

An Investigation into the Intercultural Development of Anglophone Educators Working in  
International Schools

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## DECLARATION

I, Maria Savva, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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## ABSTRACT

At a time when societies are becoming increasingly pluralistic, Anglophone educators continue to come from predominantly mono-cultural backgrounds, with often limited cross-cultural experiences. This study examines the potential of the overseas international school in providing new cross-cultural experiences that may improve the intercultural abilities of Anglophone educators. It explores how the overseas experience contributes to changes in world views, as well as how (or if) these changes translate into professional practice. Whilst ample research exists on overseas experiences and culturally responsive pedagogy as separate areas of study, this research looks to make a distinct contribution by bridging these two areas.

Thirty Anglophones educators based across three international schools in the Netherlands and China participated in semi-structured interviews which explored the challenges and opportunities of living and working abroad. Findings highlighted significant transformations in educator attitudes towards difference. These attitudinal changes seemed to be less a result of interactions *with* the other, than a result of interactions *as* the other. Changes in attitude were often accompanied by two significant shifts in perspective: an increased ability to withhold judgment, along with a marked effort to understand. These shifting perspectives often allowed educators to contextualize their experiences in such a way that their professional practice was visibly enhanced.

Evidence of increased intercultural capacities in professional practice was found in three dominant areas of language, communication styles and religious/gender sensitivity. Educators described specific teaching or management methods utilized in the classroom or school setting that they did not utilize prior to their work abroad. Recognising the limitations of the sample, findings nonetheless supported a strong link between the international school experience and improved intercultural abilities.

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## **I. THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY**

### **CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background & Rationale**

This research emerges as a result of an earlier study which examined the migration and experiences of sixteen North American teachers in overseas international schools (Savva, 2013a). A rather predictable finding of that study was an increased level of intercultural understanding among teachers as a result of their work abroad. The reasons behind this increased intercultural understanding, however, were not related to the anticipated process of cultural immersion but, rather paradoxically, to difficulties teachers faced in integrating themselves in the host cultures.

Beyond their insulated school communities, teachers often struggled with the label of ‘other’ within the larger communities they lived in. Obstacles for teachers while abroad included a lack of language proficiency, living in countries that were sometimes antithetical to Western ideals and a perceived hesitancy of locals in accepting teachers as members of the larger society. This struggle played a key role in helping teachers to develop a more empathetic view towards the difficulties that newcomers might face in their own home countries and deeply changed the way in which many teachers viewed both themselves and others in the global world.

Despite the positive contribution that the international school experience made to teachers’ worldviews, another preliminary finding of the study was that teachers did not necessarily connect their newly developed insights to their professional practice. As such, it was not apparent that changes in worldviews correlated with changes in classroom practice. Nonetheless, these outcomes may very well be the result of limitations in the study itself, which cast a rather wide net to find emerging themes among a relatively small sample of teachers.

Given that educators in multiple national contexts continue to face challenges associated with diverse student populations (Alfaro & Quezada, 2010; Merryfield, 2000; Pearce, 2012; Sleeter, 2011), the intercultural development of educators—including how that development transfers into the classroom or school setting—merits further investigation. It is along these lines of thought that the present study uses an intercultural lens to explore, in greater detail, changes in world views and their relationship (if any) to classroom practice.

## 1.2 The Broader Geo-Political Context

There have been multiple responses to the challenge of increasingly pluralistic societies. These responses have varied by region and have gone under a variety of different names and titles. They include ‘interculturalism’ in Europe (Council of Europe, 2008), ‘multiculturalism’ in much of North America (Banks, 1993; Banting & Kymlicka, 2010; Taylor, 2012) and ‘international-mindedness’ among the institutional diaspora of the Western world, more commonly referred to as international schools (Hill, 2012; Roberts, 2013).

Some have identified subtle but important differences between terms (Council of Europe, 2008; Malik, 1997; UNESCO, 2008) while others have contested these differences, ascribing them to the same movement cloaked in a changing title (Kymlicka, 2012; Levey, 2012; Meer & Modood, 2012). These discussions are teased out further in the literature review section, but suffice it to say that all of these terms grapple with the idea of difference and how to best respond to it.

In the United States, programmes have typically taken on the form of ethnic studies or multicultural coursework. These programmes emerged in the latter part of the twentieth century in response to discrimination African-American and other minorities faced in American society. The programmes aimed to alter what was conceived, by some, to be a predominantly Western or ‘White’ curriculum (Banks, 1993; Gorski, 2009). Multicultural education, therefore,

has historically operated under a social justice umbrella with a particular emphasis on valuing one's ethnicity and embracing diversity.

This response has not been without criticism. Most notable is the 2010 ban on Mexican-American studies in the Tucson school district in the state of Arizona, where a court deemed the content of particular courses too divisive in nature (Banks, 2012; Talk of the Nation, 2010). The use of antagonistic texts such as 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed' and 'Occupied America,' along with texts that referred to white people as "gringos" (a derogatory term in the Spanish language) were seen as promoting social fragmentation (Lacey, 2011). The ban explicitly outlawed any courses with content that was deemed to 'promote the overthrow of the US government' or to teach 'resentment towards a race or class of people' (Lacey, 2011).

In the United Kingdom, as well, multiculturalism emerged as a response to growing racial and ethnic tensions. In the mid-eighties, the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education was established, requiring all teacher-training programmes to include courses for a multicultural society (Tomlinson, 2008). This shift, however, also received its share of criticism. Some questioned the political agenda of multicultural education and argued that teachers should focus on teaching children how to read and write instead of engaging in the politics of race, class and gender. More recently in the United Kingdom, multicultural policies have been described as divisive, with some arguing for a more integrative approach (Tomlinson, 2008).

Operating under the auspices of 'interculturalism' a more integrative approach has been a distinguishing feature of the European Union, which has taken its own steps towards addressing diversity. Initiatives have been developed through programmes such as 'Intercultural Dialogue', 'Platform for Intercultural Europe' and the 'Creative Europe Programme' (European Commission, 2015). These programmes have often extended beyond Europe to include

partnerships with countries as far as China. Within the context of the European Union, the term intercultural is differentiated from multicultural as follows:

‘Intercultural dialogue is, essentially, the exchange of views and opinions between different cultures. Unlike multiculturalism, where the focus is on the preservation of separate cultures, intercultural dialogue seeks to establish linkages and common ground between different cultures, communities and people, promoting understanding and interaction.’ (European Commission, 2015, online)

The European Union has also committed itself to increased mobility among its citizenry. A budget of 7 billion euro over a period of 7 years has funded a host of programmes designed to offer travel opportunities at the primary, secondary, further-education and tertiary education levels (Jallade, 2011). While the main goals behind increased mobility are more explicitly aligned with economic advantages, such programmes can also be viewed as contributing to greater social cohesion, an important EU objective.

The increased movement within Europe, however, has also triggered concerns. The opening of EU borders has seen a mass exodus of citizenry from poorer EU countries towards their wealthier counterparts. Immigration has become a contentious issue among those who believe that immigrants take jobs and do not wish to assimilate (Pew Research Center, 2014). Countries that have showed a particularly strong desire to limit immigration include Greece (86%) , Italy (80%), France (57%) and the United Kingdom (55%) (Pew Research Center, 2014).

International schools, too, have crafted a distinctly unique response to diversity. Among the vast network of international schools ‘international-mindedness’ remains the term of choice and it has been promoted largely through the wide spread use of the International

Baccalaureate<sup>1</sup> (IB) Programme (Hill, 2012; Roberts, 2013). Although the IB Programme was originally developed to serve the needs of mobile expatriate students abroad, in 2012 57% of all IB schools were state run (Hill 2012), with many of them based in the United States. As a result of this shift, the IB has been viewed by some as decoupling itself from its original beginnings of serving transnational expatriate communities to serving nationally based communities in Anglophone countries (Bunnell, 2015).

The IB defines international mindedness as ‘an openness to and curiosity about the world and people of other cultures, and a striving towards a profound level of understanding of the complexity and diversity of human interactions’ (Hill, 2012, p. 256). Alongside the teaching of academic subjects, the responsibility of educators is seen as one of preparing young people to live alongside each other in a complex society undergoing a rapid process of change (Roberts, 2013; Wells, 2011).

Yet these beliefs are, arguably, embodied in multiculturalism and interculturalism philosophies as well. Apart from the association with international schools, then, it is not clear what characteristics international-mindedness offers that are distinctly different from its more dominant contemporaries. This places the term ‘international-mindedness’ in a predicament similar to the ‘international school’ and ‘international education’ (to be elaborated on further in this chapter and in chapter 3) in that it too, appears to be a largely ambiguous term (Cause, 2011).

Despite the multitude of programmes and the call for more globally minded teachers (Alfaro & Quezada, 2010; Merryfield, 2000), educators continue to fall short in their abilities to work with

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<sup>1</sup> The IB is a non-profit organisation which was originally established in 1968 to meet the needs of internationally mobile students preparing for university (IB, 2014).

increasingly diverse student populations. In particular, educators' understanding of culture continues to be limited to exotic celebrations in the classroom (Sleeter, 2011, Pearce, 2012), with scholars noting a significant gap between multicultural theory and actual practice (Fong & Hernandez-Sheets, 2004; Gay & Howard, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995b). Moreover, in some regions, teacher resistance has been identified as a frequent obstacle to the tenets of multicultural education in teacher-training institutions (Fong & Hernandez-Sheets, 2004; Gay & Howard, 2000; Gorski, 2012, Sleeter, 2011).

It has been suggested that part of teacher resistance may be attributed to the tendency of higher education faculty to focus on the political/sociological aspects associated with multicultural education as opposed to the pedagogical aspects (Fong & Hernandez-Sheets, 2004). In such instances, teachers feel overwhelmed and even resentful that the classroom should be used as a vehicle for addressing these types of issues. The role of teachers in creating political activists out of students instead of teaching disciplinary knowledge has been criticized elsewhere (Standish, 2012). This line of thought sees the social justice movement, in particular, as controversial because it utilizes education to promote a specific political agenda.

One could argue, however, that education has always carried with it a political agenda. If we assume this to be true, then the view of teachers as political activists should not – in theory -- be one that meets unusual resistance. Yet this has not been the case. Perhaps then this is not an issue of *a* political agenda but more an issue of *which* political agenda teachers are obliged to be a part of. Should teachers look to support, improve or change the status quo? When we consider that no education policy can operate successfully without the commitment of teachers (Starkey, 2007), teacher resistance becomes a very serious obstacle to policy implementation.

Data confirms that the teaching force across Anglophone countries remains predominantly White and female (Department for Education, 2012; National Center for Education Information, 2012; Ryan, Pollock & Antonelli; 2009; Commonwealth of Australia, 2012). Additionally, many Anglophone teachers have had limited exposure to cultures beyond their own (Causey, Thomas & Armento, 2000; Levine-Rasky, 2000). In the United Kingdom, efforts to diversify the teaching force have included widening access to higher education for males, minorities and under-represented groups (General Teaching Council for Scotland, 2005; Office for Fair Access, 2015). In the United States these efforts have included alternative teacher licensure paths and targeted recruitment strategies of minorities into initial teacher training programmes (Villegas & Davis, 2007).

It is possible that individuals who come from diverse backgrounds come with an increased sensitivity and capacity for managing difference, since their own lives have provided them with this type of experiential learning. Similarly, if 'learning by doing' (Ackermann, 2001) has a significantly more meaningful impact than placid learning in prescribed courses, then it is a worthy endeavour to look into providing such learning experiences not only for young student-teachers, but for practising teachers as well.

It is worthwhile to note here that within the field of multicultural/intercultural education there exists a wide spectrum of positions ranging from very liberal to highly conservative. Those who take an extreme liberal position may be viewed as unpatriotic because they undermine the state. In contrast, those who take a more conservative position may be seen as partaking in supportive rhetoric but do little more than provide a symbolic acknowledgment of difference--effectively leaving the current social structures fully intact and unquestioned.



To be an advocate of multicultural or intercultural education, therefore, can mean very different things depending on where one positions him/herself on the spectrum. In the United States, many scholars continue to explicitly support a politically active teacher role in the field of multicultural education (Gay, 2010; Gorski, 2012; Sleeter, 2012, Villegas & Lucas, 2002). This includes a politically (and unapologetically) active agenda through the National Association of Multicultural Education (2015).

Conversely, major political figures in Europe such as UK Prime Minister David Cameron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and, more recently, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban have explicitly rejected the tenets of multiculturalism. These influential figures see multiculturalism as fragmenting society through its emphasis on diversity instead of unity. As a result, they have championed integration of newcomers into the broader state apparatus (Euractiv, 2011; Press TV, 2015; RT, 2010).

The current research is not rooted in any political aspirations per se -- although its findings can certainly be used for political purposes. There is no interest in bringing down establishments or drawing attention to the inequities of governments or their education systems. Rather, this study is more simply (and perhaps narrowly) about understanding difference, the human response to difference and equipping teachers with research-based skills to best deal with the challenges and opportunities which arise from it. Such an emphasis does not discount the importance of historical background or the deficiencies of various social structures. It does, however, aspire for teachers to operate effectively and positively in their classrooms *in spite of* historical background and deficiencies in social structures.

### 1.3 Intercultural Development

#### *Operational Definition of Intercultural Development*

In creating an operational definition it is necessary to first consider for what purpose, and for whom, we are studying intercultural development. This contextualization will allow us to focus on particular aspects, as opposed to others, given the aim and scope of the current research. The current research defines intercultural development in three progressively evolving layers. At the core of this definition is the concept of difference, the predictable human response to difference (as opposed to the idealized human response) and ways in which educators—who are in an influential power position—can facilitate improved relationships and instruction within their schools or classrooms.

It is important to note that the operational definition of intercultural development, as described in this chapter, was intended to create an *easily understandable* framework for educators who would be responding to questions related to intercultural development. It is not, therefore, presented as an all-encompassing definition. On the contrary, intercultural development is a complex process which scholars have attempted to capture through a variety of intricate models that will be reviewed in Chapter 3 (Relevant Literature). An initial operational definition, however, which educators could work with, was necessary and it is this definition that follows.

The first layer of intercultural development deals with a broad perspective framework and involves the recognition and acceptance of difference in its many forms. It is based on a level of fundamental awareness. Culture is defined broadly as the way we, or others, live and do things. Whilst the way we live and do things is most certainly influenced by predictable factors such as gender, age, ethnicity and language – these are by no means the only considerations. In addition to explicit factors, ‘the way we live’ often exists in more implicit forms.

An only-child growing up in a single parent family, for example, has a very different home culture from a child growing up with four siblings and both sets of grandparents. This important cultural difference exists even if the two children share the same gender, age, ethnicity and language, thereby illustrating that culture can move well beyond commonly used sociological and psychological categories. This initial layer of intercultural development involves *knowing something* (Joyce & Showers, 1980) and may be appropriately associated with a certain level of awareness.

The second layer of intercultural development involves the ability to recognize the impact difference has on both an individual and groups. Indeed, being different can have profound effects on an individual. An individual's consciousness of his/her difference relative to others in the majority group will most certainly affect the individual's behaviour, including their willingness to participate in activities as a cohesive member of the group. This may be the case irrespective of whether feelings of difference are emanating from views of one's own self due to processes of internalization (Berger & Luckman, 1966) or are being superimposed from the views of others in a competing group (Sherif, 1958).

An often neglected component in the field of multicultural/intercultural education is the impact that difference has on the dynamics of the majority group. Empirical studies within the area of intergroup relations have consistently demonstrated a negative tendency among majority in-group members towards minority out-group members (Tajfel, 1981; Turner, Brown & Tajfel, 1979). Here the word 'minority' is used to describe individuals who do not share the characteristics of the larger group; irrespective of what those characteristics are (in other words, the term is not attached to a specific cultural group). Understanding this human tendency is an important part of managing an environment successfully. This second layer involves

*understanding something* (Joyce & Showers, 1980), which moves an individual from a state of awareness to a deeper level of intercultural understanding.

The final layer involves the ability to take action aimed at either neutralizing difference and/or using one's knowledge to take constructive action on an individual or group level. Whilst the third layer cannot evolve without the previous two, the value of the initial two layers is significantly diminished without this final third layer. 'Action' is a key term in this layer because it transforms passive forms of awareness and understanding into active forms of application. Individuals at this stage understand the fundamentals of difference, including human tendencies towards it. They are able to employ culturally responsive pedagogies, across a variety of difference, to create a positive classroom climate for students.

Since an individual who has arrived at this level is able to demonstrate observable skills *by doing* (Joyce & Showers, 1980) they have reached a level of intercultural competence. How one goes about implementing this final layer is part of what this research looks to unpack, as there are multiple variables such as power and position which influence the nature of any intercultural exchange.

#### *The Relative State of Intercultural Development*

Reaching a level of intercultural competence, which is understood here to be the highest level of intercultural development, can be a challenging task due to its relative nature. It is not likely that any single individual can claim to be interculturally competent with regards to all varieties of difference. An individual may be highly skilled in dealing with issues of language difference but not as skilled in dealing with differences associated with religious beliefs. Likewise, if value systems ascribed to regional contexts are used, an individual may demonstrate fluent

capabilities in dealing with a multitude of Western cultures but struggle when working with Middle-Eastern or tribal cultures.

This could be the case not only because particular cultural values and beliefs may be different from one's own, but because they may very well *contradict* one's own values and beliefs. The promotion of polygamy or the more restrictive role of women in conservative Muslim regions, for example, may be difficult for Westerners to accept. As such, the reading of any instrument designed to measure intercultural abilities needs to always take this relative condition into account.

The relative state of intercultural abilities mirrors the relative state of difference itself. Like difference, intercultural abilities change according to the setting and people around a particular focal point. Whether that focal point is a White male or a Black male is less relevant than what surrounds the White or Black male. A White Anglo-Saxon male placed in a group where he is the only White and the only male will most certainly make him different. Yet the same White-Anglo Saxon male can fit in seamlessly in an environment where he is around others who share similar characteristics.

It is worth noting that the illustration provided deals with visible difference. An important component of intercultural competence is the recognition that difference does not always carry visible markers. Diversity can come in subtler forms, so that even individuals who appear to be very similar may, in fact, be quite different. Within the school setting, for example, a child who does not know his father will have difficulty making a father's day card. Similarly, a dyslexic student will quietly struggle with the challenges associated with his/her learning difficulty. These forms of difference are not outwardly visible but they nevertheless require teachers who will be sensitive to each student's particular needs.

What makes intercultural development a further complicated mechanism is that it is dependent on the management of what is, minimally, a two-way exchange. As a result, the intercultural success of any individual will always be dependent – to some degree – on the capabilities (and willingness) of a reciprocating individual. The power relationship between individuals is still another factor which must be considered when examining the anatomy of intercultural exchange. In his examination of prejudice, Allport (1954) identified contact as an effective tool for its reduction. The *type* of contact, however, was seen as being particularly important in determining the outcome of the exchange.

The status and role of individuals, in particular, have been shown to play a salient role in the nature of intercultural exchanges. Important variables which affect the outcome of exchanges include whether the exchange is competitive or cooperative, whether there is a superordinate or a subordinate relationship involved and whether the minority member is positioned in an inferior, equal or superior status position in the exchange (Allport, 1954; Sherif, 1958). A refugee, for example, enters a majority culture as a minority and must adapt to the subjugated position of a ‘foreigner.’ Traditionally, refugees have arrived in new countries as a result of hardship. Their often low socio-economic status renders them little power. As a result, the quality of intercultural exchange for refugees is typically dictated by individuals from the dominant culture.

Refugees, however, are only one of many other types of migrant. Globalisation has more recently shaped a new breed of migrant: the knowledge skill worker. Unlike refugees, international educators (like many knowledge skill workers) remain part of a privileged group who often travel with generous compensation packages. These packages frequently include housing accommodation and a private education allowance for dependents (Savva, 2013a). As

such, while refugees or immigrants have traditionally arrived in new countries for *hardship* reasons, knowledge skills workers are distinctly different because they quite often arrive in new countries for *opportunistic* reasons.

### *Culturally Responsive Pedagogy*

Few would argue that the contribution of the teacher, as a central role model, is a powerful one. Indeed, the quality of the personal relationship between a teacher and student has been identified as one of the top factors affecting student outcomes (Henderson-Sparks, Ehrgott & Sparks, 1995; Stronge et al, 2008). As such, intercultural abilities can be seen as a powerful skill set which can help to facilitate the teacher/student connections necessary for such quality relationships. Such relationships can also contribute towards establishing a positive classroom climate whereby every student can feel a sense of belonging and safety.

Within the context of instruction, culturally responsive pedagogy is one area of specialization that draws on the intercultural abilities of educators to create more effective learning experiences. It is not a way to replace disciplinary knowledge but, instead, a way to facilitate knowledge acquisition by considering the cultural contexts of one's audience. Although there are several definitions used, the current research uses the following:

Culturally responsive teaching is defined as using the cultural characteristics, experiences and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively. It is based on the assumption that when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the lived experiences and frames of reference of students, they are more personally meaningful, have higher interest appeal and are learned more easily and thoroughly (Gay, 2002, p. 106).

As such, culturally responsive pedagogy looks to create an effective bridge between formal curricula and students. This 'bridge' is built upon the idea that learning experiences are most

effective when they are meaningful to the learner. Although much important work has been done in the field, the vast majority of research has placed a marked emphasis on African-American and Latino groups (Gay, 2010; Sleeter, 2012; Villegas, 1991; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). In these instances, research findings are specific to a particular social group within a given community.

Culturally responsive pedagogy, however, has the capability of encompassing a much broader scope of difference. Using the unique international school setting, it is the intention of this study to contribute to the broadening of that scope. Gender, religious and linguistic differences are considered and addressed through culture-specific instructional strategies, as well as more expansive frameworks (to be discussed in greater detail in the Findings & Analysis chapters).

#### 1.4 The International School

##### *(a) Defining the International School*

The criteria used to define an international school have varied across time, space and authorship. As a result, there exists no firmly established classification for the international school (Cambridge & Thompson, 2000; Hayden & Thompson, 1995; Matthews, 1989; Murakami-Ramalho, 2008). There are nevertheless certain variables which seem to dominate its characterization and lend themselves to a somewhat fluid and loose classification. These variables include, but are not limited to, student body, location and curriculum.

Historically, international schools have aimed to provide a national<sup>2</sup> education to expatriate children travelling with their families abroad (Hayden & Thompson, 2008). As a result, a proportion of the student body in international schools has been made up of Anglophone

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<sup>2</sup> The term 'national', as it is used throughout this paper, refers to the general policy, curricula, standards and practices of Anglophone countries.



children whose parents are often travelling diplomats or entrepreneurs. In recent years, the student body in international schools has come to include an increasing number of local (non-Anglophone) children. These children are often part of the local elite or aspiring middle class in the host-country they reside in (Hayden & Thompson, 2008).

In its most simplistic form, an international school is one which follows a national curriculum but operates on foreign soil. US Department of Defense schools are one example of such schools (Ortloff & Escobar-Ortloff, 2001). Here the word 'international' is used as a descriptor for an overseas location. Some have argued, however, that the use of the international label does not necessarily make for an international *education* (Hayden & Thompson, 1995). In such an instance, US Department of Defense schools would not qualify as international despite their overseas placement. To further complicate matters, some schools that are *domestically* based in the United Kingdom or the United States use the international label based solely on the curriculum that they deliver (Hayden, & Thompson, 1995).

This study concerns itself mostly with independent (as opposed to government sponsored) schools that are based outside of the national countries they represent. These schools typically offer some form of international curriculum, either in whole or in part. Indeed, while many overseas international schools operating abroad use a national curriculum from their representative Anglophone country, many are dually accredited through the International Baccalaureate Programme (IB). As a result of dual accreditation, such international schools prepare students to take multiple examinations that enable them to access higher education in a number of countries world-wide (Hayden & Thompson, 1998).

Accreditation offers recognition by the host-country, home-country or a group of countries, depending on the type of accreditation. Schools accredited by the Middle States Association,

for example, are fully recognised in the United States (Middle States Association of Colleges & Schools Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools, 2012). British schools accredited through the British Schools Overseas framework are fully recognized by the Department for Education (Council of Overseas British International Schools, 2014) while internationally accredited schools (e.g. International Baccalaureate) are recognised in both North America and much of Europe (IB, 2014).

