Learning to Teach in an Unfamiliar Culture

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Master of Teaching and Learning degree
University of Canterbury, Christchurch,
New Zealand

January 2010
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Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the following people whose positive support and advice made the journey of this thesis possible.

Thank you to my two wise women Dr Susan Lovett and Dr Jane Abbiss for your invaluable advice, oversight, encouragement and time. I have been fortunate to have worked with mentors who have insightfully guided, questioned, challenged, and encouraged me over the duration of this project.

Thank you to the six participants in this study who so generously and openly shared their experiences with me.

Thank you to Ronnie for the encouragement of our coffee time discussions, and the sharing of writing journeys.

Thank you to Margaret for the assistance with the transcripts and formatting.

Thank you to Tony for the patience of nights, weekends and holidays shared with my computer and for your unfailing support as I travelled in unfamiliar territory.
Abstract

Research both in New Zealand and internationally suggests that a culturally and linguistically diverse school population needs a similarly diverse teacher population. Limited attention has been given to the Initial Teacher Education experience of international postgraduate students whose own education was linguistically and culturally different to that of New Zealand students. Their voices are often unheard and the special learning needs of these students are often unacknowledged.

This qualitative study is based on narrative inquiry. It presents case studies of six participants from six different countries, languages and cultures who had undertaken ITE study with the same provider. Data sources include semi-structured interviews and written material which included a programme assignment and a reflection journal.

The findings of this study point to challenges faced by ITE students from other languages and cultures. Tensions created by language difficulties, new pedagogies, cultural challenges and a new school culture led to feelings, at times, of disorientation, heightened “otherness” and unease. Students who are crossing the border between one culture and pedagogical belief system to another require specific support. The introduction of a Foundation Course and a Support Group, modelling of good practice by ITE lecturers using a variety of interactive teaching strategies and targeted reflective practices are suggested. Despite difficulties this study did however, find evidence of students developing new understandings about teaching and learning.

The findings carry implications for the content, delivery and pedagogy of Initial Teacher Education programmes. In a time of teacher shortages, changing demographics in schools and the changing nature of university-based ITE it is important that the assumption that one size fits all in ITE all needs to be put aside. From the perspectives of social justice and acceptance of diversity it is timely to pay attention in ITE to the learning of students from other languages and cultures. This study suggests ways of moving towards this goal.
Glossary of terms

**First language** – the language learned as a child in one’s homeland.

**ITE – Initial Teacher Education** – education in learning to be a teacher.

**Pre-service teacher education** – as above – education in learning to be a teacher.

**Grad. Dip. Secondary – Graduate Diploma in Secondary teaching** – Teaching qualification for those that have an undergraduate degree, awarded after a successful year of study in ITE. There are 2 further years of teaching before full registration.

**Grounded theory** – a researcher seeks interpretation of ideas after, not before, data has been collected and studied.

**IT** – Information technology.

**Ka Hikitia** – Managing for Success is the Ministry of Education’s approach to improve the performance of the education system for and with Māori. It is a key aspect of having a quality education system where students are succeeding and achieving.

**Migrant teachers** – teachers from other countries who have migrated to New Zealand

**Narrative inquiry** – the process of gathering information for the purpose of research through storytelling.

**NESB** – Non-English speaking backgrounds.

**OLC - Other Language and Culture** – students from “other” (non-New Zealand) languages and cultures

**Pre-service teachers / Student teachers** – students who are learning to be teachers

**Teaching Practice / Practicum / TP** – time spent in schools to practise the skills of teaching with the guidance of a mentoring teacher.

**Te Mana Korero** – a programme developed by the Ministry of Education to help raise teachers’ awareness of the need for high expectations for students, the need to engage students in learning, particularly Māori students and that underpinning effective teaching is the quality of the relationship between the teacher and student.

**Tikanga** – Maori customs and traditions.

**UC** – University of Canterbury.
Chapter One: Introduction

The experiences of students from non-English speaking backgrounds in Initial Teacher Education in New Zealand are neither well documented nor well understood. This research study explores the experience of a group of six students at the University of Canterbury, College of Education, whose own education has been outside New Zealand in other linguistic, pedagogical and cultural environments. I wanted to hear their stories of the experiences, both before and during Initial Teacher Education (ITE), that shaped their perceptions of teaching and learning. Perspectives discerned by listening to their “interlapping” narratives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) provided an understanding of the needs of this group in ITE. My study investigates the challenges faced in ITE learning by these students. It identifies ways by which an ITE programme can more effectively support and promote understanding about learning and teaching for students whose previous education is in a different language and culture.

This chapter lays the foundations of this research study. It includes a review of relevant research studies to place my study in the context of the thinking of others and the research questions used to guide my inquiry. The chapter concludes with an overview of the thesis structure to map the pathway of my study.

Rationale

The experiences of those who enter ITE programmes in a new country, language and culture deserve an audience for a number of reasons.

Focus on Initial Teacher Education: ITE is an area that has come under increasing focus and critique both nationally, in New Zealand and internationally. In 2004–05 the Ministry of Education and New Zealand Teachers Council established a wide review into current ITE research. The study on Initial Teacher Education Policy and Practice (Cameron & Baker, 2004) identified gaps in the ITE research literature in New Zealand. It called for more demographic information on student teachers, for more research on their prior academic achievements and their approaches to learning.

It would seem that gaps exist in knowledge and understanding of OLC (Other Language and Culture) students’ needs and experiences of secondary ITE in New Zealand. There has been
little research documentation of basic demographic information about those selected for secondary school ITE programmes (Kane, 2005). Baker and Whatman (1999) analysed the demographic makeup of 120 pre-service secondary teachers at the Wellington College of Education. Age, gender, qualifications and previous work experience were surveyed but ethnicity was not a factor taken into consideration. No reason was given for this. A study by Hope (2004) on students in a New Zealand university ITE programme showed that 28% of the intake did not necessarily have their education in New Zealand. This is a particular group of a sufficient enough size to warrant investigation.

A slowly increasing number of people who have made the decision to enter Initial Secondary Teacher Education at the University of Canterbury, College of Education reflect the increasing racially and culturally diverse New Zealand population patterns. As a teacher educator whose classes include ITE students from other languages and cultures, I have taken a particular interest in their experiences and living stories as they learn to be a teacher. Therefore I have a real interest in investigating how these student teachers learn to teach in an unfamiliar culture and how their viewpoints proffer another lens through which to view ITE experiences.

**Demographic changes:** Population statistics show the increasing ethnic diversity of New Zealand society. In the 2006 census, 23% of young people under the age of 18 identified as being of an ethnicity that was neither Maori nor New Zealand European. According to Ministry of Education statistics (Ministry of Education, 2009), Asian students, mainly from Korea, Japan, China and Thailand, made up 8.2% of the school population and Pacific nation’s students made up 8.7%. The number of fee-paying international students in New Zealand schools in 2009 was 9,775. (Ministry of Education, 2009). A case in particular that illustrates the changing school demographics is Selwyn College in Auckland which had a student population in 1989 that was 81% European. In 1998, this changed to 44% European with students from 57 different ethnic groups (White & Gray, 1999).

In contrast, traditionally, the racial makeup of New Zealand teachers has been predominantly monocultural and monolingual – reflecting the dominant European-pakeha culture. It is of relevant interest that, at the College of Education in which this study was conducted, specific statistics have not been kept of the numbers of OLC (Other Language and Culture) students or their places of origin. This may be seen as indicative of the lack of any need, at least at an
administrative level, to recognise a small group of ITE students as being a particular group worthy of monitoring.

**Benefits of diverse teachers:** Research both in New Zealand and internationally suggests that a culturally and linguistically diverse school population needs a similarly diverse teacher population. The 2005 Ministry of Education report on Initial Teacher Education Policy and Practice (Kane, 2005) states the importance for student learning engagement of contexts and settings which show positive recognition of the cultural background of each student. A recent New Zealand research study by Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai, and Richardson (2003) shows the importance for learning, of a coherency between a student’s educational context and their social and cultural background. As a way of emphasising and illustrating the importance of making learning meaningful for Maori students in New Zealand classrooms, the study employs the Maori concept of Manaakingitanga – “care for students as culturally located human beings” (Bishop et al., 2003, p.19). Such a concept can be seen as important for students from all cultures and having teachers who are already familiar with the cultures of international students is a step towards this.

Other studies also show that having OLC teachers helps minority students adapt to the new culture (Beynon & Toohey, 1991; Boyer & Hollins, 1999) and, further, that all students benefit from working with teachers from diverse cultural backgrounds (Banks & Banks, 1989; Santoro, 2007). Moreover, OLC teachers are seen to cater for the learning needs not only of culturally diverse students but also mainstream students who will gain wider perspectives for the future as future rich global citizens (Loorpārā, Taite, Yates, & Meyer, 2006). A pedagogical approach that values cultural and linguistic diversity would benefit all students—“linguistically and cognitively, as well as providing preparation for citizenship” in the interconnected world of the future (New London Group, 1996, p.3).

We live in a global and shrinking world that is characterised by the speed of access to ideas, shortening international travel times, instant news coverage, instant “twitter” and social IT networking, and rapidly increasing knowledge bases. It can be argued that to prepare students for life in a diverse world, New Zealand schools need racially and culturally diverse teachers who parallel the growing variety of ethnicities in their classrooms. Diversity and difference is “central to classroom endeavour and central to a focus on quality teaching in Aotearoa New
Zealand” (Alton-Lee, 2003, p.3). Yet there is little New Zealand research into diversity in ITE students.

**Attending to difference:** Most New Zealand based research into ITE has focused on investigations and evaluations of the experiences of students who are typically assumed to be New Zealand educated, English speaking, Pakeha New Zealanders (Kane, 2005). The voice of “the other” is not always featured. Gathering the perspectives of OLC students in an ITE programme is intended to give another lens through which to view ITE. Allard & Santoro (2004) speak of how by seeking viewpoints of non-mainstream groups we “privilege the importance of attending to difference” (p.15). Minorities become contributors to our knowledge because they bring different experiences, backgrounds, beliefs. The perspectives of a non-mainstream, largely unresearched group of ITE students in this study provide a different lens through which to view ITE in New Zealand.

**Related Research Literature**

**The experiences of OLC students in education:** There is international interest in the lived experience of being a teacher in another culture, language and location. Countries which have sizeable immigrant populations such as Canada, Israel, Australia and Russia, have initiated studies that focus on participants who have had previous teaching experience in their home country before immigrating to a new location. Examples are Phillion (2003) in Canada, Ng, (2004) in USA, and Remennick (2002) and Elbaz-Luwisch (1997) in Israel. In Australia, Cruickshank (2004) found that students from ethnic minority backgrounds were under-represented in teaching education programmes and in the teaching profession. He reported a lack of research into what constitutes effective teacher education programmes in Australia for people from other cultures and ethnicities. His study identified issues faced by overseas-trained teachers from 27 different language and ethnic backgrounds as they developed their qualifications to gain Australian teacher accreditation. Each of these international studies reveals challenges to learning for people intending to become teachers in other cultures.

Other international studies point to a lack of understanding of the perspectives of OLC students. For example, in England, related studies in teaching non-English speakers in Information Technology (IT) skills, (Streeter, 2002; Whitehead and Taylor, 1999), identified
the need for more support for OLC students not only with language skills but also with socio-cultural adjustment. Burns (1991) in a comparison study found that compared to local students the overseas group mainly from Singapore, Malaysia and China had significantly greater difficulties adjusting to academic requirements and had significantly higher stress indicators. In their study with OLC university students in Australia, Robertson, Line, Jones and Thomas (2000) argue that identifying the difficulties faced is not enough. To prevent the establishment of a deficit model for OLC tertiary students, they investigated practical strategies academic staff could use to meet the teaching and learning expectations of international students.

A few New Zealand studies have sought to identify the challenges and barriers to learning in a new environment for OLC students in primary ITE and in secondary schools. Dickie (2000) and Fa’afaoi and Fletcher (2001), identify the linguistic and social challenges facing students from Pacific Island backgrounds in primary ITE. Lo (1998) and Lewis (1998) both found dissatisfaction with the language support given to NESB students in secondary schools. Kim (2006) investigated ten Korean adolescent students and found language, cultural and social stress left students feeling marginalised. Studies by Kennedy and Dewar (1997) and Barnard (1998) feature some of the implications of this lack of support and how ESOL programme changes can be made in schools to meet identified student needs. At New Zealand tertiary level, some research studies have focused on identifying learning difficulties for students from Asian countries. Working with Vietnamese students, Mack (2004) found evidence that suggested inadequate learning support. Scheyvens, Wild and Overton (2003) found insufficient attention had been given to identify the barriers to learning in a university Geography Department faced by international students.

In the context of New Zealand ITE for secondary school teachers, there has been little investigation into the perspectives of OLC students regarding the challenges they face and what could be done to support them. Two studies, by Syme and Nicholson (2005) and Haworth (2004), found that significant challenges were faced by OLC students, that few support scaffolds were provided and that more understanding of students’ perspectives was required. There are different ways of making meaning and it is timely to hear the standpoint of OLC students in an ITE programme as an alternative voice to that of mainstream New Zealand-born students.
Role of past experience: There has been much research interest in the role that prior experience and existing knowledge plays in ITE. One does not start the journey of learning to be a teacher from a blank slate. Britzman (1991) purports, “the story of learning to teach begins actually much earlier than the time one first decides to become a teacher ... [ITE students] bring to teacher education their educational biography and some well-worn and commonsensical images of the teacher’s work” (p.3). Investigation into the lives of teachers, their biography and the influence this has on teacher identity and on their practice as teachers is the interest of several other studies (Britzman, 1986; Elbaz-Luwisch, 2001; Florio-Ruane, 2001; Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996; Knowles, 1992). These studies examine the influence of the formative social, cultural, political and educational environment on new learning. Cole (1991), quoted in Ebbs (1997), states that, “it has become increasingly less acceptable, and recognized as less meaningful, to study teachers without their ‘texts’ - be they personal or social texts” (p.185). This perspective claims that people experience and understand their lives based on the socially constructed realities in which they are immersed (Gergen, 2000). Other researchers argue that teacher thinking or actions cannot be separated from their personal socio-historical past (Cole, 1991; Goodson, 1992; Knowles, 1992).

However, we are not passive recipients of the culture and beliefs in which we are raised. Social psychological theories such as Mead (1956), argue that we are active creators of our understandings. Learners select and transform information, constructing new ideas or concepts based upon their existing knowledge (Bruner, 1974). This views the beliefs of learners as being shaped by their world through social interactions with others (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986; Vygotsky, 1986). In terms of OLC students in ITE, the view that new learning is sifted through the mesh of beliefs already constructed, gives a powerful influence to existing understandings (Glaserfeld, 1984; Resnick, 1983). ITE students can be seen as coming to new ideas about teaching and learning with pre-formed conceptions but the likelihood of these being open to change has received differing research findings.

A pessimistic view sees ITE as a veneer. Despite the best intentions of an ITE programme “training in pedagogy does not seem to fundamentally alter earlier ideas about teaching” Lortie (1975). Kagan (1992) found that empirical studies showed beliefs are deeply entrenched, stable and resistant to change. Furthermore, because existing beliefs acted as
filters for new understandings, learners tended to translate what was presented to them according to their own pedagogical prior understanding. Several studies question the long term effect of learning new pedagogies in ITE. Some researchers claim that once a student is faced by the daily challenges of teaching in their own classroom they will revert to what they are familiar with from their past (Borko & Putnam, 1995; Bullough, 1994; Calderhead & Robinson, 1991; Ethell & McMenimen, 2002; Haworth, 1998; Lortie, 1975; Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon, 1998).

Other studies provide an alternative view. Korthagen & Kessels (1999) argue that teacher education can have a significant impact on teachers’ long-term professional development provided opportunity is given to probe their existing understandings. Nettle (1998) was able to affirm the existence of both stability and change in ITE learners’ beliefs. This would link with a post-modern view of knowledge as not static, but able to move and change, depending on language, location and time. Similarly, the research of Haworth (1998) with four Asian ITE students in New Zealand found some evidence of change. In Haworth’s study, although perceptions in new learning situations were “subconsciously overlaid with the values and beliefs from their prior learning experiences”, she found as time went by that “perceptions increasingly revealed efforts to generate strategies which could assist the subjects in effecting their new roles” (p.3). To extend these findings from two New Zealand studies, attention to the nature of learning change in ITE and how to support it warrants further investigation.

**Barriers and Challenges to Learning:** Studies in Australia, Peeler & Jane (2005), in Canada, Ovenall-Carter (2003) and in Israel, Remennick (2002), argue that because teaching is firmly located within local culture, thinking and language, there is a need for OLC students to understand the social elements of learning and teaching within local contexts. Biographical studies of beginning teachers record that early teaching concerns involve frustration, tension, shock, anxiety and alienation from their work and learning (Haritos, 2004; Tennant, 2007; Wideen et al., 1998). OLC students in ITE face additional challenges. The focus of studies by Dickie (2000) and Fa’afaoi and Fletcher (2001), of Pacific nation students found barriers included social and cultural factors – feeling reluctant to speak out in a class or group discussion and reluctance to approach lecturers to ask for guidance. Others were language based – difficulties with understanding and writing assignments. Other barriers arose from
cultural and social factors outside the College such as time demands and obligations to family, work, community and church affiliations.

Difficulties with understanding colloquial language and feelings of isolation scored highest in problems ranked by Asian international students in a study at an Australian university (Robertson, Line, Jones & Thomas, 2000). Findings were similar for Asian ITE students in New Zealand (Haworth, 1998), and with international tertiary students in England (Whitehead & Taylor, 1999). However, there are very few studies with OLC student experience in secondary teacher ITE available in New Zealand that have addressed the causes of similar feelings of unease, discomfort and dislocation and what measures could be taken to ameliorate them.

**Facilitation and Support of Learning:** There is agreement in many studies of the need for specific support for OLC students in tertiary education. Streeter (2002) advocates the need for an induction period for OLC students in ITE, including informal placement in schools to observe new styles of teaching. She also advocates language assistance such as identifying key teacher classroom phrases and tutorial support with problems encountered. Mack (2004) found little learning support for Vietnamese students in New Zealand universities and suggests support from culture specific webpages and a buddy system. Cruickshank (2004) also advocates support in the form of an orientation class to familiarise OLC learners’ with new pedagogies and new language before the course begins. He also suggests the provision of mentoring from teachers or from course graduates.

Learning can be promoted by providing challenge. To eliminate all discomfort, ambiguity and tension from learning would not create better learning. To a certain extent all learners need to work with these feelings to generate new understandings. Britzman (1991) talks of “embracing displacement” (p.64). Some studies argue the necessity in ITE of using direct strategies to identify and challenge existing beliefs (Knowles, 1993; Wolfe, Murray & Phillips, 1992). Other studies, (Allard & Santoro, 2004; Gill, Ashton, & Algina, 2004; Gupta, 1995) point to a need for ITE to focus on cognitive change – fostering new understandings of teaching and learning. If research findings indicate a need for catering for specific learning needs and challenges for OLC students then there is also a need for research into effective
ways in ITE of achieving cognitive changes. This would seem to have had little attention in New Zealand studies.

