>
<td>Teamwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to make decisions quickly</td>
<td>Balancing global versus localisation tensions</td>
<td>Language and communication skills</td>
<td>Ability to get along with people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Global business savvy</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Work with others in teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community building/networking</td>
<td>Communicate ideas and information</td>
<td>Ability to trust workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integrity managing cross-cultural ethics</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sensitivity to others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership</th>
<th>Change Agent</th>
<th>Competitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sense of power</td>
<td>Positive response to challenges</td>
<td>Oriented to clear goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Change agency</td>
<td>Need for achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foresight</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.8 - Global skills and capabilities

| Profit orientation | Willingness to take calculated risk | Entrepreneurial spirit |

The above table established the personal qualities, skills and attributes that are needed by young people in the workforce of the future. This is supported by Willard (2008) who highlights the need for the workers of the future to be resourceful, adaptable and remain competitive if they wish to ensure employability. While Levine (2005) points out that as roles are becoming more fluid and less structurally defined the primary skill set needed in the workforce of the future is for workers who have spent time in change management, quality improvement or process re-engineering, and who have the capacity to work and relate well in a team structure.

In order to provide leadership, and to be the change agent in a mobile globally focussed workforce of the future, an analysis of the key personal qualities listed in the tables above reveal six essential qualities: self learning; independence; initiative; flexibility/adaptability; resourcefulness; and perseverance.

It is these essential skills and attributes summarised in the table above that this study will seek and discuss further when analysing the findings of the four schools and their sampled students/graduates who were examined for this thesis.

2.9 Introduction to Contemporary Theories of Learning

Research into the ways in which humans learn and develop has undergone many paradigm shifts in the past 100 years. These shifts have occurred in the organisation and management of learning practices as well as in the activities, programs and the educational institutions that facilitate learning. During the Twentieth Century, in the search for the ideal model of learning, the field of education embraced a number of emerging disciplines, such as genetics, psychology, and cultural psychology to seek further illumination on the recurrent problems of attempting to understand the psychological and social processes associated with learning that are generally not directly observable.

Learning is a complex concept for which there appears to be no one accepted definition. For example, Bigge (1976, p. 1) defines learning as ‘... an enduring change in an individual’. He adds, ‘It may be considered a change in insights, behaviour, perception, or motivation, or a combination of these’. In contrast, Wilkes and Krebs’s (1981, p. 640) definition has a focus on the gaining of knowledge, also with implication of change; it defines learning as
1. knowledge gained by study; instruction or scholarship
2. the act of gaining knowledge.

This definition provides two perspectives on learning: outcome and process, the former of which was also explicit in the Bigge (1976) definition. The discussion below includes reference to these two aspects, but in addition indicates that learning can be interpreted more broadly.

In the twentieth century, learning was seen to occur in students as a response to how the teacher presented material. Theories at that time included those of behaviourists who concentrated on associations between stimuli and response (Bigge 1976; Siann & Ugwuegbu 1988). Learning was seen to centre on associations between stimuli and responses, with the rewarding aspect of the association forming the reinforcement, and the practice helping to stamp in the association. For behaviourists, the learning of associations is the basis of all learning (Siann & Ugwuegbu 1988), with learning being a change in behaviour (Bigge 1976).

This view contrasts with the cognitive approach to learning which considers that learning involves ‘the active restructuring of perceptions and concepts’ (Siann & Ugwuegbu 1988, p. 158), and that ‘incoming information is structured and processed in memory’ by the learner (Weinstein & Mayer 1986, p. 316). In this approach, learning is considered an active process for the learner that can be influenced by the learner.

Marton (1983, p. 291) suggests two ways of conceptualising learning: firstly, as a change in the way of understanding some aspect of reality, and secondly, to memorise something, to acquire some procedures and facts. He states that these two concepts of knowledge; namely linked with (indeed derived from) two different concepts of knowledge; namely knowledge as ways of viewing reality on the one hand, and knowledge as a collection of right answers on the other’.

In a study conducted by Marton and Säljö (1984, p. 52), results from the interviews with a group of adults regarding what learning meant to them revealed five qualitatively different conceptions of learning:

1. a quantitative increase in knowledge
2. memorising
3. the acquisition of facts, methods etc. which can be retained and used when necessary
4. the abstraction of meaning
5. an interpretative process aimed at understanding reality.

Within the five concepts of learning there are two pairs of ‘what-how’ relationships. The first what is the increase in knowledge, achieved through the how of memorisation; the second what is the understanding of reality, achieved through the how of abstract meaning. Looking back at the
dictionary definition of learning given earlier it becomes apparent that learners can give
definitions that refer to the process (how) and/or the outcome (what) of learning. The outcome
might also be called the product of learning.

An alternative concept of learning is inherent in the SOLO Taxonomy (Biggs 1991). SOLO, an
acronym for structure of the observed learning outcome, is a general taxonomy of learning that
identifies five stages or levels of learning. The first three levels ‘are concerned with the progressive
growth of knowledge or skill in a quantitative sense, the last two with qualitative changes in the
structure and nature of what is learned’ (Biggs 1991, p.12). The first levels focus more on ‘how
knowledge may be theorised about and generalised’ (Biggs 1991, p.13), suggesting, like Marton
and Säljö (1984) that abstraction is a valued and higher order process of learning, and different
from learning through memorisation.

Biggs (1991) identifies three approaches to learning called Surface, Deep and Achieving. The first two
appear closely related to concepts of learning, while the third, or achieving approach, relates more
to the motives or intentions, and is evidenced in study skill strategies. A student, who takes a
surface approach to learning, learns by rote methods, memorising unrelated components of a task
or tasks (Biggs 1991). Such a student appears to see learning as a concrete exercise aimed at
achieving short-term goals. In a deep approach, task components are integrated with each other
and with other tasks, so that the focus is on the underlying meaning. Higher order processes such
as theorising and forming hypotheses are part of this approach to learning (Biggs 1991). It is not
the intention, nor is it possible, that this section give a complete account of learning.

Experiments involving animal learning, such as Köhler’s chimpanzees (1930, pp. 155-156) have, in
a sense, revealed some interesting features of human cognition, but little is known about the exact
mechanisms that control consciousness, and make possible the acquisition of new skills and
knowledge. In reality there is much more to learn about what constitutes knowledge and
intelligence, life skills and attributes (Pritchard 2011). Current literature (Bruner 1997; Richardson
2000) still supports the contention that in contrast to the imitative learning that has been observed
in other animal species, only humans seek to understand the world as they experience it, thereby
learning in a systematic and sustained way (Pritchard 2011).

To gain a greater understanding of the world through learning we must understand the process of
learning itself. John Dewey (1859-1952), elaborated the fundamentals of pragmatic approach in
pedagogy. He maintained that education can be quickly forgotten. Therefore, the only worthwhile
knowledge was knowledge that could be practically utilised by an individual. In reflecting on
didactic techniques, Dewey recommended learning by doing and convinced educators that only by
performing an activity can a student properly learn a required subject (Sinagatullin 2006).
The literature is rich with different (and often competing) learning theory paradigms. However, Dewey (1938, p. 17) simplified the discussion by identifying just two essential choices: ‘The history of educational theory is marked by opposition between the idea that education is development from within and that it is formation from without.’

The first category as identified by Dewey (1938) sees learning as an essentially internal process, in which humans encounter new knowledge and develop or construct an understanding of this from the ‘inside out’. An example of this is Constructivism. The second category classifies learning as a process that commences from the outside, with unique experiences and knowledge being acquired from without by learners; such as the traditional teacher-student mode where new knowledge is ‘transmitted’.

In developing an understanding of the theory of learning underlying contemporary experiential learning, Constructivism provides one possible avenue for consideration. Emerging in the latter half of the 20th Century as one of the more dominant paradigms of learning, constructivism and its associated ideas inform much of the discussion on educational theory in the literature (Prawat & Floden 1994; Green & Gredler 2002; Perkinson 1984). In particular Piagetian Constructivism and Vygotskian socio-cultural Constructivism is seeking a theoretical base for experiential learning.

At the core of Constructivism is the concept that the individual learner is an active participant in learning, ‘constructing’ their own version of the world as perceived through interaction with the environment, society and knowledge artefacts (Tobin & Tippins 1993). This idea comes from an increasing understanding of the processes of human cognition while strengthening the case against the traditional idea that students are passive vessels to be filled with knowledge (Confrey 1995, p. 203). In the constructivist perspective, the focus of control in the learning process moves from the teacher to the learner. The basic building blocks of knowledge construction are not pieces of information transmitted to the student, but are previously constructed understandings of the learner, used to create a new understanding that transcends the cognitive structure encountered in learning activity (Ernest 1995, p. 470).

Constructivism is commonly interpreted (Mousley 1993) in terms of Von Glasersfield’s (1989, p. 162) first principle that ‘knowledge is not passively received but actively built up by the cognising subject’. Pertaining to this principle, Ernest (1995, p. 335) suggests the metaphor of ‘carpentry, architecture, or construction work’. Understanding is not built from received pieces of knowledge, but is seen as the building of mental structures, the building blocks of which are the products of previous constructions by the learner; thus being a recursive process (Ernest 1995). It was been claimed that von Glasserfield’s first principle is acceptable within all constructivist theories.
Piaget and Vygotsky are considered two of the most highly influential constructivist theorists. Their ideas and constructs form the framework to discuss modern education owing to their emphasis on human development and learning. While Vygotsky suggested a socio-cultural model, Piaget focused on a cognitive-conflict model of constructivism.

### 2.9.1 Piagetian Constructivism

Jean Piaget, considered one of the pioneers of Constructivism, advanced the understanding of learning as a process of development (von Glaserfeld, 1995). Much of the current literature dealing with the topic of childhood development and education owes a debt to Piaget’s thinking. Piaget saw cognitive development as a series of logical stages through which each individual passes on the way to adulthood (Bruner 1992; Inhelder & Piaget 1958, p. 1-2; Piaget 1952). Piaget’s view is governed by an integrated network of logical operations that perform a mediating function between the mind of self and the outside world (Bruner 1997; Piaget 1952). Through these processes the mind continually tests and compares the accepted model of the world with what can be perceived through the senses. The mind then makes adjustments and adjusts the inner model as necessary; the individual does not discover new knowledge, but makes their own version of it (Bruner 1997, p.66).

Piaget claims that *disequilibration* is the motivating force of human cognitive development. This being the state of conflict between the external world and the inner constructed world when an individual encounters a situation that is new or different from a previous experience (Bruner 1997; Piaget 1952, p. 4-5; Piaget & Garcia 1991). Existing cognitive structure become disequilibrated as a result of this cognitive conflict, prompting a response from the individual to redress the cognitive imbalance (Bruner 1997; Piaget & Garcia 1991). These novel or mismatched experiences are either incorporated into existing cognitive structures by a process called ‘assimilation’, or used to initiate the construction of a new cognitive structure through a process called ‘accommodation’ (Piaget 1952, p.6). Both assimilation and accommodation are key elements in cognitive development (Pritchard 2011).

These emerging structures, according to Piaget, gradually facilitate the formation of a network of cognitive contacts and relationships that act to mediate an individual’s perception of the outside world (Flavell 1963). In line with the fundamental idea of Piagetian Constructivism as a subjective process conducted within the individual, Bruner asserts that the individual does not find or acquire knowledge artefacts and experiences in the external world; they are perceived and cognitively reconstructed through what Bruner (1997 p. 66) describes elegantly as a ‘logical calculus’. Each person’s logical calculus will therefore be unique, tied to their own specific set of experiences and encounters.
In addition to disequilibration as a mechanism for cognitive change in specific instances, Piaget also seeks to describe the longer term processes associated with cognitive development through the notion of stages, with each stage of development reflecting the physical and psychological predisposition of the growing individual towards certain types of physical and cognitive functioning (Piaget 1952; Tudge & Rogoff 1989). Piaget states that all humans pass through each of the four stages in the same order and roughly in the same time frame (Flavell 1963; Piaget 1952, p. 4).

2.9.2 Social Constructivism

One of the major criticisms levelled at Piagetian constructivism in the literature is that it fails to address intersubjectivity and as such underemphasises the social dimension of learning (Bruner 1997; Cole & Wertsch 1996; Tudge & Rogoff 1989; Vygotsky 1986). While this claim is specifically refuted by Piaget (1952) and others (Cole & Wertsch 1996; Von Glaserfeld 1989), there is evidence to suggest that Piagetian constructivism emphasises the cognitive development of the individual over the interaction of social groups as a part of the development process (Bruner 1997). Modifications to the original Piagetian notion of constructivism are numerous, with perhaps the most notable being the development of a social theory of constructivist learning.

Developed largely in reaction to what was seen as an oversight concerning intersubjectivity in Piaget’s work, social constructivism emerged as an alternative model of human development in which the interconnectedness of all human elements of society is given a higher priority in the development of its primary dimensions (Vygotsky 1986, p.34). In social constructivism, also known as socio-constructivism, or socially-mediated learning, new knowledge manifests itself externally to the learner through the social dimension prior to internalisation of the novel structures are taken in and adapted for use by the individual. This model of learning focuses attention on the concept of interaction between people forming the basis for learning. Social constructivism is one of a number of alternative paradigms retaining the essential notion of learners constructing their own understanding of the world, but this process is said to be mediated through interaction with others, such as parents, teachers and peers (Hickey 1997, p. 175). Ernest (1995, p.180) states that in social constructivism, there is no elemental ‘metaphor’ for the learner as a discrete individual, as all individuals are part of an on-going network of interactions, or ‘conversations’. Hickey (1997, p.176) notes that socio-constructivism has become associated with a wide range of pedagogical approaches, such as the cognitive apprenticeship, reciprocal teaching, intentional teaching, and communities of learners.

Constructivists speak of meeting the students where they are at. If we accept that the citizens of tomorrow will require more from school than the ability to learn a fixed body of knowledge then a
new curriculum is in order for a new age. Beare (2006) refers to it as the ‘thinking curriculum’. It is shaped by the ‘learning where and how to access knowledge, how to handle it and how to judge its significance and veracity’. It is not about content, or rote memorisation. It involves ethical authentic learning that is of value to the learner in today’s context. It is learning that knows no boundaries, either of subject or classroom.

- The skills question: where the skills necessary to complete the exercise are analysed.

- The assessment question: where the learner provided evidence to demonstrate what they have learnt and what skills may still need development. Here it is a case of ‘valuing what they measure, not measuring what they value’?

- The systems question: where the learner reflects on the application of the skills and knowledge acquired.

The move to a thinking curriculum will necessitate a change in the way some teachers view themselves and also how they are viewed by some students. Commentators such as Mike Middleton (Middleton & Hill 2003) have advocated a student-centred classroom where the teacher ceases to be the focus of attention.

Teachers, it is argued in the literature, will need to become the ‘guide on the side’. Not just the traditional class-based teacher but rather teacher-mentors where the responsibility is not about having the answers; indeed sometimes it is more important to have questions. The internet has ensured that teachers are no longer in possession of all of the knowledge. Teachers will need to become mentors to groups of learners. The ownership for the learning broadens to include for learning will belong to everyone and learning is about making connections and working in partnership.

The literature suggests that the role of students must also shift and that is why relationships are, and always will be, paramount in education. Learners must become more active and responsible for their own learning. The literature argues that it can no longer be seen as a passive role that belongs to the industrial model. Learners need to know what it is they are required to learn so that they can work with their mentor towards achieving it. Metacognition and reflection will play a larger role in their learning.

Examination of experiential programs indicates the focus is on personalised learning not individual learning. Individual education implies isolation and excluded team work, an activity that underpins much of the social and learning activities that occur in schools. Schools increasingly are organising themselves around their learners; timetables are more flexible, decisions are made with a focus on learning not organisational expedience. The process of learning is a partnership, a
journey, where the teacher builds scaffolds to guide the learner. To do this, the teachers are constantly building a picture of all students, knowing who they are, how they prefer to learn, what they know and what they need to know to move forward. It is increasingly all about knowing the students in one’s care. The importance of relationships continues to emerge throughout the literature and in the analysis of experiential programs under examination as the key element for success in developing skills and attributes in all young learners.

The borderless classroom also suggests that other people will be involved in the learning process; it is no longer solely the domain of teachers. Schools are looking outside their gates to welcome in the local community by forming partnerships with individuals, other schools, institutions, organisations and even the local parish. This needs to be a two-way relationship for all concerned.

2.9.3 Vygotsky’s Theory of Cognitive Development

Lev Vygotsky’s (1896 – 1934) idea remained practically unknown to Western scholars until the 1960s. The concepts and ideas of Vygotsky’s theory, often called the socio-cultural cognitive theory or socio-cultural perspective, are the following (Santrock 2002):

- As children grow and develop, they internalise the processes that they use in different social contexts and later begin to use them independently
- Thought and language function independently in early childhood. Language is used as a tool that helps a child plan various activities and solve problems. Around age 2, thought and language merge, and children express their thoughts by self-talk, which eventually evolves into inner speech
- Challenging tasks foster maximum cognitive development and children can perform difficult tasks with the help and guidance of a more competent person. A child can have two types of abilities: the actual developmental level – an extent to which a child can perform a task independently, and the level of potential development – an extent to which a child can perform a task with the help of a more advanced person or adult.

This socially mediated model of learning purports that individuals do not learn alone but require some form of interaction with society, either directly through some form of social interaction or indirectly through semiotic mediation (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988, p.19). However, Vygotsky (1978) states that learning will always take place on two levels, first on the social plane and only then on the individual plane (Vygotsky 1978, p. 57; trans. M. Cole).

For Vygotsky and his followers, the social nature of human activity is adopted as a fundamental point of departure for explaining the process of acquiring and developing novel cognitive structures from earliest childhood through to adulthood (Pritchard 2011).
According to Vygotsky, learning is an instinctive and ubiquitous survival strategy adopted by humans and other species. Through learning, individuals naturally develop the means of recognising and dealing with the threats posed by the outside world, but through the medium of language they connect and form social groups that rely on semiotic mediation to form bonds through time and space to form communities (Vygotsky 1986, p. 7). It can be seen in this description that if a Vygotskian perspective is accepted, the experience of social interaction is paramount to the understanding of the world sought by humans in the form of learning.

In positing an alternative model of child cognitive development, ‘Vygotsky sets aside the classical Piagetian notion that development at an ontogenetic level occurs through the gradual maturation of pre-existing higher mental functions; instead asserting that the concept of higher functions emerge through the inter-mental functioning of more primitive cognitive functions’ (Wells 1999, p.101; Pritchard 2011, p. 28). According to Wells (1999 p.101) much of the inter-mental functioning, but specifically language, that results in the development of higher mental functions occurs in social settings that are not designed to be specifically educational in structure or purpose. Vygotsky’s ideas have enormous potential in the field of education to provide organising principles in a broad sense, but he provides little, if any, guidance to educators on the specifics of optimisation of child development processes (Wells 1999, p. 102).

In asserting the importance of the social plane for the development of the child, Vygotsky focuses particular attention on the importance of language as the most crucial of the mediating semiotic tools available to influence interpersonal activity. He also recognises the fundamental importance of language at an intrapersonal level; language acts as the very building blocks, the means by which inner speech is structured. In every sense, language shapes the way we think (Wells 1999, p.7).

Vygotsky stresses the importance of the ‘other’ in the development of self. Individuals cannot develop into themselves without the mediating influence of contact with other members of a community and it is through this influence and interaction that culture is transmitted through adult members of a given community to those emerging members. Experience is acquired through participation in activities that involve interaction with other members of the community and this in turn results in the transmission of culture to a neophyte individual (Wells 1999, p. 20). Engagement and participation in ‘doing’ and ‘making’, through the medium of semiotic tools, provides the link that binds the individual to the outside community; tools mediate activity to link individuals to the world of objects, but also to the world of people (Wells 1999, p. 47).

Vygotsky defines his perception of the issues that divide his approach to cognitive development and that proposed by Piaget (1986). In summarising what he perceives as shortcomings in Piaget’s
work, Vygotsky emphasises that children are active contributors in their own development, and that their egocentric needs are able to regulate and accommodate reality when required (1986, p.37). In rejecting Piaget’s notion of egocentricity in development, Vygotsky (1986, p. 37) claims that the adaptation to reality in development is primary, with satisfaction of needs being subordinated to or accommodated within external reality. This reversal of the hierarchy of external versus internal factors driving development further underlines Vygotsky’s case for the dominance of the social dimension over the internal dimension in determining the course of individual development.

The extent to which the mind of a child is shaped by its own internal forces and motivations is also specifically challenged by Vygotsky, contradicting Piaget’s claim that ‘things do not shape a child’s mind’ (1986, p. 39). According to Vygotsky, in realistic situations when the egocentric speech of a child is ‘connected to practical activity’, the development of the mind is quite strongly shaped by external forces. In making this connection between inner development and outward reality, Vygotsky underlines the primacy of experience, the means by which individuals encounter and assimilate reality, as a critical step in learning; in that experience of the physical and semiotic tools through which the individual encounters and interprets reality serve to shape the inner structure of the developing mind. Just as importantly from the perspective of theories about learning, Vygotsky defined this contact with reality as neither passively reflected in the perceptions of individuals, nor as an abstract contemplation in isolation. In every sense, Vygotsky believed the individual’s experience of reality would result from active engagement (1986, p. 40; Pritchard 2011).

2.9.4 Zone of Proximal Development

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is described as arguably Vygotsky’s greatest contribution to the understanding of the process of learning (Wells 1999, p.25). The ZPD concept describes the gap between the learner, with a demonstrated level of capability in a particular skill, and the notional level of competence that might be displayed in relation to that skill with the provision of capable support or facilitation (Vygotsky 1978).

The child’s ability when he or she is not yet able to perform a task independently but is able to perform with assistance of others is called the zone of proximal development (ZPD). It is to this zone that the teacher is required to orient tasks in order to realise a child’s full potential.

The ZPD is the gap between what the student can do unaided and what he or she could potentially accomplish with help of some sort. Help, or mediation, is most typically sourced through a more experienced member of the community, most likely a teacher, but also possibly through a more experienced peer, mentor or a member of the community encountered in the course of a learning
activity; Mediation may also be provided through an agency not immediately present (Pritchard 2011).

Vygotsky’s theory of cognitive development has enjoyed a resurgence in the twenty-first century especially in English-speaking and northern European countries. Investigating his heritage has shown that his ideas and pedagogical admonitions enrich and promote both theoretical and practical issues of pedagogy, psycholinguistics, and child development. The researcher however, is aware that Vygotsky’s scientific background has not yet been used to the fullest and needs further pedagogical and psychological enquiry.

The ZPD concept and its significance for theories of learning have been explored extensively in the literature (Bruner 1997; Cole & Wertsch 1996; Daniels 2001; Tharp & Gallimore 1988; Wells 1999; Wertsch 1985). A number of characteristics of the ZPD, as conceived by Vygotsky, have had a significant impact on the design of learning programs in many western countries since the introduction of the ideas in the 1960s, More recent publications have resulted in a deeper understanding of the underlying ideas and further impact on educational thinking (Pritchard 2011).

Vygotsky does not see the ZPD as an attribute belonging to any single individual; instead he sees the ZPD as a general principle applicable to all students and in fact all adults, through all stages of life (Tharp & Gallimore 1988; Wells 1999). In a given activity, it would be possible to speculate that an individual may be working at a number of different levels with respect to the ZPD while engaged in a task. Where an individual is exercising a skill already mastered, they may be acting as a supporting mediating agent for another member of a group, while at the same time, receiving the assistance of another more experienced team member in dealing with another facet of the task at hand. The bi-directional nature of mediation in a learning setting might mean that a group of learners participating in a task under the supervision of a teacher may in fact be assisting the teacher in the development of competence in a teaching or supervising task in their own ZPD. Individual differences impact on the extent to which aid can boost demonstrated competency. Vygotsky cites the example of two students of similar chronological age, but through aided competency in a task demonstrate differing mental ages. This particular feature of the ZPD concept demonstrates that the gap between actual and aided competency differs from person to person (Vygotsky 1978).

Vygotsky argues that the ZPD concept stands as a general ‘law’ of development which orientates learning and development in direct opposition to the notion proposed by Piaget.

Thus, learning, according to Vygotsky, commences beyond the learner, not within which is in contrast to the Piagetian view of learning as an internal process and one that lags behind cognitive
development in the individual. In Vygotsky’s view, ‘good’ learning occurs ahead of demonstrated or actual competence in a task, rather than following the achievement of competence (Wells 1999, p. 25).

2.9.5 Knowledge: Acquisition, Construction or Experience?

There are a number of questions raised in the extant literature about the way that knowledge is acquired and what students should learn in the course of their studies. How do humans ‘know’ what they know? What do they need to know to navigate the challenges of their futures? Are there properties of knowledge that reward a particular approach to teaching and learning, while disadvantaging another?

Wells (1999, p. 73) analyses this problem from the perspective of knowledge artefacts and arrives at the conclusion that any form of text, tool or knowledge artefact does not contain knowledge in and of itself, as all are subject to interpretation and misinterpretation. In fact, Wells settles on the constructivist view that knowledge is created and exists only through the active participation of individuals in acts of meaning making, not in the artefacts that are created through such activities. Similarly, a cultural environment does not carry the distilled and collected wisdom of previous generations, as it is actively created and recreated through the participation of members of a given community. Pea (in Wells 1999, p. 76) describes knowledge artefacts as carriers of ‘previous reasoning’, but Wells adds an important qualification: individuals and communities actually recreate or reconstruct a contemporary version of knowledge that may have resulted from acts of meanings in previous generations or in other locations. Popper and Eccles (1997, pp. 78-79) state the view that in order to comprehend a theoretical idea, individuals must in fact reinvent it, re-exploring the paths of imagination and meaning making travelled by the original proponents of the idea; understanding, in this case, is clearly equated with experience and discovery. Individuals ‘re-know’ things through their active participation in meaning making, in a contemporary setting.

In considering the properties of knowledge in the context of theories of learning, some knowledge - perhaps most, will have a physical manifestation in the form of a semiotic tool or knowledge artefact; in addition to the human participants in the making of knowledge. However, Wells makes the clear distinction between knowledge and the artefact which merely represents the knowledge. It is in the understanding of the representation embodied in the artefact that knowledge is apprehended or recreated and made available for use (Wells 1999, p. 89).

Wells (1999, p. 86) further asks the interesting question concerning ‘lost’ knowledge: if there are no longer any living participants in the making of a particular item of knowledge and no means of interpreting any remaining knowledge artefacts does this knowledge exist? For Wells, knowledge cannot be separated from the action of representing and making. Knowledge artefacts may be
integrated into the activity of representing that is undertaken by individuals, but only in the context of the activity in which knowledge is being created and shared. Clearly it is the experience of knowledge, rather than the physical artefacts created that is the defining characteristic of the existence of knowledge, according to this view developed by Wells. Knowledge that is acquired without understanding and intentional participation for transmission from one location to another is inert, having no purpose with respect to the individual acquiring it.

Leont’iev (1981) describes knowing as an intentional activity, but also one that cannot be carried out in isolation; the individual does not ‘know’ alone – the activity is one that always has a social dimension, even if no other individual is present during the activity. This social property of knowledge creation and recreation, across generations and communities, with each new participant in the activity adding a unique factor aligns strongly with Vygotsky’s notion of interactivity in learning, in that the student as an active participant in learning exerts his or her own influence, however subtle, over the knowledge apprehended. Importance is also granted to the individual’s experience of the knowledge created, rather than production of knowledge artefacts.

This review of the properties of knowledge, and particularly the social dimension of knowledge, with its emphasis on active, intentional participation, underscores the importance of establishing and sustaining learning institutions that are embedded in the community and retain an active participation in community-wide knowledge creation. According to the literature discussed above, knowledge is something which must be experienced through the intentional involvement of the individual learner.

2.9.6 Summary of Key Concepts of Learning

The notion of learning as a fundamentally social phenomenon, with the individual at the centre of the learning process and an active participant in the construction of knowledge, emerges as one of the most important aspects worthy of consideration. Moving from learning as a process of transmission of what Wells (1999, p. 86) describes as ‘inert knowledge’ to one in which learning is undertaken as an active exploration of the world through the network of mediating contacts that surrounds each member of a community means that our understanding of the interactive relationship between the individual and the knowledge artefacts of his/her culture has undergone a profound paradigmatic shift. Knowledge arising from the experience of previous generations is not transmitted; it must be recreated by each successive generation, albeit with subtle modifications reflecting the added experience of that time.

The Vygotskian notion of the ZPD further enhances our understanding of the learning process, providing a powerful theory of development that transcends mere observation and analysis of
learning and its underlying mechanisms. Through the ZPD we find a theoretical tool that facilitates a more intentional engagement in the design of effective programs of learning. By placing the focus of learning ahead of competency, but within a supporting scaffold of competence, the ZPD provides a major structural element for creating an operational model of learning based on Vygotsky’s ideas (Daniels 2001; Wells 1999).

There are still many unanswered questions relating to the design and implementation of learning programs based on the constructivist model. Chaiklin (2003) claims that the ZPD lacks specificity in terms of implementation at a pedagogical level while others (Land & Hannafin 2000; Wells 1999) see the constructivist model of learning as unproven or impractical, with too much emphasis on the learning journey, rather than the building of new knowledge. The cross-disciplinary nature of socio-constructivism, in particular, has left it open to unavoidable theoretical and terminological imprecision (Wertsch, Toma & Hiatt 1995, Pritchard 2011). The environment in which learning takes place, particularly in student-centred learning, also emerges as an issue of potential concern. Seen as unproblematic in traditional education, learning environments, when seen from a student-centred approach to learning, require further attention with respect to the underlying theoretical assumptions used for their design and pedagogical utilisation (Land & Hannafin 2000, Pritchard 2011).

2.9.7 Developing Student Independent Learning

The implementation of the National Curriculum under the Federal Government’s Education agenda has implications for teachers and curriculum content if achievement standards are to be met. Developing independent learners is a key imperative for schools. It is within this context that the researcher has sought to define what this is and how students will be able to achieve this skill. What attributes will they need to have to demonstrate their capacity as an Independent Learner?

2.9.8 Independent Learning – Pedagogical Strategy

Incorporating independent learning into a course is complex. Its goal of improved intercultural communication competence will emerge after creating the right conditions. It starts with requiring the students to work in a team with other members from different backgrounds, friendship groups and the like to achieve a goal too substantive to achieve alone and a goal that is authentic to the area of study. For teamwork to succeed, the members must communicate. For communication to be effective, they must achieve some understanding of each other’s perspectives.

Appreciating the perspectives of others and accommodating those perspectives can be too big a leap for many students and exceeds their Vygotskian Zone of Proximal Development. Hence, the
need for collaborative learning, based on project tasks that transition the learner from passive to active learner, is essential.

Rimington (2006) suggests the pedagogical strategy of:

**Team Work**
- Immersion
- Experiential
- Social & cultural interaction

**Communication**
- Analysis
- Reflection
- Feedback

**Consider Alternative**
- Social Simulations
- Statements about self-constructive.

*Figure 2.1 - Techniques used to help prepare students for future challenges and co-operative learning (Rimington 2006)*
2.9.9 What is an Independent Learner?

According to Murdoch & Wilson (2006) an independent learner can motivate, manage and assess themselves as outlined in the table below, and is supported by the National Curriculum. Independent learners are self motivators, self managers and self appraisers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>As self-motivators</th>
<th>As self-managers</th>
<th>As self-appraisers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are eager and curious</td>
<td>Are thoughtful and deliberate in their actions – they manage impulsivity and consider consequences</td>
<td>Are self-aware and can articulate their needs and strengths as a learner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek to know what they don’t know</td>
<td>Persevere despite distractions</td>
<td>Self-assess (strengths, needs) as a matter of course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are proactive-keen to take part in activities and to find out for themselves</td>
<td>Avoid procrastination</td>
<td>Take time to reflect on effective learning strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are willing to take risks</td>
<td>Stay on task despite setbacks and understand that learning takes time</td>
<td>Use their own judgments to choose appropriate strategies and actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are able to set goals and initiate tasks with less direction</td>
<td>Draw upon a range of ways of thinking to get complex tasks completed</td>
<td>Use Positive self-talk and other ways to motivate and praise themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know that positive thinking is useful and that confidence (or lack of it) affects performance</td>
<td>Make plans and set goals</td>
<td>Do not constantly seek approval or guidance by others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are likely to produce work beyond expectations, particularly when self-initiated</td>
<td>Need minimal reminders and prompts to reach their goals</td>
<td>Can adapt more readily to change in routines and expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Require less external motivation to get started or to stay motivated</td>
<td>Attempt to sort through problems first before consulting others</td>
<td>Ask questions to clarify their understanding of given tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoy a challenge</td>
<td>Are aware of time constraints and ‘pace’ themselves accordingly</td>
<td>Readily act upon feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a range of systems and develop routines to organise themselves, their materials and their time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.9 - What is an Independent Learner? (Murdoch & Wilson 2006)

Students can only develop such skills and behaviours for effective, independent learning if they are given opportunities to be independent. In schools, innovative approaches to encourage independence and habits of mind that will assist students to meet the business world needs are occurring, and according to Murdoch & Wilson (2006, paragraphs 3-9) these approaches vary, but share the following six principles:
Reframing the Role of the Teacher (and Learner)

Many teachers describe the greatest challenge in nurturing independence in students as their own struggle to ‘let go’. Letting go should not be seen as abandonment – or even retreating to the ubiquitous role of ‘guide on the side’. Contemporary thinking would suggest that ‘To better prepare students with independent learning skills, it is about letting go of the way teachers traditionally see their role as teachers and the extent to which they tend to do so much of the thinking for their students. It is also about seeing students differently – as capable of assuming some responsibility, making decisions and managing choice and time. Inevitably, when teachers reposition their roles in this way, they are often surprised by what students can, in fact, do independently.

The following elements are seen as essential measurements in the framework that helps provide scaffolding for young people to acquire the global skills and competencies as well as habits of mind which will prepare them for sustainable life learning practices.

Offering Choice

One of the keys to developing independence is to learn to make wise choices. In the innovative classrooms, students are regularly expected to make choices about what, how and with whom they will learn. In many pre-school and early years environments, children are frequently expected to make decisions about tasks they will undertake, with whom they will ‘work’, how long they will stay at a task or how they might present their thinking and learning to others. While there are clear expectations and structures that allow these learning communities to function fairly, children make a significant number of decisions about how they will use their time and gain maximum benefit from understanding their preferred learning style. If very young children can manage such responsibility, then it follows that, with increasing maturity and opportunities to make choices, this independence should flourish.

However it could be agreed that simply providing choice does not, in itself, foster independence. Just as responsibility and rights go hand in hand, so do choice and support. This support comes in the form of clear (and often co-constructed) guidelines that combine non-negotiable and negotiable tasks as well as directed instruction at the point of need and modeling of skills and behaviours.

Differentiation

One of the keys to enhancing independence in the classroom is to recognise the differences between individuals their social and emotional well-being, their individual learning styles and to develop ways to cater for these differences. The teacher’s role in determining learning objectives and monitoring individual progress is important for facilitating learning. When teachers combine the provision of choice with an acute understanding of the individual needs, strengths, interests and learning styles of students in their care, they can better guide students in managing their own learning pathways.

An Inquiry-oriented Approach to Teaching

An inquiry approach is a powerful vehicle for fostering independence. When used well, inquiry based learning assists students to ask questions and pursue investigations of relevance to both needs and interests. The emphasis on reflection and action also encourages students to think about how to best use their learning. Involving students in some shared inquiries (for example, where the class or a group pursues a common question for a period of time) can provide vital modeling of the...
skills and processes used for effective investigation and communication. This shared experience should be balanced with opportunities for students to pursue more individual interests, questions or objectives.