Overseas international schools, therefore, are in the unique position of offering Anglophone educators the opportunity to work in accredited schools which are often recognised in their home countries and other countries. Educators are also able to choose from a variety of locations and experience cultures that are different from what they are accustomed to back home. Most notable are the experiential learning opportunities that overseas international schools can make available to Anglophone educators who have otherwise had minimal exposure to cultures other than their own.

#### *(b) Changes in the International School Landscape*

There seem to be two parallel strands of discourse evolving in the international school landscape. The first strand has to do with an increasing demand for Anglophone schools outside of Anglophone borders, while the second strand has to do with an increasing demand for international school curricula within Anglophone nations themselves. Whilst this research focuses on the first strand of discourse, the second strand is discussed briefly in this section so as to provide a more cohesive understanding of the broader field.

The first strand of discourse has gained its momentum through the expansion of the English language and its increased value as a type of linguistic currency within the global arena (Hayden & Thompson, 2008). This strand can be seen as one which is coupled closely with the power and

privilege associated with Anglophone nations. Improved job prospects in Anglophone countries (Sharma, 2013), the position of English as a prominent language (Guilherme, 2007) as well as the prestige associated with English-medium universities (Hayden & Thompson, 2013) have all contributed to an increased demand for English-medium schooling in non-English speaking countries.

Whilst the 21<sup>st</sup> century began with 2,584 international schools, this number increased to 6,400 international schools by 2013 (Brummitt & Keeling, 2013). It is further predicted that by 2020 there will be over 10,000 international schools with 5 to 6 million students (Brummitt & Keeling, 2013; ISC, 2012). These numbers, however, include the expansion of international schools abroad *and* international schools within Anglophone countries. This means any school operating on foreign soil *or* offering an international curriculum (whether nationally or internationally based) is included in the count.

The increase in international schools with regards to the domestic front brings us to the second strand of discourse. Stemming from a demand within Anglophone countries themselves, a move away from a one-dimensional national curriculum towards a more contemporary international curriculum has begun to influence the landscape of national education. In the United Kingdom, the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) is expanding (Hayden & Thompson, 2013). In England alone, a total of 1300 schools use IPC to deliver the English national curriculum (International Primary Curriculum, 2014).

The curriculum is comprised of subject, personal and international goals. Within the international subcategory, goals include the understanding of one's own national culture as well as an increased awareness of both the 'independence and interdependence' between peoples and countries of the world. Other international goals include developing the ability to be 'at

ease with others who are different from ourselves' and an awareness and understanding of essential similarities between peoples and countries of the world (International Primary Curriculum, 2014). This latter goal, positions the IPC firmly within an intercultural perspective (as opposed to a multicultural perspective) because of its emphasis on shared human traits, instead of differences.

In North America, as well, there is a rapid expansion of the International Baccalaureate (IB), with 40% of IB schools based in the United States (Cambridge, 2013). Whilst the expansion of IB schools within the United States is beyond the scope of this research, it remains a phenomenon worthy of mention because of its possible relationship to the first strand of discourse. It is possible that the reasons for national demand run parallel to international demand. That is, the belief that an international education offers better preparation for an already globalized world by offering a competitive edge to its graduates. Furthermore, since the IB was initially developed through collaboration with international schools -- far from the constraints of national borders—it may be seen as being *comparatively* free from the politically charged agendas which have often framed domestic programmes (Resnik, 2013).

Whilst the unprecedented growth of overseas schools has created a need for teachers, it has simultaneously created an opportunity for national education systems. This opportunity lies in the utilization of the international school as a global resource. Overseas international schools offer a unique environment for the development of sought after intercultural abilities. It is the potential of the international school as a vehicle for cultivating these abilities that this research also looks to explore.

### *(c) Placement of the Current Research*

The current research sought to draw data from educators across three overseas international schools, all of which subscribed to some form of international curricula, either in part or in whole. Two of the three schools were based in the Netherlands and one was in China. The overseas placement of schools was considered an important component of the study. Here an assumption was made that living in a foreign country, in and of itself, provided powerful opportunities for the intercultural development of individuals. This was believed to be the case irrespective of whether school curricula were national or international (although international curricula would lend themselves better to the cause). The location variable coupled with the student body variable was of special interest largely because international educators often worked with students who had limited English language proficiency, while they themselves simultaneously struggled with the host country language.

There is extensive research supporting the benefits of study and work experiences abroad. Within the context of education, such research has focused on a variety of specializations including the long term experiences of international students in higher education (Alhazmi & Nyland, 2013; Gu, Schweisfurth & Day, 2010) as well as the shorter-term experiences associated with study-abroad programmes (Alred & Byram, 2002; Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Marx & Moss, 2011; Merryfield, 2000; Tang & Choi, 2004). Research is also available on the challenges and opportunities associated with overseas employment including, but not limited to, educators (Antal & Friedman, 2008; Savva, 2013a). Findings are consistent across studies: the potential of overseas experiences in broadening individual perspectives and increasing intercultural sensitivity is significant.

Such direct and personal experiences of 'otherness' are difficult to replicate even in the most multicultural urban cities of Anglophone countries. International educators are in an unusual position in that while they find themselves entering a new majority culture as minorities (marginal status) they continue to maintain a significant locus of power within the school structure and classrooms they teach in (high status). This dual experience of being 'powerless and powerful' at the same time is worthy of examination, particularly in its potential to transform teacher dispositions.

Yet how changes in disposition translate into observable behaviour and skills has been an area that comparatively few studies have ventured towards. Whilst the broadening of individual perspectives and increased intercultural sensitivity can be seen as an overarching and important framework, these qualities can also be viewed as somewhat sweeping generalizations. What exactly do we mean when we refer to these qualities? Why are they important? And is there any value to these qualities in the absence of observable skills?

### 1.5 Research Aims & Questions

Working under the assumption that institutions such as schools, family and mass media are powerful transmitters of culture (DeGaetano, Williams & Volk, 1998) educators themselves can also be viewed, in part, as products of the national education systems they are borne out of. Investigating how, and if, educators are transformed through transnational experiences is one small step towards understanding the contribution that long-term cross-cultural experiences can make in the intercultural development of educators. It is through such an examination that we might also begin to consider how the international school context might provide new and innovative solutions for what has become a perplexing problem across many national contexts. It is with this bigger picture in mind that the study anticipated a dual-area focus.

The first area aimed to contribute towards the field of experiential learning through a broad exploration of the overseas experience. This included an examination of how overseas work affected the world views and dispositions of educators. Did educator views of the world and themselves change? And if so, in what ways? Conversely, the second area looked specifically at how, or if, changes in world views (as a result of the overseas experience) transferred to the classroom or school setting. In other words, did educators do anything differently in their classrooms/schools that they *didn't do* prior to their international school experience? And if so, *what*? In this way, the study hoped to contribute both to theoretical and practical aspects of intercultural development. More succinctly, the two over-arching research questions that the study sought to answer were:

*In what ways does the international school experience cause change in the world views of Anglophone educators? In what ways does this change in world views transfer into the classroom or school setting?*

In attempting to answer the two main research questions, secondary and supporting questions in relation to identity and belonging were also developed (see appendix E). In particular, the study planned to explore how educators identified themselves in relation to shifting settings, as well as how they believed others identified them within those shifting settings. For example, were there differences between primary identification when in the home setting (e.g. by profession or nationality), compared to primary identification while abroad?

Within the context of world views, the study also looked to explore the feeling of belonging and any modifications to it as a result of long-term overseas experiences. This exploration aligned, and was inspired by, one of the three dimensions of citizenship: status, *feeling* and practice (Osler & Starkey, 2005). It is helpful to interject here that substantial overlap was expected between concepts of intercultural development and citizenship. This is because both deal with

elements of inclusion, exclusion and a sense of belonging. The latter, however, tends to emphasize a politically-oriented sense of belonging whilst the former utilizes a more socially-oriented perspective. The two concepts nevertheless share common space and what affects one may also affect the other. This substantial overlap will be illustrated, in greater detail, in the Findings and Analysis chapters.

In conclusion, acknowledging and supporting diversity while promoting inclusion and social cohesion remains a sensitive challenge in the Western context of schooling. Against a backdrop of an increasingly diverse world, many educators today are expected to support and value difference while promoting a shared national and/or global citizenship. Indeed, the concurrent promotion of inclusion and diversity might be seen by some as an oxymoron. It is here that intercultural abilities (or the lack thereof) can contribute to the success or failure of educators working in such diverse settings. It is the cultivation of these intercultural abilities and their relationship to world views via the international school setting that this study sets out to explore.



## CHAPTER 2 – FRAMEWORK & RESEARCH DESIGN

### 2.1 Preface

This study is concerned with human thought and how it is influenced by long term socio-cultural changes. It is also concerned with how this human thought translates into visible behaviours with regards to human relationships. As such, the study is built upon epistemological as opposed to ontological foundations. The word 'knowledge' is used to refer to how individuals experience and understand the world around them. In this way, the study positions itself largely within a social constructivist perspective.

The broad category of 'knowledge' is a challenging one because of the many components which make up its constituency. Metaphorically, one can imagine a large pot within which a wide range of ingredients come together. Although contested by some, the hard sciences have often enjoyed a relatively easy entry into the auspices of this 'knowledge pot.' Beyond the hard sciences, topics which constitute knowledge can take on additional levels of complexity. Citizenship and history, for instance, are knowledge specimens that are inherently prone to the influence of self-promoting governments.

Despite their more visibly constructed qualities, these too are thrown into the all-encompassing 'knowledge pot.' The result is a wide array of components which are often dissimilar in their claims to knowledge, with many being--more accurately--*perspectives* of knowledge (David, 1994). Knowledge, therefore, can be seen as a subjective social construct (Robson, 2002; Sharpe & Wade, 2008). Even among the most objective claims to knowledge, subjectivity can often be found colouring individual experience.

While a 5 degree Celsius temperature reading would be considered by many to be an objective piece of data, how a given individual experiences this data remains a subjective matter. An

individual from Siberia, for example, may find this temperature relatively warm. Comparatively, an individual from Saudi Arabia may find it rather chilly thereby illustrating that social and cultural background can play an integral part in how we 'construct' our experiences (Robson, 2002).

This study will not engage extensively in a discussion about what qualifies as knowledge, instead it will focus on how individuals come to understand and construct their world -- irrespective of how valid or invalid this understanding or construction may be. As such, within the 'nature or nurture' discussion the emphasis of this study lies squarely within the 'nurture' portion, positioning itself within the realm of socio-cultural elements and their role in the human experience.

It is important to clarify that this emphasis does not necessarily dismiss or go against 'nature' per se. Indeed, it may very well be that individuals are born with certain temperaments and thus, have likelihoods towards certain dispositions as opposed to others. A visit to a neonatal unit, for example, may reveal vocal and lively new-borns next to quiet and more discreet new-borns. These differences in temperament exist even before any socialization factors from the outside world can claim influence. Consequently, this research does not negate the possibility of other variables (including biological) in the formation of human dispositions and behaviour. Instead, it chooses to focus on the contribution of variables associated with the social sciences. This is largely due to the researcher's own interests and strengths.

## 2.2 Defining 'Construct' Terms

The psycho-social<sup>3</sup> domain can be seen as a non-linear interface of cognitive, social and emotional factors. The individual receives and exerts influences, with an improbability that any two individuals will process these influences in exactly the same way. Despite differences in individual transposition, this study assumes the existence of a larger pre-existing social framework within which all individuals operate. This framework provides recurrent exposure to what are essentially preferred ways of being (Kalantri, 2012).

This assumption draws largely on elements derived from cognitive and social *constructivism* (including the subcategory of social constructs), as well as experiential *constructionism*. There are significant inconsistencies regarding these approaches in literature. While some well-respected scholars are very explicit about the differences between the *constructivist* and *constructionist* approaches (Ackermann, 2001; Andrews, 2012; Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 2012) some equally well-respected scholars use the terms interchangeably, effectively treating them as synonyms (Robson, 2002; Schwandt, 1998). To complicate matters further, among the scholars who purport differences, the reported differences are far from uniform (Andrews, 2012; Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 2012).

Given these inconsistencies, it is important to understand how this research deals with these terms and most importantly, how it defines and incorporates the varying perspectives into the particular study. This section, therefore, does not take for granted the readers' prior knowledge and begins from the beginning to ensure that the logic behind the current theoretical framework is received intact. It is for this reason that this section begins with a brief background

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<sup>3</sup> The term psycho-social refers to the individual psyche and its relationship with the social environment.

of the relevant terms and then proceeds to discuss how the terms are positioned and incorporated within the study.

*(a) Constructivism*

Most literature acknowledges *constructivism* as stemming from the work of Jean Piaget (Ackermann, 2001; Bodner, 1986; Papert, 1999). It is an approach founded in developmental psychology, and more specifically in child development. Through his work with young children, Piaget developed a cognitive theory which articulated how young children's thinking develops. Unlike the popular theory of the time which treated children as empty vessels to be filled, Piaget's theory offered a radically different explanation to how children learn.

In his work with children, Piaget developed the concept of 'schemas.' Rooted in Greek etymology, a 'schema' means a shape or outline (Nathanail, 1985). Piaget found that based on prior knowledge and experiences, children developed 'schemas' of thought which they used to compare all new knowledge against. Children expanded and adjusted these 'schemas' to fit and make sense out of new knowledge. The process of negotiation and adjustment between prior knowledge and new knowledge was referred to as accommodation and assimilation (Bodner, 1986).

While Piaget's work focused largely on the cognitive development of children, his idea of 'schemas' provided an important contribution beyond the field of psychology. Overlapping and running parallel to Piaget's developmental findings, social scientists were developing similar conceptualizations on how individuals categorized information from their social environment. It is these conceptualizations which effectively set the stage for the development of *social constructivism* and social constructs.

*(b) Social Constructivism & Social Constructs*

During the mid-twentieth century, the aftermath of World War II incited significant research on how individuals and groups come to develop prejudice and hate. This branch of study, known as intergroup studies, found that while individuals did form cognitive categories by which they sorted information, these categories were also influenced by a variety of social factors that were an integral part of an individual's environment (Allport, 1954). These findings effectively extended the idea of *cognitive schemas* to *social categories*.

The additional consideration of social factors on how individuals come to make sense out of their world falls under the realm of *social constructivism*. *Social constructivism* adds new dimensions to Piaget's work for several reasons. Firstly, *social constructivism* moves beyond childhood and into the more general notion of human development and understanding. Secondly, the individual is seen as the centre of a network of other people who exert influence. These influences help to shape how individuals come to understand the world (Sharp & Wade, 2008). The interaction and role of complex social elements on the individual psyche is described succinctly in an excerpt drawn from 'The Social Construction of Reality':

'The developing human being not only interrelates with a particular natural environment, but with a specific cultural and social order, which is mediated to him by the significant others who have charge of him.' (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 66).

Social constructs, in turn, can be seen as the by-products of *social constructivism*. They are considered to be collective symbols which hold shared meanings among human groups (Sharp & Wade, 2008). The Canadian flag, for example, might be referred to as a 'social construct' because it is a symbol associated with a particular culture. Similarly, Sharp & Wade (2008) describe how in many parts of the Western world, pink is associated with girls and blue is

associated with boys. It is highly unlikely, for example, for an American to give a pink outfit as a gift to a boy.

### *(c) Constructionism*

Within the realm of human development, *constructionism* can also be viewed as an outgrowth (or variation) of *constructivism*. *Constructionism* uses the cognitive findings gained from *constructivism* to inform the learning process. In its most simplified form, *constructionism* is referred to as 'learning by making' (Papert & Harel, 1991). In education, the thrust behind this approach is in its advocacy for hands-on experiential learning, with *constructionism* standing in stark contrast to 'instructionism.'

Papert & Harel (1991) illustrate this difference via two mathematics classrooms. Whereas pupils *receive* instruction in a 'typical' mathematics classroom, they *actively engage* in a 'constructionist' mathematics classroom. Students do this through hands-on activities that decisively move beyond a paper, pencil and chalkboard. The activities may include designing electronic figures and using computations or physics to plan anticipated movements in 3D objects.

It is through active interaction with the external environment that people are able to construct knowledge most meaningfully (Ackermann, 2001). Even among adults, Papert holds a commitment that knowledge is fundamentally shaped by its *uses* (Ackerman, 2001). This concept can be effectively tied into social *constructivism* as well. One could argue that a key reason why human categorizations are so difficult to shake is because they are formed through daily and direct (e.g. 'hands-on') *experiences* provided via the social environment.

### 2.3 Positioning the Research

Adding the term 'social' to the terms constructivism and constructionism immediately implies a more collective, sociological approach to knowledge. One might say that while *constructivism* and *constructionism* focus on various aspects of the individual psyche, *social constructivism* and *social constructs* make a more explicit shift from the psychological to the psycho-social. The four terms, however, are very much related and often overlap with each other. It is difficult, for example, to examine individual perceptions without considering their broader contextual circumstances. Likewise, in order to understand a broader context great insight can come from examining the thoughts of the individuals within that context. It is for this reason that this research places itself within a graduated continuum when considering these four interrelated terms.

Indeed, the proposed research begins within a particular context. This context involves Anglophone educators teaching in international school settings. From a *social constructivism* perspective, the multiple cultures that educators experience outside of their home country may very well challenge many of their Western social constructs. For example, a female teacher may not be permitted to drive in a Middle-Eastern country. Likewise, a Western-trained teacher demanding that a Japanese student look her/him in the eye, may be surprised to discover that this is considered rude within a Japanese social context. These examples, it should be noted, have just as much to do with values and power structures as they do with knowledge. These values and power structures, however, remain socially constructed realities that are often taken for granted by individuals who have been raised within them.

Changes in cultural context are also likely to prompt disequilibrium. Since individuals are socialized to understand the world a certain way, when new knowledge and experiences do not

fit norms, adjustments need to be made. From a *constructivism* perspective, these adjustments result in new 'schemas' (or frames of reference) which, in turn, change the way the world is understood. Finally, the very act of living and working in a culture different from one's own is an experiential process that ties very closely with a *constructionist* approach to learning and growth.

The current research, therefore, does not treat the four terms as if they exist in silos. Acceptance of one approach does not necessitate the rejection of the others. In many cases, there is substantial cross-over and it becomes increasingly difficult to claim allegiance to one approach alone. Perhaps part of the difficulty and confusion surrounding the separation of these terms stems from the significant interconnectedness which actually exists between them.

#### 2.4 Theoretical Framework

In its most direct translation, the word paradigm refers to an example or model (Nathanail, 1985). This Greek word ('paradigma') continues to be used today in Greek vernacular and can be found in abundance within school textbooks across primary and secondary levels. In epistemological circles, a paradigm can be seen as a system of explanations that guide policy and action (Kuhn, 1962). Each system of explanation comes with its own set of assumptions (or beliefs) which are taken to be self-evident.

Whilst there is no paradigm that can claim to be free of such assumptions, acknowledging these assumptions ensures transparency and an appropriate contextualization of both the research process and its findings. The current research draws largely on the work of Berger and Luckmann (1966) and, as a result, utilizes key terminology from their work. The subsequent section presents both the necessary background of the theoretical model and the paradigmatic assumptions that are made as a result of its usage.



*(a) Objective and Subjective Culture*

The label of 'objective culture' is a misnomer. This is because culture is objective only in the way it is perceived. Objective culture can be seen as a solidified part of everyday life that remains unchallenged. This may include the language spoken, the laws enforced, and the general way in which we go about our daily lives. Whilst objective culture emerges out of the social world, its canons are often treated similarly to canons derived from the natural world. Objective culture, therefore, is seen by its constituents as unalterable despite its socially constructed nature (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

Institutions which rise out of objective culture typically carry with them a sense of authority because they regulate information and interaction among their membership (David, 1994). In the US, for example, the practice of polygamy is not institutionally supported. US immigration policy explicitly states that individuals practising polygamy may be considered inadmissible to the country (State.gov, 2014). Additionally, any polygamous individual who gains admittance is restricted to bringing a single spouse with them (State.gov, 2014).

Yet polygamy is widely accepted and practiced in many of the more conservative Muslim countries. Interestingly, whilst Westerners consider polygamy an offensive act, many Muslims consider the lack of Western humility equally offensive. Upon the issuance of a new Cypriot passport design, Cypriot diplomats expressed particular concern over possible punitive repercussions that the imprinted image of the naked mythical 'goddess of love' may cause in their travels to Muslim countries (Kambas, 2010). These examples attempt to illustrate the existence of two conflicting objective realities—each of which has been fully institutionalized and objectified in its respective region. Social constructs (whether anti-polygamous or anti-

Western) remain subjective symbols/beliefs that are deeply embedded within groups (Sharpe & Wade, 2008).

In contrast, subjective culture refers to the individual internalization of this pre-existing reality including how individuals develop particular perspectives and world views (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Westerners, for example, are likely to consider it unethical to eat dog. It is not a practice supported in the Western world and most Westerners are likely to experience discomfort if dog is served to them in a restaurant while visiting Vietnam. It is 'self-evident' that eating dog is not something which is done. Yet many Westerners freely eat beef, pork, poultry and fish. Western (or other) reality, therefore, is socially -- and selectively -- constructed.

The internalization of subjective culture occurs through two stages of socialization. Primary socialization is considered the first and most immediate form. It involves the significant others through which the world is mediated during our formative years. Primary socialization can be seen as a period in time when a child takes on the behaviours of the parents and internalizes them. The child may demonstrate these roles through play, with the expectation that s/he will eventually become what s/he is addressed as by significant others.

From this vantage point, 'the self' is internalized through a reflected entity that mirrors the attitude of others (Kalantari, 2012). The significance of how others see us is an interesting concept, particularly when we consider that from the moment of birth we are immediately defined by our relationships to others (e.g. a son, a grandson, a brother). Whilst our roles evolve and change throughout our lives – (e.g. we become friends, classmates, neighbours, colleagues, spouses) – it is interesting to note that these roles continue to always stand *in relation to someone else*.

Secondary socialization adds a further layer to the internalization process. Unlike primary socialization, secondary socialization moves away from the intimate relationships found within the family structure to the more distant relationships found in institution-based worlds (David, 1994). Yet even in secondary socialization, identity continues to be largely reflected by whom and what we associate with (Tajfel, 1981). Identity might be shaped by the university we attend, the subject we major in, the neighbourhood we live in, the institution we work for and the title we hold. Our sense of identity, then, continues to be influenced (to a significant degree) by the social order around us and our relationship to that social order (Hornsey, 2008; Tajfel, 1981; Turner, 1982).

The imposition of an external and pre-existing reality on an individual and the internalization of that reality through primary and secondary socialization processes are assumptions which are inherent in the design of this study. Since educators participating in the current study come from five Anglophone countries across three continents (Europe, North America, Oceania) they have each been exposed to the socialisation that is particular to their representative country.

This study acknowledges that Anglophone countries are not the same. At the same time, however, Anglophone countries do share a cultural heritage that is particular to the traditions and values of a more general Anglophone culture. This is probably most evident in their shared exposure to mass media. Hence, it is assumed that educators interviewed come from comparable (although not identical) objective and subjective norms. These norms can be seen as foundational in nature, whereby they establish a common framework or create a shared 'lens' through which the world is filtered.

*(b) The Iceberg Metaphor*

The 'iceberg model' provides a visual of what are, arguably, similar concepts. Originally designed by Sigmund Freud as a visual for the psychological states (super ego, ego & id) of the individual psyche, the iceberg metaphor was borrowed by Hall (1976) and altered to illustrate the internalization process of culture in individuals. In the model, the visible part of culture is described as the 'tip of the iceberg.' This visible part includes behaviours, traditions and customs. An American teacher, for example, will demand that a student look her in the eyes to show respect. In contrast, the Japanese must take care *not* to look at the teacher in the eyes to show the same respect.

Like all icebergs, however, the tip accounts for 10% of what is there, suggesting that these outward behaviours are relatively superficial in nature. Just below the surface, Hall (1976) placed attitudes and beliefs which can be seen as supporting the more visible behaviours. What do the behaviours and customs of a culture tell us about the attitudes and beliefs of that culture? Perhaps the American behaviour described in the previous paragraph is rooted in a belief (at least philosophically) of equality, whilst the Japanese behaviour is rooted in a hierarchical belief of respect towards elders. For the American, lack of eye contact may be interpreted as sinister behaviour, and it may very well be associated with dishonesty and/or suspect motives. In contrast, for the Japanese there is no such relationship. On the contrary, to look a teacher in the eye would be considered a rude and abrasive act.