One way suggested in the literature to support cognitive challenge for OLC students is by fostering reflective practice (Borko & Putnam, 1998; Kane, 2003). Reflective practice can be used for exploring and understanding reasons for action or belief, comparing ideas with what is already known and planning future actions (Schon, 1991). Such practice is necessary for ITE students because it heightens and focuses awareness that is not always explicit or obvious (Ethell & McMenimen, 2002). Guerra & Nelson (2009) advocate the encouragement of reflective practice with a focus on the interface of new and old beliefs to aid awareness of idea development for OLC students.

With increased interest in the efficacy of technological advances to support learning (Otrei-Cass, Forret & Taylor, 2009), researchers suggest this reflection could utilise on-line interactive reflection communities such as blogs and wikis which are playing an increasing role in supporting the sharing of learning (Biesenbacq-Lucas, 2003; Donaghy, McGee, Yates, & Ussher, 2003; Phelps & Ellis, 2003). Research suggests that wider ways of course delivery such as the use of technology and e-learning may assist OLC students in learning new language skills also. Liaw (2003) found that Taiwanese ITE language teachers obtained valuable information in interpersonal, socio-cultural, pedagogical, language learning issues through their course use of cross-cultural email correspondence.

Although research into primary and secondary school student learning has shown the importance of positive student-teacher relationships for learning, there has been no attempt to look at this in ITE. Bishop et al. (2003) showed the importance in schools of teachers caring for students and valuing the student’s culture. In a study based on over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement and studying effective teachers from around the world, Hattie (2009) found that the power of positive teacher-student relationships was critical for learning to occur in schools. The emotional and affective component of teaching has been a focus of recent attention (Gibbs, 2007; Lang, 2007) but a gap exists to see if this holds true in ITE for OLC students.
**Teacher Identity:** There is a paucity of research into how student teachers who move between cultures and pedagogies build teacher identities. Through social interactions with others, ideas are gradually constructed (Vygotsky, 1986). This may apply to constructs of identity also. The concept of self is interwoven with the society and culture to which we belong (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). This carries significance for OLC students who cross borders geographically and cognitively, and face challenge and change around what they once felt was certain. How OLC learners negotiate their identity within a new social context warrants investigation.

However, certainty is not a goal for new learners. “Ambiguity is the warp of life, not something to be eliminated. Accept ambiguity and allow for learning along the way” (Bateson, 1994, cited in Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p.235). Learning and identity undergo on-going construction. My study will investigate learning in ITE within these existing research frameworks from the perspective of OLC students as they construct their identities of themselves as future New Zealand teachers.

It is within the context of these research studies that I have framed my research questions.

**Research Questions**

I knew from my reading of the literature and from my experience as a teacher educator working with ITE students from other languages and cultures in a one year post-graduate programme of teacher education, that the challenges of learning to become a teacher are compounded by cultural, social, linguistic and pedagogical gaps in their understanding. Teaching is placed firmly within local culture, thinking and language, so the pathway for OLC students is not a familiar one. I wished to explore the experiences of students from other languages and cultures as they learned to be teachers in a New Zealand ITE programme and to consider the implications of this exploration for a programme that aimed to support student learning. My research centres on a central, overarching question which formed the backbone and main purpose of my research and five related sub-questions.

*Main question:*

What are the experiences of students from other languages and cultures in an Initial Teacher Education programme in New Zealand and what might be learned from their experiences?
Related sub-questions:

1. What aspects of previous education experiences influence their thinking about teaching and learning?

2. What can be identified in an ITE programme as either hindering or supporting their learning?

3. How have their experiences in ITE influenced their developing understandings of teaching and learning in New Zealand secondary schools?

4. What could be done to support the learning of OLC students in an ITE programme in New Zealand?

5. What are the implications of the findings of this study for the ITE programme in which it was conducted and for other ITE programmes?

Thesis Overview

To map the structure of the thesis as a whole I provide an outline of the six chapters.

Chapter 1: This chapter sets the foundation for the thesis. Despite the growing cultural diversity of students in secondary school classrooms there seems to be an invisibility of OLC students in both international and New Zealand research into ITE. My research questions are designed to guide my exploration of the social, pedagogical and cognitive factors that contribute to the success of OLC students in ITE or that create challenges to their learning.

Chapter 2: In this chapter I give an explanation of my choice of methodology, the data collection methods and discuss associated issues.

Chapter 3: This chapter focuses on my first research sub-question. I introduce the participants' personal stories of their lives and experiences before coming to ITE in order to throw light on aspects of their previous education experiences that may have influenced their thinking about teaching and learning.
Chapter 4: This chapter presents the findings relating to second and third research sub-questions. I describe the participants’ expectations of the programme and the barriers and challenges to learning that they faced. Despite the challenges it is possible to show that learning shifts did occur.

Chapter 5: This chapter presents findings relevant to my fourth research sub-question. I focus on findings that identify ways an ITE programme can support and facilitate learning for OLC students.

Chapter 6: I bring the study to a close and focus on my fifth research sub-question, with a discussion of the implications the findings of this study have for ITE programme design and pedagogy.
Chapter 2: Methodology

Overview

Purposeful investigation of an idea and the desire to make a difference to our understanding of our world is what prompts research. In this chapter I explain the process of my investigation, the methods of data collection and the issues faced in my investigation. I begin with the reasons for my choice of qualitative research methodology based on narrative inquiry and structured as a case study, linking this to my own epistemological stance. I then explain the methods I used to gather data and my own position as teacher-researcher within the ITE programme of this study. The chapter concludes with a discussion of issues of trustworthiness and ethical considerations involved with the research.

Qualitative Research Methodology

Qualitative research studies are conducted in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of the participants’ lived experiences in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). According to Mutch (2005), “qualitative research aims to uncover the lived reality or constructed meanings of the research participants” (p.43). Such research is phenomenological, because rather than work with what is purely able to be seen, measured, or directly observed, the researcher probes behind and within the individual’s conscious experience of their lives, to both describe and understand “the meaning of events and interactions of ordinary people in particular situations” (Bogdan & Bilken, 1998, p.24). The aim is therefore to understand the participant’s point of view. My research role is an attempt to describe the underlying structure of the phenomenon of my participants’ experiences based on my use of emerging internal themes, discovered not predetermined (Marshall & Rossman, 1995).

Qualitative researchers seek evolving understanding of what is created by human interactions, to mediate for others an interpretation of reality that may be useful for increasing our understanding of human experience. Many qualitative studies work with grounded theory, which means that the collection of data, using multifaceted, humanistic methods, precedes the researcher’s seeking to interpret them (Strauss & Corbin, 1997). This research is a grounded
study in the sense that it will seek to interpret and understand, after gathering the participants’ perspectives and stories, not before.

I do not claim to be a detached observer revealing what might be considered an already existing truth or pre-determined variables. Rather, my conception of knowledge and understanding is one of shared, evolving construction. I am interested in finding ways by which to uncover and bring to the notice of others, perspectives of those who are living in and are bound by, a particular social and cognitive learning context. Through the articulation and overlapping layers of several viewpoints I hope to help construct a shared understanding, one in which I too will have played a part both as researcher and as a co-constructor because I will both facilitate that uncovering and interpret the findings. Such a social constructivist stance leads me to choose qualitative research methodology based on a case study and narrative inquiry for my research.

**Whose voice may be heard?**

Goodson (cited in Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000) considers the gathering of the perspectives and interpretations of people in educational settings as “both significant and pertinent” as they provide ways of approaching the problem of “understanding the links between ‘personal troubles’ and ‘public issues’ ” (p.165). I anticipate that my findings will be particular and ‘personal’ but they may also inform others about a perspective not often heard.

Feminist standpoint epistemology as offered by Harding (2004) proposes a methodology that listens to the voices of participants by producing a “complex understanding of social reality” (p.11). As knowledge and power are intimately linked (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2004, p.71) it may be that “those who are disadvantaged along lines of race, class, gender, and sexuality may be familiar with both the dominant discourse and their own position” (Harding, 2004, p.10) in the social mediation of personal experience. Considering this position the viewpoints of the “other” may be able to throw light on both the dominant social construct of ITE experience and their own.

I see a parallel with the lived experiences of my participants. Clough (2002) speaks of “turning up the volume” (p.67) on voices not audible. He questions issues to do with “who is
listening to whom, why and in whose interests?” (p.67). In researching non-mainstream voices I am in “receipt of privileged information” (Smith, 1999, p.176). These views need to be acknowledged and be given privilege in ITE programme planning alongside the familiar perspectives of the larger numbers of New Zealand educated ITE students.

**Narrative Inquiry**

One way of making sense of our lives is through stories. Stories uncover the “multilayered and many stranded” perspectives of personal human lives that Clandinin and Connelly (2000) consider cannot be quantified into bare facts and numerical data (p.xvii). The process of gathering information for the purpose of research through storytelling, the understanding people’s lives and experiences as lived and told stories, is known as narrative inquiry (Bateson, 1994; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Ellis & Bochner, 1996). Hearing the voices and uncovering the stories of people as they relive, explore and tell about their experience, creating “pieced together patternings” opens new vistas of understanding for those outside the experience (Geertz, cited in Clandinin & Connelly 2000, p.6).

My choice of narrative inquiry was informed by a study of existing research (see Chapter 1). Examples of research using narrative inquiry to explore teaching experiences include a Canadian study by Phillion (2003), who adopted this framework to hear the stories of five visible minority immigrant women as they began teaching in a new culture and language. Ng (2004) used narrative accounts to study three immigrant teachers who had worked in other professions before immigrating to Canada and becoming teachers. It was the powerful description used in these case studies and the respect given to the perspectives of the participants that encouraged me to adopt the same narrative inquiry.

I have used narrative inquiry within “teacher research” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Rust & Meyers, 2006). This involves intentional, critical inquiry into issues that are of interest to or have potential impact on the work and practice of the teacher-researcher. Narrative inquiry provided a way for me to explore new understandings of the lived experiences of people in the context within which I worked.
**Context: Initial Teacher Education at Canterbury University**

For 125 years, up until the year 2007, ITE was the role of the Christchurch College of Education, one of four stand-alone government funded teacher education colleges in New Zealand. Teachers for three levels of schooling were educated there – early childhood, primary and secondary. In 2007, with strong central government pressure, the College amalgamated with the University of Canterbury (UC). At the time of my research interviews all participants were currently engaged in or had graduated with the Graduate Diploma of Secondary Teacher Education which remains largely similar in 2009.

This graduate programme comprises 4 areas of course study:

(i) Education Studies (eg sociology of educational systems and educational issues)

(ii) Curriculum Studies where students learn the pedagogical strategies for effective teaching at least two teaching subjects (eg science, languages, social studies)

(iii) Professional Studies which covers the skills, ethics and management issues of the profession of teaching

(iv) Two Teaching Practices in schools providing practicum experience

The course runs for 34 weeks – 20 weeks are College-based and 14 weeks are spent in schools.

**Data Collection**

Data collection for this study relates to six participants each of whom had a story relating to learning to become a teacher.

**Case Study Structure**

Each of the participants provides a case study (Carter, 1993; Denzin, 1989; Yin, 2003). A case study is bounded research (Stake, 2003). It enables the researcher to focus on the motives and beliefs of particular persons in particular settings, which may throw light on wider issues. My decision to construct my research as a case study using the narratives of six people in one
particular institution of teacher education provides a particular view of OLC student experiences. Although these experiences have intrinsic interest in their own right, it is however, possible to learn from the particular. The findings may present implications beyond this one setting and highlight areas for further related research, providing extrinsic interest and value.

Participant Selection

At the start of my study, I was faced with an unanticipated dilemma concerning participant selection – the atypical secondary ITE intake demographics for that year. Usually the new intake of students would include a small but varied group of students from a range of non-English speaking countries. In the 2007 intake group, none of the OLC students were from Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or from Polynesia; instead they were exclusively from European countries. As it was not a typical group, I felt that to use only students from European countries would narrow the investigation focus I wanted.

My reflective diary at this time records my concerns about having a range of backgrounds and experiences if the participant range was narrow, restrictive and atypical. This forced a change from my initial plan which was to use only ITE students from the current year. My decision was to use two different groups of participants. I invited three volunteers from the current year’s intake (2007) and three further volunteer graduates of the course from the previous year (2006) who included two Asian nationalities.

Of the ten people I invited to be involved in my research study, six agreed. I received no response from the four who declined to join so I can only speculate on their decision. The three 2007 students who agreed to participate had each been present at the focus group meeting I called early in the year when I introduced the idea of my study. Two days later I spoke to each of them to invite them to join. To overcome any feelings that they might have felt they had to agree because I, a lecturer in the programme, had asked them, I asked each person to reply by email after two days consideration. I then emailed an invitation to five graduate students, three of whom replied in the affirmative. This gave me a range of six participants who had five different first languages and whose education had been in six different countries.
My participants came from two separate groups giving a range of experiences and backgrounds. The three first year teachers had graduated from the ITE course in the previous year and were now employed – two as teachers and one as a university tutor. The three student teachers were enrolled in the current ITE course. Their ages ranged from 24 to 45 years.

**Methods and Data Collection**

I wanted to use a variety of approaches and methods of data collection for this study to facilitate what Geertz calls “thick descriptions” (cited in Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2004, p.2). I chose to employ both oral and written methods of data collection in a multi-faceted approach. To this end I used:

- initial group meeting
- semi-structured interviews
- written sources

**Initial group meeting**

The purpose of this initial meeting was adapted from the idea of a focus group interview (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Neumann, 1997). Focus groups are a “distinct method of qualitative interviewing in that multiple participants are interviewed in the context of a group” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2004, p.134). The planned discussions are conducted in a permissive, non-threatening environment. The format can be used to “give voice to groups otherwise excluded from knowledge construction” and can be particularly “empowering for participants because they largely determine their level of participation” ((Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2004, p.136). In practice I adapted this to an informal meeting but with similar purposes. As my participants were from non-English speaking backgrounds, and new to the College of Education, I envisaged that an initial shared group meeting would help overcome natural uncertainty and also give linguistic support.

I called an informal meeting for OLC students enrolled in the Graduate Diploma course in Week 4 of the first teaching block. The purpose of the meeting was to focus on their particular
needs as people new to teaching in New Zealand before they went to schools on their teaching practicum. I hoped that any discussion that arose would inform my questions for the individual interviews later as from this group I planned to call for volunteers from the group at the meeting to participate in the semi-structured interviews for my research study. Although I had planned some questions and topics (Appendix 1) to shape the discussion, I was not formally collecting data and I was happy to allow the meeting find its own evolution more relevant to the participants’ needs. It became clear that, up to this point, they had not seen themselves as a particular group with particular characteristics and needs. They saw themselves as individuals newly engaged with ITE rather than as OLC students.

In my reflective notes (Appendix 2) afterwards I saw positive outcomes. Although I used very few of my planned questions, I had met some possible future participants, I had explained my research proposal which was received with interest and approval, I had paved the way for later individual interviews and I had had my first taste of some of the issues that I would meet in the study. The way was now set for my major data-collection tool – the semi-structured interviews.

**Semi-structured Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews are an important technique in qualitative research (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). They are guided conversations where the broad questions asked do not constrain the conversation, and new questions naturally arise as a result of the discussion. This is different from questionnaires and surveys which have very structured questions from which deviations are not usually made. A personal interview as a research-gathering approach seeks to create a “listening space where meaning is constructed through an interchange or co-construction of verbal viewpoints” (Miller & Crabtree, 2004, p.185). My decision to use this method was influenced by my desire to uncover the experiences of others and through interviews gather descriptive data in people’s own spoken words. I wanted to “capture the nuance and complexity of the social situation” (Janesick, 2003, p.49) of my participants in their unique experience.

I had read other relevant studies which drew on interviews as a way of gaining insight into their focus interest of teachers’ experiences. For example, Elbaz-Luwisch (1997) interviewed
8 teachers who had moved to a new country, Israel, and decided to teach in a culture different to the one in which they were educated. She was concerned with their role, the changes they lived through and their developing sense of place. The use of personal interviews empowered these women and their voices. Haworth (1998) used questionnaires and interviews to conduct case studies in New Zealand of four OLC students in their ITE study. Remennick (2002) uses the term “survival of the fittest” as the title of her study which interviewed 36 former Soviet school teachers who faced social and cultural barriers when immigrating and teaching in Israel. Peeler and Jane (2005) also used interviews to explore the journey of teachers born and trained overseas as they acquired the new social and cultural knowledge needed to teach in Australian schools. Interview data of individual experience begins to create personal understandings of the challenges faced by OLC teachers in general.

I hoped that the use of open questions in a relatively informal, relaxed discussion would help my participants feel at ease in a context of shared searching for meaning. The interviews took place in my office as it was the most convenient mutual location. Although I had prepared some questions (Appendix 3) to shape what I wanted to explore, I found that I generally let the conversation run with the unfolding stories, allowing the narrative to provoke my probing or extending questions. All interviews lasted between one and a half to two and a half hours.

I would characterise the interviews more as conversations than interviews and the unfolding stories were willingly shared. All seemed to find the time of looking back and reconsidering their experiences, attitudes and learning to be a novel but rewarding personal experience. Yet interestingly, none of the participants was interested in my offer to give them each a copy of their interview transcript to read. Their response was that their talking with me was for my research purposes and they trusted me to use the transcripts for that purpose. They were future-focused on their own learning and teaching, not my research.

**Written Data Sources**

I sought permission from the participants to include their first written Professional Studies reflection assignment after it had been assessed by their lecturers. The class assignment (Appendix 4) asked students to write in their second week at College about their existing
views on teaching and learning. My interest was in what their prior knowledge about teaching and learning was and how resistant these views might be to change or development.

One of the advantages of using this material was that it was written for another purpose, not for my research. Therefore the participants were writing for a different audience and purpose and I hoped this would provide a balance to my collected data. In addition, as the assignment was written for another audience and purpose, I knew the opinions expressed there would be free of any suspicion, always present for researchers, that the participants may have been framing their answers in ways that would please the investigator (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Although I found that the interviews gave me data to use which was more complex and in-depth, the assignments did supplement the interview responses and contributed to trustworthiness in my investigation. The use of a reflective journal can be seen as a data source as it includes observations that give meaning to other sources of data. Further it can be used as a first step in analysis – an important feature of qualitative research where data collection and analysis are not always able to be clearly discerned or separated (Janesick, 2003). I kept a reflective journal – often just informal jottings – during the research process which helped map my awareness of my standpoint and my thinking. My recorded “wakefulness” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p.185) to the fluid and evolving discoveries of my study also provided data and assisted my careful consideration of the strands of the stories that emerged.

**Positioning**

My position as researcher and teacher educator in the institution in which I am conducting the research presents tensions between having insider knowledge and authority and being a neutral observer or recorder. My viewpoints and my professional role play a contributing part. “The first step in writing responsibly about others is to acknowledge precisely this tension” (Ezzy, 2002, p.156). This can be seen in my participatory role in the interviews as I guided the conversation, decided on the aspects that needed clarification or extension and responded, as a sharing participant, to the nuances of the verbal responses and the body language and facial expression I learned to read.
Qualitative researchers are aware that "knowledge of the world they enter is partial, situated, and subjective" (Richardson, cited in Taylor and Bogdan, 1998, p.37). My epistemological stance as a social-constructivist means that I view the new understandings gained from my study as something in which I have played an active part. Rather than seeing myself as neutrally recording pre-given, unchangeable realities, my use of reflective journal jottings has helped keep transparent my awareness that the participants and I have both been involved in the process of constructing and interpreting the experiences I was investigating.