**Open-ended Structures and Routines**

Catering for the individual needs within a full class of students (and generally only one teacher) can put a strain on the quest for more independent learners. Teachers manage this challenge by designing tasks, structures and routines that encourage students to self-manage and work more independently – allowing the teacher and students more opportunities for one-to-one and small group interaction.

The use of open-ended structures and routines (such as learning modules and learning contracts where students select from tiered tasks, physical learning centres or work stations around the room, task boards and activity menus, cooperative learning groups and cross-age groupings) promote self-management and provide opportunities for individual instruction. In addition, students and teachers become more accustomed to the experience of individuals and small groups doing different tasks at the same time. To work, these structures need to be used consistently, expectations must be clear and importantly, the task themselves cannot be simply ‘busy work’ – they must be relevant to learning objectives.

**Making Connections**

One simple – but powerful – way to nurture independence is to ensure that students know why they are doing what they are doing. Generally students obligingly carry out a task or investigate a topic simply because a teacher has asked them to. The learning purpose remains shrouded in a ‘command and control’ drill like exercise. When teachers are open about the relevance and purpose of the task at hand they bring their students into the picture, they better equip students with the knowledge they need to make decisions for themselves. Once this kind of discourse is established, teachers find they are able to involve students much more in decisions about anything.

Integrating the curriculum can therefore be a very effective way to help students understand the purposes behind their learning. When a curriculum is garmented and when there is little that connects one learning episode to the next, students are left in a highly dependent state. When the learning landscape is more integrative in nature, it makes more sense to the learner. In an environment that ‘makes sense to us’, we can exert more control and participate more confidently and knowingly in it.

Building students’ metacognitive capacity by encouraging regular reflection and self-assessment also fosters the ability to self-manage the ‘thinking’ demands of learning tasks.

While the above principles offer some important guidance, it is perhaps the connectedness of classroom life that can most strongly influence the developments of independent learning skills and subsequently enhance global skills and competencies. The research indicates a strong case for such skill acquisition to be embedded in the adolescent years of schooling where the students traditionally become disengaged with the learning process as they seek greater understanding of themselves and the world in which they live.
2.10 The Education Sector and Global Competency

In the 21st century, young people from westernised countries who understand the dynamics of global economic and intercultural relations will have a distinct advantage in securing good jobs. Therefore teaching students about the world outside is a challenge to most schools (with some notable exceptions).

‘In today’s world, the status quo is tantamount to a kind of educational isolationism. That is unacceptable . . . [we must] foster teaching excellence in international education, and create a new calibre of highly qualified teachers who understand the international dimensions of their subjects . . . teachers must be qualified to prepare young people for the opportunities and challenges of globalisation.’ (Levine 2005, p.3)

Given our increasingly global economy, Willard (2008) argues ‘this lack leaves students educationally and economically handicapped’. He contends that traditional teaching styles will not be able to expose students to the multitude of experiences needed to build up global competencies and teachers will need to adapt their teaching style and the learning environment in order to provide a platform for independent learning.

2.10.1 The Goals of Global Education

Sinagatullin (2006) states that the major goals of global education are oriented to:

*Preparing the young generations for life, work and cooperation* with people from various political, socio-cultural, religious, language, and social class backgrounds. Children and adolescents need to be prepared not only for life in general, which is, in its human part, often dark, obscure, and unjust; but also for a life of service and a drive to change things for the better. Preparing a graduate for the workforce, whether physical or intellectual, is important, but this objective is not an uppermost one. Consequently, a prime goal of global education is preparing a graduate to serve for the good of global humanity, encompassing people from different cultural backgrounds and with different viewpoints on global issues.

*Developing a creative and reflective personality,* capable of making wise and constructive decisions and taking responsibility for the present and future of the home country and the world. Obviously, ameliorating and cleaning one’s own country from all sorts of evil is the very starting point of such a divine global reconstruction. Likewise, cleansing one’s own heart from evil thinking is the beginning of the overall global spiritual resurgence.

*Developing students’ global competency,* i.e. attitudes, skills, and knowledge base that they require to productively work and function within a globalising and interdependent society. Undoubtedly,
required global competency will largely promote and enrich their relations within their own micro-culture and within mainstream culture (Sinagatullin 2006, p.125).

2.11 Middle Years of Learning

Over the past 100 years, numerous educational reforms have gained voice while traditional schooling has remained remarkably resilient. During the early to mid 1970s various forms of progressive education in Australia rose to prominence, if not dominance. The term ‘middle schooling’ played no real part in this phenomenon but the concept did well, particularly in small alternative schools that had been operating over the decades with the educational goals for young Australians now defined under the Federal Government’s ‘Education Revolution’. Schooling in the Middle Years philosophy is gaining greater prominence as a means of providing a framework for achieving national goals. Since 1990, growing support for middle schooling has come in various forms from a diverse range of agencies.

Chadbourne (2001, pp. 8-9) has identified the following:

‘A decade of government sponsored and official inquiries and reports on the education of young adolescents: for example, Report of the junior secondary review (Eyers et al, 1992); Middle Years of schooling discussion paper (Schools Council 1992); In the middle: Schooling for young adolescents (School Council 1993); Action plan for the middle schooling years (Department of Education and Children’s Services 1994); Victorian Years 5 – 8 project (Kruse 1995); From alienation to engagement (Australian Curriculum Studies Association 1996); Teachers working with young adolescents (Board of Teacher Registration 1996); Planning for middle schooling in Western Australia (Jackson 1999).

A range of specific Middle Years projects across Australia: for example, The AEU-SA middle schooling project (South Australia Institute of Teaching 1994; 1996); National Middle Schooling Project (Barratt 1998); Middle Years of Schooling Years 5 to 8+, Individual Learning Pathways Project (Braggett, Morris & Day 1999); Middle Years of Schooling Project (Braggett, Morris & Day 1999), Middle Years Research and Development (MYRAD) Project (Hill & Russell 1999).

The inclusion of middle schooling in broad national educational initiatives: for example, National Schools Network (1995); Innovative Links Project (1994-1997); Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Program (McRae et al 2000); Innovation and Best Practice Project (Cuttance (ed.) 2001).

The production of middle schooling ideas and resources by agencies such as: the Australian Curriculum Studies Association (1998); National Schools Network (1995); academics and professional development providers (for example Brennan & Sachs 1998; Boyd & Maroulis 1998; Harvey 2000; Kiddey & Robson 2001); and numerous practising classroom teachers, as evidenced in the books and other resources on display at events such as the Middle Years of Schooling Association conferences.


The rise of middle schooling professional associations; for example The Middle Schooling Network in South Australia, the Middle Years of Schooling Association in Queensland, the Middle Schooling Association in Western Australia, the Middle Schooling Network and the Australian Middle Years Association in Victoria.

The introduction of middle schooling units and programs in preservice and postgraduate teacher education courses; for example Deakin University, Edith Cowan University, Flinders University, University of South Australia, University of Queensland, Queensland University of Technology, University of Tasmania – to name a few.

The recognition of middle schooling in the policies and activities of a diverse range of school education agencies, such as: professional educator associations (for example the Australian College of Education, Incorporated Association of Registered Teachers of Victoria, Australian Secondary Principals Association), some teachers unions and employers, and the Australian Council of State School Organisations.

The increasing adoption of middle schooling in educational institutions across the spectrum in most Australian stages; for example, government and non government schools, Catholic and non Catholic schools, urban and rural schools, wealthy and low fee paying private schools, and schools in high, middle and low socioeconomic areas.’ (Chadbourne 2001, pp. 8-9)

This list represents a small sample of much wider range of developments related to middle schooling in Australia but illustrates the importance of the issue in the Education debate.

2.11.1 Middle Years of Schooling – Principles and Policies Framework

2.11.2 Features of Schooling

The Middle Years of Schooling constitutes a stage of schooling during which young adolescents explore themselves and the world in which they live. This stage of schooling requires educational experiences that are meaningful and beneficial to all students and advance their learning capacity in preparation for post compulsory pathways and employment. The Middle Years of schooling philosophy aims to develop in students a generic set of skills and competencies that will better prepare them for contributing to a different type of workforce than that of previous generations. The framework looks at developing key competencies which can be mapped against key employability skills.

This requires schooling that provides students with:

- Access to meaningful and appropriate teaching and learning programs including transition into and out of the Middle Years of Schooling
- Opportunities to become engaged in rich, real, relevant and rigorous educational experiences
• Achievements that is moderated and validated against the standards described in the Curriculum Framework (NTCF)
• Reading, writing and numeracy assessments through system-wide tests in Years 3, 7 and 9.

2.11.3 Principles of Middle Schooling

Middle Schooling is founded on the Department of Education and Training’s commitment to deliver high quality teaching and education services to maximise student learning and well-being.

The following principles constitute the essential components of Middle Schooling:

• Learning centred – learning opportunities and curriculum focused on the needs, interests and concerns of learners, with an emphasis on self-directed and co-constructed learning
• Collaboratively organised – working collegially to plan, deliver and assess learning, ensuring meaningful and authentic demonstrations of outcomes and judgments of achievements, within, across and beyond discipline and subject areas
• Outcome based – recording progress and achievement as explicit statements of what each student is expected to know and be able to do
• Flexibly constructed – using time, space and other resources to reflect creative solutions and arrangements responsive to local needs and circumstances
• Ethically aware – reflecting justice, care, respect and concern for needs of others, in everyday practice of students, teachers and leaders
• Community orientated – involving parents and other stakeholders in productive partnerships with the school
• Adequately resourced – supporting teachers and staff by high quality facilities, technology, equipment and materials
• Strategically linked – connecting Middle Years within the P-12 continuum.

2.11.4 Learner Characteristics of Middle Year Learners

• Experiencing adolescence and the accompanying intellectual, social, emotional and physical changes
• Forming, articulating and managing relationships and developing stronger links with their peers, greater independence and a stronger sense of belonging in wider adolescent cultures
• Reflecting on who they are, where they belong, what they value and where they are going – including how schooling fits into their identify
• Developing their own voice and sense of social justice, often challenging the voices of significant adults including parents or caregivers and teachers.
Throughout the literature from the Australian Curriculum studies Association which examined the opportunities for reform in the Middle Years of schooling between 1992 and 1998 it is suggested that it is these learner characteristics and generic competencies which will contribute towards competency acquisition as students move along the continuum from student, to employee to employer.

2.11.5 Learner Needs

The literature suggests that young adolescents have a range of personal, intellectual and social needs. With the onset of puberty, however, there are particular physical, emotional and cultural needs that should also be addressed. The Middle Years of Schooling provide opportunities for young people to learn and grow in ways that acknowledge and respect this unique phase of their development. The following represents a collective view of specific needs that must be accommodated in the Middle Years of Schooling:

- **Identify** – exploring how individual and group identities are shaped by social and cultural groups

- **Relationships** – developing productive and affirming relationships with adults and peers in an environment that respects difference and diversity

- **Purpose** – having opportunities to negotiate learning that is useful now, as well as in the future

- **Empowerment** – viewing the world critically and acting independently, co-operatively and responsibly

- **Success** – having multiple opportunities to learn valued knowledge and skills as well as the opportunities to use talents and expertise that students bring to the learning environment

- **Rigour** – taking on realistic learning challenges in an environment characterised by high expectations and constructive, honest feedback

- **Safety** – learning in a safe, stimulating and caring environment that addresses issues of discrimination and harassment.

2.11.6 The Distinctiveness of Middle Schooling Pedagogy

The broad principles of constructivist pedagogy rest on: integrated curriculum, authentic assessment, collaborative learning, professional community, learning organisations, facilitative leadership, democratic governance, safe and healthy school environments.
According to Zemelman, Daniels and Hyde (1998, p. 5), ‘virtually all the authoritative voices in each field are calling for schools that are student-centered, active, experiential, democratic, collaborative, and yet rigorous and challenging’. This unrecognised consensus crosses content boundaries and grade levels. It comprises a coherent philosophy of 13 interlocking principles about the best practice, namely, that children learn best when schools, teaching and learning are: student-centred, experiential, holistic, authentic, expressive, reflective, social, collaborative, democratic, cognitive, developmental, constructivist, and challenging. The detail of each of these principles, as documented by Zemelman et al (1998), captures the essence of middle schooling.

2.11.7 Middle Schooling within Traditional School Structures

Many aspects of constructivism that underpin middle schooling can be successfully implemented within the ‘subject-centred’ curriculum structure of traditional schooling. A constructivist philosophy of teaching and learning advocates that students:

- Be constantly presented with the worthwhile and challenging tasks
- Work as a learning community, not a collection of individuals
- Actively construct their own understandings rather than passively accept what others say
- Engage in reasoning rather than memorising
- Problem solve rather than mechanistically seek answers
- Connect ideas and their applications rather than learn isolated concepts and processes. (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics 2000).

What the research is suggesting is that Middle Schooling demands: teaching for understanding and higher order thinking, ensuring the success of all students, cooperative learning, authentic assessment, and negotiated curriculum.

With middle schooling the focus is on:

- Integrated curriculum
- Collaborative teaching
- A seamless transition between primary and secondary
- Teaching for understanding and higher order thinking
- Small learning communities that provide students with sustained individual attention and a safe, healthy school environment.

2.11.8 The Effectiveness of Middle Years Schooling

According to Chadbourne (2001, p. 15) there are a number of Australian case studies on middle schooling that have been completed through agencies such as: ‘the Australian Curriculum Studies
Association (1993; 1996); South Australian Institute of Teaching (1994); Department of Education and Children’s Services (1996); National Schools Network (1995); Innovative Links Project (1994-97); cluster group initiatives in Victoria and the Northern Territory (Braggett, Morris & Day 1999); Innovation and Best Practice Project (Cuttance 2001); IESIP-SRP projects (McRae et al. 2000); and a variety of other people and agencies for example Lovegrove et al. 1982; Cumming 1998; McInerney et al. 1998; Chadbourne and Harslett 1998’.

Chadbourne (2001) also discusses the shortcomings in research to date. While longitudinal evaluations of middle schooling have been conducted in the USA (Russell 2000), there is no of Australian research. There are some curricula programs that have been quantitatively assessed, such as the program ‘stepping out’, a literary resource developed in Western Australia for middle and secondary schools. The research looked at the program in 158 government schools over a five-year period. Evaluations of the program found that its strategies benefited all students, particularly for low achievers, English as a second language students and students with learning difficulties (Deschamp 1993; 1994; 1996).

Given the difficulties of demonstrating cause/effect relationships in a field as complex as schooling, the shortage of conclusive summative evaluations of middle schooling is perhaps no surprise. Student outcomes in any type of schooling are due to multiple factors, and some student outcomes, such as changing sexist and racist attitudes, can take years to achieve. Progress at any one time is difficult to determine; for example, progress might be significant but imperceptible when laying the foundations for changing deep seated attitudes (Chadbourne & Ingvarson 1992).

### 2.11.9 Skills and attributes for Middle Schooling

When examining the essential elements of Middle Years Schooling against the key personal qualities, skills and attributes described by Willard (2008), Levine (2005), Mendenhall (2006) and the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry & Business Council of Australia (2002) there is a clear alignment of the generic competencies which are also included in the goals of education in Australia as set out in the National Educational Goals agenda; and which the Federal Government believes will contribute framework competency acquisition as young people move along the continuum from student to employee to employer.

The researcher has identified the key skills and attributes (see Table 2.8) that young people need in order to be global citizens using the Middle Years Schooling framework which provides opportunities for young people to learn and grow in ways that acknowledges and respects the unique phase of their development in the early adolescent years. These skills and attributes can be summarised in the following way:
• Self directed and co-constructed learning
• Collaborative teams based on outcomes
• Flexibility and adaptability in multiple contexts
• Sense of community and belonging to a bigger group
• Strategic alliances
• Community oriented
• Respecting difference and diversity.

The distinctiveness of Middle School learning, as outlined by Zemelman, Daniels and Hyde (1998, viii), is for student centred, active, experiential, democratic, collaborative, rigorous and challenging developmental and collaborative learning which engages reasoning rather than memorising. Where ideas and their application are connected rather than learnt in isolation. This approach will help provide a framework for assessing the experiential programs under review in chapter 4.

2.11.10  ‘Traditional’ vs ‘Thinking Curriculum’

In order to determine how effective the Middle Years approach to schooling works, the researcher felt it useful to compare more traditional approaches with what is now being described as the Thinking Oriented Curriculum (TOC).

In figure 2.10.1, the left columns represent some of the assumptions in more traditional views of education, while the right column shows the corresponding approach in the thinking oriented curriculum. These tables could imply a black and white distinction between traditional and TOC models. But current education often contains elements from both sides. It is still useful, however, to consider the two extremes to get a feel for what is attributed to each model, as the thinking oriented curriculum has provided a platform for experiential programs in schools. It is through experiential programs that schools have tried to provide a platform for higher order thinking skills necessary for the workforce of the future.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Curriculum</th>
<th>The Thinking Oriented Curriculum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching centred;</td>
<td>Learning centred;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content focused</td>
<td>Process driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students answering questions asked by someone else</td>
<td>Students setting their own questions with the help of matrices, keys, mind maps etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparing student memories at a point in time</td>
<td>Recording growth in thinking processes over time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students recalling and applying prescribed content</td>
<td>Students applying core thinking processes as they work with content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private thought process</td>
<td>Shared experiences and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing verbal summaries and explanations</td>
<td>Summarising key points and showing connections on visual / mental maps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching of methods for content recall</td>
<td>Use of metacognition for identifying and sharing thinking processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passing standardised or public exams for selection purposes</td>
<td>Developing independent, critical, creative and caring thinkers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief in a single intelligence that is fixed and static</td>
<td>Belief in multiple intelligences that can change with effort and instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much ‘just in case’ learning</td>
<td>More ‘just in time’ learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2.10.1 - 'Traditional' vs 'Thinking Curriculum' (Pohl 2004)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Conventional Approach (20th Century)</th>
<th>Learning for the Knowledge Era (21st Century)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Imposed</td>
<td>Negotiated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mistakes</td>
<td>Should not be made</td>
<td>To be learned from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>Authentic – various modes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>View of World</td>
<td>Right – wrong</td>
<td>Uncertainty / shades of grey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determined by</td>
<td>Central authority</td>
<td>Local needs in context of general / global framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffed by</td>
<td>Subject expert</td>
<td>Cross curricula team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aim</td>
<td>Theory to practice</td>
<td>Practice to theory and theory to practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approach</td>
<td>Content driven</td>
<td>Process and content driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Teaching centered</td>
<td>Learning centered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher role</td>
<td>Expert</td>
<td>Fellow learner / facilitator / sometimes expert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis</td>
<td>Knowing that</td>
<td>Knowing how and why and how to find out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student activity</td>
<td>Working alone</td>
<td>Working collaboratively and alone – independence and interdependence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethos</td>
<td>Competitive against others</td>
<td>Striving for personal best against criteria and standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student role</td>
<td>Passive / receptive</td>
<td>Active / generative metacognitive, reflective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning experiences</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td>Flexible / opportunity guided by framework of outcomes and learners’ interests / needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2.10.2 – 'Traditional’ vs ‘Thinking Curriculum’ (Atkin 1996)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom activity</th>
<th>Teacher centered Didactic</th>
<th>Learner centered Interactive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher role</td>
<td>Fact teller</td>
<td>Collaborator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Always expert</td>
<td>Sometimes expert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student role</td>
<td>Listener</td>
<td>Collaborator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Always learner</td>
<td>Sometimes expert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional emphasis</td>
<td>Facts</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Memorisation</td>
<td>Inquiry and invention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept of knowledge</td>
<td>Accumulation of facts</td>
<td>Transformation of facts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of success</td>
<td>Quantity</td>
<td>Criterion referenced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Portfolios and performances</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2.10.3 - ‘Traditional’ vs ‘Thinking Curriculum’ (Atkin 1994)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Norm referenced Multiple-choice items</th>
<th>Quality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technology use</td>
<td>Drill and practice</td>
<td>Communication, collaboration, information access, expression</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 2.11.11 Victorian Essential Learning Standards

While each state in Australia will be able to offer programs within a particular educational philosophy and curriculum adapted to the needs of their students, and the different stages of learning, Victorian schools have adopted the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) framework which dovetails into the National Curriculum Framework. The researcher has examined that framework to better understand the schools’ response to National Agenda items.

#### 2.11.12 Years 9 to 10 – Developing Pathways

Students remain capable of rapid improvements in learning styles and competencies. Myelination – which is seen as very important at this developmental stage – continues in the brain. Myelin is the fatty material around the axons, or connectors, of the brain cells which turns impulses into thoughts. It enables students to comprehend with greater speed, make comparisons and connections more quickly and efficiently, and become more proficient in fine motor skills such as those required for drawing and playing musical instruments (VELS 2010).

Currently the literature suggests that students increasingly focus on their peers and the giving and receiving of support. They form partnerships and collaborate with groups in order to focus on, comprehend and complete tasks. As they begin to make choices about work and future schooling they are faced with new responsibilities and challenges that cause stress. They require increasingly sophisticated coping skills in order to remain resilient learners in pursuit of goals.

At this stage of their development, students take more responsibility for their learning and their learning environment. They create a learning space at home, and develop independent strategies and habits, including study plans and routines. Students use conceptual frameworks for learning. They apply logic, ethics and creativity. Conceptualisation is more likely to transpire early in the learning process. These concepts may then be applied and tested, evaluated, and discarded or applied more broadly.

VELS (2010) identifies that students become aware of, and capable of reflecting on, the differences between mathematic, scientific, literary, historical and artistic learning methods. They become flexible learners, applying a number of approaches to understanding information. All of this correlates and adds to the core global competency skills and capabilities.
The literature (VELS 2010) states that by the end of this stage, students will have generic skills such as collecting relevant information, researching, questioning, using creativity and analysis, rehearsing, elaborating, organising, judging and applying. Furthermore, they will have developed the capacity to plan and apply these generic skills to enhance learning across a variety of domains. Through this one can safely assume that teachers can enhance learning by providing opportunities for student participation in projects that occur over extended periods and are learner directed. Students will be able to construct a planned learning framework that allows a task to be successfully completed (VELS 2009, p. 1).

2.11.13 Stride Foundation and the Victorian Essential Learning Standards

Through carefully constructed activities, directed by the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS), young people are encouraged to develop life-enhancing skills which will help them develop the resilience needed to face an ever-changing and uncertain world and contribute more meaningfully to the workforce of the future. Programs focus most strongly on empowering students to relate positively with others, work cooperatively in teams, solve problems and manage conflicts. All these attributes and skills are deemed essential skills in the workforce of the future.

The following table outlines the strands and domain of the VELS that underpins the backing and learning outcomes in Victorian Secondary Schools. It reflects the rigorous stages of learning for young people and sees learning as a continuum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strand and Domain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical, Personal and Social Learning Strand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This strand aims to help young people to develop confidence to take responsibility for their own physical and mental well-being and to cultivate skills needed to operate in the local, national and global community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Physical Education Domain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of knowledge, skills and behaviours which assist students to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Live a healthy lifestyle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Understand the connection between physical activity and good health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Become involved in physical activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Development Domain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of knowledge, skills and behaviours which assist students to work collaboratively with others by:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Relating positively with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Working cooperatively in teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Managing conflicts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Learning Domain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of individual learning skills to enable students to take responsibility for their own learning by:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Understanding their own best learning style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Seeking and responding appropriately to feedback from others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Articulating and managing their own learning in relation to their personal goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Developing and expressing appropriate values both in school and the wider community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Civics and Citizenship Domain**
Development of attitudes of support and responsibility towards others in society so that students may:
- Know their rights and responsibilities as citizens
- Understand Australia’s role in the global community
- Gain the attitudes and skills to contribute to society by taking responsible action in relation to others in the local and global community

**Interdisciplinary Learning Strand**
This strand involves the recognition of a range of knowledge, skills and behaviours which cross disciplinary boundaries and which are important for helping students learn and problem solve for success in the future.

**Communication Domain**
Communication is central to the expression of learning and understanding. Students are assisted to gain a new knowledge and incorporate the language of different disciplines into their communication in its many forms.

**Design, Creativity and Technology Domain**
Students are assisted to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours which allow them to be effectively involved in the design process. This includes learning the processes of investigating, designing, planning and producing products.

**Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Domain**
The knowledge, skills and behaviours in this domain enable students to use ICT to access, process, manage and present information; model and control events, construct new understandings; and communicate with others.

**Discipline – based on Learning Strand**
The discipline-based learning strand includes subject area studies which together form a body of knowledge with associated ways of seeing the world and individual methods of exploring, imagining and constructing that world.

**Arts Domain**
The arts are unique, expressive, creative and communicative forms that engage students in critical and creative thinking and help them understand themselves and the world.

**English Domain**
Students of English learn to appreciate, enjoy and use language: to evoke feelings; to convey ideas; to inform; to discuss; to persuade; to entertain; and to argue.

*Table 2.11 - Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS 2009, pp. 3-6)*

2.12 Learning Environment

To introduce the concept of the learning environment, previous work in this field is reviewed. Early work regarding the relationship between the environment and the person included that by Lewin (1936) and Murray (1938). Lewin contributed significantly through his recognition of the importance of what he called the *whole situation*, that is, the interaction of personal characteristics and the environment in the determination of human behaviour. While his theory was not specifically developed in relation to learning in schools, it can now be seen as a major contributor to theory regarding educational life (Fraser 1994). It was the intention of the present study that a *whole situation* approach be taken through the consideration of what might be called internal and external factors in learning environments. Briefly, these relate to factors internal to the learner such as motivation, and factors external to the learner such as grouping patterns.
Murray (1938), in referring to the work of Freud, discusses the idea that an object (a thing, person or institution) that evokes a need is said to have *cathexis*. If the object evokes a positive need (for example, achievement, recognition, affiliation), indicating that the subject likes the object, it is said to have positive cathexis, or value. But to Murray it is inappropriate only to enumerate the positively and negatively cathected objects, even though this will tell us which entities in the environment have drawing or repelling power for the individual. He believes that the enumeration has limited meaning, that the objects list can only be understood by those who have experience with those objects, and that it will be only through intuition that one can imagine why the objects repelled or appealed to a person.

The research used the term *learning environment* in a broad sense to encompass a range of possible positively and negatively cathected items. The term learning environment is used in this study as factors identified by the participants. The learning environment may be made up of factors internal to the child, for example, geographical and ecological features, and communication patterns. The openness of the interview procedures developed or adapted for this research allowed participants to express their perceptions without predetermined, researcher-imposed analytic structures underlying the data generation. It is acknowledged that the external/internal divide can be problematic, as a factor that appears external to the researcher may involve internal encoding to the participant. For the purpose of simplicity the divide was retained in the initial stages but it was not intended that analysis would necessarily be according to this divide. However, the internal/external divide is useful for illustrating the breadth of the working definition of *learning environment* and suggests one perspective from which it was possible that findings be viewed.

Figure 2.1 demonstrates that the learning environment construct has the potential to encompass internal and external factors. It demonstrates also that in this study the learning environment construct was deployed in relation to participants' perceptions of helping factors for their learning.
The term learning environment is perhaps one of convenience, as it was chosen to allow for the inclusion of all factors of influence upon the learning as identified by the participants. While there is some opinion that environment refers to what is outside the person (for example, Tangiuri 1968), the present use of the word learning environment is not entirely contrary to previous studies. Within the growing body of research on the learning environment over the past two decades a range of meanings has emerged.

Nielsen and Kirk (1974, p. 57) discuss the construct in a broad manner stating that ‘a learning environment could be everywhere and entail practically anything’. Other researchers take differently focused, but what might also be called broad, perspectives. For example, Fraser and Walberg (1991, para 2) state that ‘educational environments can be considered as the social-psychological contexts or determinants of learning’. Insight into the meaning intended by these authors is found by referring to the instruments discussed in Fraser and Walberg (1991) and Fraser (1994), and noting the kind of environmental factors upon which responses were sought. These instruments, which aim to measure the perception of and/or preference for the learning environment, include items grouped according to scales such as satisfaction, teacher support, affiliation, participation, material environment, independence, speed competitiveness and difficulty of learning.

It is proposed that an alternate conceptualisation of the learning environment encapsulates physical and architectural factors (MacAulay 1990; Moos 1973; Weinstein 1979; Tangiuri 1968),

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Figure 2.2 – Participants' perspectives, extended model
structural and organisational factors (MacAulay 1990; Moos 1973; Tanguiri 1968) teacher characteristics (MacAulay 1990; Wittrock 1986), and learner characteristics (MacAulay 1990; Tobias 1994; Wittcock 1986).

An adaptation of conceptual frameworks was developed by Moos (1979) and MacAulay (1990). Categories and possible elements are:

- physical and architectural factors: space, privacy, noise, tiredness, light, equipment/materials, technology, seating arrangements, location
- structure and organisation: task type, time, grouping, teacher direction, discussion, communication patterns, rules and procedures, competition, cooperativeness
- teacher characteristics: teaching style, feedback, expectations, warmth, friendliness, communicativeness
- learner characteristics: desires, attributions, interests, motivations, expectations, attitudes, beliefs, emotions, self efficiency, gender, cognitive processes (for example, attentional processes, perceived intelligence, memory, problem solving ability).

Figure 2.2 presents a conceptual model of the learning environment that is based on the hypothesis that social, physical, organisational and psychological factors may all be components within participants’ perception of the learning environment. The focus was on perceptions of helping factors within learning environments for the learning and acquisition of global competencies. The model proposed in Figure 2.2 includes possible reference to tasks, content, and process through the structure and organisation and learner characteristic categories.
It is not intended to be a study of learning environments as they are known to exist, if such knowing can be common across individuals, but a study of participants’ perceptions of helpful learning environments and therefore skills and experiences that they may identify as important. It is possible that elements of factors may appear to be controllable, to some degree by the teacher. In the present research, some factors taken as possible elements of learning environments may be directly observable, such as those that are external to the learner. However, others, such as factors internal to the learner, are not observable. Indeed, observability is not crucial as it is the participants’ perception of factors experienced that is of interest.

It is their interpretations and perspectives that are of importance in this study, as it is knowledge about the way in which individuals perceive and interpret situations which provides the basis for understanding individual’s behaviour (Nystedt 1983). It was the intention to examine the learning environment from the ‘subject’s own interpretation of the phenomena he [or she] perceives’ (Murray 1938, p. 122).

In the summary the term learning environment is used in the present research to group the perceived factors of influence as expressed by the participants, no matter whether these factors, as perceived by the researcher, are external or internal to the participants.

**2.13 Experiential programs**

In all experiential programs examined the importance of relationships, principally, positive student-teacher relationships is presently a major focus particularly in addressing the needs of the disengaged in the Middle Years of schooling (Keedie 1973, p. 106). As Keedie argues, a student’s opinion of themselves and of their place in their community, are significant determinants in their learning. In the experiential programs examined the Schools accepted that adolescence is a period of considerable change in a child’s life, a change that is easily detected but not so easily managed by the child. Frydenberg et al (2005, pp. 14-15) argues that assisting in the management of this change by providing an emotionally safe and affirming learning environment leads to improved learning outcomes, stating:

‘Adolescents who are already experiencing profound physiological and emotional changes have to rely on their problem solving skills to deal with challenges such as establishing new peer networks and the development of abstract thinking. If adolescents are not effective in dealing with stress or using their problem solving abilities, they may develop mental health problems such as depression or anxiety that will subsequently lead to negative outcomes such as academic underachievement or social skills deficit.’
If Giedd et al (1999) is correct, and the ‘use it or lose it’ principle is indeed true as suggested, the patterns of behaviours learnt and established in adolescence are life shaping. Experiential programs aim to establish patterns of behaviour that support its students through the latter years of their schooling and well beyond into their personal and working relationships.

In many ways, Year 9 is seen as a ‘right of passage’, a critical point marking the growth of the individual from childhood to adulthood. Students are supported in ‘acting’ as independent learners and functional members of the community. The Year 9 program and processes are structured to resemble programs and processes that will prepare them for contributing to the workforce in the future.

Symbols, rituals and routines are employed in all programs examined to develop ‘norms’ of behaviour. Rehearsal of these norms of behaviour provide a predictable and, in many ways, safe learning environment. The experiential program is also in many ways rehearsal for future pathways. ‘Recall of data’ is not the preferred form of assessment. Equally important however are those broader skills that students require in their final years of secondary education and beyond as they continue their life journey to employability. These include problem solving, reasoning, communication, abstract thinking, etc, skills that are incorporated across the experiential learning programs under examination.

The pastoral care and discipline policy of the program further exemplifies the application of rehearsal. These programs, where possible, mirror expectations of behaviour beyond the gates of the school.

Adolescence marks a point of metamorphosis from a child into adult. Much behaviour, appreciation of expectations and an understanding of one’s potential are not innately understood by all. Rehearsal plays a significant part in developing these understanding both rehearsal of (‘rituals and routines’ for example) and rehearsal for (Year 10, VCE and pathways, employability and beyond).

Cornish (2004) argues that Schools need to become personal, need to emphasise the personal, need to operate not as manufacturing corporations with final test-run at HSC before sale to the community; but rather become enlightened, personal, ‘individual responsive learning communities’ in a space in which are numerous opportunities for choice variance, variation, and difference of personal learning.’ Schools need also to promise by design, architecture, curriculum and daily offering a personal future unlike anyone else’s… learning to respect and communicate with each other, a confident future in which the personal and the public can be in harmony… At the epicentre of value, schools are about a promise of life in which difference is honoured, individuality is natural, and emotional warmth can be found’. (Cornish 2004, p. 4)
Active learning and engagement in schools suggests engaging young people for positive participation in a global future means when education is customised for individuals within one group of students, it ends up for all. For many, formal schooling has not been flexible enough to enable them to sustain ongoing engagement with formal learning; for others, school had heightened their feelings of alienation and despair. Carr-Greg (2002), in highlighting the ideal environment for raising adolescents in the 21st century, recommends the following:

- Connectedness through feeling needed and a sense of belonging
- Feeling safe, valued and listened to both at home and at school.

2.13.1 Education for Relationship

The ability to develop good and satisfying interpersonal relationships is seen as the main, or a major reason, for fostering learning. This has been one of the main themes lying behind the concern of many informal educators with social education; and has been the main focus in many experiential programs.

2.13.2 Education through Relationship

If, as Carr-Greg (2002) argues, relationships are a fundamental source of learning, then paying attention to the nature of the relationship between educators and learners, it could be argued, can make a significant difference. In particular, the quality of the relationship deeply influences the hopefulness and the capacity to see connections and discover meanings (Salzberg-Wittenberg et al. 1983, p. ix).

For young people, the completion of schooling gives them credibility and a passport to rebuilding their hopes and pride in themselves by reinforcing:

- The feeling that they belong
- The feeling that they can do it
- The feeling that they have achieved.

It is about the ability to be an effective and responsible citizen – not just about leaving school or getting a job.

In helping students explore alternatives and futures in an experiential setting, students feel that they have greater control over their choices, pathways and opportunities to complete their formal years or schooling, and engage in the workforce of the future. Experiential study tasks build on the contexts and interest of each individual and their lived experience. Students engage with conversation and reflections about their ‘real life’ learning. This increases their confidence and
competence in grappling with the processes of learning, and learning for life beyond the school gates. Students quickly gain confidence and competence in demonstrating their skills in managing complex tasks that have an educational outcome combined with a life skill. Engagement with meaningful, multi-purpose tasks engendered pride in achieving. Where formal scaffolding and clear ground rules and routines were made explicit, the students also found success came much more easily.

Such an educational process of access, engagement and achievement in formal learning resulted in a holistic educational experience.

For many young people, empowering relationships is highly significant in helping them to manage their lives. According to Goetschius and Tash (1967, p. 137) ‘a relationship is a connection between two people in which some sort of exchange takes place’. Key to this transaction is the quality of interaction, be it with families, friends or school teachers.

Educational researchers also stress the significance of informal learning in creating strong, supportive relationships that can assist young people to manage their formal learning more successfully and assist young people to develop the skills and attributes needed in the workplace of the future.