Finally, at the deepest level the core cultural values of each individual can be found. Similar to Freud's version of the model, these values often exist in an unconscious state. What do individuals consider to be self-evident? From a cultural perspective, what we consider to be self-evident comes into question only when we meet tension from very different assumptions that

others somehow see as being equally self-evident. This thought is summarized best through the following quote:

The only time one is aware of the control system is when things don't follow the hidden program. This is most frequent in intercultural encounters. Therefore, the great gift that the members of the human race have for each other is not exotic experiences but an opportunity to achieve awareness of the structure of their *own* [italics in original] system, which can be accomplished only by interaction with others who do not share that system (Hall, 1976, p. 44).

*(c)The Role of the Critical Incident/Crisis*

This sub-section was not included in the initial research design. Instead, it was inserted midway through the interview process. This is because during interviews, educators frequently shared pivotal events--of varying magnitude--which appeared to play a significant role in reported transformations. These events were often communicated as a single critical incident or a series of critical incidents. Due to their high frequency, it was important to account for this development within the overall research design.

This does not mean that the design structure itself needed modification, but it does mean that the gathering of data had a less linear movement than that which is implied by the research design (see Visual A in section 2.5). Critical incidents tended to work their way backwards in that it was through them that educators were able to make sense out of their personal and professional values (Angelides, 2001; Tripp, 1994). As such, while data was ultimately sorted in chronological order, the data collection process was not usually progressively linear.

The critical incident discussed here should not be confused with critical incident *technique*, which is a skill-oriented methodology originating from the US military (Flanagan, 1954). Instead, the critical incident referenced in this section aligns more closely with the critical and reflective

thinking processes discussed in the work of Cunningham (2008) and Tripp (1994). More specifically, a critical incident(s) is defined as an event(s) or situation(s) that marks a significant turning point or change in the life of an individual (Tripp, 1994).

A critical incident is different from a crisis in that it does not necessarily have the immediate impact often found in a crisis situation. Instead, the impact may occur slowly over a period of extended time (Cunningham, 2008). Furthermore, to an outside observer, a critical incident may appear highly *unimpressional*. This is because the incident may be an otherwise ordinary part of the individual's life (Angelides, 2001; Cunningham, 2008; Tripp, 1994).

It is important to note that the critical incident-- in and of itself--is not a cause for struggle. It can, however, tap into an emotional dimension that may trigger one. Tripp (1994) writes about an otherwise normal interaction between himself and a student. Yet for some reason, this otherwise normal interaction leaves him with an unsettling uneasiness. He goes on to write about his ensuing struggle to understand the basis for his uneasiness which, in the end, he finds is connected to his own personal history. The value of the critical incident(s), therefore, lies very much within the worth which is ascribed to it by the individual reflecting upon it.

The idea of struggle and its influence in prompting change is not a new development. Although referring to scientific paradigms, Kuhn (1962) writes that there is no change *without* crisis. With reference to social change, Tajfel (1981) also writes:

No change is possible in a society without serious tensions occurring between some of its norms and some of its values. Sometimes changes . . . are accompanied by tensions, sometimes tensions create change; most often the two interact. If tensions exist, one way to resolve them is to redefine values to fit in with the norms, or to change the norms to conform more closely to values (Tajfel, 1981, p. 36).

The quote above seems to simulate the cognitive processes associated with accommodation and assimilation. Whether through a series of critical incidents or an outright crisis, struggle may be seen as a regular precursor or postscript to change. This may be the case whether the respective change is sought after by the individual or by the institutional structures within which the individual finds him/herself in.

The use of the word 'struggle' needs to be clarified. Like Cunningham's (2008) description of a critical incident, a struggle is not necessarily a perpetual constant. It can come and go in various settings and be mild in nature. It can also take a more pronounced form, where there is a deeper disconnect between the individual and those around him/her. Yet even in this situation, struggle is not necessarily a permanent and continuous feature of the individual's life.

Finally, in its most intense (and probably less frequent) form it can become an outright crisis whereby the individual is, or believes to be, on the brink of catastrophe. In this instance, struggle becomes a daily and perpetual constant of the individual's daily life. If we take these assumptions to be true, then the process of struggle is one which seeks to create or respond to change. Given this definition of struggle, it is understandable why critical incidents occupied such a significant place within individual biographies in the present study.

## 2.5 Research Design

### *(a) Research Design: How and Why it is Used*

Moving past the broad theoretical framework, the conceptual framework attempts to highlight the way in which various ideas in the study are organized. The description and justification for their organization is intended to provide transparency to the underlying philosophy used. Later

in this chapter, limitations which arise as a result of the particular conceptual framework used are also addressed.

As discussed in the framework section, the applied research design assumes that knowledge is shaped, in large part, by the people and institutions that surround an individual. Anglophone educators coming from national education systems are seen as originating from communities of comparable ideals, values and influences. Whilst generally of a Western nature, these ideals also carry elements that are particular to Anglophone culture more specifically.

Punctuality and timeliness, for example, are elements which are taken seriously and literally in the Anglophone world. Hall (1976) labels this sense of time as mono-chronic and describes it as being highly linear. In contrast, those who have ventured outside of the English-speaking world have probably noted that time can take on more fluid and flexible meanings. Hall (1976) describes this contrasting sense of time as poly-chronic because it emphasizes the involvement of people and the completion of transactions, more than a fixed schedule.

A more reserved approach may also be seen in communication styles. Anglophone culture often utilizes a more controlled and distant style of communication which contrasts sharply with the more animated styles found in the countries of southern Europe. A debate between political candidates in Britain or the US, for example, looks significantly different from a debate between political candidates in Italy or Greece.

This being said, cultural variations among Anglophone educators are acknowledged and it is understood that regional backgrounds, family histories and individual experiences will most certainly differentiate educator frames of reference. This research, therefore, does not suggest that Anglophone educators are monolithic in their experiences or perspectives. It merely



suggests that there is a similar objective culture that they are likely exposed to despite variations in family histories, experiences and geographic distance.

If we accept the premise that individuals are (to some degree) a product of their environment, then it is reasonable to believe that changing the environment may produce different outcomes. In such a case, the environment becomes a variable which can be manipulated. Within the current study, the change of environment that occurs when one moves from a national to an international setting is considered as a potential form of intervention [for improved intercultural abilities.]

The word 'setting' is used in its broadest sense, so that it is not limited to events that take place in the school building alone. Since the international school experience involves a full removal away from one's home country, experiences inside and outside of the school building must be examined simultaneously as they both contribute to the overall experience. This broader inclusion ensures that all variables which play a role in personal or professional transformation are given full consideration.

A dual focus is utilized to examine both theoretical and practically based outcomes. The theoretical focus includes personal and professional transformations which are relevant to identity, world-view and perspective. Comparatively, the practical focus looks to connect these theoretical transformations to specific changes in behaviour, particularly as they relate to professional practice. Educators, for example, are explicitly asked to provide examples of changes (if any) in their professional practice as a result of their overseas work.

This dual focus may also be viewed in light of two dominant discourses in teaching and teacher education: that of the teacher as a reflective practitioner and that of the teacher as a competent craftsperson (Moore, 2004). The reflective practitioner is defined as one who makes

connections beyond an immediate situation to a wider context (Moore, 2004). To understand the 'bigger picture', however, educators must also assess their own place within that picture-- including their personal and professional convictions. This inevitably requires a certain level of intrapersonal aptitude (or its development). The role of the international school experience in cultivating such an aptitude is one area of examination. As a discourse, the reflective practitioner continues to be valued and supported by higher education institutions and teacher educators in Anglophone countries (Merryfield, 1993; Moore, 2004).

The competent craftsperson discourse is different in that it is a results-oriented discourse. It decisively moves away from what some may view as 'navel gazing' towards concrete and often measurable outcomes. This discourse demands that educators demonstrate observable skills that indicate effective teaching and learning (Moore, 2004). In the United Kingdom, this can be seen in the development of standards lists inspected centrally by governmental agencies (Department for Education, 2013). These lists, which are determined by a central education authority, are used to judge teacher performance.

Similar discourse can be found in the United States. This has been most evident in the recent push for Common Core Standards, where forty-eight out of fifty states have adopted the same standards across the US (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2014). It can further be seen in states where direct linkages between pupil performance on standardized tests and teacher evaluations have been forged (Stefanides-Savva, 2012; United Federation of Teachers, 2010). While the reflective practitioner discourse is advocated largely through higher education institutions, the competent craftsperson discourse continues to be favoured by central governments (Moore, 2004).

The research design used in this study considers the competent craftsperson discourse by looking for specific changes in educator practice. That is, to justify the *professional* value of the international school experience it is not enough to discuss profound changes in perspective and world views. Rightly or wrongly, in today's skills-based climate there needs to be a clear connection in what these changes mean and how they translate into visible actions/behaviours in the school or classroom setting. It is such evidence that will help to validate the value of the international school as a potential resource within teacher education programmes and/or professional development opportunities for practising educators. The qualitative nature of this study does not employ any sort of normative test to gauge the competent craftsperson discourse within the international school setting. It does, however, look to collect concrete examples of changes that educators have made as a direct result of their international school experience.

*(b) Research Design-Visual A*

A visual of the research design described in the preceding section is provided on the following page:

# RESEARCH DESIGN VISUAL A

## Examined as a Potential Treatment/Intervention

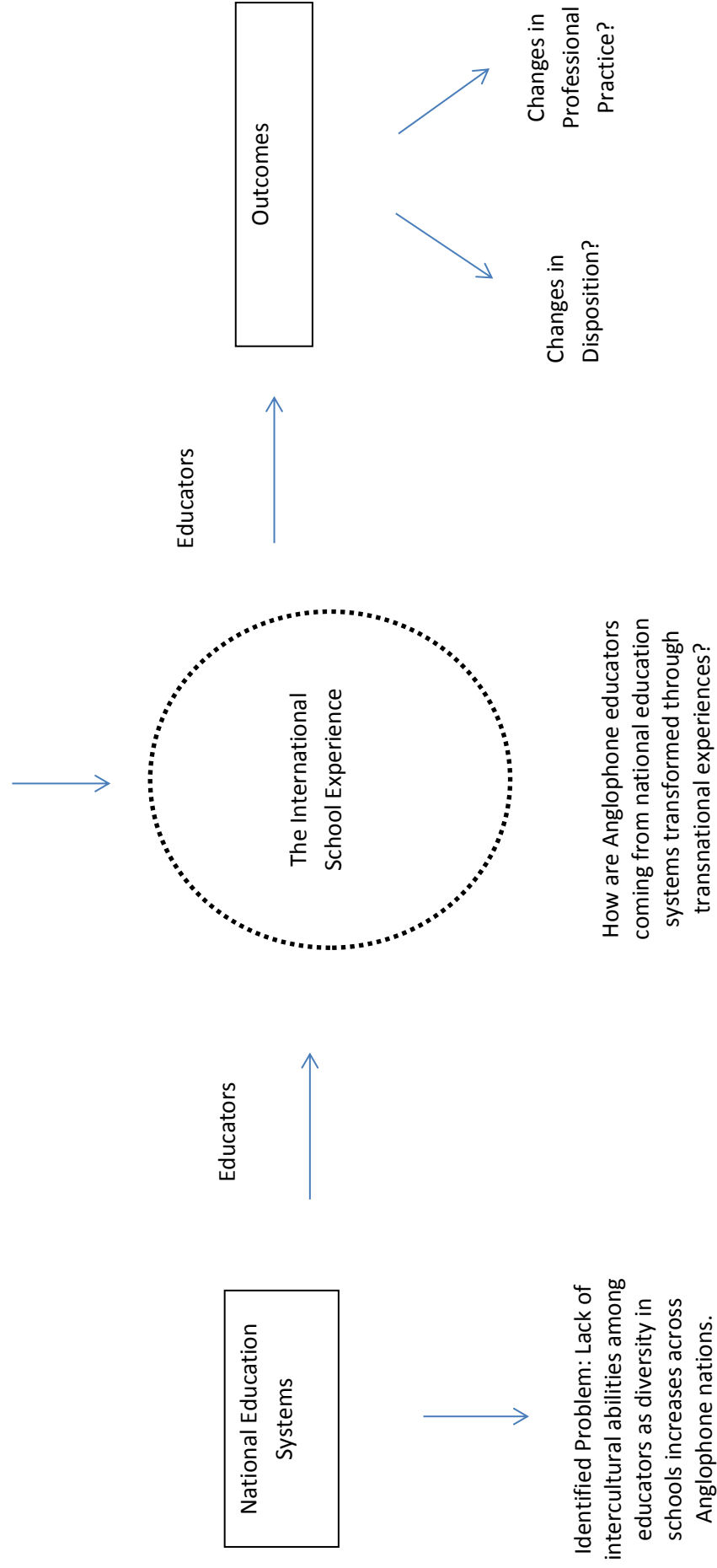


Figure 1: Research Design

*(c) Intercultural Concepts*

The implications of the international school setting are likely to be varied. The professional setting, for example, may include working with an extremely diverse student body or, in some cases, one that is largely non-Western. This can pose pragmatic challenges such as English language barriers within the classroom, but it can also pose cultural challenges. The way in which the role of a woman is interpreted in some Middle-Eastern cultures, for example, may depart significantly from interpretations in Anglophone cultures. These gender roles are likely to affect relationships within the school building as well as relationships in the larger community in which educators live.

In some Muslim countries, for example, men do not shake the hands of women. The discouragement of unnecessary touching and mingling between genders can also be seen in the separation of males and females in a single school building. Some school buildings go so far as to have separate entrance/exit points so that when males leave a classroom from one exit, females enter through a separate entry way.

The international school setting, therefore, can pose significant cultural challenges. These challenges take place within an unfamiliar setting for educators who have, otherwise, enjoyed fairly well-established positions in the Anglophone communities from which they came. How educators cope and adapt to the changed environment is one of several areas that this research looks to explore. While the current research design does not ascribe to particular scales, it does borrow the idea of ethno-centric and ethno-relative positioning as a *general* notion indicating openness to difference. Ethno-centric individuals experience their culture as ‘central to reality.’

In contrast, ethno-relative individuals are defined as those who see their beliefs as just one organization of reality among many (Bennett, 2004; Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003).

It is important to interject, however, that this general notion should be approached with caution as openness to a particular difference (e.g. same-sex marriage) may not be the same openness one has towards another form of difference (e.g. polygamy). The point being that the simultaneous existence of ethno-relative and ethno-centric dispositions can exist within the same individual at any given time. Besides making the utility of a linear scale particularly misleading, this also brings into question the accuracy of placing individuals in one of two, rather absolute, categorizations.

This being said, although all educators interviewed were born and raised in Anglophone countries, it is likely that they are individuals who are more open to change than the average educator. The fact that they find themselves in an international setting--through personal choice--is suggestive of this. If this assumption is true, then educators interviewed should show an *ethno-relative* tendency, at least with respect to differences traditionally associated with world cultures. The research, then, also needs to consider whether this level of intercultural awareness or understanding is heightened as a result of the international school experience. And if so, in what ways?

An assumption which is *not* made in this study is that educators who teach overseas will, by default, develop greater intercultural sensitivity. Extensive research has highlighted the dangers of oversimplifying the overseas experience and has also stressed the benefits of on-going guidance and support to help those overseas make the most of their intercultural encounters (Bennett, 2010; Gu, Schweisfurth & Day, 2010; Merryfield, 2000; Root & Ngampornchai, 2012; Tang & Choi, 2004).

Furthermore, even when increased intercultural sensitivity has been reported, these abilities have not necessarily moved beyond a surface level (Root & Ngampornchai, 2012; Savva, 2013b). The current research looks to interrogate these initial findings further by making changes in professional practice a more central part of the study.

## 2.6 Limitations of the Research Design

### *(a) Method & Sample Size*

While survey methods were used to gather demographic data for screening purposes, their quantitative usefulness was limited due to the relatively small sample size of thirty educators. As a result, any survey methods used in the study remained preliminary and peripheral in nature. The primary method used to gather data involved interviews. While interviews suited the qualitative nature of this study by allowing for more depth, the employment of this method did not offer the same in breadth. Findings, therefore, need to be considered within the restrictive parameters of the single qualitative method used.

It is also possible, that the interviews conducted in this study have themselves served as a type of reflective tool for educators. In such a case, the interviews become part of the treatment/intervention apparatus (as opposed to the international school experience alone). The assistive role of the interview process in prompting reflection, therefore, must also be considered when examining the benefits gained through the international school experience.

The utilization of alternative methods for future study, however, would prove useful in validating (or contesting) research findings. Data derived through interviews could conceivably be used to develop a survey that could then be distributed to a much larger population of international educators. In this way, a much larger sample of educators and schools would be represented as well.

*(b) Self-Selection*

A further limitation of the study involves the argument that educators who choose to work abroad are likely to be open-minded and ethno-relative in nature to begin with. Findings, therefore, would not necessarily apply to educators who would otherwise *not* choose to work abroad (of their own accord). In such a case, the examination of the international school as an intervention could, arguably, be based on faulty assumptions in that educators coming from national education systems are not all as malleable to changes in their perspectives as the self-selected sample group.

If we follow this line of argument still deeper, a case can be made that due to the self-selected nature of the group the research findings may very well reflect a condition that was present prior to the international school experience and may not necessarily be a *result* of the international school experience. This is a valid argument and the study has tried to compensate for this weakness by asking educators explicitly to compare their professional practice prior to their overseas experience with their practice after their overseas experience.

*(c) Socio-economic Uniformity*

Finally, overseas international schools are private fee-paying schools that typically serve middle to upper class families. As a result, the examples and experiences communicated in this research do not take into account issues associated with poverty or hardship that exist in many Anglophone urban and rural settings. Whilst educators working overseas are exposed to new cultures, they are often exposed to these cultures within the parameters of the privileged. This includes the daily lives of the educators themselves, whose travel packages often include free housing, paid



utilities, healthcare and annual aeroplane tickets home (Savva, 2013a). As such, this socio-economic parameter extends beyond students and their families to include the educators who teach within them. Findings, therefore, need to be considered within this exclusive setting as well.

## CHAPTER 3 - RELEVANT LITERATURE REVIEW

### 3.1 Overview

A more challenging aspect of the study was the voluminous amount of literature which was available for review. This included literature on international schools, multiculturalism, interculturalism, intercultural development, culturally responsive pedagogy and teaching abroad experiences. The study's attempt to connect theoretical aspects to practical aspects of education further added to the scope of potentially relevant literature. Given the sizable volume, a concerted effort was made to select reading that was deemed most pertinent. Whilst what follows is in no way an exhaustive literature review an attempt has been made to provide an effective framework through which the findings of the study can be understood.

The review begins with an examination of international schools, their students and their educators. This is intended to provide the reader with an understanding of the bigger picture in which the research takes place. The term 'international school' for purposes of this investigation is limited to any non-tertiary English-medium school based in a *non*-Anglophone country. Schools that offer Anglophone or international curricula (either in part or in whole) are included in this definition (a fuller discussion on the various types of international schools follows shortly).

The subsequent heading briefly explores how particular regions of the world have responded to increasing diversity through the use of multicultural or intercultural philosophies. It is intended to provide the reader with the historical, philosophical and geo-political background behind these two terms. Situating these terms within the broader context of world politics and developments is seen as an important pre-requisite to understanding the intercultural development models explored in the next section.

The next section on intercultural development covers four very different models, with each one attempting to map the processes of intercultural development and/or cultural adaptation from its own unique perspective. The *U and W Curve Hypotheses*, for example, focus on the sojourner experience which is especially suitable given the increased mobility of international educators. In turn, the *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)* presents a step-by-step journey towards intercultural development, attempting to address the complexity behind each stage by providing appropriate pedagogical goals to match each stage of development.

Although created with foreign language teaching in mind, the *Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) Model* offers concepts that deliberately move beyond the linguistic domain. It examines the role of knowledge, skills, attitude and values in developing increased political and cultural awareness. Finally, the *Intergroup Model* identifies predictable patterns of human behaviour towards difference and examines ways in which the formation of prejudice and stereotypes can be reduced. It is important to clarify that this study does not espouse one model over another. Nor are any of the models viewed as being all-inclusive. Instead, each model's unique contribution to the field of intercultural development is explored.

Moving on from conceptual models, the specific form that intercultural abilities take on within the school or classroom setting is examined through literature on culturally responsive pedagogy. Illustrations are provided across several subject areas and age groups. In this way, there is an attempt to anchor intercultural development directly to changes in application. Lastly, the final section looks at intercultural development as a possible outcome of internationalization. This last section considers the internationalization of tertiary education programmes, as well as the intercultural development of practising educators. The potential role of the international school in such efforts is implicit in this brief review.

### 3.2 The International Context

#### *International Schools & Students*

There is general agreement that the classification of the international school remains an ambiguous one (Bunnell, 2014; Cambridge & Thompson, 2004; Hayden & Thompson, 1995; Matthews, 1989; Murakami-Ramalho, 2008). Whilst there is no universally agreed upon definition, the single characteristic that appears to be shared by many international schools is that they offer a curriculum other than that of the host country in which they are based (Hayden & Thompson, 2013). Given this shared characteristic, Hayden & Thompson (2013) distinguish three main types of international schools: traditional, ideological and non-traditional. This typology provides a useful framework through which to examine the particularities inherent to each.

The International School of Geneva in Switzerland and the Yokohama International School in Japan (both established in 1924) are frequently credited as the first traditional international schools (Hayden & Thompson, 2013). Historically, traditional international schools were based away from the home country and were designed to serve the needs of mobile expatriate families (Hayden & Thompson, 1995). This included children of diplomats, military personnel and/or entrepreneurs. As a result, a good part of the student population in traditional international schools was -- and continues to be -- made up of children who are native English-speakers, but who have spent much of their lives outside of their home culture (Pollock & Van Reken, 1999). Within this group of students, Hayden & Thompson (2008) identify two student subcategories.

The first student subcategory involves students who are commonly referred to as 'Third Culture Kids' (TCK). The term TCK is used to describe an individual who has spent a significant part of

their formative years outside of the parent (home) culture. Whilst TCKs have created bonds with various cultures, they lack a bond with a single dominant culture (Pollock & Van Reken, 1999). An example of a TCK would be a student who is a British passport holder, with British parents, who has lived in various international locales outside of Britain, but who has never actually lived *in Britain*. Although widely used, this term can be problematic because it implies a deficit model. The assumption that belonging to a single culture is normative, for example, suggests that any deviations from that norm are anomalous.

The second student subcategory involves the 'returnee.' This is an individual who attends an international school in their own home country after having lived abroad for some time (Hayden & Thompson, 2008). An example of a returnee would be a student who is a Dutch passport holder, with Dutch parents, who has attended international schools abroad and returns back to the Netherlands. Since learning in the native tongue would be problematic after years of English-medium schooling abroad, parents often opt to continue their child's education in an Anglophone international school based in their country of origin.

Traditional international schools typically follow a national curriculum (e.g. American or British), but in recent years have increasingly begun to integrate international features. It is not unusual, therefore, for many traditional schools to offer dual curricula and hold dual accreditation (Hayden and Thompson, 1998). A school may, for example, be simultaneously accredited through the US Middle States Association (a US national accrediting body) and the International Baccalaureate Organization (an international accrediting body).

Whereas traditional international schools have historically operated within a nationalistic framework, ideological international schools align more closely with a cosmopolitan vision of the world. These schools have an underlying humanitarian purpose and look to promote peace

and understanding by bringing students together from all over the world (Hayden & Thompson, 2008). The United World Colleges are probably the best known, with 14 currently existing in the world (United World Colleges, 2015). The student body in the United World Colleges is explicitly diverse and an infrastructure exists to ensure a broad socio-economic mix of students through the use of bursaries and a comprehensive scholarship programme (United World Colleges, 2015).

Newest to the scene, are non-traditional international schools. Non-traditional schools differ from traditional schools because they cater primarily to students from the local communities in which they are based (Hayden & Thompson 2013). They also differ from ideological schools because of their globalist (as opposed to humanist) vision. Students attending such schools typically come from aspiring middle or upper class families, who see Western education as a way of acquiring a globally competitive advantage (Hayden & Thompson, 2013).