I sought to maintain reflexivity – the recognition that the process of research contains a variety of power dimensions. "Despite the sterility of the instruments, we never come innocent to a research task or a situation of events" (Clough, 2002, p.64). Throughout the study I endeavoured to remain aware of the effect of my gender, my ethnicity, my age, my own teaching experiences and pedagogical views, and my role as lecturer in the programme on my facilitative and interpretative role. It was always likely that these may have put up barriers for myself and for my students and may have coloured my interpretations. One way of foregrounding this was my use of reflexive practice tools – my reflective journal and openness to a range of interpretations.

I have found that recording my awareness of my positionality in my reflective journal as well as attempting, as I re-draft my writing, to read with a somewhat sceptical lens, has helped me become aware of any creeping layers of personal perspective leading to possible bias or assumption in writing about this investigation. I have been aware of the need for vigilance on my part to not assume that my views about co-operative and socially constructed learning should be the preferred path to learning for all cultures. On the other hand, I have also been aware that my position within the programme gave me the advantage of insight into and understanding of the nuances and particularities the participants' ITE experiences.

Above all, the stories and reflections remain those of the participants, albeit structured and interpreted by me as researcher. Telling their stories was not seen as an exploitation of their experience as indicated by the generosity of their sharing and discussion.
Trustworthiness

Benchmarks for reliable qualitative research are trustworthiness and integrity of data. (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Kvale, 1996). In qualitative research “validity has to do with description and explanation and whether or not the explanation fits the description” (Janesick, 2003, p.69). Patton (2001, p.560) makes the point that having more than one data source allows the researcher to “capture and report multiple perspectives rather than seek a singular truth”. To ensure this my study which is a case study of six varied people in the same programme, using semi-structured interviews is balanced by the contributions of written assignments from another context and by my own reflective practice.

I wished to draw on more than one source of information for my study and to examine written as well as oral material related to my research foci. To this end, I used a Professional Studies assignment and my own researcher reflective journal which tracked my thinking at each stage of the data collection process. I hoped that the material I gathered from these sources would complement, balance, and add a different perspective to the interview oral data gathered.

By using both verbal and written source material and reporting on the patterns that emerged, I have endeavoured to discuss with integrity, case studies of a particular group of people in a particular setting. The findings are mine and I offer them as one facet seen through one lens of inquiry. Hopefully they may be held in perspective by other future studies that will explore similar groups of people.

Ethical Considerations

I paid close attention in this study to ethical considerations. I wished to treat my participants at all times with consideration, respect and fairness. “Qualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world” (Stake, 2003, p.154). I paid close attention to the five clear ethical principles for a researcher that Tolich and Davidson (1999) have simplified from a variety of ethical research codes. Attention to these means that as a researcher I endeavoured to do no harm, to use voluntary participation, to ensure participants gave informed consent, to avoid any deception and to maintain confidentiality for my participants. The study was subject to
ethical and academic approval by the Christchurch College of Education Academic and Ethics Committees.

Using the College ethical consideration forms and drafting my letter of consent (see Appendix 5) allowed me to address issues of informed consent – the participants who accepted my invitation to participate in the interviews knew the purposes of the project and were given my assurances of confidentiality. Those taking part were guaranteed anonymity – real names and any possible identifying information has not been used – and they were given the option of withdrawing from the study at any stage. I also made the interview transcripts available to them if they wished.

All records remain confidential and access to data is limited to me, my supervisors and my typist transcriber. Records and data gathered have been kept in secure storage. Transcriptions of data are kept on a computer file requiring a password entry. A backup copy is kept on a DVD and stored with audio tapes and field notes in a locked study at my house. Conclusions arising from the data have only been used specifically for the purposes of this study and any related publications that may follow.

My professional role as teacher-educator I made open to all participants in the study. In bringing the ethical issues into the open with the participants and explaining my interest I hoped to facilitate a view of me as a student learning new skills. In this way I hoped to ameliorate any perceptions of lecturer power and make the experience as non-threatening as possible.

Summary

This research study takes the form of a qualitative narrative inquiry. It is structured as a case study and uses both oral and written data collection methods. The methodology affords rich description of the participants’ experiences through the telling of their stories about learning to become a teacher. I have explained my awareness of both the potential influences as well as the advantages of my position as a teacher-researcher within the programme I am investigating. I have also discussed ethical issues and issues of trustworthiness, balance and reflexivity.
In the next chapter I attempt to capture some of the detail and the drama of the realities of the lives of the research participants. I give space in turn to each of the participants to tell the story of their lives in relation to their education before they came to learn to be a teacher in Christchurch, New Zealand. I wanted to understand how their experiences before coming to ITE influenced their current thinking about teaching and learning. The stories associated with this are told in the next chapter.
Chapter 3: The People – “backward-mapping” stories

My intention in this chapter is to present the stories of the six participants about the educational experiences they saw as significant in their lives before they enrolled in the New Zealand graduate ITE course. Their perspectives related to my first research question investigating how earlier educational experiences influence the construction of understandings of teaching and learning. The participants carried these understandings with them when they came to ITE in New Zealand and began to extend their thinking about what it is to be a teacher.

My semi-structured interview questions (see Appendix 1) sought information on their early school memories, covering aspects such as their memories of their early school years, their teachers and classrooms. I asked them how they saw the role of a teacher, what the role of a learner was in their classrooms at both primary and secondary school and what they thought helped them learn then. I was interested in what characterised their experiences of teaching and learning in their formative years. We also talked about their experiences of learning in their tertiary education and what brought them to New Zealand. I was also interested in what prompted their decision to become a teacher.

The participants were people rich in life experience, all of whom made a considered, deliberate decision to be teachers. To understand their earlier education experiences I asked them to engage in “backward mapping”. This is a term used in computer technology to describe the process of creating a 2 dimensional image from a 3 dimensional one. I have adapted the term to describe the process I asked my participants to focus on as they told the stories of their own memories of school, teaching and learning, revealing some of the detail as well as the drama of lived experiences. Backward mapping defines for me the process of looking back and plotting the formative effects of previous experiences to give significance to those that have affected the way we now think, act, and choose to stand, informed as well by the context of the location in which the mapping is done.
Methods employed to convey the voices of the storytellers

It was important to me to bring the voices of my participants in their stories to the foreground. I acknowledge that I had a role too as I selected and organised the strands I discerned in their stories. However, immediately that I began to write up the findings and to use direct quotations from my participants I came up against a dilemma. The direct, unaltered transcript dialogue was characterised by fillers, pauses, repetition. As English was not the first language of the participants, but idiosyncratic English with occasional creative grammar, I debated whether, for purposes of reader clarity, to correct the transcripts. Too much amendment, however, and the voice of the speaker is lost. My decision was to take out the fillers, repetitions and use of anacoluthon but leave the syntax and grammar of the original voice as long as clarity has been preserved. Where I have omitted phrases or words for clarity or succinctness, I have indicated the gap with punctuation ... Where, for clarity, I have added words they are in [brackets].

Nodoka

Nationality: Japanese

Subject area: Music

Age: 31

Interview context: Nodoka, at the time of my interviews, was in her first year of teaching Music, and Information Technology at a city co-educational secondary school. She first came to NZ on holiday in 2000 then returned in 2002 to study for her Bachelor’s degree in music. During this time she worked to support herself on nights and weekends as she was not eligible for any study grants.

We met to have our interview in the school holidays at Nodoka’s apartment with coffee and muffins. She enjoyed the retrospective vantage point and the telling of her story which at times opened new perspectives for her.

Nodoka’s story

Memories of her schooling: The eldest child of three in her family, school began at 3 years of age for Nodoka at Kindergarten where her strongest memories are of being taught “how to drum, how to act, how to sing” but her memories of her later schooling feature strongly on
competition and assessment. "It's so competitive over there." The pressure to succeed is both academic and personal. "You have to have an examination before you go to High School. So you get sorted you see. It's sort of like Harry Potter – you get sorted." After school tuition was something most students attended because of the intense competition to achieve. "You have to be the top. I felt I had to beat my cousin so I study. I had to get the highest score. I asked my mother if I could go to After School (extra tutoring) when I was eleven." This competition she felt was her chief motivation to learn in her elementary and junior high school.

Her memories of her classroom teaching and learning were oft teacher centered learning styles. Here is an excerpt from the interview transcript.

I: (Interviewer) Can you describe what a teacher would do?

N: (Nodoka) Teacher would come to classroom and everybody have to remain silence. And teacher would say "stand up" and we stand. Everybody had to stand up exactly the same time, bow and sit down. Then the class starts and then – yeah – he would teach something – for example if it was mathematics then he would have like so many questions and questions on a question and we have to dictate things.

I: And when you say dictate do you mean copy it down?

N: Yeah, copy down, and then we have to figure out all the answers. But we not allowed ...

I: Were you allowed to talk to your neighbour about the work?

N: No. If I could have actually talked to next, like a friend, it would have been much easier, but you had to actually do it by yourself and there’s no talking between student. If you talk, you get like – warning.

Teaching and learning: Nodoka felt that a good teacher was someone with knowledge, enthusiasm and importantly – the ability to include some stories, some personality into the
teaching process. A Maths teacher she remembered favourably had a strong effect on his learners.

He just entered the classroom like – we sit straight, like you know, our spine chord was straight up. And we knew he would tell us something like interesting story as well as mathematics.

She felt a teacher could help her learn at school by “checking on me all the time” but it was parental expectations and a sense of competition that spurred her learning.

I was the eldest. I had to get the highest score as much as possible. I wanted to go to the top State school – the top. But I couldn’t and then I was very devastated because I failed the exam. I think I was fifteen. We studied so hard. I used to have like 10 cups of coffee a day just trying to memorise whole thing.

Learning involved memory. “I became very good at memorising, then I could easily forget afterwards. So that was just passing techniques. But I didn’t learn” When success and interest failed her the effect on this learner was to opt out.

By the time I got to Higher School probably I wasn’t that high cause I lost all the motivation. Complete, totally, utterly. I felt I was a loser. So I just lost all interest in English, Mathematics, everything. Japanese I was so good at it. I could get 100%, just because I was a bookworm – like a nerd. I used to love the literature and classics.

**Learning challenges:** The teaching methods of her English teacher at this time caused her to stop learning English at secondary school.

I just didn’t want to learn anymore. He was only teaching grammar of English but I don’t know – the way he speak, the way he taught us .... he would just write something and he wouldn’t actually check whether we got it or not. He just kept going on and on and on. We’re – like a corpse – once I had this role then I just switched off.
This meant that Nodoka found other ways to express her personality. She felt there was no way for her to achieve academically but she challenged another aspect of school life—the “excessive” number of school rules and regulations.

We had a ridiculous rule that your fringe had to be above your—eyebrows and then the skirt had to be like such and such, and I thought that was pathetic. So when I was at Junior High School I decided—I was quite strong-willed person—that I would change the rule. I was very determined. So I got all the school council as well as signatures from (petitions) in the city and we looked at rules from other schools and compare and then we have debates.

Her campaign was successful and some uniform variations were allowed. This dissatisfaction with her learning environment and her sense of failure as a learner was compounded by an additional factor. There was awareness through her schooling that something was missing. The system did not recognize her musical and creative skills.

When I was teenager I knew I was quite good at other things. I knew I had some kind of different talent. But then these things aren’t tested—it’s not valued in that society, so I thought, ‘Mmm, I just forget about it and memorise.

**Beyond School:** A piano teacher told her that without a degree she would not be able to teach music and her talent was not valued by her parents.

I knew I wanted to do something to do with music in the future but my father said, “You’re not talented anyway so don’t bother”. Alright—that’s just the last punch isn’t it? I didn’t realise he didn’t have that ear and it didn’t fit the picture he had for me.

Leaving school Nodoka embarked on a career as a train hostess on intercity trains in Hokkaido but this gave her no time for her music.

I had no time to practise piano, no time to practise singing, no time to actually be artistic. I wrote quite a lot of poems during that time. I wanted to create music, it was still there.
Relocation in another culture was needed before she could step outside the structured expectations of her family and her culture. "Then I came to New Zealand and I realise my parents is not here so I can do whatever I want."

**Education in New Zealand:** On a working holiday in New Zealand, Nodoka discovered the CPIT Jazz School which offered degree courses in Jazz Music.

I found the Jazz School so I went back to Japan for a year to actually earn little bit of more extra money. I was working hard and I was pretend I would work forever being Accountant. I feel like a paper Accountant. And I got the money. Yeah, and told my parents, "I'll be just one year in NZ." Then after a year I thought, "I want to complete since I started."

**Deciding to become a teacher:** Nodoka had planned to become an itinerant music teacher but a friend who recognised her musical and people skills encouraged her to enrol in a teacher education programme.

What seems to have got Nodoka to this point? A strong interest and passion for music and creativity, preparedness to challenge the status quo, the bravery to step outside what was expected of her, determination to follow her dreams and abilities, a desire to follow through and achieve something she had set her heart on and the bravery to meet the challenges in a new society with a different language, different cultural expectations and different pedagogical epistemologies.

**Bohao**

**Nationality:** Taiwanese  
**Subject area:** Economics.  
**Age:** 27

**Interview context:** Bohao came to New Zealand from Taiwan as a sixteen year old, sent by his parents for educational advantages. He attended a secondary school for two years and university where he gained a Master’s degree. He has taken New Zealand citizenship.

I interviewed Bohao at my office where we shared coffee in the late afternoon. A graduate from the ITE programme, he had been applying for teaching jobs in NZ secondary schools
without success for about four months but was working meanwhile as a university Masters tutor. Our interview was punctuated with laughter and it was obvious that Bohao enjoyed his story telling and the experience of re-viewing parts of his early life.

**Bohao’s story**

**Memories of his schooling:** Bohao’s primary school in Taiwan was large by New Zealand standards – 3000 students. He remembers large classes often of 50 students and very little opportunity for teacher-student interactions.

Teachers walk in and write down the things we need to learn, no interactions. So the only one thing they need to manage is student – OK, no talk. No talk at all. I mean, even asking questions. So that is more like a lecture and stuff.

He remembers the teachers for their role rather than their personality.

Teacher’s role was helping student to get the best test result. So they think a lot of way like formula – the way to remember formulas etc, for the tests. The result is to get into better High School. For the High School part they were trying to push students to pass the exams for their best performance to get into a good University, and that’s it.

He summarized the teaching and learning in Taiwan in terms of memorising not understanding.

Taiwan teachers were teaching formulas. They are trying to feed us as many formulas as possible, just memorize, and how to apply. But apply doesn’t mean we really understand why the formulas work like that – just apply the formula for the test – like they were teaching the strategies to deal with the questions, rather than understanding the materials.

Bohao understood the pressure of the expectations of parents, school and students on teachers. “They value the teacher as – how good your classroom performance in test marks?”
He was, however, aware that his mother, a pre-school teacher, had a different relationship with her students—"I saw how she interact with her students and how her students give respect to her. Very different from other teachers." This was to have a long term effect on Bohao later in his thinking about the sort of teacher he wanted to be.

**Learning challenges:** Bohao’s good memories of his early school years were of his primary school class being "No. 1 in choir singing." He struggled at secondary school. Despite his desire to please his family and do well at school Bohao was not successful at learning by memorising formulas.

At that point of time I was quite depressed by my academic performance, and my father was really angry about that as well so that was always led to some family arguments, and that wasn’t really good. I didn’t study hard. I had a lack of motivation even although I really wished that I could get good grades. They teach very fast, like just formulae, so – I couldn’t really handle the workload as well – huge pressures.

Established systems of teaching and learning were not working for Bohao.

**Education in New Zealand:** His parents decided that he needed a new start in New Zealand. "Not just for better education, but also for – OK – we had a better future." This was not without conflict, however, as his grandparents were "really angry with my parents." Bohao came to Christchurch by himself. After 3 months at a language school he enrolled for Year 12 and 13 at a boys’ secondary school. At first he thought the teaching was too slow because he was used to a faster-paced system where students were expected to "keep up". However, he began to thrive in a learning environment where there was an emphasis on understanding not memorising.

Initially he tried to use his familiar systems of learning but for the first time he was not just given formula to memorise. Clear handout notes explaining each step that Bohao could take home to study helped him understand and learn. This was the beginning of his awareness of difference in learning and teaching. This extract from the interview explores his excitement about learning in a different system.
I (Interviewer): Was it hard to adjust to because you would have expected a teacher to be teaching like they did in Taiwan?

B (Bohao): I didn’t feel anything needs to be adjust. I just feel I am relaxed by the way they teach because they help us to understand not just tell us “oh remember that”. And why. I revel in this kind of conversation.

I remember one of my Maths teacher as well. He teaches how to sort out the slope of a fraction – like that. He carefully went through every step, I was so surprised because I didn’t expect that much. All I knew was the formula for this function is just ‘blah blah blah blah’ and that’s it. I didn’t know anything else. And once he went through the process, oh I was really surprised. Oh that something I really learned from it.

I: So you were aware of learning as opposed to remembering?

B: Oh absolutely. I really – yeah, I think I feel excited about knowing things as well.

I: Excited about knowing things?

B: Yeah.

I: What’s ‘knowing’?

B: ‘Knowing’ means I really know how things work. Whether there is just tell me rather than that we know WHY.

Of significance to me in this extract are the words “conversation”, “process” and “excited”. Being able to participate in the learning process and understand the small cognitive steps enabled Bohao to have both motivation and interest in what he was learning. It is Bohao’s awareness of this and the difference he saw in conceptions of learning between the two
cultures that built his understanding of what teaching and learning is and the type of teacher he wants to be.

**Beyond school and deciding to be a teacher:** At Canterbury University Bohao attained an Honours degree in Commerce and a Masters degree in Economics. During his senior years at university he took up tutoring. He found he liked to help others. But more than this, he found teaching and helping others learn was rewarding.

I feel appreciated. I mean, I really enjoy the time when I was doing tutoring at Uni so that’s a very big motivation...... I feel I get some sort of satisfaction. So that’s something really pushed me into the College course.

It is with these factors as his formative background that Bohao decided to be a teacher. He was an unsuccessful learner until he was put in a learning environment in another culture that helped him understand, not just rote learn. In contrast to his own schooling, he found positive relationships were important for learning – the way students responded to his mother as a preschool teacher, the New Zealand teacher who helped him understand and the rewards he felt as a university tutor helping others to learn.

**Riarn**

**Nationality:** Macedonian  
**Subject area:** Science, Biology  
**Age:** 45

**Interview context:** Riarn came to NZ from Macedonia at the age of 34 with his wife and 2 children. He had been working in NZ for 11 years following a varied career path before teaching – carpentry, viticulture, soil surveying, laboratory technician, management of a pest control business before ITE. At the time of the interviews he was teaching Science part-time at a co-educational secondary school in Christchurch so he came into my office to talk one morning during the school holidays.

**Riarn’s story**

**Memories of his schooling:** When Riarn started school at the age of seven, Macedonia was then part of Yugoslavia. The school system required attendance of four years each at primary,
intermediate and secondary school. He remembered the dominant influence of his teacher at primary school. “One teacher from Year One to Year Four – it’s one teacher for all subjects. He was your God actually for that four years. He was everything and very strict.”