Experiential Learning Programs value different learning styles and opportunities. Productive partnerships between parents, students, teachers and community are integral to enabling young people to succeed in schooling and enhance their learning opportunities within a holistic model of pastoral care. This will ultimately builds resilience, skills and competencies for young people to contribute to the mobile workforce of the future.

2.13.3 Literature on experiential programs

There are a number of studies that have looked at the experiential program from different perspectives. Neill (2006) looks at the aims of skill development in experiential programs such as self-confidence, analytical and teamwork while identifying a number of issues and discrepancies. Pritchard (2011) claims in his work that there are few investigations into experiential programs, with Kolb’s model of experiential learning identified as the most recent study by researchers. Pritchard’s work looks at the educational experience within secondary schooling.

Dewey is considered one of the pioneers of the experiential program (Henson 2003), arguing that experience is the best way for students to learn. He also purported that there needs to be a link between the outcomes of education and the use to society (Dewey 1997).
Wells (1999) identifies some of the weaknesses of experiential programs, stating that the emphasis is on the learning journey rather than the discipline-based knowledge. The importance of reflective practice with the experience is emphasised by the work of Lutterman-Aguilar and Gingerich (2002) and Wells (1999).

There is little written in Australia around experiential learning in secondary schools. While there have been some studies done in the United States (Hendrick 1994) and the UK (Smith 2003) there is much room to identify and analyse the programs in the Australian context.

2.14 Conclusion

Albeit perhaps underdeveloped in some respects as a theory, learning that is driven by the questions that arise through experience of the world and which links to the real problems and experiences of each individual emerges as one of the key issues for educators to consider; especially when looking to determine how they prepare young people for living and working in a mobile workforce of the future. Members of a workforce must have the necessary skills and attributes to make sound moral decisions about themselves, the world around them and ongoing sustainability. Bruner (1966, 1992, 1997, 2004), Scardamalia and Bereiter (1994), Tharp and Gallimore (1988), and Wells (1999), among others, all highlight learning driven by inquiry, discovery, and experience allowing individuals to fill their own knowledge gaps, as the most promising direction for the development of effective learning programs. The highly visible and easily measurable knowledge structures and competencies of conventional education if not animated through the actual experiences of individual learners, may remain largely inert or under-utilised. As Perkinson (1984) notes, the phenomenon of inert learning reflects the transmission model of teaching and learning embedded at an institutional level in many mainstream educational systems. Similarly, Tharp and Gallimore (1988, pp. 1-6) suggest that successive attempts at educational reform have failed and that one of the reasons for this failure is the apparent embeddedness of an ineffective theoretical model of learning that focuses on control, transmission and institutional conformity.

In this chapter the researcher has identified the skills and attributes that young people will need in order to be global citizens, examining the importance of the framework of the middle school years; and how people learn as a means of examining experiential programs to determine their contribution towards young people developing and acquiring life long learning habits and global skills and competencies. In doing so, the researcher was able to identify a set of skills and capabilities specific to Middle School programs that support both educational and business objectives.
The following chapter will examine the research methodology chosen to address the research question:

Which skills and attributes do students gain from middle years experiential programs to prepare them for the workplace of the future?
CHAPTER THREE: Research Methodology, Research Design and Data Generation

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the literature surrounding generic global business capabilities, skills and attributes necessary for contributing to the workforce of the future. It also discussed key concepts of how people can acquire the capabilities through ‘learning by doing’. This chapter will discuss the rationale behind the selection of the research methodology encompassing the research purpose, its strategy, design, data generation and analysis.

The research methodology outlined in this chapter provides a template for how the research for this study was undertaken and its justification for the selection of the research methodology. The research affords the researcher the opportunity to apply a framework to a real problem (Hussey & Hussey 1997).

This chapter describes the methods of data generation and analysis used in the present study. It details the qualitative approach to the naturalistic inquiry, different data-generation means and the process of data analysis. The aim of this chapter has been to examine the methodology used for the study, particularly the choice of approach to research, the methods and techniques employed for data gathering and their analysis. This chapter is divided into six sections: the first provides an overview of the methodological base and approach; the second presents and explores the methodological choices and how they align with the research topic; the third sets out the methods and instruments used in data collection; the fourth section details the analytical methods used; the fifth section outlines the nature of learning and different sources of learning; and the sixth section summarises the application and limitations of the data generation.

It concludes with an outline of the integrated means of enhancing the validity of the study.

3.2 Research Topic

The aim of this research was to study the question: Which skills and attributes do students gain from middle years experiential programs to prepare them for the workplace of the future? This study investigates four case studies of experiential programs to identify and evaluate skills and attributes as perceived by the students reflecting on their own experiences.

The major focus of this study was to understand the skills and competencies participants gained from the experiential programs they were involved in whilst at school. It was therefore important to have a multi faceted approach to the study and to examine these programs ‘in their natural settings’ to understand the ‘meaning people bring to the experience’ (Denzin & Lincoln 2005, p.2).
Hence an Interpretative theoretical perspective was chosen for this study. Qualitative researchers place emphasis on understanding situations by investigating people’s words and actions, along with other documentary evidence, in order to construct meaning from these views (Merriam 1988; Maykut & Morehouse 1994, p. 2), and to discover the relationship, causes and effects in the natural setting (Denzin & Lincoln 2005).

3.3 Interpretivism

Miller and Brewer (2003, p. 220) have defined paradigm as deriving from the Greek word ‘paradigm, meaning pattern’ and reflecting a ‘theoretical structure or a thought that acts as a template or example to be followed.’ Using a particular paradigm dictates the research methodology to be adopted throughout the study from setting the research objectives to reaching the research findings. For Guba and Lincoln (1989), questions of paradigm are paramount: that is, of ‘the basic belief system or worldview that guides the researcher’ (p. 105).

For decades, the three dominant research paradigms commonly used by scholars have been Positivism, Interpretivism and Criticalist research (Hallebone & Priest 2009; Blaikie 2001, 1993; Gill and Johnson 2002; Collis and Hussey 2003; Miller and Brewer 2003). Where Positivism is usually preoccupied with quantities, numbers, observable events and causal relationships, Interpretivism is, on the other hand, concerned with finding the true meaning of reality for the individuals being studied (Blaikie 2001; Miller & Brewer 2003).

In his description of the Interpretivist social science, Blaikie (2001, p. 15) added:

‘It is the everyday beliefs and practices, mundane and taken for granted, which have to be grasped and articulated by the social researcher in order to provide an understanding of these actions.’

The key differentiation between Interpretivist and Positivist paradigms is in studying the human experience in the former as interpreted by the social actor from within rather than relying on the physical sensory material apprehension from outside (Blaikie 2001). Gill and Johnson (2002, p. 168) added that:

‘Unlike animals or physical objects, human beings are able to attach meaning to the events and phenomena that surrounded them, and from these interpretations and perceptions select courses of meaningful action which they are able to reflect upon and monitor.’

In the Interpretivist paradigm, theorists focus on understanding the social world that is ‘produced and reproduced’ (Giddens 1984) by people through their continuing activities. Making sense of the basis and source of social reality embedded within these activities, meaning and language was the preoccupation of the Interpretivist paradigm (Blaikie 2001). Burrell and Morgan (1979, p. 31) described this paradigm by stating that interpretive philosophers and sociologists ‘delve into the
depth of human consciousness and subjectivity in their quest for the fundamental meanings which underlie social life’.

The ontological assumption of Interpretivism regards social reality as ‘the produce of processes by which social actors together negotiate the meanings for action and situations; it is a complex of socially constructed meanings’ (Blaikie 2001, p. 96). Similarly, the epistemology of Interpretivism required the researcher to enter ‘the everyday social world in order to grasp the socially constructed meanings, and then reconstructs these meanings in social scientific language’ (Blaikie 2001, p. 96).

Blaikie (2001, p. 115) further states that

‘Interpretivism takes . . . the meanings and interpretations, the motives and intentions that people use in their everyday lives and that direct their behaviour and it elevates them to the central place in social theory and research. For Interpretivism the social world is the world interpreted and experienced by its members from the “inside”.’

Burrell and Morgan (1979) identified the underlying assumptions of the Interpretivist paradigm as explaining and understanding social reality through the realm of participants’ individual consciousness and subjectivity as opposed to the observer of the social act. This paradigm is preoccupied with understanding the essence of the everyday world. The emphasis on the constructed meaning of reality drives the Interpretivist to explain social phenomena from the individual’s viewpoint. Given this view of social reality, the acquisition of global competency acquisition is best examined in this study using the interpretive lens to magnify the embedded meaning of this social phenomenon. The emphasis in the Interpretivist paradigm lies in understanding the way in which ‘the individual creates, modifies and interprets the world in which he or she finds himself’ (Burrell and Morgan 1979, p. 3).

The paradigm of the research is interpretivist as the research question focuses on what the students see they need in the way of skills and capabilities to work and live in a global world. The views that have arisen from the data generation are the discovery and description of the ‘insider’ view (Blaikie 2001). The researcher uses the literature to contextualise the participants’ experiences.

The present research assumed multiple realities; it was the realities of individuals that the research sought to investigate and interpret over the period of data generation. The study did not search for one truth that might be expressed as a single right answer but assumed ‘multiple perspectives and multiple ‘truths’ depending on different points of view’ (Patton 1990, p. 166). The credibility of the research was increased by its natural stance as the research did ‘not set out to prove a particular perspective or manipulate data to arrive at predisposed truths’ (Patton 1990, p. 55).

The assumption of multiple realities and multiple truths underpinned the expectation of beliefs
from participant to participant and took into account participants’ varying experiences. It was anticipated that beliefs would be idiosyncratic to each participant. Just as, according to the social constructivist theory of learning, individuals learn in different ways and through negotiation of meaning construct their own understandings (for example, Ernest 1995), they also construct or develop their own beliefs about the learning (for example, Yackel & Cobb 1996). Thus links to constructivism in the present study related to individuals’ construction of beliefs about the acquisition of skills and attributes in an experiential setting.

An Interpretivist approach was well suited for this research as this study is concerned with finding the meaning behind what skills and competencies the participants believe they acquired in their experiential program and how their program has helped prepare them for participation beyond the classroom.

3.4 Social Phenomenology

Social Phenomenology is one research perspective with which the current study can be linked. Points of intersection as well as differences are explored below.

According to Patton (1990, p. 69), ‘phenomenological enquiry focuses on the question What is the structure and essence of experience of this phenomenon for these people?’ A key element of phenomenology is the idea of shared experiences of phenomena. Descriptions entail a shared perspective; they are developed from consideration of ‘experiences of different people [that] are bracketed, analysed, and compared to identify the essences of phenomenon’ (Patton 1990, p.70). Textual interpretations are then constructed using a particular writing approach based on semiotics (van Manen 1990). In the present study the essence of an individual’s experience was of interest. The beliefs of individual participants were bracketed with presentation and interpretation of data structured according to themes that appeared to emerge from that data. Some comparison of individual participants’ beliefs was made (van Manen 1990).

A summary of elements of the theoretical underpinnings and assumptions of the present research in common with phenomenology as described by Patton (1990) and van Manen (1990) are listed below. These relate, firstly, to the purpose of the research in terms of its capacity to inform teaching, and, secondly, to illustrate the underlying elements of a general nature.

Common intentions of social phenomenology and the present research are:

- study of the meaning or essence of experience or phenomena: (in the present study these phenomena were global skills and competencies for global citizenship)
- gaining of insights from people’s descriptions of experiences.
Common assumptions of phenomenology and this study related to informing teaching are:

- teaching requires a sensitivity to participants’ lived experiences and realities
- teaching requires the ability to make sense of participants’ interpretation of phenomena and situations in order to see the pedagogic significance of those situations
- the gaining of insights can help us appreciate better what the learning experience is like for participants.

Other underlying common elements are:

- the conjecture that beliefs are one form of objectification of ‘mind, thoughts, consciousness, values, feelings, emotions, actions and purposes’ (van Manen 1990, p. 3)
- the belief that it is appropriate for research to want to know the world and to question the way we experience the world
- the belief that the gaining of plausible insights bring us in more direct contact with the world, or more fully part of the world.

This research facilitates the gaining of insights into the world as seen by a small number of individual participants and the portrayals of beliefs allow other readers to review their own assumptions as well as their beliefs and experiences, in relation to the perspectives communicated by the participants. The research facilitates awareness of, and sensitivity to, the experiences of other individuals. It may encourage educators to continue to explore participants’ beliefs; thus the reflection may become an ongoing or cyclic process that can inform pedagogy and the value of experiential learning.

Phenomenology was founded by the German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) who claimed that the true essence of the phenomena was gained by bracketing off ideas, beliefs and knowledge that are normally taken for granted, in order to achieve ‘pure consciousness’ (Miller & Brewer 2003, p. 227). Consequently, Social Phenomenology aims to understand human experience and explain a phenomenon using qualitative data in naturalistic ways (Karami, Rowley & Analoui 2006, p. 44). The researcher who, in Positivism normally plays an independent role with an outside view to the research is now fully emerged in the actors’ social world. The study of the social phenomena necessitates, according to Blaikie (2001, p. 36) ‘an understanding of the social world which people have constructed and which they reproduce through their continuing activities’. This method of inquiry gave social research the emphasis on people’s interpretative and cognitive abilities (Miller & Brewer 2003, p. 220).

This research study is concerned with generating social meanings through exploring the perceptions and interpretations of the social actors. Hence, the Interpretivist paradigm was well
suited to answer in depth the ‘what’ and ‘how’ (exploratory) research questions of this study. What are the necessary global business capabilities students need to have to enter a mobile global workforce, and how do students best acquire these capabilities through an investigation of experiential programs and the students’ perceptions.

Based on Social Phenomenology, Giddens (1984) introduced Structuration Theory to provide a theoretical framework to social sciences to address the debates around the relationship between the individual and society, or what Giddens referred to as ‘agent’ and ‘structure’ (Held & Thompson 1989, p. 2). Giddens’s (1984, p. 377) theoretical approach was a novel way of looking at structure as ‘rules and resources, recursively implicated in the reproduction of social systems’ rather than a rigid framework. Giddens (1984, p. 374) referred to his concept as the ‘duality of structure’ which he explains to be derived from his belief that:

‘Everything which actors know (believe) about the circumstances of their action and that of others, drawn upon in the production and reproduction of that action, including tacit as well as discursively available knowledge.’

3.5 Inquiry’s main logic (abductive)

Blaikie (2001) outlines four major research strategies that are deductive, inductive, retroductive and abductive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Inductive</th>
<th>Deductive</th>
<th>Retroductive</th>
<th>Abductive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aim</strong></td>
<td>To establish universal generalisation to be used as pattern explanations</td>
<td>To test theories to eliminate false ones and corroborate the survivor</td>
<td>To discover underlying mechanisms to explain observed regularities</td>
<td>To describe and understand social life in terms of social actors’ motives and accounts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>From</strong></td>
<td>Accumulate observations or data</td>
<td>Borrow or construct a theory and express it as an argument</td>
<td>Document and model a regularity</td>
<td>Discover everyday lay concepts, meanings and motives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>To</strong></td>
<td>Use these ‘laws’ as patterns to explain further observations</td>
<td>Test the hypotheses by matching them with data</td>
<td>Find the real mechanism by observation and/or experiment</td>
<td>Develop a theory and test it iteratively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Produce</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Deduce hypotheses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Generalisations</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Table 3.1 - Four Research Strategies (Blaikie 2001)

In this case the researcher would develop the framework, then design the research approach, and
then proceed to test the framework.

This study has adopted the abductive strategy to research. It follows Blaikie (2001, p.25) who states:

‘The starting point is the social world of the social actors being investigated; their construction of reality, their way of conceptualising and giving meaning to their world, their tacit knowledge. This can only be discovered from the accounts which social actors provide. Their reality, the way they have constructed and interpreted their activities together is embedded in their language. Hence, the researcher has to enter their world in order to discover the motives and actions, and the situations in which they occur, in the technical language of social scientific discourse.’

The abductive approach is most suited to this research as the researcher is asking a ‘what’ question, that question being: what skills and attributes did you acquire from your school’s experiential program.

Using an Interpretivist research paradigm, the abductive research strategy was the most pertinent for this study.

3.6 Exploratory type of Methodology

‘Exploratory research is intertwined with the need for a clear and precise statement of the recognised problem. There are three interrelated purposes for exploratory research: (1) diagnosing a situation (2) screening alternatives, and (3) discovering new ideas’, (Zikmund 2003, p. 111). The research aims to determine what skills and attributes are needed for multi-dimensional citizenship to take place and the extent that experiential learning equips young people for a multitude of futures in an ever emerging global world. The type of exploratory research that is being undertaken for this research investigation is in line with the definition by Collis and Hussey (2003) that exploratory research is conducted into a problem or issue when there are not many or no previous studies from which information can be used about the issue.

The aim of this type of study is to look for patterns, ideas or hypotheses, rather than testing or confirming a hypothesis (Hussey & Hussey 1997, p.10). The researcher is not aware of this type of research having been conducted before in Australia. Although the researcher is aware of other scholars undertaking similar research projects at present, this research is dealing with an unknown application of a set of factors and, at the time of writing this study although there is a move to define the skill set against employability factors, there is no definitive set of global skills, attributes and capabilities being put forward for secondary students to master, nor the extent to which experiential programs can provide the foundation for the acquisition of these skills.
3.7 Research stance

As a senior educator in a school, the interviewer was part of the social world of the interviewees and was thus ideally placed to explore their experiences from the ‘inside’ – a key characteristic of phenomenological research (Blaikie 2001). In this instance the researcher is, to a certain extent, emic or a subjective insider rather than wholly objective observer because of the history with the programs (Hallebone & Priest 2009, p. 29).

3.8 Human Instruments

In this study the researcher was able to recognise the privileged position provided by professional experience in the sector and the subjectivity and bias that can be generated by such a role. In fact, as a human instrument the researcher was able to determine themes and trends as they emerged from the data by utilising tacit knowledge of the sector. The methodology framework was designed to reduce the influence of the researcher and yet incorporate her sector knowledge. The study utilised this condition of naturalistic inquiry and allowed the data to be generated by the participants.

3.9 Methods

Guba and Lincoln (1989) suggest that qualitative data generation methods employed the expertise of humans - in that some methods are extensions of human activities. They list examples such as ‘talking to people, observing their activities, reading their documents, assessing the unobtrusive signs they leave behind, responding to their non-verbal clues, and the like’ (p.176). The different data-collection methods served as a means of triangulation (Denzin & Lincoln 1994; Miles & Huberman 1994; Patton 1990) to confirm or discount indicative trends in the data and to provide additional means for new trends to emerge.

Interpretivist research methods were used by the researcher to endeavour to articulate which skills and attributes are needed for young people to become successful learners, confident individuals and active and informed citizens who are prepared for multiple futures in a relatively borderless world. ‘The research questions provided the framework for the literature review: determining the boundaries of what is relevant’ (Blaikie 2001, p. 24). This research design included case study analysis, focus group interviews, learning journals and secondary data analysis concluding with follow-up interviews.

The study also included naturalistic inquiry and viewed the participants as human subjects, reflecting their ‘experiences of a life time’ and focusing on the circumstances of their learning and how they recalled and reported it at the time. Qualitative data was based on the entry conditions of naturalistic inquiry advocated by Guba and Lincoln (1989), the data generation, data reduction,
data display and conclusion framework advocated by Miles and Huberman (1994) and the data analysis guidelines advocated by Wolcott (1994).

3.10 Justification

The interview questions were designed to elicit qualitative responses so that the researcher could study the skills and competencies needed for multi dimensional citizenship. The process adopted for this study was aligned with standard qualitative methods. It drew on the historical documentation published by the schools and this study included a longitudinal study of the schools’ prospectuses and school websites. This was to reflect on their evolving approach to providing engaging learning outcomes particularly in their approach to the Middle Years of schooling.

The review of the literature provided a theoretical framework of the issues surrounding experiential learning. An understanding of experiential learning identified through the literature was used to assist in the development of questions for the semi-structured focus group interviews. Interview questions were refined, and then were developed using the theory to provide a ‘window’ through which to view the world of experiential learning with the perceptions of the interviewees providing a range of rich data.

3.11 Case studies

A case study approach is selected when it is the most effective strategy for obtaining information to answer research questions (Denzin & Lincoln 2005). Such was the situation with the present research. Case Study was defined by Merriam (1988, p. 14) as intensive holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon or social unit. Case studies are particularistic, descriptive and heuristic and rely heavily on inductive reasoning in handling multiple data sources’. Case Study methodology was applied to this research project as it offered appropriate ways of approaching the investigation. Case methods allowed the development of close understandings: the programs and structures in each school; the aims and unique characteristics of each program; the relationships between staff and students and the students to each other; the student learning behaviours as they engaged in a range of learning activities over time and the student’s interpretations of the experience and skills and competencies they believed they had acquired having participated in the experiential program.

Merriam (1988, pp. xii- xiii) argued that qualitative case studies provide ‘insights into aspects of educational practice [to] have direct influence on policy, practice and future research [and] a case study approach is often the best methodology for addressing problems in which understanding is sought to improve practice’.
A major research focus in this study was what skill and competencies are being sought/will be needed by the workforce of the future, and whether the schools are preparing young people for life beyond formal schooling. And, ultimately, the researcher wanted the research to contribute keen insights into how practice and students learning could be improved through experiential learning.

It was necessary, in order to inform the investigation, to collect and study a variety of empirical materials and secondary data in each of the case study schools including: documents written by the School; interview data; stories of personal experience; and written diary entries. It was necessary to piece together various stories, conversations and concrete evidence of practices, experience and personal observations the researcher found in the schools. As the research progressed over time and new data was added to the puzzle it became a *bricolage*, a ‘pieced together construction of meanings’ (Weinstein & Weinstein 1991, p. 161). The follow-up interviews, completed three years after the study commenced, provided critical final insight to inform findings and allow conclusions to be drawn on the research questions.


*Particularistic*

This research is considered particularistic as it focused on a particular phenomenon (experiential learning and the capabilities achieved) with a small number of individuals. The study focused on a particular group and their view of the phenomenon.

*Descriptive*

The study was descriptive as it provided a rich description, drawing on details from range of sources including marketing materials, journals and interviews. The openness within the research procedures allowed many variables to emerge from the data and be represented in this report.

*Heuristic*

The study was heuristic as it provided clarification for the reader of the phenomena studied (Kemmis 1982; Merriam 1988). The illumination received from this study provides possibilities for the reader that ‘are grounded in the situation itself not imposed from outside in’ (Kemmis 1982, p. 109). The depth of detail and the ‘criss-crossed’ reflection (Stake 1995) provide insights into the capabilities gained from experiential learning.

*Inductive*
The study relied on inductive reasoning where concepts and generalisations were made about the capabilities required by Middle Years students to enter the global workforce of the future. The study was characterised not by verification of pre-determined hypotheses, but by the ‘discovery of new relationships, concepts, and understanding’ (Merriam 1988, p. 13). Beginning with specific observations, the researcher was then able to build toward forming general patterns (Patton 1990).

3.12 Sampling

The subjects for this study were the participants of a number of experiential programs under examination in this study. Each individual volunteered to be a participant in the focus group interviews and to share their learning journals with the researcher. Given the researcher’s desire to have individuals reflect on the nature of their experiences for a sufficiently long time after their involvement in their respective program, and to have the ability to reflect on lifelong learning skills and attributes gained through the experience, the participants involved in the study consequentially were similar in age and broad educational background and experience with each other. They were representative of their schools albeit in some cases gender specific given the single sex nature of their school. There was a co-educational school and both single sex girls’ and single sex boys’ schools in the study.

Schofield (1990) argued that qualitative researchers are obligated to consider the generalisation of their results and that this was greatly influenced by the representativeness of the subjects. Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 204) argued that naturalistic inquiry focuses on sampling that ‘maximises information, not facilitating generalisation’. Patton (1980) suggested that six different sampling types serve purposes other than representativeness and randomness: extreme or deviant cases, typical cases, maximum variation, critical cases, politically important or sensitive cases and convenience sampling. In this study the participants provided a convenient sample of typical participants who satisfied common criteria in relation to their school. The sampling was consistent with the purposive nature indicated by Guba and Lincoln (1989) and Patton (1980), and included a representative range of post-secondary destinations for young adults.

3.13 Sources and Selection Criteria of Participants

Participants in the primary research were generally sourced from secondary independent schools rather than government schools. Due to the funding costs involved in setting up experiential programs, the independents school sector has led the way in their establishment in the last 50–60 years. Participants were recruited through personal introductions by other educators or friendship groups of the researcher’s children. Contributors were both male and female, ranging in age from eighteen to twenty four.
Those interviewed were young graduates and school leavers who gave wide ranging perspectives and provided richly detailed and passionate accounts of their experiences. Through these personal accounts, the social world of the participants was explored; many challenges which confronted the participants were identified, and the personal qualities needed to deal with these challenges were examined.

Names used in the report are fictitious and developed for easy reference in the study. Names beginning with A-F represent participants in School A, letters G-M represent participants in School B, letters N-T represent participants in School C and letters U-Z represent participants in School D.

3.14 Participant Profiles

The research included twenty one interviewees from four independent schools. The range of individuals interviewed included the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>No. of Interviewees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single sex girls’ school</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single sex boys’ school</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-educated school</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3.2– Participant Profiles*

Qualitative data, according to Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 1) ‘are a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes occurring in local context’. Outcomes from qualitative data are meaningful, and a convincing means of informing others about the findings of research. In addition, Eisenhart and Howe (1992, p. 658) suggest that valid arguments can be made when the data generation employed is suitable for or fits the research question; that is, ‘the research question should drive data generation techniques and analysis rather than vice versa’.

Within qualitative research being restricted to one method of data generation is not advocated. Use of multiple methods within a single study is advocated by Parlett and Hamilton (1976, p. 92): ‘No method, (with its own built in limitations), is used exclusively or in isolation, different techniques are combined to throw light on a common problem’. Similarly, Fetterman (1988, p. 17) argues that the ‘validity of one qualitative method can be enhanced when supplemented by the techniques of others’. Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p. 373) propose that the use of multiple means of data generation adds greater substance to the interpretation of findings ‘to achieve broader and often better results’. To describe this procedure, they use the term ‘triangulation’. In this study, the principle of ‘multiple means of data generation’ was employed (Denzin & Lincoln 1994; Fetterman
In this research participants were initially interviewed in small focus groups. Their responses were recorded and further clarification was sought where responses were ambiguous or unclear. Participants provided their learning journals written at the time of their experiences to further highlight or explain the participants’ thoughts, feelings, interpretations and reactions to the program they were participating in at the time of the involvement. Further follow-up interviews were conducted with a select few several years after the initial focus group interviews to ascertain participants’ reflections on the experiential programs after entering the workforce. These different sources of data allow for a triangulation of results and therefore a richer and deeper understanding of the phenomena (Saunders et al 2010).

To address the area of formal learning, the researcher accessed historical documentation of the broader secondary school learning programs available at the schools under examination in this study. To address the informal and incidental nature and sources of learning, each participant reflected on their learning prior to the program under examination. An open-ended series of questions aimed at measuring the participants’ learning against the historical data available was recorded at the focus group interviews. To address the enhancement of student learning and skill acquisition, school curriculum handbooks were reviewed in light of the data gathered in other phases of the study. The data generation timetable is shown in Table 3.3 and the different data generation methods, as they relate to the research questions are shown in Table 3.4.

### 3.15 Education and Training

Data relating to formal learning was obtained from school literature for each participant’s school. Detailed historical data were available for one of the schools under examination and historical data and student records and reports were checked for the other participants involved in the study. Public data in many cases provided for broad statements on teaching and learning outcomes, desired skills and attributes of forward thinking citizens and, as such, was not quantifiable to any great degree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>No. of Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pilot presentation</td>
<td>Mar – Aug 2004</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft, ‘Global Skills, Attributes and Competencies’</td>
<td>Aug 2004 ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-ended questions on prior learning and training</td>
<td>Apr 2005 – Aug 2005</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Programs and Historical documentation review</td>
<td>Jan 2005 – June 2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group interviews and transcription of data</td>
<td>Apr 2005 – Dec 2006</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>Jan 2007 and 2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning journals and student report assessment</td>
<td>Feb 2007 – Nov 2007</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-ended questions, follow-up interview sample</td>
<td>Mar 2007 – Dec 2007</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A research strategy is defined as a general plan of the steps taken to answer the research questions (Blaikie 2001).

Yin (1994, p. 20) states that there are five important components in every research strategy:

- A study’s questions
- Its propositions, if any
- Its unit(s) of analysis
- The logic linking the data to the propositions
- The criteria for interpreting the findings

These five components were the guide when creating the research design for this study.

Focus group interviews were chosen as the primary data generation source because they represented the participants’ own accounts and recollections of the experience along with the learning journals of eight of the participants. The journal entries were, however, not restricted to
pedagogical outcomes, skills and attributes acquired during the program, but remained open-ended as determined by the participants at the time of writing. The data also included self-descriptions of learning and responses to a series of open-ended questions. Alongside these sources were also personal experiences of the researcher, reports, documents and texts as well as the researcher’s impressions and reactions.

Figure 3 - Research design
3.17 Phases

There are six steps to the research design for this study with three key data generation phases. The first step was to conduct a literature review to establish the skills and attributes required by students to enter the workforce of the future. The research case study was then narrowed down to study what capabilities were acquired by the students through their experiential program in the Middle Years. The study was then tested and the data generation tools were revised. The research then entered the data generation step made up of three phases: focus groups, content analysis and follow-up interviews make up these phases. The study was then revised and the framework modified to incorporate the findings. Finally the study was written up and submitted. This section of the chapter will look at the three phases of data generation.

3.17.1 Focus Groups – Phase One

The researcher commenced phase one by conducting 21 semi-structured interviews with four sets of participants.

The data that was collected from participants was coded into tables in order to identify themes, similarities and differences of the capabilities, skills and attributes that resulted from the various interviews conducted. Findings from this research were able to provide valuable information about how people learn and acquire a set of capabilities needed to live and work in the global workforce of the future.

3.17.2 Content analysis – Phase Two

Examination of personal accounts recorded at the time of the experience by the participants was also collected to help illustrate, support and identify key themes, similarities and differences in experiences across the group.

Learning journals were a key aspect of all experiential programs where participants were expected to record their experiences daily: both as a record of events but also as a means of reflection. Participants used a variety of ways to reflect on their experiences both positive and negative. In some cases participants wrote in extended prose while for others it took the form of poetry, song, verse and illustrations.

Finding from analysis leaning journals provided often valuable additional information to what the participants were verbalising in the focus groups.

3.17.3 Follow-up interviews – Phase Three

Follow-up interviews were conducted six years after the original focus group interviews with
sample interviewees to further verify findings. Given the longitudinal nature of this research the researcher conducted further follow-up interviews with eight participants who had entered the workforce since their initial participation in the focus group interviews.

This stage required the researcher to compare the collected data with current literature in order to ascertain its consistency. By analysing the data in the context of the skills and attributes framework that came from the literature, the researcher was able to ascertain what skills and to what extent they were acquired in the case study context.

The final step was to write the conclusions for the findings in this thesis research. In doing so, the researcher provided practical recommendations for the research question as this research is considered useful and will contribute valuable information to all of the stakeholders. It is also necessary to provide suggestions for future research in this area of investigations.

3.18 Pilot test

The pilot interview was held several months prior to the balance of the interviews, in order to review the question set as a result of the first discussion. The interview questions were subsequently refined, in order to gain more specific responses from the informants. The face to face focus group meetings were tape recorded, and fully transcribed. The transcripts were used as reference material for the process of summarising and analysing the results. Interviewees were sent transcripts from their interviews, and were able to request amendments prior to their use in this thesis.

There were no perceived risks or disadvantages to participants in the research, as individuals have not been identified by name. Transcripts and tape recordings of interviews have been securely stored at the interviewer’s home, and may only be accessed by those directly involved in the research. Participation in the research was voluntary, and subjects were offered the opportunity to discontinue their participation at any time during the project. Subjects were also advised that they could withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied, prior to completion of the final thesis.

Participants were made aware that they could at any time during the project ask for clarification of any aspect of the research that concerned them and contact details of the University Human Research Ethics Committee were provided.

3.19 Open-Ended Questions

At the start of this research a pilot study was conducted with a younger group of students from one of the schools under examination to investigate students’ initial awareness of individual learning styles and on formal and informal learning. The pilot questionnaire considered the
recognition of individual learning styles by students using Bloom’s Taxonomy (1956) and Gardner’s (1985) Multiple Intelligences and Debono’s (1999) Six Thinking Hats. The participants in this study were deliberately reintroduced to the topics of individual, team and organisational learning and the principles of formal, informal and incidental learning already used whilst still involved in their formal years of schooling.

Most participants in this study had been involved to varying degrees in their own schools on understanding their preferred learning styles and had some understanding of maximising opportunities to increase their learning potential, their own skill acquisition and the challenge they face when learning new things. The discussions on learning styles generated in the focus session formed the basis of open-ended questions for each participant in the present study and their responses to the focus questions in the interviews.

3.20 Phase 1 Focus Groups

According to Taylor and Bogdan (1998), general theories about the nature of social phenomena can be developed as a result of interviewing multiple informants.

An informed, participant observation research technique was the interview process chosen for this project, as the researcher has in recent times been a leader in experiential programs within one of the schools interviewed. The somewhat semi-structured interviews with participant groups were interactional encounters, in that the interviewer participated to some extent in the discussions stimulated by the questions posed.

There are various ways of categorising interviews. Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell, and Alexander (2000) provided the ‘continuum model for interviews’ based on the degree of structure involved. This model indicates the different degree of structure involved and the application of each interview. Fontana and Frey (2000) classified interviews into structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews. There are essentially hundreds of ways to classify interviews, but it was important to keep in mind that different interviews should be carefully selected to suit the purposes of each research project.

The interviews were designed with a view to establishing whether the experience of individuals supported or contrasted with the theories in the literature with respect to changes in the participant skills and competencies, and the acquisition of skills, competencies and attributes required for multi-dimensional citizenship. In addition, it sought new information from the interviewees, with respect to desirable skills and attributes necessary to contribute to a mobile global workforce and multi-dimensional leadership.
Face to face focus group interviews were conducted with four sets of focus groups, each with five or six participants in them. Further in-depth, interviews were chosen with eight participants across the four groups using alternative techniques of data generation. These participants were asked to elaborate on their opinions and discuss their experiences and comments made in their learning journal entries. The qualitative nature of the discussion did not lend itself to the collection of statistical results. The subject matter was inappropriate for simple ‘yes and no’ question and answer surveys would not have brought out the same level of data for cross analysis. The use of fully unstructured interviewing (Fontana & Frey 2000) was also not preferred in this instance; although it had the advantage of providing the opportunity for a wide range of information to be exposed, and the open-ended nature of the technique creates the possibility that the results of the research may in the end be so broad as to be inconclusive.

The focus of the research was the collection of the personal experiences and recollections of these participants and their opinions on ways in which each school’s experiential program equipped or prepared them for being a global citizen.

3.20.1 Natural Setting

The researcher was in the privileged position of knowing firsthand the natural setting of one of the experiential programs under examination. The researcher understood the program aims and objectives and the structures in place to achieve the pedagogical outcomes and the desired skills and attributes being targeted for the participants. This knowledge was balanced by a visit to the other learning environments under examination in this study. First hand observations of all programs and examination of the learning journal entries across all programs added greater validity to the study.