As a result, students in non-traditional schools are typically *not* native Anglophones. It is this latter type of overseas school which has seen the greatest growth in recent years. This demographic shift is significant and indicative of a changing landscape when we consider that thirty years ago 80% of international school places were filled by expatriate children, whereas in 2013 80% of international school places were filled by local children (Brummit & Keeling, 2013).

There are several factors which have influenced the increased growth of non-traditional international schools. From a grass-roots perspective, improved job prospects in Anglophone countries (Sharma, 2013), the position of English as a global language (Guilherme, 2007), and its link to elite internationally-recognized universities (Hayden & Thompson, 2013) have all contributed to an increased demand for English-medium schooling in non-English speaking countries.

Fuelling this demand are the very means to attain it. The re-distribution of wealth within growing economies has created a new market whereby an increasing number of local families are in a position to fund a private education for their children. Not surprisingly, high demand areas are also areas with rapidly growing economies, such as Abu Dhabi, Doha, Dubai and Hong Kong (ISC, 2012). At the time of this writing, the number of students attending international schools was estimated to be over 3 million, with a prediction of reaching 5 to 6 million by 2020 (Brummit & Keeling, 2013; ISC, 2012).

Of special interest is the for-profit status of the majority of non-traditional schools, which contrasts sharply with the historically non-profit status of international schools (Bunnell, 2014). Within the context of the overseas non-traditional school, then, Western education is not treated as a public good but as a commodity that can be sold at a profit. This trend is most evident in the rapid replication of imitation 'brand name' British schools that have sprouted in various off-shore settings. Dulwich College in Thailand, the Harrow School in China as well as the Repton and Belvedere Schools in the United Arab Emirates are just a few examples of this growing trend (Bunnell, 2014).

This phenomenon has not gone unnoticed in the home-front. Concerned about the wide-spread and potentially haphazard use of the "British" brand, the UK government has taken a more active interest in accrediting more overseas schools via the British Overseas Schools office. In 2012, for example, the British government reached an agreement with the Dubai Knowledge and Human Development Agency to deliver inspections on all British curriculum schools based in Dubai (Bunnell, 2014).

Needless to say, the rapid growth of international schools has also created an increased demand for an increased supply of qualified teachers and administrators who are willing to deliver such

an education in an overseas setting. Characteristics that are particular to the international school setting include high levels of transience among both students and faculty (Hacohen, 2012; Hawley, 1994; Mathews, 1989; Odland & Ruzicka, 2009) along with a higher proportion of students whose first language is not English (Sears, 2012). Looser and frequently changing curricular structures have also been reported as a result of transience and/or local demands and influences (Savva, 2013a). The curricular delivery in international schools has also been discussed in literature via the categorizations of exportation, adaptation, integration and creation (Thompson, 1998).

Whereas exportation deals with a 'copy & paste' process of national curricular features, adaptation and integration show some attempt to adjust to the unique context of the international school. Adaptation typically involves more modest adjustments to curricula such as offering the IGCSE (Hayden & Thompson, 2008) as an alternative to the GCSE. In this case, national norms remain fully intact with some relatively minor concessions to the international context. Integration, in turn, involves a more diverse contribution from various stakeholders. A school that offers the English national curriculum, alongside the International Baccalaureate programme may, arguably, fall into this category. Finally, the creation category involves curricula that have emerged as a direct result of the international context. Examples of this include the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) or the Primary Years Programme (PYP).

Beyond curricula, these categories may be extended to the broader application of policy and processes in international schools. Whilst a proportion of international schools are 'encapsulated' and operate via a rigidly exported curriculum, these types of schools are becoming increasingly rare. Instead, the majority of international schools today have some level



of interaction with the local community, with the non-traditional schools serving a relatively high proportion of local students.

Moving to a parallel field, forces exerted through the local context can be compared to the theme of transfer which has been studied in the field of comparative education (Cowen, 2009; Steiner-Khamsi, 2013). Although not developed with the international school in mind, the idea of transfer seems particularly well suited to its conditions. *Transfer*, for example, is described as the transnational movement of an educational idea or practice (Cowen, 2009). This is certainly the case for the overseas international school, as the exported education it has on offer is not the education of the host country.

*Translation* is further described as the re-interpretation of educational ideas, which typically occur with transfer in space and time (Cowen, 2009). Indeed, the international educator must consider not only the original intention of the exported curricula/standards but also how they will ultimately be used to meet the needs of the student population in the host country. Finally, *transformation* involves the actual change that occurs as a result of the social and economic powers in the new context (Cowen, 2009). The transformation phenomenon is evident when educators, for example, find that the ‘American’ or ‘British’ school they have come to work in does not resemble the schools back in the home country (Joslin, 2002).

Also drawn from the field of comparative education, the idea of ‘reception and translation’ (Steiner-Khamsi, 2013) posits that once an entity (e.g. a country) is receptive to a new programme it only emulates by drawing on selected features that serve the local/political agenda (Steiner-Khamsi, 2013). Whilst neither of the two theories is specifically situated within the world of the overseas international school, they remain applicable to many of the interactive processes that were identified by educators in the study.

### *International Educators*

Characteristics of international educators have usually been explored from a personnel perspective. Garton (2000) identifies three groups of international educators: host-country nationals, local-hire expatriates and overseas-hire expatriates. Host country nationals are local citizens of the country a school is based in. They require little paperwork and wages are often based on average local salaries (as opposed to UK/US salaries). This is particularly cost effective considering that local salaries can be especially low in many countries.

Consider, for example, that the maximum teacher salary in state schools in Latvia is 4,757 euro per annum or 4,372 euro per annum in Bulgaria (European Commission, 2013). Another advantage of host country nationals is their strong knowledge of the local and regional culture. Given that most international schools have a proportion of local students (albeit more in non-traditional than in traditional schools), local hires help to bridge and complement the international mission of schools (Garton, 2000).

The second category of educators involves local-hire expatriates. Local-hire expats are nationals of Anglophone countries (e.g. UK/US) who typically live in the host country due to their spouses' temporary employment abroad (Garton, 2000). Alternatively, some local-hire expatriates may be married to host-country nationals or be dual citizens who have repatriated as permanent residents of the host country. Together with host-country nationals, local hire expats (those who are permanent residents) offer much needed stability to what is otherwise a transient faculty. Like host-country nationals, local-hire expats are often paid at local rates, providing schools the added benefit of hiring native English-speakers at a fraction of what overseas-hire expatriates are paid (Garton, 2000).

The third and final category of international educators, the overseas-hire expatriate, is the group that this study focusses on. Overseas hires are considered to be, by far, the most costly and time consuming of all recruits (Garton, 2000). This is because they require paperwork to be processed (e.g. visa), housing to be secured and a salary that is competitive enough to entice candidates to opt for one location over another. Despite being a more costly and time consuming recruit, the demand for the overseas-hire teacher remains strong because of the prestige associated with educators coming directly from Anglophone countries to what are almost always English medium international schools (Hayden & Thompson, 2013).

Within the category of so-called overseas-hires, Hardman (2001) proposes four further subcategories of educators: childless career professionals, career professionals with families, mavericks and senior professionals whose children have left home. Childless career professionals are seen as the most ideal employees and are described as being dedicated and valuing involvement with students (Cambridge, 2002; Hardman, 2001). Career professionals with families are ascribed similar positive attributes, although due to the increased expenses associated with moving an entire family, this group remains costly. They are also more likely, however, to renew their employment contracts because they have a vested interest in the education provided to their children (Hardman, 2001; Zilber, 2005).

These two sub-categories are contrasted with the maverick educator who is more interested in the prospects of global travel than in teaching per se (Cambridge, 2002). Alternatively, the maverick educator may be seen as one who is looking to escape from national constraints and other issues which might exist back in the home country (Cambridge, 2002; Hardman, 2001). The distinction between educators who are looking to travel and see the world, versus educators who are looking to get away from an unhappy situation (whether personal or

professional) is highlighted as a subtle but potentially important difference among international educators (Savva, 2013a). The fourth and final sub-category presents similar categories for senior educators.

There are several possible criticisms of this typology. Firstly, it makes gross generalisations about individuals that fall into the various categories. The generalization that single career professionals are better educators than their married counterparts, for instance, cannot be taken seriously. Secondly, the typology does not consider the possibility that the same individual may fall into different categories at various stages of his/her life (Cambridge, 2002). Lastly, whilst three categories are based on marital/family status, the maverick category appears to be based more on a personality trait, thereby making the categories difficult to compare. This is not to say that the categories are individually and absolutely invalid, but because they do not use the same base criteria there is a risk of comparing 'apples to oranges.'

In order to examine the deeper psycho-social characteristics of individuals who choose to live and work abroad it is useful to remove the various labels and categories to see if such individuals have more things fundamentally in common than not. The model that comes to mind is Hall's (1976) iceberg model, with observable human behaviours and actions accounting for the visible part of the iceberg and deep-seated cultural values accounting for the *invisible* part of the iceberg (deep beneath the water). These deep-seated cultural values are directly influenced by family units, social institutions and the larger societies in which individuals are raised (Berger & Luckman, 1966).

If we consider that all overseas-hires demonstrate the same initial behaviour, in that they choose to move abroad (visible part of the iceberg), assessing the reasons behind such a decision helps to differentiate motives. This assessment of motives can be seen in the work of

Hardman (2001), Cambridge (2002) and Zilber (2005) discussed earlier. Yet this assessment, while getting just below the surface, lacks adequate depth. In order to move to a deeper level, it becomes necessary to assess not only the motives, but to question what those motives reveal about the underlying values of those same individuals. It is only through identification of these deeper values, including ways in which they are developed, that we are able to gain a more holistic picture through which to understand the international educator.

In considering the international educator, Pearce (2013) questions whether the educator working in an international school does anything more than what they were trained to do at home. He describes the continuous drive to define international education as an attempt to, perhaps, find something distinctive when in fact 'there is nothing distinctive but the location.' Yet the single distinction he presents is a powerful one, and its importance may very well be enough to argue a case for the personal and professional transformation of educators.

It is a distinction which, arguably, transcends the typology of the particular international school, the student body and the curricula on offer. Consider, for example, that even the educator who works in a traditional international school, teaching a national curriculum to expatriate students cannot remain immune and unaffected by his/her presence in a new society. The researcher would further argue that even the educator who limits his/her outside exposure through participation in an 'expat bubble' cannot fully insulate him/herself from the new cultural features that exist in the personal and professional environment.

### *International-Mindedness*

Across international schools, the term 'international-mindedness' is a frequently used term whose usage has been coupled closely (although not exclusively) with the Learner Profile of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme. The IB Learner Profile identifies ten attributes that

call on learners to be inquirers, thinkers, communicators, risk takers, knowledgeable, principled, open-minded, caring, balanced and reflective (IB, 2013). These attributes, however, focus on final outcomes as opposed to the processes involved in achieving them with little guidance on the assessment of these attributes available (Haywood, 2007).

What's more, attributes are presented in rather broad and generalizable categories. There is an assumption, for example, that an individual who might be very inquisitive in the arts would be equally inquisitive in the sciences. The point being that these attributes can be both present and absent within the same individual depending on context. One could further argue that it is unreasonable to expect that an individual would demonstrate all ten of these attributes, all of the time and in all situations making their assessment particularly difficult.

Beyond the attributes of the IB Learner Profile, there have been numerous attempts to bring clarity to this loosely defined term. Haywood (2007) suggests that 'international-mindedness' is more about the cultivation of a disposition that can manifest itself into a variety of forms. Some forms proposed include diplomatic, political, economic/commercial and spiritual. He further notes that some forms may be mutually exclusive to each other. Commercial international-mindedness, for example, may not necessarily be complementary to spiritual international-mindedness. Essential features identified include a curiosity and interest in the world, open attitudes towards other cultures and belief systems, the recognition of the earth's environment as a common entity that has value for all, recognition of the interconnectedness of human events and values, including caring and having a general concern for the wellbeing of people (Haywood, 2007).

Still others have attempted to pin down a more practical and objective-oriented definition of 'international-mindedness.' Harwood & Bailey (2012) propose a framework entitled 'Me and

My World’ which covers the five strands of world views, language, culture, human society and global issues. Within each of these strands, they present a concentric diagram that examines ‘me, my school, my country and the world.’ As a guiding definition, they propose:

International-mindedness (global consciousness) is a person’s capacity to transcend the limits of a world view informed by a single experience of nationality, creed culture or philosophy and recognize in the richness of diversity a multiplicity of ways of engaging with the world (Harwood & Bailey, 2012, p. 79).

This definition appears to circumvent the discrete and absolute categorizations imposed via the IB Learner Profile, with the ability to connect ‘the self’ to a larger world playing a central role. Still another definition of education for international-mindedness that flows in a similar, but more ambitious, vein is provided by the former Deputy Director General of the IB, Ian Hill:

The study of issues which have application beyond national borders and to which competencies such as critical thinking and collaboration are applied in order to shape attitudes leading to action which will be conducive to intercultural understanding, peaceful co-existence and global sustainable development for the future of the human race (Hill, 2012, p. 259).

Like the previous definition, ‘international-mindedness’ is described as having to do with views that extend beyond national borders. What is different in this definition is the explicit emphasis it makes on the world being a better and more peaceful place, positioning itself clearly within a more humanistic agenda. This contrasts sharply, however, with aspects of Haywood’s (2007) typology. Can an explicitly humanistic agenda, for instance, align with diplomatic, political or commercial forms of ‘international-mindedness’? Are not the driving forces of these other forms more closely linked to national or self-interests (as Haywood himself points out)? Suffice it to say, that despite its popular use among international schools, ‘international-mindedness’

remains open to multiple interpretations with sometimes subtle but decisively different philosophical underpinnings.

### 3.3 Multicultural or Intercultural

Whilst 'international-mindedness' is a term largely associated with international schools, the terms multiculturalism and interculturalism have endured more wide spread usage. This section prefaces with a summary of the key historical, philosophical and geo-political agendas behind both of these terms. The summary provided is in no way exhaustive but is intended, instead, to inform the reader of important differences in position between the multicultural and intercultural camps. Since the majority of educators interviewed were American or British, the review focuses primarily on these two regions of the world, along with a brief look at the Canadian and broader European context. The central point to walk away with being that the concepts of multiculturalism and interculturalism can mean different things depending on geographic, historic and political contexts.

#### *The United States of America*

Multiculturalism in the United States emerged mainly as a result of the Black Civil Rights movement during the 1960s and 1970s (Banks, 1993). The Black Civil Rights movement was driven by people of colour who were responding to years of oppression and discrimination. Prior to the movement, African-Americans were schooled separately from White Americans under the slogan 'separate but equal.' This separation, however, proved to be far from equitable. Expenditures per pupil, staff salaries and the quality of books and other materials, for example, were significantly lower than schools for White pupils. Furthermore, school boards, curricula and textbooks continued to be controlled by Whites during this period (Banks, 1993).



Not surprisingly, the taught curriculum was largely Eurocentric with no acknowledgement of contributions made by African-Americans.

A landmark event that helped to fuel the Black Civil Rights movement was a US Supreme Court ruling that outlawed school segregation (Brown vs. Board of Education, 1954). The birth of multiculturalism in the United States, therefore, was largely rooted in issues of race. Additionally, the loosening of immigration laws in the mid-1960s -- which previously used ethnic and racial bias to restrict non-White immigration -- resulted in an influx of more diverse groups to the US (Jay, 2011). It was during this time also that multicultural education developed a prominent place in school agendas. A major goal of multicultural education was the reform of schools, driven by the belief that all students should have equal access to educational opportunity and mobility (Banks, 1993).

The first phase of multicultural education involved a massive push for ethnic studies (Banks, 1993). These studies included a demand for separate courses in Black history which would acknowledge the contribution and achievements of African-Americans. As such, the aim of the ethnic studies push was to provide a form of empowerment to African-Americans and other historically marginalized minority groups (e.g. Latinos).

The second phase of multicultural education involved larger structural and system changes. Examples of such changes included the publication of *No One Model American*, published in 1973, by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and a 1977 mandate from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) requiring all member schools to implement courses or programmes in multicultural education. During the third phase, other marginalized groups, including women and individuals with special education needs sought to be better represented in schools as well.

A major criticism was that the curriculum continued to deliver an exclusively Western, white and male dominated view of the world (Standish, 2012). This was seen as problematic and unrepresentative of the historical plight of many Americans. This criticism continues today as scholars and policy makers try to strike a balance that addresses minority concerns without marginalizing other groups (including majority groups) in the process. Finally, Banks (1993) describes a fourth phase of multicultural education which involves a shift towards the development of theory, research and practice that looks to further interrelate the variables of race, class and gender into multicultural education.

More broadly in North America, multiculturalism has focused on the values of individual freedom and citizenship on a non-discriminatory basis. The philosophy has been rooted in the view that the state should belong equally to all citizens and that individuals should be able to access state institutions and act as full and equal citizens in political life without the need to hide or deny their cultural identity. It is also rooted in the view that the state should acknowledge the 'historic injustices' committed against minority groups (Kymlicka, 1995).

### *Canada*

Parallel to the Civil Rights movement in the United States, multiculturalism also emerged in Canada during the 1960s and 1970s (Meer & Modood, 2012). Unlike the US, the focus of multiculturalism in Canada had more to do with constitutional and land issues related to the entitlement and status of indigenous people, as well as a rise in nationalism and a secessionist movement in French-speaking Quebec (Meer & Modood, 2012). During this time period, Anglophone Canada promoted multiculturalism, whereas French-speaking Canada (Quebec) rejected the term and promoted the term interculturalism (Taylor, 2012). Whereas

multiculturalism is seen as emphasizing and valuing difference, interculturalism is seen as emphasizing integration into the larger state apparatus (Taylor, 2012).

Prior to the 1970s, the typical path of immigrants in Quebec was to integrate into the English speaking minority (which was the *Canadian* majority). Declining birth rates in Quebec, however, caused alarm and prompted major language legislation. Today, the integration of immigrants into the *French* language continues to be central to the continued survival of Quebec as a Francophone region. While Canadian legislation asserts no 'official culture' (parallel to the US claim of no 'official language'), Francophone Canada has remained steadfast on its position in securing the French language within the confines of its own provincial borders.

Quebec's insistence on interculturalism, therefore, is linked to a very real struggle to preserve its language and heritage. The threat of losing the French language and culture has loomed large for Quebec's Francophones amidst an otherwise Anglophone Canada, a dominating Anglophone neighbor (the United States) and the increasing spread of the English language in Europe and abroad (Taylor, 2012).

A semantic distinction between the two terms of multiculturalism and interculturalism can prove helpful in identifying the subtle but important inflexion in policies. If multiculturalism includes policies which aim both at recognition of difference and integration, one might argue that the prefix 'multi' gives greater weight to the first goal (acknowledging diversity), whereas 'inter' (as in interculturalism) appeals to the latter goal of integration (Taylor, 2012).

There is no universal consensus as to the differences or similarities between the two philosophies. Some scholars have agreed that there is substantial overlap between them (Kymlicka, 2012; Levey, 2012), with some believing that the two are, in many ways, essentially the same (Meer & Modood, 2012). Still others have differentiated between 'hard' and 'soft'

claims to differences. 'Hard' claims involve a view that interculturalism is fundamentally different from multiculturalism, while 'soft' claims see a more subtle difference, drawing attention to a matter of emphasis (Levey, 2012). To complicate matters further, interpretation of the two philosophies can vary based on whether one is examining the terms via their philosophical foundations or the (political) policies established in their name (Levey, 2012; Meer and Modood, 2012).

### *The United Kingdom & Europe*

The United Kingdom's struggle with diversity has included an influx of ex-colonial migrants responding to labour demands in the years following the Second World War (Tomlinson, 2008). Since then, migration has come to include EU nationals from poorer countries seeking better opportunities in richer countries like the UK. This increased diversity is believed, by some, to have contributed to the decline of nationalism (Standish, 2012). In recent years, there has been much discussion over multiculturalism, successful integration and a British identity (Tomlinson, 2008).

With regards to changes in education policy, concerns over a fragmented society can be seen in the overt addition and promotion of British values to the early years curriculum in England. This has included the authorization of local authorities to cut off state funding to nurseries that are believed to promote extremist views, including the teaching of creationism (Adams, 2014). As such, the educational trajectory in the UK has shown signs of returning towards a more nationalistic model.

Indeed, the UK and Europe have both made an explicit shift from multiculturalism to interculturalism. In a well-circulated speech given by British Prime Minister David Cameron,

Islamist extremism was condemned and its rise in England was blamed, in part, to the state of multiculturalism:

‘Under the doctrine of state multiculturalism we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives, apart from each other and apart from the mainstream. We’ve failed to provide a vision of society to which they feel they want to belong. We’ve even tolerated these segregated communities behaving in ways that run completely counter to our values.’ (Euractiv, 2011: David Cameron)

In this quote, the fragmentation of society is attributed to the doctrines of multiculturalism. According to this line of thought, by emphasizing difference, instead of integration, England has allowed segregated communities to exist, even as they go against British values. The White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue (Council of Europe, 2008) echoes similar concerns about the state of multiculturalism. Listed under the sub-heading ‘Major Concerns’ it writes that responses to questionnaires distributed to its member states revealed:

. . . a belief that what had until recently been a preferred policy approach, conveyed in shorthand as “multiculturalism”, had been found inadequate. On the other hand, there did not seem to be a desire to return to an older emphasis on assimilation. Achieving inclusive societies needed a new approach, and intercultural dialogue was the route to follow (White Paper, Council of Europe, 2008, p.9).

Although a lack of clarity as to what the term intercultural dialogue might mean is acknowledged, the White Paper (Council of Europe, 2008) goes on to state that its member states are united in using the European Convention of Human Rights as a ‘moral compass’ through which the meaning of intercultural dialogue could be derived. The main thrust behind interculturalism being to develop *cohesive* civil societies. One argument in favour of

interculturalism is that while multiculturalism looks to preserve and emphasize cultural heritage (difference), interculturalism acknowledges and enables cultures to have currency, to be exchanged, to circulate, to be modified and evolve (Powell & Sze, 2004).

Finally, on a more global scale the World Report on Cultural Diversity also writes that 'Multiculturalism has in practice too often led to an ethnization of cultural values' (UNESCO, 2008, p.235), and it calls for a post-multiculturalist alternative. In some UNESCO member states, for example, language requirements for immigrants are described as changing through compulsory courses and tests, to ensure that newcomers demonstrate acceptable levels of language proficiency. Despite the stronger emphasis on conformity, the Word Report on Cultural Diversity argues that changes do not aim to simulate processes of assimilation. The report further reasons that diversity continues to be valued through the reduction of socio-economic inequality among ethnic and cultural minorities across member states.

Whilst critics of interculturalism have accused it of being an assimilationist philosophy, the fact remains that interculturalism has received the backing of both influential politicians and important standard-bearing organisations such as UNESCO and the Council of Europe. Given these changes in emphasis, the models explored in the following section align more closely with the philosophy of interculturalism. That is, intercultural development is treated as a way of developing sensitivity through commonalities and shared experiences.

### 3.4 Intercultural Development Models

#### *U-Curve & W-Curve Hypotheses*

Using data from interviews with 200 Norwegian Fulbright scholars visiting the United States, Lysgaard (1955) produced a model which charted the progressive stages of cultural adaptation. In his work, he found that positive or negative responses to adjustment depended significantly

on the time duration overseas. In particular, he discovered that those who were overseas for less than 6 months or more than 18 months reported good adjustment. Those who had stayed between 6-18 months, however, reported comparatively poor adjustment. What's more, the effect of duration of stay remained consistent across all 200 participants, irrespective of age, gender, area of study or academic status.

This U-shaped relationship, whereby there was an initial euphoria associated with entry into a new and novel environment (high), followed by a crisis period (low) and then a recovery back to good adjustment (high) was seen as a time process through which all grantees passed (Lysgaard, 1955). The initial stage of adjustment has been compared to a 'honey moon' stage (Oberg, 1960). During this time, grantees experienced an initial excitement about their new environment and formed friendly but generally superficial friendships.

