Reconstructing Educators:
Stories about Teaching International Students
in Australian Higher Education

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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June 2019
Declaration

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

Yana Ostapenko
June 18th, 2019
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Abstract

This thesis examines teacher educators’ perceptions of teaching international students in pre-service teacher education programs at two Australian universities in Victoria. My research question is: How do academics in Australia construct their everyday practice when teaching international pre-service teaching students from Asian countries? This study is important because it draws attention to the need for educators to develop their teaching practices to meet the universities expanding policies of internationalisation and increasing student enrolments from Asian countries into teacher-preparation courses.

In order to investigate my research question I adopted an interpretive qualitative research stance, and employed a multiple methods approach to data collection. This included participant interviews, classroom observations and document analyses. The data were collected from eleven teacher educators, teaching in two Schools of Education at two Melbourne universities. The work of Hofstede (1994, 2001, 2009), Hofstede and Bond (1988), and Hofstede and Minkov (2010) inform the theoretical framework and data analysis, which enhances the readers understanding of the role of culture in teaching/learning.

The study reveals that the most challenging aspects of teaching and learning for international students and teachers educators in these two university settings were: (1) there is a disconnection between the cultural background of the educators and international students; (2) organisational and educational culture of the host universities were significantly different to the international students’ previous experiences in tertiary study and students’ required time to transition into this new environment; (3) there were also challenges for Asian students studying and practicing in a foreign language. These were mainly associated with English language proficiency, which primarily had an impact on practical placement and inclusion in class discussions. These challenges required the development of new strategies and pedagogies, including cross-cultural pedagogy, to be adopted by educators.

This study will be of interest and a point of compassion for university educators working with postgraduate and undergraduate international students from Asian countries.
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACARA</td>
<td>Australian Curriculum and Assessment Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AITSL</td>
<td>Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEECD</td>
<td>Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (previously in Victoria)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DET</td>
<td>Department of Education and Training (Victoria)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAL</td>
<td>English as an Additional Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HREC</td>
<td>Human Research Ethics Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCTE</td>
<td>School Centres for Teaching Excellence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEMAG</td>
<td>Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group</td>
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Key words: cross-cultural averseness, cross-cultural communication, cross-cultural pedagogy, culture, internationalisation, international students from Asian countries, inclusive practice, scaffolding, good teaching practices, globalisation, higher education, Hofstede’s national cultural dimensions, pedagogy, pre-service teacher education, stereotyping.
Glossary

Assessment - An evaluation of a student's academic performance in each of the assessment tasks prescribed for a unit, by whatever means a faculty board has determined, which may include examination.

Course - A set of units or a higher degree by research program approved by the Academic Board and which when satisfactorily completed will normally qualify a Student for an award of the University.

Domestic student - A student who is an Australian citizen, a New Zealand citizen or the holder of an Australian permanent resident visa.

Formative Assessment - Assessment primarily used to provide feedback on student learning and the effectiveness of teaching, which does not contribute to a student's final grade and/or mark for a unit of study.

Inclusive practices - Practices that anticipate and accommodate the needs of a diversity of people, minimising the need for adjustments to respond to individual needs, while maintaining quality and other standards.

International student - International onshore student holding an appropriate visa enrolled in a course of study delivered at an Australian location.

Plagiarism - Using other people's words, ideas, research findings or information without acknowledgment, that is, without indicating the source — The Deakin Guide to Referencing website provides information on how to acknowledge other people’s works.

Summative assessment - Assessment primarily used to measure the level of a student's success in achieving learning outcomes which contributes to a student's final grade and/or mark for a unit of study.

Educators or participants - Academic staff working with students regarding their position at university (Professor, Associate Professor, Senior Lecturer, Lecture, Tutor); also referred to as interviewees.

Pedagogy – The principles, practice and art of teaching*.

Teaching philosophy – Is an explanation of someone values and beliefs as they influence teaching. Teaching philosophy may be influenced by prominent educators’ theory or teaching approaches.

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the setting and rationale for my research and explains assumptions upon which the study is grounded. The main discussion points of the chapter are why the topic needed to be researched from the point of view of teacher educators working with pre-service teacher trainees from Asian countries studying at Australian universities. The research question is presented and an explanation offered for the particular methodological approach adopted.

Higher Education, as a part of economic, political and social systems has experienced huge transformations over the last two decades and globalisation and internationalisation are considered to be driving forces for change and modification (Barnett, 2000; Hammond, 2016; Knight, 2004, 2007, 2015; Ryan, 2011a; Madge, Raghuram, & Noxolo, 2015; Marginson, 2016). Redecker et al. (2011) have reported that the key factors that will shape the future of learning include “demography, globalisation, immigration, technology, and the labour market” (p. 9).

Higher education institutions, including universities, claim that they provide their students with quality education that helps students to have a positive journey during their study and be prepared to build a successful career after graduating (Biggs & Tags, 2011). Globalisation and internationalisation have also led to a number of modifications in teacher education in both Western countries (Knight, 2007; Ninnes & Hellstén, 2005; Olmedo & Harbon, 2010) and Eastern countries (Kendall, 2004; Wu & Yu, 2006; Zhu & Han, 2006; Tran et al., 2016; Tan & Chua, 2015).

Not surprisingly, teacher education continues to face particular challenges because, as Sanderson (2011) has noted, teachers as graduates should have “new skills” which include “personal, social and learning skills,” knowledge of “new ways of learning” that embrace “learner-centred, social learning and lifewide learning” (p. 664), and be open to rapid changes of policies in education in addition to overall societal change.

More broadly Sanderson (2011) listed the essential knowledge and skills that teachers need to be able to teach in diverse Australian classes; these include: knowledge of educational theory, ability to incorporate internationalised content into subject material, critical appreciation of a person’s culture, values and assumptions, and “a working knowledge of essentialist cultural theory, for example, Hofstede’s (2001) cultural dimensions, to help understand one’s own culture and other cultures,” use a wide range “of teaching skills and
strategies that accommodate the needs of international students,” and much more (p. 664). A goal of several Australian universities is to provide education that meets the expectations of all students, including international students, “seeking to assist them in their future academic and professional career” (Thankur & Hourigan, 2007, p. 44).

1.2 My Motivation for the Study

My decision to study educators’ perceptions of teaching international students in teacher education programs at Australian universities was mainly prompted by my curiosity to hear stories in the light of my own cross-cultural experience as both student and teacher whose early school and university education was undertaken in Ukraine, with my subsequent graduate education and teaching experience in schools and universities in Australia. This has made me acutely aware of the importance of cross-cultural considerations when dealing with international students. I wanted to hear about Australian educators’ teaching philosophy, what they do in their everyday practice, and what they think about the challenges and opportunities of teaching international students in teacher preparation programs.

Prior to coming to Australia, from 2000-2007 I was head of the methodological group at my university’s School of Ukrainian studies. I participated in a university-wide project that aimed to change faculties’ programs to be compatible with the European system of higher education after Ukraine signed the Bologna declaration (Kovtun & Stick, 2009). A major aim of this was to provide consistency in university accreditation and recognition across universities in Europe. This gave me knowledge of teaching policies in Europe and the practical methodology to evaluate the work of a faculty. At this time, I combined two jobs at Kharkiv National Automobile and Highway University as an Associate Professor in the School of Ukrainian Studies with an administrative and teaching position as a Deputy Dean of the Faculty for Foreign Citizens in the university’s School of Natural Science and Humanities. In my administrative role I also provided support to international students, and helped them to connect with faculty and schools at the university. I also had to coordinate the lecturers and tutors who taught international students in regular university classes as well as additional classes specifically for international students.

My teaching role at the undergraduate level in my university contributed to my knowledge of important cross-cultural considerations: the notion of culture itself, language, and history. In particular, the subject “Country of Origin,” was developed by me specifically for international students to help them to make the transition to a new culture; it guided students
through the customs, values and history of Ukrainian culture and helped them to re-think their own culture in comparison to Ukraine.

Theoretically and practically I was aware of the difficulties that international students might have at Ukrainian universities because I had read about and had some practical knowledge of the philosophy and methods of teaching that lecturers and tutors used in their practices in order to help students adapt to the new educational system. (Bohynya, 2008; Dorozhkin, 2007; Grebennikova, 2009). As a deputy dean I gained experience working with local students, international students and educators in Ukraine. During discussions with teachers, lecturers and administrators, we found some solutions for problems that arose from real practical teaching situations and, moreover, we initiated different strategies for improving the quality of teaching and the satisfaction of students and educators. In the process I heard a lot of stories from international students who told me about their experience of studying at the university, and about their difficulties and expectations.

In Australia I became involved in a different educational system. I have reflected on my own teaching philosophy, teaching methodology and have transferred it to my writing, teaching and research. My position has changed from being a researcher and an educator to also being a student in Australia. This hybrid position provided me with an opportunity to reflect on teaching from the student’s perspective and reflect on learning from the educator’s position, which has in turn brought a new perspective to my research. Teaching the Russian revolution to Victorian VCE students in the History Road Program and Department of Education and Training also contributed to my knowledge of teaching in Australian secondary schools. I have taught Russian language and literature and Ukrainian language, culture, and literature in two ethnic schools in Melbourne for 11 years. This has contributed to my experience and knowledge of how to combine different methodologies and teaching strategies in ethnically diverse classes.

I have completed two university degrees in Australia: Master of Education, and Master of Teaching Practice (Secondary), which gave me the opportunity to observe other students in my class, including international students, and lecturers/ tutors in their teaching. Moreover, I had an opportunity to learn about the various subjects required by teacher-education courses. I did my practical placements and had an opportunity to read and discuss contemporary academic literature recommended for the various subjects that I studied. I did many of my assignments in groups with international students and I heard their stories about their learning experience, including their comparisons between education in their home country and in Australia. I wanted to understand the practices of Australian lecturers and tutors with reference to my background
in Ukraine where I had developed my own strategy, methodology and teaching style in working with international and domestic Ukrainian students.

In my comparisons and reflections on education in Ukraine and Australia I found the theoretical framework of Hofstede (1984, 1994, 2011) has a strong connection to my theoretical knowledge of cultural studies across the two countries. It concurred with my own understanding and experience of culture. Hofstede writes in the area of sociology, but his ideas are applicable to broad areas from business and marketing to education and cultural studies – indeed any field involving intercultural communication between individuals. As Erdman (2018) underlined, Hostedes’ framework is still valid, “His theories and paradigm—or conceptual model and theoretical framework—are still relevant in research today. Researchers in a variety of academic disciplines use his approach to study national cultures. The work also appeals to practitioners because it has real-world uses” (Erdman, 2018, p. 11).

The factors that affect culture according to Hofstede include region, religion, gender, generation, class, and culture itself: “culture is a broad concept, consisting of values and influences from a variety of sources, including family, organizations, community, country and so forth” (Hofstede, 2001, p. 5).

However, a distinct difference needs to be made between individual differences and the overall impact of culture that produces identifiable cultural differences (Hofstede & McCrae, 2004; Hofstede, 2011). Individuals might experience different historical events, experience different forms of technology used in particular historical times, be born into different generations, have different class-based experiences, but still there are elements of culture that produce distinct, identifiable cultural differences and signs at certain points in historical time. An individual’s experiences, including those gained through teaching/learning in the context of this research, might be seen and analysed through the lenses of their own cultural beliefs, norms and values that are embedded in the patterns of communication and behaviour.

1.3 Background to this Study

This research is based on the assumption that any class in an Australian university could include international students from various Asian countries. Australia has been an active participant of the world’s education community since 1951 when the first international students arrived under the Colombo Plan that was designed to help students from Asia and the Pacific countries study in Australian universities and return to their countries as skilled and knowledgeable specialists (Auletta, 2000). In Australia the teaching of international students at tertiary institutions has changed from an aid initiative under the Colombo Plan to an export
industry with Australia being extensively involved in the international educational market (Byrne, 2016).

The higher education sector in Australia contributes significantly to national economic development. For many years full-fee-paying international students have made a major contribution to the Australian economy. According to current statistical data (2017-2018) the value of international education export is $32.4 billion (Australian Government. Department of Education and Training. December 2018) (See Figure 1.1). Reaching a peak in 2009, followed by a small decline from 2010 to 2012, international student enrolments in Australia have continued to rise strongly and there remains an optimistic prognosis of the popularity of Australian education abroad (See Figure 1.1).


Moreover, international student enrolment data collected and presented by the Department of Education and Training shows the number of international students enrolled...
into the higher education sector not only increased but made up (48%) of the total international student enrolment across all Australian educational sectors (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1

*International Student Enrolment Data (2015-2018)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Sum of DATA YTD Enrolments</th>
<th>Sum of DATA YTD Commencements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education</td>
<td>271,664</td>
<td>305,344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET</td>
<td>168,301</td>
<td>186,505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>20,524</td>
<td>23,251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELICOS</td>
<td>144,153</td>
<td>150,187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-award</td>
<td>37,589</td>
<td>44,043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>642,231</td>
<td>709,330</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Considering the importance of the number of full-fee-paying international students to the financial stability of Higher Education in Australia, it is incumbent on universities to provide quality education to ensure their reputation on the global education market (Marginson, 2013). To be successful in the global education market countries have to build their own educational strategy and develop a strong vision of how to keep up with the challenges and competitiveness and maintain unique strategies that are attractive for international students (Thakur and Hourigan, 2007). Researchers (Marginson, 2007, 2015a, 2015b, 2016; Knight, 2004, 2015; Tran & Pham, 2016) emphasise that student mobility, significant numbers of international student enrolments, expansion of collaborative research relations and increased cross-border cooperation are visible results of globalisation.

Another positive aspect of the promotion of Australian education globally lies in the humanitarian field as international students coming to an Australian educational institution bring their perspective, knowledge, skills and culture that enrich Australian society through
sharing traditions, beliefs and practices. Finally, many graduates from a diverse cohort of international students return to their own countries as valuable skilled, knowledgeable specialists, thus promoting Australia’s reputation as a country with a high standard of quality education (Hellstén & Prescott, 2004; Marginson, Nyland, Sawir, & Forbes-Mewett, 2010).

1.3.1 Why Australia? The factors that influence international students’ choices to study in Australia.

Australia is in the top five countries that attracted higher numbers of international students in 2016: USA (26%), UK (13%), Australia (8%), France (7%) and Germany (7%). (Figure 1.2)


Despite the high number of international students enrolled in university education courses, enrolments in Education are relatively low compared to enrolments in Management and Commerce, Society and Culture, and Engineering and Related Technologies as shown in Figure 1.3 below (Universities Australia, 2016).
1.3.2 International students from Asian countries

In September 2018 the Australian Department of Education and Training presented the latest International Student Data Summary. This shows that the five countries that provided the most international students enrolled in higher education were China (30%), India (13%), Nepal (6%), Malaysia (4%) and Brazil (4%) (Australian Government. Department of Education and Training [DET], 2018, n.p.).

Professor Frank P. Larkins from The University of Melbourne suggested that countries such as Indonesia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, Japan and the United Kingdom have fewer students in Australian tertiary institutions because of “more quality undergraduate educational opportunities at home. Six of these countries are important partners for Australia in the Asian region. It is clearly in Australia’s strategic political, economic and social interests to encourage more students from these countries to study in Australia; this, further, enhances diversity through emerging markets” (Larkins, 2017, p. 4).

Such diversity provides great potential for all students, both international and domestic. The interactions with peers from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds enrich students’ knowledge, communication skills and contribute to a broader and more global vision. On the other hand, they bring their challenges, including a demand for the host institutions to provide a quality education experience in all respects.
Australia is a multicultural country. According to the ABS statistical data for 2011 nearly a quarter (24.6 per cent) of Australia's population was born overseas and 43.1 per cent have at least one overseas-born parent and The United Kingdom is the leading country of birth for the overseas-born population (20.8 per cent). It is followed by New Zealand (9.1 per cent), China (6.0 per cent) and India (5.6 per cent) (Australian Bureau of Statistic [ABS], 2012).

For Victoria, according to the new 2016 census data, 28.4% of Victorians were born overseas and “49.1% of Victorians were either born overseas, or have a parent who was born overseas. Victorians come from more than 200 countries, speak 260 languages and dialects and follow 135 religious faiths” (Victorian State Government, 2016). Of the top ten countries, 6 are Asian countries: India, China, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Philippines and Malaysia. In 2,244 Victorian schools there are 971,669.2 students across the primary and secondary sectors up to VCE level. Further, in 2018 185,432 students had a language background other than English (Victorian State Government, 2018).

In Australian schools there are multicultural and multilingual classes that have accommodated the diverse population of students. To be able to operate successfully in culturally diverse classes, teachers have to be aware of the cultural differences of the learners.

Australia is geographically located in Asia, has close ties with countries around Asia, and has accepted a large number of students from Asia. To teach this cohort of students and meet their learning needs Australian educators have to look more carefully at the cultural differences between Australia and the cultures of Asian nations – and have strategies for teaching this cohort of students. Willis (2010) has suggested that university ranking is highly important in influencing a student’s university choice. Moreover, many students and their families pay attention to the status of the foreign university, the range of courses available, and the level of security in the country chosen.

1.4 Context and Research Problem

Due to its position both geographically and in the educational landscape, Australia attracts international students from several close Asian countries, including China, Indonesia and India. Consequently, a body of literature has emerged (Chang, 2000; Malbubany, 2010; Moulettes, 2007, Rizvi & Walsh, 1998; Watkins, 2000) that emphasises the academic, social and cultural experiences and needs of learners from these countries. This literature has also provided insight into international students’ perceptions of learning and their motivations for study (Akanwa, 2015; Altbach, 2015; Altbach & Reisberg, 2015; Arenas, 2015; Gautam, Lowery, Mays & Durant, 2016; Johnson & Kumar, 2010; Tran, 2010, 2011; Wang, 2004).
Some scholars encourage educators to re-think their current practice and apply new perspectives – including ‘emancipatory pedagogy’ as a culturally situated model – for new cultural formations (Hellstén, 2002; Hellstén & Reid 2008). There is a range of literature that highlights the need to re-visit or amend teaching strategies when targeting international students (Baskett, Collings, & Preston, 2004; Carroll & Ryan, 2005; Chang, 2006; Chirkov, Vansteenkiste, Tao, & Lynch, 2007; Hellstén & Prescott, 2004; Singh & Shrestha, 2008). These authors are largely concerned with the modification of monocultural assumptions that underlie teaching practices employed across a diverse cohort of international students. New approaches are recommended to supplement or replace conventional methods of Western pedagogy.

Some scholars regard international students as important contributors to the learning process through sharing cultural norms and life experiences, differing communication styles (Heffernan et al., 2010), and distinct learning styles (Biggs, 2003; McLean, Ramburuth & McCormic, 2001; McPherson & Willis, 2009; Tran, 2008; Arcoudis & Tran, 2010; Watkins, 2000). Wang (2004) claims that these students can enrich the host community through their own personal resources and experiences. Furthermore, Sanderson (2011) stressed that many approaches that educators choose for teaching international students are based on universal principles of teaching practice. Those most associated with internationalisation of teaching practice include awareness of students and host institution culture, social purpose of academic disciplines, theoretical and practical knowledge of teaching theory, and reflection on teaching and students’ learning.

Despite the growing literature and research in the area of international student support needs, and the identification of a variety of issues that are significant to students in terms of their study experience (Howson, 2002; Olsen, Burgess & Sharma, 2015; Tran, 2010), there is still a need to focus more on educators as important providers of successful teaching, particularly in teacher preparation programs. However, less has been done in the area of identifying how academics/educators themselves perceive the culture of teaching and learning. This is particularly important for cross-cultural study in pre-service teaching programs within Australian universities.

Developing a better understanding of how educators see their role in teaching a culturally diverse cohort of international students who enrol in teacher preparation programs, and understanding their pedagogy and approaches to everyday practice, will potentially contribute to the development of teaching international students in Australia and provide a basis for recommendations for academic staff and schools of education to enhance teacher
education. It may help to develop a conceptual model for the delivery of the most appropriate support to academics and international students.

This study is focused on current teaching practice at two schools of education at large dual-sector universities in a major Australian city; in particular, on the pedagogy that educators use to support international students. The new challenges that educators have been facing in their day-to-day delivery of the higher education courses require them to adopt new culturally appropriate teaching methods. In addition, educators are expected to meet the diverse academic needs of their students. This has led to one of the most significant challenges for educators: the need to review their repertoire of pedagogical strategies to meet the learning needs of their particular group of international students. The study seeks to investigate the kinds of responses pre-service teacher educators have made to this challenge.

The study has the potential to make a useful contribution to understanding teaching practices within the context of teaching students from Asian countries. Furthermore, the study about actual practice – as distinct from theory – may assist educators by sharing successful strategies that can contribute to the area of professional development of educators working in teacher preparation programs.

1.5 Objectives, the Aim and the Research Questions of the Study

This study set out to achieve the following research objectives:
- to investigate whether educators give due attention to the academic needs and difficulties of international students in teacher-education courses; and how much educators are aware of such issues as described in the academic literature and identified in the teaching of international students;
- to investigate the influence of culture on the educators’ practice;
- to describe and interpret educators’ choices of strategies for teaching international Asian students enrolled in pre-service teacher education programs in two university schools of education in Melbourne – and how they do this in addressing the students’ diverse academic and cultural needs;
- to focus on educators’ perceptions and teaching practices with respect, primarily, to international Asian students as distinct from the lenses of the international students who experience the teaching.

The aim of this study was to contribute to an understanding of educators’ perceptions of their practices of teaching international students at Australian universities. The study focused on the ways in which academics accommodate the learning needs of international students from
Asian countries who are studying in teacher-education programs. It sought to understand the educators’ visions of teaching, pedagogic strategy and the application of these in their everyday practice.

The central question of the research study is:

**How do academics in schools of education in Australia construct their everyday practice when teaching international pre-service teaching students from Asian countries?**

The secondary questions for my research are:

- What changes, if any, do educators make in their practice when they teach international students?
- What are educators’ views regarding the factors that affect international students’ success or failure in academic courses?
- How aware are educators of the significant difficulties, identified in academic literature, that international students experience when learning in English-speaking countries? The literature suggests that such difficulties might include, among others:
  - learning and living in a different culture
  - learning in a foreign university context
  - learning while developing English language proficiency
  - learning the academic disciplinary discourse
- What pedagogies do educators apply in teaching international students?

### 1.6 Significance of the Study

This study offers a theoretical contribution to the body of knowledge related to teaching practices at Australian universities with a specific emphasis on teaching international students from Asian countries in mainstream teacher education programs. The study provides useful recommendations for educators working in the field of teacher education who may find the results of the study valuable as a practical reflection on teaching international students from Asian countries.

Pre-service educators engaged in teacher education programs may find the study useful to the extent that it provides a reflective context to their classroom realities and contributes to the development of a greater awareness of how effectively they teach in a culturally diverse classroom and meet the needs of culturally diverse learners.

Teacher education institutions in Australia might consider the findings useful in examining their own practices in preparing pre-service teachers – and the implications of this for the graduates to teach in culturally diverse classrooms.
Finally, the curriculum and pedagogical experiences of the teacher educators provides a framework for further research around teaching international students in Australia.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

Culture is an integral aspect of any group of students in a classroom. It is often defined as a collective phenomenon which distinguishes one group from another. At the university level, where students might come from other countries, considerations of cultural differences are vital – yet all too often neglected in the teaching of such students. Here, consideration of Hofstede’s (1986) sociologically oriented perspective on culture and teaching and learning provides a useful framework. Hofstede (1994, 2010) refers to the ‘all pervading impact of culture’ and uses the term ‘the software of the mind’ as a metaphor for the way human beings think and act. This has been a contentious view in some respects, but in offering it Hofstede is not saying that everyone in a particular society reacts in the same way: he acknowledges significant differences between individuals. In one sense, culture can be better understood in a comparative sense: when one culture is compared to another culture.

In this and other studies Hofstede’s national cultural dimensions framework has been used as a theoretical lens through which data have been analysed. (Hofstede & Bond, 1988; Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010; Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). Although Hofstede’s work has been widely used for research over a long period of time and extensively cited in academic literature, it is not without criticism. This criticism includes concerns with the lack of relevance of his ideas today because of acculturation or modernisation in the modern world (Blodgett, Bakir & Rose, 2008; Chang, 2003); the absence of women’s voices in his cultural studies (Moulettes, 2007); and its irrelevance to Confucian heritage countries (Moulettes, 2007; Jacob, 2005). At the same time Hofstede’s national cultural dimensions framework has been used extensively to inform and reflect cultural differences. This framework has been used primarily with groups rather than individuals.

1.8 Thesis Outline

The thesis consists of nine chapters.

Chapter One introduces the context of the study, presents the conceptual framework and briefly introduces the underlying ontological, epistemological and methodological perspectives. The personal motivation for the study is also presented in this chapter. The chapter highlights the aim of the study, the research questions and significance of the research.
It also describes the research problem and research focus and outlines the limitations of the study, before concluding with the overall structure of the thesis.

Chapter 2 locates the study in terms of theory and research literature. The academic literature is presented with the aim of supporting the investigation according to the main research questions. The chapter consists of several sections that focus on discussions about current teacher education in Australia; the impact of internationalisation and globalisation on teacher preparation programs and higher education in general; the diversity of pedagogy and teaching methodology approaches for teaching international students; and the literature on the academic and other needs of international students that institutions and educators should be aware of. The literature review examines interrelated areas of the study that provide a theoretical underpinning of it and, at the same time, outline its boundaries.

Chapter 3 explores aspects of culture with particular reference to Hofstede’s cultural dimensions theory. The theory or framework provides a basis for discussing academics’ awareness of the needs and challenges of international students.

Chapter 4 introduces the underlying ontological, epistemological and methodological standpoints of this qualitative study. This chapter focuses on the research design, data collection tools and the analytical technique that was chosen for the research. It explains the rationale for the usage of the theoretical framework of the investigation and includes a justification of the data analysis procedure as well as ethical considerations.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 present in-depth discussion of the research findings in order to address the main research question and sub-questions. The discussions integrate the qualitative data with the academic literature and interpretation. The key findings are summarised in the last section of each chapter. More specifically, Chapter 5 presents the stories of participants with a strong focus on the teaching philosophies and pedagogies that they use in teaching international students. Chapter 6 reports on the extent to which the university academics modify their teaching and curriculum with respect to international students. Chapter 7 focuses on the educators’ or academics’ perceptions of the difficulties relating to the English language as experienced by their students, as well as their perceptions of ways of addressing such challenges.

Chapter 8 focuses on culture and its significance for both the teacher educator and student based on the interviews with the academics. In brings together Hofstede’s framework along with educators’ narratives as a means of exploring notions and issues pertaining to culture.
Chapter 9 presents the key findings of this investigation with suggested recommendations for further research. The limitations of the study are also presented.

1.9 Limitations

The major limitation comes from the interpretive nature of the qualitative research. Because a small sample of participants from teacher education programs at Australian universities volunteered to participate in the study, it is hard to make generalisations. While this study is in depth as interpretive qualitative research, the findings are specific and cannot be generalised on a larger scale.

1.10 Conclusion

The study aims to increase knowledge of educators’ perception of their practices of teaching international students from diverse cultural backgrounds, particularly from the Asian countries; and to provide a new vision on pedagogy and deliver practical advice regarding how to facilitate teaching and learning in culturally mixed classes. The data from the research potentially has the capacity to assist universities to support educators in teaching classes where international students are in the minority.
Chapter 2
Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an analytical review of the research on experiences and reflections on teaching pre-service international students in Australian universities. The focus is on educators’ experiences and their own stories about their teaching as a means of identifying and describing the multiple factors that influence them in their choices of approaches to best meet the needs and expectations of international students studying at Australian universities.

The literature review is one of the integral parts of the research process in qualitative inquiry: “the literature review is a complex process” that can be expressed as “an interpretation of a selection of published and/or unpublished documents available from various sources on a specific topic that optimally involves summarization, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of the documents” (Onwuegbuzie, Leech & Collins, 2012, p. 2). My familiarisation with the relevant ideas for my study comes from reading and reflection on broad ideas from the academic literature. Much helpful methodological advice for researchers on how to conduct the literature review for a qualitative study comes from the works of writers such as Boote and Beile (2005); Cresswell (2002, 2009, 2013, 2017), Cresswell et al. (2007, 2015), Denzin and Lincol (2005, 2011), Onwuegbuzie and Frels (2016). In the words of Boote and Beile (2005):

the literature review should accomplish several important objectives. It sets the broad context of the study, clearly demarcates what is and what is not within the scope of the investigation, and justifies those decisions, … moreover, this type of review allows the author not only to summarize the existing literature but also to synthesize it in a way that permits a new perspective. (p. 4).

Creswell (2009) suggested that in qualitative research, a literature review from the start of the investigation “provides direction for the research questions or hypotheses,” “can introduce a theory” (p. 27) and describe it; at the end of the study it can provide an investigator with relevant literature for comparison and discussion (p. 28).

The perceptions of educators of their practice of teaching international students from Asian countries in Australian universities have to be considered from various perspectives because of the complexity of the nature of teaching in higher education. The criteria for the selection of the literature for the analysis comes from the research question, and from the purpose of the study and its relevance to the key elements of the research. Josef Maxwell (2006) argues that in a literature review “the relevant works are those that have important
implications for the design, conduct, or interpretation of the study, not simply those that deal with the topic, or in the defined field or substantive area, of the research” (p. 28).

This literature review uses a wide range of sources, including academic journal articles, monographs, theses, academic conference papers, policy documents, and reports and various government publications about specific aspects of teaching international students at Australian universities.

This literature review focuses on:
- concepts of internationalisation in Australian universities and their relevance to the development of pedagogy, curriculum and assessment in the context of teaching international students;
- norms and ideas from both Australian national policies and universities’ policies of teaching international students in Australia;
- Australian educators’ experience of teaching international students in Australian universities;
- specific teaching techniques, pedagogies and strategies that are used for teaching in culturally diverse classes in tertiary education;
- different aspects of cross-cultural communication applied in teaching;
- educators’ awareness of international students’ academic, social and cultural needs and of the students’ personal experiences of studying in Australia.

A comprehensive selection of academic literature has been examined in this study with the aim of obtaining a full picture of “what has been conducted before, the inferences that have emerged, the inter-relationships of these inferences, the validity of these inferences, the theoretical and practical implication stemming from these inferences, and the important gaps in the literature” (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2010, p. 179). Moreover, my intention was to “select the most appropriate methodologies” for my study that allowed me “to identify the strengths and weaknesses of approaches used in previous studies” (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2010, p. 179). The literature review gives meaning to this study while it supports discussions and interpretations of the data and findings in subsequent chapters.

2.2 Globalisation and Internationalisation and its Impact on Teacher Education Programs in the Context of Teaching International Students

This section presents discussions around different issues related to globalisation and internationalisation and how they affect higher education globally and nationally, particularly in Australia. The analysis of globalisation, and more specifically internationalisation of higher
education, provides useful insights into understanding the modernisation of universities’ policies of teaching, curriculum and assessment.


Despite the uniqueness of every educational system and of the political and economic life in different countries, scholars find some commonalities in the effect of globalisation on the higher education sector. For example, academic staff can have easier access to resources, materials, and colleagues across the world for collaborating in research, teaching and publication; and there exists competition at a regional and national level among universities to attract more students. Furthermore, the literature suggests that globalisation has an impact on transformation of the universities’ function and structures (Marginson, 2015, 2016).

Globalisation has been seen as one of the strengths that drives change through various fields of political, economic and social life in societies around the world. As a part of social life, education has to respond to current societal changes. Arambewela (2010) argues that in western countries “the impact of globalisation on nations and states and resultant effects on higher education policy have been associated with conflicting discourse on modernity and the rise of neo-liberalism”, and refers to such concepts as deregulation, market efficiency and competition (p. 157). In comparison with other sectors which also have experienced effects of globalisation, Marginson and van der Wende (2007) consider tertiary education to have the potential to be more open internationally because of its engagement with a wide range of cross-border relationships and “continuous global flows of people, information, knowledge, technologies, products and financial capital” (p. 5). One of the results of globalisation is that universities have changed as institutions in comparison to the last quarter of the 20th century. Scott (2006) has stated that universities’ functions and missions have changed from the traditional functions adopted from the Medieval era to modern times. He talks about the future of education and academic systems and believes that universities’ missions “will likely internationalize their triad mission of teaching, research, and public service” (Scott, 2006, p. 32). There is much evidence in the intervening 13 years that this is continuing to be the case. Increase in competition on the educational market pushes universities to make changes in how they operate (Marginson, 2015).
Similarly, Altbach (2004) expressed the idea that leading universities have maintained their status from their research performance and from their power to attract students, staff and investors:

academic centres provide leadership in all aspects of science and scholarship - such as research and teaching, the organisational patterns and directions of universities, and knowledge dissemination. The centres tend to be located in larger and wealthier countries and benefit from the full array of resources - including funding and infrastructures such as libraries and laboratories for research, academic staff with appropriate qualifications, traditions and legislation in support of academic freedom, and an orientation toward high achievement levels on the part of individual professors and students and by the institutions themselves. (Altbach, 2004, p.7).

Moreover, Marginson (2007) claims that universities have moved from an education profile to a service and market profile; this has significantly affected university teaching policy and raised concern and dilemmas for academics and university policy makers because the universities are becoming more and more involved in educational and service providing activities in the global and national markets. Such involvement has forced universities to redesign their educational purposes and goals:

every national system exhibits a common tendency to bifurcate between selective research universities, for whom resources are a means to academic and social status, and mass providers, sometimes commercial, focused primarily on teaching, whose primary concern is to maintain and expand student enrolments and the public or private revenues they bring. (Marginson, 2007, p. 9).

To meet students’ expectations about their learning and satisfy their demands and their academic needs in the highly competitive higher education market, universities continue to seek the best technology, educational content and resources. After analysing the Australian higher education functions, Marginson and van der Wende (2007) came to the conclusion that the main changes that have happened over the last decades are directly related to the question of the funding of the institutions by government and the funding by students’ payments flowing to the universities. Thus, the Australian national higher education system is shaped by the dynamics of status competition and system stratification between institutions (p. 7). However, Marginson (2007) believes that Australian universities place themselves in a good position in the global educational market and are very focused on Asia as a business partner. Nevertheless, Australian universities are likely to face challenges in attracting and retaining international students in the future.
An ongoing task for academic staff should be consideration of their own position at the universities as new demands are made of them. One role of educators of course is to provide students with a high level of teaching and facilitate their academic needs so that at the end of their study students will “leave their degree feeling that they were provided with teaching of a high quality and have obtained the skills they were seeking to assist them in their future academic and professional careers” (Thakur & Hourigan, 2007, p. 44). The challenges of such demands for academics necessitate revising their teaching philosophy and methods of teaching and making adjustments to the new educational realities that are highly influenced by globalisation.

In the academic literature it is also well known that the impact of globalisation on higher education, despite several commonalities, is broad and varies from country to country and from one education system to another, because of such factors as national identity, traditions, culture, history and political systems. From their own perspective Ozga and Lingard (2007) see globalisation as “blurring distinction between the international and domestic, the global and local and in so doing affects a new spatiality to politics” (p. 65). Dale (1999) has suggested that “it is essential to recognize the continuing significance of national societal and cultural effects whose prominence and importance are hardly diminished by globalization” (p. 4). In his point of view “globalization may change the parameters and direction of state policies in similar ways but it does not inevitably override or remove existing national peculiarities (or different sectoral peculiarities within national societies)” (pp. 4-5). He believes that one of the powerful “nationally mediating factors is the “cultural effect” (p. 5). Dale (1999) see a rationale in the work of Hofstede (1994) whose notion of four major dimensions of Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Masculinity-Feminity, and Individualism demonstrate “how external policies are likely to be differently interpreted and differently acted on in different countries, even at the organizational level, where their impact is most direct” (p. 5).

A number of studies examine the contemporary implication of Hofstede’s model in cross-cultural communication, teaching and learning, educational sector management (den Brok, Levy, Cronjé, 2011, den Brok, & Levy, 2005; Greenlee & Stück, 2004; Hrvatić, 2005; Razak, Darmawan & Keeves, 2010; Saboori & Pishghadam, 2016; Young, 2008; Whalen, 2018).

### 2.3 Internationalisation of Curriculum and Assessment

Globalisation in the form of internationalisation has affected universities’ policies of teaching internationally, linguistically and culturally. Harman (2005) claimed that the terms
internationalisation of higher education and globalization are sometimes used synonymously. However, Harman (2005) makes a clear distinction between internationalization and globalization: “the term globalization is used to refer to systems and relationships that are practised beyond the local and national dimensions at continental, meta-nation regional and world levels. These relationships can be technological, cultural, political and economic as well as educational” (p. 122). He also stresses that such relationship can be found in “flows of ideas, images, and people, or in terms of flows of money, goods and services. In a broader sense, globalization means simply becoming more global” (Harman, 2005, p. 122).

Internationalisation is not something completely new: it has been increasingly used from the middle of the last century and in academic literature has been associated with the works of Knight (1994, 2004), Leask (2008) and de Wit (1998, 2002). Canadian scholar Jane Knight in 1994 defined internationalization as follows: “Internationalization in the context of higher education, is often used interchangeably with the term globalization and is also used as a synonym for international, global, intercultural and multicultural education” (Knight, 1994, p. 3).

Educational institutions have to maintain some strategies for implementing objectives of internationalization. Knight (1997) describes four core rationales or objectives: political, economic, academic and cultural/social. All of them, she argues, have some elements of ‘essentialness’, for example, political rationale links internationalisation with the protection of national identity. This could be viewed also as an indication of how a country responds to challenges of globalization and balances ‘homogenization’ of culture and national identity.

Economic rationales are associated with the generation of revenue from international student fees, international consultancies and collaborative international projects; academic rationales are those that are linked with the achievement of international academic standards for teaching and research. Knight also described the cultural and social rationales of globalization both of which have forced societies towards recognition of the essentialness of intercultural communication. In the context of education, therefore, cultural and social rationales for internationalisation are significant and they direct an educational institution’s focus to the development of improvement of intercultural understanding and communication.

After decades of study Knight (2004, 2015) revised her definition of internationalisation to make it applicable at the national and sector level, as well as the institutional level, emphasising that the world of higher education is changing. In her study of internationalisation she has found that all aspects or elements are different across countries and institutions in terms of rationales, outcomes, benefits, activities and stakeholders. The increase
of internationalisation has become a goal within higher education, and the implementation of this goal has been influenced by specific political and economic agendas (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Writing early in this century, Harman (2005) suggested that the theoretical work of Knight (1997, 2004) “has considerably influenced Australian thinking on internationalization and globalization” (p. 124). It could be argued that Knight’s influence continues to be felt today. Certainly her writings, including more recent work (Knight, 2015) provides a sophisticated structure for internationalisation at different levels: supernational and global with respect to countries; national level with respect to states (provinces, regions); and institutional level – universities. The university as an institution has involvement at every level. After years of practically testing her ideas about internationalisation, Knight (2015) has come to the conclusion that “as internationalization matures, it is becoming more important and complex” (p. 14).

Educators have increasingly responded to the challenges of implementation and assessment (Bovill, 2015; Cheng, Adekola, Shah & Valyrakis, 2018; de Wit & Leask, 2015; Foster, 2015; Leask, 2015, 2016; Pitts & Brooks, 2017; Robson, 2015). They have also had to confront the prevalence of English language in teaching and research (de Wit & Leask, 2017).

In the domain of education, it is possible to find discussions concerning the challenges of internationalising the curriculum. Some of them include arguments around the question of how to assist educators to understand the concept of internationalisation and encourage them to change their teaching practice. Crosling, Edwards and Schroder (2008) found that “some universities adopt a pragmatic approach, seeking to gain or entrench advantage in a competitive environment through offering a curriculum relevant to a larger number of students worldwide, or developing competencies that allow graduates to operate in an international environment” (p. 107).

Numbers of scholars have investigated how education institutions, university course coordinators and individual academics have reflected on their practices and made some changes to the design of the course curriculum (Absalom & Vadura, 2006; Bell, 2004; de Wit & Leask, 2015, 2017; Dunstan, 2003; Jones & Killick, 2007; Haigh, 2002; Leask, 2001a; 2009; 2015, 2016; Sawir, 2013; Svensson & Wihlborg, 2010; Yates & Young, 2010). Jones and Killick (2007) see internationalisation of the curriculum as “encompassing all the experiences which form students’ development (cognitive, attitudinal and affective) while undergoing their higher education studies” (p. 110).

2.3.1 Teaching international students: curriculum design and implementation

Harman (2005) believes that Australian universities have made some important
developments towards the goal of implementation of internationalisation in higher education: “with government encouragement, many universities have put efforts into internationalizing curricula and expanding the study of Asian languages in order to facilitate understanding of other cultures and to support further expansion of Australia’s trade” (p. 122). Moreover, Marginson (2007), writing about Australia’s curriculum in higher education, noted that the Australian curriculum reflects the Anglo-American model of education and notions of “global knowledge” which is not that dissimilar from the USA and the UK. At the same time Marginson (2007) says that Australia is different, with “a friendlier setting”, adding however that this is “of second order importance if foreign students believe that the better product is elsewhere” (p. 26). This pressure from the competition on the educational market has forced Australian universities to look more carefully at the methods of teaching and the values of the culturally and linguistically diverse international students and domestic students.

Australia is a multicultural society. The cultural and linguistic diversity of Australia's resident population has been reshaped over many years by migration. According to statistical data at 30 June 2017, 29.0% (7.1 million) of Australia's estimated resident population were born overseas (ABS, 2017). According to this data there had been major changes in the structure of the immigrant population. Changing immigration patterns have reshaped the ethnic composition of the Australian population in the past few decades. Thus, local students who potentially might enrol at Australian universities are not homogeneous and carry the values and traditions from various cultural and ethnic groups. Thus internationalisation for Australia is not only significant with respect to global competition, but also in satisfying the culturally and linguistically diverse local student population. Earlier in this century, Schuerholz-Lehr, Caws, Van Gyn and Preece (2007) and Bond, Qian and Huang (2003) underlined the need for university courses to prepare students to be global citizens who can operate in a globalised world; accordingly, in university programs the curriculum has to be seen as “one of the elements in promoting both domestic and international students to engage in public, community and economic segments of a global society” (Schuerholz-Lehr, Caws, Van Gyn & Preece, 2007, p. 69).

Naghdy (2015) has summarised the main principles of internationalisation as presented in select academic literature. These include the recruitment of overseas students; the internationalisation of learning programs; the organisation of student exchange programs; the promotion of overseas study and internship programs; and lastly, the increased mobility of academic staff. All these principles are reflected in complex policies and practices that make
higher education institutions competitive and sustainable on a global scale, while providing overseas learners with significant educational opportunities.

Gao, Baik, and Arkoudis (2015) also considered the key components of institutional internationalisation and noted that they “are related to three broad aspects: governance, academic and service” (p. 306). These strategies are presented below in Table 2.1:

**Table 2.1**

*The Key Components of Institutional Internationalisation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governance</th>
<th>Monitoring/evaluation system for internationalisation performance/process</th>
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<td>A supportive policy framework/organisational structure</td>
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<td>International presence in leadership</td>
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<td>Existence of an international office</td>
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<td>Staff development of international awareness and skills</td>
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<td>Budget for internationalisation initiatives</td>
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<td>Academic</td>
<td>International institutional agreements/ networks/ partnerships</td>
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<td>Outgoing exchange opportunities for student/faculty</td>
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<td>International research cooperation</td>
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<td>Joint degrees/projects</td>
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<td>Published papers in international journals</td>
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<td>International/intercultural extracurricular activities</td>
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<td>Interaction between international and domestic students</td>
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<td>Services</td>
<td>Infrastructure investment and construction</td>
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<td>Libraries and computing services</td>
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<td>Pastoral and tutorial arrangements</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Support of families</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Student security and welfare provision. (Gao, Baik, &amp; Arkoudis, 2015, p. 307).</td>
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</table>
Australian universities continually revise and implement policies and practices that have a strong focus on internationalisation. Since conducting my research, several leading universities in Melbourne, including The University of Melbourne, Monash University, Deakin University and RMIT University, and many others, have incorporated into their strategic plans and policies some components of institutional internationalisation presented in Table 2.1. Furthermore, they have identified “engagement, innovation and internationalisation as key values” for their strategic plans that provide wide possibility “for students from all cultures and all backgrounds to successfully participate in the educational, cultural and social life” at the universities (University of Melbourne, 2015, p. 5), and for graduates to be better prepared to work and live in a globalised world, which is a key element of internationalisation (Monash University, 2015, p. 17 and RMIT, 2015, para 1). For example, according to RMIT’s policy, the university offers

a transformative experience to all students from all backgrounds. The experience integrates learning, campus, social and work connections. … This experience encompasses the formal curriculum, how it is taught, assessed and researched, and broader experiences like absorbing and reflecting on new ideas and working with people from different cultures and perspectives. (RMIT, 2015, p. 12).

To achieve the relevant strategic policy goals, as discussed above, academic staff must incorporate certain strategies into their teaching practices, including an inclusive approach to ensure that teaching and assessment practices are suitable for all learners and benefit them equally. Academic staff should take a proactive role in facilitating learning and be aware of differences amongst students. They should incorporate activities that encourage all students to share their views and experiences. Reflective teaching, inclusive teaching and ‘good teaching practice’ strategies are essential given the diverse population of students in Australian universities.

Deakin University (2015) has an example of policy that formulates inclusive teaching strategies to assist academic and non-academic staff with their teaching or related work. These strategies are presented in the guide developed as ‘Deakin Learning Futures’ (Deakin University, 2015) in collaboration with the university’s ‘Equity and Diversity’ division. The guide emphasises that reflective teaching practice is one of the core concepts of inclusive

teaching. Figure 2.1 illustrates elements that should be taken into consideration when designing an inclusive learning and teaching environment.

Figure 2.1 Inclusive Teaching and Learning Environment. Adapted from “Equity and Diversity, Deakin University”, by Dr Teresa De Fazio, Deakin Learning Futures in collaboration with Claire Nihill, (https://www.deakin.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/53482/Inclusive_teaching_practices_revisedOctober2015.pdf), 2015, p. 2. Copyright 2015 by Deakin University.

General inclusive strategies from this guide are presented as Appendix 9 of this thesis.

Many universities’ policies – in a range of published guidelines, mission statements and goals – correspond to Leask’s (2001b) explanation of how internationalisation is embedded in administrative systems. She believed that embedding internationalisation policies into the academic practices of the institution at all levels, has proved to be a major challenge requiring a strategic, staged approach over a number of years. As the academic community has tackled this major challenge, a number of other related challenges have emerged. A range of strategies have been developed and implemented to overcome them. (Leask, 2001b, para.8).

The first challenge is related to the question of how to put policy into practice. Leask (2001b) argued that universities need “to develop curricula which, in methodology and content, are culturally inclusive and which develop multi-cultural awareness and cross-cultural
communication skills while achieving the specific skills and knowledge objectives appropriate to the discipline area” (Leask, 2001b, para. 9).