3.20.2 Tacit Knowledge

To gain an appreciation of the tacit knowledge of the participants, Guba and Lincoln (1989, p. 176) described tacit knowledge as ‘all we know minus all we can say – the latter is propositional knowledge’. It is the tacit knowledge of the participants that enabled the students to determine what events or activities they reported in their learning journals or self-descriptions of their learning they reflected on at interview. This tacit knowledge of learning experiences was also influenced by the natural setting of the participants and their prior access to education and training activities. According to Marsick and Watkins (1990, p. 23), ‘tacit knowledge resides in the context outside a person’s main focus of attention, and is thus a fertile ground for informal and incidental learning’. It was necessary to be conscious of this knowledge as interpretations were made from the data.
3.20.3 Interview Questions

Janesick (1998) notes that usually five or six questions will yield over one hour of interview data, but it was advisable that the interviewer be well prepared with more questions than may be considered necessary. In the interviews which were conducted, eight questions were raised, and at the end of each interview the respondents were asked for any additional general comments they might wish to make in relation to their experiences. The following table summarises the questions directed to the interviewees:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Issue 1:</strong> - What was the nature of your co-curricular program at [School name]?</td>
<td>This question established the core nature of the experience and acted as a springboard to more in-depth reflection by the interviewees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Issue 2:</strong> - Did challenges present themselves for you personally during this experience?</td>
<td>This question identified directly what each interviewee saw as extending their current skills as a result of the experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Issue 3</strong> - Were you able to overcome the challenges? How did you overcome the challenges?</td>
<td>This issue dealt with the acquisition of new skills and attributes necessary to cope with the experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Issue 4</strong> - Are there new skills and attributes you would directly attribute to your participation in this program?</td>
<td>This issue required each interviewee to reflect on how they changed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Issue 5</strong> - Were you well prepared for the challenges of the experience by the school? How about in yourself as a teenager?</td>
<td>This issue required an honest reflection on how the school prepared individuals in their orientation programs and how ready the interviewee was to take on board the challenges at the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Issue 6</strong> - Reflecting on the outcomes your school program claims to achieve, explain how well you believe the program did or did not achieve its aims. Why?</td>
<td>This question began the process of matching up the school’s philosophy and desired outcomes of their programs to the perceived outcomes experienced by the participants and ultimately to the research proposal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Issue 7</strong> - Do you believe this experience prepared you for the challenges of studying, living and working beyond secondary school life? (If Yes) In what way?</td>
<td>This question began the process of drawing defendable generalisations and conclusions about the various school programs and their stated aims in preparing students for multi-dimensional citizenship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Issue 8</strong> - Do you believe your school’s program could be improved to better prepare you for contributing to the challenges of multi-dimensional citizenship? In what way?</td>
<td>This focus question required further input from the interviewees to identify what attributes and skills are required for multi-dimensional citizenship and to critique their school experience by providing constructive suggestions for improvement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3.5 – Interview Themes*

The interview questions allowed participants to share their experiences and reflect on the whole process of participating in an experiential program. It required participants to identify what skills and attributes they had before the experience, what skills they acquired throughout the experience
and then to make judgments about the outcomes of their program and how they had changed as a result of the experience. For this research the selection of data from the interviews added an important dimension to the study and it meant the researcher was able to investigate both the skills and attributes acquired throughout the process and the impact of the program.

3.21 Phase 2 - Learning Journals

Most participants who still held onto their Learning Journals agreed to contribute further to the study by giving the researcher access to their journals. The learning journals had many purposes for them and were designed to support the recording of events that contributed to informal or incidental learning in the experiential learning program. The instructions provided in most cases by the schools were brief and simple, as suggested by Brookfield (1991). A journal proforma was designed to support the participant to record experiences, and the structure and purpose of the journal was discussed both before the program commenced and again at regular intervals during the experiential program. Regular time was allocated in the various programs for participants to undertake the task of writing in their learning journals and in some cases constituted part of the formal assessment of the particular program.

The Learning Journal was designed to minimise demands on the participants or intrusion into the unique learning environment but still create the opportunity for reflective learning as the participants determined which events they would record at the end of each day. The journals also provided a means for students to debrief themselves from the intense nature of the experiences, allowing them to adjust to the demands of the program and, in many cases to adjust to the intense living conditions for the participants undertaking the program.

Participants were able to maintain their commitment to the program and to complete their journals to varying degrees. Some made deeply reflective comments on the nature of their daily experiences whilst others wrote more personal accounts of their experiences including the challenges of the program in which they were involved. Yet others wrote very superficially about their experiences and the learning outcomes. Individual flexibility and capability reflected in the journals included: other accounts and depictions of the learning experience by the use of illustrations, photographs and memorabilia collected during the experience.

3.22 Phase 3 - Follow-up interviews

Finally, as a means of confirming the researcher’s interpretation of the data collected, eight participants were interviewed to clarify the intent of their entries in the learning journals, their responses to the open-ended questions and descriptions of their own experiential learning program. As described by Glesne and Peskin (1992, p. 65), the interviews had the potential to help
the researcher ‘learn about what you can’t see and explore alternative explanations of what you do see’. The interviews were tape-recorded, and helped confirm the interpretation of the data. The interviews were restricted to participants and those that could be contacted directly. In some cases, the geographical distance and new residential arrangements for some participants made contacting them prohibitive.

3.22.1 The first follow-up interviews

The follow-up interviews revisited the initial questions which are presented in table 3.4.

3.22.2 The second round of follow-up interviews

The 11 core skills and attributes identified in Chapter Two (Table 2.8) were used as the guide for the second round of follow-up interviews. Students were asked to reflect on their Year 9 experiences and what it meant for them now that they were entering the workforce. In this way participants were able to critically reflect on their initial perceptions of the experience and provide more mature and longitudinal reflection not influenced by potential groupthink or other influences in their initial reflections of six years earlier.

1. **Personal qualities** (energy, assertiveness, independence, perseverance, open-mindedness, enterprise, maturity, initiative etc)
2. **Understanding of self:** (self-control, self-confidence, self-reliance, self-management, personal balance)
3. **Adaptability:** (interacting in multiple and challenging contexts, awareness and understanding empathy for different ideas and ways of doing things, managing change and uncertainty, flexibility, resourcefulness, tolerance for ambiguity, resourcefulness)
4. **Skills:** (life long learning, inquisitiveness, accuracy, efficiency, plan activities, collect, analyse and organise information, time management)
5. **Critical thinking:** (problem solving, ability to make decisions)
6. **Sense of community/global community:** (community local and global, cross cultural ethics, international relations and security)
7. **Communication skills:** (ability to influence others, negotiate, language and communication skills)
8. **Team work/collaboration:** (cooperativeness, working with others, trusting others, teamwork)
9. **Leadership:** (leadership capabilities, foresight, responsibility)
10. **Change agent:** (positive responses to challenges, wanting to make a difference)
11. **Competitive:** (goal oriented, achievement focused, taking calculated risks, entrepreneurial spirit)
3.23 Triangulation

These multiple methods of data generation provided the basis for the data analysis of the nature and different sources of learning as reported by the participants. To further support the analysis, eight participants were interviewed to discuss and clarify further the interpretations of the data as different themes emerged.

Qualitative research data are designed to help researchers understand people and social and cultural contexts within which they live. Kaplan and Maxwell (1994) argue that the goal of understanding an experience from the participant’s perspective and its particular impact is lost when attempts were made to quantify the data.

3.24 Data Analysis

Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 2) suggested that in qualitative studies there are few agreed canons for data analysis in the sense of shared ground rules for drawing conclusions and verifying their sturdiness. Maykut and Morehouse (1994) offered that while data analysis may take many forms, there appear to be three approaches that vary along a continuum of levels of interpretation and abstraction.

The first approach represents data without analysis, allowing the words of the participants to speak for themselves. The second approach is primarily concerned with accurately describing what the researcher has understood: ‘Reconstructing the data into a recognisable reality for the people who have participated in the study’ (Maykut and Morehouse 1994, p. 122). The third approach requires high levels of interpretation and abstraction from the data in order to produce grounded theory inferences and generalisations.

Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 10) suggested the techniques of reduction and display for the analysis of qualitative data; from the analysis, conclusions are drawn and verified. Similarly, Wolcott (1994) suggested that ‘analysis’ addresses the essential features and the systematic description of inter-relationships among them. In terms of this study, as with the Miles and Huberman (1994) framework, they presented a structure to transform the data. Wolcott (1994, p. 17) offered advice that all sections of the data need to be treated equally and, using the descriptive phase as an example, suggested that ‘descriptive narratives can move in and out like zoom lenses’.

Wolcott (1994, p.21) warned researchers that ‘one does not gather only data that support a preconceived framework’. Firestone and Dawson (1988, p. 218) suggest that utilising different approaches to data analysis must start with the central role of intuition: ‘Intuition is the primary source of understanding what comes from qualitative analysis, but because it is a private process, it is subject to bias and difficult to verify’. They claim that intuition is the richest and primary
source of subjective understanding in qualitative research. In this study, intuition was supported by the literature and by the privileged position of the researcher in the industry.

There is a general consistency in the processes offered by Firestone and Dawson (1988), Mayket and Morehouse (1994), Miles and Huberman (1994), and Wolcott (1994). Wolcott suggested that a conscious effort should be made to include primary data in order to give the readers access to the original data. In terms of objectivity and validity, this appears to strengthen the study. Wolcott strongly advocated that the context within which a study was undertaken is an essential component of analysis, consistent with his descriptive notion of transforming qualitative analysis.

Due to the quantity of data collected in this study, the analysis utilised a number of the methods advocated above. Using primarily the frameworks offered by Miles and Huberman (1994) and Wolcott (1994), analysis of the various forms of data was divided into three sections. The first addressed the nature of the learning of the participants, the second addressed the sources of the learning and the third addressed enhancements for global citizenship development through skills and attributes acquisition.

**3.24.1 Data Reduction**

The reduction of the data into a reportable format required the process of an initial selection of data relevant to the nature and sources of learning in the experiential programs. It required a process of colour coding data in different classifications as themes emerged. The initial classification data was continually refined, enabling data patterns to emerge and interpretations were further verified with interviews of selected participants. The analysis was then displayed as the results were presented in sufficient detail to enable the reader to draw conclusions.

**3.24.2 Abduction**

‘The idea of abduction refers to the process used to generate social scientific accounts from socials actors’ accounts; for deriving technical concepts and theories from lay concepts and interpretations of social life’ (Blaikie 2001, p. 114). Abductive reasoning was used by the researcher to arrive at a series of assumptions based on the social construction of the participants in the focus groups in relation to their experiences in the programs. As part of the data reduction process the researcher was required to select from the participants’ accounts those aspects and examples considered to be relevant to the purpose at hand. In doing so the researcher was able to construct models or typifications of the social world of typical social actors’ motives and actions in typical situations. This revealed inter-relationships between themes and also highlighted the differences of experiences. By identifying the level of individual identification with skills and attributes (Chapter
Two (Table 2.8)), their reflective practice at the time and afterwards, the researcher was able to infer how the experience related to future levels of identification and learning.

### 3.24.3 Learning Journals, Open-Ended and Self-Accounts of Learning

The nature of the learning focused on examples of informal and incidental learning, different levels of learning and learning content as described by the participants. Consistent with the advice of Wolcott (1994), themes emerged using primary data from the learning journals, open-ended questions and self-descriptions of learning which then combined with the primary data generation for a deeper understanding.

### 3.24.4 Informal and Incidental Learning

Distinctions were made between informal and incidental learning during the analysis. The initial analysis identified incidental learning as learning that was recognised, but was unplanned. Informal learning was identified as a result of planned events. To support the analysis of informal and incidental learning the participants in this study had been through several sessions on different forms of learning, including both informal and incidental. The terms ‘informal’ and ‘incidental’ were often used by staff to help students reflect more deeply on the nature of the experience in their learning journals. The data were coded as incidental or informal, initially using the participant’s classifications and confirming this classification by examining the data for expressions that indicated the unplanned nature of the incidental learning.

The following examples from the data indicate how the analysis was conducted. This example of incidental learning indicates its unplanned nature.

Elle said: ‘You don’t know what you don’t know until you are placed in a position of admitting that you don’t know; Leading my group to the Ming Tombs I had to deal with many issues including reading the maps which were in another language and to deal with a transport system I really did not understand. I quickly learnt the relevant questions to ask but not until I got the group lost and way off course.’

Andrew said: ‘I led a session with my group to determine what tasks everyone would take on for the group. The group were keen to have input but I discovered at the end of that night that the process did not allow them to have enough input into their participation and did not take into account their skills fully and hence I found that the tasks were not sufficiently covered for the whole group to eat a hot meal that night’.

Terms such as discovered, initiated, I had missed clues, it was found, recognised, real surprises, underestimated, did not get the expected results, I had failed, I found, shocked or the participant’s direct reference to incidental learning helped code the data.

Informal learning was coded separately as it was not a part of the formal program or considered as
incidental learning. Informal learning was, however, recognised as planned learning by the individual or the school in both the learning journals and in the staff comments in the student reports. Terms such as next time, there is a need, I developed, I started, I can gain, I understood that etc. helped the coding for informal learning.

3.24.5 Coding: Levels of Learning

The coded examples of informal and incidental learning were then analysed against evidence of learning from the primary source of data which was the focus group interviews. During the transformation of the data it was important to heed Wolcott’s (1994) advice that enough raw data needed to be included in a report to permit the reader to form his or her own conclusions. The technique of self-description (Brookfield 1991) was used.

From the focus group interviews, evidence of base-level learning was demonstrated by the participants reporting an event and describing learning that was directly related to it. Higher order learning of a greater level of critical reflection was evident when a participant described an event and extended the recording to a secondary event that had occurred in their life since the initial experience. From the interviews, open-ended questions and self-descriptions, direct participant comments were used to illustrate an awareness or experience demonstrating different levels of critical reflection. Each response was coded according to three levels of learning - mechanistic, interpretative and critical learning - each representing different levels of reflection.

**Mechanistic learning**, the routine level, was evident by descriptions that showed little reflection regarding the event that was described. This level was described by Argyris (1990) as ‘single-loop’ learning, by Schön (1983) as ‘technical rationality’, by Marsick (1987) as ‘technical paradigm’ and by Cell (1984) as ‘situational learning’. It requires minimum reflection and applies to the immediate event and generally refers to learning factual or low-level procedural knowledge. For example, a participant described an event as:

Alice said: *I went to the Nanjing Massacre Memorial. Although I was Chinese and thought I knew all there was to know about China I learnt that many historical events had been changed or not taught to us and I need to keep my eyes opened to the new things I was learning.*

Damon said: *When learning to bargain with the locals I went in and just told the sellers what I wanted to pay. I soon realised that some of my friends got the same thing for much cheaper. Once I sought assistance from my friends they got much better prices for me.*

**Interpretative learning** required a higher level of reflection and applied the learning from the event to another situation or event. Marsick (1987) used the term ‘interpretative paradigm’, Cell (1984) used ‘transituational learning’, Mezirow (1981) used ‘dialogic learning’ and Bateson (1972)
‘learning three’, (learning about the context using reflection). Interpretative learning was illustrated by descriptions such as:

Jasmine said: The girls from each hut should be able to express their views in an open forum or in smaller groups and utilise the day’s events both good and bad to make the experience a better one for all of us.

This description followed an account that recorded the reflective thoughts of the individual. The learning could have been generated from experiences in general or from the particular event; it was the interpretative nature that was noted and coded.

Similar examples were:

Bridgette said: There is a need to understand more about China’s one child policy and her future challenges and I need to learn more about its educational policy and whether that is addressing the future needs of China with the next generation.

The third level required a significant level of critical reflection, and was coded as Critical learning. It assessed the underpinning values or principles of the issues that generated an event or circumstance. Arygris (1990) described this level as ‘double-loop learning’, Schon (1983) as ‘reflection in action’, Marsick as a ‘strategic paradigm’, Mezirow (1981) as ‘self-reflective learning’ and ‘learning through perspective transformation’ and Cell (1984) as ‘transcendent learning’.

This level was illustrated by expressions such as:

Emily said: Starting from a fresh point of view, examining a new direction, trying not to be influenced by my fears, Keeping aside the majority thinking and I kept reminding myself of this over and over, my mind said one thing and my body felt something else.

For each level of learning the data were also examined for common themes.

This analysis utilised the processes of intuition as advocated by Firestone and Dawson (1988), the direct reporting of evidence (Miles & Huberman 1994; Wolcott 1994) and triangulation (Denzin & Lincoln 2005; Miles & Huberman 1994). The themes were continually refined and they emerged for all types of learning - interpretative learning, mechanistic and critical learning. Three themes also emerged coded as: consequential issues, contextual issues and self-role issues.

Consequential issues were descriptions of learning where the participant showed evidence of an intent to undertake a course of action drawn from the recorded learning activity that focused on related consequential events. For example, when managing the future challenges unit one participant said:
Damon said: *In the future it will be necessary to keep an open mind about the Chinese.* Other expressions were, *I will not be so quick to judge others, and in the future I will raise the issue with someone I trust and do more research myself before I judge.*

**Contextual issues** were descriptions where the participant showed evidence of an intent to apply the learning from the recorded activity beyond the immediate event to a broader setting. For example:

Elle said: *I learnt to identify with the individuals and the issue. The home stay visit was a standout moment in developing trust and confidence in me personally and with people I didn’t know, I can use in the future.*

**Self-role issues** were descriptions that showed evidence of the role of the participant in the reflections. This is not the level of self-reflection that Mezirow (1981) described as transformational; it is of a lower order, when the individual plans to modify his/her behaviour. Examples of relevant expressions were:

Tristan said: *I am a good Big Picture person but a poor finisher; I need to be extremely careful about my comments and actions when dealing with my peers and others; and I must remember that everyone should be treated with respect and not take anyone for granted or take my needs as the most important ones all the time.*

The final analysis of the nature of the learning recorded the proportional distribution of the different levels of learning undertaken by the participants.

### 3.24.6 Learning Content

The analysis of the data provided limited evidence of the types of knowledge that is developed primarily by informal or incidental means. The different learning content that was evident from the data was labelled in a similar manner to the content of programs identified in the literature review. Once again, the primary data were the focus group interviews and the learning journals. Informal learning and incidental learning examples were analysed separately. This was the last area of analysis and resulted from earlier analysis of levels and sources of learning. It was determined that the content was missing from the analysis, and the data was re-examined. The three themes of learning content to emerge were functional knowledge and skills, cooperative and community thinking and interpersonal skills.

**Functional knowledge and skills** included technical skills, procedural processes, factual knowledge, group and personal budgeting requirements as well as personal hygiene and daily survival skills.
An example of an entry coded according to this area was:

Chris said: ‘I learnt a lot about solving problems on the new computer equipment that had recently been installed in China and learnt to use the washing machines there; I did not know how to ride a bike when I came to China and now I can; I needed to manage my money better as I had spent all the budget at the first stop and then was not allowed to go to the bank again for a few days; or my group was on breakfast set up and we slept in so it meant that we missed out on getting the hot water in the showers’.

**Cooperative thinking** included learning that addressed structures, planning and analytical skills.

Examples were found such as Chris said: I developed a roster for my group for the computer so that we could all get to use it or I gained a lot from working smarter with my room group to do the washing on campus: By making sure I was sitting with more girls on the table I got to have more to eat even if they made me clean up.

**Interpersonal skills** included searching the data for evidence of learning related to leadership, empowerment, coaching, mentoring, negotiations or communications. Examples of the entries coded according to this learning content were:

Damon said: There are certain people in the group who are not team players and more concerned about their individual needs. I need to be more vocal and direct about what I need and the group needs; people need to be more mature about their contribution to the task; I must take more responsibility for my actions otherwise I will be sent home because I am spoiling it for everyone else.

### 3.24.7 Sources of Learning

Consistent with qualitative inquiry, the categories were confirmed or reassessed in the follow-up interviews.

Wolcott (1994) described this as an attempt to transform the data and as ‘using’ data rather than simply gathering data; it is an analysis and interpretation of the data. Wolcott (1994) also warned that in the interpretation of data it is necessary to seek objectivity and be mindful of personal biases. The different data supported a process of triangulation or, as Eisner (1991, p.55) suggested, ‘structural corroboration’. This supports the attempt to seek objectivity while recognising ‘that neither pristine objectivity nor pure subjectivity is possible’.

For the coding of both the nature and the sources of learning it was necessary to interview a sample of the participants, as a means of verifying the researcher’s interpretation of the reported data. It also provided the opportunity to confirm conclusions drawn from the differing data, and helped support more accurate conclusions from the study (McMillian & Schumacher 1993; Wolcott 1994).
3.25 Validation

The issue of verification or seeking validity in the interpretation of data is important in qualitative research. Some factors that influence the validity of the interpretations of the data are the method by which the study was conducted, how the study was reported and the influence of bias. This section argued the general approach taken by the researcher to enhance validity of the interpretations.

Qualitative approaches to research tend to focus on the processes and they can use inductive approaches to data analysis. Eisenhart and Howe (1992, p.659) suggest that valid arguments in qualitative research can be made when the conclusions of the study are ‘judged against a background of existing theoretical, substantive or explicit practical knowledge’. According to Miles and Huberman (1994, p.11), ‘the meanings emerging from the data have to be tested for their plausibility, their sturdiness, their ‘conformability’ - that is their validity’. Crowther and Gibson (1990, p. 41) warn, however, that the nature of qualitative analysis leaves it open to subjective bias. Qualitative inquiry can be an intensely personal process, and ‘the unknown researcher can colour, taint or distort both the process itself and eventual research outcomes through intrusion of personal values, attitudes and biases’.

Firestone and Dawson (1988) suggested that researchers should be constantly aware of the many threats to validity and should design the research so as to avoid or minimise them. They listed three key threats to validity research: limited exposure to the phenomena, selective or biased perceptions or memories, and biased interpretation of observations. The researcher for this study had extensive experience in the industry and needed to address any potential biases by multiple methods of data generation and verification of interpretations directly with a sample of the participants. The lengthy period of data generation also strengthened the validity of the study, as advocated by McMillian and Schumacher (1993). Miles and Huberman (1994) strengthen their data by:

• some familiarity with the phenomenon and setting under study
• checking for research effects and bias
• checking for representativeness
• getting feedback from participants
• triangulation

In this study, the researcher had an extensive knowledge of the sector and of one of the experiential programs under examination in this thesis, and consequently was able to gain added feedback from a number of the participants as well as having access to multiple sources of data relating to the program and access to other professionals involved in the programs. The multiple
sources of data and the feedback gained from the participants helped minimise the impact of biases in the study.

With respect to feedback from participants and other professionals in the sector, Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 276) comment that this is one of the most logical sources of corroboration. They also state that ‘there is good reason for conducting feedback after final analysis’. A major component of the methodology adopted in this study was to maximise the interpretation of the participants’ data and minimise any potential biases of the researcher.

Wolcott (1994, p. 337) argued that ‘validity does not seem a useful criterion for guiding or assessing qualitative research’. He used terms such as credible, balanced, fair, complete, sensitive, coherent, internally consistent, appropriate, plausible, and helpful as possible. In seeking a term to replace validity, Wolcott (1994, p. 365) settled uneasily on ‘understanding’. He can ‘find no counsel or direction in questions prompted by a concern for validity’. He does not, however, abandon the issue of ‘seeking validity’ and added the following points to satisfy the implicit challenge of validity.

- Record accurately
- Let readers ‘see’ for themselves
- Report fully and write accurately
- Seek feedback.

In this study the researcher is also aware of the potential biases of her direct involvement in one of the experiential programs as a key designer of the program, part-facilitator and evaluator. The researcher has also worked in the sector for twenty five years as a change agent and advocated for the principles of the ‘Thinking Curriculum’ and ‘Learning by Doing’. This has enabled the researcher to develop a detailed knowledge of the broader aims of the sector in the Middle Years of Schooling and the desired skills and attributes necessary for students to become citizens of the world. This experience has also helped in the interpretation of data. The researcher acknowledges that this familiarity with the broader sector and its educational goals (Firestone & Dawson 1988; Miles & Huberman 1994) could have created a possible bias of pre-conceived conclusions beyond those generated by the data (Crowther & Gibson 1990).

As a means of addressing this bias, the study required that a sample of the participants be interviewed with the specific purpose of considering the accuracy of the researcher’s interpretations of data (Miles & Huberman 1994; Wolcott 1994). As Wolcott (1994) suggested, attempts to minimise biases and enhance the validity of the interpretations were supported by the full reporting of the participants’ evidence.
The study adopted an extended timeframe by collecting primary data over an 18 month period (McMillian & Schumacher, 1993); utilised multiple means of data generation (Denzin & Lincoln 2005; McMillian & Schumacher 1993; Wolcott 1994); accurately recorded the participants’ comments (Wolcott 1994) and addressed the representativeness of the participants (Parlett & Hamilton 1976; Patton 1980; Schofield 1990).

3.26 Tentative Application

The participants’ selection process, the longitudinal investigation and interests in experiential programs, the researcher’s sector knowledge and the design of the residential programs under review in this study, support the application of this study to enhance the development and acquisition of global competencies gained in experiential programs. The study enabled the participants to determine the extent and circumstances of their learning and skills acquisition. The design was flexible enough to allow the participants to reflect on their learning and skills acquisition both before, during and beyond the program to personal activities or events both before and since the experience. Lincoln and Guba (1985) caution researchers about generalising their results beyond the context of the study. The researcher was acutely aware of this issue and hence was cautious to not generalise widely beyond the context of this study.

3.27 Ethical Issues

3.27.1 Overview

Ethics, according to the Collins English Dictionary (Butterfield 2003), can be defined as the study of the moral value of human conduct, and the principles that should govern it. In exploring the ethical dimensions of the research to be undertaken, a number of issues arose (Fincher 2008 p.62).

3.27.2 Participant Consent and the Right to Withdraw

Before the research commenced, the voluntary consent of participants was obtained. The ethical and legal requirements of consent are set out in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans (National Health and Medical Research Council NHMRC 2007), where it is confirmed that obtaining consent should involve:

(a) provision to participants, at their level of comprehension, of information about the purpose, methods, demands, risks, inconveniences, discomforts, and possible outcomes of the research (including the likelihood and form of publication of research results)

(b) the exercise of a voluntary choice to participate (NHMRC 2007). Participants were not forced to be involved in the research. Furthermore, they were advised that they had the
right to withdraw at any stage; particularly on the grounds of concern for their own well being should they have continued to participate.

According to the RMIT University FCE Research Committee (2002) ethical guidelines,

‘The informed consent of participants is a central ethical principle in the conduct of projects involving humans as participants of research or experimentation. It is the responsibility of researchers to ensure that consent to participate is both informed and freely given by the participants of their research’.

Informed consent was ensured by completion of appropriate documentation before the research project was commenced. All potential interviewees received a plain English summary of the issue being explored prior to interview, and were asked to return a signed consent form, confirming that they participated in the research of their own free will (Fincher 2008, p. 63).

3.27.3 Privacy and Confidentiality of Participants

The privacy and confidentiality of participants was protected throughout the research – their dignity, confidentiality and autonomy were paramount. In this instance, the results of the individual interviews and names were deleted from all records and pseudonyms have been provided for all participants. Further to this, the identity of schools was shielded as far as possible by coding them rather than naming them (Fincher 2008, p. 63).

3.27.4 Discrimination

In designing research processes, a key consideration was discrimination against any individual or group of people. Issues such as the use of discriminatory language, gender, or race were all potential areas for discrimination. Such issues were not foreseen at the outset of the research, were monitored as the process evolved and did not eventuate (Fincher 2008, p. 63).

3.27.5 Misuse of Research

After its completion, the results of a research project can be put to use by others with agendas quite different from those of the original researcher. Research outcomes can be used, or misused, at a later date for political gain, or perhaps by an ‘official’ power, to shape the future behaviour of the people concerned, either to their disadvantage, or in a way which the original researcher had not intended. In this instance it was intended that the research would be useful in understanding current trends in the nature of experiential programs on offer; misuse of the results is not foreseen at the time of publication of this document (Fincher 2008, p. 64).
3.27.6 Power Inequality

The dynamics of the ‘power’ relationship between researcher and participants can be an issue, resulting in pressure being exerted on interviewees to respond with a particular bias. The researcher was acutely aware of this issue throughout the process, especially when interviewing participants from the researcher’s own school. Questions were designed to maximise the likelihood of participants responding honestly, without the influence of any perceived lines of authority, real or imagined.

3.27.7 Proper Use of Resources

Proposed research must be considered to be absolutely necessary, so that it cannot be seen to be wasteful of scarce resources – in itself an ethical consideration. As a gap in the knowledge about the effectiveness of experiential programs to achieve their stated outcomes was evident, the subject appeared to be worthy of more detailed exploration and the research was therefore considered to be a worthwhile use of resources.

3.27.8 Publication

A potential ethical issue may arise with respect to publication of research findings. If the results of a study are controversial, they may be seen to cause harm if they are published; alternatively, there will be instances of ethical concerns if research findings are not published, and the researcher allows the information to ‘sit unknown’ (Kellehear 1989). This issue has not eventuated at the time of publication. Further to this, given the age of the participants it was not necessary to refer participants’ comments back to their individual schools for validation.

3.27.9 Confidentiality

Within the design of the study it was necessary to maintain confidentiality of information. The participants supplied personal accounts and reflections of their learning, their emotional well being during the experience and since. All signed an agreement consent form to participate, provided that all information remained confidential. Due to the extended period of the data generation and the intimate and personal nature of the learning journals it was essential that participant felt protected by this confidentiality, and a high degree of trust was established with the interviewer.

3.27.10 Risk Management

There are three risk categories of research projects, at levels 1, 2 and 3, (with 3 being the highest risk activity) defined in the RMIT University guidelines. In this instance, the proposed research was in the lowest level 1 risk category, the description for which is as follows:
Research that involves non-invasive projects where there is no risk to participants above the everyday norm and where participants are not identified. It includes:

- Research involving the use of standard tests and questionnaires administered appropriately to normal subject populations, and where data are recorded in such a manner so that the participants are not and cannot be identified;

- Research or evaluative procedures involving observation of public behaviour on unidentified participants, where data are recorded in such a manner so that the participants are not and cannot be identified

- Research or evaluative procedures involving collection of existing publicly available data, documents and records; and

- Research carried out, such as in an educational setting, using groups of participants (rather than individual participants), where data are recorded in such a manner so that the participants are not and cannot be identified’ (RMIT University FCE Research Committee 2002).

3.28 Problems and Limitations

3.28.1 Practical Problems

Some practical problems arose in carrying out the research and conducting the interviews.

The participants involved in this study were highly engaged, passionate and articulate individuals. They all had a set of experiences they wanted to share and hence keeping participants’ responses orderly was extremely difficult. Both the female and male participants were equally keen to articulate their viewpoint, reflect on the experience and conclusions as to the nature of the experience, its impact, relevance and future applicability. Hence it was necessary for the interviewer to stop the natural flow of discussion to allow everyone equal time and to keep discussions focused on the task at hand.

The participants had ‘too much’ information they wanted to share and hence the allocated time for focus group discussions went in some cases more than two hours over the time allocated.

The experiences for participants in each of the focus groups seemed to be so intense that extra time needed to be factored in for them to ‘tell their story’ and to deviate from the specific interview questions.
Learning journal entries for the girls tended to be more insightful as many had spent much time reflecting in their journals and diarising all aspects of the experience, while other participants had more superficial reflections making it difficult to validate the richness of the data interview.

3.28.2 Potential for Skewed Results

There was some potential for skewed results, arising from the possibility of:

- Participants reporting their experiences in more favourable terms than the reality
- Participants may not have reflected accurately or comprehensively on the challenges which they faced during the experience
- Participants ‘romanticising’ the nature of the experience due to the uniqueness of their experiences
- Participants being influenced by reflections of others in the focus group

Alvesson (2003) discusses research interviews, and the temptation for researchers to treat interview data simplistically, thus not identifying the potential for the results to be influenced by the circumstances in which the interview is conducted.

Alvesson (2003, p. 14) warns that the research interview is ‘a socially and linguistically complex situation’ and that it is a complex social event, where a theoretical understanding of the conduct of interviews must be applied, in order to avoid the interpretation of the resultant data being naïve, lacking in depth and therefore inconclusive.

Alvesson (2003, p. 17) purports that, ideally, the research interview can become ‘... a site for exploring issues broader than talk .... Without falling too deeply into the trap of viewing interview talk as a representation of the interiors of subjects or the exteriors of the social worlds in which they participate’.

Alvesson discusses means by which it can be ensured that interview data is more than superficial commentary from individuals who are influenced by the circumstances of the interview, thus modifying their answers to provide the results they believe are desirable; or who are moving so deeply into discussion of their own personal feelings and experiences that generalisations about the situation being researched cannot be developed from such responses. (Fincher 2008, p. 66)

Although the above were possible concerns with respect to the research results, the researcher was of the opinion that, due to the nature of experiential programs, the nature of the experiences was subjective and personal, hence the results discussed were neither ‘right nor wrong’.
3.28.3 Limitations of Size

As the research was limited to twenty one participants in total, the results must be seen as representative of a relatively small sample. A larger group of interviewees would give more strength to the study. Additional focus group interviews would add to the richness of detail able to be reported on, and would perhaps identify additional themes in the acquisition of skills and attributes needed in preparing young people for global citizenship.

3.28.4 Outcomes

As a result of the research, the key issues that emerged were that the real objective of education is to give young people resources that will endure as ‘long as life endures, habits that will ameliorate not destroy, an occupation that will render sickness tolerable, solitude pleasant, age venerable, life more dignified and useful’ (Sinagatullin, 2006).

Future generations require skills and attributes, understanding and learning more about oneself, one’s ego, psychological and physiological self to promote understanding of other people who are, by nature, very much like themselves.

There is future potential for the research to be exposed through presentations at Australian Council of Educational Leadership Forums and Conferences and in other educational papers that are subsequently published on a variety of web sites and professional journals such as Professional Educator, Education Review and the Australian Educational Leader.

3.29 Conclusion

This chapter has described the methodology used for the study. It began with a discussion of the appropriate methodology orientation and the structural framework for the study. The data generation methods were outlined and aligned to the research topic. The number of participants and the role of the researcher were recognised as potential factors of support and bias. The analysis framework for the nature and sources of learning was outlined, and provided a supporting rationale and this included the process of coding the data as informal or incidental learning, the different levels of learning, learning content, and the different sources of learning. The principle of a lengthy data-collection period and multiple means of collection were described to enhance the validity of the study.

The following chapter will examine the experiential learning programs at four secondary schools. It will provide for the context which underpins the school’s mission and values and integrates the skills, attributes and global competencies that the School is wishing to impart to students from the experiential programs under examination.
CHAPTER FOUR: Four Schools, four experiences: Case Study findings

4.1 Introduction

While most educators would share a goal of student independence that sees students developing critical thinking skills and habits of mind that enhance the students’ ability to contribute to the workforce of the future, there are many pathways towards achieving this. Taking time to consider some of the principles that underpin these pathways, and how best to provide the necessary learning environment that allows it all to come together, can result in challenging – yet ultimately rewarding – classroom innovations.

This chapter provides a discussion of four Victorian Schools that have sought to embed in their core values and learning programs skills and competencies consistent with the notion of global competencies, global citizenship and sustainable interconnected global relationships. The Schools under examination sought to provide programs that prepare young people for the 21st century and help students to become effective, independent learners that will equip them for active engagement with the workforce of the future. This chapter determines the links between the Middle Years of Schooling philosophy, the global competencies identified in Chapter Two (Table 2.8), the aims of the Australian Federal Government in its National Curriculum goals. It then explores the extent to which the experiential programs set up by the sample schools in this study were able to foster the generic skills and competencies needed by students to become productive members of the global workforce of the future.

As the sector grows in its understanding of effective pedagogy, and how people learn, schools have recognised the need to develop students’ capacity to work independently and manage themselves as learners by adopting an inquiry approach model of learning.

This chapter explores how the school’s experiential programs have responded to the challenge of developing life-long learning skills and competencies which young people will need for their future entry into the global workforce.

Also discussed in this chapter are the rationale for the selection of the case studies and focus group participants, the discussion of the method for the analysis of the skills and competency acquisition by the participants in the focus groups and the method of analysis.