**Teaching and learning:** Riarn remembered a teacher-centred focus in the classroom.

We learn more like – teacher is teaching, you’re listening. After that you have assessment, like answer orally or maybe doing a test.” The students’ role was to “sit down, listen nicely, and after that write what you have to write – we should write everything from word to word what they said.

There was a reliance on textbooks.

We have books for everything. They are going by the books, by the “Bible”, and you just have to learn what’s in the “Bible”. The expectation was that the students were to be well-behaved, to listen what teacher says, and to learn that one, and after that to express what they learn. It was thought that that was the way that students learnt.

He remembered a Biology teacher as a good teacher. “She was very, very strict lady. I like her because she was different, little bit different than other teachers.” Riarn preferred her teaching because she included practical work rather than rely on textbook work.

She had different style of teaching. She used more practicals and stuff like that. I liked her teaching because always you could do something you could see something different than in, for example, Macedonian or Maths – you just sit down and write.

Riarn preferred learning where he could see and understand from practical experience rather than just transmission delivery. But Riarn had respect for all his teachers. They had a high status in his community and he was successful in passing the school assessments.
Beyond school: After graduating from school he entered compulsory military service for 2 years, and then attended university in Skopje. All education including tertiary level was free. He graduated with a degree in horticulture but found it hard to get a job afterwards.

Yugoslavia started to be little bit difficult to live – big inflations and a lack of work and stuff like that. It was difficult to find job. In meantime I work with my father like carpenter and joiner.

Four years later Riam did find work for four years with a group surveying in Macedonia. Then he and his wife made a life-changing decision.

With my wife together, we decided to maybe find some future out of our country. Actually the question was not where to go, the question was to go – how to go, that was it. In that time New Zealand was the easiest country to go in. We sold everything there. We are going – we are not coming back.

It was a decisive move, executed quickly. Riam says he came to NZ for “a better life or for a better future for my children. NZ is my country now – and I love NZ.”

Life in New Zealand: Finding work in NZ at first was not easy but he took a variety of jobs in Hamilton, Te Puke, and Tauranga. His last job, managing a company in Christchurch, lasted five years until Riam received a back injury.

Deciding to become a teacher: Riam had not considered teaching until he was forced to think of another career. A friend suggested he had the right people skills for teaching.

I was thinking really more about – because I love kids. I like them, and after that – yeah, I think that I have some knowledge to give them, to give them back what they’ve got maybe some. Because I was more practical all my life, technical, and stuff like that, working all around the place. And maybe all my knowledge I want to give some back to somebody and the only way was teaching.

It is possible to discern the influences of his formative background experiences. Inter-personal relationships for Riam, like Nodoka and Bohao, play an important role in thinking about teacher identity. The backward mapping I asked him to engage with showed threads of his
formative schooling still evident in his view of wanting to “give” his knowledge to others. His experiences of enjoying learning in practical ways and his work experience have influenced his thinking about learning. Riam’s background and experience before teacher education were important factors that his learning in ITE was to build on.

Adele

**Nationality:** French-Moroccan  
**Subject area:** French  
**Age:** 25

**Interview context:** On holiday in New Zealand, Adele “fell in love” with the country. She decided to enrol in the ITE programme one day before the course started. She came to my focus group meeting of OLC students and responded with interest to the invitation to join my study. I interviewed her in my office at College.

Adele’s story

**Memories of her schooling:** Born in Morocco to a French mother and a Moroccan father, her schooling up to the age of sixteen was in Morocco but at a French school which followed the French education system with French teachers. Her senior secondary and university education were in France. She speaks four languages – Arabic, French, German and English.

**Teaching and Learning:** Adele’s Moroccan school was a multicultural international school directed by the French embassy. It had a roll of about 3000 students. Her memories of learning and teaching reflect a teacher-centred environment.

> It’s all the time from the teacher to the student. There are not many questions, not many exchanges between the teacher and the students. And a lot of explanation – like very explicit and formal explanations.

She described the pupils’ role as passive – “to accept what the teacher was explaining and try to understand.”

**Change:** At the age of sixteen she faced a change in her life which was unsettling and was to have an effect on her later life decisions. She left Morocco and moved to France.
It was like a big shock for me to leave Morocco because I wasn’t ready to leave my country, and like – I arrived in France and I wasn’t happy at all with my new life. It’s difficult to leave your mother country when you’re sixteen, you know, you all have your friends and you have like your landmarks and it’s very difficult.

In France she entered in to high pressure education in the race to get high marks in the Baccalaureate to ensure a place in a good university.

It’s like 2 years of intense preparation for very high competitive exams, I mean like in the best schools. It’s really two years of intense work like – the first year I used to work maybe like fifteen or sixteen hours a day. You have to prepare competitive exam and maybe like 600 people are preparing this exam, there are twenty places, you know. So you have to work very hard and the philosophy of this Préparatoires classes are, you know, to be not really supportive but just to push you – but it was a bit too much. They just played with your nerves, you know, all the time and – the pressure, yeah, yeah, but I mean that’s the game of it because they want to get rid of the ones that are not, you know, strong enough, to bear all this pressure.

As at school in Morocco, teaching was in transmission mode but Adele retrospectively questioned its efficacy as a learning system.

Lectures, a lot of lectures, a lot of individual work like there were never, never, never any group work. And we had like lot of tests and exams, and orals every week for each subject........intensity and the pressure and the competition and putting you on the spot all the time. I think there are easier ways of learning things.

Role of teachers: It is possible to see conflicting tensions for Adele between understandings built in her own schooling and the different ideas she was meeting in ITE. On one hand she describes her own teacher identity – “I like talking actually, you know. When you're a teacher
I mean you have to like talking and, teaching where you say, “I know this well, this is my knowledge that I’m trying to pass on”.

However, although she saw the role of her teachers in the “Class Préparatoire” was, “to prepare the students for this competitive exam and to really to push them”, she was now aware that this methodology did not suit her changing views of learning.

Like I need to change and, you know, talk, and see other critical points of view, not to receive – not to be passive in the learning process.

She felt she aimed, as a teacher herself, for a different relationship with her students in the classroom.

During my teaching practice I always try not to put down students – always encouraging them, yeah.

**Beyond school and deciding to become a teacher:** After completing her Bachelor’s degree in English and her Masters in French, Adele no longer felt she had a place in France. She wanted to see other parts of the world. New Zealand was literally a stab on the map.

It was just curiosity actually. And I was just supposed to take one year off and to travel just around New Zealand and go back to France and start working or starting a new Degree at University. And I just fell in love with the country and I really liked it and I wanted to stay a bit more here. I decided to go to Teachers’ College.

Adele revealed tensions in her evolving views of teaching and learning. On the one hand she questioned pressured teacher-centred delivery style and talks of having a more positive relationship with her students but she also still retains from her school days a view of knowledge as something to be passed on by an expert who enjoys talking.
Martine

Nationality: French

Subject area: Science / Biology

Age: 34

Interview context: Martine was a busy student teacher balancing study demands with motherhood and pregnancy. She planned to take time off late in the year for her baby and complete the course in the following year. We fitted our talking into a time when she extended her child care time for her son in the crèche. This placed a time constraint on the interview. My reflective diary after speaking with Martine records my regret that during the interview I was governed by the need to meet the time frame rather than having the luxury of encouraging her to expand and develop her ideas.

Martine’s story

Like Adele, Martine felt a sense of dual nationality. Though she felt more strongly French, she spent some of her formative years in Canada and in Africa where her father worked as a structural engineer. As a result, Martine went to school in several countries and her memories of the schools were mixed.

Memories of her schooling: Martine’s schooling was in private French-run schools in Africa and Canada because they offered the same education as that in France, a consistency her French parents valued. A common experience remembered was that the strict rules suppressed her as an individual.

I think I have seen quite a lot of different type of school – it’s really mixed memories. Only I think you did not really enjoy private school that much. I have better time as a human being in public school.

However, when her parents separated, Martine went back to France and attended a French secondary school for the next five years which she appreciated for being able to form stable friendships.

Teaching and Learning: Schoolwork she remembered mostly for the predominance of individual work and long hours of homework. The learning emphasis was the transmission of
knowledge. Martine saw the teacher’s role at this time to be the provider of information “I think they mainly basically provided us with information or I guess where to find the information.” It was the students’ role to “learn ever since that.”

**Beyond school and deciding to become a teacher:** Martine did her tertiary study and qualifications at university in Canada and took out Canadian citizenship. It was not until she came to New Zealand with her “kiwi” husband and their young baby that Martine ever considered becoming a teacher. She tutored French language at nights and to her surprise found “actually, I’m enjoying it!” The enjoyment came from working with her language students, developing relationships with them and having “the chance to show them and they’re excited and stuff”. This rewarding experience led her to ITE.

Martine attended several schools but her learning at school was characterised by teacher-centred methods. Although no one teacher stood positively in her memory, it was the rewards of personal relationships and the positivity of seeing her private language students excited about learning a new language that led her to consider teaching as a career path.

**Jirina**

**Nationality:** Russian  
**Subject area:** Mathematics  
**Age:** 39

**Interview context:** Jirina attended the first focus group meeting that I arranged. She was willing to participate in the study but, like Martine, her childcare arrangements meant that her time was limited. We managed two interviews – both in Jirina’s lunch hours. We both felt constrained by our watching the clock to make sure we ended in time for Jirina to get to her afternoon class.

**Jirina’s story**

**Memories of her schooling:** Jirina finished her education in Russia in 1986. During her schooling there was centralised Communist government control. All schools in the country had the same ideologically inclined programme in terms of perspectives of history and a rejection of religious beliefs. In school she said, “We were all young Communists, we have all
this, you know, related stuff to it. We all constantly have those meetings and you devoted to Communist Party what they would say.”

There was no choice of subjects for students.

We had some schools which is Math oriented, others like Physics oriented, or Language oriented but we also have common school which I was through. Now all the common school had really academic approach and have big emphasis on Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, all that natural science. And subjects were compulsory there. Even in a Senior School they can’t choose the subjects – even you knew you wouldn’t use Physics or Mathematics for example, you still have to study them.

**Teaching and learning:** Teaching and learning she remembered as being teacher and textbook based. The teachers were powerful figures – “like dictator most of them.” She remembers only one as being friendly.

‘I am the teacher’ – power kind of thing – because the teacher, they say we have to, ‘Listen where I am’ – quite tough on the class and will say “shut up” and this sort of stuff. I can’t imagine this teacher work in New Zealand.

As with the other participants in this study, textbooks were important.

At the beginning of the year they open the book and start the teaching sequence like just straight from the book. We had one for each subject.

Also important were the regular tests and homework, as success with these gave marks towards the final exam marks. Preparation for the frequent tests was, “lots of memorising and lots of self studying at school and at home.”

After just one teaching practice in New Zealand, Jirina was aware of differences in pedagogy and teacher-student relationship between the country of her youth and the country she was learning to be a teacher in. She appreciated experiencing a less formal atmosphere in New Zealand classrooms and wanted that for her children at school.
However, Jirina believed that she was taught well in her school years which gave her a good lasting knowledge of which she was proud.

My education – I am grateful to it because I think it was good to remember, even they make us know Physics. I still remember all they put in our heads. I have good memory and I use it – one of my strong points.

Jirina was proud that she had been successful in a system of education that emphasised transmission, memorising and testing of knowledge. She continued to value the system.

**What she valued:** Jirina compared this education with the teaching at local Russian international schools. In her view students who moved from an international school to a Russian state school had a lower standard of knowledge and struggled with the academic work.

If the child has to go to the Russian state school, and the child start to struggle with Maths and Physics because the international school is relaxed – and Russian school is really hard. They have a really strong Mathematics, Physics kind of background to push. They test you.

This attitude to learning creates tensions to confront during her year of ITE as she seeks to balance the respect she has for the rigours of her own schooling pedagogies and new ideas about building effective learning environments.

To illustrate her view of what a “good teacher” might have been for her at school, Jirina chose her Geography teacher who “really had a different power and he did make us interested in the subject and we feel – he didn’t make us students feel miserable.” By contrast, she felt that a “bad” teacher would be someone who “don’t really know the subject, don’t listen. Like don’t listen to the students how they – their approach to understanding and learning”. Emerging, as with other participants, is the importance placed on positive relationships. She values a teacher who can interpret student needs and enable the student to feel positive in the learning relationship.
Challenges: Despite her respect for a rigorous, test-driven learning style, at university, studying Physics, Jirina experienced a lack of success in her learning for the first time.

And I say I can't do it anymore because I was unhappy when I have C grade and I just don’t understand anything and they were so strict, so intense, and like I was feeling like I’m an idiot. Because I – like I completed all my times of the study and I don’t understand. I couldn’t succeed, and I just quit.

She found the teaching too strict, impersonal and formal so she moved to another university where she took up Economics and was more successful because tuition was less demanding and fast-paced. Rather than see this as a defeat and cast herself as victim, Jirina was aware of her need for a different pace of learning and she took a proactive response by moving university schools. Awareness of different needs and initiating alternative pathways was forged.

Beyond school and deciding to become a teacher: Jirina worked as an accountant for a New Zealand company in Moscow where she met her British husband. Both her children were born in Russia but her husband was transferred to New Zealand. More study was required in New Zealand to qualify to practice as an accountant. Jirina was not interested. She wanted also to be with her children during school holidays.

So, I never loved accounting that much but I prefer mainly more creative jobs— even teaching can be creative. And I was good with children and I think teenagers are fun – and I like mathematics.

In considering teaching as a career Jirina based her decision on pragmatic family aspects but also on subject interest and on relationships with young people. Her background carried unresolved resonances with regard to how she thought effective learning took place and on the importance for learning of positive student and teacher relationships. These would be explored later in the study.
Summary

The stories told in this chapter opened perspectives relating to my first research sub-question—“What aspects of previous education experiences influence thinking about teaching and learning?” The stories have been told by six different personalities from six different countries, describing their personal journeys and experiences of schooling and learning. Yet, despite the uniqueness of each individual’s narrative, it is possible to discern similar shared experiences.

All of these stories told of teacher-centred transmission pedagogies and the need to memorise knowledge and facts to meet the demands of frequent testing and examinations. Memories of success being measured by exam results and the pressures of teacher-power status as the basis of teacher-student relationships were common to the narratives of each storyteller. This created a common teacher-centred understanding of teaching and learning.

Maybe because none of the participants remembered school with any fondness, and because negative memories of their teachers feature more prominently, teaching was not the first career choice for any of the participants in my study. Yet, perhaps reflecting their new learning in a new location, all placed importance on positive personal relationships in learning.

Another common thread emerging from these stories was the participants’ ability to deal proactively with challenges and the resilience of adjusting to change in their lives. As co-producers of their existing thinking of what it meant to be a teacher and a learner, openness to change can be seen as important preparation for the changes encountered in ITE.

All felt their previous learning was firmly located in a place and in a time. Change, both geographically and culturally brought new perspectives and involved both loss and change. The next chapter which focuses on the participants’ ITE experiences in New Zealand—both the challenges and barriers and what new learning they constructed—explores this further.
Chapter 4: Initial Teacher Education Experiences: learning and challenges

This chapter explores how the linguistic, social, cultural and pedagogical challenges of learning to be a teacher in a new country affected the ITE learning journey the participants took, in a second or, sometimes, third language. For this chapter I have departed from the individual narrative structure of the previous chapter.

Whereas in the previous chapter the participants were able to distance themselves from their formative years and use a retrospective narrative, their continuing stories used in this chapter were still being constructed. In the next two chapters I have separated the threads identified from their narratives into motifs that emerged from cross-case thematic analysis. In doing so I bring another construct, that of the outsider, to the stories. The stories are those of the participants but the thematic groupings are mine.

This chapter presents cross-case participant perspectives on three foci which emerged from their narratives – their expectations, the challenges and barriers to their learning, and the new understandings they were building despite the challenges they faced. These link with my second and third research sub-questions which sought information on how both the positive and the negative experiences of OLC students in ITE influenced their developing understandings of teaching and learning in New Zealand schools. The chapter sections are

1. Expectations of the programme
2. Challenges and Barriers to Learning
3. Learning from new experiences

Within each section I focus initially on the perspectives of the participant narrators. Then, using my acknowledged role and privilege as an active, co-constructive participant in this study, I suggest possible interpretations. Each perspective carries implications for ITE course organisation and teaching which I shall look at in the next chapter.
Expectations of the programme

To set their new learning experience in context, I asked the participants to describe what they expected would characterise teaching and learning in an ITE course. Their responses are presented thematically.

Content

Expectations arise out of our prior knowledge. Coming from schools where content knowledge was emphasised, several participants expected a curriculum content focus in the programme. What Martine saw as a lack of emphasis on this created some stress as it was several years since she had studied. “I was expecting teachers to refresh my memories. I feel like it’s an issue because I am really not the only one that needs to learn more about the content. So that’s a little bit of tension.”

Martine’s view reflects a lack of understanding that ITE in New Zealand aims to build understandings about pedagogy and strategies to achieve learning and necessarily has a strong emphasis on pedagogical content knowledge (Schon 1991). However, there was a discernible shift for Riam as an ITE graduate. He had expected a subject content emphasis, “I thought that was gonna be more like how – Biology, what to do, what is Biology, more subjectal … but now I realised it is more globally”. There was now recognition of the need for pedagogical thinking to underpin content delivery.

Some participants did not anticipate the need to include behaviour management, a familiar factor in the school culture of many Western countries. However, coming from tightly disciplined classrooms as young learners, they had not anticipated that these skills would be part of ITE learning. As Riam said, “I never thought about behaviour management before I start. But now it’s the biggest issue for me.”

Delivery Style

Based on his education experience to this point, Bohao expected teacher-centred delivery. “I expected the teacher would put some slides on, note some critical points and tell me, ‘OK, this is what you need to do. Now get on and practise it’”. Significantly, he now recognised that he
was using his own experience as the basis of his expectations. "Maybe I went back to the way I was taught." Possibly, as his story is told retrospectively, this reflects his more experienced present stance.

Nodoka’s lack of understanding of co-operative learning strategies caused disorientation. She too, was expecting more of a traditional university style of delivery with "lecture style kind of – dictation". To her, the level of independent professional reading and, in particular, the co-operative learning styles were new.

I was in shock because there was stacks of reading and it was like – ‘What? We don’t actually learn from this!’ … The shock stayed in our groups – ‘Do I learn from this?’ The co-operative learning style was new to me cause I wasn’t used to these things.

Although Nodoka was unprepared for a radically different method of building learning, it is clear that she felt the burden of adjustment was her responsibility. At no time did she blame her lecturers or the lack of programme support for this disorientation.

Adele, expecting the same high power status for her tutors as in her education, was unprepared on her first day for difference.

I just remember the first Profs class and we are all sitting in a circle and introducing ourselves, trying to get to know each other…… and it was wow, so different, I mean in France you just sit down and take your paper and the lesson starts…. You get to know the people in your class outside the classroom. Here it was so interactive…. I appreciated the fact that [my teacher] was sitting as part of the group, not standing at the board or at his desk.