In contrast, during the crisis stage grantees reported a marked need for deeper levels of companionship that were not always available. Language issues understandably exacerbated this condition. As a result, loneliness was a typical emotion reported, along with angry feelings towards the host country (Lysgaard, 1955). The crisis stage may be compared to the commonly used term of 'culture shock.' This term was used by Oberg (1960) who studied the work of Christian missionaries abroad and defined it more specifically as 'an occupational disease of people who have been suddenly transplanted abroad' (Oberg, 1960, p. 142).

The experience of culture shock is of special interest due to the extended time international educators spend abroad. Oberg (1960) identified six conditions that contribute to the development of culture shock. These conditions were further validated in the work of Ward, Bochner & Furham (2001):

- Strain engendered by attempts to continually adjust
- A sense of loss regarding friends, family, home or professional status
- Being rejected by and or rejecting members of the new culture
- Confusion about role, role expectations, values, feelings and self-identity
- Surprise, anxiety, even disgust and indignation after noting differences
- Feelings of impotence engendered by an inability to cope with the new culture

The identification of these conditions brings added clarity and definition to the experiences and emotions which take place during the crisis stages identified in the U-Curve model. It appears that the struggle between the internal self and the external environment emerges as a central theme in the experience of culture shock. Internal/external disequilibrium seems to occur as an individual attempts to negotiate a balance between who and where s/he is. Culture shock can further be seen as a struggle that comes with an growing awareness of the self not only through experiences *with* the other, but also through experiences *as* the other.

The experience of culture shock is not necessarily limited to traditional notions of national or regional culture. In Roskell's (2013) study of international school teachers based in Thailand, for example, it was observed that teacher adjustment to a new country operated separately, and at a different pace from, adjustment to the new workplace. Similar findings were confirmed in another study in which 45 foreign-trained pharmacists living in Canada described separate regional and professional migratory adjustment (Austin, 2007). Besides the expected elements of culture shock associated with moving to a new country, participants in both studies communicated a distinctly separate culture shock in relation to the new demands and expectations of their profession. This dual experience has been labelled as 'double culture-shock' (Austin, 2007).



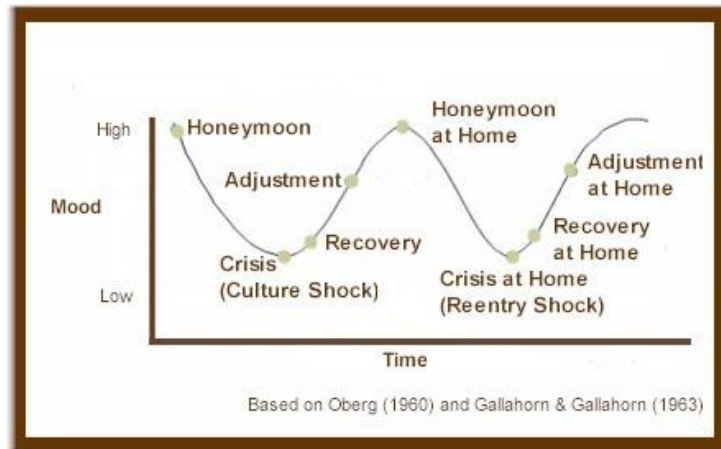
Indeed, research on the international school environment indicates that many Anglophone educators who set off to work in international schools often expect that teaching abroad will be similar to teaching back home (Joslin, 2002). This perception is reinforced by the fact that international schools invariably follow Anglophone curricula and are accredited by nationally recognized bodies. The transplantation of international schools, however, is far more complex than a 'copy & paste' application.

High student and staff turnover in international schools (Hacohen, 2012; Mancuso, Roberts & White, 2010; Odland & Ruzicka, 2009) a more flexible management style (Savva, 2013a) and, in the case of non-traditional international schools, an unusually high number of local children (Hayden & Thompson, 2013) all contribute to the creation of a very different work environment. As such, whilst many educators anticipate a level of culture shock with regards to the new country they will be residing in, the struggle to adjust to a new work environment and the new challenges it poses are often less anticipated experiences.

Among sojourners, Oberg (1960) also observed an increased dependence on long-term residents of one's own nationality in addition to a tendency of individuals to glorify everything about their home culture--a behaviour labelled as regression. The formation of groups whose members share common characteristics can be seen as a natural protective mechanism. Such groups also offer self-validation and are important coping mechanisms for dealing with the difficult process of adjustment (Bochner et al, 1985). Grouping, however, can also serve as an exclusionary mechanism (Bates, 2012). This dual phenomenon has been confirmed in several more recent studies where individuals often formed exclusive mono-cultural group relationships and/or tended to idealize aspects of their home culture while being highly critical of the host-nation culture (Austin, 2007; Roskell, 2013).

In the final stage of the U-Curve hypothesis, Lysgaard (1955) found that participants were able to integrate into the community and create friendship groups that provided more meaningful relationships. Whilst Lysgaard (1955) identified three points in the curve, Oberg (1960) inserted an additional stage of 'recovery' between the crisis and final stage. He described the 'recovery' stage as one where resistance transformed into acceptance and characterized individuals at this stage as finding humour in their overseas adventure. Lastly, during the final stage of 'adaptation' individuals not only accepted the host-culture but were able to enjoy aspects of the culture as well.

Whilst Lysgaard (1955) & Oberg (1960) examined adaptation to the overseas experience, Gullahorn & Gullahorn (1963) continued to follow the effects of the overseas experience after participants returned home. Gullahorn & Gullahorn (1963) found that expatriates who returned back to their home country often experienced similar adaptation stages to those they experienced when abroad. This included an initial stage of positive feelings, a middle stage of crisis (or confusion), followed by recovery and re-adaptation. Based on these findings, Gullahorn & Gullahorn (1963) extended Oberg's (1960) version of the U-Curve model into a W-Curve model. Below an illustration incorporating Oberg's (1960) U-curve and Gullahorn & Gullahorn's W-curve (1963) is provided:



**Figure 2: The W-Curve Model**

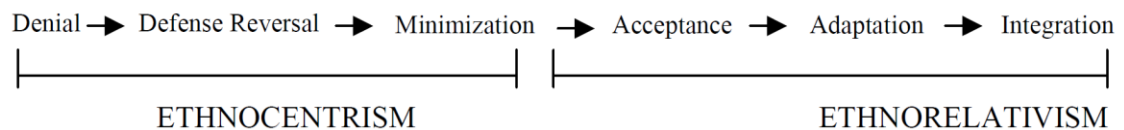
Although widely used, both the U-Curve and W-Curve models have been criticized for their oversimplification. Scholars have questioned, for example, whether all individuals begin with a sense of euphoria (Searle & Ward, 1990). One of the assumptions made by the U and W Curve models is that individuals *choose* to go abroad (as in the case of the 200 Fulbright Scholars). It does not consider, however, individuals who may find themselves in a new culture as political refugees, displaced victims of war or natural disasters. It seems unlikely that such individuals would experience euphoria in their new cultural surroundings. Instead, a state of relief or disorientation would seem more likely.

Another challenge to the hypotheses is whether the time duration is as predictable as claimed or whether a more flexible timeline is appropriate, including one that takes into account individual differences and particular environments (Black & Mendenhall, 1991; Church, 1982). Within the context of international schools, research has supported this argument by identifying multiple factors which contribute towards very different experiences among individuals working in the same communities and even the same schools. These factors include an individual's cultural heritage, their previous work culture, school organizational culture, school mission, the local community culture and regional culture (Joslin, 2002).

### *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)*

Using a grounded theory approach and drawing largely on the experiences of short-term study abroad participants, the DMIS is a linear model which identifies progressive stages of intercultural development, as they relate to changes in world views (Bennett, 1986). The linear model is divided in the mid-section with individuals identified as ethno-centric falling on the left-hand side of the divide, and individuals identified as ethno-relative falling on the right-hand side of the divide.

Individuals who are ethno-centric are limited in their intercultural abilities, whilst individuals who are ethno-relative demonstrate more advanced intercultural abilities (Bennett, 2004). Within the categories of ethno-centrism and ethno-relativism there is a further subdivision into smaller stages of development. With each progressive stage, developmentally appropriate educational goals are identified before an individual can move on to the next stage (Bennett, 2004).



**Figure 3: The DMIS Model**

Copied from: Hammer M.R, Bennett M.J & Wiseman, R. (2003) 'Measuring intercultural sensitivity: The intercultural development inventory.' *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*: 27, p. 424.

### *Ethno-centric Stages*

The initial 'denial' stage is described as the default condition of individuals whose primary socialization has been mono-cultural. Individuals at this stage see their own culture as the only

real one (Bennett, 1986; 1993; 2013; Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003). Developmentally, individuals at this initial level should not be presented with material in overly complex ways, as the overarching goal at this stage is the recognition of diversity as an inevitable part of life (Bennett, 2004).

Individuals in the second 'defense' stage are able to discriminate difference, but they see their own culture as superior to others. As a result, they have difficulty seeing the equally human experience of the other and are often openly threatened by cultural difference. For such individuals, the world is often organized into 'us' and 'them', making this stage the predominant orientation of nation building (Bennett, 2013). Developmental goals for this stage include the reduction of a polarized worldview by providing an emphasis on common humanity as well as encouraging the equal distribution of criticism about worldviews and cultures (Bennett, 1986; 1993; 2013).

An alternative form of denial is called 'reversal.' Reversal occurs when an individual becomes excessively critical of his/her own culture, while *uncritically* praising all other cultures. Such an individual is often driven by a need to gain approval from the 'other.' Although reversal may initially appear to be more interculturally sensitive, it remains dualistic in nature and overly simplistic (Bennett, 1986; 1993; 2013).

The final stage in the ethnocentric category is the 'minimization' stage. Threats in the earlier stage are neutralized because individuals in this category have learned to place differences into familiar categories. All people are seen as the same, sharing the same biological nature and all people are viewed as 'children of god' (Cushner, 2012). Individuals at this stage, however, also assume that people of all cultures would like to live like them (e.g. certainly they must want to live in a democratic society). They are not able to recognize that people can have very different

values from themselves. As a result, the development of cultural self-awareness is a key goal at this stage (Bennett, 2004).

### *Ethno-relative Stages*

The 'acceptance' stage is the first developmental stage in the ethno-relative portion of the DMIS. Cultural difference is seen as a state in which one's own culture is just one of a number of equally valid and complex worldviews. Individuals at this stage are skilful at identifying how cultural differences operate in a range of human interactions but do not necessarily have the ability to experience cultures in great depth. Since acceptance does not necessarily mean agreement, individuals at this stage also need to develop the ability to see the perspective of another culture without losing their own (Bennett, 2004).

Finally, the ensuing stages of 'adaptation' and 'integration' both involve expanded worldviews which include the development of new constructs drawn from other cultural frameworks. Adaptation does not require an individual to lose his/her primary cultural identity to operate effectively in a different cultural context. Instead, the major issue to be resolved at this stage is the development of cognitive and intuitive empathy, along with the continued expansion of abilities and skills (Bennett, 2004).

Lastly, although the 'integration' stage is placed at the end of the linear scale, it is not necessarily the most evolved state of intercultural development (Bennett, 2004). Individuals in this category have often lived within and adapted to two or more cultures. A key issue which is particular to this stage includes the need to resolve one's multicultural identity. Since 'integration' can be achieved only through long-term immersion in a culture, it is not a realistic expectation for short-term cross cultural interactions (Antal & Friedman, 2008).

It is here that the linear design of the DMIS model becomes problematic. Whilst the 'integration' stage is described as a different (as opposed to a better) condition (Bennett, 2004), there is a visual implication that conflicts with this description. Hammer (2012) argues that the 'integration' stage has more to do with the development of an intercultural identity rather than intercultural competence per se and proposes an adjusted model whereby the 'integration' stage is removed (Hammer, 2012).

Despite criticism, the DMIS offers a pedagogical framework which builds on prior knowledge and experiences, while simultaneously identifying developmentally appropriate goals. The idea of building on prior knowledge and experiences aligns closely with cognitive development theories initiated by Piaget. This important pedagogical process is further elaborated on in the section dedicated to culturally responsive pedagogy.

#### *Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)*

Unlike the previously discussed models, the Intercultural Communicative Competence model does not apply a time-line or linearity to the development of intercultural competence.

Designed originally with foreign language teaching in mind, the ICC model has been included in this review because of the intercultural components it integrates beyond those which are linguistic. The Intercultural Communicative Competence model presents knowledge, skills (two clusters) and attitudes as key components of intercultural competence (Byram, 1997; 2009). It is through these four components that political education and critical cultural awareness are also believed to emerge (Byram, 1997; 2009). These components are further supported by the values each individual brings with them as a result of membership in various social groups (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002):

	<b>Skills</b> Interpret and relate	
<b>Knowledge</b> Of self and other; Of interaction: individual and societal	<b>Education</b> Political education critical cultural awareness	<b>Attitudes</b> Relativizing self valuing other
	<b>Skills</b> Discover and/or interact	

**Figure 4: The ICC Model**

Copied from Byram, M. (1997) *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*, p. 34.

#### *Knowledge & Attitudes*

There are two types of knowledge that this model considers. The first type involves an understanding about social group dynamics, identities and how they function in societies (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002). This type of knowledge is not culture-specific and it appears to share some similarities with the intergroup model (discussed in the subsequent heading) which explicitly deals with patterns of human behaviour more broadly and across cultures. In contrast, the second type of knowledge is culture-specific, and it includes an awareness of interactive protocol. Understanding how to act in specific circumstances and what different gestures mean are a part of this second type of knowledge (Byram, 1997).

Attitudes, in turn, are considered the foundation of intercultural competence (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002) with curiosity, openness and a readiness to suspend disbelief and judgment considered most critical (Byram, 1997; Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002). An important distinction further exists between a genuine interest in learning about other cultures and the ‘tourist approach’ which involves collecting exotic experiences for their novelty or with the



‘commercial approach’ whose focus is on establishing self-serving financial arrangements and partnerships (Byram, 1997). While it is tempting to assume a causal relationship between knowledge and attitudes, care needs to be taken in scrutinizing the relationship between these two qualities. This is because increased knowledge has not always translated into positive attitudes. This danger has been highlighted by other scholars with regards to experiences as well (Bennett, 2004; Cushner, 2012; Hammer, 2013; Merryfield 2000; Tang & Choi, 2004).

### *Skills*

The Intercultural Communicative Competence model is further based on two clusters of skills: interpreting/relating & discovery/interaction. The first cluster involves the ability to identify ethno-centric perspectives (whether in a document or event), the ability to identify areas of misunderstanding due to cultural differences and the ability to mediate between conflicting interpretations. Byram (1997) notes that even two people who are linguistically competent in a language can misunderstand each other because of their ethno-centrism. An ‘intercultural speaker,’ therefore, is not limited to abilities associated with linguistic fluency. The ‘intercultural speaker’ is also able to identify and explain cultural assumptions and, in effect, reduce conflict and foster increased understanding (Byram, 1997; 2009).

The second cluster of discovery/interaction skills is a more demanding cluster because it involves producing particular outcomes within ‘real time’ restrictions (Byram, 1997). Since culture is not a static condition, individuals who are interculturally competent need to demonstrate a readiness and willingness to gather new and changing information. This involves the ability to elicit concepts and values from others, to understand their significance and to access a variety of institutions to facilitate contact and reduce conflict. Byram (1997) uses

ethnographers or foreign correspondents as examples of individuals who must enter a culture quickly and gather important data to understand the inner workings of particular social groups.

### *Education & Ways of Becoming Interculturally Competent*

In principle, all four aspects of Intercultural Communicative Competence can be acquired through experience and reflection (Byram, 1997). Ideally, it is through the learning of language and culture that political education and critical cultural awareness can also emerge both with regards to one's own culture and other cultures. A central objective of the model, therefore, includes the ability to evaluate critically based on explicit criteria both from one's own and other cultures (Byram, 1997).

In examining ways in which intercultural competence can be acquired, classroom, fieldwork and independent learning are identified as possible pathways (Byram, 1997; 2009). Since classroom and fieldwork require a pedagogical structure that includes the presence of an instructor or mentor, educators in the present study did not fall within the parameters of these two pathways. Instead, the type of learning in which international educators engaged aligned more closely with independent learning, which was autonomous in nature and depended largely on the reflective capabilities of each individual.

The experiential nature of educators' independent learning is probably one of the more powerful aspects of the overseas experience. Such learning makes demands on emotions and feelings which can be instrumental in exercises of self-reflection and meaning making. In such instances, a teacher/mentor in a consultative role would be particularly conducive to enabling educators to analyse and reflect on their varied experiences (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002).

Within the context of overseas schools, a mentoring relationship may be envisaged as one part of a formalised induction programme. A staggered induction programme extending over a

period of several months (or longer) has been deemed to be particularly beneficial to incoming overseas hire teachers (Stirzaker, 2004). The staggered induction model contrasts with the traditional induction model which typically involves a single or group of initiating events that take place at the onset of an academic year.

Not surprisingly, the more traditional approach has been limited in its usefulness. Concerns have materialised about the psychological preparedness of incoming teachers who have not always been up to the challenges of life overseas (Bunnell, 2014). Here, an important differentiation needs to be made between technical skills for teaching and emotional skills for living and working in an international context (Bunnell, 2014). The notion of a staggered approach, therefore, is particularly well-suited to international educators because of its potential to address the dual adjustments educators must make to both a new work and social environment (Stirzaker, 2004). As such, staggered induction that extends beyond the beginning of the school year and is reinforced with a mentoring relationship can offer much needed professional and personal support to international educators.

In viewing the idea of staggered induction (Stirzaker, 2004) through the lens of multiple learning pathways (Byram, 1997; 2009), activities incorporated within such a programme could hypothetically draw on a combination of classroom and fieldwork learning opportunities. Traditional induction activities aimed at providing new hires with pertinent information about an organisation are very much in line, for instance, with a traditional classroom pathway. Comparatively, the insertion of more progressive induction activities can add new dimensions to the learning experience. Engaging new educators in discussions about their personal experiences abroad and exploring how those experiences might inform their professional work is one way of facilitating deeper and more reflective thinking.

Here the importance of institutional backing needs to be highlighted. Although referring to post compulsory education training in England, ideal institutional conditions identified by Cunningham (2012) for successful mentoring programmes would appear to be easily transferable to the international school sector. These conditions include the presence of an institutional commitment and ethos, the allocation of physical resources, investment in the induction, training and support of mentors, clarity and consistency of responsibilities, the establishment of selection criteria and the integration of evaluative mechanisms to measure progress and identify areas for improvement (Cunningham, 2012). By incorporating these conditions into a school's policy, protocol and procedures the risk of failure can be minimised whilst opportunities for success are maximised.

As such, staggered induction programmes that offer multiple learning pathways (e.g. classroom & fieldwork) and that are further supported through institutionally backed mentoring programmes have the potential to enhance, and perhaps accelerate, the independent learning experience. Importantly, by accessing multiple learning pathways, a reliance on the independent learning (and aptitude) of a single individual is replaced with a more systematic and organised plan for proactive growth.

#### *The Intergroup Model*

The field of intergroup studies is made up of various theories which are anchored in understanding the relationship between social groups, including the relationship of one's self-concept to those groups. Alternatively, social groups can be viewed as *communities* that contribute to the formation of a common identity and sense of belonging (Osler & Starkey, 2005). Individuals are not seen as holders of a single and static identity but as being made up of a collection of entities which evolve, in part, through the multiple group memberships of each

individual. Social groups can vary in size, purpose and significance. Families, national citizenship, political membership or sports team affiliation are examples of some social groups.

The intergroup model identifies a social group as:

‘... a set of individuals who hold a common social identification or view themselves as members of the same social category. Through a social comparison process, persons who are similar to the self are categorized with the self and are labelled the in-group; persons who differ from the self are categorized as the out-group.’ (Stets & Burke, 2000, p 225).

One of the most influential models in the field of intergroup studies is the Social Identity Approach (Hornsey, 2008). This approach draws on earlier versions of Social Identity (Tajfel, 1981) and Social Categorization theories (Turner, 1982). It is founded on the belief that human interaction operates on a spectrum of interpersonal and/or intergroup contact (Hornsey, 2008). Whilst interpersonal contact is primarily individually-based, intergroup contact is primarily collectively-based, with few interactions believed to be purely interpersonal or intergroup in nature.

There are three behaviours that have been identified as playing a central role in social identification: *self-categorization*, *self-enhancement* and *depersonalization*. The process of *self-categorization* is one whereby an individual assigns him/herself to a category based on perceived similarities and differences between groups. It is a subjective process that is based on how an individual perceives the self in relation to particular groups (Hogg, Terry & White, 1995).

Within self-categorization, three levels are identified (Turner, 1982). Recognition of the self as a member of humanity (human identity) is referred to as the superordinate level. This level of identification is comparable to a cosmopolitan vision of belonging, whereby individuals feel a connectedness to other human beings that transcends man-made borders and boundaries

(Osler & Starkey, 2005). Another point of self-categorization is one of social groups (in-groups/out-groups) and is referred to as the intermediate level.

The intermediate level of self-categorization is analogous to traditional forms of nation-building, but can extend to any social grouping. Despite the availability of other social group categorizations, research indicates that the nation-state remains the most prevalent identity frame when compared to other possible identity frames (Antonsich, 2009; Smith, 1992). This has been found to be the case even among internationally mobile individuals (Malesevic, 2003).

Finally, recognition of one's own personal identity in making interpersonal comparisons is referred to as the subordinate level. This is the least abstract level of categorization because it deals with the self as a unique individual. Yet even this identity stands in relation to the social structure one is a part of. Some scholars argue that the intermediate (social group) level supersedes the subordinate (interpersonal) level (Steks & Burke, 2000). The rationale behind this argument rests on the belief that since individuals are born into pre-existing social groups, then they also derive their initial sense of personal identity from those groups.

The second behaviour in social identification is *self enhancement* which is based on the tenet that people have a basic need to see themselves in a positive light in relation to others (Brown, 2000; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). There are multiple strategies which are used towards reaching these self enhancement goals. These strategies include holding negative feelings against other groups, making selective intergroup comparisons that are more flattering to one's own group and/or diminishing comparisons that reflect poorly on one's own group (Hornes, 2008). The process of self-enhancement, therefore, involves biased perceptions, judgements and behaviours that are invariably linked to in-group favouritism (Brown, 2000).

The third behaviour in social identification is the process of *depersonalization*. Depersonalization (not to be confused with dehumanization) is the practice attributed to the development of prejudice and ethno-centrism, but also more positive phenomena such as group cohesion and altruism (Allport, 1954). It is rooted in the human tendency to perceive individuals in terms of the characteristics associated with the groups to which they belong (Reicher, Spears & Haslam, 2010). This way of perceiving inevitably affects behaviour as well. Politicians, for example, may reject or problematize proposals *because* they are emanating from members of an opposing political party and irrespective of proposal content.

Since entry into social groups is determined to a large degree by pre-existing social structures, an individual has little control over initial membership. Where the boundaries between groups are permeable, however, an individual in a low status social group is more likely to choose to leave the group (Boen & Vanbeselaere, 1998; Lalonde & Silverman, 1994). In contrast, when boundaries are sharply defined there is a marked increase in the tendency for collective protests (Boen and Vanbeselaere, 1998). This is because individuals who are effectively ‘trapped’ within a low status group have a vested interest to push for social change in order to transform the status of the group within the overall social structure.

An example of a historically low status group is that of the African-American. During the mid-twentieth century, the African-American social group operated within sharply delineated boundaries. Since leaving from this externally imposed group was not an option afforded to African-Americans, the advent of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States became a collective movement aimed at causing massive social change. Such large scale group movements can be seen as operating *separate and apart from* the individual characteristics of

the persons who form the group. In other words, there appears to be a collective force at work that creates a sum that is greater than its parts.

The issue of intergroup boundaries can be observed in Roskell (2013) and Austin's (2007) research discussed earlier. Neither of the two groups (teachers or pharmacists) felt that they could successfully cross-over to the dominant social groups (Thai and Canadian nationals respectively). As a result, both the teacher and pharmacist groups developed close ties with individuals whom they shared commonalities with (self categorization); both groups glorified their home country (self-enhancement); and both groups became highly critical of the host-country and its nationals, who were judged based on their group affiliation rather than on their individual merit (depersonalization).