These case studies aim to investigate and develop understanding of how experiential learning programs assist in the development of global skills and competencies identified in Chapter Two (Table 2.8), and to evaluate how the student’s preparation for global citizenship and contribution to a global workforce has improved.
Firstly, the individual school experiential learning programs are introduced, and then the schools’ educational philosophy, mission and values that underpin the programs are discussed. Next, data from the discussion groups, and written reflections from focus group participants are presented. The data are presented through the themes of the global competencies identified in Chapter Two (Table 2.8). Emphasising the notion that the individual learner is an active participant in the learning process, and that inquiry-based learning assists them to foster learning independence.

The following data is a combination of secondary data gathered from the individual schools, marketing material and school websites, as well as primary data collected from the focus group interviews, learning journals and follow-up interviews.

4.2 Rationale for case study schools

In order to examine the nature of experiential programs more closely the researcher chose four different school programs. With unique experiences each program is aimed at engaging students in the middle years of the learning continuum. The first school selected for review was a co-educational school with an overseas experiential campus aimed at rotating all Year 9 students from both its campuses through a five week ‘in country’ experience set in China. The second school reviewed was a single sex girls’ school providing a school team ‘in house’ experience in a remote coastal location. The third school reviewed was a single sex boys’ school providing a one year student centred experiential model on a separate campus within the school’s outer Melbourne suburban setting. The fourth school examined was a single sex girls’ school providing a one year ‘in-house’ remote outdoor educational experience set in rural Victoria.

While providing different pathways in their programs each school examined has as its focus the desire to build self-awareness, resilience and competencies that will sustain their students for life beyond the traditional years of schooling. The researcher chose these schools for their shared goal of developing student independence and developing critical thinking skills and habits of mind that would enhance their contribution to the workforce of the future.

When examining the four school programs the researcher was seeking to identify which of the global competencies identified in Chapter Two (Table 2.8) were evident in each program and in what ways the participants felt their experience had helped them prepare for life beyond school.

4.3 School A

4.3.1 Introduction

The first case study is a portrait of a co-education independent primary to secondary school. The school is a multi campus day and boarding school with five campuses, four in Australia and one in
Nanjing, China and is associated with the Anglican Church. It is well known for marketing itself, and for its provision of innovative specialist programs for girls and boys particularly in the Middle Years of Schooling.

The following are insights into the school derived from published school documents and the school’s website. Being a past member of staff at this school, the researcher has included firsthand knowledge gained over a period of 21 years.

The school opened in 1887 originally with a small number of boys in the south eastern suburb of Elsternwick. Its first aim was ‘that the school should be a thoroughly Christian one’, rendering Christian service. By 1900 the school had moved to a new larger location in the area and by 1945 the school had been able to pioneer the concept of a country centre. The experience of the students at the country centre in the Yarra Valley region was to clarify values, to encourage personal growth and to enhance community awareness.

The programs, aimed at different year levels, were designed to give students an understanding of themselves, the natural environment and the way they impacted on it. Students were challenged physically and mentally, as individuals and in groups. They came into the natural environment and developed an understanding and appreciation of their natural heritage. Students were placed in situations where they needed to work together, encourage others and develop skills and attributes that would allow their self confidence to grow and their own abilities to flourish. At the time of writing, the focus on environmental awareness was deemed an essential attribute as well as the students’ future in terms of both sustainability and contribution to global citizenship. The school accepted the responsibility of educating students in environmental matters – to ensure they left the school with an understanding of the impact that human activity can have on the world and, importantly, the role which they could play in minimising this. By developing a range of age-appropriate experiential experiences, that allowed for developmental differences across the school cohort, students were encouraged to choose more sustainable lifestyles, and actively participate in the long term sustainability of the world in which they live and work.

For the next fifty years the school developed this experiential learning site and its curriculum offering, becoming an exemplary learning facility for its pedagogical approach, its ability to build capacity and social awareness in young learners and also for the infrastructure that underpinned the learning outcomes. The infrastructure, for example, included eco cabins with solar hot water and solar electric power, specially designed teaching and learning facilities with state-of-the-art Information Technology networks that allowed students to draw on information from anywhere in the world, publish their own data and have live video link-up with the Melbourne based classrooms. The site also has a working commercially viable dairy, enabling students to actively
observe and participate in the milking process and commercialisation of the facility. These activities and facilities all aim to enhance the students’ understanding of their place in the world and their active engagement with it both personally and commercially. (School A 2010, School A 2004, School A 2005a)

4.3.2 Developing the School’s Experiential Philosophy

By the late 1990s the school had developed further its thinking on the value of experiential learning programs, the need to develop sustainable futures, service to the community and the principles of globalisation and internationalisation. With recognition of the growing importance of Asia as a centre of industrial and economic expansion in the region, the school established its fifth campus in the People’s Republic of China.

Opened in early 1998, the campus was designed to build on the school’s mission ‘to develop a holistic program, which develops the whole person through learning which is active and experiential, in a range of learning environments, both in the classroom and beyond, students will develop an understanding of the interrelatedness of knowledge and learning experiences which will promote respect for other cultures and develop a sense of personal identity through understanding more clearly their place within the world.’ (School A 2005b, School A 2009a)

Established as a residential experiential setting, the main objectives of the China Campus inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning was to promote self-reliance, independent cultural sensitivity and the opportunity for students to build up their own skills and competencies – socially, emotionally and physically. ‘Students are given the opportunity to explore their own values and beliefs as they explore alternatives, make decisions while at the same time experience a culture different from their own’ (School A 2009a). The school’s aim is to enhance the student’s skills and attributes, resourcefulness, initiative, self discipline and responsibility for themselves and others. A set of skills, competencies and attributes which would prepare students for global citizenship (School A 2009a) are outlined in the School literature and aligns with the skills and competencies identified in Chapter Two (Table 2.8).

4.3.3 Experiential Campus set up – Internationalism and the Nanjing Campus (School A 2005b, School A 2005c)

Underlying principles and structure

- Student-centred, and largely student-negotiated, learning experience
- Focus on personal development through the study of Chinese culture and language
- Prepare students to meet the challenges of contributing to an evolving and interdependent global community
• Education and nurturing of forward-thinking and internationally-minded citizens.

Personal development

• Participants learn a great deal about themselves – cultural awareness to enhance self-awareness
• Students encouraged to question and modify their existing cultural paradigm
• Objective observation, critical examination, active participation, accurate reflection, and finally a personal reconceptualisation of the participants’ own world view
• Promotes personal independence through active learning, less teacher dependency and isolation from family and friendship networks
• Personal interaction (conversation) with host nationals is the most effective means of achieving cross-cultural learning.

Key concepts of the Nanjing program

• Self-reliance
• Self-discovery
• Independence
• The nature of culture
• Racial tolerance
• Cultural tolerance
• Cultural and linguistic diversity
• Necessity and value of linguistic skills
• Ethnocentrism versus ethnorelativism
• Cultural and personal sensitivity
• Cross-cultural interaction
• Team work and cooperation with Australian and Chinese peers
• Economic internationalism – joint ventures and foreign investment
• Environmental conservation and economic development
• Religious tolerance and freedom
• Human rights.

Recognised key competencies of the Nanjing program

• Collecting, analysing and organising information
• Communicating ideas and information
• Planning and organising activities
• Working with others in teams
• Dealing with cultural diversity
• Solving problems
• Using technology

4.3.4 Nanjing Internationalism: The five themes

Heritage

The first of the five themes students examine is heritage. This theme gives participants an appreciation of Chinese society and its origins, traditional beliefs, values, customs, festivals, art, architecture, and significant past events.

Work

The second theme students explore is the study of work in China. This theme identifies the essential nature of primary, secondary, tertiary, and quaternary sectors in a global sense, and, through a series of visits and contacts, examines the everyday working lives of Chinese people within each of these sectors in the Chinese context. Students are expected to identify and describe some of the unique characteristics of work in China and contrast these with comparable practices in Australia.

Family

The third theme students examine closely is family. The study of family life and recreation involves the students visiting the homes of their Chinese peers, recognising the nature and importance of the nuclear and extended family, the sense of community facilities, diet, and the impact of western culture. Homestay constitutes the main learning activity focusing on the theme of family.

Education

The fourth theme is education. The study of education enables students, through their involvement in classroom and co-curricular activities in Nanjing Middle School, to consider the different styles of teaching and learning, resources, expectations, co-curricular opportunities and student organisations (School A 2005c).

Challenges

The final theme students explore is that of the challenges facing China today. This theme involves an examination of the evolving state of China and the challenges it presently faces, including issues such as population, pollution, resources, relationships with other countries, and China’s
evolving world role. Many of the challenges are closely related to issues canvassed in the first four themes. The study of challenges enables students to gain an appreciation of the enormous progress already made in solving China’s social and economic problems and difficulties that still lie ahead.

The school’s mission, its documentation, website and marketing profile presents a view of the school as having a strong sense of the desired global competencies, and a deep sense of social and environmental awareness. The experiential program examined here has also developed a learning culture in the school where students and their connectedness to the learning process enables them to subsequently face a range of future responsibilities as global citizens in their personal lives and in the workforce of the future. From the available literature this stance appears to be embedded in the school’s values statements and made explicit, and encapsulated in all that it does. Further analysis of the resources provided by the focus group participants of this School indicates a strong correlation between the aims and objectives of the School, the nature of the experience and the global competencies identified in Chapter Two (Table 2.8).

However it is important, when drawing conclusions from a cohort still undergoing a huge trajectory of personal development, growth and maturity, that the outcomes may not be apparent for years. Participants may go through the experience and not realise until significant periods of time have passed what they went through or learnt. The programs under examination lack accurate means and instruments to measure and record in any quantifiable way the outcomes. However, the following findings are from the focus group, content analysis of the journals and follow-up interviews which allow for some meaningful conclusions to be drawn. By using the process of abductive reasoning the researcher was able to draw conclusions about the nature of the experiential programs under examination and the skills and attribute acquisition process for the participants. By cross-examining a number of data sources and conducting follow-up interviews after the participants had undertaken the experience, the researcher was able to validate the typifications.

4.3.5 Personal Qualities and Understanding of self

There are many aspects of participants’ understanding of self and of developing and extending themselves beyond the familiar and their comfort zone – which participants reflected on during this study. Participants reflected on their experiences and challenges which for some started at the very beginning of the program, simply preparing for the experience, while for others the understanding of self came as the program and activities unfolded, while for others still, development of personal qualities and understanding of self came after the program once they had time to further reflect on the whole experience and their involvement in it.
For some participants the challenges of preparing for a new experience and not being able to exercise any control over their environment was a real challenge. Set patterns of behaviour were challenged and participants had to make choices very early on in the programs. Participants could not rely on traditional avenues of support to resolve their issues. A greater sense of self emerged quickly in the experience.

Andrew said: ‘when I first found out which group I was in and who the teacher was I thought this was going to be a bad five weeks, but he ended up being a cool teacher ... everyday he checked to see that we were travelling ok ... did we need anything ... how we were managing with the culture shock ... were we eating ... our teacher made us feel like one big family’.

Alice said: ‘I hated the group I had been put in and mum tried everything to get me changed...in the end the choice came down to me learning to work through the issue or not going at all to China ... I’m glad the School made me work through this as I now think I can work with anyone’.

Bridgette said: ‘I knew I was going to miss my family back home but our home group teacher became our family...I soon learnt I could cope on my own’.

Chris said: ‘I found not having my family around at night a real challenge ... at the start of the program I would write to my family every night but halfway though it I realised I was missing so much because I wasn’t giving the experience a fair go. By the end my home group became my family and the teachers became my parents’.

Andrew said: ‘One of the most challenging things I did in China was homestay. Before I went to my house I didn’t know if I could do it ... I didn’t know if I could cope being with a strange family ... I couldn’t speak Chinese ... I was really scared but did not want to make my school look bad to them ... this was the best thing I did in China. It was something that I had never done before in my life and it was so good. I know I can do it again’.

4.3.6 Adaptability

Participants reflected on their ability to adapt to the new environment, to each other, to communal living and to the experiences. Some went further to reflect on their behaviours and how they learnt to modify it to better fit in and to not waste the experience. Some adopted through fear of being sent home disgracing their families, while some adapted to the new environment but then found re-entry into the old environment difficult.

Andrew said: ‘I have done some inappropriate things I am not so proud of, like wrestling, breaking a chair and not being cooperative with fellow classmates. I have learnt from my bad behaviour and wish I hadn’t of done some of these things ... I have learnt that I should sometimes think more before acting ... I have learnt a lot about myself’.
Alice said: ‘When I first came to China I couldn’t ride a bike and I knew I had to learn if I wanted to go with my friends to fun places ... I was really scared but I did it’.

Andrew said: ‘Some things I did achieve in China were to be cooperative in things ... sometimes I did not do these things ... my behaviour did get better as the program went on ... I did do more for my group like share the computers, clean up, not use all the hot water ... I wish I had put more effort in when I was there …’

Bridgette said: ‘when I was leading the group to the Ming Tombs we got off at the wrong stop and we were lost ... I went up to someone on the street and tried to explain what had happened and where we wanted to go ... I was lucky he knew a little bit of English and he was happy to take us to the tombs as he wanted to practice his English ... I would never have done anything like that at home’.

Elle said: ‘No matter how much people told you about the experience you had no idea what you were in for ... you had to adapt and adopt a whole new way of doing things every day’.

Alice said: ‘... found leaving really hard...I was distraught ... got really attached to the people and wanted China to be ours’. ‘... I came home and it was good to be home, but I couldn’t wait to get back’. ‘It was so intense. I mean if you make new friends you might see them once a week, but you are living with these people...you are brushing your teeth together, you do everything together...you cry on each other’s shoulder and you laugh together ... then there is nothing’ ... I ended up not knowing where home is ... I wanted to remember it the way it was’. ‘... it was never going to be the same ... it was an awesome experience ... I have spent so many years trying to recreate that feeling ...’.

This cohort adapted to the new setting but then had to readapt on their return journey and reintegration into the home environment an existing friendship groups.

4.3.7 Skills

The participants in this focus group all reflected on the enhancement of, and acquisition of skills and competencies they believe the China program developed. Participants referred to having developed skills they didn’t believe they had before participation in the program. Some participants reflected on the consequences on themselves and the group for not having skill such as time management and planning skills.

Alice said ‘Time management was always a challenge, we often worked to our personal time however you soon learnt that if you didn’t plan your time and activities properly you would miss out on something else which you really wanted to do ... the program didn’t stop for you to decide to get on with things’.

Participants in this group reflected on the consequences to self and the group they belonged to as being a stimulus towards developing t desired skills such as planning, organising, communicating, working in a team, being accurate and time management.
Arthur said 'at home and school you always knew you had extra time to do things you had been asked to do or expected to do and yes you upset people by doing things in your own way but in China if you didn’t do things properly the first time everyone was affected. It could mean you would miss out on breakfast or an activity you wanted to do ... I remember my group being really annoyed with me at the start of the program because I found this difficult’.

4.3.8 Critical Thinking and Problem solving

Critical thinking and problem solving was a major theme running throughout this schools’ experiential program. It could take place on a personal level, a group level or at a more global level. The development of activities in this school was designed over the five week period to move students from thinking and solving issues affecting themselves and their group in the new home environment in China under a fairly controlled living environment to a more extended learning environment. As students continued along the five week program they were given activities in the local community and learn about global issues affecting the Chinese nationally such as the one child policy, pollution, literacy and health care issues.

Participants reflected on the need to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills, often having to rely on their own skills to solve problems without intervention from staff. Participants’ reflections highlighted their ability to solve issues and think about issues more deeply for themselves without always referring to staff. A common theme in responses was that participants often surprised themselves by their resourcefulness and ability to find a solution themselves in the absence of just being handed a solution by their teachers.

Elle said: ‘The fact that we were so far away from School meant that we couldn’t get away from our problems, we had to work together to fix them...if someone was having a bad day like homesick or tired...moody, we knew we had to help each other because we couldn’t go home’.

Elle said: ‘the teachers often helped us talk about our problems on the day it was happening … we didn’t have to stew on things above … we always found a solution as we didn’t want to waste our time fighting’.

Andrew said: ‘I was a leader for a day. I had to organise what we were going to eat for lunch, where we were going to eat and how we were going to get there ... my Chinese wasn’t very good so I couldn’t read the map or the menu...the teachers wouldn’t help me as I had to do it by myself ... I have learnt to do a lot more planning and to ask more questions before I act’.

Alice said: ‘we were encouraged to take as much responsibility for things ourselves ... we had to think differently about so many things and find solutions ourselves ... we often surprised ourselves at what we could do ... and then we would feel so good to have solved it without the teachers ... I knew I did’.
4.3.9 Sense of global community

The very setting of a program like the Nanjing experience provided participants with a global context immediately. Participants were soon working through their own framework, being challenged daily to reflect on their thinking, their prejudices, pre-conceived ideas about race, ethnicity, cultural norms, religion, family heritage, language, ethics and values.

Alice said: ‘I found living in a community 24/7 very hard. I’m an only child and I pretty much do what I want at home … I don’t have to share anything with anyone, but I had to share my bedroom, the shower, the computer … and I had to be careful of how much water I used or how much food I took so that everyone got their share … I had to learn to share’.

Damon said: ‘when we were doing our street interviews with the locals and riding around on our bikes in China through Nanjing it hit me how differently they lived to us but talking to them they were ‘just like us’.’

Chris said: ‘I hadn’t really thought about China, the Chinese, their religion or anything until I went on homestay and they included me in everything they did. Like visiting the grandparents and taking me to the Buddhist temple to have a vegetarian meal prepared by monks … I’ve changed the way I think about them now’.

4.3.10 Communication skills

Communication in this program occurred on two different levels. All participants had the command of the English language as the main form of communication. However, given the fact the experiential program was set in China, the participants needed some level of proficiency in the local language to be able to communicate with some of the locally hired staff on campus, and to communicate with people outside of the campus such as local shop owners, officials in banks, post offices and tourist venues. All participants in the program had varying degrees of Chinese language proficiency providing them with unique challenges to communicating even on a basic level. Participants reflected on how much they felt their Chinese language had improved often as a result of ‘just in time’ learning. Participants also reflected on the need of the team to communicate more clearly at all levels in order to get the outcomes they were looking for, whether it was in relation to negotiating time on computers, personal space in a shared bedroom arrangement, cooking, washing and domestic chores as well as bargaining for items in the market place or buying stamps, or converting their Australian currency for Chinese Yuan.

Andrew said: ‘my Chinese wasn’t very good. I dropped the class as soon as I could … when I got to China I had to learn to communicate quickly … I learnt to say ‘tài guì le’ (too expensive) and used it everywhere. It became a game. They would write a figure on a piece of paper or punch into a calculator. I would laugh and
say ‘tài guì le’ and write another number. We would bargain for a while until I got the price I wanted ... I learnt so much more Chinese in China than I ever learnt in class’.

Alice said: ‘living so closely with everyone all of the time made it hard to get any time to yourself and to relax. I had to learn to tell people what I was thinking and what I wanted without just assuming they would fit in with me ... I learnt quickly how lucky I was to be able to please myself at home and do as I want but I also learnt how much I had missed out on by being an only child’.

4.3.11 Teamwork and collaboration

The underlying principles and structure of this five week experiential program relied largely on student-negotiated learning experiences and the capacity of participants to interact effectively with other people, individually and in groups. Students in this program had some choice about nominating a friend to share the time with and a friend with whom they wished to room. However, the activities beyond this were largely engineered by the staff based in China. Students were put into different groups for different parts of the program and for different activities, thus forcing them to learn to work with different people to whom they may not chose to do so naturally. To achieve harmony both on campus and out on activities students had to learn to cooperate, to trust and work with people who might be very different from themselves. It often provided testing times for them but ultimately demanded they work collaboratively and in support of each other in order to articulate the desired goal. Students could not bail out of activities and the team couldn’t decide to leave a team member out of activities. Participants in the focus groups reflected on the need to think about each other and solve problems as they occurred for the good of the group.

Elle said: ‘During the ‘race around Nanjing’ activity everyone had to take a different part of the race and work out what to do, where to go, what to collect etc … we had people in our team who couldn’t ride a bike, we had kids who couldn’t read the instructions … we just had to work together to get through the race … our team won because we worked well as a team and played to people’s strengths’.

4.3.12 Leadership

The Nanjing program seeks to develop in every student a sense of self worth and the ability to contribute in a number of ways. One of the key competencies every participant was engaged in was that of leadership. The new setting enabled every student to think, experience, feel and work beyond their comfort zone, and in doing so take on the responsibility for not only their own learning but for that of their group. Leadership activities were diverse and had varying degrees of difficulty assigned to them so as to enable each student to experience success. The program allowed for different leaders to emerge in the group compared to those who typically held them in the home environment. As the Nanjing campus staff had no prior relationships or knowledge of
the students before they came to China. They were not influenced by any prior knowledge of capability or potential. All students started from the same point. Each participant had to demonstrate their capacity and rise to the challenges being presented. Participants reflected on how they often surprised themselves in their capacity to assume leadership roles whether it was for duties, activity groups, navigational tasks, public speaking or communicating with those back in Australia.

Chris said: ‘I remember being really shy…I remember not being able to voice my opinions on things…I remember when we had to be leaders and we were all on bikes and I barely knew my right from my left…the teacher had full trust in me and said, if you think that’s the way, let’s go…I laugh to myself now as no one ever picked me to lead anything before…I was so proud of myself for being able to lead the group to the Ming Tombs’.

Damon said: ‘with the visiting teachers they were your teachers before and now you are leading them…it didn’t matter if you wanted to buy a bottle of coke, …or go down to the bus stop…you are showing them who have been your teachers for the last six years’.

4.3.13 Change Agent

Many participants reflected on the Nanjing experience as being ‘the experience of a lifetime’ and ‘life-changing’. Their exposure to such a different and challenging teaching experience left participants reflecting on what things they can do to make a difference either to themselves, their families, to their local communities and to the wellbeing of the world on a larger scale. Participants’ ability to reflect on this competency varied greatly depending on the intensity of the experience, their maturity and the processing of all aspects of the program. For some participants this competency may not be evident for some time after the experience. The more sophisticated responses come through in follow-up interviews where participants could reflect on their motivations for wanting to be change agents and how the choices they have made later in life had been as a result of the Nanjing Campus experience. For some choices of study, travel, volunteer work, employment and a desire to make a difference has been lived out in later life by respondents and were attributed to the Nanjing experience.

Elle said: ‘it was this sense of wanting to make a difference, no matter how small, in the world, that led me to seek volunteer work in India after my first year back from China. … In China I learnt that it was easy to feed off the ‘need to be needed’ and it was important to recognise your motivations in assisting the students even in your personal life. I can’t even describe how important this lesson was for me’.
4.3.14 Competitive

While the program wasn’t competitive in the true sense of the word, the competitive nature of the Nanjing program saw students set goals for themselves early on in the program. The program also helped students take calculated risks and remain goal orientated and task focused throughout the five week program. At the end of the experience students had to self-evaluate their level of achievement against their stated goals and reflect on what they had learnt about themselves, the world and their place in it.

In this program it would be difficult for participants not to come out with a greater sense of community and the interdependency we all have with each other.

4.4 School B

4.4.1 Introduction

The second school under examination was founded in 1882 as a ‘modern school of the first order’ with buildings that formed ‘a collegiate institution for girls unsurpassed in the colonies’.

The goal of its founders was to provide a high-class Christian education for girls, comparable with that provided elsewhere for boys. As the first Australian girls’ school established by the Wesleyan Methodists, the school attracted boarders from all Australian colonies.

Although never exclusively denominational, the original College motto ‘Deo Domuique’ – For God and for Home – still remains today. In recent times, the College has adopted an international outlook, embracing diversity and the UNESCO principles of being an internationally-minded school.

In 1990, the school became the first school in the world to introduce the laptop computer for all students from Year 5 – 12. And in 1991 the school opened its experiential campus, providing Year 9 students with a one term residential experience with a focus on outdoor education within the broader context of global citizenship.

According to the available literature, the school is ‘committed to providing a challenging, enriching and supportive learning environment, which develops confident and articulate young women who have the skills, knowledge, values and attitudes needed to shape their future and contribute meaningfully to the international community both personally and professionally’ (School B 2010a, paragraph 1).

School B claims to remain at the forefront of education maintaining its Christian heritage while respecting the spirituality and other faiths of its community. Through involvement in the total life
of the College, they encourage each member of the community to develop the desired global competencies identified in Chapter Two (Table 2.8). The following aims articulate strongly the School’s intentions to develop the desired global competencies identified by the business community, educators and the Federal Government in its National Curriculum.

- To gain a sense of excitement in learning and develop the ability and initiative to apply what is learned
- To develop high self esteem, optimism and a commitment to personal excellence
- To sustain an individual point of view, while respecting the rights and beliefs of others
- To provide opportunities for students to participate actively in decision making
- To gain knowledge of the religious and ethical heritage of human kind
- To embrace diversity and live by a set of values consistent with the Christian faith
- To develop a sense of cultural heritage and an understanding and appreciation of the multi-cultural nature of Australian society and its place in the world
- To develop a strong sense of social justice which translates into commitment to community service and action
- To deepen students’ knowledge and understanding of the continuing contribution of women in the world and equip each to become full, equal and active members of our changing society
- To develop an appreciation of the physical environment and to understand the part each individual plays in sustaining and protecting the planet. (School B 2010a).

In its literature (School B 2010a; School B 2009a), the school recognises the importance of educating young people for life in a global village where international understanding is a key skill and mindset needed by students as they move through their school years to further education and employment.

‘To achieve this, the staff and students are forging links with a wide range of people, groups and organisations from different countries and cultures. At the classroom level, teachers are developing an internationally-minded perspective in students by giving them the tools to compare different events and issues in the past, present and future across countries. What we hope to achieve is an understanding that there are many ways of looking at people, history and issues and that environment colours our perception.’ (School B 2010b)

‘... we reinforce and support the values and messages of being internationally-minded in every aspect of day to day school life, from the classroom, to the playground, to the library, and back home to friends and families. Through activities such as cultural exchanges for teachers and students, our Ngukurr/Arnhem Land exchange program, professional development for staff, our members of The Global Compact, our International Students’ Club and students discussion forums, we are actively experiencing, supporting, valuing and celebrating diversity in our community, not just talking about it!’ (School B 2010b)
The school claims it has adopted the middle schools philosophy where students are always experiencing

‘exciting, academic, co-curricular and community activities meshed in a holistic learning framework forming lasting friendships, developing self-awareness, consolidating learning ready for Senior School, developing an appreciation for diversity and internationalism and undergoing the fun and challenges of the life-changing term at the school’s experiential campus.’ (School B 2010c)

According to the School literature, involvement, empowerment, discovery and independence are key themes in middle school. The school encourages students to explore their potential, try new things, take responsibility for their learning, care for themselves and each other, and take constructive risks. (School B 2009a)

Further to this, in Years 9 and 10, this School also emphasises community and participation. Every student is encouraged to share in the organising and taking part in a number of House activities, sports carnivals, music and drama performances, SRC and to devise community programs, where students confront social issues through practical community situations.

In this school, Year 9 has become a landmark year for the students as it is the year they live for a term in the school community at Marshmead near Mallacoota. At the school’s experiential campus, students learn and discover what it means to live sustainability. Emphasis is on providing students with a greater understanding of the social, economic and environmental benefits to be gained from personal and collective decisions, which take into account the present and future needs of the planet and prepare young people for global citizenship and employability (School B 2010a).

School B notes in its literature that the key educational objectives of its experiential program will enhance the development of self and prepare the individual for global citizenship, responsibility and lifelong learning through the following themes:

4.4.2 Personal Development (Self)

- To provide opportunities for students to develop self identity, spirituality and to form values, ideas and opinions of their own
- To provide opportunities to experience genuine adventure and to be challenged physically, socially, intellectually and emotionally through experiential activities
- To develop an understanding of achievement and the motivation to achieve
- To enable students to make decisions appropriately with a sense of confidence and wisdom
- To develop personal organisational skills and independence whilst recognising their interdependence
To develop an understanding of what it means to be responsible for one’s own actions and furthermore the group actions

To develop an ability to set realistic goals and reflect on personal experience and performance.

4.4.3 Connecting with Communities (Relationships)

To provide opportunities to gain a sense of place and space within a group and the knowledge and understanding of how to achieve this

To develop a sense of respect and compassion for others and the physical/natural world

To celebrate a sense of achievement within a group

To provide opportunities for students to develop leadership, teamwork, respect for diversity, and to learn with and from each other in a range of challenging activities

To gain an insight into rural living and communities

To experience and develop a sense of fun.

4.4.4 Environment and Sustainability

To develop an understanding of past and present management practices and impacts on the local environment

To encourage students to reach a greater understanding and appreciation of the existing natural environment

To understand our various impacts on the natural environment and the need for conservation and sustainable management for the future

To gain an understanding of farming and food production

To encourage students to understand their personal use of natural resources and the impact this has had on the global community.

4.4.5 Skills Development (Living Skills and Outdoor Skills)

To provide opportunities for students to develop skills which allow them to pursue lifelong interests

To provide opportunities for students to develop ‘living skills’ that give them confidence and independence in a variety of settings

To provide learning experiences which will challenge, extend and motivate students to explore and develop their potential (School B 2009b, pp. 23-24).
4.4.6 Experiential Campus Set Up

The residential site of School B is a 114 hectare farm in an area which combines examples of both coastal and lowland environments. The campus accommodates approximately 70 students and fourteen residential staff. Students and staff live in a small village in which residential accommodation and classrooms are clustered around a central facilities building. This structure enables students to build on their relationships with others with a view to improve their communication and decision-making skills, and to understand their experiences as individuals and adolescents working together within a small community. The students live in one of the nine houses. The intense living arrangements for a 10 week period means the students need to learn to negotiate, exercise judgment, sensitivity, adaptability (all attributes identified as necessary for their future work life in Chapter Two (Table 2.8)) in order to navigate the experience without emotional outbursts and complete the program successfully.

4.4.7 A Low Energy Lifestyle

The school’s experiential campus is not connected to an electricity grid and therefore is responsible for its own power supply. The design of all buildings is based on energy efficient principles and each house has its own set of solar panels to heat up its own water tank. The students continually monitor their use of power and water and examine ways in which to reduce their consumption of these important resources. The rural setting also encourages student to realistically consider their consumption of energy. Independence, interdependence and balancing local needs and global needs is the focus of the low energy lifestyle established in the program (School B 2009b, p. 24).

4.4.8 Community Living

The Campus at this School provides opportunities for learning and sharing. While some find it hard to leave the immediate comfort and support of parents and home, there is often a new appreciation of family life. Students are forced to consider the needs of others as they themselves feel the vulnerability of being away from reliable support structures such as one’s immediate family. The family support group often becomes the student’s Home Group with a Home Group teacher. The student households organise their own rosters to ensure that cooking and cleaning responsibilities are shared. Each household is also required to submit a weekly menu plan, showing a range of nutritionally balanced menus. Students are encouraged to adopt a responsible attitude towards taking care of themselves so that they are not a burden upon others. There are no ‘hospital’ facilities at the campus. Care of those who are ill takes place in the home by other members of the Home Group under the guidance of the residential nurse. This builds a sense of community, responsibility, caring and belonging that moves the student beyond the sense of self (School B 2009b, p. 25).
4.4.9 Curriculum

The curriculum at the campus encompasses what is studied, lived and experienced by each student. The prime criterion for including each aspect of the curriculum is its relevance to the physical or social environment of the campus. The program consists of a variety of integrated units of learning, most of which run for either a whole or half day to allow time for the completion of extended activities. Each evening either community activities are programmed or students complete portfolio work, write letters or read. The scheduled activities include assemblies, chapel services, concerts, social evenings, cluster evenings and menu planning. Each of the learning areas identified in the Middle School philosophy are represented in the campus curriculum. However, the curriculum extends beyond those learning areas to also encompass pastoral care and a variety of outdoor educational experiences. Most activities within the subjects involve some aspect of group cooperation and reliance upon others. The implementation of this approach has been an integral part of reinforcing the school’s aim to meet the middle years’ objectives.

4.4.10 Student Welfare

Each House forms a Home Group which is the primary pastoral care unit at the campus and provides a framework within which students learn to structure and organise their daily lives by acquiring independent living skills. It can also provide a sense of stability and security by creating an environment in which students can give and receive support and guidance, address issues of concern both within and beyond the house, test ideas, explore relationships, retreat to and relax in with safety. The Home Group Program attempts to help students develop and practise the following global skills:

- care of oneself
- taking responsibility for one’s own actions
- conflict resolution skills
- independent living skills
- time management skills.

Each Home Group typically consists of eight students. The Home Group teacher is responsible for the students’ overall well-being, is a source of support and helps establish relationships with staff and other students. During the course of the term, the Home Group and the Home Group teacher often need to address a number of issues. Meetings are planned and can be called as needed. It is also a time to foster leadership and decision-making in the students by encouraging discussions and helping the students to find answers to their questions (School B 2009b, p. 26).
The focus on developing personal qualities, understanding of self, adapting to challenging personal and community issues, working collaboratively and problem solving are strongly reinforced in this discrete residential outdoor experiential program.

4.4.11 Outdoor Program

The school literature outlines a number of components to the Outdoor Program at the campus. Expeditions, outdoor activities and recreation are timetabled sessions. Students exercise some choice and are encouraged to use their leisure time in a productive manner. All activities are designed to move students beyond their comfort zone to develop the global skills and competencies identified in Chapter Two (Table 2.8):

- expeditions
- outdoor skills and activities
- recreation activities/option days
- physical program.

Activities provide an extension-to-self contained ‘journeying’ where students visit a range of unique environments surrounding the property. They are valuable as a ‘time out’ period for students living closely with each other and provide opportunities for students to reflect upon their residential experience. The expedition program aims to teach students skills, attitudes and values pertaining to the natural environment. The program aims to empower students to take responsibility for both themselves and others and fosters personal qualities such as resourcefulness, leadership, judgement, tolerance and determination (School B 2009b, p. 26).

The outdoors program in this school aims to develop trust, confidence, courage and the ability for students to learn from their mistakes. The global skills that appear to emerge in this experiential program develop critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration, agility and adaptability, curiosity, imagination and responsibility for self and others. The responses by focus group participants from this School indicate a strong correlation between its stated aim, their experience of its participants and the global skills and competencies identified in Chapter Two (Table 2.8).

The following sections identify the findings by focus groups and journal content analysis of School B participants.

4.4.12 Personal Qualities and Understanding of self

Participants of this experiential program were given the opportunity to develop their own self identity and to form values and ideas about themselves, develop their self confidence and independence while recognising the needs of others and their interdependency on each other.
Participants developed strong relationships with each other and developed a sense of respect and support for the needs of all within the communal living environment.

Meredith said: ‘The camp allowed me to discover my likes and dislikes as I was put in a number of unfamiliar situations……during the camp I found my self confidence was boosted’.

4.4.13 Adaptability

Participants in this school talked of the challenges of having to adapt to a new environment that was so different from their home environment. Being disconnected from the comforts of home and being confronted by the stark contrast in living comforts meant that students needed to work through this barrier early, and to adapt to the new living quarters and to the demands of communal living.

Jasmine said: ‘I had a lot of my close friends back at School and didn’t want to go with the group I was put in…I soon learnt to make new friends because I had to or the term was going to be a long one…I learnt to like the girls I was with…I couldn’t run back to my old friends’.

Michelle said: ‘I hated my time at Marshmead and couldn’t wait to go back home…I hated the fact that I had no time to myself…I couldn’t get away from anyone…I surprised myself in the end about how I had learnt to cope…I don’t think I could have learnt this had the program been closer to home’

Mandy said: ‘I used to get homesick on every single camp which was a week and now I had to cope with a term. I didn’t think I could do it. I struggled everyday…. The school ended up getting my parents to come and collect me and take me home in week 3. After a few days at home they took me back again and I learnt to cope with the challenges I was facing… Everyday got a little easier with the help of my new friends and the teachers.