Although the different culture was a surprise, given her existing knowledge, she welcomed the new modelling of teacher-student relationships. However, the ITE programme did pose other challenges which had the potential to be barriers to learning for the OLC students. The next section of this chapter presents the participants’ perceptions of these.
Challenges and Barriers to Learning

The following distinct but overlapping aspects of their ITE experience were perceived to be barriers or challenges to learning by the people of my case studies

- language
- new pedagogies
- cultural challenges
- assessment and workload pressures
- change as adults
- teaching practice adjustments

Language: (“Is it some kind of insect?”)

English language barriers received the most frequent mention by all participants. Apart from Adele who found that her French language helped her translate new words, all the others found addressing new concepts in a second language presented a significant challenge to their learning. Bahao said, “English always a barrier. It took me longer to do the preparation and assignments – to find ways of expressing myself”.

Entering a new field of learning means encountering new subject-specific words and developing the metalanguage to talk about the learning. Riarn commented, “When you come to other environment you need to learn new language – new terms, new stuff, new words”. New ideas about pedagogy and classroom practice presented challenges because of unfamiliarity.

Underneath the humour with which Nodoka speaks of her dealing with “scary” new terminology (‘pedagogy’ and ‘kinaesthetic’), it is possible to discern her feelings of discomfort and challenge.
All of a sudden you hear “peda go chee” – “peda go gee” – “pedigree chow”!
“Yeah. And... a kalisthetic learning – what’s a kalistethici? Is it some kind of
insect?

Bohao explained why talking to other students in class micro-teaching exercises was a
challenge.

I worried if they asked questions. I need to understand what they were asking and
I need to think the answer for them. And then I need to structure my sentence and
speak out. And if they are not happy with that I need to go through the three
processes again.

Adele and Riam also worried about revealing their possible language deficiencies in an ITE
class exercise designed to build confidence. “It just freaked me out actually because I was the
only international student and all the rest of the class were English speaking”. The participants
found it challenging socially and linguistically.

Although only some ITE teachers gave vocabulary help or modelled strategies for teaching
NESB students in class, the language challenges may have been compounded because the
OLC students perceived it as their responsibility. Self-help and extra work were the methods
used to deal with language demands for everyone. It is possible to interpret their reluctance to
ask for help from their teachers as a hangover from their own education, where a teacher’s
authoritarian role was less inviting of requests about learning challenges.

Associated implications for workload (“toughest time”)

For each participant, there were times when workload pressures became a barrier to learning.
Bohao remembered the early part of the year because of work overload. “A lot of assignments
and I spent a lot of time on each to try to do things perfectly. I try my best but you get
exhausted. I think that was the toughest time”.

Martine felt that she struggled in the first weeks of ITE. “I often have this feeling that we are
running, running – oh this assignment due for this day, and this other for that day – and too
many assignment.” Nodoka felt she reeled under the “shock of the stacks of reading – that was
quite time consuming”. To Jirina, the “conceptual development and the readings” were time consuming as she had to read with a dictionary beside her. For Riarn, writing in English was also difficult.

Again, perceiving this as their problem, extra time was not requested. Given their prior experience of individual learning in teacher-centred pedagogies, this may reflect their reluctance to appear critical of their teachers. Alternatively, fear of being seen as not capable of coping with the language and so jeopardising meeting course requirements may have resulted in trying to cope alone.

**Orientation to new pedagogies ("like a game")**

Deciding to learn to be a teacher in a new pedagogical system created challenges early in the participants’ ITE experience, with expectations of active participation in their own learning such as having to speak to class groups. Riarn, for example, spoke of his feelings of discomfort with his personal exposure as an unconventional speaker of English.

For most of the OLC students, their ITE education was the first time in their educational experience where they had to interact in learning activities with other students. Their own teacher-centred school experiences put emphasis for all of them on individual work. But as Bohao said, “Here we need to interact with each other— that really makes it, for me, a little bit more challenging”.

Nodoka “was in shock” at first with the student-centred learning strategies used in the ITE programme. “Do I learn from this?” Activities like co-operative learning and jigsaw group work seemed more like games than serious learning at tertiary level. ‘New, like a game! Whoa! So do we play game, so what do we do?’ ”. The challenges of a new pedagogy led to uncertainty and unease.

Unlike the fierce competition that characterised her memories of her schooldays, Nodoka encountered group work and positive reward statements for the first time. She found it was assumed that she would have the skills required to talk in groups and build shared understandings. The reality was that she was at first confused and then had to build her ability to participate and learn this way as she went. “I just had to adjust. [At first] I didn’t know
what to do – mingle with my group like friends?” Unsupported introduction to new ways of learning led to tension and uncertainty.

Similarly, group work was a first time experience for Riarn, “because in my education we never done that in groups”. However, the participants were not able to identify any specific attention paid within the ITE programme to addressing their feelings of discomfort with the unfamiliarity of a new pedagogy.

Cultural Challenges (“Nose things”)

For both Martine and Jirina, the cultural overlay of Maori language, tikanga and cultural practices created further discomfort. On her first day, with little advance preparation, Jirina experienced cultural shock, “Doing the ‘nose things’”. (hongi or traditional pressing of nose and forehead in formal greeting) at the Maori welcome ceremony or Powhiri.

She questioned the value of learning Maori language and customs.

I’m not sure [about] the Maori language course. Maybe it’s wrong but I’ve a kind of fed-up attitude because I’ve done two lessons [in Te Reo] and, I don’t know … I came here to learn Maths and they’re making me learn Maori.

She still felt uncomfortable with this several months into the course. The ITE programme would introduce her to varied views of learning but it would seem a tension persisted for her in learning to balance wider cultural experiences with her own subject-focused, teacher-centred educational experiences. Jirina’s discomfort with meeting this cultural overlay continued to present as a barrier to her learning.

Assessment change (“you lose motivation”)

Martine experienced difficulty adjusting to a different assessment system. At the time of the interviews she was still coming to terms with a different understanding of assessment purposes in a new learning environment. The system she was accustomed to used ranking, grades and marks to contribute to motivation for further learning. The ITE programme emphasised the role played in learning by student reflection and by formative teacher feedback. Assessment was competency based.
Martine experienced a lack of motivation in ITE assignments because to her there seemed to be "no difference between ‘you’ve done it’ and ‘you’ve done it well’... you lose a bit of whole motivation". In the high stakes testing she was accustomed to in her schooling, motivation was created by external pressures. The adjustment to internal motivation and the meeting of competency standards led to her questioning the standard of work expected.

I was looking at those assignments with the same standard that I would have looked at an assignment when I was at Uni for example. So I was looking at quite high standard and I worked for hours and hours on the first few assignments. And then, to be honest, I realise that actually, that’s not what people expect. I think somehow that I have this feeling here that we are expected to produce a lot, and I think it would probably pay to produce less, but on a higher standard.

It is also possible to construe from Martine’s words a judgement, a sense of assessment not being rigorous or exacting and therefore not motivating because of a perceived lack of value. Just one semester into her ITE course a tension existed which, unresolved, was presenting a barrier to her induction to the New Zealand assessment system.

**Adapting to change as adults**

After having their own careers and income, Jirina and Martine found the shock of returning to student-mode led them to question their decision. Jirina felt she was “ready to quit on Day 2”. From the beginning they experienced feelings of unease. The ways of learning were a new experience for them – unexpected, more interactive, and more verbal involvement. However, these people were used to change. Adele encapsulates this:

Another challenge – I mean this year everything is a challenge for me….. You think you will manage to do it, but after you just – you know, throw yourself in to the arena and just fight!

This is a combative metaphor perhaps but it also shows positivity and preparedness to build new understanding from the differences.
Teaching Practice Adjustments

A significant part of the ITE learning experience in the University of Canterbury programme is the Teaching Practicum, which is divided into two 7 week sessions. This gives the students practical teaching experience in school classrooms, working with associate teachers as their mentors as well as their ITE lecturers.

Not only was there worry about class management, planning lessons and being accepted as a teacher, but the OLC students’ awareness of cultural and language differences was also an additional layer of challenge, making their learning on Teaching Practice more complex.

School culture: It took a whole period of adjustment at first on Teaching Practice for everyone to get used to school organisation such as timetables and year levels, student culture, and teacher-student relationships. Jirina expressed the lack of understanding of the culture of the NZ school system as a matter of discomfort, “because I have never experienced them before”.

Being seen as different: Nodoka was aware she would appear as “different” to New Zealand secondary school pupils. Her view was, “I would probably be the first or second person that a student would encounter as Asian”. She anticipated her pupils would have to deal with her accent – “I don’t have the kiwi accent yet”. However, retrospectively, from a first year teacher’s viewpoint, she saw this as an advantage for her students as, “they will encounter this in a diverse universe”. It might be seen that she now, as a first year teacher, is able to see the bigger picture beyond just surviving in the classroom as a student-teacher. She is able to reflect on the advantages for NZ school pupils having an OLC teacher in the classroom.

Language: Language differences presented several challenges such as the longer time it took for lesson preparation and concerns about their oral communication. Riarn worried about student reaction to his accent on Teaching Practice.

I am making mistakes. When you come in front of the students – how you gonna deliver then? Because they are big judges, they gonna say, “Ha, look at that thing – doesn’t know English.
However, this fear of being judged for his difference, decreased with time. He did feel he “managed to pass that one” in practice.

Spoken English language was a challenge for Bohao in the classroom with teenage vernacular and slang. Again the feelings of not fitting in or being accepted are seen.

Because I need to structure sentence before I speak, and I need to understand again what they are trying to say. That’s something is hard – really, really hard for me to understand because they say the similar words but has different meaning.

Balancing the desire to act competently in the new role of teacher with trying out different teaching strategies in class, created tension. Bohao recalled, “The tricky thing is I am a new person, they test. That was the hardest part because .... I need to get the things right when they were testing my work”. Feelings of being new and being expected to try new competencies are exacerbated for OLC students who already feel like outsiders.

This was echoed for Adele with her concerns with spoken English in the staffroom.

Teaching Practice was very difficult when we were in the staffroom. If many people are speaking at the same time, there is all these ideas, you know – someone starts talking and then just cuts off and someone else cuts in ... I’m just lost because I can’t manage to concentrate.

Feelings of standing outside the group experienced by OLC students at College re-surfed on Teaching Practice. Although the challenges faced were not insurmountable, they did battle them independently. While Professional Studies tutors would have given guidance on their observation and mentoring visits it would seem that Teaching Practice challenges were mostly dealt with as they arose, rather than being addressed with proactive strategies in the ITE programme.
Learning from new experiences

Despite the challenges faced during their ITE year, in order to explore the participants’ thinking about their new learning, I focused on three aspects – the participants’ existing concepts, how they adapted to new ideas, and how they applied these ideas in their practice as beginning teachers in a new context. These aspects contributed to their emerging ideas of their developing teacher identities and where they might locate themselves as future teachers.

Existing concepts about learning

At the beginning of the Graduate Diploma course the first Professional Studies assignment (Appendix 2) asks the students to discuss their thinking about teaching and learning. In all the participants’ responses I found a strong identification that learning was an independent process where the student works hard with the material given them by their teacher, to make sense of it, organise it into some logical order and then memorise the results.

Nodoka wrote, “teaching is giving information to new generations or to influence people who have not got the knowledge you have”.

To Adele teaching was, “above all the passing on of knowledge”.

To Jirina learning was a, “quantitative increase in useful knowledge and skills and / or memorising information”.

Martine described the role of teachers as one of, “providing learners with a wide range of useful information and knowledge”.

Even where there is a sense of the teacher guiding or helping, the learning emphasis is obviously on finding knowledge that was already set or known.

Bohao’s initial thoughts on teaching were that “teaching is helping students to ‘walk’ from zero towards a settled destination”.

Adele wrote that a teacher should, “guide my learning by giving clues and tools allowing me to find the rule by myself”.
These were the constructions that the participants brought with them to ITE.

**Processes that helped form new understandings**

Learning to be a teacher is a process in which we build new understandings onto those we have already formed. This is not a solitary process but occurs in a time and place with others who contribute to the construction of the individual’s learning (Britzman, 1991). In the interviews participants were encouraged to talk about how the new ways of learning built on, over, or through their existing constructions to contribute to newly emerging understandings of teaching and learning.

**Collaborative learning:** Bohao spoke of the importance for him of having collaborative learning modelled by his teachers both at College and on Teaching Practice. His Professional Studies teacher, he noted, “teaches us the way we should teach our students”. This awareness of the pedagogy being used reflects his awareness of new learning practices.

Co-operative learning practice was new to Riarn. “In my education we never did that, we always being individuals”. At first it was a challenge to work with others to construct new understandings but, “afterwards I became more familiar – I could learn”. In keeping with his positive schooldays memories about the value of practical work, Riarn was helped by the learning that happened in Professional Studies where he had “some practices for how to express yourself in front of people. I had never done that before”. In the ITE programme learning was no longer the passive reception of his previous education experiences. He valued the peer feedback and shared learning of simulated teaching situations.

Similarly for Martine, learning through talking things through in a group was different to the way she learned at school. She felt her learning was helped, for example, in her Professional Studies class with the process whereby students “talk about it and try to find a solution”. Martine saw this as a different but positive way for her to learn by sharing ideas and hearing other points of view.

New to Nodoka was the idea that the group’s discussion was accepted as valid learning and that the tutor did not give the definitive final statement. Nodoka’s existing views on the ownership of knowledge and the nature of learning were challenged by the learning strategies
she experienced and saw modelled in the ITE programme. Her learning about learning was undergoing continuing construction.

**Empowered to make choices:** Jirina’s developing views on learning emerged as she talked about her children’s experiences at school in New Zealand. Compared to her own prescriptive formal education Jirina was aware that her children were being schooled in a different environment.

I think they have more choice and much more personality development. They do not feel so much pressure like we felt. I think they have more choices and more chance to be creative and to choose the right education goals for them – for their future life.

Her thinking about effective teaching would seem to be undergoing development to include student-centred approaches which allowed for student input.

On Teaching Practice, Nodoka spoke with student teachers from another ITE provider and felt she preferred their longer TP experience. Initially she liked their prescription of clear, listed teaching behaviours to follow. “This happens and then you apply this and if this happens you do this. And then I thought, ‘that’s just to pass the test!’” This may have linked at first with her prior education which was prescriptive and test dominated, but on consideration she decided that a better way of learning was being promoted by her ITE provider because student teachers were presented with options – “Then I could try it. They let us find our own way of doing it, so I have different ways of dealing with issues”. Nodoka began to value the learner making choices and building their own understandings.

In a similar way, being able to choose after hearing more than one point of view became important to Adele. “I need to change and, you know, talk, and see other critical points of view, not to receive – not to be passive in the learning process”. She saw the role interaction and choice of viewpoint play in learning.

**Learning from Teaching Practice:** Although there were challenges, other aspects of the practicum were seen as beneficial to learning. Riam valued the practical learning on Teaching Practice. “The name is practice – you learn in practical like how to do. You see how difficult
it is to become a teacher as well. It’s not that easy”. Riarn was surprised and challenged at first by the behaviour and manner of pupils but the practical experience was invaluable to him.

Bohao also valued the practical application of what he had learned about behaviour management in ITE. “The pupils know my routine and they know I have my boundary – don’t cross that, don’t test ... definitely a positive thing and I believe I can now manage a class independently”.

Adele spoke positively about the good rapport she established with her pupils by inviting them to help her with her English pronunciation and vocabulary. She was motivated to use her classroom practice as a time to explore new ideas of shared learning.

**Shifts in thinking about Learning:**

It would seem that each of the OLC students was able to build their new understandings of learning onto their existing constructs. On the other hand, if their interview answers and assignment responses were to be more than possible lip-service to please me and others as lecturers in the programme, I needed to discover if the ideas were being applied in their classroom practice. As a means of uncovering this, I asked the participants about how they thought learning was happening in the classrooms when they were teaching. Given that I was not able to observe the participants teaching, I am unable to verify the truth of their statements but it is possible to see links between what they say is their new thinking about teaching and learning and how they described learning happening in their classrooms.

**New understandings in practice**

*Interactive learning:* Perhaps because she was accustomed to competition among her learning peers at school and university, at first Adele was suspicious of peer feedback in her ITE experience. “I don’t know if it is very sincere or not but anyway they really provide me with supportive comments”. Initially, because a co-operative, supportive learning environment was new to her, she saw her class members as competitors.

Adele also noticed more pupil involvement in the classes she worked with on Teaching Practice. “It is much more interactive and students can make any intervention. But in my
schooldays, you cannot interrupt the teacher”. Her established views of learning and teaching were meeting with new ideas. Adele was positive about her use of interactive strategies when teaching.

I think students [here] are more involved in the learning process. I think if students feel they’re involved in the learning process they will enjoy the class. I think that they would effectively learn something rather than receiving passively.

Nodoka spoke of valuing the new practices of group work and learning feedback from her peers for her own learning and reported that it has become part of her teaching practice. As a first year teacher at the time of this study, she felt that learning in her classroom happens when students “figure out the way of doing it or learn from others in my class”. She used group work with mixed ability groups in her music classes. “We have group performances. Also with a computer – you have to pair up and then you have to produce this stuff [music] together – they love it”.

In the same way Bohao valued the interactive nature of learning. “In ITE we need to interact with each other”. His learning in the ITE programme was helped when he could talk with others about underlying ideas. “Now I could understand why”.

Bohao applied these ideas to his own teaching.

Previously, I could only think of a few tools that would improve students’ learning … providing notes, using the OHT and whiteboard. [Now I can see] for the best learning outcome students need to be able to compare, construct and evaluate learning materials.

Shared discussion and construction of ideas were important ingredients for the learning he wanted for his pupils.

**Planning for learning**: Riarn’s teaching plans included practical work to involve students in their learning. “Every lesson – to learn something in practical way more than theoretically. So then if they touch it …. that’s gonna stay in their memory more”. Here he presents as a teacher
who plans for student involvement in learning rather than collecting and presenting the information himself. This represents a balance of existing and new ideas for him.

In contrast to the rote learning he experienced, Bohao thought teachers needed to plan according to student needs to find ways to engage students with new knowledge. He believed that a teacher should identify, “what will be the hardest part and why students get stuck. We are trying to approach to each other, find a point and link everything together. OK, that’s my dream”. Knowing his students’ individual learning needs he also felt would enhance teacher-pupil relationships.

**Relationships:** The importance of a positive teacher-pupil relationship for learning was identified by all participants. On the first day of her ITE programme Adele had been startled because her lecturer sat with the group of students while teaching. Fifteen weeks into the course she identified a change for herself from the authoritarian status of her own teachers, to one of mutual respect. “I think that it’s really important to create a rapport with the class. I think it plays a big role [in learning]”. That she reports applying this in her own teaching indicates her ability to make the transfer of learning to practice.

On the other hand, Adele also learned that relationships have to be managed and boundaries set. “I didn’t think I would have to use all this discipline strategy … but am finding it’s very useful”. Relationships but managed ones are important to Adele’s view of learning now.

Bohao also talked of his role as a teacher being enhanced by his personal experiences of the individual challenges that his OLC pupils might face.

For those students they need to learn English and they need to learn teaching materials. They need to get the English right but I can help a little bit. At least they can understand and they have more time and they won’t give up. You need to know them better.