Since the in-group/out-group relationship in Roskell's (2013) study was a temporary one (teachers were working in Thailand on short-term contracts), it is quite possible that there was no vested need or interest to push for social change. Austin's (2007) study was different in that the pharmacists were not sojourners passing through but immigrants with the intention of staying in Canada. Whilst boundaries for pharmacists may have been perceived as having low permeability, pharmacists also consistently referred to their children as beneficiaries of their struggles (Austin, 2007). The belief that presently rigid boundaries would become less rigid for future generations was important. Here too, the perception of *temporarily* rigid boundaries may be one of several factors that served as a disincentive for more assertive behaviour.

Besides identifying patterns of behaviour, the field of intergroup studies also considers ways in which those patterns might be altered. The Contact Hypothesis is one well known theory that aims to reduce stereotypes and prejudice (Allport, 1954). The hypothesis identifies multiple variables which can improve relations between groups. From these multiple variables, four have



emerged as the most salient in determining the success of intergroup exchanges: equal status contact, a cooperative atmosphere, the pursuit of common goals and institutional support (Pettigrew, 1998).

Equal status is contrasted with superior/inferior status and ensures that the contribution of both individuals/groups is valued. The criterion for a cooperative atmosphere is defined as contact that is not competitive, voluntary and not artificial in nature (Allport, 1954). The pursuit of common goals further strengthens relationships by effectively placing the other on the 'same side.' Interracial athletic teams is a commonly used example where individuals of varied backgrounds come together to achieve a shared goal (Pettigrew, 1998).

Finally, the presence of institutional support brings additional legitimacy to the contact process (Pettigrew, 1998). Institutional support can include organizationally sponsored programmes such as diversity training (Paluck, 2006) or politically sponsored support (eg United Nations) for negotiation among country representatives. Within a school or classroom context, principals or teachers may also be seen as authority figures representing the larger institution.

Elements from the Contact Hypothesis can be applied to instructional methods within classroom or fieldwork settings. Visits to student homes are one example of contact which is intended to provide deeper insight into student lives. In one US teacher-education programme, student-teachers are partnered with international students from the same higher education institution and are asked to conduct several interviews/meetings with their 'global partners' (Cushner, 2012). Student-teachers must keep a journal about what they find out, including the challenges that their 'global partner' may face as a non-native Anglophone (Cushner, 2012). While the particular activity is not specifically attributed to the Contact Hypothesis by its author, it

nevertheless draws on the importance of contact and the types of contact associated with the hypothesis.

What is worth noting in the broader intergroup model (not the specific Contact Hypothesis discussed above) is that it requires an increasingly high level of *applied* judgement both towards one's in-group and other out-groups. This contrasts sharply with the Intercultural Communicative Competence model which explicitly calls for the *suspension* of judgement in order to gain an understanding of another culture. An important distinction between the two models is that while the ICC model defines the components and processes involved in achieving intercultural competence (e.g. the conceptual ideal), the Intergroup Model looks at the likelihood that individuals will engage in a remedy to begin with (e.g. the reality of human tendencies). This includes the human propensity to pass judgment. These differences do not place the models in opposition. On the contrary, each model contributes very different but equally important components to paving the road towards intercultural competence.

How does the intergroup model fit into the educational context of this study? The intergroup model identifies predictable human behaviours based on the presence or absence of certain conditions. These behaviours are invariably related to processes of individual and collective identification. The relationship between individual and collective identification is a powerful one and it is important on multiple levels. The educator does not travel overseas simply as an individual, but is invariably seen (and treated) as a representative of his/her social group (e.g. country of origin). This makes the intergroup model especially relevant.

Additionally, the ability to identify and diffuse patterns of exclusionary behaviour in a school or classroom setting is an invaluable and much needed pedagogical skill. Whilst social justice models tend to appeal to feelings of morality, the intergroup model offers a unique approach

whose effectiveness has been experimentally and empirically supported in altering patterns of behaviour (Sherif, 1958; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

### 3.5 Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Beyond the effects of the overseas experience on individuals, another important aim of this study was to explore how those effects translated in the professional practice of educators. If intercultural competence involves one's ability to apply cultural sensitivity more broadly, then *culturally responsive pedagogy* refers to one's ability to apply that sensitivity specifically within the educational setting. Understanding what that entails, therefore, is an essential component of this study.

There are subtle but important differences among scholars with regards to the definition of culturally responsive pedagogy. Some, for example, have defined culturally responsive pedagogy as one of opposition (Ladson-Billings, 1992; Sleeter, 2012). Criteria used for such a definition include (a) students experiencing academic success, (b) students maintaining and developing cultural competence and (c) students developing a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the social order (Ladson-Billings, 1992).

Whilst critical consciousness is an important quality to be developed, this definition presupposes that everyone will want and *should want* to challenge the establishment (a dynamic and changing concept in and of itself). Yet the very essence of critical consciousness is its empowerment of individuals to decide for themselves what positions they will take on political and other issues. It is for these reasons that this study chooses to use a different definition of culturally responsive pedagogy:

Culturally responsive teaching is defined as using the cultural characteristics, experiences and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching

them more effectively. It is based on the assumption that when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the lived experiences and frames of reference of students, they are more personally meaningful, have higher interest appeal and are learned more easily and thoroughly (Gay, 2000).

The idea of building on prior knowledge and experiences aligns with cognitive development theories such as those established by Piaget. Individual schemas (or frames of reference) are seen as the building blocks of learning which are used to harness prior knowledge (including experiential knowledge) to the introduction of new knowledge. Studies have shown improved academic performance when knowledge and perspectives are taught through students' own cultural and experiential filters (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995a; 1995b; Pearce, 2012).

Within the field of culturally responsive pedagogy, three key dimensions have been identified as central: institutional, personal, and instructional (Richards, Brown & Forde, 2006). The institutional dimension reflects support from the larger organisational structure, including school policies and the values which are communicated through those policies. Interestingly, this dimension reflects theories espoused through the intergroup model. In particular, the institutional dimension simulates one of the key elements found in the Contact Hypothesis (Allport, 1954).

The personal dimension refers to the attitudes, skills and knowledge that individuals bring with them. This dimension is inclusive of teachers, students and families and it reflects many of the components already found in the Intercultural Communicative Competence Model (Byram, 1997; 2009). Finally, the instructional dimension involves the actual strategies, methods and materials used to teach students (Richards, Brown & Forde, 2006; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013). It especially considers how teachers use cultural information about their students to inform and improve their instruction.

Since no single person is knowledgeable in every form of difference, it is logical to expect that educators will have a limited range of experience when dealing with community/home cultures that are different from their own (Pearce, 2012; Shaklee & Bailey, 2012). In order to transform awareness into informed instruction, therefore, educators need to be explicitly aware of the community and home cultures represented in their classrooms (Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Villegas, 1991). This can certainly be supported at the institutional level, through formal training aimed at providing the necessary cultural knowledge. It can also be initiated through the educators themselves.

Using in-depth interviews, unannounced classroom visits, and video-taping of lessons, Ladson-Billings (1995a; 1995b) observed teachers whom both parents and administrators in an African-American community nominated as exceptional. Providing a vivid illustration of what culturally responsive pedagogy looks like, Ladson-Billings (1995a; 1995b) explains how one teacher asks her second grade students to bring in samples of lyrics from rap songs (deemed non-offensive). After encouraging students to perform the songs, the teacher reproduces them and uses them as a platform to discuss literal and figurative meanings as well as technical aspects of poetry such as rhyme scheme, alliteration and onomatopoeia.

What is most prominent in this example is the teacher's ability to utilize student interests to create an engaging and effective bridge to the formal curriculum. By doing so, she also validates student cultural backgrounds and interests. Such a lesson provides an exemplary model for how culturally responsive pedagogy can be utilized to aid academic achievement. It is important to further realize that the type of cultural background students come from is less relevant than the teacher's sensitivity and willingness to utilize that background (whatever it may be) to inform instruction.

In thinking about lesson extensions for teacher-education programmes, student-teachers may be challenged to take the same lesson and customize it for students of a different cultural background. What if the students came from predominantly Bengali/Jewish/Gypsy backgrounds? In cases where student-teachers are unfamiliar with a particular social/cultural group, what strategies could they use to gather information about their students' home and community cultures? *Finally, how would educators teach the lesson so that non-majority students in the class are not alienated?* This last question is particularly important, given what we already know about human grouping behaviours and how they can serve to exclude.

Whilst the above example illustrates how a teacher may utilize culturally responsive pedagogy to help students reach language arts curricular goals, the same methodology can be used to teach both subject content *and* cultivate intercultural competence in students. In another lesson, students in an English as a foreign language (EFL) class in Germany are given an abridged version of a story based on the plight of a migrant Mexican family that is staying illegally in the United States (Burwitz-Melzer, 2001). Students are encouraged to draw on their own cultural experiences and self-directed learning by creating, comparing and justifying their own endings to the story and then performing the story.

The language lesson described is interdisciplinary and intercultural in nature, thereby extending well beyond a narrow linguistic acquisition focus. Such a lesson also sets the stage for relativizing student understandings of their own cultural values and beliefs through their interaction with another society (Byram, Nichols & Stevens, 2001). Besides making culture learning as important as language learning, this approach also makes the lesson easily transferrable to other subject areas outside of language teaching. How might

teacher-education students take the same lesson and use it for a mainstream English lesson or a social studies lesson on migration? How might teacher-education students further connect this lesson to student cultures and experiences to ensure the lesson is meaningful?

Moving to the tertiary setting, Merryfield (1993) models her own personal experiences through her use of an illustration called the 'Tree of Life.' The illustration is used as a springboard to reflect incidents in her own life that she sees as contributing to her present views of the world, including her current values and attitudes. She notes, for example, the racism and prejudice that existed in the 1950s around her family and community. Through modelling and reflecting her own personal history, Merryfield (1993) then prompts students to engage in a self-reflexive exercise whereby they explore their own values. This exercise helps students to become aware of their prior knowledge (academic, cultural and experiential) and utilize it to understand the people, places and events which have helped to *shape* those values.

Other methods have included prompting students to describe a cross-cultural problem or conflict they were personally involved in. This includes the student's own role, the events leading up to the incident, objectives, outcomes and any other important background information (Antal & Friedman, 2008). Written dialogues are produced of what was said, as well as what they thought during an incident. In this way, the analysis looks at redesigning (or re-categorizing) behaviour (Antal & Friedman, 2008).

Finally, in order to bring further clarity to the concept of culturally responsive pedagogy it is also important to understand what it is *not*. Using in-depth interviews from beginning teacher education students in Britain, Pearce (2012) notes that the concept of culture continues to be seen in a celebratory manner and judged according to 'mainstream' group norms. In one

instance, a student-teacher talks about an Indian dance teacher who is brought into a primary school to teach Indian dancing to students. The visiting teacher choreographs and teaches Bollywood dancing to students who enjoy it immensely, only to be told by teachers that the type of dancing does not conform to the kind of Indian dancing they had in mind.

As such, the multicultural resources that were accessed in the particular scenario remained stereotypical (and unauthentic) and were explicitly directed by a dominant perception of what Indian culture should be (Pearce, 2012). Such a perception often involves artificial attempts to bring in exotic aspects of 'other' cultures. This lack of understanding has been criticized as a difficulty among educators, with many wrongly relegating 'cultural sensitivity' to token cultural celebrations (Banks, 1993; Pearce, 2012, Sleeter, 2012).

### 3.6 Linking International and Intercultural to Teacher Development

Although the terms international and intercultural are sometimes used interchangeably, they should be understood as distinctly separate. Internationalization, as it is used in this study, involves a *physical* placement abroad. This may involve the overseas placement of products or services, as in the case of franchises, schools or university campuses. This, in turn, involves (to varying degrees) the overseas placement of people as well. In contrast, intercultural development calls on applied *behaviours* that demonstrate an increased sensitivity towards cultural difference. As such, whilst internationalization has significant potential in *facilitating* the development of intercultural development (in that it involves some form of cultural exchange), it should not be assumed that the two terms are synonymous or that one will, by default, produce the other.

If intercultural development is seen as one desired outcome of internationalization, then research identifying conditions that maximize opportunities for realizing such an outcome



become vital. With regards to teacher preparation such research needs to be given particular attention when designing coursework and planning clinical experiences. Since the overseas experience does not exist in isolation, multiple components affecting outcomes of internationalization (including domestic ones) must also be examined. Due to word limit constraints, the subsequent review focusses on changes in *teacher* education, with teachers also being the largest group represented in the current study.

Variables affecting outcomes in teacher education include standards, faculty, teacher candidates, world language skills, intercultural competence, coursework and clinical experiences (Shaklee, 2012). It is difficult, however, to view these variables as discrete. Instead, it is more helpful to take each variable and see how it might contribute and connect to the others. For example, how might changes in standards (e.g. explicit reference to internationalization) affect the choices faculty members make, both with regards to their teaching and research? How might such changes also affect the coursework and clinical experiences provided to student-teachers in tertiary settings? Or the professional development opportunities afforded to practising teachers?

Since standards and accreditation requirements are central to content development in teacher preparation programmes, embedding explicit intercultural and/or international components to such standards/accreditation ensures a more wide spread implementation (Ortloff, Shah, Lou & Hamilton, 2012; Shaklee, 2012). The adjustment of policy to keep pace with globalisation trends, however, can occur slowly or--depending on particular political climates--not at all. As a result, this reality necessitates internationalization efforts in other domains of teacher preparation.

Choosing faculty members who have an interest in internationalization is another way to increase the likelihood that education programmes move forward. Faculty who are multilingual or have worked/studied abroad, for example, are more likely to support internationalization efforts. Likewise, faculty who have completed research in international settings or have experience with diverse students are also more likely to contribute positively to such efforts (Shaklee, 2012). The influence of faculty, in turn, can be expected to affect the perspectives and dispositions of teacher candidates themselves.

Coursework, including coursework in language learning, is another component of internationalization. A common criticism has been that coursework on diversity or language learning is often conceptualized narrowly, with delivery confined to a single course or an isolated experience (Banks, 1993; Deardoff, 2006; Shaklee, 2012). A teacher preparation programme may, for example, offer one course on student diversity but fail to help student-teachers integrate the content of that course into instructional and practicum aspects of their studies. Similarly, individuals may study a world language but fail to connect this learning to broader aspects of cultural knowledge (Byram, 1997; Orloff, Shah, Lou & Hamilton, 2012).

This is problematic because the *systematic* integration of intercultural concepts, on an institutional level, has been repeatedly identified as a significant and determining factor in achieving successful outcomes through internationalization (Cushner, 2012; Deardoff, 2006; Orloff, Shah, Lou & Hamilton, 2012; Shaklee, 2012; Shaklee & Bailey, 2012). As such, scholars have argued that intercultural concepts need to be incorporated within and across multiple courses and experiences (Bennett, 2009; Cushner, 2012; Deardoff, 2006; Shaklee, 2012; Shaklee & Bailey, 2012). Courses addressing lesson planning, instructional strategies,

assessment practices and behaviour management techniques, for example, are all areas which are affected and should be informed by the cultural values, beliefs and assumptions of students.

Finally, the center-piece of any teacher preparation programme is the clinical experience. Teaching abroad is one variation of the clinical experience that has been heralded as a particularly powerful teaching tool. Educators who partake in such experiences have demonstrated a greater ability to appreciate cultural and language diversity issues, as well as an increased capacity to teach from a global perspective (Alfaro & Quezada, 2010; Cushner, 2012; Marx & Moss, 2011; Merryfield, 2000; Shaklee & Bailey, 2012; Tang & Choi, 2004).

Such educators have also demonstrated an increased ability to understand the challenges of being an 'outsider,' thereby developing greater cross-cultural sensitivity and an increased commitment to working with ethnically diverse student groups (Merryfield, 2000, Savva, 2013a). Interestingly, this has been found to be the case even in exchanges between seemingly similar countries. In a study of American student teachers completing part of their practicum in Britain, for example, Marx & Moss (2011) found significant and profound gains in cultural awareness.

Even teaching abroad experiences, however, need appropriate levels of support and guidance in order for opportunities for success to be maximized. Interaction that guides the actual intercultural experience should ideally be built into the experience itself, with pre-departure and post-departure discussions, as well as on-site and re-entry activities (Bennett, 2009). Such support encourages guided reflection which has been identified as a powerful tool in prompting changes in world views (Bennett, 2009; Byram, 1997; Merryfield, 2000).

Since not all individuals are inclined to initiate self-reflection, the absence of systematic and guided support puts at risk any attempts to cultivate intercultural competence. Some have argued that international experiences may very well lead to resistance and a rejection of others

if they are not well prepared and supported (Byram, Nichols & Stevens, 2001). In such an instance, unsupported international experiences may very well fuel ethno-centricity instead of ethno-relativity.

## CHAPTER 4 – METHODS

Before delving into the Findings and Analysis chapters, this chapter provides a detailed step-by-step account of methods used to collect and analyse data. It includes details on how institutions (and their educators) were secured for the study, the development of institutional and participant criteria, as well as the logic behind the criteria. An assessment of validity, reliability and ethical issues are also addressed in this chapter.

### 4.1 Participant Criteria

In order to qualify, individuals had to meet four types of criteria. The first criterion had to do with Anglophone identity. Beyond being Anglophone passport holders, participants also needed to establish that they had been raised in an Anglophone country. This ensured that participants were exposed to Anglophone cultural norms as an internalized part of their daily lives (see section 2.5 for a more thorough explanation).

The second criterion looked to confirm that individuals completing the survey fit the operational definition of a licensed educator. The category of ‘licensed educator’ was defined as any teacher at the foundation, primary or secondary levels, as well as any administrator, counsellor and/or psychologist. Teaching assistants were not considered to have extensive enough training to classify as licensed educators. Furthermore, school secretaries and any other school support staff did not qualify.

Since the study involved important comparative aspects, a third criterion required that educators had experience working in both home and international settings. A minimum of one year in each setting was compulsory. Finally, a fourth criterion had to do with the ‘foreigner’ status of educators. In order to qualify as ‘foreigners’, individuals could not be nationals of the host country (e.g. via dual citizenship) or have relatives who were permanent residents of the

host country. Likewise, participants could not be fluent speakers of the host country language.

The following illustration provides a visual summary of the profile criteria used to qualify educators:

## Profile Screening Checklist

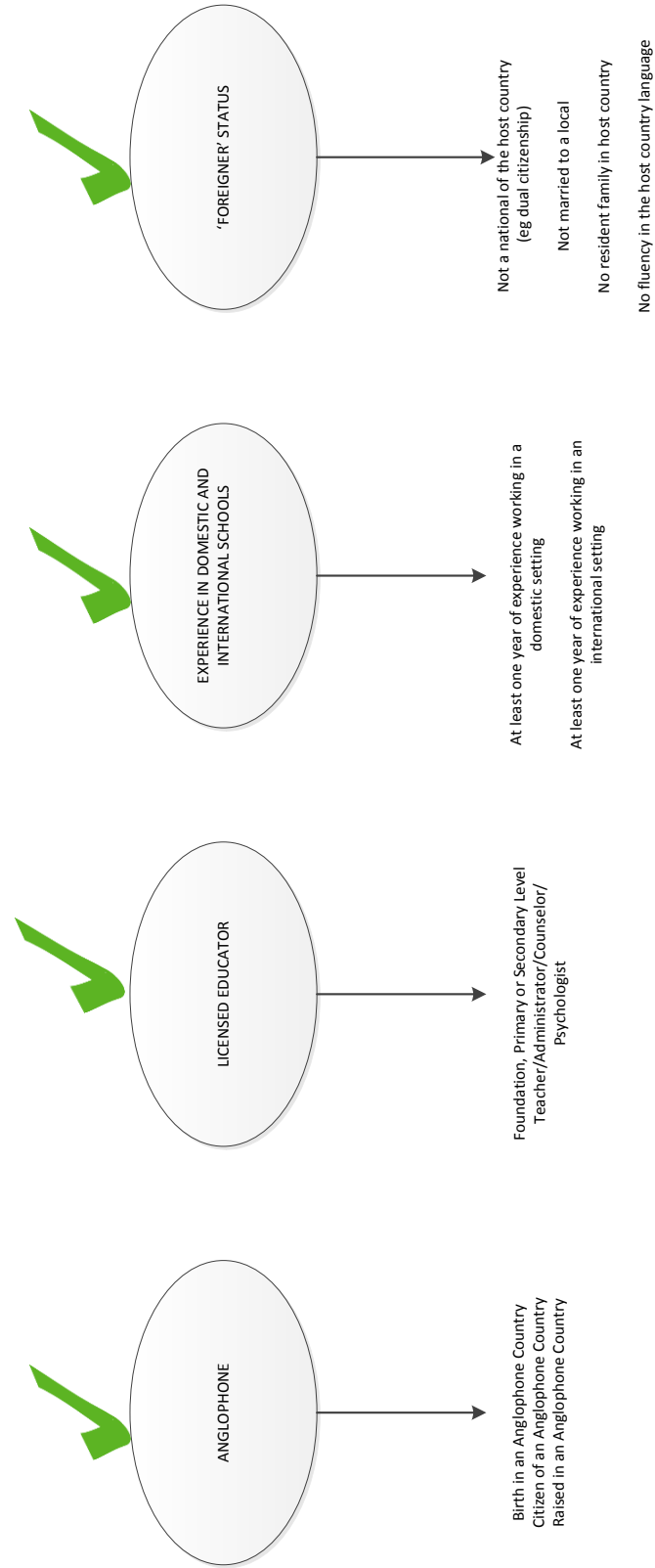


Figure 5: Profile Screening Checklist

#### 4.2 Country & School Criteria

Prior to securing educators, it was necessary to identify the candidate countries and schools that the educators would be drawn from. Since the research was sponsored through a grant awarded by the European Council of International Schools (ECIS), selection criteria for schools included ECIS membership. This involved using a list of member schools, obtained through the ECIS website (European Council of International Schools, 2013). After removing international schools based in English-speaking countries, a total of 364 schools located across 72 non-English speaking countries remained. In order to make the school selection process more manageable, additional school criteria were developed and applied.

There were numerous countries that had a very small number of member schools. Ireland, Iceland and Morocco were examples of countries that each had only one member school. For these countries, it would not be possible to identify the country without also identifying the participating school. Comparably, the Bahamas, Malta and Oman were examples of countries which each had two member schools respectively. In this second instance, it would still remain relatively easy to identify which school participated in the study--particularly for those working in the school that did *not* participate. In order to safeguard school anonymity, therefore, a decision was made to eliminate any countries which had less than four member schools.

An additional factor that weighed into the decision-making process was safety. The revolutionary upheavals in Egypt, the nerve gas attacks in Syria, as well as Jordan's proximity to Syria at the time of the study (2013/2014) removed these countries as viable options. While countries in the deeper Middle-East (e.g. Qatar, Saudi Arabia) had the potential to provide sharp contrasts between Western and non-Western norms, the researcher's own American identity and the potential for anti-American sentiment in the region served as a deterrent.



The consideration of school anonymity and researcher safety issues together reduced the total number of eligible countries from 72 to 19 (with 17 in Europe and 2 in Asia). Despite Asia being a more costly choice, schools in this region remained attractive. This is because Asian countries were seen as having the potential to provide the non-Western contrasts which may have been lost when the Middle-Eastern countries were removed from the candidate pool.

Given that international educators tend to move frequently, it was not definitive that cultural contrasts would necessarily be lost as a result of interview location. That is, there was a possibility that educators in Europe had also worked in the Middle-East or Asia. Likewise, it was also possible that educators in Asia had worked in the Middle-East and Europe. In such a case, the demographic profile of the international educator would remain consistent irrespective of the space they happen to work in at any given time. Despite this possibility, a decision was made to err on the side of caution and pair one European country with one Asian country. China and Japan, thus, became top contenders for the Asian portion of the study.

#### 4.3 Phase 1: Securing First Round Participation

From a research perspective, an advantage of the present study was that it did not involve any form of insider research, nor did it rely on any personally established networks/contacts to gather institutional or educator participation. From a practical perspective, however, this proved to be a disadvantage because it required additional levels of action to secure participation. More specifically, since institutions were essentially being approached 'cold', additional steps needed to be taken to minimize the possibility of schools declining the invitation to participate. These steps are outlined in the section below.