Jasmine said: ‘Just the thought of being sent away to the middle of nowhere, away from everything that I ever knew was torture. I remember crying so much and protesting against it that my sister took me on a long walk to talk about her experiences at Marshmead and how she knew I would just adapt and love it….. that first night in the village in a new bed, in a new room, in a small part of the house really challenged me….by half way through the program we all had adapted to the new environment and I really like all the independence and how much fun it was with all my friends.’

4.4.14 Skills

School B provided students with the opportunity to develop skills which allowed them to engage in a variety of settings. The activities of the ten week program challenged, extended and motivated students to explore, develop their potential and to take on new tasks with confidence.
Meredith said: ‘I found skills that I never used before and never knew I had. I had to use my personal skills to make new friends....I had to build up skills like camping, cooking, cleaning. I had to learn leadership and decision making skills, planning and time management skills....time management was a major point of Marshmead and planning.

4.4.15 Critical Thinking and Problem solving

Problem solving and critical thinking were two main aspects of School B experiential program. Students learnt to make decisions either collectively or on their own in order to complete the activities in the program. Tasks varied in complexity over the ten week program allowing students to test their thinking and extend themselves in terms of the challenge provided.

Meredith said: ‘When we were on our three night expedition we knew we had to get to our next checkpoint before dark otherwise everyone would worry and we would miss our dinner...we lost time as one of our group had become ill and hurt her ankle so we split the group in two...the sportier girls went ahead to go for help and the other stayed back...we made shelter with our backpacks until help arrived’.

4.4.16 Sense of global community

School B’s experiential program recognises the importance of educating young people for life in a global village. Internationally minded perspectives are embedded into its policies and curriculum at all levels. In this school the Year 9 experiential programs seeks to develop attitudes and values which demonstrate tolerance and respect, care for themselves and the group, while responding to the environment and the complexity of local and global issues of sustainability.

Michelle said: ‘Marshmead allowed me to understand that my actions did not only affect myself but everyone that was at Marshmead and consequently I felt I matured more as a person and became less selfish.’

Jasmine said: ‘living in a community and taking responsibility for the amount of power and water we used in our hut forced us to continually monitor our usage and look for ways to reduce our consumption if we wanted enough to go around for everyone ... I’m used to taking long showers and having the computer, TV and radio running in my room when I’m relaxing. I couldn’t do this anymore. This experience has made me much more conscious in what I am doing’.

4.4.17 Communication skills

The nature of residential experiential programs like this one require students to connect with the community they have become a part of, and to develop relationships with people they do not necessarily have any past connections. Students need to learn to communicate their needs and develop a sense of respect for the people’s needs; at the same time students are forced to think
through their communicative skills especially as the need to resolve conflict is easy to arise in such settings.

Gemma said: ‘living with nothing but prepubescent girls in tight living conditions for so long meant that issues needed to be communicated and resolved quickly. Skills such as empathy, understanding and conflict management were taught and learnt.’

4.4.18 Teamwork and collaboration

The structure of the village, communal living, residential accommodation and the activities of experiential programs of this nature rely heavily on personal relationships and teamwork rather than purely academic pursuits. The curriculum arises from the setting, from living together in a challenging environment. Students draw much of their learning from the lived experience and from pursuing activities which are task orientated and team based. The common theme running in all experiential programs of this type focuses on teamwork and collaboration amongst the groups and between groups. Most activities include some aspect of group co-operation and reliance on others.

Michelle said: ‘working in teams is something we did daily. These groups needed to work together to get daily tasks done and I found it very easy to trust the other students and felt that everyone worked well together as there was a sense of not wanting to let the other community members down.’

4.4.19 Leadership

The aspect of experiential programs of this nature is for all students to make decisions appropriately with a sense of confidence and wisdom and to develop an understanding of what it means to be responsible for one’s own actions and furthermore the group. The experiential program under examination here had as an educational objective the desire to allow students to assume positions of leadership at lots of different levels, and in a variety of settings and activities. Some participants expressed surprise at being confident enough to lead the group and make decisions, while others commented on learning to allow other to take leadership roles and responsibilities.

Michelle said: ‘I have been a leader in most of my classes every year and I am used to stepping in to take charge and organise what has to be done. Marshmead allowed others to take a leadership role and I had to learn to respect and trust their judgment’.

4.4.20 Change Agent

A by-product of experiential programs is the educational desire that students demonstrate as individuals and as a community a commitment to making a difference locally and internationally.
Activities allow students to reflect on cultures and people who may be less privileged than themselves and to develop a deeper sense of mutual understanding and respect.

Mandy said: ‘I’ve decided that I want to help people out more and not want anything in return. It’s the best feeling when you’ve helped someone and you know that you’ve made a difference.’

Jasmine said: ‘Marshmead allowed me to understand myself as a human being and what I can and can’t change. I became more understanding about the need to be resourceful and when I came home back to Melbourne I tried to implement a recycling strategy into my family’s waste management. I felt Marshmead was an important aspect to learning about the environment and what humans can do to help it and that is one of the reasons I became a teacher of environmental science and outdoor education.’

4.4.21 Competitive

This program was not designed to foster competition, however community members were goal driven and set tasks that were achievable. Risk taking was part of the experience but all were within a set of safety measures, especially when in solo expeditions and activities away from the base homestead. Students learnt to be resourceful when faced with particular challenges in relation to the natural environment. Most participants reflected on their competitive spirit being nurtured in the sporting and co-curricular activities rather than in their Year 9 outdoor education experience.

Michelle said: ‘I have been ambitious and competitive since kindergarten. I have always grown up to be goal orientated and achievement focused….I got this more from my swimming achievement and academic excellence not from Marshmead.’

4.5 School C

4.5.1 Introduction

School C first opened its doors in 1965 as one of a series of regional colleges which were built by the Melbourne Catholic Education Department in strategic parts of the Archdiocese. Father Colin Miller, Parish Priest of Ferntree Gully at the time, was a great devotee of St. John Bosco and keen supporter of the Salesians. His ideas were a driving force behind the project to build School C and for it to come under the care of the Salesians. A strong Salesian presence is still an integral part of the College today.

The College is a regional boys’ college under the care of the Salesians of Don Bosco. John Bosco was born August 16, 1815 in the farming hamlet of Becchi to the east of Turin, Italy. The times were politically unstable, cities were overcrowded and the young were most vulnerable in these situations. John Bosco had it in mind from a very early age that he would dedicate his life to
helping young people in the harsh conditions of city life. As such, one of the foundational aims of the College was to provide, not only a climate where the Gospel is known, lived and loved so that students may be nurtured in the Christian faith and their commitment to Jesus Christ, but also to consider their contribution to the wider good (School C 2004, School C 2009).

4.5.2 Social Justice and Community Service

One of the cornerstones of the philosophy of the Salesians of Don Bosco is a strong sense of social justice. As a way of developing this quality, students are encouraged to offer practical support to those in need, both within the community and throughout the world. This practical support includes raising awareness and funds for Salesian Missions throughout the world. Senior students are also encouraged to reach out to those in need closer to home by assisting Sacred Heart Mission in St Kilda (School C 2009, School C 2010a).

4.5.3 Retreat / Reflection Days

The school is aware that in order to fully develop the spirituality and faith commitment of its students, opportunities need to be created outside the normal classroom situation. All students therefore attend retreat/reflection days at each level of their secondary schooling. Each of these days is designed to complement the work done in the religious education classroom and other activities within the college. This aims to promote the faith development of the students, not only at a local level, but also on a world stage. Days have different themes but are linked to the foundational philosophy of Salesian Youth Spirituality and the educational philosophy of St. John Bosco: Reason, Religion and Loving Kindness.

4.5.4 Preventive System

In the midst of a wide array of educational theories, it is possible to find theories which propose an original solution to the problems of young people. Don Bosco contrasted his ‘Preventive System’ of dealing with those who broke the rules. His system is based entirely on ‘reason, religion and kindness’.

The most telling element in this system is the kindness that describes the relationship between the educator and the student. Don Bosco would say that one must make oneself loved before one can make oneself feared. Educators should enjoy themselves with their students, and should like what they like in an effort to enter this world.

Another element of the Preventive System is reason: it means giving attention to the common sense aspects of human relationships and involves the ability to understand the young and to enter dialogue and communicate with them.
The goal of teachers, administrators, students and their parents in a Salesian school is to form a true Christian community, a community of love. Don Bosco called this friendly, community spirit the ‘family spirit’ (School C 2009, School C 2010a).

4.5.5 Salesian Assistance

In contradistinction to the term ‘assistant’ in education today, Don Bosco used it to describe the role of the teacher when he or she was not actually teaching in the classroom. The Salesian tradition of ‘assistance’ requires the friendly and active presence of the educator whenever the students are gathered in any place for activity.

The school of Salesian education and the Preventative System aims that teachers develop caring and nurturing relationships with each student. As a part of the school’s Catholic community, curriculum is developed to meet the needs of boys in an ever changing world. As they develop into young men, the teachers walk the journey with the boy.

Students are taught to be lifelong learners and independent problem solvers who accept responsibility for their learning. Students develop the skills of research and enquiry and are encouraged to question the values of modern society in the light of the Gospel. The mainstream curriculum and extra-curricular activities are integrated to help students select a vocation to follow in life and set goals to achieve it. The Curriculum is structured to ensure that all students experience success and are at the same time challenged to strive for academic excellence. To this end, the learning environment is commensurate with each student's individual abilities and interests (School C 2009, School C 2010a).

4.5.6 Experiential Campus set-up

A review of the current Year 9 structure at this School found that it was not meeting student needs as they moved from School to further study and/or the marketplace. Research undertaken by the School indicated that studies showed that Year 9 was a year when boys often lost a sense of connectedness to school whilst experiencing the transition from boyhood to manhood. Therefore a more student-centred contemporary model of learning was required. The structure needed to fit in with the existing Year 7 and 8 program, as well as preparing students for Pathways through Years 10, 11 and 12 and then through to further study and employment.

The Principal and Deputy Principal of the day were firmly in agreement with the Department of Education perspective on the Middle Years of Schooling. The motivation and engagement of students should be the core objective of a successful teaching and learning model in order for students to have a depth of understanding that is beyond the knowledge about ‘facts’ and to allow them to apply their learning across disciplines (Cole, Mahar & Vindurampulle 2006, p.12).
The school’s program has been designed to address a number of perceived limitations in the traditional pedagogical approaches for the teaching of boys. These limitations resulted in low student engagement in their learning, poor skill development in the higher order thinking skills, and low literacy competencies.

The new separate campus was established to enable the School to implement a more flexible and creative curriculum which is integrated, thematic and negotiated with a focus on literacy and numeracy. The new curriculum allowed time to address key global attributes and competency issues for boys in Year 9.

The School agreed that improved learning is achieved by:

- enhancing connections between practical and theoretical learning
- encouraging creativity
- fostering student interest
- a focus on applied learning.

An experiential pedagogical approach for the school’s program and associated learning experiences was employed, with all learning experiences imbedded in an understanding and application of the other three R’s of the program: Relationships, Responsibilities and Rehearsal.

A desired outcome of the experiential program in the School has sought to engage students as active participants in their development as ‘life long learners’. The structure facilitates for a rigorous, responsive and adaptive curriculum catering for the many and varied levels of student IQ and EQ. The Program aims to set and maintain habits of behaviour that will serve to prepare students as active and productive members of communities, presently and for a range of different futures. These behaviours include their learning, physical, social, emotional and spiritual behaviours (School C 2010a, School C 2010b).

These ‘habits of behaviour’ are to be achieved through nurturing the learner (‘Relationships’), empowering the learner (‘Responsibilities’) and repetition and recognition of preferred behaviours (‘Rehearsal’). These ‘habits of behaviour’ are brought to life in this School, and take form through the learning structures, programs and processes, values/symbols/rituals rehearsed and re-emphasises within that learning community. (Cooper 2006, p.2)

The proposal for the development of a separate Year Nine Campus in this School was an outcome of considerable research of educational approaches to Middle Years Schooling. Much of the research undertaken by this School favoured an educational approach that was ‘personal’, provided a ‘safe place’ in which boys could learn, and facilitated a pedagogical approach that catered for the varied learning styles of the student cohort (Cooper 2006, p.3).
Planning for an ‘alternative’ approach to Year 9 Boys’ education at this school began with the brief that the Year Nine Program must address the key concerns regarding the student levels of engagement, higher order thinking and literacy. The program, they argued, must also develop in its students an awareness of the role in the learning process if they are to develop lifelong learning skills and be sufficiently prepared with skills and attributes that would prepare them for the diverse world they would live and work in (Cooper 2006, p.3).

4.5.7 Curriculum

The Curriculum at Year 9 is structured to be flexible so that sufficient time can be taken to deal with the questions of adolescence and prepare students for the challenges of the senior curriculum. The Year 9 Campus is staffed by a core group of teachers that provide students with a curriculum that is engaging, relevant and develops lifelong learning. The curriculum is structured in three sessions, the morning session ‘Foundations’ emphasises the core skills of Literacy, Numeracy and Religious Education. The students then move into the ‘Challenge’ Integrated Units that emphasise practical links to learning that are related to the real world and will develop higher level thinking skills and global competencies. In the afternoon, students pursue individual interests in Challenge Units, Futures Education and Sport. Remediation programs are also offered to those students who require extra support.

In Year 9 the students enter the Valdocco Campus. The program at this separate campus aims to meet the needs of the boys during this important stage in their development. Foundation studies of Literacy, Numeracy and Religious Education are emphasised while integrated Discovery programs provide practical links to the world and encourage higher order thinking skills. Challenge units allow students to specialise at Valdocco and spend considerable time planning for the future. This Futures Program ensures that students have an effective pathway through the senior school and beyond.

A separate campus, where Year 9 students and a dedicated staff work as a community, minimally distracted by the particular needs of the other Year Levels and with facilities that maximise learning opportunities, was seen as an ideal environment for the Year 9s. The School set up a commercially viable vineyard where groups of boys participate in the various stages of producing wine through to the bottling and selling of the wine. Cooper (2006) argued that the geographical nature of the Year 9 Campus has proven to be less important to the program’s success than that of the changes to the educational paradigm that is employed by staff and understood by the students at this college.

This aside, examination of the college’s experiential campus and year long program suggests that the school has incorporated the attributes and skills of successful learners and confident
individuals, while becoming active and informed citizens who act with moral and ethical integrity; and have the desire and capacity to work for the common good, including the stewardship of a successful, commercially-viable vineyard and horticultural pursuits. The students have to work in teams to plan and organise their activities, collect, analyse and communicate their ideas to achieve their desired outcome. They learn techniques, use technology, problem solve over the course of the year and become self managed. The unpredictability of the elements of nature to produce the grapes builds a positive response to the challenges that the students encounter as they take on the responsibility of the vineyard. The group is oriented towards clear goals and the need to achieve. It fosters a sense of entrepreneurialism, while at the same time developing support for each other in the face of adversity.

The responses by focus group participants from this school highlight strongly the correlation between the school’s stated aims and objectives, the perceived acquisition of skills and competencies by the participants and the global skills and attributes identified in Chapter Two (Table 2.8). This experiential program fostered the ‘competitive’ competency more strongly than other experiential programs examined.

4.5.8 Personal Qualities and Understanding of self

The religious underpinnings of this school means it is deeply committed to developing the spirituality, faith and commitment of its students’ education to provide opportunities for each student to explore their love of self and God. Reflection, religious education, discovery programs and Mind and Body programs are embedded in the structure of the school day from primary school onwards. Different year levels and activities across all year levels are linked to the foundational philosophy of Salesian youth spirituality and the educational philosophy of the foundational leader, St John Bosco.

At School C, which is governed by the Catholic Education Commission, the expectation is that each school in its system will develop a pastoral care policy and make a commitment to the ongoing appraisal and development of each student in its care. The scope of the policy requires the schools to look at the whole child and to ensure activities develop fully the spiritual and faith commitment of its students. In order for this to happen, the school takes the view that the student must first know themselves before they can make a commitment to their spiritual growth and to the Christian faith.

In School C the concern is that each individual must feel that they belong to that community and has the fullest possible opportunities provided to them for personal, academic, social and spiritual growth. It is expressed through the relationships and personal commitment the teachers make to
each student and is communicated to the student in various interpersonal contacts in the classroom and in the other learning situations the school has in place.

School C is aware that in order to develop fully the personal qualities and sense of self of each student, opportunities need to be created outside of the formal classroom situation. Age appropriate activities form part of the school experience and cover themes that are linked to the foundational philosophy of the school, Youth Spirituality, Educational Philosophy, Reason, Religion, Loving Kindness, Social Justice and Pathways (School C 2010a, School C 2010b).

Nicholas said: ‘The teachers and the Brothers in the school have been like our own family. When things aren’t going well they just seem to know and they can be really good at getting you to talk about it ...it helps you sort out the stuff in your head’

Tristan said: ‘I know I got to a point where I hated school and couldn’t wait to get out but Year 9 gave me a chance to look at what I was going to do outside school ... I didn’t like all the activities we did but I learnt that I like maths and was good with my hands and that’s why I have decided to become an electrician’.

4.5.9 Adaptability

Following a review of the Middle Years of Schooling, School C found that Year 9 was not meeting the needs of the students. Studies confirmed that Year 9 is a year when boys often lose a sense of connectedness to school whilst experiencing the transition from boyhood to manhood. The school determined that a more student centred contemporary model of learning was required, with the structure needing to fit in with the existing Year 7 and 8 program, as well as looking forward to preparing students for pathways beyond school or for a more rigorous academic pathway in Years 10, 11 and 12 as well as tertiary studies.

Unlike other programs examined, this experiential program, while recognising the need for a separate Year 9 campus, allowed students to return home each night to their families. Hence the students were not required to adapt to any new environmental factors or challenging relationship issues experienced in residential experiential programs. Students were never really extended beyond their comfort zone, nor did they need to navigate the complexity of issues that surfaced in the other experiential programs under examination. The students had to contend with the traditional educational structure in literacy and numeracy lessons in the morning to the more open ended, freer learning environment in the afternoon Challenge programs.

By setting up a separate campus for Year 9 students it enabled the school to provide for a more flexible approach to teaching and learning, thus allowing students to take greater responsibility for setting their own goals as well as group goals; and to take responsibility for their own learning. Not all students found the new structure easy to adapt to:
Tristan said: ‘When I went to Valdocco campus I thought it was as good as a holiday ... no bells, no uniform and lots of free time ... My parents thought we were slack and lost all faith in the school being able to settle us boys down ... it wasn’t until about half way through Year 9 that I found some focus and got into the things they were trying to teach us. I just couldn’t handle all that freedom. I was used to sitting in a classroom with the teacher telling us what to do all the time’

Tom said: ‘I found the first half of the day at Valdocco easy because it was the Foundations program where we studied all the usual subjects but then we needed to adapt and change the way we operated in the Discovery and Challenges units ... at the start you didn’t know what you were doing, where you were going and what you were expected to do ... once I got the hang of it I enjoyed doing different things especially where I could use my hands instead of my head’

4.5.10 Skills

The Discovery and Challenge programs established as part of the Valdocco program in Year 9 at this school has an emphasis on integrated units of work that have links to the real world; that of community, future, virtual and real environmental changes, clubs and societies, careers and vocation, community service and sport. Students are taught to be life long learners, independent problem solvers who accept responsibility for their own learning and skill acquisition no matter which activities they chose in Discover and challenge programs. Students developed skills in personal fitness and endurance, design technology and information technology, forensic science, sculpture and ceramics, food technology, animal husbandry and viticulture.

All skills acquired had a practical application to the real world and helped prepare the boys for participation in the workforce. Activities enhanced connections between practical and theoretical learning, encouraging creativity and a focus on applied learning. The program aimed to prepare students for pathways and alternative choices through their later secondary school years.

Peter said: ‘I got to do so many activities at Valdocco ... it helped me work out what I wanted to do in life. While I like all the hands on stuff we did, I worked out I wanted to stay on at school and I’ve decided to be a dental technician. I can work with a dentist if I want to or I can go into forensic work or even in the movie world ... I can go anywhere with this skill’

4.5.11 Critical Thinking and Problem solving

The challenge presented in some of the areas of study in the Discovery and Challenge programs allowed boys to work through practical problems that surfaced when elements of nature came into play, or aspects of design and construction did not follow a prescribed path. Students had to think differently and resolve issues as they arose – in some cases students had to think quickly and resolve problems by thinking laterally.
Nicholas said: ‘when we forgot to defrost enough salmon for the first course we were then forced to put the packets in cold water to speed up the process….we even tried resting some salmon on the engine of a moving car to gently defrost the pieces.’

Peter said: ‘…when the labels for the wine bottles were put on upside down, we had to solve the problem quickly by sticking a second label over the first…’.

4.5.12 Sense of global community

At this school, the sense of belonging to a community and particularly belonging to a Christian community with networks throughout the world is very strong. The message is reinforced in all the school literature and is heavily embedded in all the school does and celebrates. It is reinforced at all the stages of learning throughout the school from the early years through to completion. The students are encouraged to think about the heart and soul, their surroundings, and the sense that they are part of a wider caring community. It has many local community based projects for the students to get involved in as well as a number of international activities and programs for students to be part of. All activities are underpinned by the Catholic faith and sense of contributing to a Christian lifestyle. Students are encouraged to offer practical support to those in need within the immediate community and throughout the world. The practical awareness includes raising funds for Salesian Missions throughout the world. Senior students are also encouraged to reach out to those in need closer to home by assisting in places like the Sacred Heart Mission in St Kilda.

Units of work in this program emphasised practical links to the real world and helped students develop higher levels of thinking. Activities required students to think about environmental sustainability, power and energy sources and the challenges future communities face. The viticulture experience extended the boys beyond their own world of experience to focus on many issues associated with not only the production of wine but the sales and export implications of their produce, agriculture development and teaching used across the globe and the impact of climate change on primary industries.

Nathan said: 'We all had to do some time at the Mission in St Kilda and it wasn’t until I got there that I realised how lucky I am. I saw so many people waiting for a hand out that it made me sad ... I used to think they were lazy bums but there were so many sad stories I wanted to do something to help out.'

4.5.13 Communication skills

An aspect of the boys’ education is the challenge of getting boys to use their verbal and written skills to express ideas, articulate perceptions and value systems. The challenge program provided varying avenues for boys to explore themselves in a variety of ways either by the power of the written word in the journalism unit, the use of graphics and design in the technology unit or with
art and music in the creative pursuits, but also verbally in many of the reporting and discussion forums that took place across the full range of activities.

The College communicates and presents its vision, mission and values strongly in all that it does and says. The life of Jesus as the focus, the dignity and integral growth of the person, the role of the whole faith community, healing-reconciliation-liberation, and commitment to justice are all an integral part of the character of its pastoral climate. Students are encouraged to have solid beliefs and to discover a voice. Students are expected to contribute according to their capabilities. School C offers a number of formal and informal ways for students to articulate their viewpoints and to develop the art of communicating whether it be at a personal level or on a wider platform in forums such as Chapel, Assembly, House activities, Social Service, Debating, Camps and Activities and in the classroom.

Tom said: ‘I had natural abilities and confidence to speak up in class and so I didn't find it hard to be the voice of the group'

Tristan said: ‘I didn't always feel comfortable to speak up and say what I thought but the Valdocc experience gave me the chance to be more relaxed and not fear that others would make fun of me if I didn't get things right'

4.5.14 Teamwork and collaboration

The greatest focus on teamwork and the need to work collaboratively was evident in activities that required a group to work together in order to achieve the desired goal. Activities such as the Viticulture unit and the establishment of Café Cucina, which served a variety of snacks and meals to the extended school community, brought out the need for students to work together and play to each others strengths.

Tom said: ‘when we prepared the food for All Saints festival Day we were really under the pump….we knew Jason was faster on the griller than us so we let him take over and we prepared other things.'

Peter said: ‘Making the wine required us to work together as it was hard work. One person couldn’t do it alone. It takes days to prepare the ground, plant the vines, stake them in properly, we didn’t take it seriously at the start but we knew we had to work together if we wanted the teachers to let us go home every night.’

4.5.15 Leadership

Leadership opportunities were built into the challenge program no matter what activities the students undertook. The structure of activities enabled students to experience success while at the same time challenging them to extend themselves further. To this end the activities and learning
environment were commensurate with each students’ individual ability, interests and readiness to assume responsibility and leadership (School C 2010c).

At this school, leadership structures and opportunities for students exist at many of the year levels. The College has a student representative body at the senior levels, classroom and house captains, leaders in all co-curricular activities and a major leadership program aimed at Year 10 students. Leadership is exercised in small groups directed towards the College and its functioning. At the Valdocco Campus the students are further extended to take on positions of responsibility within the experiential program to further enhance this skill.

Tom said: *I was able to take on many leadership roles at Valdocco but I also had to learn to give others a go as well’*

Tristan said: ‘*I surprised myself at Valdocco Campus as I was able to lead activities and the others respected the ideas I had. I naturally grew in confidence as well’*

### 4.5.16 Change Agent

The desire to make a contribution and to make a difference was not something the researcher could comfortably say was front of mind for the participants interviewed in this focus group. Many of the boys interviewed saw activities as a means to an end. Those who were able to reflect more deeply about the experience could also make connections between their religious education lessons and the connection to God’s words. The more mature students reflected on the idea of service to mankind but it wasn’t clear to the researcher how much of this thinking was as a direct result of students being involved in the Year 9 challenge program and how much had its foundations in all that permeates the school’s religious beliefs and teachings.

In this school the focus is on ‘kindness, calmness and charity always’. The students are encouraged to keep sympathy in their hearts and entertain the hope in their minds that they can make a difference. ‘Gentleness and speaking, acting and counselling will win everything ... real success in changing fixed views and practices can only be the result of patience ... the honey of charity sweetens the bitterness of correction and stale minds’ (school C 2009; 2010c).

Despite the ingrained structures in this school to ‘serve’, none of the participants in the group articulated firm views about themselves being a change agent beyond school life. Peer to peer support is understood within the ministry to one another and the group was more than comfortable to serve those more needy than themselves in the community; however a global view and interpretation of being an agent of change did not come out explicitly in this group. There could be many explanations for this including the developmental stages of adolescent boys, the nature of single sex boys’ school, and the nature of the particular cohort of this school – which was
largely a blue collar, low and middle class socio-economic group and low-level aspirational in profile. The researcher felt that to labour the discussion further might have influenced the responses and therefore chose to not explore the theme any further.

4.5.17 Competitive

The focus of this program was to set goals and targets that the boys could achieve. The Year 9 campus us very mindful of the fact that boys are competitive by nature but also lose focus in their adolescent years; hence the entrepreneurial attributes were more pronounced in this program than others under examination. The commerciality of the vineyard bought out the task focused and business attributes of those more savvy in business principles.

Of all schools examined in this research paper, this school took competition to a different level than others under examination. While they provided the same structure in co-curricular and academic programs to foster the concept of competition, the real difference came in the commercialisation of the activities under offer at the experiential campus. In the hospitality and viticulture programs particularly, the competitive nature of the program surfaced where the final product provided a commercial outcome. Cooking, catering and wine making for a monetary outcome added a different dimension to this program which the boys really got into and could relate to.

Nathan said: ‘the idea of making money and getting paid for the end product made us work harder ... we knew we didn’t want to look stupid with a half hearted effort in our product especially as it was being judged by the Principal, staff, our parents and outside guests ... I really got into the sales side of things and in making sure we came in on budget.. I liked making up the profit schedules for everyone to see at the end of each activity’.

4.6 School D

4.6.1 Introduction

The fourth school under examination states its mission as follows: ‘It is our mission to enhance the lifelong learning capabilities of our students’ (School D 2010a).

The School attributes its values as being framed by:

- relationships
- courage
- creative reflection
- intellectual inquiry for understanding
- engagement in life.
4.6.2 Learning

The principal of this school notes that the experience of learning extends far beyond the ‘bricks and mortar’ of the school classroom. The Howqua region is an historical, cultural and ecological treasure-trove, providing an outdoor classroom of immense proportions and endless learning opportunities for its students.

The principal suggests that students at this school, through their engagement with their academic subjects and with the school’s dynamic Outdoor Program, become explorers, interpreters, encouragers, explainers and doers – but most of all, the school believes its students become passionate learners and therefore able to be active contributors to their multiple futures and to the workforce of the future (School D 2009, School D 2010b).

4.6.3 Philosophy and Focus

According to the School literature (School D 2010c), the unique learning environment at this school enables girls to:

- acquire new skills and discover new talents
- experience real teamwork and interdependence with peers and adults
- learn to live away from home in a secure environment
- come to grips with the basics of living
- earn from primary sources
- have the opportunity to become increasingly aware of their natural environment
- meet a variety of physical, social and academic challenges
- develop new friendships which are deeper than is possible in a day school where there are many distractions
- take individual and collective responsibility.

The school claims that its task as a leading girls' school is to create an environment that optimises each student's ability to learn. Through the literature, the School articulates that the best education is one that opens the doors to a lifelong journey of creative learning. It is a journey that takes courage, inspires resilience, and fosters personal excellence. The education of young people at this school is about the recognition and realisation of potential and is a dynamic process, with enduring benefits.

‘The aim of this experiential program is to support the notion that life at school plays an essential role in fostering academic ability and achievement, ethical and spiritual awareness, and social potential – through such avenues as community service and competitive events.’ (School D 2009 & School D 2010c)
4.6.4 Values

Throughout the literature, the school expresses their values in the following way:

**Relationships**

Assuming that all schools regard learning as a socially implicit value, this school’s difference lies in believing (and knowing) that the best learning occurs when the teacher-learner relationship is well established. In a larger sense, learning how to establish a broad range of tolerant relationships, irrespective of status, race, culture, is a fundamental life skill. The home group teacher became pivotal in helping students gain a deeper understanding of self and to learn to work and live in a community of diverse and complex individual and circumstances (School D 2010a).

**Courage**

This school places great value on courage and sees it as a quality essential to every aspect of the human condition. For example, courage to ask, courage to act independently, courage to think differently, courage to face physical and moral challenges, and courage to make decisions. The activities students are involved in over the course of the year extended students beyond the familiar and required girls to hone their natural capabilities and modify where necessary in order to adapt to the communal nature of the experience (School D 2010d, p. v).

**Creative reflection**

In this school creative reflection is seen as a value which is the powerhouse for any kind of problem solving. It is generally a whole brain activity accessing the conjunction of the rational and the aesthetic, a key to music, visual arts, and dance. It is also seen as vital to developing lateral thinking skills. Periods of reflection are structured into each day for students to examine behaviours, challenges, capacity to adapt, problem solve and work collaboratively in a close knit community (School D 2010d, p. v).

**Intellectual enquiry for understanding**

This School sees that learning is an implicit value in a school. Essentially every human being can and does learn, but may not necessarily understand. To be a lifelong learner one must value ‘how’ and ‘why’ not only ‘what’ (School D 2009).

**Engagement in life**

The value of progressive engagement is developed through projects and play with teams and games involving community issues. Students are taught ‘giving’ with a sense of national spirit,
with international awareness and with an ethical and moral life. 'Engagement' is taught to suggest delighted enjoyment, rather than dutiful commitment. This is a core value of this School’s experiential program (School D 2010d).

### 4.6.5 Curriculum

The school has developed a strong experiential program based on Confucius thinking: I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand (School D 2010d, p. 9).

The academic program at this school suggests that it is firmly grounded in traditional disciplines and is challenging, rigorous and purposeful. However, it also allows students a unique opportunity to take directly into the natural environment the skills and knowledge developed in the classroom. Students may, for example, explore history in a local cemetery, examine drainage basins in the creek that runs through the campus, take environmental action through tree planting, or seek art materials in the bush.

The curriculum is designed so that students continue to develop their skills in a key learning area, across a range of core subjects that include Drama, English, French, Humanities, Mathematics, Mandarin Chinese, Music, Science and Visual Art, as well as specialised subjects and Learning Projects which foster collaboration across and within groups, leading by influence, agility and adaptability.

One of the aspects of the Year 9 academic program in this school is the Learning Projects component, which brings together subjects such as Science and Mathematics, History and English, Physical Education and Health and Wellbeing to create genuinely exciting opportunities for problem-solving and collaborative learning. Projects allow students to research issues of regional significance, to problem-solve, and to present assignments that make a real contribution to the knowledge of the school and the local community. In undertaking these projects, the girls are truly able to ‘think globally and act locally’ (School D 2010d, p. 9).

Learning takes place within a vibrant and holistic educational environment – an environment in which students have the opportunity to be reflective, enthusiastic and at times self-directed learners, and to become incisive and creative thinkers, effective communicators and active investigators. The principal of this school believes the curriculum, not only equips Year 9 students for the rigors of Years 10, 11 and 12, it also ignites an interest and a passion for learning in all its forms. The experiential campus offers challenges and a chance to succeed in a unique environment, a place to explore and experience life, form friendships and receive positive encouragement in the development of self-worth, before moving on to contribute within the bigger community they belong to for a full year (School D 2009).
The responses by focus group participants from this school highlight the interconnectedness between the participants’ experiences, the stated aims of the school’s experimental program and the global skills and competencies identified in Chapter Two (Table 2.8).

4.6.6 Personal Qualities and Understanding of self

Students at Howqua, through their engagement with their academic subjects and with the school’s outdoor education program, became explorers, interpreters, encouragers, explainers and doers (School D 2010d, p. 9).

The experience has the opportunity to ‘develop the utmost the mind and heart (School D 2010d, p. 1). The concept of rural camps is designed to foster confidence and self development. Both the physical environment and the activities are designed to challenge the girls’ intellects, their bodies, their emotional selves as they explore who they are and develop a strong, emotionally resilient self not afraid of a challenge, ready to respond to change and able to cope with adversity.

Zoe said: ‘The thought of being away from normal life for a whole year did not excite me. I think I hated the whole first term…..as I learnt more about myself and independent living I managed better and developed personal relationships and friendships which will go on for long after I have left the school.’

Ursula said: ‘we met in our hut groups every morning and after dinner…our group teacher helped the girls to share with each other what we were going through or any problems we had to fix…our group teacher became one of us, by the end of the program we didn’t see her as a teacher’.

4.6.7 Adaptability

The experiential program in this school provided the most challenging issues for the girls more than any other program under examination. The students needed to adapt to life at Howqua and to foster positive house dynamics.

Girls needed to adapt to going without the comforts of home. There are no facilities for girls to receive calls directly and mobile phones were not permitted. The girls have no access to email. Life at Howqua allows students a unique opportunity to learn about and develop an appreciation for the natural environment, free of sensory bombardment that accompanies a reliance on email, mobile phones and contemporary technology. Many participants reflected on the difficulty of this aspect of the program.

Victoria said: ‘we knew we couldn’t have our phones or access to our email accounts… we couldn’t contact our parents on a regular basis or have family visit other than the designated one day in Term 1 and 2 open days throughout the rest of the year…..I just felt this was barbaric I couldn’t understand what they wanted
to teach us with this approach… with time I learnt to write letters the old fashioned way…I still think email is a better way to communicate and you can get that anywhere on the world nowadays.’

Ursula said: ‘Being away from home was the biggest challenge’.

Yolaine said: ‘Learning to live with big groups was the hardest’.

4.6.8 Skills

The year-long program at Howqua provided the students with all the traditional classroom subjects while working in an interdisciplinary way so as to eliminate duplication of content. Girls were also provided with an extensive outdoor education program to extend their skills beyond the classroom in activities to do with areas as diverse as hiking, canoeing, cross-country skiing, horse riding, long distance running, expeditions and trekking through mountainous terrain.