He placed importance on positive relationships and the need for teachers to understand individual student needs. Bohao felt having OLC teachers would directly benefit the learning relationship for OLC pupils in New Zealand schools.
Bohao and Nodoka both felt a more interactive environment and the establishment of positive teacher – student relationships where a climate of trust is established would foster their students’ learning. Bohao preferred his students’ learning not to be hampered by the fear of making mistakes – quite different from his cultural background. “In Chinese culture we’re punished if we make a mistake, so people are scared to make a mistake”. He would like his students to be ready to take a risk and to be prepared to ask questions as active participants in his lessons. “So that’s how I am teaching. ‘Don’t worry,’ I say, ‘there is no stupid question’ ”.

Nodoka expressed a very similar viewpoint. “How not to make a mistake – that’s important in Japan. However, here it is OK that you’re to make a mistake and to learn from it”. Importantly, in Nodoka’s comment it is possible to read that she now viewed learning as something her pupils construct for themselves rather than being given information by a teacher. She wanted her pupils to be prepared to take risks and learn from the results whether they be right or wrong.

In her classroom, Nodoka says she likes to affirm positive behaviours. “Affirm early so they can’t do any bad thing because they’ve all been praised for what they are doing well”. She self-reports her new understanding of positive relationship building, abandoning the stern authoritarian teacher role of her own education. Her views on teacher identity, it would seem, are undergoing change.

**Comparing school cultures:** Awareness of differences in the school environment in New Zealand as compared to their home culture showed the processing of the participants’ new learning. This is reflected in Adele’s growing understanding of what it is to be a teacher in New Zealand. After her first Teaching Practice she made a comparison between two different cultures.

There are some rules here that are quite strict. That’s funny because in France the teaching like is more formal and more strict, but everything that happens outside the classroom is much more like lax. Yeah, I mean we don’t have uniforms, we can smoke in the school yard, but I mean there is not a lot of rule – if we have a free period we can just go out from the High School, yeah, much more lax than here. Here there is a uniform and you have to stay in the High School. But once
you are in the classroom I think that it is much more lax in New Zealand – like the way student deal with the teacher and the way that they express themselves. They can express themselves all the time.

A tension apparent for Adele as she encounters differences is her nostalgia perhaps for the out-of-class freedoms of French schools. On the other hand she is aware that in New Zealand students have more freedom in class to express their own ideas although this also has implications for behaviour management. This accords with her other views about the importance of classroom interactions in student-centred learning.

Adele also found a difference placed on the role of textbooks in classroom use.

Sometimes I have to adjust during my teaching practice – like for example the students they don’t take the textbook home. They just leave it here and it’s so different in France because they have the textbook and they have to bring all textbooks all the time.

It is possible to identify here that Adele was beginning to be aware of a difference in respect for the textbook as the authority or container of knowledge and the need to use other ways to teach in a different context. However, at this point her awareness seems to have gone no further. Opportunities for reflection on the implications of this would be beneficial for further development of her thinking.

**New understanding – old context:** A further perspective on their learning was gained by asking the participants if they could transfer their new understandings to teaching in their previous settings. Adele said,

> I think I would be quite different. I mean, having this experience now in New Zealand I think that that would change a lot of things if I had the opportunity to teach in France. I imagine that I would make it a bit more interactive.

This reflects a student who is coping with the emerging tensions between her existing and new pedagogical understandings and who does recognise a shift in her views
I also asked Nodoka if she felt she would later return to Japan to teach. She felt she would find it difficult to return to teach in Japan because of the different staffroom culture there. Part of this is her independent personality; part is her experience with New Zealand staffrooms.

It is quite different and I don’t think I would fit in the staffroom. I am too individual and independent. There is an expectation in a staffroom in Japan that a teacher would behave in a certain way. Older people have to leave it first. If you’re younger you have to stay, remain.

She also believed her new understandings of teaching and learning would not sit comfortably with the pedagogy there. “Still teacher-centred learning style over there – and how not to make a mistake is important thing”.

Nodoka is aware of the changes in her conceptions of teaching and learning. Her evolving identity as a teacher inhibits her desire to relocate as a teacher in her home country. For her there is no going back. It would seem that her decision to learn to be a teacher in another country has built a feeling of dislocation about her homeland. Such a feeling reinforces the importance of support for OLC students in ITE programmes.

**Incorporating tendrils from the past with new leaves**

Despite some evidence of new learning it is still possible to discern influences from the participants’ formative educational backgrounds. This may relate to the discomfort they are experiencing in a new educational culture. Some of the participants made comparisons with their own memories of school in their home country and noted aspects such as perceptions of poorer behaviour in New Zealand classrooms were noted. Martine, Jirina and Adele identified a lack of motivation and less of a sense of working for excellence in New Zealand students. Adele saw a resultant difference in academic standards.

I think the level of teachings would be higher from the expectation from the Teacher for Year 9 students in France than Year 9 New Zealand students. The curriculum there expects more.
Jirina also talked of better academic standards in Russian schools where, she said, “the education was really strong”.

A strong link to his memory of learning at school is Riarn’s commitment to using textbooks.

Teachers are using too much energy to find good resources. I think we should have one general textbook for each subject – it is important to have textbooks which are uniform – and if the teacher wants to give more he can give more.

Although Riarn still retains the idea of collecting knowledge in a book, there is not a total reliance on it. A teacher would be able, Riarn stated, to add extra material or resources to suit their teaching and learning goals. Here also is an incorporation of existing and new understandings.

Competition had been a dominant memory of Nodoka’s school experience. Given her talk about the importance of positive relationships and co-operative learning strategies in her music classes, it was interesting to hear about her use of competition in class.

I actually make them compete with each other by doing a lot of tests or competition. They have to get to the top of the top to get the chocolate fish or the reward.

This sounds more like using competition to motivate with fun rewards in contrast to her experiences of high pressure test result competition. However, her use of competition as a learning motivator suggested that the tendrils of her schooling experiences are still with her.

It may seem that Nodoka continued with the teacher-talk she had experienced but she used teacher talk combined with passion to inspire her students. “I talk about my subject with passion. I really do love this. And from my experience they love it.” Importantly she adds, “I try to let them do a lot of things more than I talk”.

“Doing” was important in her classes, “because they would learn by making mistakes”. In contrast to her native culture, Nodoka talks of encouraging her students to take risks, to try, as even if they get it wrong the attempt will lead to learning. It is possible to discern in Nodoka’s descriptions a blend of new and existing ideas.
As the participants learned to cope with the dissonances of two different educational cultures, tendrils of past understanding about teaching and learning were evident. Ideas about textbooks, competition, and teacher talk had not been completely thrown away but can be seen to be incorporated with their new understandings.

It was with these newly emerging understandings in mind that I prompted the participants to think about their future directions and where they might locate themselves as teachers.

**Location and Identity**

Thoughts of their future might have seemed tentative but those who responded to my question believed that their new thinking about teaching and learning had resulted in a realisation that they could not envisage themselves teaching back in their home country’s education system as they remembered it. In light of their changing identities of themselves as teachers, they no longer fitted with their old location.

Bohao emphasised that in Taiwan, there was pressure from families and schools to do well and the learning of formulas. This was not what he viewed as a constructive learning environment in which he would want to teach. It no longer fitted with his emerging identity of himself as a teacher.

Could I teach in Taiwan? I could but I'm trying not to. Would there be pressure on you to teach in a different way? Yeah, absolutely. Even from students. Because the whole environment is just so different from New Zealand’s environment. Because I could explain things step by step but the problem is the test will come tomorrow. They couldn’t do it without a formula and we have 10 formulas to go through today, and how could I go through each of them? That requires a whole change in the education system.

Nodoka felt no affinity for a return to an education system she remembered as pressured by high expectations of exam success, memorisation and teacher-centred delivery of content. She felt she would not fit socially or pedagogically in the staffroom of a school back home. Here is, perhaps, the link to the rebellious school girl of Chapter 3 who was not accepting of the norm. “I am too individual and independent. There is an expectation in a school staffroom that
a teacher would behave in a certain way”. Nor was she accepting of the “teacher-centred learning that is still over there.” Nodoka had adapted to a different learning environment. After her learning in ITE, New Zealand was where she locates and identifies herself as a teacher.

Jirina found it hard to speculate because she felt she had changed so much since she left Russia – personally and with new learning. “I have a completely different life and a different approach”. She felt also that it would depend on changes to teaching and learning in Russian schools that would have happened since she was there. She felt she could teach not in the Russian schools she remembered but perhaps in an International School there. New experiences have led to change. Her location as a teacher is New Zealand.

Adele, too, realised that her ITE learning in another country has changed her views on teaching. To teach in France, she reported would only be without compromising her new understandings.

No. I would be different after this experience of learning to teach in New Zealand. Change a lot of things – I guess I would be more interactive because I think it is important to create a rapport with the class. I think that plays a big role in passing on the knowledge. You learn something more effectively than just by receiving like a passive person.

Change for Adele has resulted in a re-conception of her identity as a teacher and the pedagogy she would employ.

At this stage in their learning journeys, the participants might be said to be in a state of transition with links to their previous and their new locations. It may be too early in their learning journey to call them border crossers yet but learning to teach in another language and culture had, even for current students in their first semester, altered their thinking and where they felt they could locate themselves as the sort of teacher they wanted to be.
Summary

In choosing to relocate geographically, the participants in this study met cultural, linguistic and pedagogical challenges in their new learning environment for which they were largely unprepared. Although their narratives showed they were used to change, the differences led to feelings, at times, of disorientation, heightened "otherness" and discomfort or unease.

Student involvement and interaction in learning was a new experience for them. Adjustment was required for new assessment practices, for differences in classroom behaviour patterns and for the culture shock of encountering Maori language and tikanga. These combined on Teaching Practice with the challenges of managing classes and the active practice of new teaching strategies.

Despite a lack of organised recognition or support from their ITE programme, these OLC students were willing to adjust, learn and apply their new understandings. There was evidence of past ideas blending with new understandings. A developing understanding of establishing learning environments using interactive, co-operative learning activities, where students are given choices and the establishment of positive teacher-student relationships was seen as important. In addition, despite their continuing sense of dissonance it was in New Zealand, with new pedagogies, that they located themselves as future teachers.

Both the barriers to learning that were uncovered and the articulation of the new understandings that were developed carry implications for the construction, organisation and content of the ongoing future development of ITE programme involved in this study. The participants' own recommendations for improving OLC student pathways in ITE are reported in the next chapter.
Chapter Five: ITE Programme Support

The previous chapter focused on the participants’ learning journey in ITE. This chapter looks to the future and presents the findings of my fourth research sub-question which focused on what could be done to support the learning of OLC students in an ITE programme in New Zealand. It presents the participants’ identification of practical supportive steps that an ITE programme could initiate.

Recommendations for an ITE programme

I encouraged my participants, based on their experiences so far, to talk about how they felt a future ITE programme could better accommodate the needs of OLC students. They suggested proactive assistance to OLC students in the form of programme initiatives and self-help steps. They also identified aspects of the programme that were beneficial to their learning and which should therefore be maintained and extended.

Establishing a Foundation Course

I initially mooted the concept of a Foundation Course held before the Graduate Diploma Course began. All the participants viewed this positively although there were concerns about length of the course, the time it would take, the cost and whether it would be compulsory. It was felt, especially by those participants with children, that a Foundation Course would ideally run for one or two weeks before the main course. It should not be compulsory for a student with previous experience in New Zealand and the cost should not be a burden or deterrent.

The primary Foundation Course foci suggested were language and cultural studies—such as coverage of the historical development of schools and educational thinking in New Zealand, introduction to Treaty of Waitangi issues and Maori culture, an introduction to youth culture in New Zealand and orientation visits to New Zealand secondary schools. The course was also seen as a way of giving social support for the new students, settling them in and helping overcome the feelings of disorientation typical of their first weeks, introduction to new language and a different school culture and some curriculum content revision.
Social support and belonging: For Riarn, an important emphasis on the Foundation Course would be orientation and settling in, acknowledging that this is a strange new world for OLC students.

Like to actually relax those students because they are—well, I was in the first 2 weeks, wondering what am I doing here? ..... relax them, give them more confidence.

Adele echoed this idea because, “at the beginning of the year I was scared actually.”

Nodoka thought a social gathering would be helpful initially to relax and introduce people. A Foundation Course would begin to create a feeling of ‘belonging’ to a group and a place of learning.

Language support: As Chapter 4 demonstrated, coping with new social and academic vocabulary, along with shifts in language nuances and subtleties, was a major challenge for all participants. Language support on a Foundation Course would vary from pronunciation work to an introduction to the vocabulary of educational concepts and jargon that would underpin the ITE programme, as well as what was called ‘classroom language’.

Nodoka and Jirina put an emphasis on help with pronunciation. “Have an English lesson on how you pronounce the words and how you use them in this language.” Riarn also would include a focus on everyday classroom language pronunciation and meaning. “Teaching words you have to use in class.” Nodoka spoke of familiarisation with “kiwi language – a slang lesson would be quite nice.” They hoped that language support would help to overcome language challenges later in the ITE course.

Showing her familiarity with rote learning, Nodoka suggested a list of educational vocabulary to use during the ITE course that “you could go back to”. I asked her if she would give that list to students or encourage them, in a student-centred approach, to build their own list as they encountered the words in class. She felt that a prepared list would be helpful for OLC students. “You say to the student, ‘It’s really up to you to check your dictionary list’”. As Chapter 4 highlights, the tendrils of past understandings about teaching remain. The concept of the
teacher predetermining, rather than the student identifying their needs, was still strong for Nodoka.

**Introducing a new school culture:** Another barrier encountered that could be addressed by a Foundation Course was the lack of experience and knowledge of the organisation and culture of NZ schools. There was strong support for an orientation visit to schools as part of this course. Adele agreed because, "I didn’t have prior knowledge— I didn’t know it was Year 9 or 10. I mean sort of like Chinese to me”. Riam also favoured this proposal. "I never been in a New Zealand school before. I didn’t know how that worked. We had different, different education.”

Generally the group felt that being able to visit some classes, to see how the school day was organised, what the expected roles of students and teachers were, observe New Zealand teenagers together and experience the daily life cycle of a school on an Observation Day Visit to a school would give them a context for their new learning.

Nodoka suggested the Foundation Course should also include a history of education in New Zealand. “History of the background – how it’s become, right now. And then where we’re headed currently.” Such an introduction both to the past developments and to current practices like the assessment system would provide background preparation for their ITE learning.

**Curriculum content:** An academic focus was also suggested. In Chapter 4 some participants described their feelings of insecurity in their subject area because of time away from study. Riam, Jirina and Martine favoured an opportunity to update and re-familiarise curriculum content knowledge. Riam recommended familiarisation with the curriculum document and with library use and IT research skills. Such background skills, often incorrectly assumed as familiar to OLC students, were seen as being beneficial to OLC students once the ITE course had begun.

Participants agreed that the establishment of a Foundation Course would have several benefits in easing the transition to a new course of learning in a new culture and language. Challenges or barriers to learning identified in this study, such as language, organisation and historical development of school systems, unfamiliarity with methods of course delivery and teaching,
and cultural differences, could be directly addressed on such a course. The stories of the people in this study revealed that assumptions about prior learning or ease of assimilation of new cultures, pedagogies and languages were incorrect.

**Establishing a Support Group**

Some of the participants mentioned the idea of a Support Group and if not, I introduced it to others in the interview conversations. A Support Group was envisaged as a regular meeting of OLC students and support teaching staff. The participants saw several benefits.

**Sharing:** Riam felt it would benefit OLC students to be able to share their experiences and perhaps help each other solve any difficulties in a student-centred way.

More conversation ... we need more work together with students because everyone is different – they have different problems and they can bring one problem each to solve that way. They can learn more that way.

**Belonging:** Riam felt the Support Group would also help new OLC students on their first days in the programme, where in his experience, he felt like an outsider.

On the first day I saw all the young people and they talking, talking. They know each other and I was a little bit confused because first I saw those kids – they come out from the university, straight here, with fresh knowledge for everything. I am behind. I have to learn new terms – different words in different situations.

He felt that feelings of not fitting in and being disadvantaged by difference would be eased by belonging to a Support Group.

**Empathy:** Bohao saw this Support Group as having particular advantages for OLC students shy about sharing problems publically or in a class where they might be the only OLC student. In the Support Group, “we can speak out our difficulty. I wouldn’t ask this sort of question in Profs (Professional Studies) because others are local, they don’t have these issues.” He felt the members of the Support Group would be able to empathise and help because they understood and possibly shared the same feelings.
Cultural barriers opened: Bohao, like Riarn, saw this as a student-centred group which worked through their challenges together. “Let people share and work it out amongst themselves.” Bohao also saw an OLC Support Group as being a catalyst to overcoming such cultural challenges such as Chinese students being afraid to take risks or share problems in case of a perception of weakness.

Actually I know for Kiwi people, they don’t really care if you speak wrongly or have a grammar issue. Chinese people think differently. We think, ‘Oh if I say something wrong that could be a big mistake and people don’t like mistake so we better say nothing’. In Western culture it’s OK to make a mistake but in Eastern culture because we’re punished if we make mistake, so people are scared to make mistake.

In his culture, reticence about speaking in front of others is compounded by the fear of loss of reputation as well as the fear of being seen as disrespectful by testing a teacher’s idea. A Support Group would make it “safer” place to share feelings and challenges to learning.

Reciprocal learning: Given the possibility of their lecturers not being aware of some cultural differences or the learning barriers faced by OLC students, Bohao saw that the Support group could also give feedback to the lecturing staff.

They can say, ‘Oh, OK, yes, that’s a good question because I don’t experience such things like they do. Maybe we can come up with some real help, some solutions to deal with it’.

Such lecturer awareness would help, others thought, during the ‘settling in’ phase when OLC students had to also cope with language, vocabulary and cultural differences. There was a need at this time for lecturers to be cognisant of the need for some extra time allowance for OLC students.

Self-help advice

The participants in this study did not cast themselves as victims. Their stories reveal that they were used to change and challenge. Several of the participants felt future students could take
some proactive preparations themselves such as doing as much reading in English as possible to get used to the language, talk in English with New Zealanders as much as possible or make a point of watching TV News to help their spoken English skills. They suggested reviewing content specific reading before the course as there would be little time for this once they were busy on the ITE programme.

Perhaps Adele sums up the attitude of the participants with her advice.

Just absorb. Even if you don’t understand at first ... not like to have a stress reaction ... take it easy and say, ‘Even if I don’t understand I’ll still be alive tomorrow’. And just say, ‘OK, people are not judging me here.’ If you are really stuck with something you just have to see your Profs Studies lecturer and he or she will be pleased to just explain.

She felt that if a student was “from a country where the teaching is very formal – just get ready to be interactive when learning and teaching. Contrast the advantages.”

Their suggestions of proactive self-help measures highlighted the resiliency and initiative of these independent adults who have learned to deal with challenges and change. They recognised aspects of the programme which they felt could be developed as they were positive and beneficial to their learning.

**Positive Support in the Existing Programme**

The participants described three aspects of the current programme in particular that they valued as supporting and helping their learning. These related to Teaching Practice, Professional Studies and lecturer-student relationships. However, they are not exclusive of other aspects of the programme. Had I directed questions to them, they may have received attention also.