A second challenge identified by Leask (2001b) is related to staff development for internationalising the curriculum because of a lot of misunderstanding or simplification, which she calls “myths associated with internationalisation.” For example, she identifies the belief on the part of some academics that it is “someone else's responsibility” to think about internationalisation such as policy makers or administrative staff; the idea that academics “don't need to know anything about it or do anything about it”; and that it is sufficient to have “more international students whose presence will automatically benefit Australian students” (Leask, 2001b, para.10).

Leask (2001) sees the third challenge as “changing teaching practices.” Traditionally, academic staff in universities have focussed on the transmission of knowledge rather than on the processes by which students come to understand the subject. Leask points out that “the improvement of teaching is related to the extent to which academics are prepared to conceptualise teaching as a process of helping students to ‘change their understanding’ of the subject matter they are taught” (Leask, 2001b, para.11).

In Leask’s (2011) view, implementation of internationalisation to practice requires educators to focus on rethinking the teaching and learning process, not just the content of a subject or discipline; that is, to reflect on their own practices, pedagogies and methods of teaching. She highlighted:

Deep learning within this complex environment, in which the culture of the discipline provides the framework for international and intercultural engagement, requires coordination across a degree programme. It requires the incorporation of specific international and intercultural learning objectives in different components (e.g. subjects, courses or units of study) at different levels of study. Learning needs to be ‘scaffolded' within the degree structure so that skills, knowledge and attitudes are acquired progressively and the achievement of high level learning outcomes is supported, assessed and assured. It is important that the activities associated with an internationalised curriculum, and in particular the assessment, teaching and learning that are at its heart, are as well planned, managed and monitored by discipline experts as any other aspect of the curriculum. (Leask, 2011, p. 8).

As noted, many Australian tertiary institutions have experienced an increase in international students. In his study, Sawir (2013) argues that “the impact of international students on the quality of education in a host country has also been debated ... Institutions have
to have the strong commitment to provide relevant education and support for international students” (p. 360), and design and implement strategies that can assist students in adapting to the new learning environment.

Sawir believes that the curriculum in Australian courses is not always appropriate for many international students because of its content and the focus of the materials in it. Accordingly, universities have been forced to redesign their curricula to varying degrees. It is incumbent therefore that academics should learn about their students and understand the international context of their students.

In supporting this notion, Leask (2005) claimed that educators should be sensitive to the cultural diversity of students in their classes. She asserted that when university academic staff members want to incorporate internationalisation into a program or a course, they should first establish their ‘motive’ or ‘motives’ to make it ‘easier to focus … thinking and develop clear course objectives” (p. 120). She suggested combining ‘big picture’ and ‘fine detail’ approaches in designing internationalised curricula. ‘The big picture’ implies the goals of general policies and programmes while ‘the fine details’ relate to the specific objective of particular courses (Leask, 2005, p. 120).

In this context, internationalisation of the curriculum is defined narrowly to refer to designing a curriculum to accommodate international students’ needs. The Good Practice Principles’ for teaching across cultures that Leask and Carroll (2013) employed for their guide for academic staff have merit and, it is postulated here, should be considered in relation also to pre-service teacher programs. They delineate six principles of good teaching practice across cultures and they are in brief are:

1: Focus on students as learners
2: Respect and adjust for diversity
3: Provide context-specific information and support
4: Facilitate meaningful intercultural dialogue and engagement
5: Be adaptable, flexible and responsive to evidence
6: Prepare students for life in a globalised world. (Leask & Carroll, 2013, p. 5).

It is important to remember that the changes to the cultural profile of the student population in Australian universities caused by the increasing numbers of international students have raised educational issues and challenges for academic staff to find ways of teaching in culturally new educational settings and meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse group of students (Daly, Hoy, Hughes, Islam & Mak, 2015; Gomes, Berry, Alzougool & Chang, 2014; Machart, 2018; Mesidor & Sly, 2016; Teichler, 2017).
Another contributing consideration to the discussion about rethinking teaching strategies suitable for a culturally diverse cohort of learners has been linked to the fact that approximately one quarter of Australian students have at least one parent who was born overseas. As far back as 2002 Haigh believed that internationalisation would be “a major dilemma for those universities that just happen to teach some international students. Despite the fact that their ‘glossy recruitment brochures’ may attempt to portray an image that is friendly to international students, their academic practices “are overwhelmingly embedded in local traditions” (Haigh, 2002, p. 51).

In the final analysis it can be argued that the teaching of international students still comes down to the responsibility of the staff who have to implement new policy in their teaching practice; in so doing they can experience considerable challenges – in addition to benefits – in having international students in their classes.

In the next section, my intention is to explore how we can think about cross-cultural pedagogy as a main avenue through which educators in universities in Melbourne may actualise their teaching. Rizvi (2003) presents the idea that, pedagogically, internationalisation would benefit from “a curriculum approach that seeks to provide students with skills of inquiry and analysis rather than a set of facts about globalisation” (Rizvi, 2003, p. 4).

Certainly, as the literature suggests, internationalisation has required higher education institutions to re-construct curriculum, assessment and activities as a result of increasingly culturally diverse classes. And, in the words of Leask (2015), “Internationalisation of the curriculum is the process of incorporating international, intercultural and global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods and support services of a program of study” (Leask, 2015, p. 9).

2.3.2 Internationalisation of assessment: policy and criteria

Assessment is an integral consideration in relation to internationalisation policy in higher education. Assessment can measure the specific knowledge, skills and attitudes of students in a particular discipline. According to Biggs (1999) “what and how students learn depends to a major extent on how they think they will be assessed. Assessment practices must send the right signals…” (p. 141). In the culturally diverse university environment it is important to ensure that all students will benefit from the assessments adopted and fully understand the purpose and benefits for their learning outcomes. Leask (2011) argues that in the context of internationalisation the curriculum should be link closely to the teaching and
learning and to the assessment and they all should require from academic staff develop their understanding of:

- understanding of the cultural foundations of knowledge within the discipline and practice within related professions
- definition and communication of the international and intercultural learning outcomes that students will develop across a programme of study
- teaching content and pedagogy informed by international research, experience and understanding
- learning activities focused on the progressive development in all students of international and intercultural skills, integrated across a programme of study
- assessment of student progress towards achievement of international and intercultural learning outcomes. (Leask, 2011, p. 11).

Internationalisation of assessment tasks and methods has been widely researched and discussed by academics (Biggs, 1998a, 2003; Carroll & Ryan, 2007; Kamens & McNeely, 2010; Leask, 2005, 2011, 2015).

Many universities in Australia encourage their staff to research and make a recommendation not only about how to implement internationalisation policy into practice, but also how to assist educators to create an assessment that is suitable for diverse students in the class and responds to the challenges of internationalisation. Design of assessment tasks should be associated with curriculum content, which also should support the development of global and intercultural perspectives. One example of practical recommendations for staff was developed in the Griffith University (2007) assessment strategy which asks educators to:

- make assessment criteria related to global/multicultural capability explicit to students;
- map out the links between assessment criteria and international standards in the discipline area or profession for students, so that they are aware of why the assessment items are important;
- use the assessment task early in the course which provides feedback on students’ background knowledge, so that teaching can be modelled in such a way as to ‘fill in’ any gaps in requisite knowledge or skills and hence combat risk of failure;
- include assessment items that draw on cultural contexts as well as disciplinary knowledge (e.g. comparative exercises that involve comparing/contrasting local and international standards, practices, issues, etc.).
- include both individual and group projects, so that students’ ability to work with others, consider the perspectives of others, and compare and contrast the diverse perspectives of other individuals is assessed;
- design assessment tasks that require students to present information to, and receive feedback from, an international or cross-cultural audience. (Griffith University, 2007, p.14).

Such recommendations are useful and can be relevant to many courses. The educators may form the assessment tasks on that basis, with specific focus on a discipline’s unique requirements and purpose.

Teaching staff at higher education institutions have an essential role in this process. In Australia as well as in other Western countries such as the USA, Canada and the UK, students are increasingly being seen as more active players in assessment. Here assessment for learning is integral to the process and is undertaken within a context of open dialogue and feedback about learning.

Thus, assessment strategies have to encourage active student participation. The main challenge for educators is to choose assessment strategies that accommodate both local and international students. Tran (2010) stressed that “a meaningful internationalized learning environment should involve change in the host community and disciplinary practices as much as the change from international students. Teaching staff should play a key role in this process” (p. 171). She argued that in order to provide support, and cater for international students’ needs in terms of assessment tasks, academic staff should take responsibility for ensuring that students are able to discuss assignment expectations, given examples of sample assignments, “and other forms of support” (Tran, 2010, p. 171). Even so, it still needs to be recognised that cultural differences and educational system differences might be a barrier to successful communication between lecturer/tutor and students even in a discussion about assessment.

Emphasis on the importance of giving students guidance about assessment was made in the findings of a study by Arkoudis (2006). She believes that “as international students bring different educational experiences, we may need to highlight what we will be valuing in the assessment process. This requires explaining the assessment criteria and our expectations, as well as offering constructive feedback to students” (p. 16). The simple procedure of explanation and checking students’ understanding of the assessment criteria can benefit students’ learning and reduce stress and misunderstanding. The educator might consider distributing, as a part of the routine teaching practice, the explanation of the assessment criteria, which might be
adopted from the following recommendations in which Arkoudis (2006) asserts that educators should:

- Explain in detail the purpose of the assessment and the subject content that will be assessed. Give students a copy of the assessment criteria and explain how marks will be allocated. This gives students a clearer understanding of what is required and clarifies expectations.
- If English language is being assessed, indicate in the criteria that aspects of English language will be assessed and that marks will be allocated for this.
- Outline the requirements of the exam and model the type of responses required. (Arkoudis, 2006, p. 16).

Practical placement experiences in schools are an essential component of all pre-service teachers education programs (Touchon & Gwyn-Paquette, 2003). Campbell, O’Gorman, Tangen, Spooner-Lane, and Alford (2008) investigated some issues in assessing international pre-service teachers from the perspectives of lecturing staff, liaison staff and supervising classroom teachers during practical placements. The researchers asked participants to describe their experiences, beliefs and attitudes to the assessment of international pre-service students during their practical placement or field experience. Their findings reveal educators’ primary concern was international students’ English language proficiency:

While for some education students, especially those coming from an English-speaking background, this presents minimal problems of adjusting to another culture, for those students with English as an additional language there are many stressors relating to living and studying in a different country. These students have often been reported having problems with language, communication and cultural differences which have had a negative impact on their studies. (Campbell, et al., 2008, p. 3).

Secondly, the authors stressed that international students do not have sufficient background information about schooling in Australia. Further, there is not always enough information for supervising teachers to support these students during their field experience; and finally, there is "an inconsistent approach to grading students against assessment criteria” (p. 8).

An important finding emerges from the issue of the assessment reports from university staff and supervising teachers in schools about international students’ teaching practice with regard to measuring the student’s performance against the assessment criteria.

While the university staff member maintained that all students must meet the same criteria, the supervising teacher was not as clear on this point. It seems that the university staff may ascribe to the view that if international students want to study
teaching in Australia they must show the same competencies as Australian students because they chose to study here. (Campbell, et al., 2008, p. 9). Therefore, it has to be part of a university’s responsibility to provide this cohort of students with recommendations and support to better meet the criteria, particularly because of the differences between education systems between countries.

For example, in Asian countries, pre-service teachers, traditionally, are more familiar with imparting knowledge codified in textbooks, and lecturers and tutors see learning in terms of absorbing, memorising and relying on the knowledge of books (Chan, Tan, & Khoo, 2007; You & Jia, 2008). Several authors have offered explanations for the different teaching and learning styles associated with some Asian countries and why these are different from those more commonly found in Western countries (Doherty, & Singh, 2005; Machart, 2018). The essential point here is that such differences in teaching and learning can cause problems for international students when they study in Australia. The problem can also be seen in approaches some students tend to use on practice teaching rounds – not all of which are as appropriate in Western countries in which more learner-centred teaching/learning approaches (e.g., peer tutoring, cooperative learning) are adopted (Baik, Naylor, & Arkoudis, 2015; Madge, Raghuram, & Noxolo, 2015).

Leask (2009) argues that learning and assessment activities should focus on “the acquisition of intercultural skills and knowledge through promoting and rewarding student interaction across cultures” (p. 211). At the same time, she acknowledges that in a culturally diverse setting at university the communication between domestic and international students has been reported as challenging. A major constraining factor to interaction between domestic and international students can be a perception amongst academic staff that international students do not want to mix or do not have adequate language skills to do so easily. Leask (2009) argues that teaching staff should learn and have clear understanding of “the cultural foundation of knowledge within their discipline” and have knowledge and the ability to manage student diversity in the classroom. They need to understand the cultural forces that have shaped their discipline over time and how they continue to do so and use this knowledge to construct appropriate learning and assessment tasks. (Leask, 2009, p. 212).

She adds that academic staff themselves should be highly efficient and effective intercultural learners with the skill “to engage with and utilize diversity to develop their own and their students’ international perspectives” (Leask, 2009, p. 212). This entails academics adapting their teaching to an international, culturally diverse teaching and learning environment rather
than expecting only learners to adapt to a monocultural, inflexible environment. When academic staff engage and learn from other cultures they become intercultural educators. To develop such skills, Leask (2009) believed, they should

- be self-reflective and critically aware of how their own culture influences what they do,
- be aware that the way they select and structure what they teach curtails the cross-cultural context,
- be aware of how and what they (academics) learn, and how they respond to students and other staff. (p. 212).

Such reflective strategy may empower educators to understand the importance of structuring teaching and learning and assessment activities within the formal curriculum to improve the quality of interaction between home and international students.

Group discussions in class can also present a problem, as Biggs (1997) argued: “it’s not that Chinese students won’t talk inside the classroom, but things have to be structured so that they see it as appropriate that they do” (p. 9). An example of a successful strategy of facilitation of learning and assessment activities comes from Chang’s reflective study (2006). The researcher deliberately uses the cultural component as an important element of assessment. First, in the examination questions students were asked to present arguments in relation to their reflection on their own culture(s) and those of their fellow students. Secondly, from the first day of tutorials, Change required students to form study groups, and each study group had to be composed of three members from different cultural or subcultural backgrounds. This study group is fixed through the whole semester and its members need to conduct group projects outside the classroom and discuss these in the tutorial sessions. Because the concept of the wisdom bank had been introduced to students from the start of the semester students became familiar with its format and purpose: “students know that it is to their advantage if their group’s members are from very diverse backgrounds – the more diverse, the better. The students make their own choices for these groups, but the tutor has a role in assisting and overseeing the process of group formation” (p. 372). Furthermore, students have, as prerequisites, to analyse data from two or more different countries and the more diverse the group, the more resources (‘wisdoms’) from which students have to draw and make sense of various transcultural contrasts. Students may if they want to add their personal examples from their life, study or work experience which can provide a valuable insight into the culture; moreover “in presenting their conclusions to the class, they are expected to provide an overview of these diverse contributions and use them to generate theoretical arguments” (p. 374).
Ryan (2011b), advocates for reflective practice when academic staff from Western universities should be open and learn from the teaching practices common for Asian countries. They should bring into their own teaching practices “more explicit explanation and direction; closer relationships between teachers and students; more emphasis on self-reflection by students and assessment of this as an area of learning; recognition of the value of education and the importance of effort and perseverance; a more holistic attitude to research; less adversarial approaches to the critique of others; and a willingness to learn from other academic cultures and traditions” (Ryan, 2011b, p. 644).

Such approaches are useful, but the analyses of the literature indicate that there is still a lack of research in the area of cross-cultural studies in Education and particularly in pre-service teacher preparation programs where there are not many international students.

2.3.3 Pedagogic practices and teaching international students

The term ‘pedagogy’ has been defined and understood very differently. Watkins and Mortimore (1999) stressed that the concept of ‘pedagogy’ has become more complex over time and as a category it includes several elements: “the teacher, the classroom or other context, content, the view of learning and learning about learning. Such models draw attention to the creation of learning communities in which knowledge is actively co-constructed and in which the focus of learning is sometimes learning itself” (p. 8). The authors recognised that the term ‘pedagogy’ is more commonly used in European countries, in particular, in French, German and Russian-speaking academic communities, than in English-speaking ones. In Europe, pedagogy has been seen as the art of the science of educating children, “In continental European tradition, pedagogy is both act and the idea of teaching, and its knowledge base can be both broad and eclectic” (Alexander, 2008, p. 5). Furthermore, Alexander (2008) believe that in the English tradition it is necessary to clarify the differences between teaching and pedagogy because the “terms are often used interchangeably”. He sees “teaching is an act while pedagogy is both act and discourse. Pedagogy encompasses the performance of teaching together with the theory, beliefs, policies and controversies that inform and shape it. […] Pedagogy connects the apparently self-contained act of teaching with culture, structure and mechanism of social control” (p. 5).

Another aspect, which Loughran (2006) highlighted, is that in academic literature the term “pedagogy” in countries such as the USA, Australia, the UK, Canada and New Zealand has sometimes been used as a synonym for teaching. He explained that “In this sense, pedagogy is seen as a catch-up term for such things as teaching procedures, teaching practice, instructions
and so on” (p. 2). Beetham and Sharpe (2013) stated that pedagogy is “a dialogue between theory and practice, as well as between learning and teaching” (p. 3) and that pedagogy should not be defined in a way that stresses only the teacher’s role and activity. For such a notion they suggest that the term ‘didactics’ is better than ‘pedagogy’, because of the focus on both teacher and learner.

In my study I applied the term pedagogy with some understanding of the complexity of ideas and practices that surround it. The combination of Loughran’s (2006) and Beetham and Sharpe’s (2013) definitions allowed me to define the concept that I preferred to use in my interviewing, my discussions with participants and in interpretation of my data.

In Eastern European traditions – which were part of my schooling – the term pedagogy is much broader and more complex. Very often it includes teaching philosophy or world-views or ideological views that influence and sometimes determine the educator’s beliefs and principles of teaching practice.

The following literature discussion reflects the pedagogical experience of academics working with international students and considers practical examples of successful teaching or recommendations for working in a culturally diverse class environment.

Developed from Hofstede’s (1997) influential notion of cultural dimensions and Gudykunst’s (1997) theory of inter-cultural communication, the term ‘inter-cultural pedagogy’ has been broadly adopted as an intellectual activity for implementing culturally sensitive approaches.

International education is currently seeking direction in areas of both pedagogy and policy and one of the key questions is how educators approach the internationalisation of their teaching and form a ‘new’ pedagogy that promotes an equal and respectful learning environment (Hellstén, 2002, 2008; Hellstén & Prescott, 2004). Methods for assessing teaching and learning in diverse social and ethnic groups of students with recognition of students’ previous study experience is discussed by Howson (2002) and Tran (2010, 2011); issues of pedagogy and policy by Reid and Meeri (2008), Hellstén and Reid (2008), and Ninnes and Hellstén (2005). This range of literature illustrates some innovative teaching and learning methods, methodological frameworks and explanations about new types of pedagogies that contribute to improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning in higher education settings.

As Ninnes and Hellstén (2005) remind us, historically, many universities in Australia were “the products of the power and history of the White Australia Policy, being limited to nation-building institutions rooted in specific metropolitan and rural centres” (p. 18). Today those universities are promoting numerous “transnational experimental teaching/learning
practices, ranging from study abroad, student exchanges, international internships and overseas field studies” and teaching international students locally in Australia. For the researcher such practices should provide “deep, extended and interactive teaching/learning encounters” (p. 18). But, as always, such practices are not without difficulties. International students come to study in Australia from various countries, particularly from Asian countries.

Hellstén (2008) considers that “internationalisation has had an immense impact on the working lives of academics and the formation of new pedagogies and policies” (p. 95). She pointed out that it is not possible to quickly change the traditional educational model, which “still exists in some places and which position lecturers as ‘superiors’ and students as a ‘blank screen’” to new educational models which hinge “on an awareness of individual and professional capabilities as well as deeper educational philosophy” (pp. 95-96). To accomplish such a task, educators should form a ‘new academic identity’ by adopting an inclusive teaching philosophy as “a reliable culturally sensitive framework”. An inclusive framework contains “curriculum and assessment guidelines that account for individual variation and diversity” (p. 96). She strongly believes that “any process of change must begin with the initiative of the host academic community rather than the incoming student population” (p. 96).

Howson (2002), argues that teaching international students should be done through an ‘exploratory view’, in which “Western educators need to realise that Asian students come with an extended history and culture that transcends much of Western thought. Cultural superiority should therefore not be part of Western education”. Howson (2002) suggests that Hofstede’s (1988) theory about national cultural dimensions may give educators in Australia an opportunity “for synergy with the combination of Western analytical thinking and the synthesis abilities of Eastern thinking” (p. 11). Howson provides an example of an international student’s point of view on the role of teacher and students in a class. In an interview a Thai international student revealed an issue in a class discussion. International students asked the tutor to give the answer to a question. The tutor passed the answer back on to the students in the class and the Thai student was disappointed and confused because of his previous cultural educational experience. In his native country he was involved in a different form of communication and a different distribution of power between students and teacher. In Thai culture, a teacher has more power and is expected to give an answer to a question, not pass it on to the students in class. His/her role demands that he/she acts as superior, knowledgeable, respected and trusted (Hofstede, 2010). If the educator does not act in such a way, students easily make a judgement such as: “We would think that teacher is either poorly qualified or lazy. But in Australia this way of not giving the answer ... is common in our class, even when the professor is our teacher”
Howson (2002, p. 4) has emphasised that this kind of class communication can give a negative perception to the international students about teaching in Australian universities, because students believe that the teacher needs to have “the right answer, but not pass the question to the other students in class”. In modern Australian educational culture, the tutor or teacher should be a facilitator of discussion and students in the class have equal status with each other and with the educator, so the tutor feels comfortable putting the student’s question forward for general discussion in class. Australia, according to Hofstede, is a country with small Power Distance (see Table 3.2 in Chapter 3).

Howson (2002) highlighted that it is not only the students who come to Australia for study who should be prepared to adapt to the new university environment, new culture and teaching style, which they definitely do, but “there would be a need for the university to accept a measure of responsibility for facilitating the students’ learning experience” and that would be achieved by:

- a pre-semester orientation program in which the culture and style of learning expected by the university are spelt out;
- providing an ongoing orientation program;
- informing university staff of the particular needs and difficulties faced by overseas students. (Howson, 2002, p. 7).

The suggestion for the pedagogy that might be used by educators to help students in their transition points to a negotiated curriculum and learning/teaching style in which lecturers demonstrate that an “Australian/Western learning style is different (not better) but worthwhile practicing in this context” (Howson, 2002, p. 7) and will benefit both students and educators.

Howson’s argument is enhanced by Tran’s (2010) findings in which she highlighted that international students who are studying in Australia might be in Australia for a relatively short time for their course and after that they “may spend the rest of their life living and working in their home countries or any other country. Giving explicit instructions on the integration of prior experiences will provide them with a valuable opportunity to validate the theories they learnt by reflecting on the professional practices of their specific contexts and compare those with international practices or the practices of other cultures they may have experienced during the class discussion or through reading” (Tran, 2010, p. 170).

Chang’s (2006) research is a practical example of how she has made cultural diversity a key resource in her teaching. She strongly believes that the ideas, principles, and pedagogy involved in her teaching in the various courses at The University of Melbourne are transferable to teaching and learning in other disciplines and in other universities. As she stressed, “cultural
diversity is not something to be imposed or engineered, as it is already there—it only needs releasing and harnessing”. She developed what she called a “transcultural wisdom bank”, which is “a conceptual metaphor that describes the eliciting, reflecting, pooling, and exchange of cross-cultural insights and experiences about problems and issues that affect all humans” and is built in to all the teaching procedures and assessment (p. 370). One of her principal tasks is a comparative perspective and reflection in the class study when through comparison and contrast of the different cultures and students’ own cultures the learning happens. Such an approach can enable learners to achieve goals such as:

- developing non-ethnocentric views about social issues in their own lives;
- enjoying the sheer intellectual adventure of breaking out of the comfort or the “taken for granted” of their own culture, because such cultural contrasts generate surprises that stimulate students’ minds and provoke new thoughts and discovery;
- discerning what is of value within their own culture and what is of value in other cultures; and, therefore,
- understanding not only “other” cultures better but understanding themselves better. (Chang, 2006, p. 370).

In her class Chang encourages students to share their own stories that include information about different cultures and subcultures, and which could stem from different ethnicities, regions, classes, genders, generations, religions, rural/urban settings, sexual orientations, and so on. Chang believes that the more diverse their range of reference, the more they will learn. This factor is a key criterion in the assessment of the subject: “students are encouraged to look around the classroom and feel excited (rather than scared, alienated, or invaded) when they see students from a wide range of different backgrounds” (p. 72).

To sum up, there is persuasive evidence in the literature that the culturally diverse learning setting in modern universities provides practices of teaching/learning in which pedagogy offers rich opportunities for students and staff from very different cultural backgrounds to listen to each other, learn from each other, and develop the skills they will need to successfully achieve the goal of teaching/studying. Despite the rich literature there is still a lot of room for research, specifically for finding examples of pedagogy and teaching practice formed from the experience of educators working in pre-service teacher preparation programs.

2.4 Teacher Education in Australia

Understanding academic practice in teaching pre-service international students in Australia is not possible without a brief analysis of the literature on teacher education as it
provides inside knowledge of the current situation with teacher education programs in Australia. Within the scope of this literature review, the aim is to present a brief overview of academic opinions and issues, rather than an in-depth exploration.

Teacher education has been explored in different ways: in terms of analysing teacher education around the world in the context of political and educational reforms that have taken place in many countries (Bates & Townsend, 2007; Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012; Hatton & Smith, 1995); and in terms of understanding the impact of globalisation and internationalisation on teacher preparation programs and rethinking the teacher’s role in the society (Ben-Peretz, 2001; Day, 2000; Sanderson, 2011; Zhao, 2010). Researchers found that reforms in teacher education involve complex sets of interactions among and within social institutions. These interactions are part of and help to shape power relations and patterns of social regulations that operate throughout state, university and school practices.

In many countries there is no longer a homogeneous population in schools because of migration or refugee movement around the world. In some countries, such as the USA, the UK, Australia, Canada and some European countries, the multicultural environment in schools has become common, so the teacher needs to have not only knowledge of the content of a particular subject, but also needs to be sensitive to cultural and linguistic differences, experiences of migrating, and students’ life experiences and living conditions (Zhao, 2010, p. 427). Thus, every cultural transformation takes determination, time, and effort from all – from students, academics and institutions. In terms of exploring teacher education in Australia, changes that have occurred in teaching policy and their influence on teachers’ practices in schools and teacher preparation programs at universities have been analysed in academic literature (Dinham, 2006; Knipe & Fitzgerald, 2017; Mayer, Pecheone, & Merino, 2011; Weldon, McKenzie, Kleinhenz, & Reid, 2013).

In 2009 the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood (DEECD) introduced School Centres for Teaching Excellence (SCTE) to establish partnerships between universities and schools “to explore options for the delivery of pre-service teacher education with a school based focus and the ways in which pre-service teachers are immersed in effective professional practice; and to improve teaching practice and professional learning in schools by building stronger partnerships between schools and universities” (Rowley, Weldon, Kleinhenz & Ingvarson, 2013, p.13). Moreover, Rowley et al. (2013) reported that in 2012/13 seven SCTE Centres were involved in a pilot program in Melbourne and rural Victoria. “Each Centre consisted of a cluster of schools and one or more university. Across the Centres there were 65 schools, six universities, and 1,000 PSTs” (p. 13). It will be argued later in this study that there
should be a strong relationship and understanding between university schools/faculties of education and schools with respect to placements for pre-service students.

Darling-Hammond (2017) in her comparative study about teacher education policies and practices in Australia, Canada, Finland, Singapore and the United States provided an overview of current teacher education practices in Australia (Victoria). Currently, the Australasian Teacher Regulatory Authorities has developed a new national professional standards framework for teachers that outlines what teachers, at all levels of responsibility, know and do across the domains of professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement. Since taken up and furthered developed for both teachers and leaders by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), the standards define an architecture within which expectations for preparation, registration and career development are articulated. These are aligned, importantly, to the new national curriculum for students. (Darling-Hammond, 2017, p. 296).

To ensure the quality of teaching at Victorian schools, the Victoria Institute of Teaching has been engaged in an ongoing process of developing and evaluating new national standards for graduate students, teachers and principals, and is accountable for implementing them.

In Australia, similarly to Canada and the United States, standards direct preparation and registration for teachers. Universities engaged in teacher preparation programs construct their program and establish the content of subjects according to the standards. In ensuring the quality of the students’ practical placement universities work on the establishment of partnerships with schools and, as has been seen, particularly in Victoria, several major initiatives have been developed to create new models of partnerships to provide pre-service teachers with real-life teaching experiences.

A relatively recent development has been The National Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education Students (LINETE), which was implemented in 2016 and which all students have to complete before their graduation. Teachers are required to have strong personal literacy and numeracy skills as a means of providing quality teaching (Australian Government, n.d., para, 6). Hardy (2018) concluded that this and other initiatives from the Australian government and educational organisations are to ensure “‘classroom readiness’ amongst pre-service teachers” (p. 207).

Many international students find that teaching in Australia is different from their home country, including teaching in schools and in tertiary institutions. Their expectations of the teacher’s role and of methodological and pedagogical practices are influenced by their home
culture and their own experience as students (Ho, 2018). It follows that academic staff who are teaching in pre-service teacher education need to be aware of specific cultural needs of international students in this respect and be able to provide the necessary support. According to Spooner-Lane, Tangen & Campbell (2009) for some pre-service teacher education students, these challenges are revealed, in specifically during their practical placement or field experience. The authors argued that “international students from Asian countries may experience similar anxieties about practicum as their peers, they also contend with the challenges of adapting to a foreign culture, understanding the expectations of their role, and adjusting to language, communication and cultural differences” (p. 80).

Clearly, teacher education courses have their own requirements and these have to be considered with respect to internationalisation. Findings from my research may contribute to the literature as they bring practical examples of implementation of internationalisation into the curriculum, pedagogy and assignments. At the same time it must be acknowledged that teacher education courses have their own particular requirements apart from those that relate purely to notions of internationalism.

2.5 Conclusion

This part of the literature review has provided some background to the general and specific issues of teaching international students in what for them can be a foreign university context. Innovative ideas about internationalisation of curriculum, assessment and teaching activities in the literature were presented. The role of institutions and educators in teaching has been discussed and specific barriers to the successful teaching of international students that occur during their learning in Australia were found in a number of studies and have been discussed in this part of the literature review. Principally I was interested in finding pedagogies, pedagogical models and applied methods that address student diversity. The analysis of the literature has provided ideas for discussion and helped to form the contextual framework for the data analysis in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. There is still a place for research to hear educators’ voices expressing their concerns about teaching international students in pre-service courses. I hope that the reflections of those educators whom I interviewed on their practices, pedagogies and assessments will contribute in some way to the field. In saying this it must be acknowledged that my respondents came from two universities only, both in Melbourne.

The next chapter discusses the broad scope of the literature related to discussions around educators’ awareness of international students’ academic needs, and difficulties and challenges as well as benefits for teaching/learning in culturally and socially diverse classes in
tertiary institutions. I am also interested in discussing the literature related to cross-cultural studies for my theoretical framework, which is based on Hofstede’s national cultural dimension theory.
Chapter 3
Understanding Culture

3.1 Introduction

The concept of culture is extensive and integral to this research; it was therefore decided to discuss this concept as a separate chapter. The chapter begins with an exploration of the academic, social, and cultural experiences and needs of learners from Asian countries studying in Australia. It then focuses on the writing of Hofstede and its implications for learning.

3.2 Academics’ Awareness of the Needs and Challenges of International Students

The previous chapter argued the need to cater for international students at the university level in Australia – that is, the need for internationalisation of the curriculum in the broadest sense of the term. This is not without its challenges. Several researchers believe that international students enrich the learning experience for themselves and others through sharing cultural norms, and life and schooling experiences (Paltridge, Mayson, & Schapper, 2012; Ryan, 2011b; Moloney & Saltmarsh, 2016). Further, it has been seen that their presence in a foreign classroom presents challenges for themselves, other students and their teachers – not least because they often have different communication and learning styles (Andrade, 2006; Barron & Arcodia, 2002; Richardson, 1994; Wong, 2004; Loh, & Teo, 2017).

Over the last three decades there has been a growing interest in understanding the diverse academic needs of international students and educators’ views of the challenges they present. These include differences in their learning experience, culture shock, language difficulties, problems dealing with university staff and other authorities, loneliness, isolation from other classmates and anxiousness about speaking in the classroom in front of classmates and lecturers (Chang, 2000; Macionis, Walters, & Kwok, 2018a; Malbubany, 2002; Novera, 2004; Nguyen & Pennycook, 2018; Rizvi & Walsh, 1998; Tran, 2009, 2010). As Novera (2004) pointed out, international students need to adjust not only to academic life, but also to the social and cultural environment, adding that “while academic success may heighten a student's confidence, social and cultural adjustment can be important factors that lead to this academic success” (p. 475). Social difficulties, homesickness and financial difficulties were researched in the works of Nyland, Forbes-Mewett and Marginson (2010). International students’ security in host countries and issues of racism continue in varying degrees even today (Baas, 2006; 2015; Johnson & Kumar, 2010; Mason, 2012). Earlier reports about difficulties related to stress and its affect in international students learning can be found in the articles of Forbes-Mewett.
One of the biggest challenges for academics and international students is confronting their previous experiences when these are at odds with new situations. It has been seen that there are several studies that look at different learning styles and ways of thinking and constructing knowledge, and this can result in a ‘conflict’ between ‘Eastern’ and ‘Western’ teaching and learning paradigms (Doherty & Singh, 2005; Lin & Scherz, 2014; Littlewood, 2000; Machart, 2018; Ziguras & Harwood, 2011; Wong, 2004; Xiao, 2006). The rationale for identifying learning styles is that a ‘one size fits all’ teaching style is inherently exclusionary and inhibits efficient and effective learning (Wynd & Bozman, 1996). Wen (2011) argues that understanding the learning style of the student, including cognitive and personality learning style, can help academics to facilitate learning and find the best teaching methods “to cater to differences of the learning style” (p. 415). Xiao (2006) in his study found that mismatch between culture and style of teaching and learning can result in what he calls ‘teacher-student style conflict’ (p. 12). To reduce such conflict academic staff should “consider culture-related style differences as they plan how to teach, and make a conscious effort to include various learning styles in their daily lesson plans” (p. 12). Mesidor and Sly (2016) argued that it is critical to consider culture of international students. “People who are strongly attached to their own culture find it more difficult to learn and adapt to the mores, customs, and the language of a novel culture” (Mesidor & Sly, 2016, p. 273).

Loh and Teo (2017) investigated how culture influences international students’ learning styles, arguing that educators who are working with international students should be cognisant of the possible effects on them of the host culture: “To better facilitate students’ learning, improve on learning outcome and performance, one should leverage on viewing culture as an inducing instead of hindrance force on learning. Interaction among peer learners and implementing appropriate learning strategies would help improve learning” (p. 207).

Assertions by some Australian researchers and teachers from the 1980s onwards suggesting that students from Asia rely significantly on memorisation strategies have incorrectly attributed the use of memorisation and rote learning to a ‘surface’ approach to learning (Ballard & Clanchy 1991; Samuelowicz 1987). Chalmers and Volet (1997) listed the most typical stereotypes about international students from Asian countries as learners:
Misconception 1  “South-East Asian Students are Rote Learners who Adopt a Surface Approach to Learning” (p. 88);
Misconception 2  “Students from South-East Asia are Passive Learners and do not Participate in Class (p.90);
Misconception 3  “South-East Asian Students Stick Together and do not Want to Mix with Local Student” (p. 92);
Misconception 4  “Students from South-East Asia Lack the Skills for Analysis and Critical Thinking” (p.93);
Misconception 5  “South-East Asian Students do not Easily Adjust their Learning to the Australian Context” (p.94).

More than twenty years ago Chalmers and Volet (1997) argued that such misconceptions have lead to stereotypical views on international Asian students studying at Western universities as ‘deficit learners’. However, these writers have argued that this is incorrect and that students from Asian countries “have been shown to be motivated, effective and strategic learners. They present us with the opportunity to learn from them. It is an opportunity that we should take advantage of for the benefit of all students and teachers” (Chalmers & Volet, 1997, p. 96).

Several other writers have also contradicted this ‘deficit learner’ view (including Biggs, 1990, 1995, 1996; and Ramburuth & Cormick, 2001) and argued that Asian students’ emphasis on accuracy of recall should not be regarded simply as mindless repetition, for it is used as a means of achieving deep understanding. The anecdotal claim that Chinese learners are inherently more inclined to be rote learners at the expense of deep learning – in comparison to comparable groups of local Australian students – has not been supported (Hellstén & Prescott, 2004; Li, Chen & Duanmu, 2010).

MacKinnon and Manathunga (2003) have encapsulated the problem from the perspective of the Asian student: “these students are attempting to learn course content, while also attempting to grasp the cultural and educational requirements of the dominant cultural literacy, which is not formally taught as part of their educational experience; all of this, while simultaneously retaining their own cultural literacy that is deemed redundant” (p. 133). Even dominant writing academic norms are closely linked with the belief of a long tradition of the native-speaker’s writing and communication skills in English (Davies, 2003). Making judgements about students’ abilities based on statements about whole systems of cultural practice (such as students from ‘Confucian-heritage cultures’) ignores the fact that there can be
greater diversity within cultures than between them (Ryan & Louie, 2007; Tran, 2010, 2011; Wang, Andre & Greenwood, 2015).

International students’ motivations for study have been described by several researchers (Akanwa, 2015; Hellstén & Prescott, 2004; Hofsted, 1986; McLean & Ranson, 2005; Ramburuth & McCormic, 2001; Straker, 2016; Tran & Vu, 2016; Wang, 2004; Witkins, 2000). Very recent research has focused on international students studying at Australian universities (Arkoudis, Dollinger, Baik, & Patience, 2018; Palmer, Oakley & Pegrum, 2017).

Finally, Mesidor and Sly (2016) have discussed factors that contribute to the transition and adjustment of international students to their new learning environment. One issue that has received considerable attention has been that of international students’ plagiarism (Abasi & Graves, 2008; Amsberry, 2009; Ehrich, Howard, Mu, & Bokosmaty, 2016; Hayes & Introna, 2005; Le Ha, P. (2006).

3.2.1 Proficiency in English language as a challenge for teaching and learning

In the article ‘Cultural Differences in Teaching and Learning’, Hofstede (1986) explored how language influences cross-cultural teacher/student interaction. He argued:

In many cross-cultural learning situations, teacher and student speak different native languages. I suggest that the chances for successful cultural adaptation are better if the teacher is to teach in the students’ language rather than if the student is to learn in the teacher’s language, because the teacher has more power over the learning situation than any single student. Language is the vehicle of culture and it is an obstinate vehicle. Language categorizes reality according to its corresponding culture. Together with a foreign language, the teacher acquires a basis of sensitivity for the students’ culture (Hofstede, 1986, p. 314).

In Australia, international students from non-English language speaking countries have to study in what for them is a foreign language and thus they have to make a transition into a new culture and all that this entails – including becoming comfortable in the new language and working within an educational system with which they are not familiar. If they have a high level of English proficiency in writing, reading and speaking this transition is made easier; but if their level of English proficiency is relatively low, the transition into the new culture becomes much more difficult. The latter case is not uncommon in Australia.

English has been actively used for communicating knowledge globally, as a language of academic literature and broadly for teaching at universities (Albatch, 2004; Andrade, 2016; Trudgill & Hannah, 2017). “The dominance of English is not surprising, and it is a factor in
globalisation that deserves analysis if only because higher education worldwide must grapple with the role of English” (Albatch, 2004, p. 10). In many regions, including in Europe and Asia, students at universities and schools study English as a second language or as an additional language. Some then decide to study at tertiary institutions in English-speaking countries such as the USA, the UK, Australia, Canada and New Zealand where they have to meet language requirements (Bretag, 2007). In Australia a score in IELTS or TOEFL, ranging from 5.5 to 8.5, depending on the university and the program, is required (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1
IELTS Requirements of the World’s top 200 Universities in Australia in 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of institution</th>
<th>World rank</th>
<th>IELTS minimum requirement (undergraduate programs)</th>
<th>IELTS minimum requirement (postgraduate programs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The University of Melbourne</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian National University</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Sydney</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Queensland</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monash University</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of New South Wales</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Western Australia</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Adelaide</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Academic literature has highlighted that if students do not have adequate language skills they struggle academically and socially. This is evident in their ability to understand lectures, participate in tutorial discussions, write essays and other types of written assessments, reading course academic literature, and communicating effectively with lecturers, supervisors, and other students (Daroesman, Looi, & Butler, 2005; Haugh, 2015; Hellstén and Prescott, 2004; Robertson, Line, Jones, and Thomas, 2000; Sawir, Marginson, et al., 2012; Wu, Garza and Guzman, 2015; Mesidor, and Sly, 2016). According to Zhang and Mi (2010), amongst the
various factors contributing to variation of English language learning by international students, “the education culture, education system, and pedagogical practices of international students’ home countries (p. 372)” were listed most often. Haugh (2015) has drawn attention to the importance of understanding that for a long period in the academic literature, in media discourse and in public debates, international students were “the focus of simplistic stereotyping” and the tendency was to see them having trouble with learning because of language skills. He argues that “such debates do not sufficiently acknowledge the complexity of the so-called ‘English problem’ among international students in Australian universities” (p. 91).

Certainly, research studies of teaching international students, in particular those conducted in Australia, identify that many students have problems coping with both academic English and conversational English (Andrade, 2006; Madge, Raghuram, & Noxolo, 2015; Ortiz, 2006; Robertson et al., 2000; Yanagi & Baker, 2016; Zhang & Mi, 2010). These difficulties were reported especially in relation to speaking and writing. The research of Robertson et al. (2000) looked at the difficulties faced by international students studying at one Australian university. The researchers used a survey to investigate both international student and university staff perceptions. Whilst acknowledging a lack of English, some students expressed disappointment and complained that they had difficulty understanding the lecturers’ spoken English; they mentioned that lecturers speak too fast and unclearly, and use colloquial language. Further they felt embarrassed and unhappy with their oral performances in the presence of Australian classmates and lacked confidence because of their verbal skills, writing skills, and comprehension. Both staff and students agree that the speed of lecturers’ spoken English exacerbates the problem of understanding by international students.

But, unlike staff, students view their lack of confidence with the language as the source of their problems, forcing them to seek a practical remedy through rote memorisation and textbook copying. To staff, these appear as culturally specific solutions. (Robertson et al., 2000, p. 93).

Sawir (2005) argued that many students from Asian countries, when they arrive to study in English-speaking universities, face multiple challenges, both academic and social. She suggested that communication in the classroom, as well as communication with faculty and administration staff, are important for international students’ learning and social adaptation in a new country. Not surprisingly, students use their prior English language-learning experiences from their home country as the foundation for their study and they “are affected by the kinds
of pedagogies that were used before coming to Australia” (Sawir, 2005, p. 567). Accordingly, she argues, they especially need to be supported during the early period of transition.

Similarly, Wong (2004), who analysed interviews with international students, came to the conclusion that many international students are familiar with a didactic and teacher-centred teaching/learning environment and feel uncomfortable with classroom conversation in English; as a consequence they found studying at Australian universities difficult. Furthermore, students emphasised that their inability to use English language well in the classroom was a major source of learning problems.

A study conducted by Hellstén (2002) suggests that international students’ passivity in class discussions and activities is partly due to constraints resulting from their prior learning. One of her participants believed that during his study of English in China he learnt a lot of words to build and extend his vocabulary, and “really good grammar” was a strong point in his education; by contrast, he acknowledged that his spoken language was not as good as it needed to be for good communication: “we can’t speak for ourselves. We never tried it. And just, uh … our education system … put everything in my brain, not participate. There’s only one way. My teacher says. I listen. That’s it. So I never say. So I can’t speak very well before… (coming here)” (Hellstén, 2002, p. 9). Like other scholars, Hellstén and Prescott (2004) reported international students’ difficulties with language, and their negative feelings whilst using spoken English, suggesting that such negative feelings stopped many Asian internationals students from participating in classroom discussions. One of their research participants explained: “It’s just hard and difficult. I don’t know the feeling, the nuance, I don’t know those in English so I … I am not a good English speaker at all. It’s very uncomfortable when I talk with somebody” (p. 346).

Furthermore, Jandt (2007) argues that language is a real barrier to intercultural communication, “even speakers of the same language do not share exactly the same meaning for every word. That problem is compounded when you attempt translation” (p. 124). Tran (2010) argues that despite the rhetoric of internationalisation of the curriculum and “inclusivity”, this is not always represented in academic practice; further, there is evidence of inconsistency between lecturers’ expectations. She concludes that institutions have to make some effort to better meet international students’ needs, including their learning and writing styles.

In their research into recent changes in practices relating to the teaching of English in Asian countries, Hamid and Nguyen (2016) commented: “Against this dominance of English for communication across the region and the world at large, Asian nations’ English language
policy responses to globalization and to the discourses of English as a global language have resulted in two major education reforms: 1) introducing English earlier in the curriculum; and 2) adopting English as a medium higher education” (pp. 26-27). They suggested that this has only met with mixed success; that is, the policy of itself has not ensured its successful implementation: “not all teachers will necessarily take this direction in their teaching practice. In fact, it is also common to see teachers either resisting policies or subverting policy intentions” (p. 37). The success of such policies, they suggested, relies to a large degree on adequate teacher education and ongoing professional development.

Wen (2016) has discussed ‘The Production-Oriented Approach’ (POA) in China that has been “developed over ten years to overcome the weaknesses in English instruction … The POA tries to integrate the strengths of Western instructional approaches with Chinese contextual features” (p. 526). Although acknowledging the need for ongoing research, Wen posits not only that the approach should also be experimented with in primary and secondary schools, but “is also suitable for other contexts where English is taught as a foreign language such as Japan, South Korea, or Thailand” (Wen, 2016, p. 538).

Having analysed major textbooks for teaching English in both Malaysia and Taiwan, Chung (2017) came to the conclusion that in practice the inclusion of ‘communicative tasks’ – which were generally included in textbooks as supplementary activities – were left up to the personal decision of the teacher.

It is essential to understand the cultural differences embedded into learning and consider that languages difficulties also affect the socialisation of international students. Benzie (2010) argued against the assumption that international students’ English language proficiency will automatically improve as long as they study at university. According to him, ESL students find it difficult to benefit from an immersion experience in the Australian university context. Socialisation is best achieved if students take part fully in the social and cultural life of the university community; but for international students, especially for newcomers to Australia, it can take time to establish a network. Very often international students at the start of their new life in Australia prefer to live with people from their culture and language, which makes their chances of building strong connections with local students low (Benzie, 2010).