*(a) Distribution of Invitations*

Since the researcher had been personally invited to the November ECIS conference (2013) in the Netherlands, it seemed a good opportunity to utilize the visit to conduct interviews for the study as well. Besides being convenient, the Netherlands had fifteen member schools which made it a further attractive selection. An alternative considered was Austria, which had eleven member schools and was relatively close to the researcher's home setting in Cyprus. The closer proximity of Austria, it was believed, would help to offset costs associated with later travel to Asia. In the event that schools in the Netherlands did not work out, Austria could conceivably serve as a back-up. It was along these lines of thinking that a decision was made to simultaneously approach the Netherlands, Austria and Japan (with four member schools) during the first phase of the project.

Sending invitation letters to schools in three countries was a precautionary measure intended to save time in the school selection process. Besides increasing the chances that several schools would respond positively, it also safeguarded against schools that may have responded positively but may not have been able to provide the targeted number of participants – whether due to lack of interest or low staff counts. This three-pronged approach did not assume that things would run smoothly. Instead, it anticipated some difficulties in the process of gathering the necessary number of educators. As such, there was no expectation (or need, for that matter) to receive positive responses from all schools. Rather, invitations were sent with the anticipation that one or two schools from any of the three countries would be able to fulfil the sampling requirements of 15 educators for the first phase of the study.

Upon IOE ethical approval, personalized invitation letters (see appendix A) were placed on ECIS letterhead and signed by both the researcher and the Executive Director of the ECIS at the time.

. This was essentially a branding attempt to create an association between the researcher and a trusted and familiar institution which all candidate schools held membership in. This relationship, it was believed, would increase the likelihood of participation when compared to the alternative approach of sending an email as an independent and unknown researcher.

The timing of invitation distribution (sent electronically) was coordinated to avoid the beginning of the school year rush. Invitations were sent towards the end of September, once educators had been back at work for a few weeks and had adjusted to their schedules. Since School Heads in international schools tend to change frequently, the ECIS contact information lists needed to be verified prior to letter distribution. This was done through emails, telephone calls and the use of social media. Names of School Heads were confirmed and generic email addresses were avoided whenever possible.

#### *(b) Response to Invitations*

In the Netherlands and Austria, school invitations were sent to clusters of schools that were within a one hour travel radius from each other. By choosing schools that were relatively close to each other, access to educators (who might conceivably be drawn from multiple schools) would be more expeditious. A total of eight schools from the Netherlands and four schools from Austria were sent invites. All schools in Japan received invites, as there were only four member schools in that country. In total, sixteen invitation letters were sent out across the three countries. Two rejection letters were received immediately (one from Japan and one from the Netherlands). A total of six invites were accepted: three in the Netherlands, two from Austria and one from Japan. The remaining half of the invitation letters remained unanswered despite a follow up email.

Since schools in the Netherlands were preferable to schools in Austria, it was decided that schools in Austria would be kept as a back-up option (in case schools in Asia did not work out). As a result, Austrian schools did not reach the survey distribution stage. Heads of Schools were thanked for their willingness to participate and were informed that they would be notified before the end of the school year if survey distribution proved to be necessary.

### *(c) Survey Screening of Educators*

Once participating schools were identified, it became necessary to qualify educators within each school. A short survey of 13 questions was developed through Survey Monkey to screen participants (see appendix B), along with a personalized web link for each school. This allowed data to be kept in categories where information on educators specific to each school could be gathered. Heads of Schools who accepted the invitation were sent an introductory email (see appendix C) containing the web link to the survey. Each Head of School was asked to forward the email with the link to faculty members. A one week response deadline was also communicated.

In order to ensure that interested and willing individuals completed the survey, the information provided in the introductory email aimed to be as transparent as possible. Educators were informed of the expected interview duration as well as where and when interviews would occur (on school premises during the school day). The final survey question asked for participants to provide an email address for further contact. *The aim of the survey was not to obtain a high response rate*, but to identify educators who fit the necessary profile criteria and were willing to interview. A high response rate with a low rate of interest in interviewing was not a desired outcome. A low response rate with a higher rate of interest was preferred.

*(d) Results of Survey Screening*

In the Netherlands, 40 educators responded with a total of 17 qualifying and willing to interview. This sample was spread among two schools in the same region. A third school did not have a high enough staff count (with only one member fitting the profile criteria) and was removed from the group. Completed surveys were printed out individually and examined manually. Once qualifying participants were identified an 'Informational Letter' (see appendix D), along with interview questions (see appendix E), were forwarded to the email address provided by each individual educator through the survey. Educators were reminded that participation was completely voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time during the process.

Arranging interview days and times varied between the two Netherlands schools. Once the travel week was designated, the smaller school arranged the interviews to take place on one day of that week and notified the researcher of the scheduled times. The larger school requested that the researcher contact the educators directly to check their availability. Once schedule times were confirmed, the two timetables were merged into one master schedule (see appendix F). A quiet room to conduct the interviews was allocated via each school's point person and communicated to participating educators. This was also the time during which flights and accommodations were arranged.

While there were 4 ECIS member schools in Japan, only one accepted the invitation to participate. This was a relatively small school which garnered eight survey responses, of which only two educators fit the necessary criteria. As a result, Japan was no longer a viable option. In an effort to stay within the Asia area, China became the next country which would be approached for the second round of interviews. Since the first round of interviews had already

been secured in the Netherlands during the fall term, China schools would be approached in the summer term for the second round of interviews.

*(e) Unexpected Developments*

Whilst a total of 17 educators in the Netherlands qualified, only 15 responded to individual emails sent after survey completion. Furthermore, out of the 15 which were scheduled, 3 were not able to make the interviews (one had a death in the family and two others had unforeseen schedule conflicts). As a result, a total of 12 educators were interviewed in the Netherlands. This unexpected development required an increased number of educators (18) to be drawn from the second location. In order to ensure that the total number of participants reached thirty, it would become necessary to overbook interviews in the second location.

#### 4.4 Phase 2: Securing Second Round Participation

*(a) Distribution of Invitations*

International schools in China had several marked differences from those in the Netherlands. Firstly, while there were four ECIS member schools in China, the distance between them was significant. As a result, transport from a school in Beijing to a school in Shanghai or Hong Kong would require further air travel. Another difference involved the size of the China-based schools, with most of them having upwards of 100 faculty members. Due to the large size of China-based schools and the distance between them, a decision was made to approach schools one at a time during the second round. This is because the majority of schools appeared to have a large enough pool of educators to secure the relatively small number of educators needed for interviews.

Since the educator sample in the first round drew on a predominantly American population, British schools became an attractive alternative for the second round. By drawing on educators

from British schools, the sample group would be further diversified in its representation of Anglophone educators. The timing of the second round of invitation letters took place during the month of March, shortly after the Chinese New Year.

*(b) Response to Invitations*

Once a British school was identified, an invitation was sent and was immediately accepted. As in the first round, an introductory email with survey link was sent to the Head of School, who then distributed it to faculty. Unlike the schools in the Netherlands which sent the introductory email to all staff, the Head in China was able to forward the email exclusively to expat faculty. This meant that most educators who completed the survey would be qualifying educators. No other schools in China needed to be approached.

*(c) Survey Screening of Educators*

Educators from the second round were a more diversified group of Anglophones. Although most educators were British (as expected), there were also a number of Americans, Australians, Canadians and South Africans. South African educators, however, were removed from the sample group because of the circumstances which are unique to South Africa. In particular, whilst English is an official language of South Africa, so is Afrikaans. This makes the bilingual education system of South Africa distinctly different from the other Anglophone countries represented in the study.

*(d) Results of Survey Screening*

In China, a total of 38 educators responded to the survey with 24 qualifying. Of the 24 educators who qualified, 19 responded to individual emails sent. Once the participant counts were confirmed, educators communicated their availability and a master schedule was created for the

second week of May, 2014 (see appendix G). Flights and accommodations were booked shortly thereafter.

*(e) Unexpected Developments*

Travel insurance and a visa were required for a visit to China. There was a three week delay in visa processing. Fortunately, the visa was successfully issued – albeit two days before the scheduled departure date. Out of the 19 educators, one was unable to make the actual interview. This resulted in a total of 18 interviews in China. This was the exact number needed to reach the total of thirty educators between the two countries visited.

#### 4.5 Methods of Data Collection

This section presents a detailed account of the methods used to collect data. There were two main types of data collection used in the study. Surveys were initially used for screening purposes to qualify candidates. The primary method of data collection, however, was the semi-structured interview. This method was chosen for several reasons. The most pressing reason being the nature of the research questions themselves, which explored the subjective views of educators and the relationship of those views to behavioural changes in the classroom setting. According to King (1994), the use of qualitative interviews is most appropriate when examining individual perception as well as the *meaning* of particular phenomena. The semi-structured interview method, therefore, allowed the researcher to not only garner responses from participants but to interrogate the meaning of those responses by seeking clarification as needed.

Another reason for giving the interview method special privilege had to do with the flexibility it provided to the researcher (Woods, 2011). As interviews progressed and salient issues became evident, the ability to modify according to responses of interest enabled the researcher to



investigate more deeply and thoroughly. In this way, the interview method lent itself to the collection of rich and illuminating data (Robson, 2002). Finally, the interview method also offered the same flexibility to the participants. The open-ended nature of the semi-structured questions allowed participants to express themselves freely without feeling constrained by a narrowly structured survey or an informant-style questionnaire (Robson, 2002). By questioning and talking directly to people, the researcher was able to gather a collection of extensive and meaningful qualitative data for analysis (Woods, 2011).

This is not to say that the interview method was without disadvantages. The flexibility of the interview method meant that it also lacked a high level of standardisation. This may have put the reliability of the data at risk because it left a vacuum whereby researcher biases could conceivably influence the findings (Woods, 2011). To address these weak areas, the study utilised semi-structured interviews (as opposed to unstructured interviews) to allow for some level of standardisation and replication. Additionally, the incorporation of negative case analyses also looked to address issues of bias. These steps were taken in an effort to minimise (although not completely eliminate) the weaknesses inherent to the method used.

The interview method also proved to be particularly time consuming (Robson, 2002). Beyond the actual interview discussions, a great deal of planning and preparation was involved in making and confirming arrangements for visits, creating timetables and securing the necessary permissions. Moreover, the work involved in the verbatim transcription of the audio recorded interviews also required significant time allocation. Nevertheless, it was believed that the strengths of the interview method outweighed its weaknesses. It was for these reasons that interviews became the primary tool for data collection once educators were identified via the screening survey.

*(a) Screening Survey*

The survey length was intentionally short (see appendix B). Thirteen questions aimed to identify three types of data: (1) educators who fit the profile criteria (2) educators who were willing to interview and (3) educator demographics (e.g. age, gender). Each of these aims and their corresponding questions are discussed in the headings below.

*(a.1) Profile Criteria (Questions 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7)*

In order to qualify, participants had to fulfil four basic requirements. Firstly, they needed to have an Anglophone identity. This criterion was addressed through two survey questions. Question 2 asked the preliminary question of ‘Which country are you originally from?’ This was followed by question 3, which asked ‘Did you grow up in an English-speaking country during most of your childhood?’ This latter question looked to confirm that the participant’s Anglophone identity was not restricted to being a passport holder alone. If responses to both questions referenced an Anglophone country, participants remained in the candidate pool.

The second criterion (addressed through question 4) looked to confirm that individuals completing the survey fit the operational definition of a ‘licensed educator.’ Teachers across foundation, primary or secondary levels, as well as administrators, counsellors and/or psychologists were included in this grouping. Teaching assistants and other school support staff were excluded. Since the study involved important comparative aspects, it was also necessary for educators to have experience working in both domestic and international settings. Question 6 presented three statements, with educators asked to tick the statement that applied to them. Educators who ticked the first statement remained in the candidate pool while educators who ticked the second or third statement were removed:

I have taught both in my home country and internationally

☐

I have only taught in international schools ☐

I have only taught in my home country ☐

Finally, another important criterion (question 7) had to do with the foreigner status of educators. Here, the survey looked to move beyond the assumption that an Anglophone passport would automatically make an educator a foreigner. Responses aimed to assess each educator's personal connection and motives in the country they were working in. Educators were asked to tick all statements that applied to them:

I have no personal ties to the host country beyond my work ☐

I am a national of the host country ☐

My spouse (or significant other) is from the host country ☐

I have family and/or relatives in the host country ☐

I speak the host country language fluently ☐

Educators who ticked the first statement continued to remain viable candidates. Educators who ticked any of the other statements were disqualified. This is because ticking any of the other statements meant that educators had access to resources (and knowledge) which are typically unavailable to foreigners.

#### *(a.2) Willingness to Interview (Questions 12 & 13)*

A comparatively short but critical piece of data that was required in order for the survey to be successful was educator willingness to interview. This willingness was essentially communicated through contact information that each participant was asked to provide at the conclusion of the survey. Whilst question 12 asked educators if they would be willing to interview, question 13 asked educators to provide their contact information. Fortunately, all educators who took the

time to complete the survey indicated an initial willingness to interview and provided contact information (although a few of them did not respond to the ensuing emails).

*(a.3) Gathering of Demographic Data (Questions 1, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11)*

The remaining questions in the survey looked to gather demographic data. This data included gender (question 1), years of experience (question 5), dual citizenship status (question 8 & 9), ethnic background (question 10) and age range (question 11). These questions aimed to gather additional details on the type of educators data was being drawn from.

This information could potentially also allow for the diversification of the sample. In the event that there were an excess number of participants, for example, this data would allow the researcher to select educators who represented a more balanced profile. Despite gathering qualified educators beyond the fifteen needed in each location (Netherlands 17/China 24) no excess was actually available. This is because any initial and minor excess was off-set by educators not responding to scheduling requests (Netherlands 2/China 5) or cancelling interviews during the interview week (Netherlands 3/China 1). The flowchart on the following page illustrates the step-by-step process leading up to interviews.

## FLOWCHART OF PROCESSES LEADING UP TO INTERVIEWS

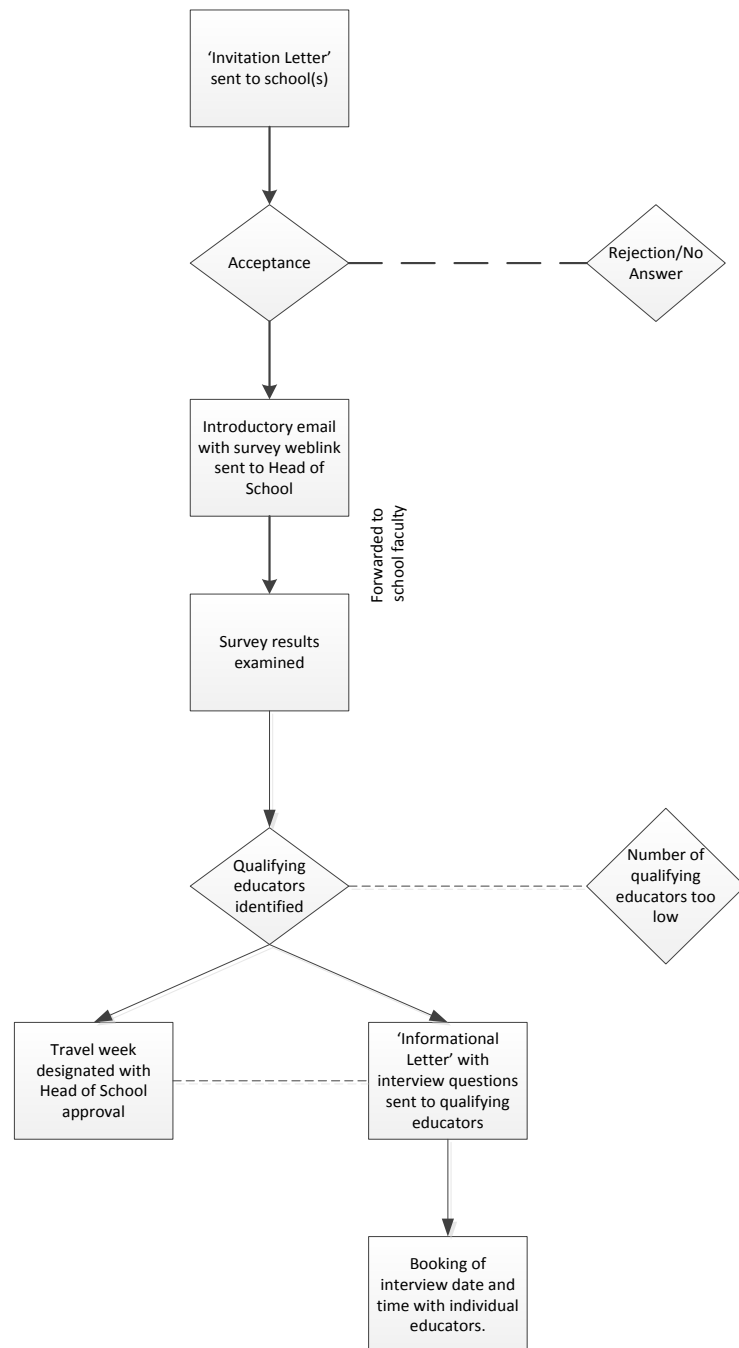


Figure 6: Flowchart of Interview Process

### *(b) Interviews*

Once qualifying educators were identified via the survey and secured through scheduled interview slots, data collection occurred via interviews. The researcher travelled to each of the two countries, where she visited participating schools and conducted face-to-face interviews with educators on school premises. Whilst visits to school premises added an ethnographic component to the study, this was not significant enough to label the study as ethnographic. This is because visits involved only a one week stay in each country. Nevertheless, the visits did help the researcher to gain a *general* feel for each school, community and region.

In order to assist in the reflection process, participants were all provided with the semi-structured interview questions via email. This preview opportunity was intended to give educators more time to reflect on their responses but also to reduce anxiety. By knowing what to expect during the interview, educators would be more comfortable and confident in choosing to take part (Robson, 2002). Interview schedules for each country visit can be found in appendices F and G. Names have been replaced by numbers to safeguard the anonymity of participants.

There were several points of communication prior to actual interviews. Besides receiving the 'Informational Letter', most educators were also asked to provide their availability during the designated travel week. This sometimes involved several emails back and forth until a final master schedule could be developed. Besides date and time, the location of interviews also needed to be communicated. In the Netherlands, interviews in the larger school took place in a spacious conference room. In the smaller school, interviews took place in a small faculty room. No other members of staff were in the room, at any point, during the interviews. Finally,

interviews in China took place in an empty office that included a desk, chairs, two sofas and a coffee table.

Before beginning each interview, participants were informed that the conversation would be digitally recorded and the reasons for this were explained. In particular, they were told that a total of thirty interviews would be digitally recorded and that once transcription was complete, audio files would be destroyed. Additionally, their names or any identifying markers would be removed from the transcription and that a number would be assigned indicating the ordinal sequence of the interviews. Educators were also reassured that anything they said would be held in strict confidence and that no part of the transcription would be used if it endangered their anonymity.

During each interview, a paper copy of the interview questions was used by the researcher (appendix E). This paper copy was used to take notes and highlight information, including points of interest and/or any information that was confusing or contradictory. All interviews began with the researcher confirming the demographic data provided in educator survey responses. This was considered a warming-up period in that it required educators to give short responses. This was followed by the body of the interview which explored broad cultural experiences as well as experiences specific to intercultural development.

The interview design included some duplicate questions. That is, some of the questions may have been construed as asking the same thing in a different way. This was a deliberate attempt to probe for a deeper response from the participants. For example, one question asked 'In your opinion, has working in an international school contributed to the development of your intercultural competence?' Educators were then prompted to explain and justify their answers. Shortly thereafter, educators were asked 'Is there anything you do differently within the

classroom/school setting now that you have taught internationally [that you didn't do before]?' Whilst this latter question may have been answered—to varying degrees—by the former question, this rephrasing pushed for further elaboration. This elaboration often provided greater clarity and served to enhance the data.

Special care was taken in ensuring that questions were not leading and that any further elaboration on responses was not coaxed in a particular direction from the researcher. When further elaboration was needed, participant responses were followed by a period of silence or questioning through the use of the participant's *own* wording (e.g. what do you mean by "*words they actually used*"?)

Interviews ended with the collection of additional demographic data. This process was intended to serve as a cooling off period. After each interview, audio files were imported as MP3 files into a laptop which was then used to transcribe each interview into a Microsoft Word document. Interviews resulted in a total of 30 Word files with each file representing one interview (averaging 40 minutes). Each Word file was later transported into NVivo software for coding.

In summary, the structure of each interview included an introduction, a warm up involving non-threatening questions, followed by the main body of the interview and a cooling off period to diffuse any tension which may have built up during the interview (Robson, 2002). The unit of analysis was the international educator and, in particular, the *individual* response to changes in cultural context. Whether that altered cultural context was specifically Chinese or Dutch was considered less relevant than the adaptive mechanisms that educators used to cope/ respond to elements of cultural dissonance.



#### 4.6 Methods of Data Analysis

Data was analysed with the assistance of the QSR NVivo 10 software package. Each transcribed interview was imported as one source/file resulting in a total of thirty independent files of data. Interviews were coded individually via applied thematic analysis (ATA). Applied thematic analysis is described as an inductive analysis of qualitative data that can incorporate a multiplicity of analytic techniques (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012). This method was used for its appeal as a more comprehensive approach, as well as for its potential to capture the complexities of meaning within text.

The analysis incorporated elements from the three procedural stages of open, axial and selective coding used in Grounded Theory approaches (Grounded Theory Institute, 2011). Contrary to Grounded Theory, however, the analysis focused on a more fundamental level of identifying themes and their relationships within the international school context. This contrasted with any aim towards the development of a larger-scale theory often associated with the Grounded Theory approach. Whilst thematic analysis does not necessarily preclude theoretical development, it is not its primary goal (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012).

During the initial stage of coding, interview responses were coded as multiple segments according to the type of data they communicated. This initial process resulted in a long and disordered list of nodes. The relationship between the nodes was not clear during this initial stage. Also during this stage, the study remained exploratory in nature and open to the emergence of unexpected data and new directions.

The second part of the coding process involved the formation of broader umbrella categories to house the multiple segments created during the initial open coding process. To illustrate, during interviews educators sometimes talked about how locals in the community reacted to them,

their difficulties with the host-language, the frequent turnover experienced in international schools and the large number of students who were English language learners. In response, two umbrella categories were formed to organize these varied segments. More specifically, segments referencing experiences that occurred *outside* of the school building were placed under the category of 'Personal Challenges & Opportunities.' In contrast, segments referencing experiences that occurred *within* the school building were placed under the category of 'Professional Challenges & Opportunities.'

The process of pulling the data apart during the open coding process and then placing it back together during the axial coding process, often in new ways, offered a greater insight into the data set. This is because data obtained through the interviews were not received in neat and tidy categories. As such, the deconstruction and reconstruction of the same data provided a new lens to look through. It was during the axial coding stage that relationships began to emerge and memos with headings were also developed. These were often done in the form of free writing (Charmaz, 2006). Besides description, the free writing process aimed to further conceptualize the data.

A main goal of free writing involved getting ideas down on paper quickly, without the constraints of following proper conventions or consideration of audience (Charmaz, 2006). Like brainstorming, it aimed to generate ideas freely. Some of these ideas were eventually discounted due to lack of evidence, whilst others were developed more fully through the identification of patterns and relationships in the data set. Memos were written directly into the presentation document (Microsoft Word), as opposed to the QRS NVivo 10 software package. As the data collection and analysis continued, each memo was moulded, refined and moved into the appropriate body of the thesis.

Once data was sorted into broader categories, further attention was given to the presence (or absence) of patterns/relationships between the various subsets. Themes that illuminated teacher experiences and any ensuing changes that emerged as a result of those experiences were examined. At this time, educator data was further filtered through the lenses provided by the various intercultural models reviewed in the study. When examining segments in an umbrella category, for example, connections to various intercultural models (discussed in Chapter 3) were considered.

In the final stage of selective coding, the most salient data categories were those that had a high frequency (e.g. number of educators making reference and number of actual segments) as well as an alignment with the analytical objectives of the study. Analytical objectives of the study placed a special emphasis on data relevant to changes in world views or changes in professional practice. Categories that were loosely connected or had a very low frequency were not considered in the analysis. A total of two educators, for example, talked about the self-mutilation of Asian students due to the unrelenting pressure to succeed in school. Although a thought-provoking piece of data, it remained an infrequent reference that also did not serve the analytic objectives of the study. As a result, it was not selected as a central piece of data in the culminating analysis.