Victoria said: ‘I got to try so many different activities I never would have tried at home. I got my physical fitness up and built up the ability to participate in so many things… at least now I know about all these things and I won’t feel so hopeless if I ever get to do them again.’

4.6.9 Critical Thinking and Problem solving

School D is committed to developing confident and articulate girls who can take on the challenges of an evolving global world.

The school encourages girls to have courage, a quality it sees as being essential to every aspect of the human condition. Courage to ask, courage to act independently, courage to think differently, courage to face physical and moral challenges and the courage to make decisions and to problem solve. Further to this, the school wants their girls to engage in ‘Creative Reflection’, a value which is the powerhouse for any kind of problem solving. It is generally a whole brain activity accessing the conjunction of the rational and the aesthetic.

Through its experiential program, intellectual enquiry for understanding is fostered. To be a lifelong learner the school believes the girls must value 'How' and 'Why' not only 'What'. The girls in this school are encouraged experientially to ‘Engage in Life’ through projects and activities with community issues. Giving, with a sense of national spirit with international awareness with an ethical and moral life, forms part of the whole school approach to the girls’ time at the school. ‘Engagement’ in this school suggests enjoyment and critical thinking rather than dutiful commitment. (school D 2010a; 2010b).

Yolaine said: ‘meeting everyday in our homeroom groups with the teachers helped us solve problems as they arose … we had to get on well together on campus before we could go out on activities’.
Victoria said: ‘…when our matches got wet and we couldn’t light the fire to boil clean water to mix with our camp food, we collected water from the river and filtered it through one of our stockings to make sure it had no bugs in it…at least even if it was cold we got to eat’.

4.6.10 Sense of global community

The environmental projects at Howqua reflect the School’s commitment to environmental education, to conservation and to the region as a whole. The environmental projects are undertaken throughout the school year and students learn to contribute to and support the overall functioning and longevity of the campus. Others reflected on the effect of living in a community and the consequences of not thinking about the group.

Wendy said: ‘we learnt to monitor local water quality and supply and plan propagation for indigenous species as well as bushfire management plans and wildlife protection programs.

Zoe said: ‘When our group didn’t do its early morning duties there were no hot showers that morning and no hot food for breakfast for anyone…’

4.6.11 Communication skills

The challenges of living and working in a remote residential experiential campus require participants to refine their communication skills and their listening skills. In order to work through the many issues that arise, girls are given regular periods of reflective time and time to resolve issues by talking and listening to each other. Staff became the critical adult responsible for guiding the girls through emotional issues such as homesickness, friendship and group conflict through to illness, body image and emotional health issues. The girls learnt to communicate at a lot of different levels concerning the full range of issues affecting the adolescent years.

Victoria said: ‘we had to help each other through many personal issues and some girls didn’t want to talk about their problems … you couldn’t get away from your issues as we lived together all day, every day and everyone learnt everything about you … you couldn’t hide … most of the time people just wanted to help but they’d give you personal space if you needed it’.

4.6.12 Teamwork and collaboration

A major feature of experiential programs aimed at the middle years is the inclusion of activities that move young people from focusing on themselves to that of working collaboratively in a team to achieve a variety of tasks. Team based activities are goal-oriented and task-focused based on the outcomes. The girls in this experiential program were set a range of tasks that needed to be planned and executed as part of a team, requiring the girls to think and work as part of a larger
group. While these activities are a feature in the structured curriculum it is in the communal living arrangement and in the outdoor activities that girls are really forced to work collaboratively.

Ursula said: ‘during the 5 day hike in the highlands our group faced many challenges. Nothing seemed to be going right. We started to blame each other for things … we wouldn’t communicate things … it was feral. It wasn’t until we sat down and started to talk to each other that we finally began thinking as one and dividing up the different parts of the expedition amongst the group … when everyone contributed the expedition wasn’t that hard after all. I went on to do my solo successfully based on what we learnt in the group expedition’.

4.6.13 Leadership

Throughout the year students are encouraged to apply for a number of student leadership roles which include student representative committee, fitness captains, library monitors, music captains, house leaders and social event committee. While these were formally recognised positions of responsibility many other leadership opportunities surfaced throughout the year, especially in the outdoor education activities where girls were given opportunities to lead expeditions and co-curriculum activities.

Victoria said: ‘I’ve always been the leader in school both in sport and as a class and now house captain but at Howqua I had to sit back and sometimes let others have a go at leading activities … sometimes I was surprised at what others could do when I hadn’t even thought of them as leaders’

4.6.14 Change Agent

The one year program established at Howqua is seen to provide a forum for its girls to think about the world beyond the comforts of their largely privileged educational and socio-economic background. The focus for the year is on local and global issues and is why the school insists on limited contact from outside influences, comforts and pleasures. The activities in the outdoor education units all focus on the girls learning to make a contribution and to make a difference to the habitat, the fauna and flora in the national setting.

Zoe said: ‘the Howqua experience has opened up my eyes to how poorly we think about the environment we live in. My family has a holiday home at Philip Island an we’ve never once thought about the issues for the seals on the island, the water and coastline concerns on the island … we always saw them as a bunch of greenies who have dropped out of city life … I’ve become more concerned about the island because of what I’ve learned here … I will look for ways I can get involved in the area and use what I have learnt’.
4.6.15 Competitive

The nature of the experience at the Howqua did not focus on competition and entrepreneurial activities, rather aiming to get the girls to set individual and groups’ goals and to work towards these goals in a non-competitive way. The girls have a real sense of unity, respect and support for each other having lived and worked together for the year.

Victoria said: ‘I had to set myself some personal goals when I arrived and then assessed how well I had achieved these goals at the end of the program. We needed to share these goals with our House group as well so they could assess how we were tracking with our goals … I achieved most of my goals and learnt so much about myself along the way that will help me in later life’.

4.7 Follow-up Interviews: second round

In the second follow-up interviews eight participants responded to the invitation to reflect on their initial comments in the focus group, further critically assess and reflect on the identified skills and competencies in Chapter Two (Table 2.8). These follow-up interviews were conducted by writing to each participant and asking them to respond in writing against each of the eleven competencies. The written responses were then used as a basis for one on one discussion between the researcher and the participant.

4.7.1 Personal qualities and sense of self

The respondents to the follow-up interviews are now entering the final stages of their schooling – University, TAFE or apprenticeship – or have recently entered the workforce. As a group, all the participants appear to be confident, assertive, independent, articulate individuals. While the ability to conceptualise and use higher order thinking skills varied across the group their sense of who they are and optimism about their future is strong. As a group they face their future believing their experiences thus far has set them up well to enter the next stage of their lives. While only one participant wasn’t sure what exactly she would settle into as paid employment, all respondents have a plan and a feeling that they were actively engaged in steering their personal and professional journey.

Mandy said: ‘I know my mum would like me to settle into a well paid job but I’m just not ready yet. There is so much I want to do and I think if I go overseas and travel a bit, work a bit, I will get all this out of my system’.

Meredith said: ‘I’m ready to throw myself into the next part of my life … I’ve finished uni, travelled to all the places I’ve wanted to go … I want to buy a car, finish my legal training, put some money behind me and buy an investment property. I’m looking forward to the next stage … and besides I’m only 25, I have plenty of time to settle down. I needed the time after uni to have fun but I’m now ready to work and build something bigger than myself … something that will benefit more than just me … something that is more than just buying the next dress.

When I was travelling I met so many people who were living for the moment. They had all started things and never finished anything – they seemed to be running away from something … I loved solo travel and am more comfortable in my own company but realise I don’t have to be alone if I don’t want to be. There are
places I wouldn’t travel alone like Cuba but I became more aware of how to project myself and, how not to draw attention to myself’.

4.7.2 Adaptability

The majority of respondents have been able to demonstrate a high level of adaptability since leaving school. With the exception of two respondents from School C (who only participated in the in-house experiential program) the other six respondents all had a heightened sense of appreciation of diverse cultures and settings. Six respondents had travelled widely, spent time on their own dealing with uncertainty and managing the unexpected and unexplained things that happen when you travel to different destinations without the support network and comforts of home.

Meredith said: ‘When you travel you learn to adapt and respond to things that happen … You know it’s all up to you … my train was delayed by five hours just sitting on the track … I was now arriving in Agra in the middle of the night. It was clearly going to be dangerous to arrive as a single woman … I needed to call home for mum to get in contact with the hotel and the driver … I had the skills and resources to get the answers to the problem I was facing at the time’.

Andrew said: ‘I went to live in the outback for a year, living in a dugout, having to support myself in every way … home was 2000 kilometres away so I had to use the skills I had learnt in China …. I managed that experience so I knew I could do Coober Pedy’.

4.7.3 Skills

The participants in the follow-up interviews were able to reflect on a skill-set gained which went beyond technical competencies. The participants could link the benefits of their time in their experiential program directly to a skill-set they have needed to source now in their adult life. While participating in their experiential program access to technology was restricted, requiring students to seek alternative sources of entertainment and means of communicating with family and friends back home. The practice of requiring students to be more creative and resourceful with their time, while challenging when in Year 9, proved to be beneficial to participants later in life when they had to take responsibility for themselves and for solving problems as they arose.

Meredith said: ‘When you travel beyond just visiting a romantic beach location you demonstrate that you have life long learning skills … what happens when something goes wrong? … what happens when you need medical help? You go beyond just the technical skills of converting money, asking for things in the local language and reading bus and train timetables. The people I know and mix with want to challenge themselves, they read a lot, they want to know what’s going on in the world … they are technologically savvy … we are the first generation whose life has been digitalised … tracked using technology … we went from homemade videos by mum and dad, to recording of our achievements at school; mobile phones; Facebook; internet etc. Technology records everything we say and do. Technology permeates everything we do.

My generation has the challenge of how to get around without technology … you go to Cuba, Google maps doesn’t work, your iPhone doesn’t work … in that way what we were forced to do at Marshmead was to cope without technology … all the toys were taken away from us and we had to learn to cope without it. We didn’t get emails, we couldn’t use the phone … we used snail mail … in this way you had to pick yourself up, you couldn’t get instant responses from home … by the time you got a response by mail you’d already moved on … so Marshmead was a great training ground for you to survive using your own skills.’
Andrew said: ‘When I lived on my own in Coober Pedy that’s when I really got tested … I had to manage everything from my money, the rent, shopping, getting myself up to go to work, my rec time, making friends … there was no one to do it for me … It was China but on a bigger scale’.

4.7.4 Critical thinking and problem solving

When discussing the experience and the reflection with the respondents in the follow-up interviews travel appears to have pushed their critical thinking and problem solving skills to a higher level.

Meredith said: ‘Places like Cuba made me think about resources and social justice. Poverty in Cuba was so confronting more so than India. In Cuba everyone was equally as poor. There is no food in Cuba, there are no shops, there is no sense of consumerism … there is a low level of violent crimes, those in prisons are there for political crimes … they all get their rations in a socialist system. In stark contrast you go to America which has everything you want 24 hours a day … when you compare the two experiences you stop and think … hold on, why can I get a hamburger at 4am? … maybe it’s good for there to be some level of restraint. Why are we slaves to consumerism? I was more analytical about New York this time … the first time I was swept up in the romance of afternoon teas, central park, the shopping … this time I compared it to Cuba and it made me challenge my own thinking’.

Michelle said: ‘My training and work as an ambo requires great problem solving and thinking skills with clear responses as often the people we see are ill, distressed, anxious or injured in some way. We need to think clearly so that we don’t cause further problems … all of this was possible at Marshmead as we had to deal with the natural elements of the bush, go on hiking expeditions and work through the activities. There were often things that we had to deal with such as girls getting sick or injured; activities not going to plan and we had to solve the problems ourselves … If we didn’t get it right we suffered the consequences’.

4.7.5 Critical thinking and problem solving

The respondents in the follow-up interviews from School A reflected strongly on their heightened sense of being part of global community, essentially because their program was based in China. By providing a culturally different setting to the other schools the experience amplified the participants sensitivities to living and working in a global world.

Andrew said: ‘I had travelled widely with my family but it was mainly to relax by the beach and be in kids club. I got to visit Fiji, Bali, Vanuatu, America and Europe but it wasn’t until I went to China where we lived on campus and has to be part of the Nanjing community with home stay, interviewing people on the street, visiting workplaces, hospitals etc that I got a real sense of what the rest of the world is like … I loved China and I want to go back … also want to go to Vietnam and experience the local culture but not through a Contiki tour rather on my own’.

Elle said: ‘The China experience opened my eyes immensely – so much so I went back four times … I went back to study and to work there … the things I was exposed to led me to my work with exploited Asian women today’.

Bridgette said: ‘Home stay for me was the highlight of the China experience. While it was quite frightening to be paired off with one of the Nanjing students and to go home with them without any other people I knew I realised at the end of that experience that they were just the same as us … The grandparents lived at home and looked after my home stay partner while her parents worked … the things they did as a family over the weekend were similar to me, we laughed at the same things, watched the same TV programs and listened to the same music, the problems they were trying to solve as a family, as a country were similar … the only difference was I had a lot more comforts at home than my home stay partner.’
4.7.6 Communication skills

The follow-up interviews highlighted the development of communication skills, essentially because the Year 9 experience relied on good communication skills. Students needed to be understood and to understand others, as the pressure of communal living was intense.

Meredith said: ‘I was already a good communicator before I went to Marshmead but communication is more than just having to think about what and how others see the issues so that it becomes a two way process. You learn that I can’t just say what I want because it will piss some people off. Marshmead did help me improve my awareness of my audience. This helped me greatly in my travels … in a country like Mexico you need to be very sensitive to a male dominant society, you need to be careful you don’t offend the males and their masculinity … if you are not careful you could get yourself raped or into all sorts of trouble … often it was easier to lie – whether it was saying – please don’t talk to me I have a fiancé which they’d respect and leave you alone, to lying about what jobs your mother had versus your father so that it didn’t appear like my mother had a better job than my father … My career choice of being a lawyer requires exceptional listening and communication skills all of which have been developing since my Marshmead experience’.

Andrew said: ‘Due to my having learning difficulties I haven’t always been a strong communicator. I have allowed my big brother to do all the talking or get me out of trouble and I have become good at avoiding things. In China we were all responsible for ourselves, our time, duties, personal hygiene etc. We had to manage our emotions and our tempers without upsetting others and without getting sent home. It wasn’t always easy. You had to learn to communicate with others, share, otherwise things blew up quickly … we had to communicate not only with ourselves but with the teachers and with Chinese people … Nanjing showed me what I could achieve on my own … it gave me the confidence to speak up and take responsibility for things even when it meant I would get into trouble’.

4.7.7 Team work and collaboration

All respondents to the follow-up interviews reflected on the nature of team work and collaboration being the focus of their experiential program. By far the most illuminating reflections were provided by Meredith, who is now entering the workforce.

Meredith said: ‘Marshmead was definitely important for this. You got thrown into a house with eight girls I didn’t particularly like and fit with … it taught you so much about yourself and how you get along with people when you don’t want to collaborate. The girls would steal the cooking wine and food. They would go to the mountain high point and smuggle in cigarettes and sit and smoke … it was easy to work with people you like and when you all want the same thing but I learned more at Marshmead by having to work out how to survive with girls I didn’t like … I have done many temp assignments while studying where you get sent to different work sites and you have to get on with people who you don’t like, offend you, take liberties but it wasn’t my role to fire them. I had to teach them and they just didn’t want to take instructions from a woman … there will be clients I will need to deal with and represent as a lawyer and I will not be able to pick and choose who I represent otherwise I’ll starve … they will not all be innocent either … how to separate the personal from the professional?’ … that’s what I learnt at Marshmead.

Nathan said: ‘As an apprentice I often have to work with the more experienced guys to get the job done … they watch me so that I don’t stuff up … sometimes I feel like they treat me like I don’t know anything but I know it’s good training … when we finish a job and they include me in the celebrations or when they trust me to supervise the new trainees I can see how the team thing works and why communication is important … We had to do group activities at school and Valdocco as well so it wasn’t anything new to me.’

4.7.8 Leadership

The participants in the follow-up interviews reflect strongly on their leadership skills and where they believe they were at in Year 9 compared to their lives now.
Meredith said: ‘I had leadership qualities before I went to Marshmead. I think Marshmead squashed my leadership qualities. You can’t be a good leader without good self esteem. I was bullied by those girls … girls at that age were as nasty and hierarchical as it gets … it’s like ‘Mean Girls’ the film … if you’re a personality like mine and want to stand for something different to what the majority are doing you will get victimised … kids with strong personalities like mine who don’t want to be sheep will struggle. I couldn’t fit in to the mainstream all day and then got to swim club with the other elite athletes at night … it probably wasn’t until I went to uni that my leadership skills came to the forefront through the surf club where I was on the board and the competition co-ordinator.’

Nicholas said: ‘I didn’t see myself as a natural leader while I was at Valdoccio but now that I’m in my third year of my apprenticeship and my boss is letting me supervise some of the jobs the first years are doing I think I can run my own company one day and have a few workers of my own.’

Elle said: ‘My work with abused women now helps bring out my natural leadership style. I work with women from all walks of life and help them reshape their future and take control for themselves. I help train other officers. I’m sure that these skills were first unearthed when I was in China … everything I did as a student in Year 9 to then becoming a trainee and going to be an activity teacher all have their seeds in that first experience in Year 9.’

4.7.9 Change agent

The ability to see themselves as a change agent was not something that respondents necessarily linked back to their Year 9 experience but rather respondents reflected on it being part of the process and experiences that have helped shape the people they are becoming.

Meredith said: ‘I see myself as ambitious and I want to make a difference hence my career choice and travels. I couldn’t put that down to Marshmead but it was influential for some of the girls I went to school with. The whole environmental push of Marshmead was effective for a few weeks but there were girls who were politically aware … I am incredibly passionate about women’s issues and gay rights but these issues probably were shaped by the fact that I went to a strong girls’ school added to this I have a strong mother. The school breeds strong women who think for themselves … it doesn’t breed classic Toorak wives like St Catherine’s. You are expected to make something of your life’.

Elle said: ‘I feel like I have found my natural compass due north since I have joined the womans refuge group Respect. All these experiences in China, India and Tibet have led to this role where I am making a real difference to the lives of these abused women.’

Michelle said: ‘I am now working as an Ambulance officer and love being able to help people … I wasn’t cut out to be a doctor but this is the next best thing. In a funny sort of way the experiences at Marshmead made you think about who you are and how you fit in … I haven’t gone down the environmental line which was just a phase for about two weeks but I have gone on to train in something that helps people in need.’

4.7.10 Competitive

The respondents in the follow-up interviews especially in Schools A and B were highly competitive by nature and goal-focused while others found a sense of competition through team sports.

Meredith said: ‘I’m competitive by nature … it’s got nothing to do with School or Marshmead … my parents are competitive, my family is competitive, the extended family is competitive, it’s in the DNA, I’m naturally competitive … I took advantage of every opportunity whether it was sporting competitions or mooting’.
Michelle said: ‘I was the outdoor type and always competed strongly at School. Year 9 just put another dimension to it ... what I had to learn was to give others a go and that not everything has to be done because there is a reward at the end’.

Andrew said: ‘I wasn’t very good at anything specific at school and in my head I have always competed against my brother ... I’ve been getting help to deal with these issues but feel that in China I was given the chance to be good at things without being compared to others ... the team environment also helped shape the sports activities I have gone into such as basketball and indoor cricket where we get very competitive against the other teams’.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter examined the School’s values, mission and the influence of the four experiential programs on the learning outcomes that enhance global competencies. Insights into the participants’ experiences and reflections on the impact of their program participation are provided as a context for further analysis of their views in the next chapter.
CHAPTER FIVE: Cross-Case Analysis

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on gaining an understanding of the participants’ perceptions of the skills and attributes gained from participating in their school’s experiential program. Four focus groups were interviewed for the research from four different schools. To further clarify participants’ responses the researcher examined six learning journals and conducted follow-up interviews with seven of the participants. Further follow-up interviews were conducted with four participants once the skills and attributes were identified in Chapter Two (Table 2.8), asking participants to reflect on the nominated skill set. In this chapter, cross-case analysis is provided on how the various experiential programs influenced the acquisition and improvement of the participants’ learning, skills and global competencies. The comparisons provide more of a ‘thick description’ Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 124) saw as a ‘complex’ interrelationship’ (Stake, 1995, p.37) that are part of those case studies ‘so that anyone else interested in transfer ability has a base of informative appropriate to the judgment’ (Lincoln & Guba 1985, pp. 124-125).

The participants’ responses have been reviewed and analysed with reference to the research question and the skills and attributes identified in Chapter Two (Table 2.8) because, as Stake (1995, p. 40) argued, ‘in qualitative research, narratives optimise understanding of the cases’. Therefore, the voices of the participants are further included in the comparisons, as well as the inclusion of interview notes taken at the time of the interviews. In addition other documentation collected from either the schools or the participants themselves, that added further insight into the factors that contributed to improved student learning in the preparation and the acquisition of global compliance and employability.

The analysis is structured around the skills and attributes identified in the literature, the business community, National Educational goals for the future and the aims of the Middle Years Philosophy which seek to identify the skills and competencies young people need to participate in the workforce of the future. The skills and attributes identified in Chapter Two (Table 2.8) provide a framework for further exploration.

5.2 Drawing out Themes

The twenty-one interviews provided rich and complex data from which clear themes emerged. While these themes cannot represent the fullness of detail, complexity and subtlety of findings for each participant, they do facilitate appreciation of, and insight into, each of the participants’ beliefs about the skills and competencies gained from their experiential learning experience.
The researcher used what has been referred to as ‘reflection-on-experience’ (Boud, Keogh & Walker 1985; Schön 1987; Yoong & Hutt 2007), which involves the trainee [interviewer] revisiting the experience [first and subsequent interviews] … The interviewer re-evaluates the experience, makes connections with prior experience, and plans the appropriate strategy to deal with similar events in the future, or further identify issues that arose in the first interview (Yoong & Hutt 2007, p. 94; Boud, Keogh & Walker 1985; Schön, 1987; Cerotti, 2009, p. 106).

5.3 Analysis of Programs – broader themes

The core values of the programs under examination were universally understood and shared by all students. The values were both inherited from the schools’ overall philosophy, values and mission as well as being established by consensus from within the student cohort. They were further supported by the symbols and rituals that prevailed in the program which were essentially (in no particular order):

- service to community (‘Living in Community’)
- development of positive human relations
- development of positive ‘self’ relations
- life-long learning
- individual excellence
- sustainable living
- reflection.

All programs examined demonstrated a clear structure in preparing students for the experience through a pre-departure program. Daily routines and structures existed in all programs to develop the core competencies outlined above and weekly rituals and opportunities existed to reflect on the experience as well as how each individual was tracking with their own set goals. All programs also ended the experience with a celebration of achievement that reaffirmed all participants.

The following themes relating to personal development, community living, skills, attributes and attitudes emerged across all experiential programs examined. These themes were stated aims by all schools examined in this research study (in no specific order):

- personal growth and understanding of self
- self-esteem and wellbeing
- personal responsibility
- health and body image
- independent living
• meeting challenges and adaptability
• risk taking and extending oneself beyond your comfort zone
• goal setting
• problem-solving
• managing stress and separation
• communications skills and social interaction
• teamwork
• leadership
• trust
• loyalty
• relationships, staff and peers
• belonging
• privacy
• confidentiality
• sustainability within a global perspective
• making a difference
• reflection.

These themes identify strongly with the themes found in the analysis of global competencies in Chapter Two (Table 2.8). All programs sought to provide an experience for participants to learn to live in a community, develop strong positive sense of themselves and group learning to adapt to the demands and challenges of living together; achieving set goals by problem solving and working together collaboratively in teams. All programs gave participants the opportunity to extend themselves and their leadership capabilities.

One of the most important aspects of learning for students in these programs is a greater self-awareness and understanding of self within the context of the learning environment. Students became more aware of the differences between their public and private self. The intense social interaction that takes place in a residential setting over an extended period of time heightens awareness of what is presented to others. The process of ‘holding up a mirror’ to each participant and providing a period of reflection and self-analysis provides a strong platform for participants to look at aspects of themselves they wish to change. All programs demonstrated a belief by staff, parents and the participants that it provided a strong period of personal growth, maturity, responsibility, resilience and independence in each of the participants.

All programs sought to have participants take responsibility for themselves and the group in a number of different ways. All the programs have an inbuilt period of reflection for participants to identify issues of concern – whether personal, pertaining to communal living or broader issues
affecting the community and sustainability. The ultimate aim of the programs under examination was for participants to examine ways that they can make a difference, whether it be at a personal level, or at a local, national or international level.

The list of skills and attributes identified in Chapter Two (Table 2.8) provides a strong framework for comparison of the different experiential programs. The cross-case analysis allows the researcher to identify the similarities, differences, successes and failures of the programs and how this affects the student’s learning. This chapter analyses the four different programs against the skills and attributes identified in Chapter Two (Table 2.8).

5.4 Similarities within the Themes and Programs

At the time of the focus group discussions all respondents expressed similar views on the nature of their experiences. The intensity of the experience was fresh and for many it was still raw. The participants could be classified into three generic types

1. those that were challenged by the experience
2. those that embraced the experience
3. those that over-identified with the experience.

The quotations from students above are testimony to how the respondents felt at the time of the experience and how they responded in the focus group discussions. The respondents all espoused the virtues of their School’s program forming one voice on the nature of the experience an their perceived benefits, challenges an outcomes despite which of the 3 participant groups they fell into.

The following examines each of the themes (skills and attributes) separately across all experiential programs.

5.5 Developing Personal Qualities and Understanding of Self

The primary focus of the experiential programs examined was to develop personal qualities and a deeper understanding of self. Also it was to develop the self-esteem and independence of each and every student and develop their habits of mind; while ensuring that the students experienced happy and healthy relationships with their peers, within a nurturing and mutually supportive school and community environment. This is the context in which the experiential programs are developed and maintained. This provides direct links to the aims of middle years learning (Braggett, Morris & Day 1999; Chadbourne 2001).
In the context of developing an understanding of self, the programs under examination had strong pastoral care structures. Each student’s first point of contact was a significant ‘Tutor.’ The role of the Tutor encompassed the following:

- being available as a source of support, encouragement and guidance to the students in his or the tutor’s care
- monitoring individual student progress across both academic and outdoor programs
- monitoring group dynamics closely, and facilitating a successful and rewarding journey for residents through the various stages of group development
- assisting residents in understanding and managing the daily tasks essential to cooperative, independent living
- keeping residents informed of all programs and of any preparations required
- maintaining a close liaison with the Director of Pastoral Care, the Head of the Year level, the school counsellor and the Head of Campus; and communicating and consulting with staff at the home campus and parents should the need arise
- formal reporting to parents at the end of the program.

The skills and capabilities that young people will need to thrive in the years beyond 2020 are seen to be: being a lifelong learner and just-in-time learner, to be able to update skills, to adapt to changing circumstances, to develop a curiosity about the world we live and work in, and to achieve wellbeing in an evolving society. As seen in Chapter Two the ability to embrace a personal value system, which is compatible with emerging twenty-first century paradigms and realities, which in turn determines the nature of future markets, industries, jobs and ethics, is seen by leaders, educators and industries as a desired educational outcome.

The experiential programs examined in this study all had at their heart a desire to engage students, ignite their curiosity and capture their imagination. The activities in each program focused on the ‘Habits of Mind; Learning to Think, Learning to Listen and the Thinking Curriculum in Action’. By providing open-ended problem solving experiences in the programs, the students were given opportunities to develop higher levels of thinking and learning experiences that move them from what they know into new learning and new ways of learning. Participants were able to develop an increased recognition of the value of global citizenship and to study and experience global issues from multidisciplinary perspectives.

At each stage of the experience, all schools had a formal and regular period of time allocated in the program for the learner to reflect on the experience, and the application of the skills, knowledge attributes acquired during the experience. All twenty-one participants interviewed spoke about the bond they developed with their home group and their Tutor. All participants reflected on their
feelings, thoughts and attitudes before the program. The closeness of the Tutor was evident in all respondents, as was the social interactions of the group developed during and after the program, the reflecting on what they were learning about themselves and their ability to adapt to the changed teaching, learning and living environment.

The emphasis on relationship-building with the experiential programs was as much about removing the blockers of learning (i.e. self doubt and fear) as they were about developing ‘connectedness’ between the stakeholders and building capacity. Consequently, relationship-building included relationships with self (and developing resilience) as well as relationships with others.

While the motivation for each school setting up their particular program might vary, all schools began their program with activities that allowed participants to explore their sense of self in a new setting and with a new set of relationships to navigate. Schools A, B and D all provided an ‘away from home’ living arrangement which gave participants a real opportunity to examine who they are, their likes, dislikes, wants and desires as they negotiated their way through the new relationships with people they did not necessarily know or like.

Meredith said: ‘I have always been an assertive person, long before my Year 9 experience. However I do feel that Year 9 was one where I learnt greater skills of diplomacy. More and more decisions were left to my discretion … I do credit Marshmead with beginning a much greater and longer journey of self understanding … In the 10 years since Marshmead I have looked at Marshmead as an example of how I deal with crisis and learnt much from examining patterns of my behaviour, self confidence, self control and sense of personal balance’.

On examination of the experiential programs in Schools A, B and D the living away from home component of the program provided a solid framework for participants to explore their understanding of self and to develop skills and attributes beyond patterns of behaviour they may have established in the home environment. Participants were often challenged to re-establish themselves in the new setting and within the new group, hence developing a greater understanding of how they operate.

5.6 Adaptability: a focus on responsibilities

In order to build greater engagement with learning it has been suggested that teachers need to give students choices and control over their learning and to build up their ability to adapt to different environments and circumstances.

Rather than being passive participants, students in these programs were encouraged to be actively involved in their community. A philosophy of providing opportunity for learning through
responsible behaviour is adopted. Acting responsibly and taking responsibility for one’s actions underpins the programs’ approach to this tenet of learning. (Cole, Mahar & Vindurampulle 2006, p. 18)

One of the strongest themes to emerge in the analysis of the responses was the need for participants to adapt to their new environment and separate themselves from the familiar both in terms of the physical environment and personal relationships.

The intensity of the experience also provided participants with equally challenging scenarios that required individuals to adapt again as they re-entered their home environment and returned to the routines of school life.

All the programs had an element of addressing the ‘adaptability’ of the participants. In School A participants had to adapt, not only to the new living arrangements, but also to the new culturally different learning environment as the program was set in China. For many of the participants they had not travelled and for those that had travelled their experiences did not include an intensely on-the-ground experience in an Asian country of China’s magnitude. In Schools B and D, where the setting was largely rural, participants had to adapt to the elements of the natural environment as well as adapt to the intensity of living with each other all day, every day for protracted periods of time – spanning from five weeks to one term (10 weeks) without going home in between.

In order to help participants adapt to the new environment, programs in Schools A, B and D also limited the amount of contact participants had with their families. School A only allowed email contract for the five weeks while in School B, where the program ran for a full term, the program allowed for a family visit halfway through the program. Similarly in School D, where the program ran for a full year, visits from family or a return to the home environment were factored in at critical times in the program.

Meredith said: ‘Year 9 presented me with so many situations in which I felt I exhibited very poor adaptability … with further maturity and reflection I learnt what factors inhibited my adaptability and how I could improve … I feel I have become more flexible, resourceful and tolerant’

5.7 Skills: accessing and analysing information

The ability to collect, analyse and organise information is a skill the programs under examination sought to embed. Throughout the experience students were provided with concrete tasks which helped develop these skills. Participants were required to collect information relating to themes in the programs. In some instances, the information was collected via research, in other instances from personal observations, and in some instances information was collected by conducting interviews. The representation of information gathered also took several forms. In some cases the
information needed to be presented statistically, in others diagrammatically, and further still through music and artwork.

The ability to use a variety of media to access information and use a variety of means to analyse and reproduce information was deemed to be an essential component of all experiential programs examined. The uniqueness of the programs is that this skill development had an immediate applicability to the themes studied or the desired goals of the program. ‘Just-in-time learning’ had a great connectivity and engagement factor for the participants. Participants were able to make informed decisions and to effectively problem solve when the task was imperative.

Upon examination all programs provided participants with the opportunity to refine existing skills and to acquire new ones. The nature of the activities, group work and set tasks required participants to develop domestic skills, social skills, time management and planning skills, thinking skills and analytical skills. The degree and rate of acquisition of these skills varied depending on the individual rather than the programs themselves. Each program developed technical competencies whether it be in numeracy, literacy, mapping, navigation, outdoor education or camping skills.

In Schools A, B and D participants were required to learn survival skills, given the nature of the residential element of the experience. Participants in these programs had to become self sufficient and self managing. Participants in School C learnt technical skills relating to future employability.

Michelle said: ‘I believe Marshmead allowed me to utilise skills I never knew I had. At age 14 I had not experienced many life changing events or things I had to do for myself … 10 years later I can see all that I experiences in Year 9 has made me a very effective adult. I keep coming back to the things I learnt at Marshmead’.

Alice said: ‘I learnt so many new things in China, like reading maps and navigating the group to historic sites … I learnt about managing my money, managing my time and managing my emotions … I couldn’t have learnt all this in a class … my Chinese language skills improved hugely to the point I want to continue with the language’.

5.8 Critical thinking and problem solving: the learning environment

In all of the experiential programs, separating the Year Nines from the main-campus was a conscious decision and produced many benefits. The ‘islandisation’ of the Year Nines has greatly reduced incidents of bullying between students in different year-levels as well as encouraging the development of ‘resilience strategies’, critical thinking and problem solving skills in the Year Nine students. Rather than being a refuge, experiential programs have very few places in which students can maintain their anonymity. Consequently, the experience encourages students to deal
with the needs and behaviours of their peers in an environment that requires students to work together to solve common problems supported by a team of staff familiar with these behaviours and associated tensions (Cooper 2006, p. 14).

The learning environment was designed to be different from the home school environment. The experience is something the students are immersed in and is designed to be a deliberate contrast to the main school campus. The residential campuses under examination were deliberately different to the point of being uncomfortable for the students, challenging every aspect of their known world. This confrontation required participants to acquire different skills to what they had developed, and it also meant they needed to learn to communicate, navigate, negotiate, reflect on and acquire a variety of skills and attributes they previously may not have needed to access. The immediate setting and design of the residential and recreational areas meant students were more vulnerable and exposed through a challenging and sometimes confronting learning environment, and hence these programs could capitalise on the learning experience in a much more meaningful way compared with the home school setting.

In these programs particular attention was paid to staffing and class sizes in the remote locations so that a more intimate understanding developed of student needs, with the homeroom teacher being the main point of contact for all stakeholders. The new environment allowed for smaller class sizes established in these experiential programs which allowed for problem solving activities taking place in smaller, safer groups to what might be the custom in a traditional classroom set up. Regular communication between the homeroom teacher and the rest of the pastoral group also resulted in improving the understanding of the individual student, thus ensuring that activities and challenges were appropriate to the skill-set and capability of the individual. The intensity of living and working together in these remote locations 24 hours a day meant that many of the behavioural patterns of individuals were brought to the surface and needed to be dealt with immediately, not for the good of the group, but also to ensure the safety of the group.

All twenty-one participants agreed that their programs helped develop a crucial capability that one would need to develop further in order to live and work in the twenty-first century. The nature of the experiential programs examined meant the challenges set for students required them to think about the issue at hand and work in providing possible solutions to whatever the challenges encountered were. In some cases the challenges were part of the program, in other instances the challenges came coincidently and were even unpredictable.

Participants were required to use their initiative, problem solving and critical thinking skills - whether to complete a set task or to solve an immediate problem. Andrew’s earlier example of
getting his group lost when leading the group meant he had to use his initiative to solve the problem by seeking out someone who could communicate in the same language as he could.