Educational systems and ways of thinking are cultural, and as Andrade (2006) stressed, academic staff “often fail to recognise the complexity of language issues confronting foreign students, particularly those associated with writing” (p. 138). Earlier, Fox’s (1994) research demonstrated that what lecturers and tutors identified as the incompetence of international students to analyse and construct logically structured arguments should be linked to cultural
communication styles, not simply a lack of English proficiency. She found that students’ writing reflects explicitly their ways of seeing the world, identities and cultures. For example, Bliss, (1999) argued that some languages have a circular structure, and some a rhetorical style based on philosophy and long cultural traditions of writing that have their beauty in their forms and logic of argumentation. Such considerations led Andrade (2006) to arguing the importance of a faculty or university school more fully understanding alternative modes of expression if a deeper level of multiculturalism is desired in higher educational institutions (p. 138).

De Vita (2000) underlined that learning about such linguistic diversity brings understanding, respect and valuing other than English ways of writing. This means that “what may appear to be an unstructured, disorganised, off the point, or repetitive piece of work, may be written in accordance to the discourse style and logical patterns of the home language” (p. 172). This underscores the importance of universities helping international students learn how to construct an argument in English. In addition, De Vita (2000) has argued that it should be recognized that “the adopted ‘rules’ of what constitutes a well-structured and logically organized essay do have cultural boundaries, and if we want students to apply these rules, then it must be our responsibility to help international students develop essay-writing skills by teaching the local conventions for presenting and structuring material” (De Vita, 2000, p. 171).

Furthermore, some authors have suggested that one of the difficulties that should be addressed is how to teach international students to write in a reflective writing style using the first person. For students who had their schooling in Australia, it is just a matter of learning how to incorporate in one piece of writing the analysis of scholarly articles with personal reflection. For international students who may not have had experience in reflective writing it can cause a problem. Scollon (1994) and Hyland (2001) suggest that the use of first-person pronouns is mostly unacceptable in Asian writing traditions because of the cultural distinction between individual and collective identity. Hyland (2001) explains that the cultural phenomenon is linked closely to the culturally constructed individualistic or collectivistic idea of authorship in academic writing. In the English writing tradition, the “responsibility for the truth of an assertion [rests] heavily on the shoulders of the writer” (Hyland, 2001, p. 1110); in the Asian tradition it is mostly about the notion of collective ownership of knowledge. “Such an identity both exposes the writer and reduces group solidarity, and as a result, L 2 students often view the use of I with misgivings” (Hyland, 2001, p. 1110).
3.3 Hofstede’s Theory and its Implication to Teaching

In this section I will discuss the rationale for using Hofstede’s national cultural dimensions theory as the framework for my data analysis, which includes the interpretation of data from interviews with educators and data from the observations of their practices.

3.3.1 Defining culture in Hofstede’s theory

Before applying Hofstede’s ideas as a framework for my study, I attempt to answer the question “What does culture mean?” The word culture has been used in various ways in everyday language and discourse; we use this word to mean race, nationality or ethnicity, or when we reflect trends in music and art, food and clothing, rituals, traditions, and heritage. The term refers to a myriad of differences between people, including physical and biological characteristics. The number and range of cultural definitions used by researchers are too numerous to count, each one having a relevant claim to a meaningful understanding of the term.

Culture is even interpreted differently from one discipline area to another. Matsumoto (2007) discussed how culture emerges from the interaction of basic human nature and the ecological contexts in which groups exist, and how social roles are determined by culture-specific psychological meanings attributed to situational contexts. He proposed a model that posits three major sources of influence on behaviour: basic human nature (via universal psychological processes), culture (via social roles), and personality (via individual role identities) and argued that individual behaviours are the product of interaction between the three.

In a later study, Matsumoto and Juang (2012) think about culture as “unique human product. They suggest that “cultures have ideas about what is valuable and desirable” (pp. 23-24). In their writing they refer to the work of Geert Hofstede (2001) and acknowledge that his ideas have influenced researchers across disciplinary fields and help to “predict and explain many differences across cultures” (p. 24).

The influence of Hofstede’s works is not limited to the cross-cultural domain. Ten years ago, in 2008, a Wall Street ranking of the most influential business thinkers of the twentieth century ranked Hofstede sixteenth, ahead of Jack Welch and Tom Peters. Geer Hofstede, a Dutch social psychologist and organisational anthropologist, is well known in the academic world and considered to be a ‘father’ of cross-cultural research, having created a new typology and paradigm for studying the culture of countries. His paradigm for the study of cultural differences was originally based on a four-dimensional model of national culture and later updated on the basis of subsequent collection and analyses of cross-cultural data. The
model has been used as a framework for cross-cultural research and has become an extremely widespread method for the study of cultural differences in a broad range of disciplines, including international management, cross-cultural psychology, and education (Minkov & Hofstede, 2011). Hofstede formulated his own definition of culture as early as 1980 and continues to use it:

Culture is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others. … It is always a collective phenomenon, but it can be connected to different collectives. Within each collective there is a variety of individuals. If characteristics of individuals are imagined as varying according to some bell curve the variation between cultures is the shift of the bell curve when one moves from one society to the other. (Hofstede, 1980, p. 25; Hofstede, 2011, p. 3).

He uses the expression ‘programming’ in a metaphorical or allegorical sense. For instance, with a computer, people use the words hardware and software, where software is an operative system which uses programs that allow it to work in a certain format; in application to human society, culture becomes an essence of certain characteristics, values, rituals, beliefs, attitudes and rules that distinguish one collective of people from others. Hofstede believes that culture influences a person from childhood:

if you grow up in France you have a different ‘mental program’ in your mind than if you grow up in Germany, and in that respect you are not equal (in your culture). You benefit enormously by understanding difference, they enjoy doing things together realising that one person is better in something and another person is better in something else. Misunderstandings arise in certain areas and if you expect these differences you can laugh about it and work with it. (Hofstede, 2011).

In referring to culture as a “collective programming of the mind”, Hofstede (1980, 2001) argued that it “resembles the concept of ‘habitus’ proposed by the French sociologist Bourdieu” (Bourdieu, 1980, pp. 88-89). Hofstede translated and applied Bourdieu’s work into his own interpretation of cultures – “certain conditions of existence produce a habitus, a system of permanent and transferable tendencies. A habitus … functions as the basis for practices and images … which can be collectively orchestrated without an actual conductor” (Hofstede, 2001, p. 4). He added that “Learning through the transfer of collective mental programs goes on during our entire lives, but as most of it deals with fundamental facts of life, we learn most when we are very young” (p. 4).

Hofstede argued that the term culture has specific meaning in the area of academia; for example, in anthropology it refers to tribes or ethnic groups, whereas in sociology or
management it can have different referents. The term can also be applied to the genders, to generations, or to social classes (Hofstede, 2001, p. 10). Furthermore,

societal, national and gender cultures, which children acquire from their earliest youth onwards, are much deeper rooted in the human mind than occupational cultures acquired at school, or than organizational cultures acquired on the job. The latter are exchangeable when people take a new job. Societal cultures reside in (often unconscious) values, in the sense of broad tendencies to prefer certain states of affairs over others. (Hofstede, 2011, p. 3).

Jones and Alony (2007), in their interpretation of Hostede’s work on dimensions, stressed that “culture is not something that is easily acquired: it is a slow process of growing into a society” (p. 409). It includes, they argued:

- learning values (dominant beliefs and attitudes),
- partaking of rituals (collective activities),
- modelling against heroes (role models), and
- understanding symbols (myths, legends, dress, jargon, lingo…). (Jones & Alony 2007, p. 409).

These components of culture are acquired from birth. They are influenced by family, school, religion, workplace, friends, television, newspapers and books, among other sources.

### 3.3.2 Background /evolution of Hofstede’s national cultural dimensions

Some background to Hofstede’s model is useful because of the long history relating to the introduction and evolution of his dimensions (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede and Bond, 1988; Hofstede and Minkov, 2010, Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010) This has been succinctly provided by Hofstede himself in conjunction with Minkov (2012):

Geert Hofstede’s (1980) first monograph presented a four-dimensional model of national cultures, which provided an extremely popular research paradigm in the field of comparative cross-cultural management studies. All of the four dimensions in that model were derived from Hofstede’s analysis of an existing IBM employee database. In a subsequent publication, Hofstede (1991) added a fifth dimension to his model. It was based on a study of students’ values in 23 countries around the world, using a Chinese Values Survey (CVS), initiated by Michael Harris Bond. The results of the
CVS analysis were published by the Chinese Culture Connection (1987), a consortium of researchers for whom Bond acted as a spokesman. (Minkov & Hofstede, 2012, p. 3).

The first four dimensions include: Power Distance, Individualism versus Collectivism, Masculinity versus Femininity, and Uncertainty Avoidance.

Michael Bond, a Canadian, introduced in 1987 the fifth dimension named ‘Confucian Work Dynamism’. This dimension essentially relates to the teachings of Confucius: “it contrasted dynamic, future-oriented items on its positive pole to static, past- and present-oriented ones on the negative pole” (Minkov & Hofstede, 2012, p. 3). In 1991 Hofstede adopted this dimension and renamed it as “Long-Term versus Short-Term Orientation (LTO). Although the subject of extensive debate over the ensuing years, it remains as the fifth dimension. Many years later, in 2010, Hofstede added a sixth dimension based on the work of Minkov: Indulgence versus Restraint (Minkov & Hofstede, 2011).

Minkov and Hofstede collaborated extensively over several years. Further, Minkov et al. (2017) provided new data of measuring Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV-COLL) as one of the dimensions of national culture. Their research was based on “large probabilistic samples: 52,974 respondents from 56 countries, adequately representing the national cultures of all inhabited continents” (p. 386) and the research’s finding concludes that “IDV-COLL differences are remarkably stable as our measure is strongly correlated with measures that are several decades old” (p. 400). Furthermore, the research provided strong evidence to support the validity of Hofstede’s Individualism/Collectivism dimension, “internal reliability, and predictive properties” (p. 401). Minkov continued his work on upgrading the data for dimensions and published a wide range of articles by himself and with colleagues (Minkov & Hofstede, 2012; Minkov, 2018; Minkov et al., 2018).

The dimensions are known as Hofstede’s “model of national dimensions”, but have seen a number of iterations. Hofstede’s (1994) description of the first four is quoted at length:

**Power Distance.**

This is the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. This represents inequality (more versus less), but defined from below, not from above. It suggests that a society’s level of inequality is endorsed by the followers as much as by the leaders. Power and inequality, of course, are extremely fundamental facts of any society and … ‘all societies are unequal, but some are more unequal than others’. … People’s behaviour in the work situation is strongly affected by their previous experiences in the family and in the school. … In order to understand
superiors, colleagues and subordinates in another country we have to know something about families and schools in that country. (Hofstede, 1994, p. 2).

**Individualism versus Collectivism.**

Individualism on the one side versus its opposite, collectivism, is the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups. On the individualist side, we find societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him/herself and his/her immediate family. On the collectivist side, we find societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, often extended families (with uncles, aunts and grandparents) which continue protecting them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty. The word “collectivism” in this sense has no political meaning: it refers to the group, not to the state. Again, the issue addressed by this dimension is an extremely fundamental one, regarding all societies in the world. (Hofstede, 1994, p. 3).

**Masculinity versus Femininity.**

Masculinity versus its opposite, femininity, refers to the distribution of roles between the sexes which is another fundamental issue for any society to which a range of solutions are found. The IBM studies [which he undertook] revealed that: (a) women’s values differ less among societies than men’s values; (b) men’s values from one country to another contain a dimension from very assertive and competitive and maximally different from women’s values on the one side, to modest and caring and similar to women’s values on the other. The assertive pole has been called “masculine” and the modest, caring pole “feminine”. The women in feminine countries have the same modest, caring values as the men; in the masculine countries they are somewhat assertive and competitive, but not as much as the men, so that these countries show a gap between men’s values and women’s values. (Hofstede, 1994, p. 3).

**Uncertainty Avoidance.**

This fourth dimension was found in the IBM studies and in one of the two student studies. It deals with a society’s tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity: it ultimately refers to man’s search for truth. It indicates to what extent a culture programs its members to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unstructured situations. Unstructured situations are novel, unknown, surprising and different from usual. Uncertainty avoiding cultures try to minimize the possibility of such situations by strict laws and rules, safety and security measures, and on the philosophical and religious level by a belief in absolute truth; ‘there can only be one truth and we have it’. People
in uncertainty avoiding countries are also more emotional, and motivated by inner nervous energy. The opposite type, uncertainty accepting cultures, are more tolerant of opinions different from what they are used to; they try to have as few rules as possible, and on the philosophical and religious level they are relativist and allow many currents to flow side by side. People within these cultures are more phlegmatic and contemplative, and not expected by their environment to express emotions. (Hofstede, 1994, p. 3).

The fifth and sixth dimensions will be discussed shortly. What follows now is Hofstede’s (1994) elaboration of the first four dimensions with respect to children in their family and their school (and ultimately the workplace). This can best be seen with reference to Tables 3.2 and Table 3.3 below. (Table 3.3 was constructed by myself using Hofstede’s data from his website.)
Hofstede’s Four Dimensions in Relation to the Family, School and Workplace

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power Distance</th>
<th>Collectivism versus Individualism</th>
<th>Femininity versus Masculinity</th>
<th>Uncertainty Avoidance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small power distance societies</td>
<td>Collectivist societies</td>
<td>Feminine Societies</td>
<td>Weak uncertainty avoidance societies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large power distance societies</td>
<td>Individualist societies</td>
<td>Masculine societies</td>
<td>Strong uncertainty avoidance societies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the family:

- Children encouraged to have a will of their own
- Parents treated as equals

- Children educated towards obedience to parents
- Parents treated as superiors

- Education towards "we" consciousness
- Opinions predetermined by group
- Obligations to family or in group: - harmony - respect - shame

- Education towards "I" consciousness
- Private opinion expected
- Obligations to self: - self-interest - self-actualization - guilt

- Stress on relationships
- Solidarity
- Resolution of conflicts by compromise and negotiation

- Stress on achievement
- Competition
- Resolution of conflicts by fighting them out

- What is different, is ridiculous or curious
- Higher anxiety and stress
- Showing of aggression and emotions accepted

- Ease, indolence, low stress
- Aggression and emotions not shown

- What is different, is dangerous
- Showing of aggression and emotions accepted

- Higher anxiety and stress
- Showing of aggression and emotions accepted
### At School:

- **Student-centered education (initiative)**
  - Learning represents personal "wisdom" from teacher (guru)
- **Teacher-centered education (order)**
  - Learning represents impersonal "truth"
- **Learning is for the young only**
  - Learn how to do
- **Permanence education**
  - Learn how to learn
- **Average student is norm**
  - System rewards students' social adaptation
  - Student's failure at school is relatively minor accident
- **Best students are norm**
  - System rewards students' academic performance
  - Student's failure at school is disaster may lead to suicide
- **Students comfortable with**:
  - Unstructured learning situations
  - Vague objectives
  - Broad assignments
  - No time tables
  - Teachers may say "I don't know"
- **Teachers may say** "I don't know" in:
  - Structured learning situations
  - Precise objectives
  - Detailed assignments
  - Strict time tables
  - Teachers should have all the answers

### At Workplace:

- **Hierarchy means an inequality of roles, established for convenience**
- **Hierarchy means existential inequality**
- **Value standards differ for in-group and out-groups: particularism**
  - Other people are seen as
- **Same value standards apply to all: universalism**
  - Other people seen as
- **Assertiveness**
  - Ridiculed
  - Undersell yourself
  - Stress on life quality
  - Intuition
- **Assertiveness appreciated**
  - Oversell yourself
  - Stress on careers
  - Decisiveness
- **Dislike of rules written or unwritten**
- **Less formalization and standardization**
- **Emotional need for rules written or unwritten**
  - More formalization and standardization
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subordinates expect to be consulted</th>
<th>Subordinates expect to be told what to do</th>
<th>members of their group</th>
<th>potential resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideal boss is resourceful democrat</td>
<td>Ideal boss is benevolent autocrat (good father)</td>
<td>Relationship prevails over task</td>
<td>Task prevails over relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moral model of employer-employee relationship</td>
<td>Calculative model of employer-employee relationship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Hofstede, 1994, pp. 2-4).


The bar graphs in Table 3.3 provide a visual representation of Hofstede’s national cultural dimensions with respect to selected Asian countries. Each of them has been expressed on a scale from 0 to 100.
Table 3.3

Bar Graphs: Power Distance, Individualism/Collectivism, Masculinity/Femininity, Uncertainty Avoidance Dimensions

With reference to the above two Tables, it can be seen that in Asian countries like China, Malaysia, India and Vietnam, there is some evidence (Table 3.3) that the **Power Distance** dimension is relatively high. By contrast, it is much lower in Australia. Where the Power Distance dimension is high, as in some Asian countries, children work within a more teacher-centred environment where the teacher is the ‘guru’ and obedience is demanded. By contrast, in Australia, schooling is generally more student-centred and initiative is valued more highly; there tends to be an acceptance of children having a will of their own, and the teacher is more of a facilitator (Table 3.2).

Table 3.3 indicates that the **Individualism Collectivism** dimension is extremely high in Australia compared to other Asian countries. Table 3.2 indicates that collectivist societies place a stronger emphasis on ‘learning how to do’ compared with ‘learning how to learn’ in more individualist societies. In Asian countries there is much emphasis on the ‘group’, respect, harmony, and shame (‘saving face’). In Western countries there tends to be more emphasis on self-interest, self-actualisation and guilt (as opposed to ‘shame’).

Table 3.3 indicates that the differences between Australia and China on the **Masculinity versus Femininity** dimension are not as strong as they are in the previous two dimensions. China is only marginally higher in the masculinity spectrum than Australia, with other Asian countries in the feminine range. Hofstede, in Table 3.2, indicates that those countries that are strongest on the Femininity dimension focus on the ‘average’ student, whilst those more strongly on the Masculinity dimension tend to focus on the brighter or higher achieving students. There is however a commonly held perception that in China the focus is on the higher achieving students, whereas in Australia, whilst these students are certainly not ignored, much teaching is geared toward the ‘average’ student; yet the scores of both countries on this dimension are similar.

It will be recalled that Hofstede above suggested that **Uncertainty Avoidance** cultures tend to regulate with excessive rules and a belief that ‘there can only be one truth and we have it’. By contrast, Uncertainty Accepting cultures are more tolerant of different opinions, philosophical beliefs and religions, and there are generally fewer rules. It might not be surprising that Malaysia is very strongly an Uncertainty Avoidance culture. China, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Taiwan, on the other hand, are significantly more Uncertainty Accepting – considerably more so than Australia. Perhaps the strongly embedded Confucian philosophy embedded in China and Taiwan, might go some way in explaining their respective positions on the scale. But then Indonesia which, like Malaysia, is largely Muslim, is also an Uncertainty
Accepting culture. Further, it can be seen that Vietnam (which, like China, is a Communist country) is even more an Uncertainty Avoidance culture than Malaysia. Clearly, the reasons for these differences are much more complicated than mere labels might suggest. To take Chinese students as an example, Table 3.2 suggests that Uncertainty Accepting students are comfortable with unstructured learning situations, broad assignments, and teachers saying ‘I don’t know’ – all of which, anecdotally, it will be seen, the participants in later chapters said did not apply in general to Chinese students. Hofstede (2011), certainly, commented that the Uncertainty Avoidance dimension has a lower score “in English speaking, Nordic and Chinese culture countries” (p. 11). Minkov (2018) provided more insight, suggesting “an analysis across countries from all continents reveals quite clearly that societal preference for strict rules and laws is an aspect of COLL [Collectivism], and is not related to national measures of anxiety or neuroticism as UA [Uncertainty] theory predicts. This explains why, despite their low UA [Uncertainty Avoidance] scores, the South and Southeast Asian countries have extremely strict rules in domains that their COLL [Collectivism] cultures have traditionally considered important” (p. 250). The bottom line is that the Uncertainty Avoidance dimension does not correlate strongly with Asian countries in comparison to Individualism / Collectivism.

On July 16, 2014 at the 22nd IACCP (International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology) World Congress, Geert Hofstede discussed the importance of learning from culture. He underlined that the analysis of Chinese Values Survey data correlated with three dimensions (Power Distance, Individualism/Collectivism and Masculinity/Femininity) but the Chinese Values Survey did not find the presence of the dimension of Uncertainty Avoidance, “because the relevant questions were not included” and this, he suggested, was clear evidence of “the effect of the researchers’ culture on the [research] outcome” (Hofstede, 2016, p. 29). Initially, the survey for the IBM study was structured with questions relating to Western countries; it was not constructed with reference to Asian culture and countries.

The following discussion relates to the two later dimensions: the fifth (Long-Term versus Short-Term Orientation) and sixth (Restraint versus Indulgence).

Hofstede’s (2011) elucidation of his fifth dimension, Long-Term versus and Short-Term Orientation, is clarified in the following Table 3.4:
Table 3.4

*Long-Term versus Short-Term Orientation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short-Term Oriented Societies</th>
<th>Long-Term Oriented Societies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most important events in life occurred in the past or take place now</td>
<td>Most important events in life will occur in the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal steadiness and stability: a good person is always the same</td>
<td>A good person adapts to the circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are universal guidelines about what is good and evil</td>
<td>What is good and evil depends upon the circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditions are sacrosanct</td>
<td>Traditions are adaptable to changed circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family life guided by imperatives</td>
<td>Family life guided by shared tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supposed to be proud of one’s country</td>
<td>Trying to learn from other countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service to others is an important goal</td>
<td>Thrift and perseverance are important goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social spending and consumption</td>
<td>Large savings, funds available for investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students attribute success and failure to luck</td>
<td>Students attribute success to effort and failure to lack of effort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow or no economic growth of poor countries</td>
<td>Fast economic growth of countries up till a level of prosperity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Hofstede, 2011a, p. 15)</td>
<td>(Hofstede, 2011a, p. 15)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Hofstede presented differences between Long-Term and Short-Term Orientation Cultures, in relation to the family, school and the work place as follows in Table 3.6 below:
### Table 3.5

**Long-Term Orientation and Short-Term Orientation (at family, schools and work place)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In the family and at school:</th>
<th>Short-Term Orientation</th>
<th>Long-Term Orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“In short-term-oriented cultures, children experience two sets of norms. One is towards respecting social codes and being seen as a stable individual; the other is towards immediate need gratification, spending, and sensitivity to social trends in consumption (‘keeping up with the Joneses’). There is a potential tension between these two sets of norms that leads to a great variety of individual behaviours. In these cultures, old age is seen as an unhappy period, but it starts late” (p. 497).</td>
<td>“In long-term-oriented cultures, family life is primarily a pragmatic arrangement, but supposed to be based on real affection and with attention paid to small children. The children learn thrift, not expecting immediate gratification of their desires, tenacity in the pursuit of whatever goals, and humility. Self-assertion is not encouraged. Old age is seen as a happy period, and it starts early” (pp. 496-497).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| At work place: | “In short-term-oriented cultures, main work values are freedom, rights, achievement, and thinking for oneself. Personal loyalties vary with business needs. The focus is on this year’s or this quarter’s profits, and managers and workers are psychologically in two different camps” (p. 497). | “In long-term-oriented cultures, main work values are learning, honesty, addictiveness, accountability and self-discipline. One invests in life-long personal networks (‘guanxi’). Leisure time is not important; the focus is on market position, and owner/managers and workers share the same aspirations” (p. 497). |


In the third edition of the book “Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind” Geert Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede and Michael Minkov discussed their sixth dimension, Indulgence versus Restraing: “Indulgence stands for a tendency to allow relatively free
gratification of basic and natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun. Its opposite pole, restraint, reflects a conviction that such gratification needs to be curbed and regulated by strict social norms. As a cultural dimension, indulgence versus restraint rests on clearly defined research items that measure very specific phenomena. Note that the gratification of desires on the indulgence side refers to enjoying life and having fun, not to gratifying human desires in general” (Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind, 2010, Indulgence versus Restraint as a Societal Dimension section, para.1)

Hofstede’s elucidation of the sixth dimension is presented in Table 3.6:

Table 3.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indulgence</th>
<th>Restraint</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher percentage of people declaring themselves very happy</td>
<td>Fewer very happy people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A perception of personal life control</td>
<td>A perception of helplessness: what happens to me is not my own doing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom of speech seen as important</td>
<td>Freedom of speech is not a primary concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher importance of leisure</td>
<td>Lower importance of leisure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More likely to remember positive emotions</td>
<td>Less likely to remember positive emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In countries with educated populations, higher birthrates</td>
<td>In countries with educated populations, lower birthrates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More people actively involved in sports</td>
<td>Fewer people actively involved in sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In countries with enough food, higher percentages of obese people</td>
<td>In countries with enough food, fewer obese people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In wealthy countries, lenient sexual norms</td>
<td>In wealthy countries, stricter sexual norms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining order in the nation is not given a high priority</td>
<td>Higher number of police officers per 100,000 population (Hofstede, 2011a, p. 16).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above Tables relating to the fifth and sixth dimensions will be discussed in relation to the following bar graphs relating to Long-Term versus Short Term, and Indulgence versus Restraint Cultures.

Table 3.7

*Bar Graphs Relating to Long-Term/Short Term, and Indulgence/Restraint Cultures*

---

With reference to Tables 3.4, 3.5 and 3.7 above it can be seen that, compared to Australia, **Long-Term Orientation** is much stronger in Asian countries in general, particularly in Taiwan and China. Where Long-Term Orientation is high there is an emphasis on children learning to be modest about their achievements and waiting until their teacher or older member of the family provides recognition of their work and learning. Further, children and students are not expected to have immediate gratification of their desires: they learn to control their behaviour, and modesty is praised while self-assertion is discouraged. They learn to value accountability and self-discipline, and learn how to adapt to their environment. Children and students begin learning how to develop an understanding of the importance of life-long personal networks (‘guanxi’) – considered important in adult life – early on through a sense of loyalty and respect to their school. By contrast, in Australia, which is comparatively strong on the **Short-Term Orientation** dimension, schooling is more generally geared towards providing students with learning that focuses on being seen as a ‘stable individual’. More than in Asia, Australian children and students expect to have immediate gratification for their efforts and work.

With reference to Tables 3.6 and 3.7 above it can be seen that, on the **Restraint/Indulgence** dimension, Australia is very high on the Indulgence scale compared to the lowest scoring country, China, and, indeed all other Asian countries. In countries that are high on the Indulgence spectrum, such as Australia, leisure is more highly valued than in countries that emphasise Restraint. Indulgence is particularly associated with Western countries and countries where there is a high degree of freedom of speech; at the classroom level, students are encouraged to participate in discussions and express their thoughts and opinions. By contrast, in Asian countries that are relatively high on the Restraint dimension there is more emphasis on self-discipline and less encouragement on classroom discussion in which students are invited to express their own opinions.

### 3.4 Application of the Hofstede’s National Cultural Dimensions

It must be stressed that Hofstede’s six dimensions continue today to be the subject of debate and criticism. At the same time, they also have relatively strong support in academic fields and are applied in diverse contexts. Several writers in the 1980s and 1990s used his pioneering work in their own research (including Abu-Saad & Hendrix, 1995; Garant, 1997; Fisher & Waldrip, 1999). This century, other writers have drawn on his work in cross-cultural communication, teaching and learning, and in the educational management sector (Hrvatić,
For example, his work has been used with respect to blended learning and teaching (Cronjé, 2011); and culture and its influence on communication style (den Brok et al. (2002), den Brok & Levy, 2005; den Brok, Tartwijk, Wubbels & Veldman, 2010; Loh & Teo, 2017; Razak, Darmawan & Keeves, 2010; Richards, & Lee Ross, 2004).

Finally, acknowledgement must be made of criticisms of Hofstede’s work. These include that of Moulettes (2007) who argued that in Hofstede’s studies (1980, 2001) women’s voices have been missing, referring specifically to “the choice of samples: the essentialistic construction of masculine and feminine values; and the idea of social gender roles and how this is supposed to correspond to the dominant values in society as being ‘masculine’ or feminine” (p.445). Accordingly, Agneta Moulettes suggested the need for “further research to deconstruct more carefully the MAS [Masculinity/ Femininity dimension] (p. 452). This was addressed by Hofstede and others in subsequent works (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010; Hofstede, 2011) with a change to the definition of Masculinity/Femininity dimension:

Masculinity versus its opposite, Femininity, again as a societal, not as an individual characteristic, refers to the distribution of values between the genders which is another fundamental issue for any society, to which a range of solutions can be found. The IBM studies revealed that (a) women's values differ less among societies than men's values; (b) men's values from one country to another contain a dimension from very assertive and competitive and maximally different from women's values on the one side, to modest and caring and similar to women's values on the other. The assertive pole has been called 'masculine' and the modest, caring pole 'feminine'. The women in feminine countries have the same modest, caring values as the men; in the masculine countries they are somewhat assertive and competitive, but not as much as the men, so that these countries show a gap between men's values and women's values. (Hofstede, 2011, p. 12).

Jones (2007) has been critical of Hofstede’s approach to culture, arguing that although Hofstede (1998) does not agree with him, “many researchers find culture to be a dynamic, constantly changing field. Cultures are merging, technology is changing the way we communicate, and globalisation is changing the way we trade and interface. Therefore, researchers must keep abreast of these changes to ensure practitioners are provided the best and latest tools ensuring global cooperation. More research is needed to evaluate culture in
terms of contemporary standards” (Jones, p. 7). Jones (2007) also advocated the need for further research “to better explore the dimensions proposed by Hofstede and Hofstede and Bond to determine whether more can be added” (p. 7).

These and other criticisms will undoubtedly continue to be argued and debated as educators and others grapple with notions of culture in an increasingly globalized world. Hofstede himself has, over several decades, re-visited, revised, and expanded his original four dimensions (Hofstede, 2011, Hofstede 2016; Minkov & Hofstede, 2011, Minkov, 2017). Hofstede said:

Culture change basic enough to invalidate the country dimension index rankings, or even the relevance of the dimensional model, will need either a much longer period – say, 50 to 100 years – or extremely dramatic outside events. Many differences between national cultures at the end of the 20th century were already recognizable in the years 1900, 1800 and 1700 if not earlier. There is no reason why they should not play a role until 2100 or beyond. (Hofstede 2011a, p. 22).

And Minkov and Hofstede wrote:

There is no one best way of constructing dimensions, be they cultural, psychological, organizational or other. Different approaches to data collection and data analysis will yield different dimensions. Asking which of them are true or right in an absolute sense is a meaningless question. The correct question is how coherent these dimensions are (they should be easily understood by the consumers of social science) and of what use they could be (they should predict and explain interesting and important phenomena). The enormous popularity of Hofstede’s model is not due to the fact that it is the absolutely right one or the true one. It stems from the model’s coherence and predictive capability. (Minkov & Hofstede, 2011, p. 17).

3.5 Summary

The discussion in this chapter of culture and language, followed by a presentation of Hofstede’s National Cultural Dimensions model, inform the following chapters with respect to the presentation and analyses of the interviews and observations undertaken with university academics working in pre-school teacher education. In particular, Hofstede’s model provides a framework for gaining greater clarity of understanding with respect to the research findings, especially with respect to interpreting the participants’ experiences as educators and their comments on international Asian students’ learning. That is, the model provides a useful lens
for viewing and conjecturing on the cultural and educational issues that are raised and is so doing highlights the role of culture in teaching and learning. Indeed, it might be postulated that the model, or an adaptation of it, might assist in providing professional development for educators working with Asian international students in university contexts in Australia.
Chapter 4  
Research Methodology and Design

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 built on Chapter 2 and presented further literature related to the teaching of international students at Australian universities. Chapter 4 introduces the theoretical philosophy, conceptual framework, methodology, and research design employed to drive my research. At the outset it is worth repeating my research question: How do academics in Australia construct their everyday practice when teaching international pre-service teaching students from Asian countries?

This chapter consists of six sections. The first section explains the epistemology and ontology of the research. The second section provides an overview of the research strategies and explains the reasoning for the preferred methodology. The third section provides the structure of the research design and an overview of the research process. Section four describes the research instruments, the sampling techniques and the data analysis process. Section five provides the reader with ideas about sample size and participant selection criteria, as well as introducing the setting of the investigation. The last section gives an overview of the benefits and limitations of the research tools employed in this study.

4.2 Framework for the Study

Creswell (2007, 2009, 2013, 2015) described research as an intellectual activity and systematic investigation of inquiry that has distinguishing features such as data collection, data analyses and interpretation of the data and recommendations or suggestions that result from the study. To make this kind of intellectual activity valid, it has to be grounded in theory, some paradigm or philosophical idea. A wide range of comprehensive theoretical paradigms have been discussed in the academic literature for at least the last 50 years and they have formed the basis for research frameworks.

After years of discussion around a theoretical definition of world views, scholars have produced a number of different terms. Constructs such as ‘paradigm’, ‘theoretical idea’, ‘approach to the study’ and ‘epistemological stance’ have become terminological “synonyms” and give the researcher flexibility in using various terms. However, such variety in terminology may lead to confusion. For example, Denzin and Lincoln (2011) have used the term ‘paradigms’ when they describe the theoretical world views that researchers used as a
foundation for their inquiries in different academic fields and labelled them as: positivism and post-positivism, constructivism-interpretivism, critical (Marxist, emancipatory) theory and feminist-poststructuralism. Similarly, Lincoln, Lyngham and Guba (2011) use the term “alternative inquiry paradigms” which includes “positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, constructivism and participatory paradigms” (p. 96).

Creswell (2009) has identified them as “post-positivism, constructivism, advocacy and participatory, and pragmatism” (Creswell, 2009, p. 6). Crotty (1998) does not use the term paradigm, but prefers the term “epistemological stances” (pp. 8-9) which he identified as constructivism, subjectivism and interpretivism. Scholars who are working in the fields of social science, humanities and education are likely to apply different paradigms or epistemological stances that harmonise the research purpose and aim (Denzin, & Lincoln, 2011). Thus, paradigm, or in other words, worldview, become important as they frame the research and motivate the researcher to choose a particular methodology, methods, and design for inquiry.

Furthermore, Mertens (2005) believes that the selection of paradigm influences the way in which the knowledge has been deliberated and understood by the researcher (Mertens, 2005, p. 2). Guba and Lincoln (1994; 2000) and Guba (1990) see paradigm as “a basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choice of method, but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.107). Both ontology and epistemology are highly abstract principles. Ontology drives both researcher and philosopher to answer questions such as: “‘What is the nature of “knowledge”? Or, what is the nature of “reality”?’” and epistemology is looking at resolving questions such as: “‘What is the nature of the relationship between the knower (the inquirer) and the known (or knowable)?’”, and methodology provides the researcher with tools to know the world, or gain knowledge of it: “How should the inquirer go about finding out knowledge?” (Guba, 1990, p. 18).

In this chapter I will explain the research paradigm that I applied in order to understand educators’ insights into their practice and their reflections on their teaching of international pre-service teacher students from the Asia Pacific region at two schools of education at Australian universities.

During my career as a researcher in the history field I was confident in using an historical research approach based on the paradigm that Denzin and Lincoln (2011) called the critical paradigm (Marxist, emancipatory). I have expertise and skill in data collection methods and interpretation. In this thesis however I have applied my skills and knowledge in a new
research environment and conducted my research on the basis of a constructivist approach. My previous education and academic experience directed me towards being a neutral and objective investigator. However, after reflection on qualitative research and qualitative data analyses, I became comfortable with a subjective approach and saw the benefits of applying this paradigm, which allows for understanding rich data that comes from individuals. My understanding of how to conduct my research is in accordance with Merten’s (2014) point of view:

constructivist researchers go one step further by rejecting the notion that there is an objective reality that can be known and taking the stance that the researcher’s goal is to understand the multiple social constructions of meaning and knowledge. (Merten, 2014, p. 18).

Creswell (2002; 2009; 2012; 2013) underlines that research has to be done in logical stages and must be organised well. The procedure of inquiry matches the ontology and epistemology of the study and makes clear the declaration about what is believed to be researched (ontology) and what has to be understood about the inquiry (epistemology). Methodology defines what tools the researcher may apply to reach the goal of the investigation. To underpin this study, several important ontological, epistemological and methodological decisions were made.

Epistemologically, a fundamental assumption of this study is that knowledge is socially and culturally constructed and this is why my research follows the constructivist interpretative framework as described by Denzin and Lincoln (1994, 2003, 2008; 2011). I decided to use constructivist ideas about linking both researcher and inquiry as a means of giving meaning to data that was reconstructed and interpreted. Schwandt, 2000) has asserted that “constructivism means that human beings do not find or discover knowledge so much as construct or make it” (p. 197). In addition, I have brought to this study my own understanding and subjectivity.

How do constructivist ideas link to the interpretive research? Interpretivism has sometimes been referred to as constructivism as “it emphasizes the ability of the individual to construct meaning” (Mack, 2010, p. 7). Hence, the ontological assumptions of interpretivism come to the idea that “social reality is seen by multiple people and these multiple people interpret events differently leaving multiple perspectives of an incident” (Mack, 2010, p. 8). As Cohen et al. (2007) emphasised, interpretive research or study based on the “interpretive paradigm, in contrast to its normative counterpart, is characterized by a concern for the individual” (p. 19). Further, according to Cohen et al. (2007):
The interpretive paradigm, in contrast to its normative counterpart, is characterized by a concern for the individual. Whereas normative studies are positivist, all theories constructed within the context of the interpretive paradigm tend to be anti-positivist. As we have seen, the central endeavour in the context of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience. To retain the integrity of the phenomena being investigated, efforts are made to get inside the person and to understand from within. The imposition of external form and structure is resisted, since this reflects the viewpoint of the observer as opposed to that of the actor directly involved. (Cohen et al., 2007, p.19).

The role of the researcher in interpretivist research is to understand, explain, and elucidate social reality through the point of views and experience of different participants.

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) underline that “all research is interpretive; it is guided by the researcher’s set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied” (p. 31). A similar notion is expressed by Schwandt (2000) when he reminds us that the researcher is influenced by ideas that come from every interpretive paradigm; these ideas influence the choice of questions the researcher asks, as well as the interpretations the researcher makes in all methods of investigation. In the present study, in order to understand the educators’ perceptions of their teaching practice with respect to international students from Asian countries in Australian universities, I intended to reconstruct the story from the interviews, talks with educators (Koch, 1998) and interpret the variety of the data gathered from the observation of their practices and artefacts (Denzin, 2013).

4.2.1 Interpretive qualitative research

The qualitative approach adopted was one that “situated activity that locates the observer in the world” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p. 3) and provides the researcher with deep understanding of the educators’ perception of their teaching in a particular setting and with a particular group of people. Creswell (2009) has pointed out that “strategies of inquiry are types of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods of designs or models that provide specific direction for procedures in a research design” (p. 11). In my interpretive research, I used the qualitative approach to design my investigation. The rationale for selecting the qualitative approach for my study comes from a number of writers, including Patton (1990; 2002), Creswell (2009), and Erickson (2011; 2012). They all advise to use the qualitative approach if the aim of the investigation is to find out what people do, know, think and feel (Patton, 2002);
in Creswell’s (2009) words “the qualitative researcher tends to collect data in the field at the site, where participants experience the issue or problem under study” (Creswell, 2009, p. 175). From this data, the researcher interprets the meaning of the information drawing on personal reflections and past experience of reading the relevant literature and engaging in some other study. In the case of my research, such a format of investigation provides me with a deeper understanding of educators’ perceptions of their practice with respect to pre-service teacher education students from Asian countries who are studying at Australian universities in schools of education. Furthermore, as one of the qualitative research characteristics is the centrality of interpretation of the data, this allows me to have a holistic understanding of the individual opinions of my participants, and apprehend their perceptions, beliefs and feelings.

Discussion about ‘types’ of qualitative research design, such as case studies, grounded theory research and narrative inquiry, is widely considered in many theoretical works (Creswell, 2007; Creswell, 2013; Stake, 1995; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Best and Khan (2006) list them as the ethnographic, case study, phenomenological, constructivist, participant observational and others (p. 246). The type of qualitative approach I used is in accordance with Erickson (2011), who stressed that “qualitative inquiry seeks to discover and to describe in narrative reporting what particular people do in their everyday lives and what their actions means to them. It identifies meaning – relevant kinds of things in the world – kinds of people, kinds of actions, kinds of beliefs that make a difference for meaning” (p. 43).

In considering the range of qualitative research design formats available, I am more comfortable applying a small-scale interpretive narrative research format with a reasonable number of participants. Erickson (2012) claims that “the essential purpose of qualitative research is to document in detail the conduct of the everyday events and to identify the meanings that those events have for those who participate in them and for those who witness them” (p. 1451). He believes that qualitative research in education is appropriate to use if a researcher wants to get “detailed information about implementation; to identify the nuances of subjective understanding that motivate various participants in a setting; to identify and understand change over time” (Erickson, 2012, p. 1451).
4.2.2 Research question

As stated at the outset of this chapter, in my research I wanted to understand:

*How do academics in Australia construct their everyday practice when teaching international pre-service teaching students from Asian countries?* In order to answer this overarching question, I have considered four secondary questions:

- What changes, if any, do educators make in their practice when they teach international students?
- What are educators’ views regarding the factors that affect international students’ success or failure in academic courses?
- How aware are educators of the significant difficulties, identified in academic literature, that international students experience when learning in English-speaking countries?
  The literature suggests that such difficulties might include, among others:
  - learning and living in a different culture
  - learning in a foreign university context
  - learning while developing English language proficiency
  - learning the academic disciplinary discourse
- What pedagogies do educators apply in teaching international students?

The aim of this study was to look at the influence of culture on the pedagogy of teaching and its impact on the teaching strategy used by educators in the process of teaching international students in Australian higher education. I therefore focused on the individual approach of educators teaching a class where international students were only a small proportion of the student population. Of course, another possibility is researching the approach of educators where the majority or all the class members are international students.

Janesick (2003) highlighted that the clear setting and formulation of the research question helps the researcher to decide on the best or most appropriate methodology to employ in order to collect the richest data from different sources. “Once the researcher has a question, a site, a participator or a number of participants, and a reasonable period of time in which to undertake the study, he or she needs to decide what data collection strategies are most suited to the study” (Janesick, 2003, p. 54). Furthermore, the researcher aims to understand the main principles of the process of the whole system “rather than proving some notions” (p. 54).

To sum up, I based my thesis on qualitative strategies of inquiry and will apply a constructivist worldview which makes it possible to “not create meaning’ but “construct meaning” (Crotty, 1998, p. 43-44).
4.2.3 Research setting and participants’ selection

The following section describes the setting for this study and explains why this setting was chosen. A brief explanation of the selected institutions is offered to establish the context of the study and explain their relevance to the research question.

In the last decade international students from Asian countries have increased in number in university schools or faculties of education in Melbourne. As shown in Chapter 1, this has placed educators in a position where they have been compelled to reflect on their teaching practice and possibly change their style of teaching and revisit the curriculum and their approaches to class activities and assessment as a means of making them relevant to international students. Accordingly, I sought out universities that had a strong policy relating to teaching international students. I also researched universities with policies that indicated a strong commitment to the internationalisation of the curriculum and provided support to staff on teaching in a culturally diverse environment. As has been illustrated, a considerable body of research has already been conducted in Australia regarding the teaching of international students in universities, particularly those from Asian countries.

In this study I aimed to explore educators’ perceptions of their teaching of international students, and particularly wanted to select a setting where international students were not in the majority. The reason being that there is a different dynamic of teaching in a class where international students are in the minority compared to a setting in which they represent all of most of the cohort. In an ideal situation, educators adjust their teaching, to some extent at least, according to the student cohort. Certainly, where consideration is not given to the sometimes particular needs of international students, issues can arise.

In considering sampling for this research I was cognisant of Merten’s (2005) statement that “qualitative methods are used in research that is designed to provide an in-depth description of a specific program, practice, or setting” (p. 229). That is, a main reason for sampling is to provide the researcher with the possibility of finding the richest data. Silverman (2000) and Creswell (2009; 2013) argue that qualitative data places emphasis on people’s real-life experience. Peoples’ stories give meanings to the events, processes, and structures of their lives.

Purposeful sampling is probably the most commonly described means of sampling in the qualitative methods literature today. And the typology of purposeful sampling strategies of Patton (2002, 2015) have been extremely influential, as has been argued, for example, by

In adopting purposeful sampling in this research, I found support in Patton’s statement: utility and credibility of a small purposeful sample are often judged on the basis of the logic, purpose, and recommended sample size of probability. Instead, a purposeful sample should be judged according to the purpose and rationale of the study: does the sampling strategy support the study’s purpose? (Patton, 2002, p. 245).

In qualitative research the size of sampling is not as crucial as it is in quantitative research because of the ontological and epistemological focus of the research and the focus of the research question. To quote Patton (2002) again, “in-depth information from a small number of people can be very valuable, especially if the cases are information rich” (p. 244).

In this research, all my participants believed that they had a degree of expertise in teaching international students at the university level in Australia. In the schools of education where these educators were working there was a small cohort of international students who were in the minority in their classes; the local students were in the majority. All participants had indicated a willingness to share and reflect on their own experiences of teaching. Certainly, the sample provided me with a richness of stories regarding their teaching philosophy, pedagogy, and practice, and the challenges they experienced in working with international pre-service teacher students. The sample consisted of 11 participants (see Table 4.1 below). I have used pseudonyms to identify them in the universities in which they are employed.

I knew some of my participants personally and this made it easier to approach them to take part in the study. Some also recommended other people who, they believed, had appropriate experience and might be interested in participating – the ‘snowballing’ technique of sampling. In qualitative research, as Noy (2008) argues, snowball sampling is perhaps the most widely used method of sampling. It is popular in various disciplines across the social sciences and can be used in education. This technique assists a researcher in enriching the sampling group and provides access to new participants:

- a sampling procedure may be defined as snowball sampling when the researcher accesses informants through contact information that is provided by other informants.
- This process is, by necessity, repetitive: informants refer the researcher to other informants, who are contacted by the researcher and then refer her or him to yet other informants, and so on. Hence the evolving ‘snowball’ effect, captured in a metaphor
that touches on the central quality of this sampling procedure: its accumulative (diachronic and dynamic) dimension. (Noy, 2008, p. 330).

Table 4.1

Participants’ Demographic Data

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Gender</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Anna</td>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>Female</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Anastasia</td>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Borislava</td>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Igor</td>
<td>Asia Pacific region</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ivan</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Lada</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Lina</td>
<td>Asia Pacific region</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Marko</td>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Olga</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Sasha</td>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Vera</td>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.4 Data collection methods and data gathering techniques

Qualitative design proposes a wide range of data collection methods and techniques. The combination of informal interviews and participant observation is considered to be a most effective technique and is recommended by many scholars for qualitative research (Creswell, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, 2003, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 2009; Mertens, 2005, 2014; Silverman, 2006).