**Teaching Practice:** Despite the associated language, school culture and time challenges, the participants described Teaching Practice mostly as a beneficial learning experience because it provided firsthand experience with the culture of schools, and gave opportunities to practise their new learning.
Martine found it cemented her decision to be a teacher.

I was a bit worried before the first teaching practice because I was really wondering, ‘Am I going to enjoy it?’ But it’s cool. It’s the nature of the experience and I learned to follow curriculum. It actually went very well and I have actually enjoyed it.

They placed importance on having supportive Teaching Associates in their placement schools. Bahao appreciated the support he got. “I found supporting staff. I think that’s very important especially for those who lack confidence in teaching. We need that. We do need some support.” The mentoring of her associates was positive for Jirina too. “All the teachers helpful and the girls very good behave.” Nodoka valued the modelling of positive teacher-student relationships by her second associate, “I thought I want to work like her.”

This supportive mentoring role is important for OLC students who often feel that they are swimming with difficulty in new and unfamiliar waters, at least on their first Teaching Practice.

**Professional Studies:** The Professional Studies course received particular and favourable mention in all the interviews. They believed that both the course and the lecturers gave positive support as well as consistent stimulus to learning. It was in ‘Profs’, as it is known, that the students felt many of their challenges or barriers to learning were able to be addressed and shared. The positive mentoring role of their ‘Profs’ lecturers was very important. They valued the supportive “pastoral care” relationship with these lecturers who were seen as important models for the pedagogical theories and strategies introduced in the learning programme.

Bohao spoke strongly about the modelling role of his ‘Profs’ lecturer. “She teaches the way that shows the way that we should teach our students. She sets a very good example of how to manage a class and how to present learning.” Adele found that her “very supportive” relationship with her ‘Profs’ lecturer was an important factor for her in accommodating to the programme and new ideas.

Martine valued the opportunities to discuss matters as a group in ‘Profs’, to share and build understanding of new issues. “It’s more thinking about trying to anticipate the problems that
you're going to face and think about it and try to find a solution.” Likewise the advantage of 'Profs' for Rian was that it gave him shared opportunities to build his confidence with oral presentation skills. “Professional Studies was good because you talk in front of your colleagues. We work very well in group.” He found the use of student-centred group construction of learning, though unusual at first, was an environment in which he was able to learn.

Participants valued the Professional Studies course for its facilitation of learning with the encouragement of students to think critically, evaluate and build their own philosophies of teaching and learning. Bahao said,

I think Profs Studies helps me to understand the “why”, the philosophy of teaching. It tells me a kind of general concept or general theory. OK – even although that doesn’t really fit me perfectly it definitely get me some guidance. I could decide, ‘OK I didn’t agree with that.’ It’s OK. Now I understand. So every time [my Profs lecturer] taught me I rethink why she said this word and after my teaching practice I think all the time. So I get, “Oh that’s why she said that. How do I apply and how could I use this sort of skills?

Making a comparison with another ITE programme, Nodoka felt students on her ITE programme were advantaged over the other she knew of because, on her course the learning and thinking were facilitated and given time to develop in a supportive Professional Studies environment not just on Teaching Practice.

Although I did not probe about any negative views of ‘Profs’, neither were any discussed with me. I am aware that this may, of course, have been out of respect for my position as a lecturer in the programme. Nevertheless, Professional Studies was given high importance as a support and model of learning for OLC students in this study.

**Positive Relationships:** Repeating an earlier motif that runs through these research findings, several participants talked of the importance for them of relationships with their lecturers especially their Professional Studies lecturer. Adele remembered her first day on the course
vividly as, “wow, so different.” Her lecturer was not formal and removed. She spoke positively of all her ITE lecturers as “pleasant, helpful and supportive”.

This modelling would seem to have carried over into the participants’ teaching too. Bohao reported practising similar positive relationship-building in his own teaching. He said, “I get the feeling – this is what a supportive teacher would be like. And I get the feeling that I can do it.” Nodoka spoke of her positive relationship with her own students. “It is important to me as teacher to have this one on one relationship… you know I just affirm.”

Likewise Adele felt that she would apply the modelling of her ITE lecturers. That her ITE lecturers would try to understand a student’s accent or their fumbling efforts to express an idea was something she carried into her own practice. “I think the teacher should always try to understand what a student is trying to express, even if it doesn’t make sense (initially) for the teacher… I think the teacher should give this effort.”

As Chapter 3 revealed, when talking of their own schooling, none of these students was able to speak of a teacher-student relationship that they remembered positively. Their previous education gave them a perception of a teacher’s role in the classroom as the stern controller. In contrast to this, they now valued the modeling of positive relationships by their ITE lecturers. Not only did they feel it enhanced their own learning but they also talked of it as being part of their own teaching practice. Again it is possible to see a shift in the participants’ perspective of teaching and learning as a result of their ITE experience.

**Summary**

This chapter has included what the participants of this study identified individually but shared in common in terms of ways to facilitate and support OLC students both before and during an ITE course. In their opinion the challenges and barriers to learning faced by this group of ITE students could be specifically addressed with the establishment of a Foundation Course, a Support Group and by retaining of aspects of the course identified commonly as positive.

The people in this study located themselves as future teachers in New Zealand schools. It is the responsibility of ITE course providers to plan for and consider their particular learning
needs. Whilst the immediate benefit is the learning of OLC students, the long term benefit is for New Zealand students and their learning in New Zealand schools.

In the next chapter I consider the implications of these findings for ITE. Although the implications are grounded in the ITE programme in which this study was located, they do, however, raise wider questions for programme design for other ITE programmes which include students from languages and cultures different to their own.
Chapter Six: Discussion

This chapter draws together the threads and patterns discerned from the stories of six OLC students embarked on a journey of Initial Teacher Education. The findings are linked to my fifth research sub-question relating to the implications of my study's findings for ITE programmes. Discussion focuses on challenges and issues concerning OLC students learning to be teachers and the implications of these for ITE that are both specific to the programme that is the context of this research and more generally for other ITE programmes. At the end of the chapter, I discuss the strengths and limitations of my research journey and suggest starting points for further investigation.

Learning Challenges for OLC Students

This study identified four main challenges in the ITE experience of the participating OLC students which affected their learning experiences. These challenges resonate with other studies of learning to be a teacher in a new country.

Firstly the discomfort and unease experienced by OLC students in this study confirms the findings of other research into the feelings and emotions of migrant students who cross borders to be educated in a new country; namely that the challenges and differences encountered lead to feelings of discomfort, unease and dislocation (Dickie, 2000; Fa’afioi & Fletcher, 2001; Haritos, 2004; Robertson, Line, Jones & Thomas, 2000; Tennant, 2007; Wideen et al., 1998). From their previous educational experiences, the participants in my study expected lecture-style delivery, an emphasis on curriculum content and a formal teacher-student relationship. Instead, they met unfamiliar student-centred classes where they worked in groups to construct their own understandings, played what seemed to be games, encountered new school and social cultures and interacted with their teachers in ways that initially seemed too informal. Unfamiliarity with language – academic, social and classroom-orientated – affected both workload issues and learning and adjustment on Teaching Practice. Each difference presented a challenge to learning in ways for which they had not been prepared or assisted.
Cultural challenge was a second aspect which supported the findings from other studies (Peeler & Jane 2005, Cruickshank, 2004, Fa’afaoi & Fletcher, 2003, Streeter, 2002). Feelings of discomfort accompanied these social and cultural challenges as the participants were identifiably different – some in appearance and all by accent – so they initially felt like outsiders. Such discomfort was heightened by the overlay of Te Reo and tikanga. Encountered on Day One with no preparation, the powhiri and hongi were unexpected, confusing, and alien to them. Clearly what is natural to the “natives” of a country needs introduction, adjustment time and focus for newcomers.

A third aspect impacting on the learning of OLC students was school culture and language. It was clear that the students’ prior academic qualifications were an insufficient basis for building new understandings about becoming a teacher in a new country (Ovenall-Carter, 2003; Peeler & Jane, 2005; Remenick, 2002). This need to understand the social and organisational elements of learning and teaching within the local context has been noted in many studies. The OLC students in my study experienced discomfort and unease with the need for behaviour management, with New Zealand teenage vernacular and with unfamiliar classroom language. The organisation of classes and the school day as well as differences in practice and teaching culture also caused feelings of discomfort. However, participant description of preparation for Teaching Practice in the ITE programme shows an assumption that all students were familiar with New Zealand school culture and language.

Pedagogical change was a fourth aspect. My study revealed that for some students the challenges posed by constructivist learning pedagogies were confusing; for others they were initially threatening enough to create barriers to learning. The view that learning and knowledge are socially constructed rather than transmitted from teacher to student required adjustment for my participants. All identified unfamiliarity with the terminology of the new pedagogy and with student-centred collaborative learning activities as barriers to learning but no-one reported specific support from within the programme. Other studies in ITE, such as Streeter (2002), and Cruickshank (2004), and studies in tertiary education, such as Mack (2004), and Scheyvens, Wild & Overton (2003) report a similar lack of support for OLC students adjusting to a new pedagogy. Participants reported in my study that there seemed to be little recognition of their different learning backgrounds or consideration given to
scaffolding ways to help them adjust to new learning strategies or to understand unfamiliar competency-based assessment. They were a minority group within the programme whose special needs and learning challenges were not being addressed.

These findings would support concerns about the learning of those who can be referred to a border crossers. The term “border crosser” (O’Loughlin, 1992, p.791) has been used to describe students who move from one belief or cultural system to another. In the process they may straddle both beliefs as shown by my participants. Research into science education for OLC secondary school students who are border crossers, points to the need to make the differences encountered explicit for students. This can be achieved through discussion and with acknowledgement of the two systems of understanding (Coben & Aikenhead, 1998). My study has found that if there is an expectation that OLC students will cope without explicit introduction, then pedagogical change can be a barrier to learning.

Studies by Allard and Santoro (2001) and Gupta (1995) point to a need for ITE to focus on cognitive change – fostering new understandings of teaching and learning. In their study with OLC university students in Australia, Robertson, Line, Jones and Thomas (2000) argue that identifying the difficulties faced is not enough to prevent the establishment of a deficit model for OLC students. The implication for New Zealand ITE is that the reduction or prevention of deficit positioning for OLC students requires both recognition of learning issues and the taking of active steps to challenge mainstream assumptions that ‘one size fits all’. The participants of this study have identified ways to facilitate pedagogical border crossing for OLC students in ITE through addressing learning issues, making programme initiatives and using specific teaching strategies.

**Learning Issues**

Three issues are pertinent to learning in this study. These are the role of prior experience, the resistance of stable beliefs and the possibility of shifts in understanding. They highlight continuing challenges for ITE programmes that aim to support a diversity of learners.

*The role of prior experiences:* Teacher thinking and actions cannot be separated from their personal socio-historical past (Cole, 1991; Goodson, 1983; Knowles, 1992). Several pertinent
factors emerged from the study’s narratives which highlight the ways participants actively constructed their ideas about learning and began to shape their identities as future teachers. My study endorses Clandinin and Connelly’s (2007) claim for ‘narrative unity’. Each of the participants had brought with them beliefs and attitudes about teaching and learning that had been built during their earlier years of education in their respective homelands. These beliefs inevitably coloured how they viewed teaching and learning. Florio-Ruane (2001) suggests that these existing understandings have formed both who they are as people and their evolving identity as teachers and learners.

However, in contrast to previously published findings about reasons for going teaching, (Knowles, 1993; Olsen, 2008), none of my participants mentioned positive relationships with their teachers or remembered an inspirational teacher from their past. They did recognise the negative effect on their learning of poor relationships with their teachers. Although, for some, the reasons for becoming a teacher were pragmatic - suiting the demands of parenthood or the need for a different job - other reasons can be linked to the importance the participants placed on relationships, both positive and negative, in their own prior learning contexts. Reasons offered such as enjoying helping others, a desire to work with young people and identification of their people skills, have each contributed to their emerging teacher identities.

Similarly, it was clear in their early written assignment that the participants’ thinking about teaching was ‘transmission orientated’. Phrases such as “giving information”, “passing on knowledge”, and “quantitative increase in knowledge” indicate a view of knowledge as already predetermined, to be packaged by the teacher for delivery to learners whose role was to accept, learn and show mastery in a formal test. Common experiences of teacher-centred pedagogies, the pressures of teacher power status as the basis of teacher-student relationships, the need to memorise knowledge and facts to meet the demands of frequent testing and exam results lay as the basis of their existing beliefs about teaching and learning. Whether these existing understandings are open or resistant to change in an ITE programme is relevant to my research.

The participants’ narratives show their ability to accept and initiate change. Not only were the participants used to change in their lives but five of the six were prepared to challenge their
education system and initiate change if they believed their learning was at risk. This proactive ability to question teaching and learning and to initiate change can be seen as a positive precursor for the journey they underwent in ITE where they had to evaluate, question, and consider a change in belief. Thus familiarity with and the ability to initiate change can be seen as important precursors of the construction of new learning in ITE.

**Resistance and shifts:** This study stands within the context of a body of other research which questions the lasting effect of any new understandings about teaching and learning. The study’s findings challenge some of this research and highlight nuances and subtleties in student beliefs and their resistance or ability to change.

Some researchers have presented arguments that position prior knowledge as resistant to new ideas. It is argued that existing beliefs that learners are comfortable with, are held implicitly, and act as filters to select what a learner gives attention to and to how the learning of new ideas is shaped (Bullough, 1990; Ethell & McMeniman, 2002; Lortie, 1975; Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon, 1998).

This particular study offers both findings that support previous literature and those that prompt a more positive perspective. Both the students in their first semester and the graduates in their first year of teaching revealed beliefs which were resistant to change along with others that exhibited some shifts in understanding.

Some views exhibited resistance to change. Nodoka’s idea of being given a list of terminology to learn without a context, the importance of textbooks for Riarn and Adele, and Martine’s discomfort with competency-based assessment illustrate this. An enduring underlying belief lingered with some of the participants, that higher academic standards are achieved by exam results in teacher dominated pedagogies. Others saw a lack of motivation in NZ school students and felt competition for exam rankings would alter this.

Tensions and dissonances created by new experiences can make the integration of new thinking and practice difficult. This study found limited programme recognition of ways to actively acknowledge or make OLC student's entrenched beliefs explicit. Likewise they reported little attempt to facilitate shifts in understanding about teaching and learning.
Recognition of special needs requires programme support both in ITE and thereafter in schools employing OLC teachers.

**Shifts in understanding:** On the other hand, the findings of this study would suggest that theories such as the ‘inflexibility’ of student prior knowledge (Bullough, 1990; Kagan, 1992) and the assertion that training programmes are not very powerful interventions (Borko & Putnam, 1995; Calderhead & Robinson, 1991; Ethell & McMeniman, 2002; Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon, 1998) do not paint a complete picture. In contrast to the body of research supporting the negative view that existing understandings are intractable and resistant, the findings of this study would support a more positive view already found in two other studies. As with Haworth (1998) in NZ and Nettle (1998) in Australia, this study found evidence of both stability and change in the beliefs about learning held by OLC students in ITE.

Although some beliefs remained stable for some, this study indicates that, in contrast to their teacher-centred schooling, all the participants valued collaborative, interactive learning experiences in their ITE course. Moreover, they showed willingness to adopt and explore new ideas and pedagogical approaches. The participants talked of planning interactive, student-centred strategies as scaffolds for learning in their lessons. They recognised and practised the importance for learning of building positive relationships with their students. Competition, when used, was for fun, not for ranking of test scores. Several participants, in contrast to their original beliefs that knowledge is transmitted by the teacher and the student’s role is to receive and adopt, talked of encouraging students in their classrooms to take risks, to test their own ideas, to participate in the construction of new learning.

Although three of the participants were still in the ITE programme and were clearly still grappling with new ideas, this was balanced by the inclusion of the three first year teachers. Both groups were able to both talk about their new ideas and to give examples of how they applied them in practice in their classrooms. However, a follow-up study, focused on OLC students in their first years of teaching, could extend these findings which remain tentative and indicative at this point.

It is also relevant to recognise that teacher education is not a one year programme. In New Zealand, ITE is not completed until after two years teaching in schools. Change in
understanding and belief takes time (Pajares, 1992), social interaction (Vygotsky, 1986) and experience. One year in an ITE programme is not sufficient time needed for processing change. Further teaching experience, with good mentoring programmes in the first years of teaching and with continued reflective self-study, will maintain the developing shifts of beliefs begun in ITE for these students.

Further evidence of shifting beliefs is that, as ‘border crossers’ coping with two belief systems, despite their growing identity of themselves as facilitators of learning in student-centred classrooms, most participants could not locate themselves back in the context of their homeland schools. They felt they had relocated cognitively as well as geographically; for them there was no going back.

**Implications for ITE**

Pro-active, direct action within an ITE programme both before and during the course, is needed to address the particular needs of a non-mainstream group of students whose learning and social needs have not been given direct attention previously. Specific programme initiatives suggested include the establishment of a Foundation Course and a Support Group for OLC students, as well as several targeted teaching strategies. In the conclusion, discussion also refers to challenges that need to be made to perspectives of ITE by programme designers if effective change is to be made.

**Programme initiatives**

A *Foundation Course*, scheduled before the main ITE course, would give attention to cultural, linguistic, and pedagogical differences and to anticipated barriers to learning. A lens that sees OLC students as border crossers is a positive one as it recognises initiative and resilience but also indicates a need for programme support during transition. Such a course could address stress factors associated with the change and difference and ease the passage to new learning.

One of the purposes of a Foundation Course would be to introduce OLC students to New Zealand culture, Te Reo and tikanga and the importance of the Treaty of Waitangi as well as
raising student awareness of research into the importance of the cultural context with learning (Bishop et al, 2003; Vygotsky, 1986). Prior observation experience in NZ schools would establish an awareness base on which to build learning in the ITE course. In addition, a Foundation Course would facilitate experience of different pedagogical approaches methods of learning and assessment before the year began and deal proactively with learning barriers identified in this and in other related studies (Fa’afioi & Fletcher, 2001; Scheyvens, Wild & Overton, 2003; Syme & Nicholson, 2005).

A Support Group was suggested to provide ongoing, year-long support for international students. Mutual support would address social, emotional and cultural needs thereby alleviating feelings of dislocation and discomfort members might be feeling as outsiders and newcomers (Fa’afioi & Fletcher, 2001; Kim, 2006; Streeter, 2002). Such a group could also celebrate successes and diversity giving OLC students a positive and higher profile in the programme. Staff members who would be encouraged to join would gain a deeper understanding of the perspectives of students from different cultural and pedagogical backgrounds.

**Targeted Teaching Strategies**

Opportunities in ITE to facilitate shifts in thinking by OLC students about teaching and learning should be fostered and scaffolded. Strategies include opportunities for interactive learning, modelling good practice, recognition of existing understandings, allocating time for reflective practice and retaining positive mentoring relationships especially in Professional Studies.