All the school programs provided activities which tested the participants’ capability to analyse, think critically and problem solve. In the first instance these skills were set at an individual level and as the programs progressed, the degree of difficulty increased. Critical thinking and problem solving skill are an essential element of each program examined. The nature of activities and the setting varied from school to school. However, each school structured the activities to test and extend each participant throughout the duration of the program.

Michelle said: ‘problems would arise everyday as part of normal living and we had to work these out ourselves … things wouldn’t work to plan for an activity and we had to respond to each situation … the experiences of Marshmead has helped me think about decisions I make now as an adult … I think through different solutions to different problems’.

5.9 Sense of global Community

The notion of ‘living and learning in community’ is a guiding principle that underpins the experiential programs evaluated. Students are provided with opportunity to develop tolerance, empathy and appreciation of others. Development of an understanding of ‘community’ commenced from orientation and continued throughout the programs examined. Consistent with, and central to, the notion of global community in experiential programs is the importance and uniqueness of the individual. These two keystone principles are explored and grounded in the curriculum, the pastoral care processes and procedures of the programs.

By its very nature, living in community provides and demands the application of responsible behaviour. Community living is a dynamic state that feeds from the actions of its members. Students are encouraged in all programs to take responsibility for their learning environment of their peers. This directed empowerment involves an educative process of dialogue and example. In remote settings which have limited resources and access to energy and power, the self absorbed actions of individuals have immediate implications for the rest of the group.

The focus for students in experiential programs was to develop an engaging relationship which brings with it the sense of belonging to a community and ultimately to acting responsibly towards the values the community held dear. It was about the student’s ability to be an effective and responsible citizen – not just about ‘what’s in it for me’ factors.

The programs are clear about which principles in a successful learning environment help students towards lifelong sustainable skills and attributes and global competencies. By reframing the role of the teacher (and learner), offering choice in activities, developing an inquiry-oriented approach to
teaching and learning with open-ended structures and routines that the participant navigates themselves, the participants were able to make connections, share personal practices and reflective dialogue which improved their sense of connection to global issues and global citizenship. While the geographical setting varied in each of the experiential programs examined, the schools have developed meaningful learning experiences that engage the students and allow for improved global citizenship.

The concept of developing a global mindset coupled with habits of mind and responsibility for corporate citizenship is one that has come out strongly in all the programs. How one attains this mindset, builds the skills and attributes of global citizenship was examined from program to program. Participants in each program became more aware of themselves, their thinking and their habits and were able to make connections between their actions and the effect on others. By reflecting on their behaviours, participants were able to commit to a set of values and behaviours which benefited the whole group. By developing an outward looking focus, participants developed positive reflections of self, service to community and positive relationships. By focusing on the relationships first, each experiential program was able to move out to course content which would engage and reinforce global behaviours. In School A the participants were able to connect with issues such as over population and mandated policies. While in Schools B and D sustainability and environmental issues were examined. School C examined international trade, banking and finance, marketing and competition. The intensity of the in-house experience of the program in School A, which was set in China, provided a truly global exposure; as it incorporated inter-cultural and global perspectives which highlighted the cross-cultural engagement and global citizenship in a very real and tangible way.

Andrew said: ‘China allowed me to understand that my actions did not affect just myself but everyone around me. I didn’t want to let the group down and so I think I matured a lot in this regard’.

Bridgette said: ‘my experience in China were very intense … everything I saw, smelt and touched was new … I realised I was such a small part of something bigger … I couldn’t get enough of it’.

Victoria said: ‘my time at Howqua showed me how we need to take responsibility for our actions and care for the environment if we still want to enjoy it in the decades to come … at times it was back-breaking work but watching things grow gave you so much pleasure that I don’t want to be irresponsible with our resources in the future … Howqua? Certainly has made me focus on the environment a lot more’.

5.10 Effective Communication

In the analysis of data provided by participants, the art of effective communication is something most interviewees reflected on. The ability to communicate thoughts, ideas, needs and wants was
essential both for the individual and for the group. The ability to communicate effectively was also crucial in managing the communication with parents back home, who relied on limited opportunities to communicate with their child, as this was the only means of knowing how their child was managing the experience.

For participants of the China experience, language provided another layer of complexity to communicating. Students needed to pick up on the particular nuances, idioms and cultural sensitivities of the language to complete the simplest of tasks such as buying food or navigating public transport. The nature of the programs examined required participants to communicate at a more sophisticated level to what is seen in adolescent years.

Living in the residential setting affords students very limited physical privacy over an extended period of time as well as demanding a sense of community consciousness which most adolescent don’t experience when living at home with their family. Where behaviours and varying levels of communicating, or not communicating, can be tolerated in the home environment, living with others in a residential setting, taking responsibility for communal areas, tasks and goals is seen as one of the hardest challenges of experiential residential programs. These programs require a higher level of communication between the participants, not only to manage their own needs and wants, but also to negotiate conflict, duties and interactions with the wider community.

In Andrew’s report at the end of his experiential program, the staff reflected on Andrew struggling to communicate his ideas and how, over time he learnt to write, articulate and focus his use of language to better get across his viewpoint. As young people enter a global workforce with diverse value systems, religion, colour, sexual orientation and ethnicity, the skill of effective communication will be highly sought after.

5.11 Teamwork, collaboration and leadership

The programs required participants to work together to achieve common goals and to demonstrate leadership capacity as required. In some instances leadership opportunities were scripted into the program, while in others the circumstances provided the opportunity for participants to step up and demonstrate leadership capacity.

In many instances the participants reflected on the reversal of roles with their teachers. The participants had been used to being recipients of information rather than actually involved in defining tasks, setting the agenda and executing the strategy for completing the task.

In School A leadership opportunities came in the form of leading activities, public speaking, music, art, and technology. In Schools B and D leadership roles were factored into expedition and
campus roles while in School C designated leaders were elected by the student cohort, depending on the skill-set of the group.

Tom said: ‘I designed the label for our wine as I had the best graphic skills’.

Damon said: ‘The group picked me to get up and speak at the International School assembly because I had the most Chinese language skills. I felt nervous but excited to have the opportunity to speak on behalf of the students’.

5.12 Themes not evident in experiential programs

Following the analysis of the findings two themes appeared to be in the list of global skills and competencies, as identified in Chapter Two (Table 2.8), which were not addressed directly in the experiential programs. The qualities of change agent and competition are not deemed elements of the Middle Years philosophy and experiential programs. The nature of the experiences undertaken by the students were in fact totally at odds with the nature of being competitive, although participants were given the opportunity to think about how they could make a difference – thus being a change agent over time. In all the schools examined, competition came in the form of sports, music and debating programs. All schools have factored House competitions into the equation, which brings out the competitive nature of each individual. Inter-school competitions of this nature also factor in a sense of competition which prepares young people to the nature of competition in the workplace and the business world.

One important aspect in this research investigation is the time and effort spent by participants in developing skills and attributes they hadn’t thought about and, in some cases, did not know they had. The participants reflected on how much better prepared they felt they were for completing their years of study or making informed decisions about studying and working. By being more engaged in the learning process many felt they were more independent and more in control of their lives. The participants were more aware of choices, consequences and the need to work more collaboratively to achieve outcomes.

5.13 Differences within the schools and programs

Once all the interviews were completed and the school programs analysed for philosophy, values, content and the broader goals, it was interesting to see that on the surface there were not many differences between the programs. While the journey to achieving the broader goals differed from school to school the philosophy, structure, rituals, routines and the process of ‘watching, thinking, feeling and doing’ were common across the programs. The participants were engaged and active and by doing further purposeful reflecting on the experience they then made changes in the way
they felt, thought and behaved as a result of that experience. The teachers in each program became the facilitator of learning.

The real differences lay in the fact that School A, by having based its experiential program in China, provided an extra dimension towards developing a global mindset in its students that the three other schools could not emulate in their local and remote settings. The cultural immersion setting, linguistic challenges, and geographically unfamiliar location of the China program provided a real and rich environment for participants to develop the logical skills and competencies identified in Chapter Two (Table 2.8). The intensity of the program made it quite unique and one unlike the others under examination. The global setting challenged the participants further than the Australian settings provided by other schools. While all school programs had participants that were challenged by their program and had participants who embraced it, the interesting observation in School A’s Chinese program was the number of students who over-identified with the program and then found it difficult to re-enter the day programs back at School upon their return. The re-entry issues for School A were much more significant and longer lasting than for the other schools under examination. Both parents and day school teachers were keen to settle the children into old familiar routines, establish forms of communication and freedoms/independence. They found that the China experience had extended their children in ways they had not envisaged or were ready for. The students, having experienced a different level of independence, resilience and way of learning, were challenged by the return to the old patterns of living and learning both at home and at school. Parents were not always ready to accept the new level of independence, and classroom teachers were not experienced enough to deal with the demands by students for more student-centred negotiated ways of learning.

The second major difference that arose within this research was that while all the schools had the broader educational goals in mind when developing their year nine experiential programs School C had an extra challenge. They needed to keep their boys at school for the year and away from potential risk-taking behaviours before they were old enough to choose whether they stayed on at school or chose to enter the workforce. The school mantra of ‘prevention is better than cure’ took on another dimension as educators sought to provide meaningful learning experiences for boys who often went into the trades and apprenticeships. The experiential offerings in School C provided boys with a wide range of hands-on learning experiences which would help their students reflect on opportunities open to them in the world of work and life beyond compulsory schooling.

Another major difference that emerged in the final follow-up interviews with five of the original interviewees was the reflection by two of those participants that, at the first focus group discussion, they felt that they had to say only positive things about their experiences because
everyone was. It was only with the benefit of time and maturity that they now felt they could say, with more clarity, what the program didn’t do for them and how detrimental the program was to their development. One of the participants from School B reflected in her follow-up interview that now she is in her mid-20s that the outward bound type experience that she undertook in year nine in fact ‘squashed her natural abilities and reduced everyone to the lowest common denominator. … in an effort by the program to be fair and equitable and to give everyone a go at everything the incentive to excel and push yourself was taken away from the highly competitive students (Meredith, School B). This reflection raises further questions about the nature of focus group interviews and potential pitfalls. It also highlights issues about the necessary levels of maturity and self-awareness interviews should have to enable meaningful analysis of their comments, individually and collectively.

5.14 Summary

All the participants in the semi-structured interviews had very similar experience emerging from their experiential program. The themes under discussion in this research emerged across all programs, regardless of setting or gender of participants. As is evident from the statements above, 100% of respondents articulated the same set of skills emerging from their experiences. Most of the quotes provided relate to global skills, attributes and competencies deemed necessary for living and working in the twenty-first century. The quotes above are testimony to how experiential programs create real, working life experiences that develop a global mindset, responsibility and sustainable habits of mind; capabilities which are needed to be taught, analysed and nurtured in the experiential programs.

At the conclusion of the interviews, the review of learning journals and the follow-up interviews, it was interesting to see that there were little differences in experiences. All participants agreed on the relationship strengthening, increased levels of responsibility for self and the community in which they were living. Some participants placed more emphasis on one aspect than another, with the only differences that emerged were:

- the intensity of the experience
- the ability for the participant to re-enter the home environment at the end of the program.

In this research it appeared that differences occurred in the way schools both prepared their students to undertake the experience and the level of management and control of the re-entry issues. One wonders whether the participants’ reflections on the experience may have been coloured by the degree of difficulty they faced in reintegrating family, freedom, independence and routines of the home and school environments back into their own lives.
5.15 Typifications

What became apparent in this research investigation was the soft skills that emerged – such as communication, teamwork, empathy, reflective practice and the self management required to succeed both at school and in the workforce. Students, educators, policy writers and employers acknowledge that these skills can develop through part-time employment, volunteer work, community participation through sports, the arts and in the classroom.

Managing relationships and possessing effective soft skills is a great asset to have in the world of business where much of the working day is spent in meetings and discussions. Globalisation requires empowered business teams to work around the world using soft skills to deal with, not only people from different cultures, but to work also with home teams that are no longer homogeneous.

In the process of drawing conclusions from patterns and difference across all the data the researcher was able to use participants’ meanings to look beyond the skills and attributes identified in Chapter Two (Table 2.8) to identify typical personalities and behaviours of the participants. In the first instance the participants could be classified into three distinct groups in terms of their response to living and learning experientially in a student-centred program. The three groups can be divided into:

1. those who were challenged by the experience
2. those who accepted the experience
3. those who over-identified with the experience.

These typifications were evident in all programs under examination.

5.15.1 Typification one: challenged by the experience

The first group of participants that emerged and were quickly able to be identified by the teachers in each program were those who struggled with the new setting, the change in their routines, the differences in patterns of communicating with both staff, their families and other participants. The change to their level of independence and interdependency of the groups for everything from personal hygiene, shared sleeping quarters, collective use of facilities and communal living. Each of the programs presented a challenging backdrop for some of the participants whose whole construction of their worlds was well defined prior to undertaking the experiential program. In Schools A, B and D, where the participants were physically removed from their family, school setting and friends, the separation caused anxiety and unease for some participants. In School A where the physical setting was also such a different cultural setting to their own caused some participants to find the experience extremely difficult to adjust. Participants displayed signs of
restlessness, lack of sleep, inability to adjust to the food and the noise of communal living. While returning to their families was not an option in any of these programs there were examples of extremely unsettled and potentially self-harming instances that required the individual to be returned to their families but not until all opportunities to allow the individual to acclimatise had been exhausted.

In School D the open ended structure of the program made it difficult for the less academically able to be disciplined enough to be self-directed in their learning and to take tasks seriously. The fact that they could go home to their families each night made it difficult for staff to reinforce their intended outcomes as participants could default to a soft option and bail out mentality.

In the follow-up interviews students reflected on the challenge of their Year 9 experience but also on aspects of the experience that they felt had changed over time in their own lives.

Mandy said: ‘I really struggled with Marshmead so much so that I had to be sent home for a few days and then I was made to go back and rejoin the group … the interesting thing is that I now cannot settle into either work or study … I don’t know what I want to do … I started two courses at Bond and didn’t like them … I spent six months working for Club Med and didn’t like that either … I’m now working to save money to go overseas possibly to work for some time in the UK’.

5.15.2 Typification two: accepted the experience

By far the largest cohort was the group of participants who could, after an initial period of acclimatising to the new living, learning and socialising issues, adjust their own pattern of behaviours, thinking and desires to fit in. By working collaboratively with others they ensured their own survival and didn’t risk being sent home in disgrace. The pressure to conform and fit in was great enough that this group was able to adjust many aspects of their known world to the new order. This group, by and large, were able to capitalise on the experience, build their own capabilities and exploit the opportunities being presented to them. This group was able to accept their program for what it has to offer and became actively engaged with the experience. While many were able to identify the strengths of their program they could also think clearly and articulate the aspects of the program through which they were challenged and to evaluate critically their own development path. They were able to reflect on and identify what they needed to work on. This group had the least problems reintegrating in the home and school environment. These students were able to compartmentalise the experience and see it as part of the total school experience amongst a range of other learning opportunities available to them whilst at school.
In the follow-up interviews students reflected on their acceptance of what the school program provided. They were not the type to challenge the offerings but simply took things at face value. Their maturity and future pathways have taken place without a great level of analysis.

Nicholas said: ‘I knew I didn’t get the best out of my time at school … because I didn’t cause the teachers much trouble they left me alone and I just did what I was told … If it wasn’t for my Dad pushing me I don’t know what I’d be doing now … I’m nearly at the end of my apprenticeship and lots of my mates have done the same … school just helped us find jobs because we weren’t going to do uni … Valdoco just taught us how to use our hands’.

5.15.3 Typification three: over-identified with the experience

The third group identified in this research were those that over identified with the program, seeking to be part of everything on offer. They could be seen as volunteering for more than their share of duties, leadership roles, performances, communication and nurturing roles. The experience for this group became so intense that they literally were reliving the experience every waking moment - between spending periods of their leisure time looking for ways to reconnect with the experience. Participants in School A who were identified in this group would seek to spend their recreational time in the local streets of China mixing with the local people, practising their language skills, sketching or photographing the local scenes while their fellow students would spend time on campus, watching television, listening to music, writing emails home or simply reenergising from the external stimuli. The over identifying group were continuously energised by the learning experience and found it difficult to reconnect with the home environment, family and school. The experience became so intense for this group that they went on to explore ways to re-enter their programs in later years of school as year 11 leaders, as trainees and activity teachers. By far the most fascinating group to track over time has been this group who have gone on to do very different and personally challenging things in their lives. They have pursued travel, adventures, experiences and work beyond the expected comfort zone of most young people. These have included travels to Tibet and remote parts of China, South America, Antarctica; learning more than one foreign language, helping build schools in the Congo Republic, working in the not-for-profit sector and helping women involved in prostitution, illegal lifestyles and victims of abuse and homelessness. This group has taken much longer to settle on a single course of study and work than their peers. Their desire to make a difference to others has been a personal passion that has guided their life choices since leaving school.

In the follow-up discussions Elle said: ‘The China experience was incredibly emotional for me on many levels. I have come from a very close and highly protective European family and the China trip was the first time I was allowed to go anywhere without my parents. The experiences in China opened my eyes to so many social issues. For the first time I saw poverty, I was confronted with people with disabilities, beggars and
such filth and pollution that I was determined to go back to China and help make a difference. I returned as a trainee in 2002 and immersed myself in the language and culture. When we were not guiding younger students in activity groups, myself and the other trainees took off to Tibet, India and to remote Chinese villages to get a taste of the real China. I returned to China again in 2004 half way through my uni studies as I couldn’t settle into uni life here … I made two more trips to China working as an activity teacher at Nanjing campus but also teaching English to women in the little villages near Nanjing. I never really settled in Australia or China, I ended up getting sick and had to be flown home to Australia. My weight plummeted and it took me nearly a year to get better physically and emotionally. My work now is with women in the sex industry to challenge violence everywhere. As an outreach worker I feel like I am making some contribution and some difference … I’m sure my passion for this type of work came from my Year 9 experience’.

From this can be seen the profound effect that the experiential programs had on some students, to the point where it has helped shape the people they have become in their adult lives. In some cases the Year 9 experience was so profound that it has led the participants into uncharacteristic adventures and career paths to one envisaged by themselves, their parents or their teachers.

Given the age group of the participants in this study it has not been easy to typify the experiences. The nature of the experiential programs under examination had well structured activities and roles for each student to participate in and students were rotated through the roles until all participants had been exposed to each role. While students found some roles easier than others it was not easy to identify or predict how each student would respond. The natural leaders in the home environment did not necessarily emerge as the natural leaders in the new setting. The strong communicator nurturers didn’t typically emerge as the same characters in the new environment. What was evident was that participants could re-invent themselves in the new setting. The existing social order was thrown out and participants were given the opportunity to reposition themselves in the group. This was particularly so in School A where the cultural setting was new to every participant. Some of the ‘queen bees’ in the home environment were displaced in the new location where those that had the advantage of language could step up to take on the leadership positions. In Schools B and D those that had greater outdoor survival skills were also able to step up to take on new positions in the new social order.

In School C those with the practical skills were also valued more highly by the group and hence the previously established social order and social groups were also challenged. What was not evident was how sustainable these new roles would have been over time, and how quickly the initial social order would have returned to its original state once the highfliers had acquired the necessary skills to reassume their positions. What was evident in all programs was the personal growth and ability to apply reflective practices by the individual to their own thinking, ideas,
behaviours, responses and social constructs. Each program had factored in daily structured time for students to reflect on events, their thoughts and implications of actions and behaviours. The reflective practice process is a major strength of the experiential programs that has contributed to the participants’ acquisition of global skills and competencies. This practice is often missing in the structure of the traditional school day and school environment as it is, in the workplace.

Meredith said: ‘The Year 9 experience was not the highlight of my time at school and while there were many things I didn’t like about my time at Marshmead what I found really useful and something I’ve been able to carry into my adult years is the practice of sitting and reflecting on things and experiences … We had what was called ‘solo’ where we had to sit on our own for hours to reflect with pen and paper … I’ve done a lot of travel during my university years and have used a lot of these solo skills. I have taken thousands of photos of my travels to India, Thailand, Laos, Mexico, Cuba, Croatia, Slovenia, Argentina, Venezuela, France, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, UK, Greece, Dalmatian Coast and USA and have put them into fabulous storybooks … it’s my way of debriefing my head on the experience and something I can share with others. I have used my time travelling to reflect on lots of things about how I think, how others think, how my grandparents thought … what type of personality am I …’

Participants in the follow-up interviews were able to reflect on how they have made a conscious decision in their adult life to factor in time to sit alone and reflect on personal, national and global events. The skill does not appear to require a huge effort, but is something these young adults appear to be able to practice intrinsically since their experiential programs.

This chapter has drawn out the themes identified in the research and examined similarities and differenced across the schools. The chapter then identified typical personalities and behaviours that emerged amongst the participants in the schools examined and how these experiences have led the participants into further experiences that have reinforced global skills and competencies.

The next chapter examines the conclusions that can be drawn from the research against the goals of global education and developing student’s global competencies.
CHAPTER SIX: Conclusions and Recommendations

Globalisation and Education

*If we wish to create a lasting peace, we must begin with the children. Gandhi* (2002)

6.1 Introduction

Methodologically, the principles of humanisation and democratisation have taken visible shapes. The pedagogical process from kindergartens through to the distance education of adults has become more child and learner centred. This study has investigated global skills and attributes needed by young people to enter the global workforce of the future, and how students in secondary schools have been prepared by their schools to develop these skills and attributes. This chapter will draw relevant conclusions from the research, literature and focus group discussions concentrating on how contemporary globalisation has challenged and impacted Victorian secondary schools and how they have responded to the challenges of a rapidly-evolving world of the 21st Century. This chapter will discuss the contribution of this research, its findings and examine the limitations of this study, and propose further research across areas associated with this topic that would be valuable for the future and to make a contribution to professional practice in secondary schools.

6.2 Contribution to Professional practice

This study opened with a discussion about the contemporary information-packed era we live in that requires and creates possibilities for organising life-long sustainable educational skills and attributes. The study examined the Middle Years framework to determine the philosophical underpinnings of how young people learn and how best they acquire skills, competencies and attributes and how these learnings will sustain them in their years beyond traditional schooling and prepare them for active citizenship in a global workforce. The study then examined the skills and attributes the Federal Government has targeted in their National Curriculum agenda, and overlaid these findings with the skills and attributes the business world is seeking in the workforce of the future. From this examination it could be seen that secondary education has a strong and fundamental role to play. Initial education and training can secure in all young people the foundation of solid knowledge and skills, ‘combined with the ability to learn afresh – learning to learn – without which no further educational progress can take place … Effective schooling can build on the influential pre-school years and operate in a close partnership with parents and the local community. Important objectives and alternative learning strategies need to be put in place, to address the multiple learning needs of all young’ (Sinagatullin, 2006, p.75).
As Sinagatullin (2006) argues, strategies for lifelong learning cannot be effective unless they represent a concerted effort within the formal education system itself and are linked to all the other settings where education, training, and skill formation take place - particularly learning by doing. The focus of these strategies will increasingly be the adult workforce, whose skills need to be constantly renewed under the impact of technological change. However schools, universities and TAFE institutions are well placed to provide the training and develop citizens who will achieve those personal and professional competencies required for living fulfilled and constructive lives in a constantly changing world.

Contemporary thinking also supports the contention that education must train individuals who are capable of learning by themselves; people who have learned how to learn. This is all the more essential as most employment forecasting experts predict considerable ‘volatility’ in the labour market on a global scale; hence it is impossible to know precisely which professions will provide opportunities 10 or 20 years from now. To better prepare young people for employment, education will need to be multidisciplinary, not only providing a vital minimum level of literacy and scientific knowledge, but also serving as a preparation for civic, cultural, family life and global citizenship (Sinagatullin 2006, p.76).

The previous chapters have examined the experiential programs that provide formal, informal ‘learning by doing’ and life long learning opportunities which complement the various stages of cognitive development. In the schools examined in this research a rich and complex learning environment was found to be embedded in the context of the school. While working on authentic tasks the learner was continuously oriented towards a learning process that contributed towards bridging the gap between the development of knowledge and the application of knowledge. The programs moved from a behaviourist to a constructivist approach to learning. In parallel, these programs demonstrated a shift from teacher-oriented to a learner-oriented approach thus developing modern competencies as discussed in Chapter Two (Table 2.8).

While experiential programs have proliferated across the sector and are actively promoted by schools as innovative, progressive and life-enduring there is not a clearly articulated theory of experiential learning on which to base promotion of the programs. The schools all attach relevance to the intended learning outcomes such as independence, resilience, maturity, personal development and community spirit as a way or securing commitment and acceptance of the programs. There is a degree of trust and acceptance as to the value of these programs to justify the cost and disruption to mainstream schooling. The proliferation of these programs beyond just the independent schools of Victoria suggests there is a widespread belief and acceptance of their value in the Middle Years of Schooling. The wider employment of experiential learning of this type could suggest that it helps address the disengagement and disaffection associated with this
age group by providing more active and meaningful learning experiences. These experiences however do provide vital links to the goals of global education and sustainable life long learning skills.

The research shows secondary schools that have adopted the Middle Years philosophy are helping create learning experiences that assist young people to acquire life-long sustainable global competencies that prepare them for active citizenship in a global workforce. Authentic tasks for the learner contributed towards bridging the gap between the development of knowledge and the application of knowledge, thus moving from behaviourist to a constructivist approach to learning.

These programs continue the move from a teacher-centred to a learner-oriented approach helping develop modern competencies in line with those identified in this study. Experiential learning of this type suggests it helps address the disengagement and disaffection associated with this age group by providing more active and meaningful learning experiences. Experiential programs provide vital links to the goals of global education and global competencies.

6.3 The Goals of Global Education

6.3.1 Preparing the young generations to life, work and cooperation

The development of people as members of society and enabling members of society to contribute to the achievement of societal goals at a local, national and international level. This sees an interrelationship exist between learning, life, work and co-operation. The rapidly evolving world of the 21st century faces challenges that are unprecedented in the severity and potential implications for the continuance of humanity. These are multi-dimensional, having economic, ecological, social, cultural and institutional implications. The problems and their solutions can only be handled effectively by citizens with increasing self-consciousness acting together with other agents. This required learning should take place in an interconnected way between home, school and work as we learn to live together in peace, with dignity and mutual respect for each other in a globalising world.

The challenges for education and learning are to grow in breadth and to move beyond technical skills and competencies to sustainable development. The programs under examination in this research all have made a fundamental commitment to this broader challenge acknowledging that students are concurrently developing global competencies through a variety of pathways. Experiential programs provide one basis for these skills and competencies to be developed. As the individual develops cognitively, appropriate experiences need to be presented to them that enhance the skill acquisition of global attributes and competencies. The programs under
examination in this research place a high priority on preparing young generations of learners for life and work beyond the school environment. The reflections by the participants in this research study provided valuable insight into the construction of the world in which young people live and work. It also highlighted the level of cooperation required of them to make meaning of themselves, their behaviours, their personal needs versus the needs and wants of the collective, the environment and humanity. There is much that educators can learn by examining the individual and group challenges the programs provided for their students, and the practical learning that took place, as well as the applicability and transferability of these experiences across all aspects of lives of the young people.

6.3.2 Developing creative and reflective personality

Effective learners must

1. perceive information
2. reflect on how it will impact some aspect of our life
3. compare how it fits into our own experiences
4. think about how this information offers new ways for us to act.

Learning requires more than seeing, hearing, moving or touching to become a lifelong trait or pattern of behaviour. Like the Greek word *praxis*, meaning action with reflection, one needs to practice a skill, analyse the practice and then repeat the practice at a higher level in order to move from practice to *praxis*. The experiential model of learning provides a framework for the learner to move from a learning-by-telling model to a learning-by-doing model.

All programs examined in this research had a daily period of reflection-only time factored as a fundamental element of the program. By purposefully examining the process of an experience the students were able to enhance their awareness of the learning and make changes accordingly both personally and in a wider context. All programs had activities which helped the learner move out from reflecting on their own behaviours, feelings, needs and thoughts to that of the group and further still to reflect on the impact on local, national and international communities. It would appear from the interviews conducted that the participants felt this was a crucial part of the program. It is rare in the structure of a normal school day that students are given time to reflect on the learning and to really understand the nature and impact of the learning taking place. This reflection provides some solid lessons to be noted by educators who are designing curriculum. It must also be adopted by educators and government involved in setting the National Curriculum Agenda, for employers and business seeking to develop professionals, and for organisations who are responsive to economic, social, cultural, technical and environmental changes. There is also the
need for learners, graduates and workers to understand the part they play in building their institutions and organisations.

6.3.3 Developing students’ global competency

The global skills and attributes identified in Chapter Two (Table 2.8) provide a starting point for the discussion on employability skills. These skills and associated attributes provide a solid framework for examining the value and outcomes of experiential programs in secondary schools. All programs examined in this research have recognised the need to develop young people who are highly skilled in these global competencies if they are to be active contributors in the world they will live in and lead. The experiential programs are one of the few educational offerings where detailed mapping of these skills has taken place, and where schools have actively embedded them into the curriculum.

Experiential programs, by their very nature, provide the forum for such skills and attributes to the acquired as part of everyday living and thereby fosters long-term effectiveness. A global perspective was embedded into each program examined in this research. These programs all opened up possibilities for developing citizens to achieve those professional and personal competencies required for living fulfilling and constructive lives in a world of change.

The experiential programs under examination provide important first lessons into what works and is effective, and gives insight into the transferability or context specificity of lessons upon which other educators might draw. This research study demonstrated the interconnectedness between the academic works, National Government Curriculum Agenda and the employability framework that employers seek.

6.4 Further Research

This study has established the necessary global skills and attributes that are required by young people to enter the global workforce, and the extent that experiential programs are able to create learning environments that foster young people’s ability to acquire these skills and attributes. Further research is required to illustrate a more extensive list of global capabilities required by all young people to live and work in the mobile workforce of the future. This research contributes to professional practice by providing a starting point for schools to think about their programs and their outcomes as they prepare for the implementation of the Australian National Curriculum.

6.4.1 Global Capabilities – From Different Cultural Perspectives

This study discussed global capabilities from the perspective of an English-speaking country, where participants were largely a homogenous group. Further research is necessary to illustrate a
more in-depth research investigation into how the capabilities are acquired within a more culturally diverse group. The grouping for further study could include:

- China and Japan
- Malaysia and Singapore
- India
- South America
- Iran, Iraq and Lebanon.

A focus on diverse cultural settings would increase our understanding of how these countries prepare their young people for engagement with the workforce of the future.

6.4.2 Global Competencies – A Longitudinal Study

This study was an examination of capabilities at a particular point in time and up to six years after the event. The results may be different if examined over a longer period of time. Most young people in this study were reflecting on their experiences at an early point in their career development and entry into the workforce. A longer period of ten to twenty years would note changes in differences in capabilities, being sustained overtime. Attitudes, responsibility, sense of community, problem solving, adaptability and sustainability of lifelong global skills may be impacted as one moves through the various stages of life and life’s challenges.

6.4.3 Global Competencies – multiple perspectives

This study examined capabilities, skills and attributes from a learner’s perspective and looked at change over time from a single perspective. The opportunity now exists for a study that takes into account the perspectives of parents, staff and employers; and examining these perspectives against the participant’s perspective. An overlay of all these perspectives would provide a rich framework for educators, policy writers and employers to work within the 21st century.

6.4.4 Global Competencies – A school’s perspective

This study examined experiential programs in schools that had a Middle Years of Schooling philosophy, specifically year 9 programs. A further examination could occur across schools analysing what happens in schools that do not have Middle Years programs and do not provide for any form of experiential learning– or for programs that occur outside the Middle Years. This study concentrated on independent schools and there is significant scope to expand the research into government schools. This could broaden out even further to examine what is happening in schools overseas.
Other areas of research to be explored could be:

- role of setting in learning
- learning needs multiple settings
- role of risk as part of uncertainty in learning theories needs further examination
- role of reflections as a key learning mechanism needs further scrutiny
- global capabilities from different cultural perspectives how are they acquired from a more culturally diverse group.

6.5 Conclusion

The principal question of this study was to discover what global capabilities are needed by young people to enter the global workforce and how Secondary Schools are preparing them for acquiring those skills and attributes.

At a school level the contribution to professional practice and the conclusions that can be drawn from the research include the following:

Four core ideas emerge from the analysis – the importance of setting, social interaction, risk and reflection

Setting - There is a deeper, implicit importance attached to a natural setting. Learners explore themselves in communion with nature by facing and overcoming its challenges. Setting contains, constrains, and facilitates social interaction. Peer group structure was levelled and reshaped in a new setting. Individual social personai were reshaped in new settings.

Social Interaction - The key factor influencing social status and interaction in residential programs is social utility, based on demonstrated ability to offer something – knowledge, skill, or attitude – that meets the social or physical need of the peer group.

Risk - Learning starts with cognitive dissonance; cognitive dissonance comes from new experiences. The experiential dissonance equates to uncertainty which in turn is associated with risk that is essential in experiential learning. Although the role of risk in learning theories is unclear.

Reflection - Reflection provides the cognitive mechanism by which experiential stimuli becomes learning. Reflection plays a key role in formation of episodic memories and can be done independently of facilitation by teachers.

At a global level the conclusions the research can draw include the following:
• Present-day globalisation is a new and unprecedented stage of human development. A whole plethora of events, ranging from political, environmental, cultural and technological, affects the current globalising era.

• Governments worldwide have aimed to advance their communities and build capacity at a national level. However, layers of conflicting demands and agendas have led groups of people to preserve their indigenous culture, language, and their traditions of folk pedagogy. This contradiction – between the national needs and the individual, the global and the multicultural, the international and the national, and between the cosmopolitan and the patriotic (civic) – is unlikely to be solved in the foreseeable future; therefore the goals of education (and global education, in the first place) must be flexible enough to accommodate the changes in the contemporary globalising society.

• The 21st century is also a digital era, an era of cybertext and cyberspace. In the years to come, educators and students will be working more intensively within the virtual reality, widening its possibilities and further creating it.

• Like many other human creations, globalisation is not an ideal entity. Globalisation makes both positive and negative impacts on various domains of human life; including the issues of education.

• A great challenge and necessary requirement of the contemporary era of globalisation is global education, which is aimed at developing students’ attitude, skills, and knowledge for them to become competent and reflective members of society. When organised properly, global education opens an area for developing students’ global and multicultural consciousness and mentality; developing an attitude about the world as one community; and creating an optimal environment for learners’ social adaptation, self-identification, and self actualisation.

Global education, civics and citizenship, and the development of global skills and competencies, rest on the premise that students must be prepared not only for a life that is currently unfolding on the planet but for an uncertain future. Currently, life encompasses a lot of human imperfections such as drug and alcohol abuse, adultery and prostitution, juvenile delinquency and teenage pregnancy, woman and child abuse, ethnocentrism and chauvinism, corruption and terrorism. The ideal would be that the future life should be based on moral principles of truth, honesty, fidelity, empathy, mutual help, respect for the teacher and elderly, and love to of people.

Reverend Tim Costello (2005, p.37), Chief Executive of World Vision Australia, reminded educators that:
‘Our nation’s future as a global citizen rests on the shoulders of our young people. The values and education received today will shape our policies and directions of tomorrow. We must increase the emphasis placed on global issues in homes and classrooms; we can educate the next generation of Australian leaders to become responsible decision makers and to become more globally responsible.’

Dewey (1997) wanted learning to be more effective and relevant to life. And the content of this discussion on the skills and attributes developed through experiential learning, and the expectations of business and government, might be incorporated into mainstream education particularly in the Middle Years of schooling. Some students identify more closely with the experiences while others only ‘survive’ – but the research shows that, regardless of the identification with the program, the global skills and attributes required by a multidimensional citizen are acquired during this time.

While the issues and problems examined in this study represent only a small percentage of the topics related to globalisation, education, civics and citizenship and global competencies, the study achieved its intended purpose of examining experiential learning programs and their relevance to preparing young people for active participation in a global marketplace.


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