I employed a range of means of data collection, such as semi-structured interviews, observation and document analyses, which provided me with the possibility of multiple perspectives to investigate the main research question and generate holistic and detailed explanations of the data gathered. Best and Khan (2006) emphasised that if a researcher selects “complementary methods” the researcher “can cover the weaknesses of one method with the strength of another” (p. 269).
I subscribe to Mertens’ (2005) notion of qualitative research being an activity that locates the investigator in the world which is composed of a collection of interpretive practices that make the world visible and such practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them. (Mertens, 2005, p. 229).

4.2.4.1 Narratives in educational research

According to Duff and Bell (2002) “Narrative inquiry rests on the epistemological assumption that we as human beings make sense of random experience by the imposition of story structures. That is, we select those elements of experience to which we will attend, and we pattern those chosen elements in ways that reflect the stories available to us” (p. 207). As an historian, I am familiar with the study of events, historical facts, people’s stories, biography and autobiography, and this influenced me in my choice of a narrative approach. In Chapter 5 I assemble my participants’ stories from the interview data for the purpose of interpreting them and presenting my participants as a real people. Generally, narratives present the material in a way that gives the researcher some “space” for analyses and the reader can get a “picture” of the participants through their stories and experience. The purpose of using the stories in my research is not for telling the story of a person’s life. Rather, the idea is to give the background and “portray” the participants through my remarks or interpretation of their practices with the purpose of finding an answer to the main research question. In my research the educators’ stories link and make connections between the reader and the writer, between the researcher’s view and the literature; they provide a frame for comprehending ideas that come from the interviews, observations and conversations:

In narrative research that includes a section devoted to the interpretation of the assembled stories, researchers need to justify their interpretations for the reader. The general purpose of an interpretative analysis of storied texts is to deepen the reader’s understanding of the meaning conveyed in a story. An interpretation is not simply a summary or précis of a storied text. It is a commentary that uncovers and clarifies the meaning of the text. It draws out implications in the text for understanding other texts.
and for revealing the impact of the social and cultural setting on people’s lives. (Polkinghorne, 2007, p. 192).

4.2.4.2 Semi-structured interview

In many ways the participant educators represent the institutional structures that support the discourse of educational disciplines (subjects). Further, all of the educators are individuals with their own system of beliefs, identity, world-view, philosophy of teaching, feelings and thoughts. They all construct their own practice according to their own referents, preference of pedagogy and knowledge, and expertise. The interview has become the most popular data collection method in qualitative research (Fontana & Frey, 2000). Atkinson and Silverman (1997) believe that the interview has broadly established itself as a neutral method of data collection to “give researchers, amidst a diversity of methodological and epistemological positions, a spurious sense of stability, authenticity, and security” (pp. 309-310).

In my research the interviews elicited how educators change their teaching practices to accommodate the academic needs of international students from diverse cultural backgrounds and what challenges and opportunities the educators faced during their teaching. I applied the semi-structured interview format (Fontana & Prokos, 2016; Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Merriam, & Tisdell, 2015), with open-ended questions, because it gave the participants ‘space’ to express their own ideas, “respond in their own terms” to the questions (Sheppard, 2004, p. 208) and add information that I was not aware of. (One point of interest for me was that although none of the structured questions referred specifically to the educators’ teaching philosophies, this was addressed by each of them, sometimes obliquely and sometimes directly when discussing their teaching. Not surprisingly, in the analysis of the data, their individual philosophies are given considerable attention.)

In preparing for interviews I was guided by the research literature (for example, Creswell, 2009; Creswell and Creswell, 2017; Minichiello et al., 1995; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The questions for the interviews covered some issues identified through the reading of the literature and were based on my prior understanding of the issues under study. Some questions occurred during the conversation’s natural flow. For instance, it was useful to clarify some aspects of pedagogy, how activities were actually run in class and how the international students responded to the class activities; and what kind of techniques and pedagogy educators used to engage students in class activities. In order to capture any information outside of these
categories, the final questions asked participants for any further comments or issues that they would like to raise regarding the teaching of international students.

At the beginning of the interview I asked some personal demographic questions, including information relating to respondents' teaching experience and career in education. Such information was important to portray my participants as real people with experience, attitudes and reflections on their own practice and teaching philosophy.

I asked my participants to allocate between one hour and one hour-and-a-half for the interview. Most of the interviews were conducted in 2011, 2012 and 2013 and provided me with rich data for analyses. I attempted to create an interview environment as similar as possible to a simple informal conversation (Patton, 2002; Patton, 2015). Even though each interview had some questions in common, the stories that I collected from my participants were very different in terms of what they told me and how the conversations flowed.

Most of the participants were comfortable having the interview at their workplace in a quiet atmosphere. At the end of each interview the participants were asked if they were happy to be contacted by email if there were any follow-up questions, or if the researcher wished to confirm some data.

Good listening skills, which Creswell (2015) listed among other essential skills that a qualitative researcher should develop, enabled me to navigate a conversation without directing it towards an expected answer and allow spontaneous responses as much as possible. I was careful not to encourage them to say anything that they did not genuinely mean. When I was not sure about the meaning of answers, I asked my participants to clarify or elaborate on some issues. When I noticed that the conversation went into a direction that was not relevant to the purpose of interview, I gently backtracked, saying something like: “Maybe we will discuss this topic later,” or, “I see what you mean”. I was also conscious of the importance of finding the right moment to ask the next question without interrupting my participants.

All interviews were recorded. The transcripts of all interviews were typed up by the researcher, then read while listening to the audio recordings again to check for accuracy in terms of the content and pauses and emphases in speech. This allowed for deep engagement with the data and careful analysis of the themes (Patton, 2002; Patton 2015). To ensure the quality of the transcripts – especially as I am not a native English speaker – I employed a professional editor to listen while checking transcribed materials and eliminate any inaccuracies in the transcribed texts. The editor did not have any affiliation or personal contact with the schools of education and her involvement in the data checking did not interfere with
participants’ anonymity. After receiving transcripts back from the editor, I again re-read the corrected versions of the transcripts and re-listened to the interviews to ensure that no changes to the meaning were made by the editor. The final copy of the interview transcript was sent to each participant to read and I reminded them that if they wished they may remove any part of the conversation if they did not want some information to become a part of data analyses. None of the participants made any changes or removed any parts from the transcripts.

4.2.4.3 Observation

Observation of my participants in their teaching situations was used to generate the data about their teaching practice in their respective schools of education. Certain kinds of research questions can best be answered by observing how people act or how things look. For example, a researcher could interview educators about how their international students behave during class discussion of a topic or issue, but a more accurate indication of their behaviour would probably be obtained by observing such a discussion as it took place. Interviews offered what Johnson and Christensen (2008; p. 211) called “self-reported data,” but such self-reported data is not necessarily completely reliable evidence of knowing what people do in their everyday practice. In other words, people do not always do what they say they do, and sometimes they don’t know what they do, or at least, don’t articulate that knowledge. Thus, to observe people in a “naturalistic setting” (Adler & Adler, 1994, p.382) reveals their behaviour as it naturally occurs in a real-life situation and the data “appear to be meaningful to the people involved.” Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) believe that during observation an investigator should make “no effort whatsoever to manipulate variables or to control the activities of individuals, but simply observe and record what happens as things naturally occur” (p. 451). I wanted to see what was going on in a class and how the educators accommodated all their knowledge of teaching, pedagogy and didactic techniques. I chose observation as a method of collecting data as it allowed me to come ‘close’ to people who were engaged in teaching in the schools of education.

Careful observation enriched my perception of the class activities, and enabled me to see how the educator engaged students in discussion and conversation. My attention focused mostly on the educator and what he/she did, and what was said and how activities were organized. I also observed some interactions between students and the teacher following the conclusion of the formal class. People are not always consciously aware about aspects of their practice until someone asks them: ‘Tell me what you are doing day by day? How do you teach?’ For many educators their teaching becomes second nature.
In the academic literature there is some discussion around the usage and meaning of the terms “participant and non-participant observation”. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) listed four well known types of participation, adopted from ‘classic typology’ of Gold (1958) and they are:

- “Complete participant: The researcher is a member of the group being studied and conceals his or her observer role from the group so as not to disrupt the natural activity of the group…” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 144).

- “Participant as observer: The researcher’s observer activities, which are known to group, are subordinate to the researcher’s role as a participant…” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 144).

- “Observer as participant: The researcher’s observer activities are known to the group; participation in the group is definitely secondary to the role of information gather…” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, pp. 144-145).

- “Complete observer: the researcher is either hidden from the group (for example, behind a one-way mirror) or in a completely public setting such as an airport or library…” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015 p. 145).

During my observation I acted as a passive observer and did not interact with people; but I was not ‘invisible’ as I was physically present in the class, so my presence is termed ‘participant observation’. As an observer I was not involved in any form of relationship with students and educators within the class and did not participate in activities, but at the same time I was introduced to them and they were informed about my research.

Recent work by Merriam and Tisdell, (2015) has discussed the relationship between observer and observed and they argue that “in reality, researchers are rarely total participants or total observers. Rather, there is often a mix of roles wherein one might either begin as a full participant and then withdraw into more of a researcher stance or the reverse: begin as a total observer and become more of a participant over time” (pp. 145-146).

I observed the tutorial sessions in the morning or afternoon sessions each week for the course’s duration (normally 10-12 weeks). Some participants did not have their teaching during my research, but their interviews provided rich data. This might be considered as a limitation of this method of data collection in qualitative research. Some educators, however, invited me to sit in on lectures at other times, so that I could see their teaching, lecturing and wider range of activities. I also watched and noted down how the students related to one another outside of class time. I always let the educators know in advance that I would be observing their class.
I acknowledge that my presence in the classrooms may have had the potential to affect the behaviour of the educators and/or the students. This phenomenon is known as the "observer effect" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 47). However, all of the educator participants said that they felt comfortable with my presence and from their perspective the classes continued in the usual way. Table 4.2 presents the data collection timeframe.

The Table 4.2

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<th>Data Collection Timeframe</th>
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The classroom observations proceeded according to plan in all the classes in the study (see the Appendix 4). I tended to vary where I sat in the rooms (albeit it always in the back) in order to be able to observe behaviours of different groups of students. I was particularly interested in recording some aspects of communication, interaction or other variable which the lecturer or tutor might not have noticed.

For ethical reasons I had to have the students’ permission to be in a class and undertake my observation (see Appendix 2). At first, when I arrived for an observation the educator introduced me to the students in the class, explained what I was intending to do in the class and asked students whether they agreed to me being present and recording aspects of it. I always mentioned that I was not doing the research about the students and that my focus was on the
lecturers and tutors. None of the lecturers or students refused me permission to be present in any class and record aspects of it.

4.2.4.4 Document analysis

The constructivist approach provides researchers with opportunities to collect data from different sources. Among others they may collect documents, that “may specify events and issues in greater detail than interviewees can” (Burns, 2000, p. 467). Official documents, personal documents, physical data, and archived research data belong to secondary data or “existing data” (Johnson & Christensen, 2008; Johnson & Turner, 2003). Document analysis provides researchers with an opportunity to use data which already contains information that the researcher may be looking for.

The rationale for choosing this type of data collection in this study is based on the benefits summarised by Johnson and Turner (2003): it is useful for “corroboration” (provides an additional dimension on the issues that are being researched); “grounded in the local setting” and is “useful for exploration” (p. 317). (the documents that are collected improve our understanding of the aspects of teaching at the university, at least according to how it is stated on paper.

Merriam and Tisdell (2015) argued that for researchers who are interested in educational investigation there is wide range of sources and documents to work with, including public documents and documents related to the educational program (pp. 163-164). In the case of my research the document analyses included data from:
- Policy which provides statements about cross-cultural learning (Australian University, School of Education)
- Documents about study support for international students
- All papers related to the program (curriculum, course guide, course materials and so on)
- Documents related to the assignments
- A wide range of additional material, which the lecturer/tutor prepared for the course (including learning materials, presentation, materials for activity).

4.3 Data Analysis (from the Interviews and Observations)

Patton (2002) underscored that the purpose of qualitative analysis is to transform the data into findings. Qualitative data may sometimes be bulky and according to Patton no “universal formula exists” about the best way to manage data: there is only “Guidance, yes, but
no recipe” (Patton, 2002, p. 432) about how to make the transformation from raw data to the themes and extracts of evidence that at the end of analysis will give a clear picture in answering the research questions and fulfilling the purpose of the investigation. In analysing the data, I decided to apply thematic analysis and narratives.

The greatest challenge of qualitative analysis is to make the data clear to the reader. Moreover, as Patton (2002) said, “the human factor is the great strength and the fundamental weakness of qualitative inquiry and analysis, thus, analysts have an obligation to monitor and report their own analytical procedures and processes as fully and truthfully as possible” (p. 276).

To identify significant patterns and find the essence of what the data revealed, I have employed thematic analysis. It was a challenging task to manage the rich and huge volume of raw information in transcripts of interviews.

4.3.1 Thematic analysis and its stages

Thematic analysis is one of the methods for qualitative analysis that has been widely used in many areas by qualitative researchers (Aronson, 1995; Braun & Clark, 2019; Patton, 2002, 2015; Riessman, 2008; Ryan & Bernard, 2003; Tuckett, 2005; Terry et al., 2017) and it has been employed for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data from interviews and observations.

Ryan and Bernard (2003) provided ideas on how to identify themes. They underlined that analysing text involves more than a few tasks, including:

- discovering themes and subthemes;
- winnowing themes to a manageable few (i.e., deciding which themes are important in any project);
- building hierarchies of themes or code books;
- linking themes into theoretical models. (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, pp. 87-88).

4.3.2 Data analysis procedure

Early reading has been suggested as a necessary stage in data analysis by numbers of qualitative research scholars, such as Creswell (2013), Denzin and Lincoln (2009), Patton (2005, 2015), and Tuckett (2005). Tuckett (2005) argues that at the early stage of the research the analysis of literature is important as it involves analytical choices relating to the data that are relevant to the research question.
Figure 4.1 below provides an overview of the analysis process that Tuckett (2005) applied in his research. I used it as a guideline for my data analysis which has a strong focus on educators’ narratives derived from the interviews I conducted.


In the pre-collection data stage, I read the relevant literature which provided a focus for the development of the main research question and sub-questions. I then developed the list of questions that I wanted to ask my participants during the interviews.

From the literature of teaching international students, possible themes emerged. (The data analysis subsequently revealed the need for refinement of some as well as identifying others.) The first group of themes formulated from the literature review related to the significant difficulties that international students experience when learning in English-speaking countries:

- learning and living in a different culture;
- learning in a foreign university context;
- learning while developing English language proficiency;
- learning the academic disciplinary discourse.

Following the interviews and data analyses of the educator participants’ responses to my questions and the individual narratives that each provided, I identified similarities and
differences in their responses and re-visited the themes I had originally anticipated and adjusted or changed these according to what the data suggested.

The second group of themes that emerged initially from the literature related to the pedagogies and strategies employed in teaching international students. These included internationalisation of the curriculum and the nature assessments. These were subsequently confirmed by the interview data. In developing this second group of themes I was influenced by the work of Leask (2005, 2009). The themes were to large extent an embodiment of the narratives that each participant had engaged in through their respective interviews. Kohler-Riessman (2000) suggested that the narrative illustration (story) should provide the reader with a particular and a general description of each participant’s story, followed by interpretive commentary.

In the data analyses I applied positioning theory and Hofstede’s model of cultural dimensions as a framework for my study. This enabled me to analyse how culture influenced my participants’ teaching practices and how they made their transitions from their first order position to a second order position. In other words, the extent to which they adjusted their ‘Western’ frame of reference in a Western university to accommodating students from an Asian cultural background.

The data analyses thus suggested themes (initially proposed from the literature review) that were investigated within the framework of Hofstede’s model of cultural dimensions and positioning theory. Figure 4.2 below provides a graphical summary of the process.
4.4 Ethical Consideration in Qualitative Research

In all research related to human beings the question of ethics is important as a researcher needs to protect the participants and themselves from any harm: “Research involving human beings is more complex than some researchers understand or want to acknowledge. As researchers we must respect the rights of the individual” (Fehring, 2002, p. 22). Qualitative research more than other types of investigations operates with data from people and about people (Denzin and Giardina, 2016; Merriam and Grenier, 2019). Ethical questions are apparent today in such issues as personal disclosure, authenticity and credibility of the research report, the role of researchers in cross-cultural contexts, and issues of personal privacy through the form of internet data collection (Israel & Hay, 2006).

Creswell (2009) stresses that when “researchers anticipate data collection, they need to respect the participants and the sites for research. Many ethical issues arise during this stage of the research” (p. 89). To minimise potential physical, psychological, social, legal and other risks as an investigator, I applied for ethics approval for my research in which I explained all the procedures of data collection, data analyses and information about participants. The research had approval from the RMIT DSC Portfolio Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee.
and was classified Level 2 as it was considered to produce only minimal risk to the participants (Appendix 7 and Appendix 8).

The clear Language Statement reassured participants that involvement in the study was voluntary, that they could withdraw at any time, that their participation was anonymous, that all data would be de-identified and only available to the researcher, that their views would not be compromised and that their participation (or not) would not be reported to any personnel in their or any other School of Education, and nor would it be used as an evaluation tool. Data was de-identified and coded. Pseudonyms for participants and schools of Education were used when I undertook the interview transcriptions, during the data analyses, and in the reporting of the findings. Further, it was decided that the identity of all participants would remain anonymous to the researcher’s supervisors, a solution with which the participants were comfortable and the supervisors agreed was essential. This put greater pressure on the researcher, however, to ensure participants could not be identified in the discussion and analysis.

To the educators who freely expressed their interest and agreed to take part in the research, I sent an e-mail that included the title of the research, a brief explanation of the purpose and aim of the study, the list of questions for the interview (Appendix 3) and the Plain Language Statement and the Consent Form (Appendix 6 and Appendix 1). As a part of ethical procedure, at the interviews the participants were handed another copy of the Plain Language Statement and were invited to read it and to sign the official School of Education, and University and Portfolio Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee consent form (Appendix 5). I reminded my participants that their anonymity would be preserved and that any information from the interviews that might in any way identify them would be removed from the transcripts before analysis. Furthermore, I proposed that the educators choose a Ukrainian name from a list that I gave them.

All my participants were informed that they were free to leave the project at any time simply by letting me know, and any unprocessed data would also be withdrawn. Because I intended to do class observations it was necessary to protect the students in the classes. The Plain Language Statement and the Consent Form ensured them of the necessary protections. In my first attendance at each class the Plain Language Statement and Consent Form were presented to all students, including the international students, requesting their permission for me to conduct my research in their class.

Patton (2002) has stressed the ethical dimensions of qualitative inquiry:
interviews can be and often are interventions. They affect people. A good interview lays open thoughts, feelings, knowledge, and experience, not only to the interviewer, but also to the interviewee. The process of being taken through a directed, reflective process affects the persons being interviewed and leaves them knowing things about themselves that they did not know – or least were not fully aware of – before the interview. (Patton, 2002, p. 277).

I was sensitive to this and resolved that if I had any indication that my participants looked tired or emotionally overwhelmed I would pause the interview, but this never occurred. All of my participants had great experience of talking with people and because they wanted to tell their stories I did not face any difficulties in conducting the interviews. I was also conscious during this process that issues could arise because of cross-cultural communication with respect to myself, coming from another country, and did all that I could to accommodate this.

During the collection of the data I was not involved in any teaching/learning activities in any School of Education at any Australian university. I was not a student in any courses apart from my PhD enrolment which has no course-work component; this minimised any conflict of interest.

4.5 Credibility, Transferability, Dependability and Confirmability

As a qualitative researcher, I have adopted the following strategies to demonstrate my research credibility: prolonged and varied field experience, time sampling, reflexivity (field journal), triangulation, member (participant) checking, peer examination, interview technique, establishing research authority and structural coherence. Firstly, I would stress my persistent and prolonged observation, which ensured that as a researcher I saw my participants acting in their natural teaching environment, and also established their trust through extended interactions in the context of their day-to-day work. That strategy allowed me to collect rich data and to immerse myself in the participants’ world in a way that was described by Anney (2014): “Thus, prolonged engagement in the fieldwork helps the researcher to understand the core issues that might affect the quality of the data because it helps to develop trust with study participants” (p. 276). Schwandt, Lincoln and Guba (2007) also recommend establishing prolonged contact with the participants to “assess possible sources of distortion and specially to identify saliencies in the situation” (p. 18).
The second strategy used to establish credibility in my research was reflexivity, which was achieved by keeping a field journal. I made extensive notes in the journal during observation periods and considered them in detail later.

The third strategy that I employed is one commonly seen in qualitative studies, that is triangulation. Creswell and Miller (2000) recommended this strategy, writing that “Triangulation is a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study” (p. 126). Triangulation has to be seen as necessary action is a step taken by researchers employing only the researcher’s lens, and it is a systematic process of sorting through the data to find common themes or categories by eliminating overlapping areas. “The narrative account is valid because researchers go through this process and rely on multiple forms of evidence rather than a single incident or data point in the study” (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 127). According to Merriam and Grenier (2019) the researcher collects data through interviews, observations, and/or document analysis that insure the credibility of the investigation. Data triangulation is discussed in detail in Chapter 4 in Section 4.2.4.

The fourth strategy I used was member checking. I asked my participants to comment on my interpretation of the data retrieved from interviews and observation, to ensure that even if I used different words, participants recognised their own experiences in my interpretation.

Peer examination or what is known as ‘peer debriefing’ was adopted as my fifth strategy. According to Guba (1981) and Merriam and Grenier (2019), peer debriefing provides a researcher with the opportunity to test research progress. As a qualitative researcher, I continually sought support from academic staff at the School of Education at RMIT University in the shape of feedback on my research. At all stages of my investigation, at confirmation, mid-candidature reviews and the completion seminars, I took the opportunity to present and discuss and receive the opinions of academics and other PhD students on my research and its findings. Also, I attended the writing research group’s sessions regularly to discuss my research design, findings and theoretical frameworks with other PhD students at the various stages of designing, collecting data and writing up my thesis.

Finally, my background as a researcher and as an educator in Ukraine and Australia has provided me with deep background knowledge and experience to establish my authority as a researcher. This combined with extensive reading of the academic literature has helped me to establish structural coherence in my thesis and ultimately, to demonstrate credibility.
The working hypothesis of ideas that are presented in one piece of research can offer researchers working in a similar field of study some ‘guideline’ for constructing their own research. “If one thinks of what can be learned from an in-depth analysis of a particular situation or incident and how that knowledge can be transferred to another situation, generalizability in qualitative research becomes possible” (Merriam & Grenier, 2019, p. 29).

My qualitative study includes ample ‘rich’ and ‘thick’ description of data which is considered to be an important way to ensure transferability or generalizability of study findings. Schwandt, Lincoln and Guba (2007) have described this process “Thick descriptive data—narrative developed about the context so that judgments about the degree of fit or similarity may be made by others who may wish to apply all or part of the findings elsewhere” (p. 19).

Using a purposefully-selected sample (Patton, 2005) is another strategy to ensure transferability. I selected my participants and educational settings carefully to choose experienced participants who believed that they had the knowledge and expertise to contribute to the study. That allowed me to collect thick description through in-depth interview, observations and document analyses and gives any reader an opportunity to ‘read’ the experience of my participants and decide how to transfer the knowledge of this research by using the data in similar cases.

As stressed by Lincoln and Guba (1982), a dependable study needs to be both accurate and consistent. Two ways of evaluating dependability of data include replication and inquiry audit. According to Schwandt, Lincoln and Guba (2007), dependability refers to the idea that research findings remain stable over time. Dependability comprises evaluation of findings and providing recommendations of the study through the use of external audit. “That part of the audit that examines the process results in a dependability judgment, while that part concerned with the product (data and reconstructions) results in a confirmability judgment” (Schwandt, Lincoln & Guba, 2007, p. 19). Confirmability is the degree to which the findings could be verified by others.

Connelly (2016) argued that confirmability refers to the degree to which the findings are “consistent and could be repeated” (p. 435). To ensure reliable research findings the investigation should be structured and based on the rationality of data collection methods and analytic techniques employed to the study. “Finally, conclusions should be demonstrably triangulated by reference to multiple data sources (preferably collected and analysed by multiple methods and representing multiple perspective” (Guba & Lincoln, 1982, p. 15).
4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has detailed the research methodology and design of this study. It has presented theoretical, ethical, practical and implementation issues with respect to the educators working in pre-service teacher education at the two selected university schools of education and their students – and in particular, their international students. The following chapter presents and discusses the data analyses and findings that resulted from the methodology and design elaborated in this chapter.
Chapter 5
Data Findings and Analysis: Listening to the Educators

5.1 Introduction

In reporting the data and findings of the study I have used the words of the participants which pass on to the reader the richness, depth and complexity of their views. Each story is individual and exhibits the person’s unique experience. Moreover, each story is written with a focus on the research questions. As the quotes from the interviews related to the research questions are extensive I decided that the best way to engage the reader in presenting the findings is to structure them across three chapters.

This chapter analyses the interview data with the focus on three of the interview questions (Numbers 1, 3 and part of Number 6; see Appendix 3):

- Could you explain to me how much you enjoy teaching and how that may differ from your other obligations to the university (research, administration, other activities)?
- Could you tell me about your experience in teaching international students or people from the Asia Pacific Region? Please elaborate.
- What kind of activities do you prefer to choose for your course and why?

5.2 Narratives and Story Telling

Riessman, (2005) argues that when researchers employ thematic analysis they look through the data with strong emphasis “on the content of a text, ‘what’ is said more than ‘how’ it is said, the ‘told’ rather than the ‘telling’” thus inductively creating “conceptual groupings from the data” (p. 2). What follows here, in a narrative form, are the eleven stories that came from the interviews with the educator participants (some background details on whom were presented in Chapter 4 (Table 4.1)).

5.2.1 Marko

Marko is an Australian-born academic who has lived, studied and worked in Australia. He worked as a teacher for seventeen years in Melbourne and rural Victorian high schools where he taught science and physics. That experience provided Marko with a deep insight into how Victoria’s schools operate. After completing his PhD he worked in schools of education at universities in Melbourne for nearly 20 years. He mentioned that he was comfortable
working at both undergraduate and graduate levels. His research interests related to curriculum, policy and teaching practice.

Marko has enjoyed teaching, which he has been doing for a long time, and this job is very familiar to him: “teaching provides things that the other work does not provide, because it does provide a lot of interaction with a range of people and that is always good.”

I found Marko responsive, friendly, diplomatic and caring. He delights in teaching and gives the impression of considering himself to be fortunate in having a job which is an important part of his life and in which he is happy. In describing his attitude to teaching, he said that he likes to talk to people, to be able to help people, to be able to convey something which makes a difference in some way, whether it’s because the students have learnt something or because you might be able to influence the students in a positive way.

Marko was a bit surprised when I asked him directly about his philosophy of teaching, (despite the fact that I had given him the list of the questions prior to our meeting). After a pause he answered that “it is a question that we should be able to respond to quickly, but it is not a question that one gets asked very often, to talk about a philosophy of teaching.”

His suggested that his philosophy of teaching is based on “building strong relationships with students, so that learning can take place well.” For Marko “learning is an enjoyable experience.” He wants to see that his “students are comfortable” with him, and “enjoy their teaching or the learning experiences that they have.”

As a course coordinator for various undergraduate subjects he incorporated reflective journal writing into class activities and assessment. Marko considered reflective writing, introduced in the 1990s, as a still relevant and popular technique for encouraging pre-service teachers to reflect on their professional practice in schools and their overall study at university. To which I would add that is also provides educators with “a window to their students’ learning” (Bain, Mills, Ballantyne & Packer, 2002, p. 172).

Marko has experience in working with international students at universities as a lecturer and as a supervisor of both Australian and international research students. He shared his experience of teaching groups of students where there were “just international students, completely international students, mostly from Asia.” He said that the dynamic of working with only international students is different in comparison with teaching a mixed student population (local and international students) with diverse academic needs. He noted:
With the teacher education courses, particularly here, the number of international students – and they tend to be from Asia and the Pacific in the classes – are very small, so if we have a group of maybe 200 students, there might be 10 international students out of 200 students, so very small; so in a class of 30 we might have one, two or three at the most – very small numbers. My experience with them is that they are seen too often to have difficulties, because they’re a small number within the group, and sometimes the difficulties are because the non-international students and the international students don’t communicate effectively, and that makes it difficult with teaching.

As an experienced educator Marko is reflective and observant. He believes that one of the other issues that affected teaching/learning in his classes is the dissimilar expectations of students of teaching,

Students sometimes come from cultures where they expect teachers to behave in certain kinds of ways, and that may be different to how you usually operate, or how other students expect you to operate. For example, international students, particularly from Asian backgrounds, will expect the teacher to be an authority figure, and offer respect to the teacher as an authority figure in ways that local students do not, and so if you don’t behave like that the students may become confused, and may take some time to adjust – but usually they do after a while – so you have to think about all those sorts of things.

Marko’s teaching practices might be different from the kinds of pedagogy that international students have experienced in some countries. He doesn’t want to change his philosophy and pedagogy and pointed out that it is impossible to always meet everyone’s expectation in class. At the same time, he has found techniques to help students understand why and how he is teaching and help them with transitions. Part of his teaching philosophy is that: “It’s very important to tell students or to give students not only the content, what this subject is about, but also to tell them the story behind that.”

Marko discussed his experience of cross-cultural communication by taking an example of Master’s and PhD supervision. His postgraduate students tend to be older, and already have qualifications and experience, life experiences, so it is a different sort of experience, because you’re usually working with them in smaller groups or one on one. Language with international students is still always an issue there and expectations are always an issue, as well.
Even at a postgraduate level the difficulties still have the same roots – a different education system:

Sometimes … with international students, particularly from Asia, if they have not had much experience here in Australia or other Western educational institutions, they will wait for advice and instructions, and they won’t present themselves in a very confident way, and they defer too much to my authority as supervisor or teacher. It takes some time to establish a different kind of relationship – which is a little more equal and open. That’s a challenge sometimes, particularly with students from Asian backgrounds … That arises because of the cultural experience that this student brings.

Marko expects his students will adapt to a new university environment, and eventually make the transition. Some can do this more quickly than others, but there are a few who do not succeed at all. He believes that as an educator he “has to learn to deal with that” and improve his own teaching; conversely, he also thinks that students need to learn how to work well with him and that means: “they have to change their behaviours. They have enrolled in an Australian Western-focused institution – that’s the way we work, that’s how knowledge systems work for us, but it takes time.”

Marko thinks that this process should be similar for both international and local students, but for local students it is perhaps easier in some ways as they do not have language problems and are familiar with the Australian cultural and educational system in general.

I know, in this particular case I find that they [international students] are frustrated, because it can take such a long time for the student to adapt … you have to be really patient, but it is difficult sometimes.

Of course, there are some regulations and procedures that students and their supervisors have to work with. Even if the supervisor wishes to be patient and responsive to cultural difficulties and works with students to help them to adapt to the system, students too need to be responsible: “students need to move through the process, otherwise it can slow it down.”

His recommendation to supervisors is:

When international students are looking for supervisors you have to think ‘How long is this going to take to work well – and what sort of support does the student need?’ and if you don’t think you can provide the support … then maybe this is not going to work.

In working with international students Marko says he uses the same principles as he does with local Australian students. His repeated that his teaching philosophy is influenced by Western educational and sociological theories and he is not prepared to disavow these for
international students. At the same time, he recognises the importance of being aware of their differences in terms of their educational background and culture. In other words, he is not prepared to compromise his beliefs for international students, but, at the same time is sensitive to some of their particular needs and where his principles allow him he tries to accommodate them. He sees the issue through a prism of “othering.”

In his class he prefers where possible to model teacher behaviour. In the process he uses small group discussion as well as whole class discussions. During the observation I noticed that he structured some of his teaching to suit secondary school teaching, modelling examples of activities that his students could subsequently apply in their own teaching. Students were asked to prepare mock classes collaboratively, working in the groups. In his undergraduate and postgraduate classes, he likes to use stories that link his theoretical material with examples from his experience in teaching in schools.

My observations suggested that Marko guided his students toward the destination that he had planned but in a such way that students believed that they have arrived there based on their own thoughts and understanding. In doing so he combined different teaching techniques. He was not didactic, but clearly retained control of the situation. He used a combination of teacher-centred and student-centred approaches, giving students opportunities to drive discussion about a range of issues related to Australian teaching policies, curriculum, teaching theory and pedagogy, as well as their experience in schools.

5.2.2 Lada

Lada came to Australia from the UK and became an academic in Australian universities in Melbourne. She shared a story about her education back in the UK:

I did all of my education in the UK, in terms of secondary education I went to a private school, which had the advantage of offering more subjects. I then went to the University of Birmingham and studied for a Bachelor of Arts in Russian and then went straight on and completed a Masters in Russian and East European studies and then completed a doctorate.

She claimed that she had always been interested in teaching as her parents are both teachers, but she wanted to teach in Higher Education – “I wanted to do something but I didn’t want to teach in secondary schools” – as it gives her the chance to work with adults to share her knowledge and ideas and learn from her students.
Lada is very open to new experiences and likes to be challenged. Her passions are literature and languages; she enjoys playing with words “so being able to play with both languages was great.” She learnt the Russian language and taught it in the UK, but after the collapse of the Soviet Union there was not much of a career opportunity available to her as a Russian speaker and “it made sense to switch to a disciplinary perspective but be able to bring greater knowledge of languages and cultural contradictions to a discipline like International Relations,” she said. Moreover, she finds teaching rewarding and is happy when she has good students, because “at least, you can do a lot with them.”

Lada understands how hard it is to express yourself in different languages and that it takes time to gain the level of language necessary to be able to express yourself clearly and convey a beauty of language in your written and spoken expressions: “language plays a crucial role” in communication and but there are challenges in teaching “in terms of communication.” She opined that “the wonderful thing about teaching a language is you get immediate results.”

Lada suggested that the discipline you teach influences the way you teach it. It would seem that her past experience as a teacher of Russian still has an influence on her teaching in education. Her teaching philosophy relates to interactive teaching:

It’s not standing at the front of a room talking. It is that you might do a little bit of that, but then you want your students to activate all of their knowledge – and you want them to do something.

When asked about her teaching philosophy she began with two words: Experiential Learner! Whatever we are teaching we have to make it connect with people on the personal level. It can’t just be an intellectual endeavour where you learn theory and just go through the motions: you can get a reasonable way with that, but you want people to feel it: ‘It is ‘getting’ people, sparking their curiosity, sparking their feelings.’

She stressed the importance of her students developing a passion and curiosity for their study: Because that’s when you’re going to get the best results from people. When they start to see the bigger picture, they start to make connections beyond their discipline. I don’t want a student to come to me and say: ‘Why do I we need to know about sociology? Why do we need to know about other cultures?’ Students should be able to see why.

Lada feels upset when her students ask her questions such as: ‘What do I need to know that for?’ It is the question, that makes my heart sink ‘Why do I need to know that?’ … So, the teaching philosophy is very much getting people to make those connections themselves. Give them the tools to make those connections,
that’s probably a better way. And it’s not only about teaching facts, figures, whatever – it’s about teaching people or facilitating peoples’ learning. How do they learn? How can we support them in learning? Because if we can get them to learn how to learn, we set them up for life.

I observed more of her classes than any of the other classes, partly because all the other classes were interrupted by student placements in schools. She welcomed me throughout semester and was also curious to discuss my findings and receive comments about her teaching. She was constantly looking for better ways of teaching her students.

Lada is experienced in working with international students in the UK, China and in Australia. Speaking of her teaching in the UK, she said:

It was very much focused on European international students; and generally, in comparison to the UK students, they are highly motivated, better educated, more mature, just because they tend to be a little bit older. They’ve chosen to go to the UK to study; they have just got that sense of focus and they mostly know how to learn. Undergrads – they are generally fine. Occasionally they do struggle, they tend to be quite out-spoken.

Continuing to reflect on her students’ difficulties in learning back in the UK, she referred to her experience of working with postgraduate international students who completed their education in the former Soviet Union: “They struggled more, simply with the change of style of learning, particularly at postgraduate level, or starting out on a research Master’s and so on; so they tend to want more direction and support.” She also had some experience in teaching students from Asian countries: “I had a few Japanese students and a couple from Central Asia as well in the UK.”

Lada commented on differences in culture, language, and social, political and educational systems between UK, Kazakhstan (one of the former republics of the Soviet Union), Asian countries and Australia. In Australia, particularly at a postgraduate level, where there were “a lot more Chinese students, and quite a few students from Africa as well, they tend to be the ones that really do struggle.” She added that having on-campus and off-campus students required a different teaching approach. Interestingly, she had two groups of African students based in Africa as well as African students based in Melbourne. She observed that those who lived in Melbourne struggled because of a “lack of support networks. A lot of them come through the system initially as refugees, and then they’ve made a life here for themselves, but they still don’t have the support network that a lot of other students will have.”
In Australia, despite being a native English speaker, she had to adapt to a culture that is different from her home country and from Asian countries where she had taught for several years. Not surprisingly, she had to adapt to new educational settings and structures when she commenced teaching at an Australian university.

My observation of her classes, which were of 50 minutes duration (each of them), indicated that she combined a formal lecturing style with periods of discussion and other class activities that provided opportunities for her students to become more actively involved in the class. Her role in the second part of the class was more as a facilitator and she applied questioning techniques to get students thinking and actively working.

5.2.3 Borislava

Borislava is an Australian who has studied and taught locally. A special research interest has been early childhood education in China. She taught initially in primary schools in Melbourne. It was when she became a mother that her interest in early childhood education increased to the extent that she enrolled in a degree in early childhood education and worked as a kindergarten director. Subsequently she began teaching at university.

Borislava likes working in a university and sees her teaching as a core component, suggesting, “as we teach – for me anyway – I think it changes us. My teaching style here in tertiary education is quite interactive.” She stressed that she consistently tried to make a link between her teaching and research.

During our conversation Borislava talked about her and her students’ experience of practical placement in China. She said that some kindergartens in China occupy a multi-storey cement building that looks very different from most Australian kindergarten centres. Children in China stay in such kindergarten centres for longer hours, sometimes sleeping during the day and even staying overnight if their parents have to work late at night. This she stressed was very different from the experience of Australian students who needed to make several ‘adjustments’ when they went to China to do a placement.

However, for Borislava the most important differences were in terms of different teaching philosophies between the two countries. For example, she was not happy to see that children in China were not allowed to play outside as much as they do in Australian early-childhood centres. She said that early childhood staff “lock them [children] inside when they prefer to be outside.” She expressed that she was upset at the extent to which this was done, attributing it to China’s different political and educational system.
This difference in philosophy upset Borislava particularly because it runs counter to her own teaching philosophy which is strongly associated with a notion of ‘play’:

kindergarten teaching is play-based learning. It is sort of built around that and around children’s free play, and their interests … It’s all about children being engaged in play … educators just help to provide the prospects for children to grow and challenge them.

As with her own experience, Borislava’s Australian students found their practical placement in China confronting. For example, Australian students were unfamiliar with Chinese educational philosophy which “was quite different from what they learnt” in Australia. Not surprisingly, “they were very challenged by it.” At the same time, Borislava believes that as an educator and supervisor she has done her best to equip students with skills and knowledge that they might need to have during their overseas practical placement. She always conducts debriefing meetings after the placements and commented that “they did not regret going … [and] when I look back on it I realise how much it changed them; it was very worthwhile.”

Similarly, to each of the other participants, Borislava used interactive activities. She created working environments that allowed her students to work well and it was clear that she enjoyed face-to-face teaching. During the interview she emphasised that “Every class is quite unique. So, for example, if you are teaching the same course, maybe to three different classes of students, each one would be quite different.”

In comparison with a lecture format she prefers to a tutorial model, with smaller classes where all might be engaged in the conversation: “to have interactive classes, where we talk about things. We might have some readings, some discussion, some slides, photos, sometimes someone shows a little video – something like that.”

Her teaching was reflective: she always looked at what she did and how her students reacted and responded to class activities. She was experienced in implementing strategies in class to better facilitate discussion among students. But having said this, she acknowledged her lack of previous experience in working with international students – who had become part of the School of Education only in recent years – had put her in a new, unfamiliar situation. Borislava believes that students should be free to say what they want in class and she expects them to be active and take part in discussion. At the same time, she is aware of cultural differences that educators should know about when working with international students. She positions herself as an open person, welcoming students to approach her with any questions. She stressed the importance of them feeling comfortable in contributing to the class whatever they want.
It was clear from the interview that Borislava has credible experience of working with international students and consequently was aware of some issues that might appear in class during group work and discussions. She has techniques to make things happen: “given our strategies, you know, we will deliberately find ways of getting students mixing.” Such strategies relate to her understanding that people in other cultures can have different ways of thinking and behaving.

5.2.4 Anna

Anna is a very experienced early-childhood education academic who has taught for many years in early childhood settings as well as at university and TAFE; she also has several years administrative and research experience. She loves what she is doing as a researcher and as an educator:

I enjoy teaching if I am teaching the course that I actually have expertise in. I think, for me, I have been lucky in that most of my teaching in university I have liked. And I have enjoyed postgraduate work.

Anna has a lot of experience of working with local and international students at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. As an educator she is very confident in her professional knowledge and practical experience.

During the interview Anna said that her philosophy had changed over the years of her educational practice because of her personal experience of life. She has a family of adult children and also grandchildren. She observed that her years of experience as a mother and grandmother account for her value of life as a multidimensional phenomenon. It is this that she attributes to the changes in her values. She described herself as having become gentler and caring – and, significant for this study, came to see international students as other people’s children who need support and nurturing. Her attitude to building relationships with students might be linked to notions of pastoral care (Grove, 2004). She acknowledged that her teaching philosophy was influenced by John Dewey (2004, 2007, 2013).

Anna is an Australian who, like Borislava, has worked and conducted research not only in Australia but in China as well in the field of early childhood education. She has supervised many postgraduate international students from different countries, including Asia. She noted that because of this she had formed several friendships with people from overseas. She stressed that international students who come to study in Australia can feel very isolated; and sometimes their life at home is dramatically different from what they experience in Australia. Anna also
discussed how international students face various challenges and difficulties; in addition to those relating to studying there can family issues, financial problems, and social adaptation complications.

Anna prefers collaborative classes incorporating learning activities built on international perspectives; her students share what they know about teaching and engaging children in different cultures. Interestingly, she taught several on-line courses and commented on differences between this mode of delivery compared to face-to-face teaching. From the teacher’s perspective she opined that in on-line courses there is less possibility of seeing and reacting as much as she would like. Further, she mentioned that on-line teaching can be time-consuming in answering students’ queries. She regretted what she described as a relative lack of spontaneity associated with online teaching. To her credit she had facilitated an electronic discussion board where students share their opinions and experience. I regret that I was only able to observe her engaged in one online teaching session.

Anna discussed the changes that happened in China over the last decades in terms of globalisation. She is strongly critical of stereotyping Chinese cultural behaviour, such as the generalisation that all Chinese learners as passive, rote learners, who do not contribute to discussion nor engage in critical thinking. This, she stated, was a common misconception of Chinese learners. At the same time she commented that China as well other Asian countries have changed a lot in recent years (Dello-Iacovo, 2009; Hong, 2018; Wu, 2017). She argued that, to varying degrees, Asian education systems have been modernised and affected by globalisation – to some extent even ‘Westernised’. She decried the danger of having a singular view of Chinese or any other culture, emphasising that this generalisation is fraught with problems.

5.2.5 Lina

Lina came originally from an Asian country, having received her school and university education outside Australia. Her first degree, in her home country, was related to English language and linguistics. She subsequently graduated with a Master’s degree followed by a PhD relating to international students. She mentioned that she found her study in Australia was less pressured than it had been in her home country. Her career as an academic commenced at a school of education in one of Melbourne’s universities and she had been teaching at that level for eight years.

Lina stressed that she enjoyed teaching students, describing them in general as being “really motivated learners”. She added: “It is a pleasure to be involved in teaching, but at the same time it’s meaningful to be engaged in the research as well,” because the research “contributes to improving the learning experience of … the students.” She said: “I really appreciate the opportunities to learn from my students.” She also enjoyed collaborating with colleagues: “It is really rewarding when you can trust your colleagues and they help.” She said:

I think teaching is a very rewarding career. Because you contribute to making changes in a person’s perspective, a person’s views, and in a way you help people develop their knowledge, skills and capacity in order to prepare them for a life and for work.

Lina described her teaching philosophy as a ‘hybrid’: she blended her theoretical knowledge and experience of studying, working and living in both Asia and Australia. She has a strong interest in cross-cultural pedagogies and educational practices of different countries. She collects stories and narratives from her students about “different educational practices in their home countries” because she believes that “educational practices are contextualised”. Consequently, in the class “we learn about what is relevant and not relevant in the context of their home country, the educational tradition, and it is often very interesting” in comparison to their study in Australia. Lina likes to offer students opportunities to talk about “their customs, habits, culture and in the end it’s a great learning opportunity for all class members, including the lecturer.” However, she stressed that she is very sceptical about simplification and the stereotyping of different cultures.

In the interview Lina actively used terminology that is in accord with the university’s policy of teaching. She remarked that her teaching is based on inclusive principles that are a fundamental consideration for her in designing curriculum and implementing teaching and learning activities. In describing her on-line teaching activities, she mentioned using a reflective forum “that allows them to contribute to the class discussion to build conceptual knowledge based on their own experience in the home country – statistics and case studies from their home country.” Although she was only engaged in on-line teaching at the time of the interview, Lina stressed that she found it very useful in all types of classes to incorporate “on-line activities, on-line discussion board … because some students may not be very confident in contributing during the class, but if you make that forum open for them and they
can work at their own pace and their preferred pace, they will be more confident. They are contributing to the discussion, you know, visible contribution. Sometimes we have very valuable insights from students through the online discussion board.”

It was obvious that Lina is flexible and she uses new approaches for teaching based on a readiness to change her teaching approach and philosophy if the need arises.

5.2.6 Sasha

Sasha is an Australian who did his secondary and university study Australia. His parents were migrants and he is able to speak more than one language at home.

He began his teaching career in high schools. I was a mathematics, science and chemistry high school teacher for 20 years, all in public schools here in Melbourne, and I have been at the university as a lecturer for just over three years. As a lecturer I teach across a variety of different degree programs. I teach mathematics method and I also taught science method in the same program. I have also taught curriculum theory, educational practical type courses, and first year numeracy in the B.Ed.

As a relative newcomer to university settings Sasha found the environment very different from what he had experienced in working in high schools. He commented that in schools there were many people around him: his colleagues with whom he shared the staffroom, other teachers and many students, but at university he saw himself as being more alone, mostly in his office. He noticed that in comparison to a school, a university “is obviously an adult environment” where students come to tutorials or lectures if they want to, and don’t come if they don’t want to. He also highlighted that, unlike a school, he simply makes a mental note of who attends his classes on a regular basis because it is not a requirement. He takes the view that students at university are responsible for their study.