**Interactive learning:** Refinement and restructuring of early beliefs occur gradually as conceptual change is challenging and needs developmental time (Gergen, 2000; Pajares, 1992) to test, talk, adopt or reject new ideas. Vygotsky (1986) advocated the role of social interaction in the transformation of prior knowledge. Thus OLC learners would benefit from ITE programmes that facilitate learning with interactive pedagogies such as group work, collaborative activities and the use of co-operative learning strategies. Reinforcing this view is the fact that all participants valued the learning opportunities of interactive Professional Studies classes. This presents a challenge in a tertiary culture where financial cost cutting is
increasingly sought through an increasing allocation of teaching time to large group lecture style delivery.

**Modelling good practice:** The participants report that they were expected to cope with language challenges on their own. This may be because the higher numbers of OLC students in ITE has been a more recent trend for which change has not developed. Similarly, there is an apparent assumption that all students have had previous experience of student-centred learning. Models of good practice are helpful for learners (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Sadler, 1998). In preparing teachers for student-centred teaching in ethnically diverse classrooms, it would be helpful for ITE lecturers to maintain the frequency of modelling co-operative teaching strategies.

**Acknowledging existing understandings:** As other studies show, strategies that explicitly acknowledge existing perspectives as a basis for building new concepts foreground an awareness of the basis on which new knowledge is to be constructed (Glaserfeld, 1984; Resnick, 1983; Roschelle, 1995). However, this was not made explicit in the ITE programme of this study. Indeed, in many ways, by engaging in this research study the participants were advantaged by the reflective exploration of their thinking about teaching and learning. Direct exploration by OLC students of ways to acknowledge their own standpoint and that of others will also support a deeper metacognitive awareness in their ITE learning.

**Reflective Practice:** A chance for reflection and evaluative awareness is an important part of the learning process if the learning is to be effectively transferred from experience to conscious awareness and practice (Ethell & McMeniman, 2002; Moon, 1999; Schon, 1991). With increased awareness of the efficacy of technological advances to support learning (Otrel-Cass, Forret & Taylor, 2009; Phelps & Ellis, 2003; Selwyn, Gorard & Furlong, 2006) much of this reflection could be done on-line with the establishment of interactive reflection communities such as blogs and wikis. The Foundation Course, with in-course discussion and assignments, and with participation in socially-interactive technology could facilitate reflective practice on shifting interpretations of learning.

**The Role of Positive Relationships:** It was clear that positive relationships played a significant role in the ITE learning of these OLC students. The study confirms the importance
of shared learning experiences with supportive teachers in a graduate ITE course. The participants reported on the positive effects of their Professional Studies lecturers' preparedness to work with classes to establish a community of learners and the ethics of care that they modelled. All participants felt their learning was fostered and supported by the student-centred, interactive learning strategies used in course delivery, by their lecturers' modelling of teaching skills and by the building of positive relationships between lecturers and students. These both modelled the pedagogy recommended and created the engagement necessary for active learning. Although not part of their earlier educational experiences, participants spoke now of the importance for learning of positive relationships (Hattie, 2009) and acknowledged this as part of their developing teacher identity. Moreover, they reported a willingness to include it in their own practice. Any ITE programme looking to restructure course delivery in a new research-driven university environment should pay attention to these considerations and explore ways to retain what is identified as valuable.

The figure [Figure 1] on the following page summarises challenges, findings and implications of the study.
Learning to Teach in another Language and Culture

The challenges –
* How to support OLC students’ special learning needs?
* How to shift existing entrenched beliefs about teaching and learning?
* How to ensure that ITE makes a positive difference for OLC students?

This study found –
* OLC students often invisible and unheard
* Little direct programme support for special OLC learning needs
* Some beliefs are resistant but there is evidence of shifts of understanding in student thinking and in their reports of classroom practice.
* Proactive planning and support in an ITE programme is needed to meet OLC learning challenges and prevent deficit views.

Implications for ITE

Programme initiatives –
* Foundation course
* Support group

Teaching strategies –
* Interactive learning
* Modelling good practice
* Positive relationships
* Acknowledge prior learning
* Reflective self-study practice
* Positive mentoring relationships

Perspective change –
* End hegemonic views
* End assumptions of “one size fits all”
* Value diversity

Figure 1: Summary Diagram
Limitations of this Study and Suggestions for Further Research

As this is a bounded case study which took place in one programme of ITE with six OLC students, the findings are particular. Other programmes may already incorporate teaching strategies and programme initiatives recommended by this study. Yet, while I would hesitate to claim general application beyond a specific programme, my reading of related research suggests that generally there has not been specific, proactive attention paid to supporting the learning of OLC students across a range of contexts.

The six participants were varied by age, ethnicity, language, culture, nationality and curriculum specialisation. Three participants were current students in the programme and two of the three who had graduated in the previous year, were now teaching in New Zealand schools. This balance and variety suggests that the results might be accepted as indicators for other ITE programmes. The results take their place alongside other research studies (see Chapter 1) and confirm, challenge and supplement these.

I have been aware of the limitations of having only one researcher. The study was limited to one project in one context and was open to the limitations of my positioning. My awareness of these limitations has been discussed in Chapter 2. In balance, my positioning provided a lens which had the potential to both obscure a perspective and illuminate it. I brought my own particular perspective to the study. However, at the same time my experience and viewpoint provided a grounded understanding.

My experience as teacher educator working with OLC students gave me an understanding of the participants’ situation and an insider viewpoint of their experiences in ITE. The complexity of learning for OLC students in ITE deserves a variety of lenses in further research. Additional case studies of OLC students could look for comparisons with the findings of this one. One extension would be to follow a group of OLC students in their first two years of teaching and examine their thinking and pedagogical practice over time in a busy teaching context. The nature and the sustainability of discernible shifts in understanding require further research, as does investigation into effective ways of achieving this. The use of social-networking ICT technologies, in conjunction with other pedagogical practices, can offer
rich insights into shifts in thinking and the tension between existing and newly challenging ideas. This warrants further study.

Overseas studies into the ITE experiences of OLC migrant teachers also report the difficulty of adjusting to the first year of teaching in a new culture (Elbaz-Luwisch, 1997; Ovenall-Carter, 2003; Peeler & Jane, 2005). This is supported by the informal study by Syme & Nicholson (2005) and by an article in the PPTA News (2006), both of which reveal the difficulties faced gaining employment in New Zealand schools by teachers whose first language is not English. Further research is needed into the reasons principals in secondary schools are reluctant to employ OLC teachers and into what their particular challenges and barriers are as teachers in NZ schools. This in turn, will inform ITE programmes working to prepare OLC students for a teaching career in New Zealand schools.

My Learning in the Research Process: My engagement with the research process has been a learning journey for me. One of the frustrations for me as researcher has proven to be the limitations imposed by my time frame. Were I to do this study again I have learned that building in time to do follow-up interviews to clarify ideas, responses and issues that arose for me as I read through the transcripts and began to write. Perhaps shortening the first interview would encourage the participants to share time with me for a second interview.

The learning journey means that I have a stronger awareness of the relationship between design, chosen methodology, methods and findings. To me one of the strengths of qualitative research is that it takes place in the real world rather than in the controlled situations of empirical research where variables can be eliminated to focus on one aspect of investigation only. “Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p.325). I am interested in teacher-research as a way of developing new understandings based on the interpretations and constructions of experiences by the people in the world in which I also work and study.

I have also come to appreciate the strengths of narrative inquiry as a method of uncovering some of the nuances of lived experiences. I have learned the value of time for planning, reading, data gathering, interpretation, and writing. I am aware too that the journey is not over; there are other doors to be opened and other research paths that could be followed.
Conclusion

I began this study hoping to turn up the volume on the often unheard voices of a group of students who are becoming increasingly significant in ITE in New Zealand. Underpinning this focus is a values position that just as we need more Maori and Pasifika teachers in New Zealand schools to reflect the growing numbers of Maori and Pasifika students (TeachNZ, 2009), we also need more OLC teachers to reflect the growing ethnic and linguistic diversity of pupils in our changing school culture. This does however, present challenges for ITE.

One challenge is to ITE programmes which maintain hegemonic power and limit any capacity to be more inclusive. Some of the barriers for OLC students identified in this study seem to be based on the implicit belief that one of the roles a society gives teachers is to represent and replicate the views and values of the dominant culture (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2001). Any hegemonic society looks first to its own members to fulfil this role. Yet in the diverse school population of today, schools need to do more than replicate the existing culture. Indeed, perspectives that value and encourage diversity are more relevant. From a perspective of social justice ITE programme design must address unrecognised assumptions arising from monocultural hegemonic values. The assumption that ‘one size fits all’ no longer holds in an increasingly diverse society.

As they construct their identity of themselves as teachers in New Zealand secondary schools OLC students face particular tensions. Too often they are expected to swim unaided in a sea of change and challenge. OLC students who are in transition require specific support as they cross the border between one culture and pedagogical belief system to another. It is ironic that an ITE programme that claims to teach ITE students to support and scaffold learning, does not model specific support pertinent to diverse learners in ITE. This study has identified programme and teaching strategies that can make a practical difference in redressing some of these tensions.

International and local research studies relating to shifts and changes in existing beliefs suggest that stable, confirmed prior beliefs are resistant to change. Yet it is heartening to find evidence in this study that sands of belief can shift and such shifts can be used to inform practice in the classroom. On the other hand, facilitating these shifts of pedagogical belief
would be undermined if economic needs increasingly drive ITE programme restructuring. In the research-based university environment that state-funded New Zealand ITE has been moved into, less time is given to face-to-face delivery and relationship building. Potentially, OLC student needs may be rendered even more invisible.

It is also a possibility that more lecture format teaching in a changing ITE environment may serve to reinforce the teacher-centred delivery that OLC students are being taught to move away from in preparation to teach in NZ classrooms. The participants in this study clearly indicate that modelling good practice in smaller interactive classes supports OLC students as they adapt to new pedagogies in a different culture. ITE programmes must address ways of maintaining and practising the socio-cultural constructionist learning being taught.

This study suggests that if the practice of accepting teachers from diverse backgrounds into Initial Teacher Education is to be continued then these students deserve programmes which will support their emerging teacher identities. More explicit, direct and proactive attention should be paid to identifying ways to support the particular learning needs of OLC students in ITE programmes in general. Underpinning this is a basic view of the role of teachers. This poses questions for ITE and tomorrow’s teachers.

- Will ITE prepare teachers to accept changing concepts of what counts as official knowledge and include multiple perspectives of diversity of race and culture?

- Will ITE programmes maintain student-centred pedagogical practices for their students to learn this?

Such perspectives encourage a view of teachers as professionals practising more than a practical, technicist craft. Teachers from diverse backgrounds should experience learning in ITE that both challenges existing ideas and supports new learning about teacher identity in a new language and culture. ITE programmes have a responsibility to ensure this happens.
References


## Appendix 1: Initial Group Meeting Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lead question</th>
<th>Probe question</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. General composition of the group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where are we all from?</td>
<td>What would we call home?</td>
<td>Compile a list on WB for all to see.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are our first languages?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gradually build a picture of ourselves as a group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What other languages do we speak?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How long have we all been in New Zealand?</td>
<td>In Christchurch ?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has anyone had previous teaching experience?</td>
<td>What. Where. How long</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What other careers or main employment work have we had?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did anyone come to Christchurch just to study at Christchurch College of Education?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Anticipation of TP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has anyone been into a NZ classroom?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Describe what you think a typical NZ classroom will look like.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What do you know about the way a school day is structured in NZ?</td>
<td>Times. Year levels.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intervals and breaks, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next week you go out on your first TP. What are some of the things you are looking forward to?</td>
<td>Positives.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What differences do you expect between what you know about teaching in your home culture and teaching in NZ schools?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What are some of the things you have concerns about?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What are your fears?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What ways for dealing with your concerns have you learned about?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2:


Some concerns -

- not a typical group, narrow range of nationalities, none Asian—usually several
- meeting was intended as a preliminary meeting—scope the situation, meet some of the potential participants, gauge the lay of the land, see if they needed any help before TP.
- but met with protests—no help needed, all fine.
- only help identified = pronunciation of words.
- detected feelings of ‘why has meeting been called?, am too busy for this, who says we have problems? Who are these other people?
- little conversation between people. Didn’t seem to know each other. No camaraderie or fellow-feeling.
- didn’t welcome offers of help or TP preparation.
- felt - will I be able to work with some of these people?—seem to be too busy, time-pressured

*Turning point* – Mid-year student (from Ukraine) shared his experiences on TP1—opened the gates—more questions and concerns emerged. – language, understanding student voices, will they be seen as “different”, concerns about student behaviour, associate’s expectations.....

**BUT** – “Busy, busy, too much pressure just now, haven’t time to meet, everything is so new, different, much to cope with—perhaps next Block?”

**However** – I have met possible participants, they have met me—we got on well, I have mentioned my research interest, I have listened to common concerns.

It’s a start.

How to select participants? Need more variety.
### Appendix 3: Semi-structured Interview Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lead question</th>
<th>Probe question</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tell me about yourself-</td>
<td>age, home country, first language, qualifications etc</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Primary schooling and your Secondary schooling – whereabouts were they?</td>
<td>Country, years at each level, transitions, etc</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell me about your schools.</td>
<td>Organisation, Age started,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you remember about some of your teachers?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What would you say characterised their teaching style? Can you describe what a teacher would do?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe the relationships between teacher and students in your schooling.</td>
<td>Respect? Status? Helpful to learning?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you think of a teacher you remember as a good teacher and just tell me something about that person or the way they taught? How they helped you learn?</td>
<td>Examples.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you see yourself as having a role in that learning process? What would your role as a learner have been?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was learning? Describe how you learned something.</td>
<td>Examples. How did you know you’d learned something?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>What would happen in the classroom on a typical school day?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why did you decide to become a teacher?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Did any of your teachers inspire you to be a teacher?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Why did you decide to come to New Zealand?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tell me about deciding to enrol for ITE.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was it like at your first few days at Teachers College?</td>
<td>How did you feel? Why?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did you expect you would learn how to teach? What did you expect the classes would be like and the courses would be like?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Were there any surprises?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What were some of the challenges you found in your time of learning to be a teacher? What were perhaps even the barriers that made things difficult to learn?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What helped you meet these challenges?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did you adjust to differences?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In what ways would you have appreciated further help or support?</td>
<td>Support? Pre-learning?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What could be done to help?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What helped you learn in ITE?</td>
<td>Examples.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>What is learning in ITE?</td>
<td>How do you know?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are your courses meeting your learning needs?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching Practice - How was your experience of going into a school?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What were the challenges, what were the barriers to your learning in schools on TP??</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What were the good things that you learnt on TP?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you find it very different and was it hard to adjust to a new school system?</td>
<td>What? How could this have been made easier?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What would a teacher from a school in your home country who came out say on an exchange programme be surprised about in a NZ school? Do you think there would be differences?</td>
<td>Why?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you were designing a teacher training course and you knew it would have some people from another culture and another language coming, what would you put in to help them? What would you make sure was part of the programme?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Can you think of some ways that would have made it easier for you if you had had this already set up? What might have helped you as an overseas student?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Has your view of what a teacher is and what a teacher does to help learning, has that changed?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What do you think helps your students learn in your classrooms?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How would you define your role as a teacher in your classroom?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you feel you could go back now if you did a time travel – could you go back to your school in your home country and teach? Why?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How beneficial do you think it’s to New Zealand schools to have teachers from other cultures in the schools,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Anything else you would like to add?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4: Professional Studies Assignment One

Assignment 1: Towards a Philosophy of Learning and Teaching

Purpose/Rationale:
Teacher education research suggests that prior experiences and pre-existing beliefs about teaching and learning are important influences on beginning teachers (student teachers). To make the most of the professional development experiences you will have this year, it is important for you, as a beginning teacher, to identify and examine your ideas related to learning and teaching.

This assignment requires you to write about your responses to the questions below. Your ideas about learning and teaching will provide a reference point for other work in Professional Studies and Teaching Practice. The format of your response is flexible: from essay form covering the relevant points through to individual paragraphs responding to each question.

Word limit: approx 750 words.

Part A

1. Reflect on your background giving particular emphasis to the factors that have led you to the Christchurch College of Education and to teaching as a career. Issues that you may wish to highlight include your qualifications, work experience, teachers who have inspired and/or frustrated you.

Part B

2. How do you go about learning (something new)?

Describe some particular examples about how you go about learning in particular situations or settings eg school, university or informal settings?

Include examples of learning something you may be confident in as well as learning in an area where you are not so confident.

3. What does learning mean to you - what do you think learning is?

Part C

4. Explain your ideas about what you think teaching is?

5. How can a teacher help you learn? (Provide some examples).
Part D

6. At the present time, what sort of a teacher do you want to be? What do you think has influenced your views about the kind of teacher you want to be?

7. At this point in time, what do you think you need in order to help you to become the teacher you want to be?
Appendix 5: Letter of Consent

Date .......... 2007

Dear ........ (Student Name)

I am currently undertaking research for my Masters of Teaching and Learning thesis, into the experiences of students in our School of Secondary Teacher Education here at the University of Canterbury, who have had their own education outside New Zealand in another culture and language. My aim is to find out how the experiences of current students in their first six months at College and on their first Teaching Practice may inform our programme and help us meet the needs of such students. I will also be working with some students who did their teacher education in previous years, to include their perspectives.

To help me gather information for this research project, Learning to Teach in another Culture, I would like to ask you to consent to being one of the participants.

The study will involve two approximately 60 minute interviews with you, a written reflection on your learning experiences that will take about 20 minutes and the use of part of your first written Professional Studies reflection assignment which has already been assessed.

Information collected will remain strictly confidential. It will be kept in a locked filing cabinet and destroyed at the end of my study. I will maintain the confidentiality of all information gathered and the anonymity of anyone involved. The submission of my written thesis on my findings will use pseudonyms in place of any names.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is not part of your curriculum and you will not receive any penalty or be placed at a disadvantage if you choose not to participate. I can assure you that the information gathered will have no influence on your course requirements. My role is that of researcher only. I will provide you with feedback on the research findings at the end of the study so you can share the information you have helped build.

If you do choose to participate you can withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Enclosed is a form which you can use to give your consent.

The University of Canterbury College of Education Ethics Committee has reviewed and approved this study.

Complaints Procedure

The College requires that all participants be informed that if they have any complaint concerning the manner in which a research project is conducted, it may be given to the researcher or, if an independent person is preferred, to:

The Chair
Ethical Clearance Committee
University of Canterbury School of Education  
P O Box 31-065, Christchurch  
Phone: (03) 348 2059

Please contact me if you have any other queries or concerns about the project or would like to be informed of the research findings. My contact details are given below.

My course supervisor is Dr Susan Lovett. She can be contacted at the University of Canterbury School of Education, PO Box 31 065 Christchurch or email susan.lovett@canterbury.ac.nz

Thank you for taking the time to consider my request and I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Yours sincerely,

(Signature)

Robyn Robinson

School of Literacies and Arts  
University of Canterbury School of Education  
Phone: (03) 345 8169  
Email: robyn.robinson@canterbury.ac.nz

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**Declaration of Consent**

I consent to participate in the project - *Learning to Teach in another Culture.*

I have read and understood the information provided to me concerning the research project and what will be required of me if I participate in the project.

I understand that the information I provide to the researcher will be treated as confidential and that no findings that could identify me will be published.

I understand that my participation in the project is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the project at any time without incurring any penalty.

Name: ___________________________  Date: ________

Signature: _______________________