Initially, when I first started teaching at [name of the university], I did not like teaching aspects of university teaching ... I thought it was not really teaching of the sort that I had enjoyed in high school teaching. However, I must say now that I am enjoying it more … The courses I am teaching, overall, I like them, I like teaching more ... I like teaching in some postgraduate courses with the older students.

Sasha’s commented that his teaching philosophy derived from his understanding of the work of Dewey (2007), Freire (2000, 2014, 2015) and Critical Theory in education in general. His main principles in his teaching are justice, equality and fairness. He stressed that he
provided the same support for all students regardless of whether they are international or domestic students.

During my observation of his teaching I found that Sasha made a strong effort to convince those in his class that science is not a boring subject, as some might have believed, but, on the contrary, it has many interesting applications into the students’ “real life.” For that reason, his class activities were full of interesting, engaging educational videos about science and maths. I was present over two days in his classes when groups of three students presented topics related to physics or chemistry in a highly entertaining and unusual way as part of a mock class. It was obvious that Sasha had a commitment to making science meaningful and fun for his students in the hope that they would in turn do the same with the students they would eventually teach. It was especially interesting from my perspective to see that the international students participated strongly in these classes and obviously enjoyed the experience.

5.2.7 Olga

Olga came to Australia from the UK where she went to school and university. After some years she did her Master’s degree in social research and then graduated with a PhD. During her period of graduate study, she also worked in special education. She said that she never qualified as a teacher, but her research was about teachers. This ultimately led to her taking up a teaching position in a university School of Education in Australia. Her teaching experience is thus based on working in the UK and subsequently in Australia.

Olga said that her working experience in special education at a very multicultural school in the UK provided her with an important understanding of different cultures. She developed insights into how religions, cultural values and societal norms influenced children’s learning. At this school most of the students were ethnic minority students from all over the world. During this period a few overseas conflicts occurred resulting in more refugees fleeing to the UK. Her school took children of asylum seekers and refugees from the Balkans, the former Yugoslavia, Kosovo, Croatia, Albania, Macedonia, Serbia, Somalia, Iraq and Afghanistan. Additionally, the school had students who were second or third generation refugees from African, Caribbean and Asian countries. Olga said that some of the new students had never been to school, particularly the girls from Afghanistan because the Taliban did not allow them to enrol; many Somali boys had not been to school either and were illiterate in their own language. Olga worked with many of these students to assist them in developing their English language literacy skills. She commented that some of them developed very quickly, but others
less so. Such a range of learners with different needs and abilities gave Olga extremely valuable experience in managing students in diverse classes.

After completing her PhD Olga moved to Australia, teaching initially in a School of Education at a university in Northern New South Wales on a casual basis until she found a job in Melbourne. She opined that one of the many valuable experiences in working with such a diverse group of students in the UK, along with her own subsequent experience as a migrant, caused her to reflect that

When you move to a country it is challenging on so many levels, but particularly culturally. If you come from a culture that is so different from the one that you are going to, I’d imagine, that it is really very, very difficult for anyone.

In her interview Olga stressed the point that culture plays a great part in peoples’ lives. In saying this she emphasised that it is not just national culture or one’s own culture, but the wide spectre of subcultures that one brings to situations from a personal level – and encounters when one moves to a new country and culture. Her sensitivity to this broad issue, along with her knowledge of sociology and education, enabled her to bring to her classes broad perspectives on culture, gender, sex, and religion. For example, Olga talked about the religious differences that vary from country to country. In her opinion religions like Catholicism, Islam, Judaism and Hinduism create a kind of nationhood, and she suggested that “Islam and so on is different in different countries, but there are also cultural commonalities.” Another aspect of cultures that she believes can differ markedly is gender. It is significant to note that she taught classes in popular culture.

Olga’s philosophy is based on notions of fairness and equality. After living in other countries she compared attitudes to ‘others’ and ‘othering’ – or ‘whiteness’ – in the UK and Australia. “When I go back home to England I notice straight away how negative people are compared to Australia. The British default position is that something will probably always go wrong.” On the other hand, she was surprised to see that despite multiculturalism, Australia still had debates about refugees. For Olga this was where the UK was 15 year ago – an attitude of “let’s lock them up.”

Olga enjoys her teaching, even though as an educator she has had to adjust to new conditions of teaching and this has not been without difficulties. She attributes this in the main to the fact that she has had to adapt to a new country, which has caused her to reflect on her teaching values and beliefs as well as change her teaching practices in a new educational setting.
During my observation of Olgas’ teaching I found her style inclusive and her role was that of a facilitator. She chose questions for discussion with reference to the lecture, recommended readings, or short fragments from video clips. She was not a dominating figure, but rather facilitated discussions and was careful not to unduly direct the students. She balanced her classroom activities most impressively and evidenced a sense of passion and energy in her teaching.

5.2.8 Igor

Igor is originally from India. He received two university degrees in his home country, one in commerce and another in secondary teacher education. He had lived in Australia for many years, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Education, Master’s and PhD; he had also undertaken a range of certificate courses related to training and computer education. His experience in teaching for several years in secondary schools in Australia meant that he knew a good deal about school operations, teaching and philosophy. He had taught in various universities in Melbourne prior to his current appointment. In the interview Igor stressed that of all his academic activities he “enjoys teaching most.” At the same time, he is dedicated to undertaking research related to his teaching.

I am in a very privileged position of communicating with other people, sharing knowledge with others, receiving knowledge from others, and interacting with others. It is exceptionally important, I think. We are all teachers in some way.

Igor is very positive and optimistic, supportive of others, a good listener, and a friendly and open person. In conversation and in his teaching he exudes a sense of wisdom. In inviting me to observe his classes he was delighted to show his approaches to teaching. During my observations he kept eye contact with me to make certain that I felt comfortable in his class; at the same time, he checked that his students were comfortable with me being present. (Parenthetically, I should note that participants’ level of comfort in having me observe their lessons ranged from Igor at one end of the spectrum, to others who were somewhat nervous or anxious at my presence; nonetheless, all were welcoming.) Igor was the only person whose class I observed who asked me if there was anything else I would like to see in relation to what he had discussed in the interview. He had a unique and welcoming manner of showing respect and politeness to myself and all his students; this was even apparent in his body language. Indeed, he emphasised in the interview that respect is a part of his teaching philosophy:
This means different things in different places. In India most teachers are respected, however, it is changing in India. But in Australia you have to earn your own respect. So I can’t say to my current students: ‘I am a teacher, respect me, come to me, and learn from me. The students want to know, ‘What have you got to offer me? And if you don’t have anything to offer me I am not going to come.’

Furthermore, his teaching philosophy is based on the belief that ‘good teaching’ will give a teacher the possibility of teaching anywhere in the world. Because of his interest in different cultures, and extended knowledge of the internationalisation of curriculum in Higher Education and in secondary schools in Australia, he had a role within his School of Education of supporting colleagues with respect to internationalisation and the implementation of policies relating to it. This includes conducting a course that “all the academics have to do.”

Observation of Igor’s classes indicates that he used a range of methods, such as modelling and student-centred approaches with a focus on active learning.

5.2.9 Ivan

Ivan came from the UK where he received his professional education. After migrating to Australia he worked for a long time in Melbourne in the vocational education sector. His expertise and knowledge of curriculum, assessment and evaluation of courses was established when working at TAFE colleges and universities.

I worked there in various roles as a teacher, a curriculum designer and in some management roles. Over this period until about 2002 I was seconded to various universities for research projects.

In response to my question about how educators might balance their duties as a researcher and a lecturer, he said that educators must be realistic and balance workloads whilst being responsible for their academic obligations and teaching duties. He enjoys teaching and research and is clearly innovative with a willingness to experiment with new teaching approaches and methods. In reflecting on his practice, he said he likes to try new things, testing them in the class, and if something does not work he will try another teaching method.

Ivan’s teaching was mostly about himself being a facilitator and he stressed the importance of teachers giving students opportunities to take on active roles:

It is hard to step back and give students the opportunity to discuss issues in their own way, rather than take the role of the leader and tell them and lead them.
He said that he has changed his teaching philosophy from a didactic, teacher-centred position to one that is student-centred. And he stressed the importance of educators taking a step back from their desire to be in the centre of discussion and, instead, putting students in the centre. To assist student learning Ivan actively uses technology during his lectures and tutorials. His students can download from You Tube some of his lectures about diverse teaching strategies, notions of pedagogy, and other issues related to current teaching innovations.

There are challenges for educators in writing a curriculum for a particular subject or course. With respect to internationalisation however Ivan feels confident because he deals with plurality in many ways:

I think one is aware that there will be – particularly in the sort of programs I am involved in – a diverse range of people in the course. So, one is going expect that there’ll be some international students, that there’ll be some people that come with substantial experience in the industries that I am associated with, and some people will come with no experience whatsoever; so, inherently there is a diversity in the students.

At the same time, he said it is not easy to ‘connect’ people and make them talk, adding that he himself is “not a good icebreaker.” He freely acknowledged the problem of ensuring that his students feel comfortable in his classes at the outset; nevertheless, he stressed his willingness and desire to help them learn in the best way that he can.

5. 2. 10 Vera

Vera is an Australian, all of whose schooling and university education has been undertaken in her home country. She completed an undergraduate degree in engineering and then a diploma in teaching in mathematics. After this she worked in high schools in the Western suburbs of Melbourne for eight years and went on to do a Master’s degree in Special Education which allowed her to work with children with learning disabilities. She subsequently taught in primary schools and tutored children from grade 2 upwards, including some at the secondary level. In 2000 Vera took a position in a School of Education at one of the universities in Melbourne in numeracy. She is the only participant who held concurrent positions as both an academic and secretary/administrator role in a School of Education.

With her special education background, Vera was acutely sensitive to the learning difficulties in both literacy and numeracy that some of her students experienced and developed strategies to address their needs. In articulating her teaching philosophy, she said:
I am about them having a good experience. Both academically and socially and supportive-wise, you know sort of pastorally, pastoral care, pastoral sort of stuff. Because my idea, my mantra, I guess, is we need to model best practice. We are teachers and we are training and teaching teachers.

During my observation I found her class interactive, full of discussion, and not tightly controlled. It was less structured in comparison with the classes of other participants. Conceivably, this might present difficulties of adjustment for international students who come from cultures where classes are run in a more structured way. Although Vera appeared not to specifically address issues of pedagogy as far as international students were concerned, she used language that was very easy to understand (but not simple). Her sentences were short and not overloaded with colloquialisms, an approach that is conceivably welcomed international students. Her manner and pace of presentation clearly indicated that she was experienced in working with people who had special needs. The speed of her speech was slow enough to understand if English was not one’s first language. In other words, Vera found a compromise, using clear language to convey sophisticated ideas in a way that people whose English is not fluent might understand.

Vera loves teaching: “I love the interaction with students: it is a part of my administrative role, and a major part of this role is to do with the students.” She sees her non-academic administrator role as being one of supporting local and international students, being someone whom “they know they can come to and get an answer and a response that makes their life at university easier; that’s what I am about – making things smooth for them.”

5.2.11 Anastasia’s story

Anastasia is an Australian who had all her schooling and university education in Australia. She commenced her career as a primary teacher and later worked as a literacy consultant with the Department of Education. She taught at a university in Melbourne for 15 years before changing her career direction and went into educational publishing for a few years. This was followed by a stint teaching English in a girls’ school in Abu Dabi. After her return to Melbourne she resumed her university teaching career, but at another university.

Although engaged in research in her present role, Anastasia “would prefer just to be the teacher,” as she believed it what she does best. She elaborated:

I think that I like the relationships. I think teaching basically is about relationships and about establishing good relationships, and then about helping people develop some
skills in various areas. I think it’s mainly because it’s about working very closely with people. You only can be a good teacher if you develop a good relationship. It’s very rewarding, it’s a very fulfilling career. I always tell my students that I have loved every minute in my teaching career and they say: ‘Oh!, and they feel very inspired by that, adding something like ‘Ok, I am in right profession, if someone says that to me!’ I think I am quite observant, and I think I am quite sensitive to my students. I look after all of them. I look after the internationals. I think what makes a difference here is ‘valuing.’

In relation to cultural sensitivity, she said: “You must be [sensitive]. Cultures differ in terms of gender and all sorts of social practices. If you understand basic concepts about differences between cultures, at least you’re thinking of the need to make connections [in class]”. Her sensitivity to cultural differences was heightened when teaching in primary schools in two of Melbourne’s northern suburbs early in her career where there were “a huge number of kids from Lebanon, Turkey, Greece, Italy … I think, in every teaching context I have been in it have been a very large proportion of the students from the other countries.” To this she added that through marriage her extended family is very multicultural, with ties to several Asian countries. In addition, she has accommodated many homestay international students over several years. She observed that such close living with people from other countries has helped her observe, learn, and value cultural differences.

Anastasia commented that her varied multicultural experiences in schools, teaching overseas, and within her own family has equipped her well for her teaching in universities. She commented: “The first thing I do is identify who are my international students in terms of whether they are just here for study.” She distinguishes between her international students who come here to study and those with other cultural backgrounds who are second or third generation Australians. She then “connects with them in a one-to-one way”:

I just ask them where they are from and what place they come from – what countries they come from – what sort of educational experiences they are used to.

In highlighting her “background knowledge” of many countries Anastasia said that she is even sensitive to differences between Hong Kong Chinese students and Mainland Chinese students. After an initial acquaintance she tries to ensure that in group activities there is generally only one international student in each group.

I always tell my Australian born students, ‘We are lucky! We have four international students in here and you are so lucky because you are going to find out something about
Saudi Arabia or about Korea and China, and it is up to you explore this. Make sure you have coffee with them, find what their educational experience is.’

Anastasia proudly added: “I make a big deal about the internationals … because I think they are very isolated from day one when they come. Valuing who they are, I think, is very important; and try to connect them socially. So, I do a lot of things.”

As a coordinator of the international students within her university Anastasia organised after class cultural activities, such as excursions around Melbourne, and she invited local Australian students from her classes to participate and interact socially with them. Her workload for this role was just “half a day a week” and “there’s no job description.” She added that it’s unclear what you need to be doing; it’s not even specified which students I have to deal with. Really, I can do what I like, but it’s impossible, because what do you focus on? … I’m just going with my gut feeling, but I need to help these new ones connect socially, connect with me, so they know they have someone who they can come to, and then I need to help them in whatever [way I can].

At the time of my interview with Anastasia there were 88 international students in the undergraduate courses at the School of Education, “And this is only undergraduate, it is not postgraduate – I know it is impossible!”

The eleven stories presented in this chapter offer unique descriptions of each educator’s experience, reflections, teaching philosophies and insights which have informed and shaped their professional practice when teaching international pre-service teaching students from Asian countries.

5.3 Conclusion

The following Table (5.1) summarises the interviewees’ educational and teaching backgrounds.

Table 5.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Schooling experience</th>
<th>Undergraduate learning experience</th>
<th>Postgraduate learning experience</th>
<th>Experience in teaching international students</th>
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<td>1.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
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<td>6.</td>
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<td>7.</td>
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<td>9.</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>Igor</td>
<td>India</td>
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<td>India, Australia</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

As indicated, Marko, Vera, Anna, Borislava, Anastasia, and Sasha had their schooling and university education in Australia; Lada, Olga and Ivan studied at the UK; Lina had her school and university education in Vietnam and her postgraduate degree in Australia; Igor had his school and university education in India and similarly to Lina completed his postgraduate studies in Australia. Six of the interviewees undertook their education entirely in Australia. Five of the interviewees received all or part of their education overseas; of these two had experience studying in Australia. Regardless of these differences, all of the interviewees had first-hand experiences of travelling, teaching or living in other cultures. Their philosophies, styles of teaching and practices in general were influenced by a range of educators and educational models. Each of them had varied experience in teaching international students at university level in Australia – and in teaching international pre-service education students from Asian countries.

Students’ expectations of their study at university are shaped by many factors. For example, as Faulkner and Crowhurst (2015) have stated: “what students want or need from university might well sit in tension with those who work in the university,” and students
generally arrive at tertiary education “with sets of values and beliefs already in place, values often deeply rooted in family and community” (p. 207). In a sense, this applies even more strongly to international students’ expectations when they come to a new country to study. International students come to a foreign country where English is the dominant language, and universities often operate in ways that are different from what they are familiar with in their home countries. This applies to curriculum, styles of teaching, modes of assessment, and policies and regulations in general. On top of this the university academics, in addition to working within an ‘Australian’ framework, have their own individual philosophies and approaches to teaching– with some having had extensive experience in working with students from overseas and others having had relatively little. All of these factors have a bearing in some way not only on how students ‘accommodate’ the differences between their home country and Australia – but also on how their educators accommodate them in their teaching and interactions with international students.

Finally, it should be acknowledged that the narratives or stories presented in this chapter are based not only on interviews with each of the eleven educators, but also observations of eight of them teaching in classes, some extending over several classes. The following chapter presents and discusses findings relating to three of the subordinate questions of this study.
Chapter 6

Educators’ Pedagogies and Adaptions in Relation to International Pre-service Teacher Education Students

6.1 Introduction

Chapter 6 presents and interprets the data in relation to three of the secondary questions of this study: What changes if any do educators make in their practice when they teach international students? What are educators’ views regarding the factors that affect international students’ success or failure in academic courses? and What pedagogies do educators apply in teaching international students? This is undertaken from the perspective of curriculum, assessment, and pedagogy.

6.2 Background

Pre-service teacher education in Australia began to gain in popularity as an option for overseas students earlier this century. During their study students have to develop particular theoretical and practical knowledge and skills and be able meet the requirements of government and statutory bodies. The broad field of education is innovative and responds to societal changes; however, the degree to which this happens across the country and within schools and school systems can vary widely. But certainly, innovations in the theory of teaching practice, new policies and new teaching methodologies are introduced for discussion and/or implementation on a somewhat regular basis (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016; Darling-Hammond, 2017; Finger, 2019; Joseph, 2015; Hardy, 2018; Mayer, 2014; Osler & Starkey, 2017; 2017; White et al., 2014.). Further, the broad field of education is not lacking in a plethora of government reports at both federal and state levels (for example, Gonski, 2011; Allen, Rowan & Singh, 2018); the same could be said of curriculum documents.

The following section presents examples of practices that the interviewees have developed to prepare and support international students in their practical placements.

6.3 Challenges Relating to Practical Placements in Schools for International Students

Five of the eleven interviewees (and most vociferously Vera and Anastasia) commented that practical placement for international students was challenging: firstly, because it was affected by students’ English language proficiency level, and secondly because the educational settings within the Australian context were new for international students. An extensive discussion relating to international students’ fluency and competency with English is presented...
in Chapter 7; the issues discussed in this section relate to the interviewees’ insights and opinions, changes some of them initiated, and the pedagogies they employed with respect to international Asian students in consideration of their school placements.

In presenting examples of ways in which assistance was provided to pre-service international students with respect to their teaching placements it should be stressed that not all of the interviewees engaged in all of the practices. Further, it should be noted that some of the interviewees were directly engaged with students on their school placements, but others were not – nonetheless all of them were cognisant that they had a responsibility, to varying degrees, to prepare students for such placements.

As a means of maximising the effect and ensuring the quality of the educational practical placement, some interviewees provided students with weekly reading materials. These related to such topics as how to engage school students in their learning; principles relating to creating safe learning environments in classrooms; students’ differing learning styles; examples of strategies for teaching in primary and secondary schools in various educational settings; advice on class management; lesson planning according to curriculum requirements; and observation, assessment, and feedback strategies. What is significant about this list is that because of their cultural background some of these topics and the approaches to them tend to be less familiar to – or present more issues for – international students compared to Australian students.

Sasha, Vera and Marko, all of whom visited students on their placements, facilitated peer, small group and whole class discussions based on academic articles as an important means of providing students with a solid platform for their practical placement. All three interviewees mentioned their commitment to carefully observing and monitoring their international students. Similarly, the same three interviewees, when assisting students to prepare assessment tasks that they might employ on their placement, mentioned again that they were conscious of the fact that for some international students at least several of the concepts and approaches would not necessarily be ones with which there were familiar.

The importance of students obtaining positive results from their practical placement and experiencing ‘real’ teaching in various educational settings in primary and secondary schools needs little if any argument (Pendergast, Garvis, & Keogh, 2011). For international students there is the additional challenge of relating to Australian students and teachers. As Spooner-Lane, Tangen and Campbell (2009) suggested, “practical experience has long been regarded as playing a vital role in the preparation of pre-service teachers for the real world of
the classroom” (p. 54). Nevertheless, as the academic literature reveals, all students are challenged by the reality of teaching (Allen, Ambrosetti, & Turner, 2013) but international students can be challenged even more because of their lack of knowledge of the Australian educational system and different life and cultural experience (Campbell, O’Gorman, Tangen, et al., 2008). Moreover, for some international pre-service teachers, their cultural background and language differences act as barriers to successfully completing their practicum experiences, and may result in disconnection from their mentor, causing a problem in establishing rapport with students in the classroom, and affecting the whole practical experience, “which leaves them feeling vulnerable, isolated, confused and threatened” (Spooner-Lane, Tangen, & Campbell, 2009, p. 8).

However, in overcoming such challenges, students gain new experience and knowledge and can make a transition from the familiar educational setting in which they studied in their home country to the new setting. For example, Vera compared the experience of transition that her local Australian and international students made from being a student to becoming a teacher. She found that for international students, the process seems to be more challenging. She said that even Australian local students, after 13 years of being a student, have to rethink who they are and adopt a new role and position as a teacher. For international students however such a transition is more complex because they not only have to adopt to a new role as teacher, but also do so within a new cultural context. They make a transition from one culture to another, from one educational system to another. The teacher’s role is a social role in society and from country to country such a role is culturally determined (Santoro & Kennedy, 2016).

The remainder of this section addresses issues relating to the challenges teaching placements present for international Asian students. It is presented with reference to Vera who was particularly experienced and vocal on this issue.

Vera was strongly aware that her Chinese international students’ expectations of a teacher’s role in Australia does not match with the reality of an Australian classroom: “the students experience cultural shock coming here and doing education. It is very a big shock … it is cultural.” She saw it as an issue that needed to be addressed at the outset in order to most beneficially support the students during their practical placement.

In similar vein, Machart (2018) noted that there is a great deal of research in which international students reported experiencing culture shock, facing extremely difficult challenges for which they needed to “be prepared” in order to overcome “the crisis” (p. 128).
Even when students accept responsibility for their learning, there is still the need for them to be supported and guided.

Interestingly, the research of Campbell et al. (2008) discussed the difficulties that international students faced during their practical placement and raised the rhetorical and practical question about whether it is culturally fair to assess international students on the same criteria as local students, because of their cultural and linguistic background. Furthermore, they argued that very often “the supervising teacher has the ideal teacher in mind when evaluating the student performance at the school” (p. 4) and supervising teachers expect pre-service teachers to show initiative. Showing initiative however often relies on students’ cultural experience; whilst some international students may demonstrate initiative, international students in general might be unsure if their home experience of teaching and learning would be accepted and valued or not. De Vita (2002) went so far as to point out that methods of assessment of students’ teaching competence proceeds “regardless of differences in cultural, ethnic or linguistic backgrounds” (p. 225) and questioned whether this is fair to international students.

In light of such issues, Vera emotionally proclaimed that universities sometimes put students in a position where every failure in their learning is considered to be their fault. Accordingly, she argued the need for more ‘support’ and cultural and institutional induction of international students. She elaborated:

It must be hugely difficult for them, for the Chinese students in particular. I would say that their experience of teachers is very traditional, like, ‘Do this, do this, do this; ‘I know everything and you know nothing; and We don’t discuss anything, you just do what I say.

Vera’s view on the teaching style in China and the teacher’s position in Chinese schools and culture is very stereotypical. In reality it is more complex, as has been argued by Ramburuth and McCormick (2001). The Chinese approach is rooted in history, philosophy and culture (Biggs, 1998b). At the same time, Vera’s insights into the expectations of international students and the difficulties they experience concurs with those of Spooner-Lane, Tangen and Campbell (2009), who argue that the students come “from a different cultural understanding of learning and have developed different schema about schooling to that of the majority culture and so have different personal and academic expectations” (Spooner-Lane et al., 2009, p. 81).
Certainly, it is not uncommon for students in an unfamiliar social and cultural environment to experience academic dissonance, and this can lead to them feeling stressed when unable to achieve to the same degree as in their home country. Asian countries in general are increasingly developing new teaching/learning strategies and with globalisation are adopting approaches more aligned to many Western countries. And, as Spooner-Lane et al. (2009) have argued, when studying in Western universities

the students can also engage in hybrid adaptation to their new disciplinary practice through attempts to create a hybrid space for meaning making. Within this form of adaptation, the students engage critically and creatively with the disciplinary requirements and treat their first language and culture as a resource rather than a problem. (p. 88).

Another challenge identified by Vera is that of classroom management, and this too can be problematic for international students because of cultural differences. She stated that classroom management “is not about control or classroom behaviour management – it is not about that: it is about building relationships.” She said that pre-service teachers have to be able to ‘read’ their class and manage students’ behaviour, more as a facilitator than an ‘authority figure’, using various class activities to engage learners. Here again she stressed that international students need extra support during their practical placement to help them to establish appropriate communication techniques with their students and not simply resort to the classroom management environment in which they themselves were taught; this of course can also be problematic for local Australian students.

Vera commented further that she has seen international students, because of their cultural differences, misinterpreting or confusing an Australian teacher’s informal conversations with students as a form of friendship without proper understanding about how to balance such conversations and relationships. She cautioned that international students may easily get into trouble in their class because there is “a fine line between the way we are as teachers in this culture and friendship.” This, she said, is not an uncommon source of problems for some international students.

Vera was extremely sensitive to the complexity of difficulties that international students have to overcome: they have to “accommodate a new teaching style; they have to learn a second language – all this stuff. It is phenomenal! And then they are living away from home, I don’t know how they do it.” She suggested that whilst many students make the transition, others struggle. She concurred with Campbell et al. (2008) who argue that all students “draw on their
own educational experiences when under stress. However, international students will draw on different experiences from those of native-born Australian students which may not assist them in their field experience” (p. 9). Wang (2015) has argued that despite the academic difficulties that international students experience whilst learning abroad, they effectively use their previous experience, knowledge and their “agency” to successfully adopt new methods of teaching/learning.

Vera expressed her ongoing wish that her international students will work as teachers in their home countries and apply the knowledge and experience they gained in Australia. Such was her empathic interest in these students she expressed her regret that she does not have data to show “if they have a job as a teacher, and how they are in the classroom” after they have returned to their home countries.

Vera’s reflections and insights relating to international students’ experiences supports the research of Machart (2018) which suggests that Asian international students are still presented as deficient, even when they clearly demonstrate a great capacity as learners. Earlier, Machart and Lim (2013) warned against the danger of stereotyping individuals’ cultural identity that placed them into ‘boxes’ and was misleading in interpreting their learning behaviour. Similarly, Machart (2018) argued that

University websites, Embassies or organisations in charge of the promotion of student mobility give a great emphasis on the difficulties that prospective students would encounter, and furnish them with complete ‘sets’ of advice on how to overcome such difficulties. This provides them with a sense of comfort in their role as better-education-providers and reinforces the impression that ‘we’ [the ‘west’] can educate ‘them’ [Asians], and that the ‘West’ will add value to the education of these Others. Not only are these discourses discriminatory, they also are based on the pre-requisite that international students are absolutely different based on an essentialising approach. (Machart, 2018, p. 136).

The analyses of Vera’s narratives relating to international students’ practical placements were rich because they focused on the complexity and uniqueness of the learning experiences that these students from Asian countries encounter. Central to her conversation was the importance of educators having a sense of cultural awareness and cultural difference within the context of preparing students to perform effectively on their school placements.
6.4 Curriculum Developments as a Consequence of International Student Enrolments in Pre-service Teacher Education Classes

This section addresses the question of how educators modify their curriculum because of the presence of international students in their class and, further, how this internationalisation of the curriculum may benefit all students’ learning (Altbach & Knight, 2007).

All of my participants have been working at one of two schools of education at two universities in Melbourne, and have developed curricula for undergraduate and postgraduate courses. To various degrees they have written, evaluated and upgraded the curriculum and its associated course guides and teaching and reading materials.

During the interviews I asked my participants the question: When you work on the curriculum for a particular course, do you take into consideration that the enrolment could include international students from diverse educational and cultural backgrounds, particularly from Asian countries? I wanted to hear if and how they made the curriculum relevant and inclusive for international students. Most of the participants responded positively to the question, indicating that they took all students’ feedback seriously and evaluated their curriculum every year, making it relevant to current policies and directions. My observations of their course guides suggested that attention to notions of internationalisation was given to varying degrees.

Marko said that as the numbers of international students are increasing, he is becoming more aware of their presence in the class and has begun planning accordingly:

You start to think about the curriculum and how that will be presented, and its suitability for a mixed group of students, not just students born in Australia, perhaps, but students who have come to Australia for study, or students who have recently moved to Australia from other nations. You do start to think about how the curriculum fits a diverse group and in particular from Asia and the Pacific, because that tends to be mostly where our international students are from in our programs. But not entirely, because many come from the Middle East and from Europe, and other places; but, yes, mostly from Asia and the Pacific.

Because of the specific focus of the teacher education programs to prepare students to work in Australian – and, in particular, Victorian – schools there are some limitations on what educators can do. He noted that all teacher qualification programs have to be approved by “Australian teacher registration bodies, which primarily are concerned with registering teachers to work in Australian schools”. Nevertheless, Marko strongly believes that:
there is a recognition that it [the curriculum] should have some internationalisation aspects to it and so when we think about curriculum we will be trying to take that into account. But at the same time most of our content and our focus will be concerned with what happens in Australia, which has made it difficult for us in designing curriculum to ensure that there’s sufficient breadth for students, for international students, to be able to contextualise their learning with their own experiences – coming from international settings into an Australian setting – to be able to learn things that are suitable not only for working when they live here, in Australian schools, but also when they leave the program as a teacher; for them to be able to take what they learnt that can be applicable in the international settings … in home countries and in other places. We try to take that into account, but then are some limits about what we can do there because of the limits which are placed on us.

I observed many of Marko’s classes over a period of weeks and we had several conversations about the internationalisation of the curriculum. It was interesting that over the time I observed him he tended to pay more and more attention to issues relating to internationalisation, especially in relation to Asian countries. This was evident for example in new tasks for class activities, including an increased number of research investigations and added readings. Students were also required to think about the implementation of intercultural capabilities with a strong focus on cross-curriculum priorities and include them in sample lesson planning.

Marko explained that for a long time curricula in Australia had strong connections with European and North American traditions, but since Australia and Asian countries had become even more important strategic partners, learning about Asian politics, economy, education, culture and language has become part of the Australian school curriculum, particularly in Victoria.

Obviously, there’s a whole range of other sources, the knowledge about various fields which need to be included to give everybody a global perspective on the content, not only because of what that can bring in terms of enriching the learning, but also in terms of the applicability of the learning.

Marko’s view correlated with that of (Leask, 2011) in relation to the notion of an internationalised curriculum:

an internationalised curriculum is not at attempt to produce a curriculum that looks the same everywhere and can be taught anywhere to anyone. … what we are striving for is
a curriculum that will facilitate the development in all students of the skills, knowledge and attitudes that will equip them, as graduates, professionals and citizens of the world to live and work effectively in a rapidly changing and increasingly connected global society and in so doing to contribute positively to that society. The way this is done will differ depending on particular features of the disciplinary, institutional and national contexts within which students are engaging in the learning and assessment activities. (Leask, 2011, p. 10).

Although internationalisation of the curriculum does not occur in every subject that Marko teaches he nonetheless is committed to providing students with experiences “that involve an international context rather than just a local context”. He further explained:

here in our programs we do try and provide opportunities to students to have teaching experiences in other countries if possible. You know, it’s all those things rolled together that make the curriculum look outward in a bigger picture rather than being just narrow and being about the immediate locality. So, that’s about enriching everybody – not just making it relevant in different ways for international students, but for all students.

Interestingly, at the time of the interview with Marko the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), an independent statutory authority, had introduced into the Australian Curriculum Design structure ‘cross-curriculum priorities’ which included Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures, Asia and Australia’s Engagement with Asia, and Sustainability.

Many Asian nations are growing rapidly and are regionally and globally influential. Immigrants from all these countries have historically contributed to Australia’s development and will continue to do so in the future. An understanding of Asia underpins the capacity of Australian students to be active and informed citizens working together to build harmonious local, regional and global communities, and build Australia’s social, intellectual and creative capital. It also builds understanding of the diversity of cultures and peoples living in Australia, fosters social inclusion and cohesion and is vital to the prosperity of Australia. (Australian Curriculum, 2014).

During my observations I noticed that after facilitating class discussions, Marko moved from one group to another, listening to the conversation at each table and making comments and asking questions. At the end of this activity he invited each group to present their planning and ideas to the whole class. It was a successful strategy because it combined theory and
practice and had a specific focus on intercultural capabilities, encouraging the students to reflect and value their classmates’ perspectives, including the international students’ experience and contribution.

Anastasia also shared her experience of internationalising the curriculum. She commented that although the curriculum for the subject she taught was “already developed” she would “certainly in terms of organising tutorials and thinking about the diversity of students’ in her class make changes to include and engage both her local and international students. Moreover, she stressed that since the beginning of her career she has taught students from “different backgrounds, with different amounts of spoken and written English” and is accustomed to adapting the curriculum to adjust to the needs of each cohort of students. She added that it is “second nature” to her, something she does “unconsciously”: “it’s like a natural sort of thing for me now. It’s just part of the way I think about organising my teaching.”

Some of the participants struggled somewhat in articulating their responses to my question about how they adapted their courses – including curriculum and assessment – to the needs of international students. Conceivably, some might simply not have given it a great deal of thought; some might not have internalised the language around notions of internationalisation; and others might have been trying for the first time to articulate the concept from the perspective of their own practice as distinct from a general acquaintance with the principles of internationalisation. Further, there are some areas that are so routine to an academic, or so embedded into their practice, that they have not had to articulate the issue – as well might have been the case.

It was clear from Sasha’s response to the question about internationalisation of the curriculum that he was not aware of the terminology, but ongoing conversation and my observation of his classes provided me with clear evidence that he had included some elements of internationalisation in his practice, particularly in his teaching. Certainly, he found it difficult to tease out and elaborate on his practice compared to Igor, Lina, Marko, Olga, Lada and Anastasia. What Sasha did say related more to ethics than to internationalisation:

Nothing has been changed [in my content]. I never really have taken notice of this policy [of internationalisation] other than I am conscious when I am developing courses or assessment tasks, I try make sure that nothing is discriminatory. … I make sure that it is written in the language which is appropriate; it’s really straightforward. But I don’t necessarily put anything in that is specific cultural, or ethnic background because I think there are practices which we are doing here in education that I think are universal. You
can apply them in any culture, in any country. I think they [the students] could apply them anywhere. Hopefully they do see they’re useful and they do. … They try using them, if they think it is ok. I think they should.

Borislava was of the opinion that to date academic staff have not made changes in the curriculum on the basis of having international students in their classes:

No, I don’t think we do. I think we will need to begin to do that more and more because early childhood education programs here, in our school, have become very popular for international students. They never used to be, but now they suddenly are. … It happened so quickly that we kept what we had, but we know that we need to change some of those things based on what we are now experiencing.

Certainly, it is not surprising that some academics have embraced notions of internationalisation more than others. Indeed, the term itself has been a source of confusion for some; for others the term has been interpreted in different ways. Qiang (2003), for example, in an evaluation of the conceptual framework of internationalisation in higher education argued that academic literature had for the last ten years presented overlapping concepts of internationalisation. He outlined four approaches: “the activity approach”, “the competency approach”, “the ethos approach and the process approach” (pp. 250-251). The activity approach “promotes activities such as curriculum, student/faculty exchange … and international students” and was “synonymous with the term of international education in the 1970s and early 1980s” (p. 250). He added however that the activities “are prone to be considered as distinct programs in terms of their operation” (p. 250). The competency approach, by contrast, “emphasizes the development of skills, knowledge, attitudes and values in students, faculty and staff. The issue central to this approach is how generation and transfer of knowledge help to develop competencies in the personnel of the higher education institution so that they become more internationally knowledgeable and interculturally skilled” (Qiang, 2003, p. 250). “The ethos approach, which emphasizes creating a culture or climate that values and supports international/intercultural perspectives and initiatives” (Qiang, 2003, p. 251). Finally, the process approach “stresses integration or infusion of an international/intercultural dimension into teaching, research and service through a combination of a wide range of activities, policies and procedures” (Qiang, 2003, p. 251).

To be sure, in considering the interviews and observations that formed the background to this section on curriculum developments as a consequence of international student enrolments in pre-service teacher education classes, it was obvious that there was a range of
opinions and practices. Some of the interviewees had not only given considerable thought to the issues involved, but also made considerable attempts to embed aspects of internationalisation into their practice; others less so. Given this, Qiang’s (2003) view, is helpful. During the period of my research and since the interviews were conducted approaches to internationalisation have continued to develop and more and more become embedded into university practice. As Qiang (2003) has implied, an ongoing challenge is for educators to continue to be cognizant of the need for developing skills, knowledge, attitudes and values in students (local and international) and staff (the competency approach) – but educators must not lose sight of the fact that the quest is to ensure that they become interculturally skilled. The creation of a culture that values and supports international and intercultural perspectives and initiatives (the ethos approach) is also essential. And finally, it could be argued that the end goal is a complete integration of the international/intercultural dimension into all aspects of teaching and research.

The next section presents examples of inclusive teaching practice that were developed by my participants.

6.5 Internationalisation of the Curriculum: Inclusive Principles

The interviewees whose narratives best exemplify ways of making the curriculum inclusive for all students were Lina, Igor, and, to a lesser extent, Ivan and Borislava. Lina opined that it was a challenge to make curriculum content and pedagogy more inclusive for students from different backgrounds. In doing so she stressed that inclusive principles and diverse principles are always fundamental considerations in designing the curriculum and implementing teaching and learning activities. That means … making the curriculum content and pedagogy more inclusive for students … from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

She spoke of integrating into her teaching and learning activities more intercultural examples, case studies, videos about what is happening in different countries … making the content more international and intercultural … and similarly with teaching and learning activities: you can always make them more inclusive through the way you organise group work, which facilitates the engagement of both international and local students in classrooms … [and] by giving them reading for the questions before the lesson and allowing them to prepare … the responses before the class.
Lina believes that such approaches help students feel they are included in the learning and teaching process. Moreover, she thinks that it may be important for domestic students to have case studies about the different countries that international students come from and for them to research issues relating to schooling and education in these countries, including research about the curriculum structure which is a critical issue relevant not only to Australia, but globally.

Make them well-prepared for the world. If they live in Australia, they live in a multicultural country and they definitely have to interact with people from different backgrounds. That knowledge will be very helpful; and if they are engaged in conversation [with people from other countries] they will have a broader perspective … that allows them to contribute to class discussions to build conceptual knowledge based on their own experience.

Similarly, Igor was consciously working on a curriculum for classes with a diverse population of students, including international students. It was with heartfelt declamation that he said “Oh, I have to [do it]. I have to find who my students are. What their interests are”. He noted that he was using ‘engagement’ strategies (Biggs, 2011), For example, for the subject “Children, education and society, and cultural settings” Igor put much effort into exploring approaches to teaching and learning that would be of most benefit to his pre-service student teachers. Had he not done this he felt that the students would not have been not engaged with the curriculum. As an experienced educator Igor evidenced in the interview, and in the classes I observed, a deep understanding of how to connect with every learner.

So, the curriculum to me is something that needs to be communicated to you. I can’t assume that the curriculum is static – that it is there and all we have to do is take from it. No! I have to actually unpack the curriculum and communicate it to you. So, that’s my view of teaching and in this view of teaching it is very important that you are engaged. Yes!

Another practical example of Igor’s approach to curriculum came from his teaching a course, ‘Effective learning environments.’ He arranged for his students to teach an on-line class to children in Pakistan. He asked students in his class what they knew about Pakistan and received two responses: “they play cricket,” and “they are terrorists.” They knew nothing about Pakistani culture, customs and how the society operates. He expressed an opinion that in a sense some “students are afraid of different cultures.” Not to be daunted, he developed several learning activities so that they could better acquaint themselves with the culture prior to them
engaging in the on-line teaching. At the conclusion of the on-line teaching sessions he asked them again: “What do you know about Pakistan” He described their responses as ‘the best thing about learning,” stating that they learnt by themselves and changed their minds. He paraphrased their response:

Oooh, you have embarrassed us. They are like us. That is, Pakistan kids are like us and the girls are interested in make-up and dress, and in the same films and music we are interested in. And the boys are interested in girls, they are interested in girlfriends and they are interested in music, and playing sport.

He stressed that the students worked as active learners and made the ‘discovery’ by themselves, not because Igor told them they were wrong, but because they went into an ‘unknown’ space where new learning became possible (Davis, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler, 2015). Moreover, they had a set of reading materials for this course to work on, and these too provided them with information that they were able to assimilate and use.

Activities such as this were undertaken in the context of Igor revising his strategies of engaging students in learning, and “asking the right question: ‘What do you know about that?’ That got them interested.” He also said to his students, “You know, foreign students find Australia quite racist. Why? Are you racist? No! No! But let’s find out why they might think this.”

Carr and Johnson (2014) stress the importance of encouraging students to develop “rich repertoires of multicultural instructional examples to use in teaching ethnically diverse students” (p. 37) and this is precisely what Igor was committed to doing. A trustful teacher-student professional relationship where students feel safe and welcome is a key element of this. In his interview Igor went to some pains to stress the importance of engaging students, beginning with the introductory session for any course. For him this included learning his students’ names because, as he says to them, “I want to show you respect by getting your name right. And in respecting you and your name I hope in return you will respect me and my name.” This was also a point stressed strongly by Anastasia.

Ivan too expressed the opinion that good teaching practice is based on a notion of knowing your students:

So, one of the elements of that good practice is to find out who your students are; yes. But in reality, in the way the university works, that is not likely to happen the first time you meet people in the class. You can’t learn about them in five minutes – it develops over a period of time. So, there are all sorts of challenges.
Another example of inclusive practices came from Anna. In discussing the internationalisation of the curriculum in early childhood education she underlined that in her subject there is “a lot of talking about languages and literacies … music, and singing with children, doing painting and those sorts of things.” She encourages her pre-service students to recognise and use artistic languages – music, visual art, dance, drama – as a basis for using these languages with students. And she does not limit herself to a Western perspective; rather, she stresses the importance of using the rich tapestry of artistic expression as used in other cultures. This might, for example, include learning a simple song in another language, but it can be extended to other art forms as well. Such activities, Anna suggested, enrich the curriculum and make it more relevant and personalised.

We’re talking about languages and literacies, we are not talking [about] English, so much. Storytelling and acting, and dramatic play and painting … diversity is welcome … It’s language based, not just English based.

Anna also referred to the importance of her students learning how to ‘read’ body language. And she strongly encouraged her students, Australian and international, to share songs or rhymes or other activities with which they are familiar in their own culture. Such activities and insights can be applied in their work as teachers in the early childhood sector:

the sort of things which could become part of anybody’s repertoire, and children would love it. We all learn it, and it is really useful for a preschool teacher to be able to say, sing ‘Happy birthday’ or ‘Twinkle, Twinkle little star’ in 10 languages … The young ones, they are fascinated with other languages. So, we’ve always had games in different languages, and songs and poems, and different things.

For years Anna has been collecting culturally related literature. And she also encourages her students to share their favourite stories from childhood and talk about the sorts of accompanying story-book illustrations that were popular in their country. “They can bring [to class] whatever they like because you’re talking about the sorts of languages by which you assume a child will be stimulated.”

When asked if she saw such activities as a form of internationalisation, Anna stressed that first and foremost, for her, it was simply exemplary early childhood practice:

“We had these things before we had international students. So I don’t see it is as internationalisation: I see it as a part of early childhood education, but it does have a fairly international focus.”
Anna was particularly critical of what she saw as a tendency to move away from a broad use of ‘languages’ in the early childhood sphere into a more narrowly focused emphasis on formal literacy and less recognition of diversity: “I see the new curriculum as actually less international than practices in the past and becoming much more concerned with formal literacy.” For her, internationalisation is, in part, a by-product of her philosophy and beliefs regarding early childhood education per se. and as such she is most supportive of it. Finally, she gave an example of encouraging a Chinese student to compare Australian curriculum documents with Chinese documents, firstly, because it brings an international perspective to Australian classes for comparison and learning, and secondly, because such activities help international students to see their home experiences as being relevant to their learning in Australia:

I would like to encourage more of that because, obviously, they [international students] give us ideas about the curriculum too. So they’re the sorts of things I like to sort of build in if possible.

Her sentiments bring together the two elements of inclusiveness and internationalisation.

The final interviewee who commented strongly on the importance of inclusivity in relation to the internationalisation of the curriculum was Borislava. She also spoke on the importance of her international students sharing their knowledge and experience with other members of the class in order to bring a “broader perspective.” One of her students from the Philippines, who had worked voluntarily as a kindergarten teacher in her home country, asked Borislava’s permission to tell the story of her educational experience. It was a poignant presentation given in the last class of the semester. She used PowerPoint and showed many pictures to illustrate her unique and emotionally compelling story. The student relayed how she travelled daily from the city where she lived up to a poverty-stricken area high in the mountains where she ran a couple of kindergartens for children. Borislava commented:

She did on her own and she did it with not much support. She walked up the mountain and came back [each day] … and I thought to myself, why didn’t I ask her to tell us this at the start [of the semester] because [throughout the semester] she used to come to my class and she sat on her own and she worked alone, and tried very hard. [After she finished her story] I looked around at the other students in the class and some of them had tears in their eyes; you know, some were moved by what they saw.

Borislava said that she was extremely moved and filled with regret that she had not made more effort to get to know the student at the beginning of the semester. This, she opined,
could have changed the classroom dynamics considerably such that the student might have been more embraced by the other students and felt more included within the class. Borislava described it as a moment of opening a new and unimagined perspective on someone’s life and work and, at the same time, it provided material from another culture that she, Borislava, could have used positively during the semester; it opened-up a number of challenging issues that could have been richly discussed. She said, “I learnt a big lesson from that.”

In summary, it can be said that to varying degrees and in different ways some but not all of the interviewees made conscious attempts to include inclusive principles in their teaching. The adoption of such inclusive principles is essential when considering the internationalisation of the curriculum.

6.6 Internationalisation of the Curriculum: Experience of Practical Placement Overseas

The two universities in which my participants worked had an acknowledged reputation for attracting international students and adopting policies that kept abreast of current trends with regards to internationalisation. Three of the participants – Igor, Anna and Borislava – shared their experience of supervising pre-service teacher students undertaking practical placements overseas.

Igor organised practical placements in India for pre-service teacher students. The placement was of three weeks duration and the students lived with Indian families and taught in the local schools. Igor believed that for Australian students it was a great cultural and teaching experience, where “everyone is from a different culture.” A challenge identified by him is that students, understandably, want to teach as if they are teaching Australian students, but “what they learn in Australia is very much ‘active’ learning … But in India they rely more on ‘passive’ or book learning,” so they have to be sensitive to this when teaching in a more ‘active’ manner; he added however “but that is very good.” Nonetheless, he said, the Australian students experience “absolute cultural shock” – not only because Indian children respond to their teaching differently from Australian students, but because the food in India is different as is the lifestyle in general. On the other hand, he observed that in India the attitude to the teacher is “a lot more respectful” and students are more attentive: “they want to listen, they want to give the right answer.”

I asked Igor whether the teaching/learning style in India confused his students. The essential point, he suggested, was that his students “need to make their way,” adding that the “Indian students appreciate very much their teaching and like the involvement.” He added that,
having had the experience in India and overcome their initial cultural shock and become “culturally broader,” several of his students have expressed a desire to return to India again: “they just loved it.” For educators like Igor and his colleagues, the experience of organising and supervising students’ practical placement overseas provides new perspectives on teaching in Australia.

Anna and Borislava commented on their experience of students’ practical experience in China. In contrast to the Indian experience, the Chinese experience of the students could have been improved by finding more suitable practical placement partners. The university signed a contract with a company to facilitate the practical placement in China. This entailed students working as English teachers in early childhood centres. Unfortunately, the conditions of their work were unsatisfactory and not suitable for a practical placement because, as Anna said, students had to work an excessive number of hours and many of them found the “home stays with families a bit difficult.” Anna explained that unfortunately the program was terminated because one student was completely traumatized by the experience and many others complained.

When I saw what they were actually doing in these centres, it was atrocious! And, you know, the sort of techniques they were using with the children; they were screaming at the children and things like that … it was absolutely appalling. … What was actually happening was not teaching and learning in any way, shape or form. Those sorts of things are a bit disturbing. That was put to a stop!”

Anna attributed the problem largely to the fact that they had used a private company to organize the placements. She herself had undertaken much of her research in China and other Asian countries and said:

Now you have got entrepreneurial companies moving in to deliver private preschooling, and they’re not particularly committed to quality and things like that. So, that is an issue for us, because for most countries early childhood is not part of the compulsory school system, a lot of it is private. So the quality is pretty up and down – you get the best and the worst.

Borislava also provided her insight into this particular practical placement. She acknowledged the need to be fully cognizant of the situation the students were going into, which was not the case in using the private placement company. After having had such a negative experience she, as a coordinator of the overseas practical experience program for early
childhood education, worked towards establishing a new program “with a lot more awareness of how this program actually works.”

To be sure, an overseas teaching placement can have many benefits for students, but it is essential that it is extremely well organized. Fitzsimmons and McKenzie (2006) commented on the benefits of such programs, suggesting that student teachers dealing with the challenges of their overseas program gained in confidence and built resilience through self-reflection during and after their overseas practical placement. The critical reflection happened because the pre-service teachers had to deal with different perspectives, culture and systems (pp.185-186). From quite a different perspective, Cruickshank and Westbrook (2013) argue that because requirements for graduate teachers to have intercultural skills was now embedded into requisite professional standards, the practical placement overseas may provide rich experience of cultural and educational diversity.

Finally, it should be noted that in supervising students on placements overseas, university academics have the opportunity to become better acquainted with educational and cultural issues from new perspectives. This, in turn, can be of benefit in gaining a better understanding of the students who come from overseas to study in Australia.

6.7 Teaching International Students and Internationalisation of Assessment

Another important issue confronting many international students studying at university in Australia is the method of assessment. Even today there is a general tendency for students from Asian countries to be assessed through examinations at the end of a course or semester in their home country. This is less common in Australia with respect to pre-service teacher training programs (Appendix 10).

It is therefore important that consideration be given to the assessment tasks given to international students. Understandably, many will need assistance in adapting to what are often new means of assessment – in addition to coping with the learning of a new language. (This will be the subject of Chapter 7).

Marko has commented:

A lot of university policy is actually geared towards the didactic and then assessment through exams, and so on. In a School of Education, we don’t work that way, by and large. Maybe some aspects are like that but I think if you look at how the teaching and the learning takes place in a School of Education it is sometimes quite different to what might be happening in science, or engineering … and there is obviously a reason for
that, because the people involved in the schools of education are used to working with children in schools, working in different kinds of ways, and so they teach in different kinds of ways because the students that they are teaching have to go and teach like that. So there’s often more group work, more inquiry-based learning, rather than just didactic telling; and this is why assessment is different – there are lots of projects and presentations, rather than just tests and exams.

Marko stressed that for him assessment should provide students with an opportunity to show what they have learnt:

An exam or a test is only one way to test for the right answer – but there are many ways that students can show what they have learnt continuously all the way through [the course or semester] … that’s why it is important to have a whole range of different things at your disposal.

Marko wanted students to have opportunities to experience different kinds of assessment: “different styles of assessment at different times.” According to his university’s policy, students have to have two assessments during the semester, but he noted that sometimes “these can be broken down into smaller pieces.” Moreover, for his subject Marko preferred to have “group assessment, and some which is individual, some which is written, some which is spoken, some which is a performance, a presentation or a demonstration – things like that – so that there are different things happening.”

He explained that the reason for such variety of assessment is to give different types of learners the opportunity to use the skills they already have and to master new skills:

If you happen to be strong at writing, it’s good you have an opportunity to show that strength; if you are not strong in writing, then there are other things that will occur during the assessment [process] where you can show what you have learnt and so you are not disadvantaged because you don’t write so well. Or there’ll be opportunities to speak, and so if you speak well but don’t write well you have that opportunity, and this is important.

Marko believes that this helps international students as well as local students. He notes that international students are expecting everything to be written because they have had those experiences perhaps in their home countries. But I think it helps them to have multiple ways of being assessed – it helps all students, not only international students ... Sometimes it takes a while for the international students to understand there are benefits in that.
Marko is clearly mindful that this is not necessarily easy for international students, and it takes time and practice for them to familiarise themselves with new forms of assessments. He discusses assessment criteria and nuances of content with them because his courses “tend to have a lot of alternative assessment, so there are always questions; students are always asking about assessment, and internationals and locals both ask questions all the time. That is good!” He went on to explain how he ensures that the students are clear about their assessments such that they are able to successfully complete their course. He wants to see things in progress, so that … if you just have end-of-semester assessment then sometimes you don’t know that the students haven’t understood what they have to do until they hand it in, and it’s too late, because the teaching is finished. But if you have assessment that requires things to unfold then if they are not understanding what to do, you do see that quickly. There’s a course that I teach in which students have to compile the evidence of their learning as they go through the semester, and the building-up of all the evidence is part of the assessment; and so they have to record that and you can see very early on if they are not progressing and that benefits everybody, not just international students.

In Ivan’s subject he uses “a range of different approaches” to assessment and “it partly depends on the curriculum outcome.” At the same time, even when students work in a group they submit individual assessments rather a group one. He stressed that he sees it as his responsibility to monitor the groups but he conceded that sometimes “it is actually a bit like a duck paddling in the water”: it looks like nothing is happening, but in actual fact you are struggling underneath because you’ve got all of those group dynamics and you are having to make sure that people are contributing in the group.” He believes in applying diverse strategies: If in education you are a lecturer and you only use one or two strategies, then you are not modelling a diversity of strategies, which include individual work, group work, on-line work, off-line work, exploratory work, working directly from set readings; it means all sorts of things.

Not surprisingly Ivan commented that international students are often not familiar with some assessments. Further, he said, they would prefer to do a written assessment based on recommended reading material rather than having to choose their own articles because they feel uncomfortable and often anxious in making a choice for themselves because they want validation that they’re good articles, and if they use them they’re going to get a good mark; but that happens with the local students, as well. But I do
think, for international students, that in some ways it is easier for them if it is a set reading-writing task, because they can spend lots of time reading and writing, drafting and re-drafting, getting other people to read it. And where it is an oral presentation they have to deal with the whole English language thing and there is less of an opportunity to craft the answer.

Another problem relating to assessments and, in particular group assessments with international students, is that where possible many prefer to work together in their respective language and cultural groups (if there are sufficient numbers in any one class). Anastasia commented:

In general, Chinese students do not connect; they make little effort towards the locals – and locals make little effort towards them. So there are no meeting points; it is not likely that they have a social connection or an academic connection.

Vera said that when there is a bigger cohort of international students in a class they are more likely to stay together and form their own group for assessment purposes, “which is normal if we think that people in general feel more comfortable working with friends.” She posited the view that they felt more support from and trust in people who are from the same culture, with the same customs and traditions, and simply “because you have the same history as me.”

Olga commented that she sometimes felt frustrated when local and international students did not want to work together: “I don’t know what to do because you can’t force people to work together.” She perceptively added that “some of those students do not progress very well” because of their tendency to stay together, work together, and study together.” Generally, however, it is more pedagogically sound for international students to work in groups with local students.

Borislava echoed somewhat similar sentiments and understands students preferring to sit and work in groups with those they know well, adding that she doesn’t like “to treat them like children” and be directive: “I don’t want to make them feel that I am forcing them … I don’t want to make them feel uncomfortable in any way.” Certainly, she spoke of using activities that require them to speak to others in the class, such as telling them to speak to someone else in the class (in front of them, behind them, or alongside them) and “tell them what your philosophy is.”

In our strategies we will deliberately find ways of getting students mixing … just deliberate ways of physically moving them to a new spot; talking to someone you have
not talked to before … when I do that it is works very well. It is just an initial communication exercise.

This she sees as a means not only of getting international and local students talking but even breaking down barriers that might prevent them from ‘mixing’ in group assessment tasks and activities.

A complicating factor underscoring all of this is that some English speakers prefer not to have international students in their group when group assessment activities and tasks are involved because they see them as not being able to contribute fully. This then becomes a language issue and will be discussed further in Chapter 7.

6.8 Conclusion

This chapter examined, from the educator interviewees’ perspectives, a range of pedagogical issues that they faced in working with pre-service teacher education students from Asia. In particular, these related to the students’ English language proficiency level, issues relating to Australian students and teachers, and their lack of familiarity with Australian schooling and Australian cultural practices in general, as seen, for example in classroom management practices.

Another issue examined relates to the extent to which the interviewees re-examined or ‘modified’ their curriculum and pedagogical practices to better accommodate Asian students – and, indeed, to ‘internationalise’ the curriculum. Notions of ‘internationalisation’ itself as well as practices adopted varied considerably.

The manner and extent to which the interviewees addressed issues of ‘inclusiveness’ were also examined, a particular challenge being addressing the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds and at different skill levels; in the process this entailed overcoming issues relating to stereotyping and prejudice (Machart, 2018; Spooner-Lane, Tangen & Campbell, 2009).

The narratives of the interviewees revealed a strong degree of reflection and initiative in their efforts to make the curriculum and their teaching pedagogies inclusive. Further, examples were given of approaches to student teaching placement overseas as one means of internationalising the curriculum. The discussion highlighted both successes and failures, thus underscoring the sensitive and sometimes tenuous forces that operate when undertaking such activities – but also the benefits that can be gained not only by the pre-service student teachers themselves but, more broadly, the benefits that accrue to those in the host school.
Finally, the chapter examined challenges relating to assessment from the perspective of the interviewees in considering the effect and implications of assessment on international – in particular, Asian – students. Attention was given to cultural differences with respect to some modes of assessment and the difficulties this can cause international students in adjusting to them. Group assessment tasks also presented some cross-cultural problems. The interviewees shared their attempts to address the issues highlighted.

The next chapter discusses difficulties faced by international students and the educator interviewees regarding English language issues and communication more broadly.
Chapter 7
Role of English language and cross-cultural awareness in teaching and learning

7.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the participant educators’ familiarity with the issues – presented in the literature review – that international students experience when studying in English-speaking countries.

To varying degrees, all eleven participants acknowledged that the challenges they faced in their teaching related mostly to international students’ English language proficiency levels and their cultural background. The participants’ narratives as presented in this chapter, and my observations of their teaching, revealed a range of strategies and pedagogies employed to address the issues.

7.2 English Language and International Students’ Learning: Acknowledging the Problem

Ivan, with his teaching experience at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels at Australian universities and in TAFE, strongly held the view that English language difficulties affect international students’ learning and, as a consequence, present particular challenges for him:

An obvious … challenge has been language, and there certainly have been issues in the past. I think, with people being allowed to enter university courses with a standard of English below that which is required, [especially] considering the level of support the students are given. … That does not mean that these people are less capable, but English is an issue; and I am not an English second language teacher [to be able] to help them well. So, [language] that is the obvious thing … the negative thing really, when you get people whose English is so poor. They really should not be there, and dealing with that is really very, very difficult.

Ivan’s opinion resonates with the findings of Feast (2002), Zangh and Mi (2010), and Marginson and van der Wende (2007) who argued that higher education institutions compete in the global education market and must consider the numbers of students entering courses to keep universities economically sustainable. Moreover, Feast (2002) stressed that “sustainability has negatively impacted language proficiency entry requirements” because institutions have lowered or kept at too low a level the English language proficiency
requirement, which potentially increases the risk of students having difficulties with learning/teaching” (p. 71).

Elaborating further, Ivan highlighted the problem with some universities’ enrolment and recruitment policies extending the timeframe for international student commencement: “It’s not unusual for students to arrive here in the week of the start of a semester – or even a week or two after it” and this in itself can be the cause of problems. He explained that if international students arrive late, or even just a few days prior to the start of the semester, they are already at a disadvantage because it takes them time to settle down in their new country and familiarise themselves with administration and course/university study requirements. As a consequence, they are already behind the other students in their learning. The point has been made by Arenas (2015) that trying to make up this loss, when they have to quickly undertake a great deal of reading and preparation for their first assignment in a new educational setting and when, on top of this, they are also trying to study for the first time in a foreign language, the problem can become almost insurmountable.

Like Ivan, Lada was similarly forthright in declaring that the challenge in teaching international students was “mainly the language,” stressing that international students “struggle” when they have an “insufficient level of English.” She said the problem is obvious even when they have to engage in academic discussions in tutorials. Whilst sensitive to their difficulties, she stressed that she can’t change the requirements of her course and she expected students to read, particularly at Master’s level, and to get through two or three journal articles a week and, actually, have a level of understanding to be able to discuss them. That’s always going to be the biggest challenge – both for us and for them because they’re frantically trying to keep up and it’s tiring. I don’t think until you’ve studied in a foreign language on a day-in-day-out basis that people really appreciate how exhausting it can be.

Sasha also expressed serious concern about international students’ English language proficiency. He was not sure how well those students understood the course content, the theory and his lectures and tutorials, and somewhat rhetorically posed the question: “Do they feel comfortable in class discussions?” He reflected:

It is always students from the Asia Pacific region in my classes who, I think, have the most challenges. I always wonder if they understand what I am talking about … I wonder sometimes if they are interested in doing what I am asking them to do … to
think critically, to evaluate things, to analyse. I just wonder whether they are interested in doing that.

In my observations of his classes I also found that international students seemed less comfortable taking part in class discussion, and they spoke up only when they were asked to answer to Sasha’s questions or when they did their part of an oral group presentation.

The problem has been recognised by Wang (2016), who noted that in interactive teaching, verbal communication in class between the lecturer and students, or between the students themselves, is highly important, but problems occur with those who have a problem with English and because of this can be reluctant if not unwilling to actively participate in class activities.

Vera spoke of her students’ communication difficulties:

Even though they say they studied English and they know English, it is very different to living and being in a community of English speakers – very, very different and it is certainly about the language. I think it takes them at least two and two-and-a-half years actually. It’s very, very difficult.

Vera stressed that poor English language proficiency created not just a learning problem for students, but it also affected their confidence and self-esteem. She provided an anecdotal example of an international student who had a very low level of English and was most reluctant to communicate; even “her body language was ‘closed’”; she subsequently failed a subject. A year later Vera meet her again in the corridor and was surprised at the extent to which her language had changed, as had her body language:

I looked at her and I thought, Oh, my God, I’ve just spoken with different person. Her hair was pulled back in a ponytail ... her face was smiling, she had a bright yellow jacket on. … And she just spoke to me, and just the confidence was there.

What Vera described concurs with the research of Zhang and Mi (2010) who have argued that international students experience difficulties, especially with language, during the first 2 years of their study, resulting at times in a failure in a subject. In similar vein Bretag (2007) commented that the problems of international students who are new arrivals and have never studied abroad are compounded by their difficulties handling a new language, often without institutional support.

Anna spoke of the importance of her early childhood students not only having adequate English speaking skills, but also reading skills to enable them to fully comprehend government and other reports in the field, as well as effective writing skills. In addition, she mentioned the
importance of them being able to communicate effectively with parents and children. If the problem is not addressed at the undergraduate level it is exacerbated at the post-graduate level, she postulated.

7.3 Practical Placement and English Language

Some ‘oblique’ discussion has already taken place in Chapter 6 with regard to students’ issues with English during their practical teaching placements. This section will tease out the issues in more detail.

Typically, Vera was forthright in stating that in students’ practical placement, “The challenges are their language barrier. Yes, it’s a big barrier, a huge barrier. Because they are only here, in first year, for five or six weeks and we put them into schools ... Uh, it’s crazy!”. She added: “In the last few years it has been very difficult to find a placement; it is very difficult to place international students because the schools don’t want to take them.” Nonetheless, Vera did make considerable effort to assist these students and to find them appropriate and “nurturing” placements:

We have an alternative program for the first practical placement. We’re still working on it and trying to get it better. We send them into schools for just a couple of days. In short we try to protect them a little bit more.

In this alternative program the students are given more intensive ‘workshop’ experiences in undertaking the type of activities that they will use in schools. It follows what Spooner-Lane, Tangen and Campbell (2009) advocated with respect to providing “mock classes or tutorials to give students opportunities to practise their teaching skills before entering schools” (p. 91).

Anastasia stated that if international students cannot demonstrate a high level of proficiency in English there is a high probability that they might fail their practical placement:

It’s frustrating being sent out to observe a student on teaching practice and the school wanting to fail them because they don’t have enough English. And the teacher says: “But I won’t fail them if you can assure me that when they get back to university there’s some support for them.” And then you have to say, “Well, there’s no support for them at Uni.” And [they say], “Okay, we are not going to fail them because it is not going to make any difference!”

Her frustration was palpable.
7.4. Educators’ Strategies in Dealing with the Challenges of Teaching International Students

This section examines the data from the interviews that highlight the educators’ main areas of challenge and presents the pedagogical solutions they found to address the issues.

Ivan expressed concern that lecturers and tutors are working within a limited timeframe of 12-14 weeks during the semester and this is often not enough time to establish the well-developed teacher-student relationship that allows international students in particular to feel comfortable enough to come and ask for support: “And, you know, once the semester gets going you are actually quite busy. So you tend not … to have too much time” … “and secondly, you know, once the semester gets going you are actually quite busy. So you tend not … to have too much time, but you can prioritise that time in the course for different things.”

But given this, Ivan was willing, most altruistically, to sacrifice his other duties in administration and research to find a way to provide the best possible teaching and support for his students. With his understanding of the needs and difficulties of his ESL students he developed a strategy: “I think what one has to do is try to present the same information in a range of different formats, such as articles or a podcast or a little video, or whatever.” Ivan also spent extra time talking with students after tutorials and lectures to answer their questions or to look at their assignments. He did not rush to leave the room, giving students an opportunity to chat and ask questions. He explained that because some international students – and others – felt uncomfortable speaking or asking questions in front of the whole class, he was willing to work with them one-on-one.

Sasha developed his teaching strategies based on inviting, engaging, and understanding his learners as a main principle of his teaching pedagogy (Biggs, 2003; Fry, Ketteridge & Marshall, 2008). He used scaffolding, questioning techniques and monitoring to ensure that students acquired knowledge and skills and had a positive experience in his class (Perrott, 2014). It was obvious during my observations that Sasha created a positive, inviting and safe learning environment in his tutorials and lectures. He is a good listener and he kept reminding the students to consult with him if they wanted to discuss anything related to their learning.

Several of the interviewees, such as Ivan, Sasha, recognised the importance of motivation as a teaching strategy (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 2017). Vera too demonstrated this and provided the following anecdote:

When they did their presentations and I stopped at the end of each presentation and said to them: “Hi everyone, did you notice how good your thing was! And how good
‘Miranda’ was in that group?”… and the other students would shout “Yes!” and clap them all. She spoke extremely positively of the need to give recognition and reinforcement to all students, but in this particular context to the international students.

As someone who is not a native English language speaker but did her postgraduate study in Australia, Lina was empathic to the needs of other second language students. To assist and support her international students she organised weekly activities for her class, providing a set of questions for class discussion which students were given beforehand. Having the questions in advance offered both international and local students an opportunity to be better prepared and, concomitantly, it lowered their stress level and ensured that the class time was more productive.

If they [international students] know and can prepare a response in advance, they normally feel more comfortable in contributing during the discussion.

Such a strategy helps students to develop academic skills, increases their confidence and reduces the level of anxiety and stress related to their learning in English as an additional language. As Lina said, she applied the principles of inclusive pedagogy (De Vita, 2000).

Teaching students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds requires educators not just to have a knowledge of pedagogy but also, as Ivan suggested, to be patient, resilient and have empathy and compassion:

sometimes you have to be patient, because people are struggling to construct what they want to say. Some people are very shy because they are not confident about their English, even though their English is often better than they think it is.

Igor’s narratives were not dissimilar from Ivan’s. To my question during the interview asking how he dealt with students whose spoken English was somewhat deficient, he replied: “We have to listen, and if they don’t speak very well we have to keep trying, I do try to do my best, and if they can’t speak I have to try to listen and understand as much as they can say.”

Arkoudis and Tran (2007, 2010), Arkoudis and Starfield (2007), Woodward-Kron (2007), and Lee, et al. (2014) recommend a range of strategies to help ESL (EAL) learners in regular classrooms. These include teachers slowing down the speed of conversation and the pace of the lecture; using fewer colloquialisms in the classroom; and using simplified language that international students might more easily comprehend. Relatedly, Sawir (2005) drew attention to another issue encountered by educators, namely that some international students, although they studied in an English-speaking institution abroad before coming to Australia –
or studied English intensively in their home country – found that they had to adjust to Australian English, including the accent, colloquialisms and slang. Some years later, Sawir et al. (2012) commented that international students “have problems with the Australian accent and cultural references, which differ from the English they had acquired prior to coming to Australia” (p. 437).

Igor, who grew up and undertook his undergraduate study in an Asian country, but has now been living for decades in Melbourne, stressed that

the difficulties are all about communicating clearly. Sometimes my [Australian] students assume that they don’t have an accent. They think because they are Australian they don’t have an accent. But the Australian accent is very difficult.

He discussed this in the context of local students in his classes who complained that they have difficulties understanding international students; ironically – or perhaps with a degree of ‘insularity’ – they had not considered that as Australian English speakers their own pronunciation, colloquialisms and Australian slang presented difficulties for second language speakers new to the country (Trudgill & Hannah, 2017). Igor stressed that it is an educator’s responsibility to ensure that international students are comfortable in class: “my strong principle is that if they can’t understand you, you have to speak slower and if your language is too complicated you have to simplify your language.”

Like Lina and Igor, Olga was born overseas, albeit in an English speaking country – the UK. She was surprised and disconcerted to hear local Australian students criticise international students for their accents. To be a teacher in a multicultural country, she suggested, students should increase their cultural and linguistic knowledge and be more open and less ethnocentric:

especially if the people want to be teachers. They have to think of that as a challenge, you know … Anyway, it was the same in the UK. Further, a lot of the international students would always sit by themselves in a corner, and locals sit in front of you.

She therefore was conscious of the importance of encouraging local students to break that barrier and make an effort to talk to international students as she herself does:

I work in their groups with them, and talk to them, and they are often very happy to talk and they really want to share their experiences, but they don’t want to do this in front of the class.

Certainly, it is not uncommon for international students, even if they have a degree of fluency in English, to feel uncomfortable speaking in class and avoid putting themselves on
the spot. These are issues that have been highlighted by Arkoudis and Starfield (2007) who said that the problem is compounded because they often do not pursue opportunities “to develop fluency in English” (p. 22).

Marko expressed his concern that it can be problematic for the tutor/lecturer to find ways of addressing the language needs of some international students, especially when they are very much in the minority:

As a teacher you have to break down the barriers and get all students interacting well together. If you have a class of 30 and for 27 of them English is their first language, and you have three students [for whom] English is not their first language (or their second or third), then you have to be aware of that and the approaches you take have to be suitable for the whole group – and that’s a challenge!

The challenge, he said, is that if you make it too simplified, then the other students become alienated and unhappy; if you make it too complex then it makes it even more difficult for students already experiencing some difficulty. “So, you have to be very careful.”

Ivan also spoke of the difficulty of finding the right balance:

I think that can be frustrating for local students sometimes. I think people are tolerant to a degree, but you have to get that balance right … you can’t just focus only on international students, so sometimes they are going to miss out, because you can’t go over and over everything, two or three times.

Although the application of strategies recommended by experts in teaching English as an Additional Language (or ESL), and discussed in the literature review, would be beneficial for these particular students, Marko and Ivan have understandably expressed their discomfort in applying them lest it devaluate their teaching in the eyes of the ‘native’ English speakers (Kimmel & Volet, 2012).

7.5 Responsibility and Action: Students and Educators

All of the interviewees agreed that even where international students have support and understanding regarding their language needs from academic staff, they nonetheless still have to take responsibility themselves for improving their English language skills. Marco, for example, opined that international students “have to be receptive” and responsible for their study, and if they face difficulties related to their oral or written English language they should seek the support from the language specialists at the university’s Learning Study Centre. Ivan
similarly noted that importance of them being proactive in seeing support – and in the university providing this:

Really it is important that the university has support systems that allow students to get help. I think, to [name of the university’s] credit, the student support system in terms of languages is very useful. I say this as someone who requests students to go there; they seem to find it very useful.

At the same time, Ivan noted that students sometimes only take his advice when they face a real problem with their assessments.

The problem for the students is they seem very reluctant to go until they are actually in trouble. It doesn’t matter how much you say, “Look, go before you have a problem, go and introduce yourself and establish a formal relationship.” But I think it is just human nature to put it off.

Anastasia expressed a similar sentiment:

But they don’t take the responsibility, because no one says to them … “We’ve taken you in, that’s great – but you need to understand that every day you must work on your English. … We are going to monitor your progress, and in six months we are going to say, ‘Ok, this is where you seem to be strong, this is where you seem to have some gaps’.” They need to have someone who will say that to them; otherwise they think “Oh, I am ok!” – and of course why wouldn’t they? We can’t blame them.

7.6 Responsibility: The Institution

There was common agreement amongst the participants that the university has a responsibility to provide language support beyond what can reasonably be expected of them in their normal teaching and other activities. It was also stressed that all academics should be well acquainted with what is available in terms of student language support.

Anastasia was somewhat emotional when she expressed this:

I mean, I feel in some ways, I find the whole thing about international students … I feel we take these people, we take their money, we take them with not enough English, and then we do nothing about it, and we fail them. I’ve written a letter this morning to [Name of the person] saying I’ve got four third-year students who do not have enough English to pass. I have got two first-year students who are repeating and who do not have enough English to pass. I don’t want to fail them, but they shouldn’t pass. What we are going to do? And it’s not their fault. We should not have taken them in the first
place, or if we do take them, we need to support them We don’t support them. I hate it, I hate it, I think it’s so immoral. They lose face when they fail!

Anastasia, who has prepared students for IELTS, reflected that the score institutions require does not necessarily ensure students will avoid language related difficulties:

When I was in the Middle East I used to teach IELTS preparation classes, so you teach them the tricks to pass the test. They don’t teach English: they train [the students] how to do IELTS. So of course they are not going to have enough English. And we accept them and we don’t give them any help with English. ... But there’s no support for them, so where do you send them? There has to be an institutional focus … we need to support them. There needs to be a structure for supporting them.

Anastasia argued passionately that, in addition to having adequate support at an institutional level, “everyone” in the school or Faculty has a responsibility to make an effort with respect to students’ language issues – not just those academics who teach literacy.

Finally, Anna too spoke with empathy about her experience with international students:

I think a lot of it is a combinations of pressures: you come into a course, you have not got the English language, you’ve got that visa thing hanging over your head … There are some supports in place but the sorts of supports we’ve got, even going to the Learning Centre, means you have to feel confident in yourself to go and get that help.

The above insights and proposals underscore the fact that an IELTS score (or its equivalent) is not necessarily a sufficient indicator of a student’s ability to cope with the language demands at university, and students are misguided if they believe that their acceptance into a university is an indication that their language level will be sufficient for them to perform well in their studies (Benzie, 2010). Ideally language support for international students should come from within the School or Faculty, as Murray (2015) argued, and from the university itself. The problem should not rest on the shoulders of individual lecturers and tutors, many of whom struggle to accommodate both 1st and 2nd language speakers in the same class, and the attendant problems that these entail for both groups of students.

7.7 Dealing with Assignments (Writing in English)

Academic writing is an essential part of student learning, but as Richards (2003) has argued, for students who are writing in a second language it is especially complex. Li and Zhang (2015) identified the factors that contribute to academic writing difficulties for international students as linguistic, rhetorical, cultural, educational as well as individual factors.
In discussing academic writing this research focuses on the specific requirements of teacher education in Australia (Aspland, 2006; Mayer, 2014; Wyatt-Smith, 2017). Academic writing is generally expected in students’ written assessments.

### 7.7.1 Assisting students with their writing

Writing in new genres is difficult for all students and especially for students with English as a second language. Borislava observed that her international students in general “understand the idea of writing an essay”, but they may struggle with understanding how to do it in a way that meets the standards the university is looking for. Following are responses some of the participants provided in relation to considering ways of assisting international students (in particular) with their writing.

Ivan’s strategy for helping international students with their writing entails being prepared to set aside time to look at drafts, and not only for me to look at the drafts as a lecturer, but for students to share the drafts [with each other], and I would … build in a session directed to the completion of the assessment. So, if the assessment is due in week 7, then in week 6, or something like that, I would have a tutorial session and say, ‘This is an opportunity for you to bring your drafts and share them with each other and share them with me’. Because I don’t have time to read everyone’s drafts outside of class … and it is not really fair to do some and [not others]. So, what I would do is run those tutorials, look at a number [of their draft submissions] and try to provide general feedback, and get other students to look at them and also provide feedback. At the end of that session I do a summation if you like: ‘All right, what have we seen here? Here are some things that are being done really well, and here are some things that clearly, as a group, you’ve genuinely got issues with, and here are some [ways] to solve them’. So being a lecturer to me is only partly about content; I would describe myself as less of a content expert and more concerned with process.

In all of this he stressed the importance of “setting aside time for good planning”: “Don’t bring me your piece of assessment at the last minute and ask me to read it because I am not going to. I can’t, and I am not going to.”

Lina uses a variant of Ivan’s tutorial approach by taking one or more students’ pieces of writing as an example (after gaining permission) and organising the discussion around it.

Similarly, Igor spoke of encouraging students to bring him their drafts: “[A] good student and students who are conscientious about [their study] … they want to improve … I
love to encourage this. I like that.” But he lamented that “no one does that often … it is hard to
get students to do that.” And he was critical of students who bring along a draft “one or two
hours before they have to hand it in.”

Lada stated that she is happy to read student’ drafts, but added that it is too difficult to
find time to read all of the students’ work before they submit their assessments. And she
believed it would be unfair to local students if she only offered to read the drafts of international
students. Additionally, she stressed that because of her workload – which includes
administrative duties, research projects and teaching – she simply cannot dedicate time to read
and comment on all students’ work before they submit.

Marko also said that he does not have enough time to work with every student to provide
one-to-one assistance on their assignments. Accordingly, he advises them to use the services
offered by the university. At the same time, he is happy to explain what is required in the
assessment to make certain that students understand the task: “to help them understand what it
is that you have to do, what I want from you; yeah, I will talk to students about that.”

7.7.2 Dilemmas in grading assessments

International students whose writing is satisfactory often face the problem, initially at
least, of not being familiar with new modes of assessment when they commence at university.
The issue is seriously compounded with those whose English level is relatively poor. Bretag
(2007) identified that academic staff find themselves in a dilemma when grading international
students’ assignments where their English expression is not of a high standard. To ensure
fairness and equity in marking it has to be done under the guidance of clear assessment
requirements. Clarity of expression in English is normally included in university assessment
requirement criteria, but the dilemma is that some international students with just the minimum
IELTS score (or its equivalent) cannot meet the writing expectations of some academic staff.
If lecturers and tutors focus just on the students’ ideas and understanding of the subject’s
content and do not take into account the quality of English they are in fact using “a separate
assessment standard for international students which may threaten academic integrity” (Bretag,

Participants in this study indicated facing such a dilemma. For example, Vera, Igor and
Anna spoke strongly of looking for the meaning and ideas in students’ writing rather than the
level of English, unless of course the use of language was unacceptably poor or not relevant to
the task. In such cases Anna gives them the opportunity to resubmit their work, sometimes the problem being not just the expression but also their understanding of the task.

Vera shared her approach: “I try not to assess them on the written expression. It is not in the criteria, actually. I am tough on the local students, where English expression is concerned – but not the international students.” As has been seen, this notion of having two sets of criteria regarding English expression is contentious. Vera was the only interviewee who adopted this approach.

Igor stressed that he wrestled with this issue a great deal. As much as he could he was concerned to focus on the ideas that students expressed in their writing, but while understanding that they are writing in a second language he could not ignore the quality of English language expression. He was encouraging with statements like, “This is a really good idea, but you really need to work more on how you express it.” And he acknowledged that he was also cognisant that his students “will be teaching in schools … they need to be able express [themselves] in English quite clearly.”

Sasha similarly went to great effort in dealing with issues relating to the quality of written assignments, especially with international students. When students submitted an assignment that was below standard he approached them and invited them to discuss it: “I ask them to make an appointment with me so we can go through it … I can give them another chance to resubmit their work.”

Lada said that she expected to see “quality of English … punctuation, spelling, also … clarity of expression” in the work submitted by both local and international students. Where the written work is unsatisfactory she meets with students and discusses the issues before inviting them to resubmit. She explained that in their essay writing students “do not necessarily realise that Western style academic disciplines have their own ‘mentality’ and they require people to conform to those … effectively it’s not so much the language, it is the way that they express their ideas.” When international students merely translate their ideas into English “it doesn’t translate well. It’s in English, but it comes across as a completely different mentality.”

For Lada, academic writing in the English language is “very formulaic” and students can easily follow a clear structure. She breaks it down for her students:

The first link of the main paragraph gives me the main point. Then you give me a bit of evidence, then you give me a bit of an explanation, then you tell me how that answers the question. Repeat this for every paragraph and it won’t be a pretty essay; but it will do the job. It’s getting people to understand that academia is a game; you’ve got to learn
the rules of the game before you can break them. But this comes back to teaching people how to learn.

Certainly, several of the interviewees mentioned that although they apply the same grading criteria for all students, where they think it appropriate they are happy to give a student an extension of a week or more with their written work rather than make them comply with the due date and then have to ask them to resubmit subsequently. Borislava acknowledged that for students with English as a second language it normally takes more time to write than for native speakers, and she is happy to give an extension if the students need it:

I always talk to them about applying for special consideration. If they find they are overwhelmed or something is going wrong there are processes in place … and the lecturers can give them a one-week extension; and if they need longer … you know, we explain all of those practices to them.

Similarly, Olga underlined that she always tells students that she is “more than happy to give them an extension” and is “always happy to talk through [their work]”:

I have allowed international students to resubmit work because I find often it is to do with the language or something they didn’t understand, or they don’t know how to put an essay together.

7.7.3 Dealing with plagiarism

All of the participants – but Vera, Sasha and Lada especially – were concerned with plagiarism in international students’ writing. To address this issue each sought different strategies.

Lada related the problem of plagiarism to the difficulties some international and local students experienced in referencing sources according to standard academic English requirements. She argued that it is not sufficient to provide students just with guidelines of academic referencing styles. As a means of encouraging them to practice this knowledge she constructed a quiz on academic referencing. The quiz became part of the assessment, accounting for ten percent of the subject’s total mark. It comprised “a bank of random questions” related to referencing and asked students to identify the correct answers in twenty minutes. Students were allowed to do the quiz twice to improve their mark if needed. Lada concluded that it was good for students to have an opportunity to take the test twice because it afforded them an opportunity to reflect on their mistakes and improve: “I don’t mind because if they get half [of the answers] wrong they can say: ‘Ok, I might study a bit more’.” She
stressed that her strategy worked well “and most of the students improved their mark when they did it [the quiz] a second time, and ninety-five percent of the students did take it a second time.”

Ivan also sought approaches for improving the referencing skills of students. He asked them to complete a small writing task on a topic relating to the course content and reference it appropriately. This small writing exercise provided him with a clear picture of a student’s writing and referencing ability such that he could give individual feedback to each student.

Borislava also confirmed that plagiarism “is a big issue” in students’ writing. She opined that it is difficult for academic staff to deal with the issue and was critical of university systems that relied on the lecturer to deal with the problem: “That is not fair.”

Each of the schools of education in which the interviewees were placed had policies that linked to the university policy on plagiarism and academic integrity. Furthermore, a document analysis of the course guides consulted for this study revealed a section explaining what plagiarism means and providing a link to the university webpage which had examples of referencing and advice on how to avoid plagiarism. Furthermore, the universities concerned provided workshops on referencing for all students. Sasha, for example, said the he was most vocal in recommending that his students attend such workshops: “It is not compulsory, but … we advise them strongly that they should do it. Some do, but not all of them.” Despite such efforts he acknowledged that the problem still remained to some extent.

As the literature review revealed, plagiarism may arise because some students are not taught the rules relating to plagiarism in their own country and are not aware that practices that might have been acceptable in their former university are not accepted in Western academic writing. Recently Adhikari (2018) has argued: “instead of trying to figure out whether students making mistakes are honest or dishonest, it is much more important to consider their understanding of originality, their ability to generate new ideas on given topics, the level of their citation skills relative to the demands, and such other factors that increase the chances of unintentional plagiarism and must be addressed pedagogically” (p. 376). Bretag’s (2007) insights remain salutary: “Taken together – low English language entrance scores, little institutional support or training, and different cultural expectations and learning backgrounds – it is perhaps not surprising that accusations of plagiarism are a frequent occurrence for many EAL [English as Additional Language] international students. A number of researchers claim that many instances of so-called plagiarism in student academic writing is the result of poor academic literacy, particularly in the case of students struggling in a second language” (p. 13).
7.8 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed reasons why educators see the English language as a major problem for international students’ learning, and this in turn has implications for them on their school placements. The chapter has addressed some of the major issues that academics continue to grapple with in the context of international pre-service teacher education students.

The interviews and observations with the eleven participants revealed their awareness of language issues experienced by international students, and the implications of this for their teachers at university, other students in the university, and for their supervisors and the school children with whom they work on school placements. In discussing the issues, focus also centred on strategies the educator participants used to assist these students with respect to their language and associated difficulties. The ‘solutions’ cannot be seen as the responsibility of one cohort only: effort needs to be made by the international students themselves, the academics who work with them, the school or faculty in which they are enrolled, and the wider university itself. Ideally, from the perspective of university educators the experience of working with students from another culture and language group can be a most positive one and enrich their own perspectives and pedagogical practices. The experience can also be a most valuable one from the perspective of local students. It is expected that all students who enrol in an Australian university will have appropriate English language skills to equip them to study and progress effectively: the challenge is compounded with international pre-service teacher education students who are required as part of their study to teach in Australian schools.

Underscoring many of the issues that international students face when studying in Australia is their own cultural background and the effects of this on their English language learning. Further, they are faced with the challenges of transitioning into an Australian cultural setting, including the requirements and expectations of university students in general. Chapter 8 discusses issues relating to culture.
Chapter 8
Culture: Implications for Teaching International Students

8.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses culture in the context of teaching international students enrolled in pre-service teacher education courses. It explores issues from the perspective of the educators who work with these students and highlights the difficulties and contradictions that may occur between educators and international students relating to their culture.

8.2 Educators’ Insights into the Influence of Culture on International Students Studying in a Foreign Country

Culture is an essential part of a person’s identity and is rooted in the collective, shared knowledge of a group of people (Dervin & Machart, 2015; Mesidor & Sly, 2016). Argenter (2000) has argued that culture can be defined as a set of ‘characteristics’ and cultural patterns of behaviour that influence the behaviour of individuals. Abdallah-Pretceille (2005) prefers to look at culture with respect to interactions between people and groups. Jahoda (2012) argues that ‘culture’ is “a social construct vaguely referring to a vastly complex set of phenomena” (p. 300). Many writers have stressed that culture is an important factor that influences both teaching and learning, especially when educators and their students are from different cultural backgrounds (Baik, Naylor & Arkoudis, 2015; Madge, Raghuram & Noxolo, 2015; Marlina, 2009; Xiao, 2006).

It is within the context of the extensive writings of Hofstede and others on his six cultural dimensions, together with writers such as the above, that the following discussion of the research undertaken with the eleven educators who participated in this study unfolds.

8.2.1 Culture as an important factor affecting the teaching of international students and their learning in pre-service teacher programs

Ten of the eleven participants in this study commented strongly on the significance of international students’ cultural background and its impact on their learning in Western (in particular, Australian) universities at the pre-service teacher education level.

For Lada, consideration of a student’s cultural background is integral to her teaching and implies the need to engage in “different way of communicating and dealing with people.” She acknowledged that many of her international students experienced “a big cultural shock,”
adding that “they have to find out how the host culture works and how to solve problems living in the new culture.” She elaborated: “We are a product of our culture or cultures and what we have experienced.”

Lada recalled her experience as an international student herself studying in Kyrgyzstan, a former Soviet Republic. She reflected on how her English cultural background and mentality, “being very-very English about everything,” affected her behaviour. She learnt about Kyrgyz culture, where the people spoke both Kyrgyz and Russian, but at the same time they had “a slightly Asiatic mentality.” It seemed to her like a ‘blending’ of two cultures and she commented that she learnt “how to manage conflict without losing face” which, as she said, was typical of some Asian cultures. She offered this as an example of the fact that sometimes it is more complicated – an over-simplification – to say that international students merely have to learn about a new culture.

That experience, she said, has helped her to better understand the cultural background of her international students. Lada not only monitored their academic performance in class, but also paid attention to their “emotions and feelings.” She knew that her Asian international students would be less included to openly express their frustration with the local culture. She knew that they would experience frustration in adapting to the new culture and where possible she was willing to help. “If someone’s having a shitty time at home, it’s going to have an impact” and possibly affect their performance:

I see a lot of international students here and if they’re faced with not being happy about the culture – classic culture shock – the last thing they want to do is to talk to someone ‘Ozzie’ and say: ‘I’m really having a tough time and I am really not enjoying Australia at the moment’, especially if they fear getting a reaction like, ‘Well, if you don’t like it go home, then!’ [There can be an attitude of] ‘This is the Lucky Country. You can’t criticize it!’ How do you get past that? I have had quite a few students this trimester express that frustration with Australia and have wanted advice. I’ve said ‘Yeah, I completely understand that.’ (Laugh). But I am allowed to say that, because I am an outsider.

Lada expressed strongly the importance of not stereotyping students and their culture. She is of the firm opinion that in academia stereotypes still exist. For example, she said that one common stereotype is that “Chinese students do not have critical thinking skills – this is a very common stereotype.” Another stereotype she suggested, is that “Chinese students or Japanese students are unwilling to speak up in class.”
Olga strongly believes that culture plays a major part in people’s lives:
Absolutely. I think it is one of the key influences really. Oh, obviously there are all sorts of things, you know. A key one is religious differences and often with religions – Catholicism, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism – they create a kind of nationhood. I am aware that Islam and so on is different in different countries, but there are also cultural commonalities. Gender also is a big thing – the way that different cultures do gender.
She stressed that in her experience the same pattern of cultural issues relating to international students was evident regardless of the educational settings in which she taught – or in the particular country itself.

When I worked in New South Wales I worked very closely with some international Master students from Vietnam and Japan. I would try to get them to go to the Hub [Learning Centre]. In Vietnam, a communist country, they tended to do as they were told, and [at that time] they were not expected to challenge authority or think [independently] …. There was a certain [pattern] of culture in Japan as well; it’s a very complex society – it is really about collective identity in Japan … I think it’s important to see other people’s context, where they are come from, and what they think.
Vera also agreed that international students’ cultural background influences their learning and experience of living and studying in Australian culture. Moreover, she recognised that they may experience culture shock: “We [the administrative team in the School of Education] try to do what we can to make sure they’re OK.” Vera learnt to distinguish particular cultural differences between students from different Asian countries. But in the final analysis she said that she looked at them all as individuals within their particular culture, noting that in doing this she relied on her experience in special education: “You need to put extra time into international students … all students have special needs at some stage in their life.”

In acknowledging the importance of culture, Anastasia, recognised the need for international students to make the transition to a new learning environment. At the same time, she stated that Australian academic staff and local students should support them wherever possible in order to minimise any negative experiences.

I think that when you come to a country, if you feel welcome and you feel like you’re valued, it’s a whole different thing from coming and thinking ‘They don’t really want me here, they just want my money’. I think that’s what the internationals must sometimes feel. I think most countries are racist – I think we are.
Anastasia said that she encouraged international students to build their connections with local students, and local students to form friendships with international students. She mentioned telling her local students that international students “are socially isolated” and the best thing that local students can do is “talk to them, invite them for coffee or … home for dinner.” She also discussed with her local students how it might be difficult for international students to establish a social network in Australia – unlike their situation in their home country. She stated that “many other cultures are much more focused on hospitality. I don’t think, in general, Australians make enough effort towards other cultures … it’s lacking in our culture … Australia is very self-centred.” She referred especially to the younger generation who “don’t think that it is their responsibility to make an effort towards other people”, adding “but generally they [local students] are too busy doing their own thing, focused on their own stuff to care about anyone else – and I feel like shaking them.”

Anastasia believes that local students benefit from mixing with international students because they have an opportunity to share cultural difference. I think that is what our students get out of it. Actually, international students can give a greater understanding of the world, how education works in other countries – and that can help them become a better teacher. That’s a huge plus, I think. I also think that the relationships that we as teachers can have with students from the other culture is a plus.

Ivan similarly drew attention to the cultural differences between Australia and the countries that international students come from. Like Vera, Marko and Lada, he used the term ‘culture shock’ to describe the emotional and mental state of international students when they arrive in Australia:

They are not only struggling with that whole language thing, but they are struggling with the fact that they are away from home. Some of them have been around the world, they’re very worldly, and some of them maybe have never have been away from home, never been away from the village, or away from their family, their support structures. They are living somewhere strange, the food is strange, the whole cultural thing is strange.

In stressing the importance of recognising and addressing both local and international students’ academic needs, Ivan argued for an emphatic approach grounded in what he saw as ethical principles and moral obligations.
An academic staff member’s work load and work description is different [from a teacher’s in a secondary school]. There are not a lot of lecturers who will provide fairly high levels of pastoral care. It is not really part of the job description [at university]. You don’t get a benefit in terms of promotion … It’s a personal thing. You can prioritise it or not prioritise it. It’s about human issues that people are struggling with.

Marko’s narrative reveals a rich understanding of culture:

Cultural differences are significant in how people interact and how people present themselves, and how people build connections … That’s all about sensitivities and it’s about how you learn things. And so it’s not just stereotypes, because stereotypes are just assumptions. ‘Everyone is like this!’ – but everyone is not always just like this. I mean that maybe there are differences, but within this difference there’s a lot of variation. So, stereotypes don’t have variations. … stereotypes are not helpful – they may tell us something general, but it is not really the basis for acting or doing anything.

He elaborated further with regard to international Asian students:

Yes, there are cultural differences and we just need to be aware of them, and try to be sensitive in responding in a way which works with the people involved. I mean, it’s all about experience and it’s about being receptive, and adaptive. Let’s say I had in my class last year four Chinese students, and then this year I have another four Chinese students. These new Chinese students won’t behave the same as the students from last year, and neither will the local students, and I have to learn something about them and they have to learn something about me. And that is how we find the way that works.

He went on to say:

sometimes …with international students, particularly from Asia, if they have not had much experience here in Australia or other Western educational institutions, they will wait for advice and instructions, and they won’t present themselves in a very confident way, and they defer too much to my authority. It takes some time to establish a different kind of relationship. Which is [one that is] a little more equal and open. That’s a challenge sometimes, particularly with students from Asian backgrounds.

Marko also had much to say on what has been noted by others as the ‘unresponsiveness’ of several students in class:

They are either unwilling or unable to tell me what it is that I can do [to help them]. Perhaps you could say that I should know what I have to do, but it is not always the case. I think of some Chinese students, for example, who come and sit here with you
… and it’s like extracting secrets, or like taking out teeth [Laugh] finding out [what they want]. It would be much easier if they just told me, but they are reluctant to; I know it’s hard to overcome that.

Igor too saw the need to pay more attention to the culture of international students. He mentioned that he tried to “unpack their culture” to better accommodate their academic and social needs. “So, if I have Indian students or Chinese students I must understand where they’re coming from, what kind of the traditions they have. What is their experience? I need to develop my own understanding of China and Chinese culture.” Regardless of whether he has one or several international students in his class Igor attempts to “create a link” with the student: “I often use the fact that I also am from another culture in order to reach them and make some link with them. I have never been to China, but I don’t need to go to China: I can still understand the Chinese student by making more effort on my part.”

Sasha agreed that international students who come to Australia have to accustom themselves to the new culture and its norms, but cautioned that “sometimes they are not ready.” Campbell and Zeng (2006) suggested that “living in a different culture involves more than communicating in a different language. As different cultures often mean different ways of thinking or doing things, students have to adjust to cultural differences as well” (p. 3). Sasha believed that in the process of adapting international students have to go through a transition stage in order to feel comfortable in their new cultural environment. He referred to his childhood memories of growing up in a Greek family with Greek culture: “I remember that other students or friends of mine would sort of react differently to me … sometimes what was normal to me looked silly to them.” He added that the reverse was true for him.

Sasha expressed the view that culture is an important collective phenomenon that affects individuals on various levels. Observing Indian and Chinese students in his class he noticed that they have different learning styles which he surmised might be an influence of their culture. For example, he commented that his Chinese students tend to be “less engaged in class discussions … and not confident enough” to express their ideas openly in comparison to Indian students.

I find Chinese students a little bit more self-conscious than Indian students. But Chinese, I think, are much more self-conscious … they feel more embarrassed. His observation is supported in studies by Zhenhui (2001) and Nguyen, Terlouw and Pilot (2006). At the same time, whilst acknowledging culture as one of the factors that affects international students’ learning, Sasha argued that educators should take into account other
factors such as students’ age and educational experience and not put everything into the ‘cultural differences’ basket.

Similarly, Borislava stressed the importance of her international students learning how to communicate successfully in group situations, present their argument and take part in discussions:

For example, local students here might be quite happy to disagree with what the lecturer says, absolutely. And we would encourage that. There can be discussion and debate, and sometimes we might agree or disagree. But I can’t imagine the international students from Asia doing that. I have found that they have not seen that as their role. I suspect they think ‘We are students, we have to listen’. And for international students – particularly, I think, the Chinese students – culturally they don’t always question a teacher. They are more inclined, I think, just to accept that.

On a positive note, however, Borislava acknowledged that after a period of time living and studying in Australia international students are able – to varying degrees – to make the transition between their own and the new culture. By way of example she said:

One cohort of students we have studying here in Australia have already done a Master’s Degree in Early Childhood at one of the other universities but they need to do a professional qualification with us so that they can actually teach. They have been here a couple of years and are already familiar with our culture. They have somewhere to live, and have networks that help them to manage their life, and they usually speak English pretty well and know how to write an essay.

Anna was the only interviewee who somewhat forthrightly asserted that the home ‘culture’ of international students did not create a problem for her teaching: “Culture, to me, is probably not so important.” But she added, “obviously, the language use stuff” is important and “the experience stuff.” This serves to highlight that the term culture itself can denote or connote different things; unlike Anna, it would seem for many others ‘language’ is almost inextricably bound up with culture.

In concluding this section, it can be stated that each of the interviewees spoke positively of the benefits of having international students in their classes despite the challenges this sometimes presented. The interviewees spoke of their presence in class as enriching the teaching-learning experience for all involved. Ivan, for example, summed it up as:

There’s the diversity that [international students] have to offer, and it’s a diversity that you otherwise don’t get. I think it does force you to think about your educational
practice, and how can I cater to their needs and at the same time cater to everyone else’s needs? So you become a bit less complacent. They’re the main positives. And you get to meet some really nice people — stuff like that.

8.3 Professional Development and Training

Teaching cohorts of culturally diverse students presents its own challenges to academics at university (Sherry, Thomas & Chui, 2010; Moloney & Saltmarsh, 2016). This raises the question of whether professional development might assist academics with respect to cultural differences and issues encountered when working with international students. Following is some of the pertinent feedback given by interviewees.

Five of the eleven participants (Igor, Lada, Lina, Marko and Sasha) indicated that they had undertaken some form of professional development relating to cultural issues within their university. Igor stated that initially his learning came from his own direct experience in working with international students and reflecting on such experiences over a period of time. He also availed himself of workshops provided by the university. Subsequently, he wrote a course for academic staff about how to internationalise the curriculum with consideration given to cultural differences. He spoke positively of the professional development program he participated in at his university, describing it as being - useful, very useful! I liked it … listening to others, other academics’ experiences, how they are doing things dealing with [cultural] differences. It was useful. It was useful to share ideas, hear the problems they were having, … such as students having difficulties with their assessment, responding badly to group work, feeling that they are excluded from social networks in the university — those kinds of things. And how different people have responded to this. It was interesting.

Marko similarly spoke in positive terms about professional development for academics:

We had professional development on students’ writing styles and the rhetorical strategies [they use in their own culture]. How their sense of making an argument in writing can be different from ours — and the misunderstandings [that can arise]. We looked at how different cultures have different ways of logical reasoning and what we may see as superficial or not following certain steps may be simply a different approach that is normal [in their own culture]. We looked at some strategies to work around these things.
Sasha related his experience of attending a professional development session organised by his colleague for all academic staff in the School of Education. In her session his colleague covered issues related to international student’ cultures, along with strategies that academics might adopt to assist their students:

You can call it a strategy … I learnt a lot. She caused us to think about a lot of issues, and she did a lot of different activities around these. I can’t remember all of the activities, but you basically should try to think what it would be like as a learner if you were an international student – about what it would be like if we would be international students. She made us think about various cultures, particularly the Chinese culture, and some of their beliefs and ideas around education. She helped us understand why students from that area of the world might react [or respond] in class, depending where they’re from.

Lina spoke strongly on the importance of professional development activities relating to international students and availed herself of some: “Yes, the university offers different professional learning activities, and if we’re not formally trained there are many opportunities if you are keen to learn.” She stressed the importance of seizing every opportunity to learn, suggesting that educators should “Look around, learn from your colleagues, participate in workshops and so on.” And she expressed a desire that the university organise more professional development programs that focus on cultural diversity: “They help you improve your class content and teaching and learning activities to make them inclusive.”

Vera said that she had not undertaken any specific training relating to working with international students: “Not really… my experience, my overall experience in life, perhaps, helped me there, but no specific training.” She did, however, make mention of a session run by her colleague in the School of Education about “how plagiarism is seen in other countries” which she found enlightening and it assisted her understanding of why from a cultural perspective some students engage in plagiarism.

Lada, who was strongly sensitive to cultural differences with respect to international students, advocated the need to provide professional development in cross-cultural communication as being basic to understanding such differences. “One of the things that always strikes me is we don’t train university staff to facilitate communication. We don’t pay much attention to the interpersonal skills of academic staff. But we’re always talking about students’ employability. It’s bizarre.”
8.4 Hofstede’s Model as Understanding Culture

Hwang and Matsumoto (2017) argue that culture provides guidelines for expected behaviours, thinking and feeling from the cultural meanings ascribed to contexts, relationships, and events. Culture ensures that behaviours follow culturally prescribed scripts, increasing social coordination and decreasing social chaos. Culture also aids in understanding and sharing others’ intentions in social interactions in that culture enhances self-other knowledge. (Hwang & Matsumoto, 2017, p. 345).

Certainly, the educator participants who were the subject of this study considered culture be an important factor that influenced both teaching and learning in their professional practice. This includes not only the culture of the students they taught, but their own cultural background and experiences as well.

With reference to Hofstede’s national cultural dimensions (2010, 2011) it is important to have a clear understanding of how he believed his research could be applied. He stressed that his theory for interpreting culture using his dimensions could only be applied on a collective level and not at an individual level. Minkov and Hofstede (2011) argued that:

Hofstede’s dimensions of national culture were constructed at the national level. They were underpinned by variables that correlated across nations, not across individuals or organizations. In fact, his dimensions are meaningless as descriptors of individuals or as predictors of individual differences because the variables that define them do not correlate meaningfully across individuals. (Minkov & Hofstede, 2011, p. 12).

The following discussion is provided to put into context the insights and experiences of the eleven educator interviewees as seen through the prism of Hofstede’s six national cultural dimensions.

Several of the interviewees referred to their students having an ‘Asiatic mentality’ (to use Lada’s words) to signify that, regardless of the Asian country they come from, they collectively have something in common that distinguishes them from, for example, Western European, South American, or Middle Eastern students. Of course, within each Asian culture there are also differences and these can be seen through the prism of Hofstede’s six dimensions. Every country evidences a complex combination of Power Distance, Individualism versus Collectivism, Uncertainty versus Avoidance, Masculinity versus Femininity, Long-Term Orientation versus Short-Term Orientation, and Restraint versus Indulgence.
8.4.1 Power Distance

On the Power Distance dimension Australia is the lowest compared to all other Asian countries. International students from Asian countries are accustomed to seeing their teachers in a ‘higher position’ than themselves. The culture generally stresses the importance of obeying the teacher. In a university, a lecturer – and even more so a professor – is accorded an especially high status. Compared to Australia, Asian students are not encouraged to show initiative in discussions nor challenge the teacher by asking questions. This is the norm for all students from countries where the Power Distance dimension is high. At the same time, of course, the Power Distance scores vary across Asian countries – but all of them, as noted, are higher than in Australia.

Students from cultures where the Power Distance dimension is high focus on the ‘right answer.’ By contrast, in countries where the Power Distance dimension is relatively low, students are more encouraged to engage in discussion and consider alternative opinions before reaching – if ever – the ‘right answer.’ Students from cultures with a high Power Distance score expect the teacher not to leave a discussion open-ended but, rather, to give the ‘right answer’ at the end; these students, further, are generally less inclined to participate in discussion – not simply because of their language issues but because in their own culture this is viewed as unnecessary. In cultures with a low Power Distance score the need for ‘closure’ is not paramount.

Many of the interviewees commented on the difficulty of Asian students participating in small or larger group discussions because the Australian students, who were more experienced in expressing opinions, tended to dominate; this was not helped, of course by the Asian students’ poor command of English in some instances. Further, for Asian students, ‘harmony’ is stressed over ‘dissension’ which can be present in open discussion. The issue was seen to be compounded when there were older (or ‘mature age’) students in the class because Asian students are enculturated to respect the opinions of those older than themselves – even if they are also students.

Finally, the interviewees were strongly of the opinion that Asian students performed best when the teacher acted as a Power figure as distinct from merely making suggestions that they may or may not wish to act upon. This perhaps should be seen in the context of students from Asian countries, where the Power Distance score is high, being accustomed to a teacher-centred educational model, in contrast to Australia where there is more emphasis on a student-centred approach in both schools and at university.
8.4.2 Collectivism versus Individualism

On the Individualism versus Collectivism dimension it was seen in Chapter 3 that Australia is an extremely highly individualistic culture compared to Asian countries. This translates into a loosely-knit society. People look after themselves and their immediate family. By contrast, in Asian countries in general the emphasis is on a collectivistic society in which people have very strong links with their extended family. Such marked differences go a long way in explaining why international students from Asian countries can experience significant cultural shock when they arrive in a country where they don’t have their networks of support that are the basis of their sense of security.

This issue arose as a leitmotif in the interviews with the educator participants. Anastasia noted that she was so sensitive to the problem that on occasions she organised gatherings of her international students in her own home, where the students could cook and share their food along the lines of what they were used to doing in their families back home. In an attempt to assist Asian students in transitioning from a Collectivist to and Individualist culture, Marko and Sasha advocated ‘pairing’ Asian students with Australian students, and using a ‘buddy’ system.

Despite such attempts, it has been seen that some interviewees noted that Australian students can be reluctant to work with Asian students in groups, partly because of language issues and partly because Asian students tend to be shy or less forthright in contributing to the group. This is compounded when the group activity involves a degree of assessment.

8.4.3 Masculinity versus Femininity

It was noted in Chapter 3 that the scores on the Masculinity versus Femininity dimension for Australia and China (which provides the largest number of Asian students) were similar and in the masculinity spectrum. Other Asian countries however are in the femininity spectrum. Hofstede’s score suggests that both Australian and Chinese students should evidence similar ‘masculine’ qualities such as ‘assertiveness’ and ‘competitiveness’. This is interesting from the point of view of most of the interview participants in this study who suggested that Asian students (most of whom were Chinese), did not come across as assertive or competitive in class. This, as has been suggested, might simply be because of language and cultural differences relating, for example, to Power Distance. In other words, what the interviewees saw as a lack of overt assertiveness and competiveness might, conjecturally, be a cultural display
of behaviour that does not in fact mean they do not have and employ these attributes within their own cultural context and in a manner that is appropriate to that context.

8.4.5 Uncertainty Avoidance

Australia has an intermediate score on the Uncertainty versus Avoidance dimension, which according to Hofstede indicates the extent to which ambiguity and uncertainty are tolerated. China and Vietnam have the highest level of tolerance amongst Asian countries. This is interesting in that, according to Hofstede, countries with a low level of tolerance try to minimize uncertainty and ambiguity by strict laws and rules, safety and security measures – yet China and Vietnam, which have high levels of tolerance, are both communist countries that are highly ‘regulated’! Perhaps this can be explained by the mediating influence of a Confuscian, Taosiam or Zen philosophy.

Given the many cultural ‘shifts’ that students from an Asian country have to make when they study in Australia, having the ability to tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty must surely be an asset as they grapple with adjusting to new regulations relating to education both in universities and in schools. Additionally, the pre-service teacher education students who are central to this study must come to terms with Australian regulations and practices operating in the schools in which they undertake their practicums.

8.4.6 Long-term Orientation versus Short-term Orientation

Australia scored very low in this dimension, indicating it to be a short-term orientation country. According to Hofstede, this suggests that Australian children and students expect to have relatively immediate gratification for their efforts and work compared, for example, to countries such as Taiwan and China, both of which scored very highly on this index; in fact, Australia scored lower than any other Asian country. In long-term orientation cultures children and students learn not to expect immediate gratification of their desires: they learn to control their behaviour, modesty and discipline are praised, while self-assertion is discouraged. As Hofstede (2011) highlighted, the values are based on “perseverance, thrift, ordering relationships by status, and having a sense of shame [‘saving face’ or ‘losing face’] … social obligations, respect for tradition” (p. 13). Four of the interviewees, Olga, Vera, Anastasia and Lada, made particular comment on the issue of ‘having a sense of shame’ or ‘saving face’, stressing that they were conscious of the importance of doing the best they could to help students avoid such a state. Campbell (2004) stressed that the notion of ‘saving face’ and “the
maintenance of it, is very important in many Asian cultures. These anxieties and fears result in Asian students tending to sit quietly listening to the conversation but not joining in, a situation that confronts many teachers of mixed-culture classes” (p. 6).

8.4.7 Indulgence versus Restraint

“Restraint stands for a society that controls gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms” (Hofstede, 2011, p. 15). Australia scored very highly on this index – and much higher than any other Asian country – indicating the dominance of indulgence over restraint. China by contrast was at the opposite end, identifying it as a country and culture where restraint is the norm. The indulgence dimension is often associated with happiness. People living in countries with a high level of ‘indulgence’ are more likely to express their desire to enjoy life and have fun.

The Indulgence dimension is particularly associated with Western countries and countries where there is a high degree of freedom of speech. At the classroom level students are encouraged to participate in discussions and express their thoughts and opinions. In social science disciplines, for example, students are likely to have Problem Based Learning projects to investigate critical and controversial issues in history, politics, and society; such freedom is not evidenced in cultures where restraint is dominant – particularly in communist countries such as China and Vietnam.

Asian countries, except for Malaysia (mid-way), are relatively high on the Restraint dimension. Students are encouraged to be self-disciplined and open classroom discussion where students can voice – sometimes controversial – opinions freely, are not the norm. Instead of having a notion of study as ‘fun’, there is a prevailing attitude that equates hard work with a serious attitude to study. The notion that teaching and learning can be equated with ‘fun’ can present problems for students from cultures where restraint is the norm. Unlike Indulgence cultures, homework tends to be a feature of Restraint cultures, and students have less leisure time. This, of course, underscores the culture shock that many Asian students experience when they come to study in Australia. It is exacerbated when pre-service teacher education students begin learning about becoming a teacher in Australia and undertaking teaching placements. For many, it requires a considerable change of mind-set to approach teaching and learning as a ‘fun’ activity. Certainly, this was commented on by most of the interviewees.
8.5 Conclusion

The interview data provided valuable insights from the teacher educators into notions of culture as it related to their professional practice in working with pre-service teacher trainees from Asian countries. The examination of cultural differences is seen, primarily, from the lenses of the interviewees. They in turn have provided valuable comment and insight into culture in their reflections on the experiences of their pre-service teacher education students as well as the teachers and students in schools with whom these students interacted on their teaching placements.

Interview data revealed the important place that the interviewees accorded culture with respect to their students’ learning. Having international students from Asian countries in Australian pre-service teacher education classes enriches the possibilities for cultural awareness of the university academics who work with them (and who must reflect on their own teaching), their student colleagues (many of whom will not have experienced learning alongside others whose cultural referents are different from their own), and those whom they encounter on their teaching placements.

This has been presented firstly through the voices of the interviewees themselves, and my own reflections and consideration of their narratives – all of which has been placed in the perspective of Hofstede’s national cultural dimensions. These dimensions, it has been stressed, have been the subject of debate and contention over several years, but they remain an important referent for ongoing discussion and debate. Underscoring this is the importance of not stereotyping individual students from individual cultures. Hofstede himself was extremely strong in imploring researchers not to apply a theory that related to a culture to individuals representing that culture. His framework or system of ideas has been used here merely as a tool or device for investigating issues identified by the eleven selected interviewees all of whom were teaching in one of two schools of education at two Australian universities.
Chapter 9
Conclusions and Implications for Teaching, Practice and Research

9.1 Introduction

This chapter revisits the focus of the study by reviewing information covered in the introductory chapter and drawing the thesis to a close. It revisits the primary and secondary research questions and associated objectives and offers a reflection on what has been achieved. I highlight the most important issues that have emerged in response to my research questions and conclude by discussing the limitations of the research and recommendations for further research.

In this study I wanted to understand how educators in university schools/faculties of education construct their practices with respect to pre-service Asian international students. I focused on two cohorts of academics – referred to as the ‘educator participants’ or interviewees.

I undertook this study from the perspective of being a relatively recent migrant to Australia (coming from Ukraine, twelve years ago) and having been a student myself in a pre-service teacher education course at university in Australia. Prior to this I had qualified as a teacher in Ukraine and subsequently worked as a university professor for several years. It was from this frame of reference that I developed an interest in the teaching of international Asian students in Australia.

In considering and reflecting on the situation I realised that whilst attention was increasingly being given to research relating to international students studying in Australia, there was relatively little that focused on the perspective of those who teach these students at university level – in this case pre-service Asian teacher education students. The study has illustrated perspectives and perceptions from eleven participants with respect to their experience with pre-service teaching students from Asia – and these form the basis of the findings and implications of the research undertaking. Responses to the interviews I conducted have enabled me to identify issues that I have grounded in the writings of Geert Hofstede’s national dimensions of culture. Acknowledging that this is a theory not without its critics, it has however enabled me to apply a degree of clarification and understanding to the present study.
9.2 Contribution of the Study

My research has identified a recognition of the needs of Asian students studying in Australia through the lens of those preparing them to work in the field of school teaching. In particular, the research focuses on these students’ needs with respect to language and culture, which are generally interrelated. To some extent it has highlighted the mediating forces of the lecturers’ own cultural background and ‘world view’ in working with these students. This has led to recommendations which are presented below. In addition, the study has suggested possible avenues for future research.

The preparation of school teachers at the university level varies from country to country, and what is applicable to one country is not necessarily applicable to another. Education systems and practices are ‘country’ or ‘culture’ specific, according to the dominant views of education and schooling, and teacher-learner practices. Problems can arise, however, when students from another culture (in the case of this study, Asian cultures) come to Australia to study. This study has attempted to define such issues and consider the implications of them.

The need for such a research project would not have been identified had Australia not been a major country of choice for increasing numbers of Asian students wishing to enrol in pre-service teacher education programs. Thirty years ago there would not have been an ‘issue’ as the numbers of Asian students coming to study were relatively small. This century however has seen an influx in the numbers of students from Asian countries enrolled in pre-service teacher education programs.

The literature suggested that Asian students (as with students from other overseas countries) have their own cultural learning styles and expectations relating to university teaching and learning, including issues relating to assessment, the role of the teacher, classroom activities, and general expectations. Not surprisingly, these were confirmed by the eleven teacher educator participants/interviewees, thus suggesting the possibility of re-assessing and re-orienting teacher education programs to better cater for such cohorts of students. This study offers a theoretical contribution to the body of knowledge related to teaching practices at Australian universities with a specific emphasis on teaching international students from Asian countries in pre-service teacher education programs. In addition, it provides useful recommendations for educators working in the field of teacher education who may find the results valuable as a practical reflection on their own teaching of international Asian students. Finally, it proffers directions and opportunities for further, related research.
Those engaged in pre-service teacher education programs may find the study useful in providing a reflective context to their classroom realities and contribute to a greater awareness of their effectiveness when working with culturally diverse learners. Teacher education institutions in Australia might consider the findings useful as they increasingly enrol and adapt to new, culturally diverse student cohorts.

The main research question of this study was: ‘How do academics in schools of education in Australia construct their everyday practice when teaching international pre-service teaching students from Asian countries?’ In investigating this question the study has provided insights and perspectives from each of the eleven participants as revealed in interviews and observations of their teaching. It was seen that these participants constructed their practices based essentially on their own cultural perspectives and experiences, their reading and research, and the requirements and expectations of the institutions in which they were working. To varying degrees, they were sensitive to the culture of their international students and adapted their teaching accordingly. In addition to their own constraints they were ‘restricted’ by their institution in the degree to which they could internationalise the curriculum with respect to its content and assessment.

Several secondary questions were addressed in this study. The first asked about changes the participants introduced in their teaching of international students. In their responses the participants mentioned: referring to specific Asian countries in the course content as a means of acknowledging and valuing Asian students’ frame of reference; organising pre-practical placement training for this cohort of students; disseminating questions for class discussions prior to each lecture, principally in order to assist Asian students; allowing time within lectures for students to practice their writing and referencing skills in conjunction with assessment tasks; modelling teaching strategies and arranged mock classes to specifically prepare Asian students for their teaching rounds.

The next secondary question sought the participants’ views regarding factors that affect Asian students’ success or failure in academic courses. Responses focused strongly on international students’ culture and their English language proficiency level with respect to both writing and speaking. Language proficiency, it was suggested, not only affected Asian students’ learning, but also created difficulties for teaching in accommodating their specific needs alongside those of local students in the one classroom. Relatedly, a further secondary question highlighted the fact that Asian pre-service teacher education students have to undertake teaching placements in Australian schools and are expected to have an adequate level
of English fluency. This was seen to be an issue, the responsibility for which is not confined to universities alone.

Following this a further secondary question sought to investigate the extent to which the participants were aware of significant difficulties – identified in academic literature – that international students experience when studying in English-speaking countries? The extent of the participants’ awareness varied and, as predicted, related to issues arising from living in a different culture, with attendant feelings of ‘culture shock’ and being isolated from familiar networks which in turn highlighted a need for both academic and social support. The challenge of learning in a foreign university context was acknowledged, with participants commenting on students having to adjust to different types of relationships between students and academic staff and different administrative and support systems, along with different university structures where independence and initiative were strongly encouraged.

A further issue identified in the literature and confirmed by the participants relates to learning the academic disciplinary discourse. This is often strongly evident with regard to academic writing with many Asian students encountering new approaches to writing and referencing, including approaches to essay structure, reflective writing, writing in the first person, and issues relating to plagiarism.

Finally, the literature has identified various pedagogies that educators can apply in their teaching of international students. This includes culturally inclusive practices and scaffolding of students’ learning. In their interviewees, and in my observations of their teaching, the participants revealed a strong degree of reflection and initiative in their efforts to make their curriculum inclusive. Some, further, were particularly conscious of the danger of stereotyping Asian students with respect to their learning.

The discussion and analysis in previous chapters of the main and secondary research questions took place with reference to Hofstede’s six national cultural dimensions. It was acknowledged that these continue today to be the subject of debate; despite criticisms, they nonetheless have a high degree of acceptance across educational, social, business, and management discourse. In this study the dimensions have provided a useful lens in investigating university academics’ perceptions and practices in teaching international students from Asian countries in pre-service teacher education programs. It has been stressed that Hofstede stated strongly the importance of not applying a theory that related to a culture to individuals representing that culture. Further, he argued against cultural stereotyping of individual students. Equally, it must be stressed here that the discussions and analyses relating
to Asian students must not be misconstrued and be seen to relate to specific students. This point has been argued very recently by Jones (2017) who cautioned that “not all international students, or even those from the same country, have similar needs. It also means accepting that not only international students will have those needs, but certain domestic students may have similar requirements” (p. 942).

Certainly, as has been seen, Hofstede’s six dimensions – Power Distance, Collectivism versus Individualism, Masculinity versus Femininity, Uncertainty Avoidance, Long-term and Short-term Orientation, and Indulgence versus Restraint – have provided insights into issues relating to Asian international students in the context of the interviews and observations undertaken of the university participants who featured in this study.

9.3 Recommendations Arising from the Study

Several recommendations arise from this study. Some can be more readily addressed than others.

A major recommendation is that Australian stakeholders (government and universities) revisit English language requirements for international Asian students wishing to enrol in pre-service teacher education programs in Australian universities. In considering this it is essential not only that a student’s language ability is sufficient for university academic work but is also adequate when undertaking practical teaching placements in Australian schools.

With increasing importance being placed on the internationalisation of the curriculum, it is incumbent on universities to ensure that those working with international students are acquainted with the challenges and needs of such students as they transition to an Australian context. This might entail providing academics with targeted professional development to assist them in their interactions with both international and local students.

With respect to international pre-service education students’ teaching placements, consideration should also be given to providing professional development to the teachers in schools who supervise them as a means of these students better adjusting and adapting to the culture of Australian schools.

There is strong evidence that some Asian students will need additional support when enrolling in teacher education programs not only with respect to English proficiency, but also in terms of addressing issues that arise in the transition of living and studying in a new culture with its own norms and expectations. Not only should appropriate structures be available for
this, but university staff should be sensitive to the need to provide appropriate advice to students to avail themselves of such a service.

Consideration might be given to the provision of an adequate ‘load allowance’ for coordinators responsible for inducting international pre-service teacher education students into their program of study. There is some evidence that the load allowance is not necessarily adequate. Further, this might be extended to lecturers who have a relatively large number of students in their classes and require additional time for consulting with them. (Of course, it is recognised that there are various factors that mitigate against this from the university perspective.)

9.4 Recommendations for Further Research

This research could be extended in several ways. For example, the present study was conducted with educators working in pre-service teacher education programs at two university schools of education. This could be expanded to involve a broader cross-section of Australian universities, representing all states and territories, and include those in both metropolitan and regional areas.

Valuable research could also be undertaken from the perspective of international students themselves, not just their teachers. A further refinement might include focusing on students from specific countries as distinct from Asian students in general.

Given that there is an additional ‘stakeholder’ in pre-service teacher education students’ training, namely the early childhood, primary and secondary schools themselves, a future research project might involve the teachers who supervise these students on their teaching placements.

Finally, consideration could also be given to other appropriate research methodologies. This study used a qualitative interview, observation, and document analysis approach. Further research might involve other appropriate research methodologies which could offer new perspectives and ‘richer’ data.

9.5 Limitations

The limitations of the study have been presented in the introductory chapter. These include:

- the inherent limitations of qualitative research design in general;
- the small sample of participants and the fact that it was conducted in two universities only, notwithstanding the generation of a large body of data;
- that the findings cannot be generalised to a broader population;
- ethical considerations that arise from interviewing the participants and related issues of confidentiality.

Other issues relate to reliability of recall with respect to the participants who were interviewed; research across several domains has shown that memory or recall, which is dependent on factors and situations that are indeterminable, can be flawed.

9. 6 Summary

Finally, by way of concluding, it is useful to refer to the objectives of the study as presented in Chapter 1, which were:

- to investigate whether educators give due attention to the academic needs and difficulties of international students in teacher-education courses and how much they are aware of such issues as described in the academic literature and identified in the teaching of international students;
- to investigate the influence of culture on the educators’ practice.
- to describe and interpret educators’ choices of strategies for teaching international Asian students enrolled in pre-service teacher education programs in two university schools of education in Melbourne – and how they do this in addressing the students’ diverse academic and cultural needs;
- to focus on educators’ perceptions and teaching practices with respect, primarily, to international Asian students as distinct from the lenses of the international students who experience the teaching.

Each of these has been addressed in this study.

Re-thinking and re-imagining educators’ teaching practice is a complex process involving methodologies, principles, and philosophies. In this study the challenge has been investigated through a cross-cultural lens and been assisted by a consideration of Hofstede’s theory of national cultural dimensions.

Finally, in the words of Churchill et al. (2013):

Teaching is a complex activity, but it does not have to be overwhelming. By organising classrooms around educational and sociocultural principles and policies derived from research
and practice, classrooms can be productive and enjoyable workplaces for teaching, and effective and enjoyable learning spaces for students (p. 300).

Although said in reference to schools, it applies equally to universities and all students.
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Appendixes

Appendix 1: Consent Form for Educators

DSC College Human Ethics Advisory Network

Prescribed Consent Form For Persons Participating In Research Projects Involving Interviews, Questionnaires, Focus Groups or Disclosure of Personal Information

COLLEGE OF Design and Social Context

SCHOOL/CENTRE OF

Name of participant:

Project Title: Teachers’ perceptions of teaching international pre-service teaching students at Australian Universities

Name(s) of investigators:

Yana Ostapenko Phone: 90953846

(1)

(2) Phone:

1. I have received a statement explaining the interview/questionnaire involved in this project.
2. I consent to participate in the above project, the particulars of which - including details of the interviews or questionnaires - have been explained to me.
3. I authorise the investigator or his or her assistant to interview me or administer a
questionnaire.

4. I give my permission to be audio taped/photographed  □ Yes □ No (delete if inapplicable)

5. I give my permission for my name or identity to be used □ Yes □ No

6. I authorise the investigator or his or her assistant to interview me or administer a questionnaire.

7. I give my permission to be audio taped/photographed  □ Yes □ No (delete if inapplicable)

8. I give my permission for my name or identity to be used □ Yes □ No

9. I acknowledge that:

   a) Having read the Plain Language Statement, I agree to the general purpose, methods and demands of the study.

   b) I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied.

   c) The project is for the purpose of research and/or teaching. It may not be of direct benefit to me. The privacy of the information I provide will be safeguarded. The privacy of the personal information I provide will be safeguarded and only disclosed where I have consented to the disclosure or as required by law. If I participate in a focus group I understand that whilst all participants will be asked to keep the conversation confidential, the researcher cannot guarantee that other participants will do this.

   d) The security of the research data is assured during and after completion of the study. The data collected during the study may be published, and a report of the project outcomes will be provided to RMIT in the form of a thesis and possible journal publications and conference presentations. Any information which may be used to identify me will not be used unless I have given my permission (see point 5).
Participant’s Consent

Name:  
Date  

(Participant)

Name:  
Date  

(Witness to signature)

Where participant is under 18 years of age:

I consent to the participation of ____________________________ in the above project.

Signature:  (1)  (2)  Date  

(Signatures of parents or guardians)

Name:  
Date  

(Witness to signature)

Participants should be given a photocopy of this consent form after it has been signed.

Human Research Ethics Application Register Number CHEAN B-2000476-04/11

Any complaints about your participation in this project may be directed to the Executive Officer, RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee, Research & Innovation, RMIT, GPO Box 2476V, Melbourne, 3001. Details of the complaints procedure are available at: http://www.rmit.edu.au/governance/complaints/research
Appendix 2: Consent Form for Students

DSC College Human Ethics Advisory Network

Prescribed Consent Form For Persons Participating In Research Projects Involving Interviews, Questionnaires, Focus Groups or Disclosure of Personal Information

COLLEGE OF Design and Social Context

SCHOOL/CENTRE OF ________________________________

Name of participant: ____________________________________________

Project Title: Teachers’ perceptions of teaching international pre-service teaching students at Australian Universities

Name(s) of investigators: Yana Ostapenko Phone: 90953846

(1) ____________________________________________ Phone: ______________________

(2) ____________________________________________ Phone: ______________________

1. I have received a statement explaining the interview/questionnaire involved in this project.

2. I consent to participate in the above project, the particulars of which - including details of the interviews or questionnaires - have been explained to me. I authorise the investigator or his or her assistant to interview me or administer a questionnaire.

3. I give my permission to be audio taped/photographed □ Yes □ No (delete if inapplicable)
4. I give my permission for my name or identity to be used □ Yes □ No

6. I acknowledge that:

e) Having read the Plain Language Statement, I agree to the general purpose, methods and demands of the study.

f) I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied.

g) The project is for the purpose of research and/or teaching. It may not be of direct benefit to me. The privacy of the information I provide will be safeguarded. The privacy of the personal information I provide will be safeguarded and only disclosed where I have consented to the disclosure or as required by law. If I participate in a focus group I understand that whilst all participants will be asked to keep the conversation confidential, the researcher cannot guarantee that other participants will do this.

h) The security of the research data is assured during and after completion of the study. The data collected during the study may be published, and a report of the project outcomes will be provided to RMIT in the form of a thesis and possible journal publications and conference presentations. Any information which may be used to identify me will not be used unless I have given my permission (see point 5).

Participant’s Consent

Name: ________________________________ Date _______________

(Participant)

Name: ________________________________ Date _______________

(Witness to signature)

Where participant is under 18 years of age:

I consent to the participation of ______________________________ in the above project.

Signature: (1) Date _______________

(2)

(Signatures of parents or guardians)
Participants should be given a photocopy of this consent form after it has been signed.

Any complaints about your participation in this project may be directed to the Executive Officer, RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee, Research & Innovation, RMIT, GPO Box 2476V, Melbourne, 3001. Details of the complaints procedure are available at:
http://www.rmit.edu.au/governance/complaints/research
Appendix 3: Questions for Interview

Questions for interview

1. Could you explain to me how much you enjoy teaching and how that may differ from your other obligations to the university (research, administration, other activities)?

2. When you work on the curriculum for a particular course, do you consider that a section of your audience could be international students from diverse educational and cultural backgrounds, particularly from the Asia Pacific Region? Please elaborate.

3. Could you tell me about your experience in teaching international students or people from the Asia Pacific Region? Please elaborate.

4. Could you tell me what opportunities and challenges you have experienced with international students from the Asia Pacific Region in your class? Could you give me some examples?

5. What have been the most positive and negative aspects of teaching in courses in which you have international students from the Asia Pacific Region?

6. What kind of activities do you prefer to choose for your course and why? How does that reflect on your learning outcomes? Do you notice any obvious differences in the responsiveness of international and domestic students to your classroom activities? How do you deal with non-responsiveness in international students from the Asia-Pacific region?

7. Could you tell me what the criteria for assessment are in the course you teach? Why do you believe these criteria are appropriate for international students from the Asia Pacific Region?

8. How do you know that your students (domestic and international) understand the purpose of the assessment and that they are familiar with its format? What is your strategy if you recognise that some of the students don’t know how to work with the assessment format? Please elaborate.
9. Do you collect feedback from students? Are there differences in the feedback from international and domestic students? If so, why do you think that is?

10. Have there been occasions when you have made changes to your classroom content or teaching approach on the basis of international students’ comments, particularly students from the Asia-Pacific region?

11. Have you ever been trained to work with international students from the Asia Pacific Region? Please elaborate.
Appendix 4: Observational Protocol

Observational Protocol

Project title: Teachers’ perceptions of teaching international pre-service teaching students in Australian universities.

Pre-Observation Conference:
I will discuss the observation protocol with the tutor/lecturer I will be observing so that they are acquainted with all aspects of it and can decline to participate in any or all of the observations if they wish. They may ask me to focus on a particular aspect of their practice, and in that case, I will observe only those practices to which they have consented.

Class/ session Background
1. Date of the session: _______________________________________________________
2. Number of participants: ___________________________________________________
3. Length of the class/session: _________________________________________________
4. Topic of session ___________________________________________________________

Engagement of Participants
What does a lecturer/tutor say and/or do in the class?
- to engage international students in discussion
- to encourage international students to ask questions
- to encourage international students to give their opinions

Learning in a foreign university context
What does a lecturer/tutor say and/or do in the class?
- to support international students to engage in group work
- to teach international students how to use references
- to address the importance of plagiarism with international students

Developing English language proficiency
What does a lecturer/tutor say and/or do in the class?
- to explain colloquialisms and slang to international students
- to check for understanding (of instructions or meanings) with international students
- to address misunderstandings (of instructions or meanings) with international students

Learning the academic disciplinary discourse
What does a lecturer/tutor say and/or do in the class?
- to explain to international students the specific terminology related to the subject
- to explain assessment/assignment requirements to international students
Appendix 5: Plain Language Statement for Educators (Interview Participants and Observation)

Appendix 4 a (Plain Language Statement for Educators)

PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT
(Interview Participants and Observation)

Project title: Teachers’ perceptions of teaching international pre-service teaching students at Australian Universities

My name is Yana Ostapenko. I am a PhD student in the School of Education at RMIT University in the Design and Social Context College and I am doing a PhD under the supervision of Dr Jude Ocean in the School of Education, at RMIT University, Victoria, Australia. In my research, I would like to address the questions of “How do academics in Australia construct their everyday practice when teaching international pre-service teaching students from the Asia Pacific Region?”

I am doing this research to investigate the experiences of educators in teaching international students from Asian Pacific Region in Education at Australian universities.

You are kindly invited to participate in this research because of your experience in teaching international students. Please read the following information carefully before deciding whether you would like to participate in the study.

If you agree to participate in the project, you will be invited to:
Participate in a one-hour in-depth interview in which you will be asked to talk about your perceptions of teaching international students in your subject area(s), your personal experience of teaching and about ways you communicate during activities in your class. In the interview, you will be also asked to give your opinion about any challenges and any successes you have experienced in teaching international students.

You may be asked to participate in a second half-an-hour interview later in the year to explore this subject further.

With your permission, the interview will be audio-taped (if you do not wish to have your interview taped then field notes will be taken). The interview will take up to 60 minutes and will be conducted at a place comfortable for you.

All information gathered from the interview will be reported anonymously in my research. Your identity will be kept confidential, and when I report my results, pseudonyms will be used. Data will be de-identified and coded.

You will also be asked if I can attend some of your classes to see practical examples of your teaching strategies in action. I will sit at the rear of the class and not participate in the activities in any way. You can refuse to have me as an observer in your classes if you wish, and just participate in the interviews only.

Results from interviews and observations will be returned to you for checking before they are included as data. You can at that time remove any statements or observation data that you do not wish to have included in this study.

The data will be accessible to me and my supervisor Dr. Jude Ocean. Only I will have access to your identity. Your privacy is insured, because I will use the codes instead the names when I discuss the data.

After the completion the study, the data from the interview will be stored in a locked cabinet in my supervisor’s office for five years and then shredded, and the tapes will also be destroyed at this time. No findings which could identify any individual participant will be published. However, please note that due to the very small sample size, it may be impossible to guarantee
complete anonymity. You will have the opportunity to read transcripts of the discussions as well as the published thesis. You will also be supplied with a copy of any published articles upon request. Every attempt will be made for your identity to remain anonymous so that any data you supply will not use as evaluative tool by the management of your department.

The data collected for the period of the study may be published as a PhD Thesis and in academic journals.

Please note that your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. If you agree to participate initially, you can still withdraw at any time and any unprocessed data may also be withdrawn without giving reasons, simply by letting me know you wish to withdraw.

If you agree to become involved in the study, you will be requested to sign a consent form.

This study has the approval of the Human Research Ethics Committee, Approval Number: B-2000476-04/11.

If you seek information concerning the conduct of this research study or any matters concerning the ethical nature of the investigation, please contact:

the Executive Officer, RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee, see http://www.rmit.edu.au/rd/hrec_complaints

**Human Research Ethics Application Register Number CHEAN B-2000476-04/11**

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<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>

232
If you would like more information concerning the study, please contact me or my supervisor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mrs. Yana Ostapenko</th>
<th>Dr Jude Ocean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PhD student</td>
<td>Lecturer School of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:yana.ostapenko@student.rmit.edu.au">yana.ostapenko@student.rmit.edu.au</a></td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:jude.ocean@rmit.edu.au">jude.ocean@rmit.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone: +61 3 90953846</td>
<td>Phone: + 61 3 9925 7863</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you very much for taking time to consider this request.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Yana Ostapenko
Appendix 6: Plain Language Statement for Students. Observation

Appendix 4 b

School of Education
Building 220, Level 4
Plenty Road
Bundoora VIC 3083
Australia

PO Box 71
Bundoora VIC 3083
Australia
Tel. +61 3 9925 7480
Fax +61 3 9925 7586

(Plain Language Statement for Students)

PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT

(Observation)

Project title: Teachers’ perceptions of teaching international pre-service teaching students at Australian Universities

My name is Yana Ostapenko. I am a PhD student in the School of Education at RMIT University in the Design and Social Context College and I am doing a PhD under the supervision of Dr Jude Ocean in the School of Education, at RMIT University, Victoria, Australia. In my research, I would like to address the questions of “How do academics in Australia construct their everyday practice when teaching international pre-service teaching students from the Asia Pacific Region?”

I am doing this research to investigate the experiences of educators in teaching international students from the Asia Pacific Region in Education at Australian Universities. You are kindly asked to give your consent to my observation of teaching practices in a class in which you are a student. I wish to attend some of your classes to see practical examples of teaching strategies in action. I will sit at the rear of the class and not participate in the activities in any way. You can refuse to have me as an observer in any class you attend. All information gathered from the observation will be reported anonymously in my research. The identity of the educator will be kept confidential. Consequently, pseudonyms of all educators will be used, as all data will
be de-identified and coded. Every attempt will be made for your identity to remain anonymous so that any reports on this study cannot be used as an evaluative tool by the university.

After the completion the study, the data from the observations will be stored in a locked cabinet in my supervisor’s office for five years and then shredded, and the tapes will also be destroyed at this time. No findings which could identify any individual participant will be published. Before it is destroyed, the data will be accessible only to me and my supervisor Dr. Jude Ocean. The data collected for the period of the study may be published as a PhD Thesis and in academic journals.

If you agree to my observation of teaching practices in classes in which you are a student, you will be asked to sign a consent form.

This study has the approval of the Human Research Ethics Committee, Approval Number: B-2000476-04/11.

If you seek information concerning the conduct of this research study or any matters concerning the ethical nature of the investigation please contact: the Executive Officer, RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee, see http://www.rmit.edu.au/rd/hrec_complaints

If you would like more information concerning the study, please contact me or my supervisor.

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<td>Lecturer School of Education</td>
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Human Research Ethics Application Register Number CHEAN B-2000476-04/11

Any complaints about your participation in this project may be directed to the Executive Officer, RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee, Research & Innovation, RMIT, GPO Box 2476V, Melbourne, 3001. Details of the complaints procedure are available at: http://www.rmit.edu.au/governance/complaints/research

Thank you very much for taking time to consider this request.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Yana Ostapenko
Appendix 7: The Letter to the Head of School of Education

The Letter to the Head of School of Education

Dear Head of the School of Education

My name is Yana Ostapenko. I am a PhD student in the School of Education doing a PhD under the supervision of Dr Jude Ocean.

My research title is: “Teachers’ perceptions of teaching international pre-service teaching students at Australian Universities “

In my research, I would like to address the questions of “How do academics in Australia construct their everyday practice when teaching international pre-service teaching students from the Asia Pacific Region?”. I am doing this research to investigate the experiences of educators in teaching international students from Asian Pacific region in Education at Australian Universities.

I request your permission to involve lecturing staff in your school and to observe classes. I wish to observe the strategies academics use in teaching international students from the Asia Pacific region in pre-service teacher education courses.

All information gathered from the observation will be reported anonymously in my research. Data will be de-identified and coded. The data will be accessible to me and my supervisor Dr. Jude Ocean.

After the completion the study, the data from the observation will be stored in a locked cabinet in my supervisor’s office for five years and then shredded, and the tapes will also be destroyed at this time. No findings which could identify any individual participant will be published.

The data collected for the period of the study may be published as a PhD Thesis and in academic journals articles and report outcomes will be provided to the RMIT University. This study has the approval of the Human Research Ethics Committee, Approval Number: CHEAN B-2000476-04/11.
If you would like more information concerning the study, please contact me or my supervisor.

Mrs. Yana Ostapenko  
PhD student  
Email: yana.ostapenko@student.rmit.edu.au  
Phone: +61 3 90953846

Dr Jude Ocean  
Lecturer School of Education  
Email: jude.ocean@rmit.edu.au  
Phone: + 61 3 9925 7863

Thank you very much for taking time to consider this request.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Yana Ostapenko

I consent to Yana Ostapenko conducting observation in classes taken by lecturers in the School of Education.

Name: 

Date: 

(Signature of Head of School or approved delegate)

School/Centre: 

Extn: 

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Appendix 8: Ethics Approval

RMIT University

Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee
Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor

Phone: 9217 2199
Email: hres@rmit.edu.au

14 July 2011

Mrs Yana Onapenso
4/8 Liburnan Street
PARKDALE VIC 3195

Dear Yana,

Re: Human Research Ethics Application - Registration Number CHEAN R-2009476-04/011

The Chair of the Design and Social Context College Human Ethics Advisory Network (CHEAN), Assoc Prof Heather Fehling, assessed your amended ethics application titled:

"Teachers' perceptions of teaching international students at RMIT School of Education"

I am pleased to inform you that your application has been approved at a Low Risk classification by the committee. This approval will be reported to the University Human Research Ethics Committee for noting.

Your ethics approval expires on 13 July 2014.

Please note that all research data should be stored on University Network systems. These systems provide high levels of manageable security and data integrity, can provide secure remote access, are backed up on a regular basis and can provide Disaster Recover processes should a large scale incident occur. The use of portable devices such as PDAs and memory sticks is invalid for archiving data transport where necessary and some works is progress. The authoritative copy of all current data should reside on appropriate network systems; and the Principal Investigator is responsible for the retention and storage of the original data pertaining to the project for a minimum period of five years.

You are reminded that an Annual/Final report is mandatory and should be forwarded to the College Ethics Sub-Committee Secretary by mid-December 2011. This report is available at http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=deqef7a66ckp or can be located by following the link under Policy at http://www.rmit.edu.au/doc/cchein.

Should you have any queries regarding your application please seek advice from the Chair of the College Human Ethics Advisory Network (CHEAN) Associate Prof Heather Fehling on (03) 9925 7840, heather.fehling@rmit.edu.au or contact Lisa Mann on (03) 9925 2974 or email lisa.mann@rmit.edu.au.

On behalf of the DSC College Human Ethics Advisory Network I wish you well in your research.

Yours sincerely,

Liana Mann
Secretary, DSC College Human Ethics Advisory Network

cc: Dr Jude Ocean
### Appendix 9: Example of Inclusive Teaching Strategies: Deakin University and RMIT Universities

#### Inclusive Teaching (RMIT University)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching features</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Digital technologies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visual presentation of material</td>
<td>Ensure students follow demonstrations of equipment.</td>
<td>eSims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Video capture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Echo 360 personal capture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminology</td>
<td>Clarity the terminology so that students can follow the presentation easily.</td>
<td>Prezu presentation on terminology and how it is used appropriately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear assessment criteria</td>
<td>Ensure your assessment criteria are clear and reasonable.</td>
<td>Rubrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing linguistic elements</td>
<td>Make any requirements of English language skills explicit (vocabulary, spelling, grammar etc.) for all students.</td>
<td>Rubrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusting the learning requirement</td>
<td>Consider how learning requirements provide a way for students to demonstrate skills and understanding.</td>
<td>ePortfolio eLife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group work</td>
<td>Mix group for collaborative work to develop a range of graduate competencies.</td>
<td>ePortfolio Moviemaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Students need to be able to grasp key concepts in their own time without the pressure of understanding each and every word. Students might find these resources helpful as they eliminate the need to physically locate to campus, and tailor the learning experiences to meet their needs.</td>
<td>Cloud concepts, podcasts of lectures, i-lectures (echo 360 personal capture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity expectations</td>
<td>Clear expectations decrease anxiety. Use examples/models, think about delivery methods, be flexible when reasonable etc.</td>
<td>Cloud concepts, i-lectures (Echo360 personal capture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recourses</td>
<td>Direct students to improve resources – don’t assume, for example, that students will just work out the referencing system.</td>
<td>Get to know library resources <a href="http://www.deakin.edu.au/library/">http://www.deakin.edu.au/library/</a> The Deakin university Guide to assignment writing and referencing <a href="http://www.deaking.edu.au/students/study-support/referencing">http://www.deaking.edu.au/students/study-support/referencing</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>Feedback that facilitates student understanding and strategies to manage learning would be appreciated by the student. Consider the format of the feedback: audio? text? Breaking down of messages? How will the student process the information and how can you best facilitate this? Consider types of feedback that may be incorporated – self, peer feedback</td>
<td>eLive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek assistance</td>
<td>Deakin has a range of support services including the library, Deakin Student Life, DUSA, equity and Diversity to assist students in their transition to academic life. Consider providing students with links to these services via Cloud Deakin (e.g. course sites) or invite relevant staff in to speak to students directly if appropriate</td>
<td><a href="http://www.deakin.edu.au">www.deakin.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

INCLUSIVE TEACHING AT RMIT

A Diversity of Learners

Strategies to Build a Community of Learners

1. Facilitate a safe learning environment for your students

1.1. Set up and define values, objectives and ground rules for behaviour within the class:
- Define your role with your student group as a facilitator.
- Negotiate a class agreement which emphasises the importance of encouraging different points of view, interpretations, values and attitudes.
- Refer to the University’s Student Charter. www.rmit.edu.au/about/studentcharter

1.2. Encourage student participation:
- Set up pair/small group work, for example, regular 3-minute talks, 3-minute brainstorms on topics.
- Make use of Personal Response Systems (PRS) including dedicated handheld units (clickers) and/or internet connected mobile devices (Smartphone etc.) in large classes to find out what students know and get feedback. www.rmit.edu.au/teaching/technology/prs
- Make sure participation is voluntary rather than singling out individual students or putting anyone ‘on the spot’.

1.3. Implement strategies to deal with challenging topics or ‘heated’ moments:
- Remind students about the ground rules for behaviour by referring back to the class agreement.
- Let students know that you reserve the right to intervene in response to any behaviour that could be considered prejudiced, biased or discriminatory in nature.
- Model how to use ‘evidence’ based discussion in debates rather than just providing an opinion.
- Promote turn-taking when discussing controversial issues.

1.4. Seek feedback from students on how the class is being managed or managing itself:
- Ask for informal feedback regularly as part of a class activity.

Get to know your students

1.1. Learn and use students’ names:
- Introduce yourself to the class.
- Learn something unique about each student where possible.
- Use a variety of activities to get to know student names.
1.2 Ensure you are approachable and friendly to students when they ask for help:
- Use plain English in your oral and written communication.
- Allow time at the end of each session for students to ask questions (this may also reduce the need for individual correspondence).

1.3 Ensure you are explicit about your availability, along with contact details and expected response times to emails:
- Put your contact details, ‘office hours’ and expected response times on PowerPoint, BlackBoard and as part of your email signature.

1.4 Communicate regularly with students:
- Create friendly, online spaces where students and staff can interact, for example, e-mail, blogs, wikis and social networks.

1.5 Ask students about their educational experiences and future aspirations:
- Ask a group question, or pair/small group work at the beginning of semester to find out the intended direction(s) of students.
- Review the above question regularly so that teachers and students can respond to changes in direction.

**Value difference in your students**

1.1 Be mindful not to make assumptions about students:
- Get to know your students as individuals with multiple identities.
- Employ strategies to address a range of student learning styles and needs including language competence, socioeconomic status, gender, race, ethnicity, prior educational experience or achievement.

1.2 Value difference:
- Create opportunities for students to present their own perspectives and worldview.
- Use resources which represent a broad range of perspectives.

1.3 Use language that recognises your students come from diverse backgrounds:
- If readings, websites or texts use stereotypical language cite the date the material was written, point out these shortcomings and give students an opportunity to discuss them (Gross, Davis, 2009).

1.3 Treat all students equally:
- Maintain high expectations of all your students.
- Avoid undervaluing or overvaluing comments from students whose first language is not English.
Build confidence in your students

1.1 Have high expectations of all your students:
   - Tell students at the beginning of semester, and before each activity and assessment task what you expect of them in terms of participation, standards and deadlines.

1.2 Listen attentively:
   - Listen to individual students as well as well as the group (double or multiple listening).

1.3 Respond thoughtfully:
   - Pay attention to both individual learner and group learner needs.
   - Use positive language in your responses.
   - Know why you are responding, for example, to assist a student to find meaning, to integrate new learning with previous knowledge, or to analyse a concept.

Facilitate opportunities for your students to get to know their peers

1.1 Create both informal and formal opportunities for students to get to know each other:
   - Use ice breaker activities in the first session.
   - Encourage buddy or mentor systems.
   - Link up students from different year groups to work on projects.
   - Set up ample opportunities for group work.
   - Create friendly on-line spaces.

1.2 Support students to access peer tutoring programs:
   - Study and Learning Centre (SLC) Mentor training: The Study and Learning Centre (SLC) student mentor training program is for students who participate in academic mentoring programs across RMIT.
   - Contact your College ADG for more information on peer mentoring and tutoring opportunities. Find out about peer tutoring and mentoring programs in your College.

Context for Inclusive Teaching at RMIT University

**RMIT STUDENTS**
*Diversity Dimensions*
- Educational
- Dispositional
- Circumstantial
- Cultural

**RMIT UNIVERSITY**
- RMIT Goals, Plans and Policies

**Approaches to Teaching**
- Universal Design
- Student-Centred Learning
- Inclusive Pedagogies

**PRINCIPLES FOR INCLUSIVE TEACHING**
1. Design intentional curriculum
2. Offer flexible assessment and delivery
3. Build a community of learners
4. Teach explicitly
5. Develop a feedback rich environment
6. Practise reflectively

**Support for Teaching**
- Resources
- Strategies

**RMIT GRADUATES**
- Urban in orientation and creativity
- Global in attitude, action and presence
- Connected through active partnerships with professions industries and organisations

*Note.* Adapted from “RMIT University. Inclusive teaching resources”. (http://rmit.libguides.com/inclusive_teaching_practice). Copyright 2018 by RMIT University.
### Appendix 10. Assessments (Pre-Cervices Teacher Education)

1. Examples from RMIT University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course name</th>
<th>Retrieved from the RMIT University website (2015)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education Theories and Practice</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://www1.rmit.edu.au/courses/049035">http://www1.rmit.edu.au/courses/049035</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of Formative and Summative Assessments</td>
<td>There will be two assessment tasks. Assessment may include reports, projects and presentations, individually and in groups. Assessment will cover both theoretical and practical aspects of your learning. You will be able to develop your work in relation to your own specific areas of interest in your professional practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Activities</td>
<td>You will be engaged in learning that involves a range of activities both face to face and online such as lectures, tutorials, group and class discussion, group activities and individual research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Description</td>
<td>In this course you will explore significant educational thinkers and a range of established and emerging educational concepts and identify their impact on learning, teaching and the organisation of education. You will examine assumptions about learners, teachers, and the place of education in society to develop an informed personal and professional stance. You will explore some important educational ideas, their interpretation, and their application in contemporary contexts within your professional practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Objectives/Learning Outcomes/Capability Development | • Develop and apply theoretical and practical knowledge and skills to your professional practice and development in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.  
• Critically analyse, synthesise and reflect on educational policy and practice in both local and international contexts. |
• Communicate using a range of formats and strategies to audiences within and external to the discipline of education.
• Work with others in a range of roles and contexts, demonstrating cultural, environmental and social awareness and ethical and reflective practice.
• Explain your values and intentions in relation to past influences in your educational experience.
• Identify, analyse and evaluate current and past practice in relation to educational thinking, policy documents and other relevant frameworks.
• Discuss the history and changing nature of the educator’s work.
• Research relevant educational thinkers.
• Communicate and substantiate positions on ideas studied.

Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting

http://www1.rmit.edu.au/courses/049049

Types of Formative and Summative Assessments

You will be assessed on how well you meet the course’s learning outcomes and on your development against the program capabilities. Assessment may include reports, projects and presentations, individually and in groups. Assessment will cover both theoretical and practical aspects of your learning. You will be able to develop your work in relation to your own specific areas of interest in your professional practice.

Learning Activities

This course will consist of lectures and tutorials. A range of activities is intended including presentations, case studies, document analyses, and set reading. The emphasis will be on general capabilities so that you can develop a shared understanding of the nature, scope and sequence of the Australian Curriculum and also curriculum and assessment issues more generally.
Course Description

In this course you will be introduced to knowledge and debates
about curriculum, assessment and reporting practices and policies
in schools and education systems. You will focus on curriculum,
assessment and reporting for Victorian schools as well as
addressing alternate approaches in Australia and internationally.
You will explore about important theories and professional
debates in curriculum, assessment and reporting that will
influence your teaching careers. You will also gain knowledge of
the complexities and practicalities of constructing and
implementing curriculum, creating and applying appropriate
assessment and providing clear reporting.

Objectives/Learning

Your learning in this course is focused on development of the

Outcomes/Capability

following program level capabilities.

Development



Critically analyse, synthesise and reflect on educational
policy and practice in both local and international
contexts.



Develop and apply theoretical and practical knowledge
and skills to your professional practice and development
in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.



Demonstrate creativity, critical thinking and innovation
when identifying and solving problems in diverse
educational contexts.



Communicate using a range of formats and strategies to
audiences within and external to the discipline of
education.

At the conclusion of this course you will be assessed on the
following learning outcomes:


Identify the relationship between curriculum and
assessment



Critically examine theories and models of curriculum
planning and assessment practices

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Curriculum and Assessment</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong><a href="http://www1.rmit.edu.au/courses/042455">http://www1.rmit.edu.au/courses/042455</a></strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Types of Formative and Summative Assessments</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment tasks are directly linked to the stated objectives and outcomes. Assessment in the course will be both theoretical and practical in nature. A range of formative and summative assessment types will be incorporated into the course (for example, individual and group tasks involving research, analysis and practical work).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Activities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ learning in this course will involve a range of activities including researching curriculum and assessment theories relevant to the 21st century, synthesising curriculum and assessment strategies into classroom practice, debating key issues in National Curriculum and National Assessment and Reporting and discussing different types of assessment and reporting and their purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course Description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is a core course that focuses on issues related to understanding how curriculum, assessment and learning are connected. This course will provide an introduction to knowledge and debates about curriculum, assessment and reporting practices and policies in schools and education systems. It will focus on curriculum, assessment and reporting for Victorian schools as well as addressing alternate approaches in Australia and internationally. Students will learn about important theories and professional debates in curriculum and assessment that will influence their teaching careers now and into the future. Through</td>
</tr>
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</table>
work integrated learning students will gain understandings of the complexities and practicalities of constructing and implementing curriculum, creating and applying appropriate assessment and providing clear reporting to relevant audiences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives/Learning Outcomes/Capability Development</th>
<th>This course is designed to assist students to:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Understand the relationship between curriculum and assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Critically examine theories and models of curriculum planning and assessment practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop integrated curriculum, assessment and reporting strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Implement knowledge of curriculum, assessment and reporting in teaching practices.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Upon completion of this course students will be able to:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Plan curriculum activities with integrated, appropriate assessment techniques.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Demonstrate knowledge of debates in curriculum and assessment related to current teaching practices.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Explain their understandings of major theories of curriculum and assessment.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Initiate and implement constructive, well considered change to curriculum and assessment activities in their teaching practices.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

ICT Outcomes
At the conclusion of this course, students will have demonstrated and/or acquired the following ICT capabilities:
• Understanding of the role of ICT in society and the implications for society
• Understanding of the role of ICT in learning and implications for the classroom
• Awareness of digital assessment and reporting tools for effective learning
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflective Practice and Professional Development for Early Childhood Teachers</th>
<th><a href="http://www1.rmit.edu.au/courses/049754">http://www1.rmit.edu.au/courses/049754</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Types of Formative and Summative Assessments</strong></td>
<td>You will be assessed on how well you meet the course’s learning outcomes and on your development against the program capabilities. Assessment may include reports, projects and presentations, individually and in groups. Assessment will cover both theoretical and practical aspects of your learning. You will be able to develop your work in relation to your own specific areas of interest in your professional practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Activities</strong></td>
<td>You will be engaged in learning that involves a range of activities both face to face and online such as lectures, tutorials, group and class discussion, group activities and individual research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course Description</strong></td>
<td>This course focuses on developing confident and competent beginning early childhood teachers who are independent professionals. You will develop a personal teaching philosophy through reflecting on your professional behavior and building on professional skills in multiple contexts, including developing relationships with families. You will focus on aspects of interpersonal relationships, learning opportunities, pedagogy and</td>
</tr>
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</table>
learning environments in work integrated learning and in relation to your professional development as an emerging teacher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives/Learning Outcomes/Capability Development</th>
<th>Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Prepare an ongoing professional development plan that is grounded in theory and practice</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Articulate and practically communicate the relationship between interpersonal relationships, learning opportunities, pedagogy and environments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Select and use a range of effective teaching and learning strategies to enhance learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Work as part of a team and form professional working relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop and articulate a teaching philosophy that consolidates knowledge and practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You will be assessed on your development of the following program learning outcomes in this course:

- Engage with diverse learners in a range of educational contexts in order to develop skills and knowledge for flexible and adaptable participation in professional communities of practice.
- Develop and apply theoretical and practical knowledge and skills to your professional practice and development in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.
- Work with others in a range of roles and contexts, demonstrating cultural, environmental and social awareness and ethical and reflective practice.

**Languages**

http://www1.rmit.edu.au/courses/048975

| Types of formative and summative assessments | You will be assessed on how well you meet the course’s learning outcomes and on your development against the relevant program capabilities. |
| Assessment may include reports, projects and presentations, individually and in groups. Assessment will cover both theoretical and practical aspects of your learning. You will be able to develop your work in relation to your own specific areas of interest in your professional practice. |
| Learning activities | You will be engaged in learning that involves a range of activities both face to face and online such as lectures, tutorials, group and class discussion, group activities and individual research. This course will involve a range of learning activities including workshops, presentations and demonstrations. |
| Course Description | This course focuses on the broad notion of languages; the development of a first language, simultaneous development of two or more languages, and the learning of additional languages. Bilingualism and multilingualism will be explored through investigating how learners make sense of language/s. Language acquisition research will be studied to inform teaching pedagogy. The unique context of multilingual and multicultural classrooms will be explored with practical classroom strategies for these settings. Throughout this course, you will discover skills to create language programs to recognise a diversity of languages that you will have within your classrooms. |
| Objectives/Learning Outcomes/Capability Development | Your learning in this course is focused on development of the following program level capabilities. Undergraduate program capabilities:  
- Work with others in a range of roles and contexts, demonstrating cultural, environmental and social awareness and ethical and reflective practice.  
- Critically analyse, synthesise and reflect on educational policy and practice in both local and international contexts. |
Communicate using a range of formats and strategies to audiences within and external to the discipline of education

Engage with diverse learners in a range of educational contexts in order to develop skills and knowledge for flexible and adaptable participation in professional communities of practice.

Postgraduate program capabilities:

- Determine and apply the specialist knowledge and professional skills required to creatively solve problems, demonstrating expert judgment and ethical responsibility relating to your professional practice
- Critically analyse, synthesize and reflect on complex theories and recent developments, both local and international, to extend and challenge knowledge and practice in education
- Professionally communicate with specialist and non-specialist audiences, as producers and consumers of knowledge, about philosophical and pedagogical propositions, processes and outcomes
- Engage with complex bodies of knowledge and multiple professional skills in order to contribute to your professional identity and career within contemporary contexts.

At the conclusion of this course you will be assessed on the following learning outcomes:

- Demonstrate knowledge of key concepts related to language acquisition of first and further languages
- Investigate and reflect critically on the literacy practices of monolingual, bilingual and multilingual students
- Develop a languages program appropriate for primary students with diverse language backgrounds
- Create resources to support first and further language development
- Explore the power of the teacher to develop the capacity in children to learn how to learn languages.

**Professional Experience: Connected Classrooms**
http://www1.rmit.edu.au/courses/048998

| Types of Formative and Summative Assessments | You will be assessed on how well you meet the course’s learning outcomes and on your development against the relevant program (undergraduate or postgraduate) capabilities. Assessment may include reports, projects and presentations, professional experience, individually and in groups. Assessment will cover both theoretical and practical aspects of your learning. You will be able to develop your work in relation to your own specific areas of interest in your professional practice. |
| Learning activities | You will be engaged in learning that involves a range of activities both face to face and online such as lectures, tutorials, professional experience, group and class discussion, group activities and individual research. |
| Course Description | In this course you will examine the relationship between Information Communication Technology (ICT) and education and reflect on how learning can be effectively supported by ICT. You will critically examine the role of educational technologies and develop strategies for using ICT in responsible and ethical ways in the classroom. This course includes a work integrated learning experience in which your knowledge and skills will be applied and assessed in a real or simulated workplace context and where feedback from industry and/or community is integral to your experience. |
| Objectives/Learning Outcomes/Capability Development | Your learning in this course is focussed on development of the following program level capabilities. Undergraduate program level capabilities: |
• Apply initiative and judgment in planning, problem solving and decision making to enhance your practice and continuing professional development
• Work with others in a range of roles and contexts, demonstrating cultural, environmental and social awareness and ethical and reflective practice
• Critically analyse, synthesise and reflect on educational policy and practice in both local and international contexts
• Communicate using a range of formats and strategies to audiences within and external to the discipline of education.

Postgraduate program level capabilities:
• Determine and apply the specialist knowledge and professional skills required to creatively solve problems, demonstrating expert judgement and ethical responsibility relating to your professional practice
• Critically analyse, synthesise and reflect on complex theories and recent developments, both local and international, to extend and challenge knowledge and practice in education
• Professionally communicate with specialist and non-specialist audiences, as producers and consumers of knowledge, about philosophical and pedagogical propositions, processes and outcomes.

At the conclusion of this course you will be assessed on the following learning outcomes:
• Interpret issues of educational technology and effectively communicate to colleagues, students, parents, carers and the community
• Critically analyse strategies to create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments
- Draw upon a range of ICT resources, applications and software, to implement creative, inclusive, engaging and challenging learning and teaching activities
- Compare, contrast and critically evaluate educational technologies in a schooling context.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discovering Science</th>
<th><a href="http://www1.rmit.edu.au/courses/049034">http://www1.rmit.edu.au/courses/049034</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Types of Formative and Summative Assessments</td>
<td>You will be assessed on how well you meet the course’s learning outcomes and on your development against the program capabilities. Assessment will cover both theoretical and practical aspects of your learning. You will be assessed on both your science understanding and your appreciation of science pedagogical approaches. The assessment tasks will include both individual and group work. Assessment tasks are directly linked to the stated course objectives and outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Activities</td>
<td>You will be engaged in learning activities that include but are not limited to: lectures, tutorials, workshops, on-line material, practical science, group activities, collaborative work with peers, investigations, reading, and web-based research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Description</td>
<td>In this course you will be introduced to key science concepts in the primary curriculum and will develop an appreciation of how science can be taught in ways that engage and motivate children. The course structure is designed around a collaborative, participatory learning environment that reinforces the inquiry-based, learner-centred pedagogies it promotes. You will engage with science education at a theoretical level and will also be supported as you explore science and teaching concepts for yourselves through practical activities in ways that facilitate critical reflection on the nature of science and science learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Your learning in this course is focused on development of the following program level capabilities.

- Develop and apply theoretical and practical knowledge and skills to your professional practice and development in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment
- Demonstrate creativity, critical thinking and innovation when identifying and solving problems in diverse educational contexts

At the conclusion of this course you will be assessed on the following learning outcomes:

- Explain selected science concepts, skills and processes
- Describe theoretical rationales and pedagogical approaches that support primary science
- Design lessons that reflect inquiry-based, learner-centred approaches to science
- Critically evaluate how individual lessons and activities act together to support a science unit based on constructivist principles
- Apply the skills and knowledge necessary for planning, implementing and assessing a science investigation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Diversity in Training</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Types of Formative and Summative Assessments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refer to the Part B course guide for assessment details</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants will have the opportunity to apply course content to their own life through both classroom participation and individual study. The course encourages personal application, insight and reflection. We will approach the topic of diversity from a ’culture-general’ perspective. One of the foundational views of culture-general learning is that we need to understand ourselves and our own ’cultures’ before we can attempt to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
understand those of others. Thus the course moves through three core themes:

- Culture-general learning (what is diversity all about; what is culture; how are people different).
- Theories of cultural difference and intercultural communication.
- Applying the previous themes to the world of work (specifically training and development).

The course assumes that ‘education’ is a core concern for all participants. However, the course will present a broad view of what ’education’ means: this will be different for individual participants. Some of you may be interested in education in the form of VET teaching. For others, education might be about the workplace (e.g. training, development, organisational development) and for others relevance may be found in education for life-long learning. Thus diversity is implicit in the program in many ways; and the readings, discussions and experiences we will have will apply to ’managing diversity’ in a range of different settings.

Learning opportunities will be maximised through participant preparation as guided by the facilitator (for example, the completion of weekly readings and tasks), and participation in activities and guided discussion. Options for individual study will include reading and reflection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Emphasis in this course is placed on examining key issues in cultural diversity as they apply to training settings and the diverse factors affecting provision of culturally inclusive training delivery, assessment and materials development. Learners will be assisted to critically examine approaches used to accommodate learners’ diverse needs in adult learning environments. Globalisation has given rise to the challenges of work in cross-cultural and multi-lingual contexts and created urgent demands</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
for new forms of skill development amongst education and training professionals. The role of organisations in developing and supporting staff working in cross-cultural contexts forms a key topic within the program. Emerging issues including the internationalisation of education and training will also be explored. The course will also focus on the multidisciplinary foundations of cross-cultural communication and training, which have given rise to diverse models of delivery. Classes are based on a participative model of adult learning and will utilise a range of approaches including simulations, discussion and structured exercises. Case studies of education in a range of cultural contexts will also be used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives/Learning Outcomes/Capability Development</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On successfully completing this course, students will be expected to be able to:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• recognise the potential value of development of qualities such as tolerance of ambiguity, ethnorelativism, and cognitive and behavioural flexibility</td>
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<td>• critically evaluate training and development policies and programs in the context of an increasingly globalised world</td>
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<tr>
<td>• identify cultural bias in learning materials</td>
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<tr>
<td>• plan education and training delivery that is culturally inclusive</td>
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<tr>
<td>• customise learning materials to meet the needs of culturally diverse groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• identify barriers to learning among trainees and strategies to overcome them</td>
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<tr>
<td>• develop effective approaches to cross cultural training and learning</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Early Literacy Foundation to Year 2
http://www1.rmit.edu.au/courses/049066
<p>| Types of formative and summative assessments | You will be assessed on how well you meet the course’s learning outcomes and on your development against the program capabilities. Assessment may include reports, projects and presentations, individually and in groups. Assessment Task 1: Preparing a Case Study of an Early Years Literacy Learner, 30% Course Learning Outcomes: 1, 2, 3 and 4. Assessment Task 2: Literacy Learning Resource, 20% Course Learning Outcomes: 1, 2 and 3. Assessment Task 3: Professional Literacy profile, 50% Course Learning Outcomes: 5. Feedback will be given on all assessment tasks. If you have a long term medical condition and/or disability it may be possible to negotiate to vary aspects of the learning or assessment methods. You can contact the Program Manager or the Equitable Learning Services if you would like to find out more. |
| Learning activities | You will be engaged in learning that involves a range of activities both face to face and online such as lectures, tutorials, group and class discussion, group activities and individual research. |
| Course Description | You will learn how literacy is developed in the early years of schooling by conducting a case study of one learner. You will explore the components of language and literacy (listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing) and strategies for observing and assessing learning needs to extend literacy learning. You will expand your repertoire of professional literature and investigate Information Communication Technology (ICT) in literacy learning, home and school literacy practices, the literate environment and the diversity of learners. You will also review current literacy programs in educational settings and new government initiatives. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives/Learning Outcomes/Capability Development</th>
<th>Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Critically analyse the development of oral language, reading and writing to maximise literacy learning practices</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Redesign and develop literacy teaching strategies, curriculum materials and assessment practices appropriate to a variety of early years contexts</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Observe, record, analyse and report information on a literacy learner</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Incorporate effective and strategic Information Communication Technology (ICT) with a critical awareness of its impact</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5. Engage in personal professional literacy learning in relation to literacy issues, with particular emphasis on locating and evaluating appropriate contemporary academic research</td>
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</table>

In this course you will develop the following program learning outcomes:

- Develop and apply theoretical and practical knowledge and skills to your professional practice and development in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.
- Critically analyse, synthesise and reflect on educational policy and practice in both local and international contexts.
- Demonstrate creativity, critical thinking and innovation when identifying and solving problems in diverse educational contexts.
- Apply initiative and judgement in planning, problem solving and decision making to enhance your practice and continuing professional development.

**Understanding Diversity and Difference**

http://www1.rmit.edu.au/courses/049063
<p>| <strong>Types of Formative and Summative Assessments</strong> | You will be assessed on how well you meet the course’s learning outcomes and on your development against the program capabilities. Assessment may include essays, reports, projects and presentations, individually and in groups. Assessment will cover both theoretical and practical aspects of your learning. You will be able to develop your work in relation to your own specific areas of interest. |
| <strong>Learning Activities</strong> | You will be engaged in learning that involves a range of activities both face to face, blended and online such as lectures, tutorials, critical reading, group and class discussion, group activities and individual research. You will make explicit links to the cross-curricular priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia. What you learn in this course will directly assist you with your teaching in all the AusVELS Learning Areas, especially Civics and Citizenship and History. |
| <strong>Course Description</strong> | This course focuses upon questioning the multiple ways in which we can understand diversity, difference and education. The course is informed by the principles of equity, global participation, social justice and anti-discrimination legislative frameworks. The course will introduce you to some of the key contemporary ways of thinking about and understanding diversity and difference within Australia and the globe. Particular attention will be paid to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and knowledge, and at least one other area of diversity and difference which will be based on your course team’s area(s) of expertise. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives/Learning Outcomes/Capability Development</th>
<th>Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Critically discuss diversity and difference as social</td>
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<td>constructions that are historically, socially, economically,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>politically, legally and contextually situated</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Demonstrate a critical understanding of Aboriginal and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories and experiences</td>
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<td></td>
<td>as they apply within contemporary education settings</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply critical insights to notions of diversity and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>difference within pedagogies and pedagogical practices;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Relate sociological and theoretical frameworks for</td>
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<td>examining diversity and difference to contemporary</td>
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<td></td>
<td>educational practice.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

You will be assessed on your development of the following program learning outcomes in this course:

• Engage with diverse learners in a range of educational contexts in order to develop skills and knowledge for flexible and adaptable participation in professional communities of practice.

• Develop and apply theoretical and practical knowledge and skills to your professional practice and development in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.

• Critically analyse, synthesise and reflect on educational policy and practice in both local and international contexts.

• Demonstrate creativity, critical thinking and innovation when identifying and solving programs in diverse educational contexts.

**Developing Literacy: 3-6**

http://www1.rmit.edu.au/courses/049060
| Types of Formative and Summative Assessments | You will be assessed on how well you meet the course’s learning outcomes and on your development against the program capabilities. Assessment may include reports, projects and presentations, individually and in groups. Assessment will cover both theoretical and practical aspects of your learning. You will be able to develop your work in relation to your own specific areas of interest in your professional practice. |
| Learning Activities | You will be engaged in learning that involves a range of activities both face to face and online such as lectures, tutorials, group and class discussion, group activities and individual research. |
| Course Description | In this course you will develop the skills and knowledge to plan and implement literacy learning strategies for a diverse range of literacy learners (Years 3-6). In particular the needs of readers and writers who fall into categories such as under achieving, reluctant, highly able and ESL will be investigated. You will develop an individual literacy plan for a particular student and explore a range of texts, with appropriate strategies to support and extend all literacy learners. You will develop curriculum development skills by applying your knowledge of literacy learning models to the design of a unit based around factual texts with particular learning intentions, strategies and assessments. |
| Objectives/Learning Outcomes/Capability Development | Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:  
- Identify the individual literacy learning needs of diverse students years 3-6  
- Use necessary literacy knowledge and skills for the differentiated learning needs of a group of students  
- Identify levels of complexity and challenge contained within the language features and structures of non-fiction texts across disciplines |
- Incorporate effective and appropriate use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) with a critical awareness of its impact
- Cultivate personal professional literacy by developing critical approaches to selecting and researching texts for professional learning.

You will be assessed on your development of the following program learning outcomes in this course:

- Engage with diverse learners in a range of educational contexts in order to develop skills and knowledge for flexible and adaptable participation in professional communities of practice.
- Develop and apply theoretical and practical knowledge and skills to your professional practice and development in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.
- Critically analyse, synthesise and reflect on educational policy and practice in both local and international contexts.
- Demonstrate creativity, critical thinking and innovation when identifying and solving problems in diverse educational contexts.
- Apply initiative and judgement in planning, problem solving and decision making to enhance your practice and continuing professional development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Futures: Imagining Policy and Practice</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www1.rmit.edu.au/courses/049036">http://www1.rmit.edu.au/courses/049036</a></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Formative and Summative Assessments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You will be assessed on how well you meet the course’s learning outcomes and on your development against the program capabilities. Assessment may include reports, portfolios, projects and presentations, individually and in groups. Assessment will cover both theoretical and practical aspects of your learning. You will</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
be able to develop your work in relation to your own specific areas of interest in your professional practice.

Learning Activities
You will be engaged in learning activities that include but are not limited to: lectures, tutorials, on-line material, group activities, collaborative work with peers, independent investigations, reading, and web-based research.

Problem-based learning is the teaching and learning theme for this course and it puts you at the centre of the learning process and makes you responsible for your learning. Your tutor will support you in the development, progress and completion of your project. However, you will manage your own learning in preparing two assessment items. It is an example of the assessment as learning approach.

Learning activities in this course will involve:
- Outlining contemporary issues and contexts in education
- Summarising, authenticating and reconstructing assumptions about current and new education policy
- Mapping the learning and teaching implications of new approaches to policy and practice
- Reporting defensible positions about current and new issues and contexts in education
- Leading peer discussion about curriculum, teaching and assessment policies and practices
- Modelling principles of problem-based and team learning approaches
- Recommending solutions to educational problems
- Planning for educational change as an informed professional
- Evaluating personal-professional learning about education in creative and innovative ways.

Course Description
In this course you will focus on contemporary and emerging trends and ideas in education. Using a problem-based learning
approach, you will apply educational ideas in creative and practical ways to explore strengths and shortcomings of approaches to educational policy and practice. Research and practical expertise about learning, teaching and policy will be used to investigate and analyse assumptions so as to extend your knowledge of curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and educational policy. By focusing on recent topical initiatives and future trends in education, this course enhances your professional skills and attributes as a competent, knowledgeable and active educational professional.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives/Learning Outcomes/Capability Development</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Explain the possibilities and limitations of some current education policies and practices</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Apply the principles of problem-based learning in a professional team</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Investigate with peers in researching future directions in education</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Interpret and analyse rationales for innovative educational practices</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Appraise professional debates and defend ideas in an informed way</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Plan for educational change in an informed, creative and supportive way as part of a professional team.</td>
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</table>

You will be assessed on your development of the following program learning outcomes in this course:

- Develop and apply theoretical and practical knowledge and skills to your professional practice and development in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment
- Critically analyse, synthesise and reflect on educational policy and practice in both local and international contexts
• Demonstrate creativity, critical thinking and innovation when identifying and solving problems in diverse educational contexts
• Communicate using a range of formats and strategies to audiences within and external to the discipline of education.
• Work with others in a range of roles and contexts, demonstrating cultural, environmental and social awareness and ethical and reflective practice
• Apply initiative and judgment in planning, problem solving and decision making to enhance your practice and continuing professional development.

2. **Examples from Deakin University**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Learning Theory and Practice in International Education</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="https://www.deakin.edu.au/courses/unit?unit=EEG702">https://www.deakin.edu.au/courses/unit?unit=EEG702</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Formative and Summative Assessments</th>
<th>Assessment 1 - Essay: A critical analysis of theory and practice in contemporary international education contexts (2500 words) - 50%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment 1 - Essay: A critical analysis of theory and practice in contemporary international education contexts (2500 words) - 50%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will critically analyse how contemporary practices in international educational classrooms and contexts are informed by current learning theories. They will demonstrate a critical understanding of the changing nature of professionalism in the international context.</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Assessment 2 - Essay: A theorised philosophy and plan for effective teaching in the international context (2500 words) - 50%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment 2 - Essay: A theorised philosophy and plan for effective teaching in the international context (2500 words) - 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will develop and present a professional philosophy and teaching plan that are appropriately analysed and theorised for the international context. They will link theory and practice and provide a well-researched argument that shows how the plan will improve student learning outcomes.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The internationalisation of education necessitates that professional educators rethink their approaches to professional learning. Professional learning takes place within contexts of cultural and educational diversity in which educators negotiate their work and pedagogical practices.

This unit will critically explore the changing nature of professionalism in a range of international educational contexts. Students will critically reflect on their own knowledge and practices in the light of current learning theories and contemporary practices in international educational classrooms and contexts. The unit will require students to investigate the implications of the rising expectations on teachers that require them to be learners, researchers and networkers, implementing research based policy and practice within international education contexts and teacher labour markets.

The unit draws on comparative sociology to theorise professionalization and educational practices that are emerging from global educational markets, for example IBO. It will require students to analyse and theorize about teachers' professional learning needs in international contexts, apply these learnings to their own practices and relate these to student learning outcomes.

**Social Contexts of Education**
https://www.deakin.edu.au/courses/unit?unit=ETP102

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Formative and Summative Assessments</th>
<th>Assessment 1 - Sociological imagination narrative (2000 words) - 50%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment 2 - Analysis of life in a school (2000 words) - 50%</td>
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</table>

This unit introduces students to some of the key social and political contexts of education in contemporary Australian society. The notion of ‘context’ will be unpacked at the local, school, national and global levels. The unit introduces some of the key conceptual
tools of the field of sociology of education, such as ‘sociological imagination’ and ‘hidden curriculum’. Through a sociological lens, students will reflect upon the relationship between individuals and educational settings and the ways in which individuals’ cultural and social backgrounds shape the experience of education. They will examine and explore how education and schools might mediate and/or redress forms of social inclusion and marginalization by focusing on particular social issues that are pertinent in twenty-first century Australian society. Students undertake a 5 day professional experience placement in this unit, in which they will collect evidence about how social contexts of education shape life in schools, and make links to the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) standards, in particular standard 1.

**Perspectives On Learning and Teachers’ Work**

https://www.deakin.edu.au/courses/unit?unit=ETP101

| Types of Formative and Summative Assessments | Assessment 1 - Reflective Response (1600 words) - 40%  
|                                           | Assessment 2 - Analytical Essay (2400 words) - 60% |

**Content**

This unit introduces students to the nature of learning, teaching and the teaching profession. It considers major theoretical approaches to learning which will enable a critical perspective on the complexities of teaching.

As students transition toward becoming a teacher, they will consider how assumptions and beliefs associated with learning and teaching translate to the classroom. The unit will require students to individually and collaboratively consider teaching and learning within the context of the broader purposes of schooling. Students will be introduced to the Professional Portfolio where they will begin to collect evidence of their on-going professional learning. Students are introduced to aspects of professional experience and make links to the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) standards. Through observation and reflection
students will consider how these standards may guide classroom practice.

**Literature for Children and Young Adults**
https://www.deakin.edu.au/courses/unit?unit=ALL153

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Formative and Summative Assessments</th>
<th>Assessment 1 (Individual) Essay - (1400 words or equivalent) - 35%</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment 2 (Individual or Group) - Essay (1400 words or equivalent) - 35%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment 3 (Individual) - Test (1200 words or equivalent) - 30%</td>
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**Content**
Children learn about themselves and others from their families, their educational settings and from texts – the books, films and other media – they consume. Our focus in this unit is on how children’s texts position their readers, paying attention to the narrative strategies they use and the ideologies they promote. The unit provides an overview of children’s literature, its origins and its place within children’s culture and socialising practices. It engages with a wide range of genres and texts (picture book, novel, and screen) from a variety of cultural traditions. This first year unit introduces students to key concepts essential to the analysis of children’s texts.

**Visions of Australia: Time and Space From 1700 to 2010**
https://www.deakin.edu.au/courses/unit?unit=AIA105

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Formative and Summative Assessments</th>
<th>Assessment 1 (Individual) - Online/class exercises (1000 words) - 30%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment 2 (Individual) - Essay (1500 words) - 35%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment 3 (Individual) - Essay (1500 words) - 35%</td>
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</table>

**Content**
This unit in Australian Studies takes a long historical and broad geographical view of Australia. From the age of European expansion and “discovery”, it considers key moments in Australia’s history – its convict foundation, battles for territory between settlers and the indigenous population, the gold rushes, Federation, Depression, war and reconstruction, the Whitlam era of reform to
the resurgence of conservatism – and interconnects these to some vital spaces. Thus AIA105 examines how indigenous land uses were replaced by different forms of agriculture in the 19th century, defying the environmental realities of the continent; how Melbourne became one of the great Victorian cities in the 1880s; how suburbs emerged along consumerism and gendered domestic ideals; how the conservation movement intersected with indigenous land rights; and how Australia engaged with a globalising world in the late 20th century. Along with these transformations of space over time, went different visions of Australia – as a yeoman democracy, as the workingman’s paradise, as the suburban dream, the lucky country and as a reconciled land of diversity. How and why these changes occurred will be explored through classes, readings, field work and online in a rich mix of text, visual materials and applied learnings.

**Primary Science Education 1**
https://www.deakin.edu.au/courses/unit?unit=EES245

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Formative and Summative Assessments</th>
<th>Assessment 1 (Individual) - Research Report (2000 words) - 50%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment 2 (Individual) - Lesson Plan (1200 words or equivalent) - 30%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment 3 (Individual) - Seminar Tasks (800 words or equivalent) - 20%</td>
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</table>

**Content**

This unit introduces students to contemporary principles and issues in the teaching of science, and extends their understandings and critical appreciation of science and its importance in primary school education. The unit will consist of content sequences designed to support students learning to clarify their own understandings of the nature of science and their own dispositions towards science learning, and to plan and implement effective teaching sequences. Engagement with children in small group teaching situations will occur at points designed to support and
extend their understandings and skills in planning and teaching science.

The content will include:

Key concepts in science drawn from physical, chemical, biological and earth sciences; investigative processes in science; and approaches to supporting students learn these concepts at different stages of primary schooling.

Components of contemporary Australian science curricula and how these can be interwoven to design activity sequences that lead to quality learning in science.

Science for a sustainable future; socially responsible scientific literacy; science-society-technology-environment interactions.

Contemporary theories of learning in science including constructivist and conceptual change perspectives; the role of representation and modeling; scientific reasoning; and the nature of science.

| Planning and Assessment with Diverse Learners | https://www.deakin.edu.au/courses/unit?unit=EEE752 |
| Types of Formative and Summative Assessments | Assessment 1 - Articulation of Practice: Text Analysis (2500 words equivalent) - 50% |
| | Assessment 2 - Designing, Planning and Assessment in a Learning Sequence (2500 words) - 50% |
| Content | Students will investigate contemporary issues in teaching, assessment and curriculum development. They will consider and develop pedagogical approaches and curriculum perspectives to address the learning needs of a diverse range of students with particular attention to culturally diverse learners including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) learners. |

Planning for Learning in Professional Experience
https://www.deakin.edu.au/courses/unit?unit=EPR731
| Types of Formative and Summative Assessments | Assessment 1 - Planning for managing learning - document analysis (2000 words) - 40%
Assessment 2 - Literature review and reflective narrative (3000 words) - 60%

| Content | This unit focuses on exploring learners in context. Over the trimester, Preservice Teachers will examine their own learning processes to develop skills in becoming a reflective practitioner. Preservice Teachers will develop an awareness of the importance of inclusive practices required in early years, primary and secondary classrooms and learning environments, staff rooms, and broader learning communities. Preservice Teachers will take an inquiry approach to investigate understandings of learning in early years and school settings. They will consider cultural practices and begin to understand how to use their knowledge of and relationships with learners to build meaningful learning experiences which positively impact learner outcomes. They will begin to develop the skills of planning, teaching and evaluating learning with individuals and groups of learners. Preservice Teachers will begin to understand curriculum as policy and the theories that underpin this. Preservice Teachers will begin to formulate their understanding of pedagogy as central to effective teaching and learning and the educational theories that inform their emerging pedagogical stance. |

| Reflecting On Practice in Professional Experience | https://www.deakin.edu.au/courses/unit?unit=EPR733

| Types of Formative and Summative Assessments | Assessment 1 - Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA): Deakin Authentic Teaching Assessment (ATA) (5400 words) - 90%
Assessment 2 - Professional Experience Reflection (600 word equivalent) - 10%

| Content | This unit is a capstone experience where preservice teachers examine teachers’ work and align these practices to the relevant professional standards. Using the skills of inquiry required by a |
teacher-researcher to gather evidence, document, analyse and reflect on practice. Preservice teachers will independently investigate and examine the role of the teacher and professional standards in early years/primary/secondary contexts.

Preservice teachers will select key teaching, learning and assessment artefacts and build their professional portfolio to evidence impact on learning with a focus on assessment. The unit requires critical reflection in and on the professional practice of teaching through critical engagement in teacher-research, professional learning and communication with members of the profession and the wider school community and/or early years setting.

**Literacy and Numeracy Across the Curriculum**
https://www.deakin.edu.au/courses/unit?unit=EXC725

| Types of Formative and Summative Assessments | Assessment 1: (Individual) - Online learning portfolio consisting of a number of written pieces in response to tasks detailed on the CloudDeakin site (3000 words) - 60%

|   | Assessment 2: (Individual) - A Cross-Curriculum Understanding of Teaching Literacy - 40%

| Content | This unit will enable students to have a clear understanding of the nature of numeracy and literacy. It emphasises that numeracy encompasses not only mathematical concepts and skills (e.g. numerical, spatial, graphical, statistical and algebraic), but also mathematical thinking, general thinking skills, problem solving strategies and the context within which these concepts and skills are to be applied. It features language and literacy as social constructs and addresses theories of reading and writing processes; oral language and its importance in learning; teacher talk and its role in student learning; and second language learning and the second language learner.

Teaching, learning and assessment materials from a literacy and numeracy perspective will be critically evaluated, including an
examination of the language of texts and genres across different curriculum areas. Students will develop teaching strategies to discern and respond to the inherent literacy and numeracy demands and opportunities across the curriculum.

In addition, students will also identify and address the numeracy and literacy demands on teachers in their professional lives in areas such as planning, timetabling, assessment and reporting, and their role in developing a whole school approach to literacy and numeracy.