In contrast, there was substantial data collected on the autobiographical histories of educators including the reasons why they chose to teach abroad. Besides being frequent and salient, this data helped the researcher to better understand and assess changes in world views. This is because data on what prompted educators to choose to teach abroad provided greater insight into the world views they held *before* their work overseas.

Throughout these three procedural stages there was an on-going process of comparison and analysis that attempted to relate pieces of information to each other (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 2012; Grounded Theory Institute, 2011). The intensity of comparison, however, was greater during the final stage. While the current research initially used an inductive methodology, it progressively incorporated deductive reasoning techniques as the research analysis progressed. This inductive/deductive approach aimed to connect groups of data to a bigger and more coherent picture.

#### 4.7 Reliability, Validity & Ethical Issues

##### *Reliability & Validity*

This chapter has outlined, in detail, the key processes and the thinking behind those processes in an effort to provide transparency in both the findings and their analysis. Embedded within these processes is an audit trail which includes copies of communication used (e.g. forms and emails sent) and verbatim transcription of interviews. Whilst this audit trail contributes towards reliability (consistency) it also contributes towards validity (credibility). This is because an external party is able to critically compare the research questions to the documented methods and processes used to answer them.

The financial sponsorship of the European Council of International Schools (ECIS) has been a transparent part of all communication in this study. The ECIS defines itself as a 'leading collaborative global network promoting and supporting the ideals and best practices of international education' (European Council of International Schools, 2013). Since ECIS sponsorship aims to benefit the international school community, findings needed to be handled sensitively. Whilst findings that highlighted the benefits of the international school community

were ideal, the authenticity of the research could not be sacrificed in the event that the reverse was true.

This possibility was accounted for within the research questions themselves, which remained flexible. If there was *no* evidence of transfer into the classroom or school setting, for instance, the study could explore why this was the case. This might include the exploration of catalysts that educators felt might actually foster such change. In this way, problems associated with the international school community could be used to suggest ways for school improvement. This positioning ensured that the research would contribute positively to the international school community.

Another strategy employed in this research was the use of negative case analyses. These analyses are incorporated in response to the common criticism that data in qualitative research can be selectively chosen to support conclusions drawn by the researcher (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012; Robson, 2002). Negative cases have been included in the Findings and Analysis chapters where their implications for the study are considered and discussed.

An audit trail, sponsorship transparency and negative case analyses all aim to contribute towards the reliability and validity of findings. If validity is defined as assessing what one intends to assess (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012) then all information necessary to evaluate this study's success or failure in this endeavour have been made openly available.

### *Ethical Guidelines*

The six key principles set out in the updated Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Framework for Research Ethics (2015) were considered carefully for this study. The research design remained transparent at all times and all participants were informed about the purpose, methods and uses of the research. During the study, participants were assured both in writing

and in-person that interviews were confidential and that only information which maintained their anonymity would be used. Prior to conducting each interview, participants were informed that all audio-recordings would be destroyed once verbatim transcription was complete. They were also advised that each interview would be assigned an ordinal number for identification purposes (as opposed to a name).

Data storage, therefore, would be limited to anonymized written transcripts stored on the researcher's computer. Three educators expressed an interest in receiving a copy of their interview transcripts and these were forwarded directly to their email addresses. No educators who the researcher knew personally were interviewed. This was intended to create an environment that was more conducive to sharing information openly. Whilst educators were encouraged to participate, an 'opt-in' approach provided the necessary privacy so as to ensure that any choice to participate remained a voluntary one.

The study also sought minimal disruption to school and teacher routines. This is one reason why site visits were limited to a single week. Interviews with educators were scheduled based on availability given their normal schedule. Once all interviews were complete, educators were thanked directly and an acknowledgement letter signed by the researcher and the (new) Director of ECIS was forwarded to each of the three participating School Heads. The letter acknowledged their support and thanked them for permitting access to their facilities and educators (See Appendix H). Upon completion of the culminating ECIS Research Report (July, 2014), a copy was also forwarded to the three participating School Heads for distribution to their general faculty.

Finally, in line with British Education Research Association (2011) guidelines, voluntary informed consent, the right to withdraw at any time, openness and disclosure were all embedded within

the research design and communicated multiple times to potential candidates. This is evident in the documented communication (see appendices A-E) sent to educators throughout the screening processes leading up to interviews. Methods used to collect and analyse data were also shared with sponsors prior to beginning the research.

## **II. FINDINGS & ANALYSIS**

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### CHAPTER 5 – EDUCATOR BACKGROUNDS

The Findings & Analysis section begins with a chapter on educator backgrounds. The backgrounds of educators are important because they provide a framework through which we can understand the experiences leading up to decisions to work abroad. It is through personal histories that we also gain insight into the motives, values and world views that exist *prior* to overseas employment. This, in turn, allows us to establish a starting point whereby any ensuing changes, as a result of overseas employment, can be compared and contrasted.

The chapter is divided into five parts: *Demographic Data* provides the reader with raw data on, but not limited to, gender, age, ethnicity and years of experience. Data is presented both in short prose and through visuals to facilitate easier reading. This is followed by *Differentiating Between Motives and Values*, a section that establishes an introductory context for understanding the relationship between surface motives and deep-seated values in life choices. Next, *Values and their Development*, begins to piece together the personal narratives of educators. By investigating the conditions that propel educators overseas, the study looks to move beyond surface motives to explore the existence of deeper values, including how those values come to develop in the national setting. To this end, the analysis of critical incidents provides particular insight.

*Complexity Behind Decisions* expands on findings by examining the intricacies behind educator decisions to work abroad. This is done through the analysis of selected quotes, which highlight overlapping motives and values. Finally, *Summary* connects the key points presented in the



body of the chapter and considers what these key points might mean within the context of the guiding research questions. Most importantly, by providing an in-depth analysis of educator backgrounds, this chapter sets the stage for the remaining chapters, which look at the actual experiences of educators once abroad. This includes how (or if) these experiences cause change in the world views or professional practice of educators.

Wherever possible, data is presented sequentially for expediency purposes. Where quotes from transcripts are used, educators are identified by a serial number. The serial number represents the order sequence of each interview. Educator 0002, for example, was the second to be interviewed. Similarly, educator 0030 was the last to be interviewed. The international location and citizenship of each educator is usually provided within the text leading up to each quote, except in cases where it is provided within the quote itself.

### 5.1 Demographic Data

Demographic data was drawn from thirty educators who participated in the study. The first phase of data collection occurred via a screening survey completed by educators prior to interviews (see appendix B). Additional demographic data was also collected during interviews. This section presents and, wherever needed, elaborates on the raw data collected.

#### *Gender Distribution*

Findings were drawn from seventeen female educators and thirteen male educators.

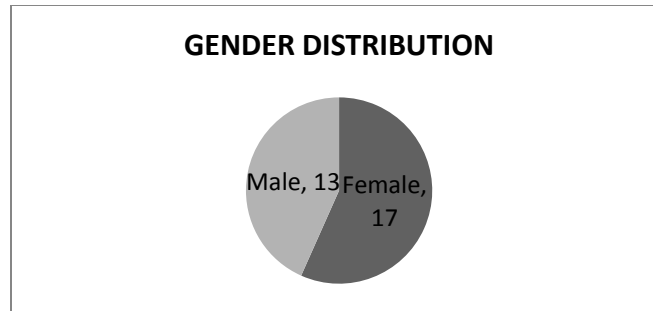


Figure 7: Gender Distribution of Sample

### *Age Distribution*

The majority of educators fell between the ages of thirty to forty-nine with only a small proportion being under thirty or over the age of forty-nine.

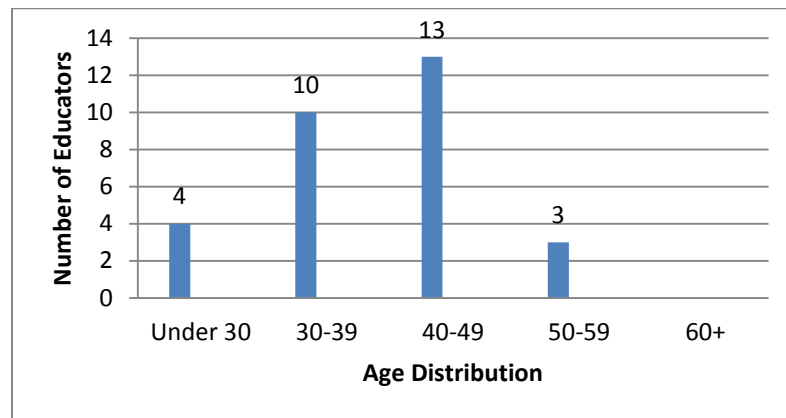
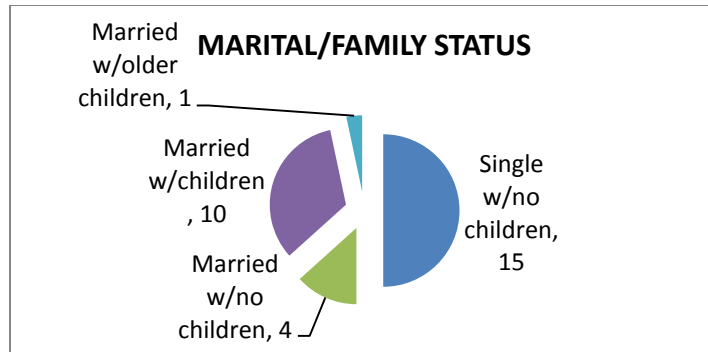


Figure 8: Age Distribution of Sample

### *Marital/Family Status*

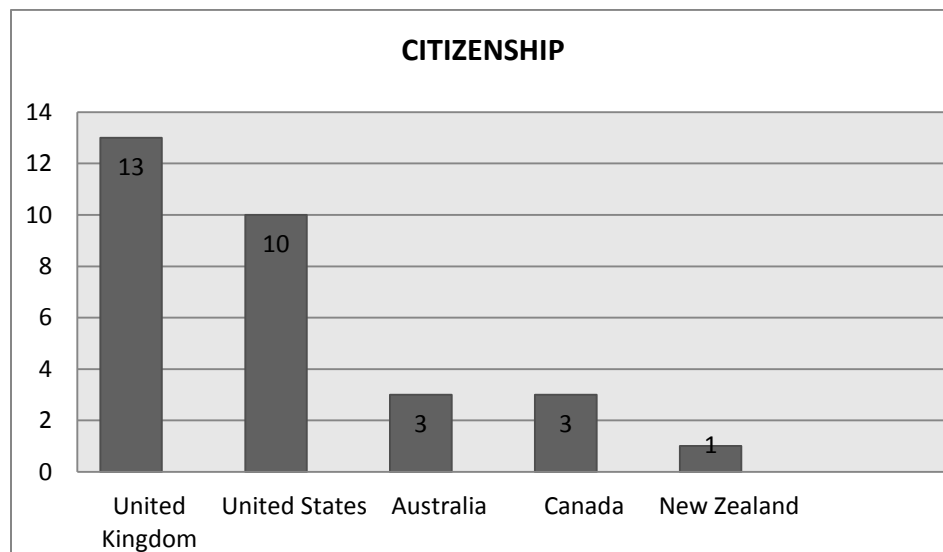
Fifteen (half) of the educators were single with no children and ten (one third) of the educators were married with children. Four educators were married with no children and one educator was married with older children who were not travelling with him/her. There were no single educators travelling with children. The word 'single' is used here to refer to any individual travelling without a spouse, irrespective of the reasons behind their single status (e.g. divorce, widowed, never married, etc.).



**Figure 9: Family Status of Sample**

### *Citizenship*

All thirty educators were born and raised in a *single* Anglophone country. That is, educators who indicated that they were born in a particular country had also grown up there. The graph below illustrates Anglophone countries represented.



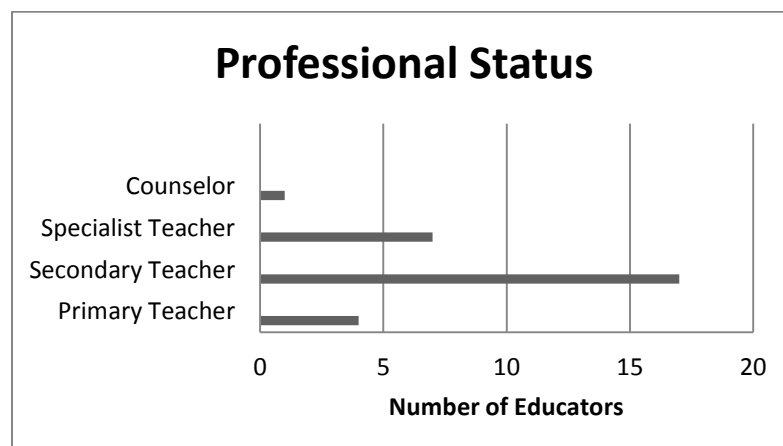
**Figure 10: Citizenship Status of Sample**

Three out of the thirty educators held dual citizenship, but in all three cases the dual citizenship involved another Anglophone country: British/Irish, Australian/British and Australian/Canadian. For practical purposes, a decision was made to place these educators within the citizenship

category of the country they were born and raised in, while making note of their dual citizenship status.

### *Type of Educator*

Seventeen educators were secondary level subject teachers, out of which three had served as principals/heads in the past (either in their home country or abroad). Subjects represented at the secondary level included art, algebra, biology, chemistry, design & technology, drama, English, geography, history, music, physical education, physics and psychology. Seven educators were specialist teachers who worked across the primary and secondary levels. This category included English Language Learner (ELL) and Special Education Needs (SEN) teachers. Four educators were primary level teachers and two were administrators. The two administrators who were interviewed spent approximately half of their time performing administrative duties and the other half performing teaching duties.



**Figure 11: Professional Status of Sample**

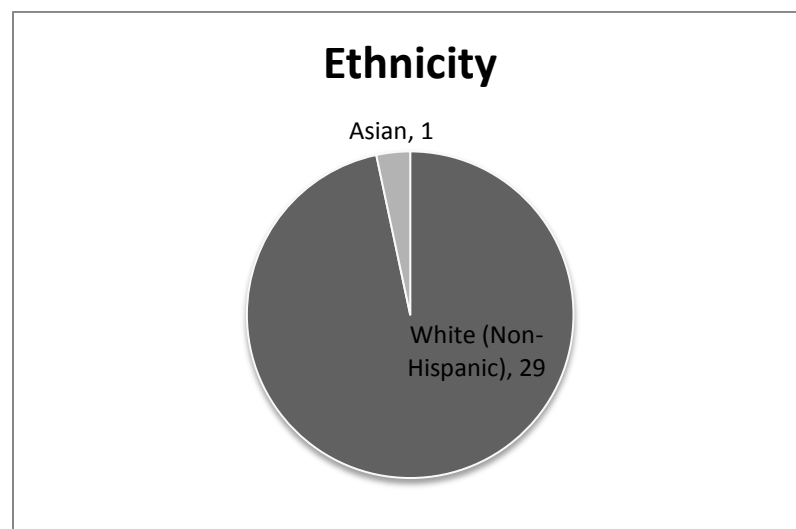
### *Years of Experience*

The cumulative total of *international* school experience across all thirty educators was 261 years, with an individual average of 8.7 years. The cumulative total of *domestic* school

experience across all thirty educators was 191 years, with an individual average of 6.4 years. All educators had experience working in both international and domestic school settings.

### *Ethnicity*

The educator demographic was made up of an almost exclusively White population. This demographic was similar to a previous study where sixteen educators from unrelated international schools around the world fell exclusively into the White category (Savva, 2013a). Ethnicity data was considered helpful because it shed some light on whether or not educators had been exposed to the challenges associated with out-group membership (e.g. minority status) back in the home country. If so, correlations between minority status and increased sensitivity towards difference could also, potentially, be explored. Ethnic categories on the survey from which educators could choose included: Asian, Black, Hispanic, Mixed, or White (see appendix B).



**Figure 12: Ethnicity of Sample**

### *Country Representation*

During interviews, educators were asked what international locations they had previously taught in. Whilst educators had taught in a diverse set of overseas locations, there seemed to be

a preference for countries clustered in particular geographic regions. Many educators in China, for example, had also taught in other Asian countries. Likewise, many educators in the Netherlands had taught in other European countries. Aside from the augmented clustering pattern in Asia/Eurasia and Europe, there were no other visible patterns of location preference. This is because educators who had taught in the Netherlands had also taught in Asia, Latin America and, to a lesser degree, in Africa. Likewise, educators in China had also taught in Europe, Latin America and, less so, in Africa.

This suggests that countries represented by international educators may function independently of the educators' current location. The table below summarizes the non-Anglophone countries educators had worked in. The countries are separated according to continent and the number of educators who worked in each country is listed in the parallel column. Information about individual schools within each country was not collected.

<b>Africa</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Asia/Eurasia</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Europe</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Latin America/ Caribbean</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Middle East</b>	<b>#</b>
Egypt Malawi	01 01	China Georgia Japan Philippines South Korea Taiwan Thailand Tonga Vietnam	20 01 01 01 03 02 02 01 02	Austria Germany Hungary Italy Kosovo Latvia Luxembourg Netherlands Spain Switzerland	01 01 01 01 01 01 01 13 02 01	Bahamas D. Republic El Salvador Mexico Venezuela	01 01 01 01 01	Bahrain Kuwait Qatar UAE	01 01 01 01

**Table 1: International Locations Represented by Sample**

## 5.2 Differentiating Between Motives and Values

One of the guiding research questions in this study was whether or not the international school experience caused change in world views. In order to gauge changes in world views, it was

necessary to first establish the world views and dispositions educators possessed *prior* to embarking on the international school experience. Initial access to this information was obtained by asking educators: 'Why did you decide to teach abroad?'

Whilst research exists on educator transience between international schools (Hawley, 1994; Hardman, 2001; Mancuso, Roberts & White 2010; Odland & Ruzicka, 2009), the findings of this study focused on the *initial* decision to move abroad. The physical change of removing oneself from familiar surroundings and placing oneself in a foreign land, far away from the safety associated with home, was considered significant. The reasons behind such life choices, therefore, were of special interest in helping to identify characteristics specific to international educators as a professional group.

Why *do* educators choose to teach abroad? And what does this tell us about the nature of the international educator? Without answers to these fundamental questions, the larger research project risked missing a vital piece of information through which other data could be reflected. In trying to establish this starting point, preliminary findings emerged about the characteristics of international educators, including the conditions that contributed to their development.

Interview data was analysed on two levels. The first level examined the initial motives articulated by educators. This typically involved a question being asked, with a response given and recorded (e.g. 'Why did you decide to teach abroad?'). The second level of analysis looked for additional data within the duration of each interview. In particular, it looked for data that supported, further expanded or contradicted the stated motives. This allowed for a deeper examination of both the personal history and values behind each educator's choice to work abroad. Analysis of data pointed to an important, albeit sometimes subtle, difference between educator motives and values.

The iceberg metaphor (Hall, 1976) is a helpful visual in illustrating important differences between motives and values. The visible part of the iceberg (above the water) can be seen as representing the outward behaviour of choosing to work abroad, in which all international educators partake. Reasons for this behaviour are varied and they can be found just below the surface of the water. Here we find the immediate motives that prompt educators to make the leap into overseas work. At the deepest part of the iceberg we find the values that support the surface motives. This part of the iceberg is deeply personal and may be analogous to the primary socialization stages referred to in sociological studies (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) or the developmental stages referred to in psychological studies (Freud, 1949).

The analysis of values is complex because even when motives are similar, underlying values are not necessarily so. A higher income, for example, may be one shared motive for many individuals seeking new employment. In the analysis of values, however, we must explore what an individual seeks to gain from this motive on a more conceptual level: Does increased income translate into increased freedom? Does it translate into increased safety? Does it translate into increased power? Or does it translate into the accumulation of material goods?

One could argue that an individual stands to gain from all four of these conceptual and material advantages. Yet the *emphasis* placed on each one is likely to vary between individuals. It is this variation in emphasis that sheds light on the value hierarchy behind individual motives. In situations where two paths may offer the same benefits, information at the value level may help to explain why individuals choose one path over the other. Within a given country, for example, there are numerous ways in which educators might increase their income. Acquiring new qualifications, transferring to better paying schools or regions to work are just two examples of actions that can result in an increased income. In extreme circumstances, educators have been



known to even change career paths. Given that these options are all available within one's own country, one must ask why certain educators opt to look *outside* of national borders.

On a micro-level, this level of depth may appear to be of little practical use to the school head or board. This is because employment candidates, through the process of their application, have *already shown* a willingness and interest to work abroad. As such, the necessary values are assumed to be there even if the intricacies behind them remain unknown. On a macro-level, however, this level of depth allows us to consider the broader framework in which individuals operate. Consider for a moment that an attractive overseas-hire package may be effective in recruiting educators who have already applied overseas. The same package, however, is likely to be less effective when offered to nationally-based educators who have *not* applied overseas. One reason for this may be that the latter group of educators has a different value hierarchy from the former group -- even if many surface motives remain the same.

Within the context of global mobility, identifying values that are most prominent among international educators--*including how those values form in the national setting*--is an important first step in understanding how predispositions towards overseas work develop. This knowledge holds value because it can address issues related to supply at a time when demand for international educators is on the rise (Brummit & Keeling, 2013).

It can further inform the development of new programmes and interventions aimed at cultivating the necessary values in the home context. Such cultivation would ultimately increase the pool of candidates available to international school administrators. As such, whilst the primary goal of this exploration was to establish a marker by which subsequent change in worldviews could be compared, important insights into the identity of the international educator were also gained.

### 5.3 Values & Their Development

#### *High Value: 'To Travel & See the World'*

The desire to 'travel and see the world' was a dominant characteristic of international educators. Engagement in the processes of discovery and exploration played an integral part in their choice to work abroad. The development of this characteristic seemed to revolve around critical incidents that had a marked impact on educators during various points in their lives. A critical incident is typically defined as one which comprises an event in professional life. This event subsequently creates a significant disturbance in the prior understanding of important principles or practice. Following a period of focused reflection, this disturbance further results in a turning point (Cunningham, 2008). Adding to this definition of a critical incident, this study includes events in personal life as well. This is because the very nature of overseas work calls on simultaneous challenges in both the professional and personal lives of educators, with the understanding that the two domains are rarely neatly compartmentalised.

The particular point in time in which critical incidents occurred was wide-ranging with some educators referencing incidents in their early childhood, others in their years at university and still others well into their adult life. Critical incidents were typically articulated later in interviews and often served to validate and explain initial responses to the question of why educators chose to teach abroad.

#### *Childhood Influences*

Within the field of psychology, childhood is often seen as a malleable age whereby the growing mind begins to take shape. So powerful are the experiences of childhood that theorists have claimed it to be one of the most important periods in human development (Freud, 1949; Piaget, 1947). In sociology as well, the process through which young children internalize values is

described as *primary* socialisation (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). This is considered a particularly potent socialisation because of its early introduction, as well as the significant others through which it is mediated.

If we take these psychological and sociological positions to be true, then critical incidents that occur during the formative years are likely to have a particularly lasting effect on the individual. Whilst a critical incident is often thought of as a single major event, it can also involve a series of smaller events. These events may initially appear trivial but begin to assume greater importance with time (Cunningham, 2008). As such, learning derived from a critical incident is not always immediate or self-evident.

During interviews, educators often used personal stories, in the form of critical incidents, to explain the values behind their choices to work abroad. Unlike motives, these tended to be more emotionally influenced. Educator 0023, for example, was one of many who attributed her desire to 'travel and see the world' as central in her choice to teach abroad. During the interview, she also talked about visiting a friend in Thailand prior to beginning her PGCE, at which time she became enamoured with the idea of living outside of England. Towards the end of the interview, she was asked why travelling and seeing the world was so important to her. Her response revealed the gradual and cumulative impact of a critical incident in her childhood:

I identify a lot with my mother. She raised me from a very young age by herself and she's really my idol. . . she was born in Dublin and she moved to Scotland and then she moved to England . . . when my mum brought me up. . . she used to save up and . . . every three or four years, we would go on an amazing holiday. We would go travelling to India or Cuba or Australia. . . it's something that she held important enough to say; "You know what we're not going to have a holiday this year, we're not going to have a holiday next year because I want

you to go out and I want you to experience the world.” And, I think because she did that, I saw the world as a bigger thing than just England or Europe.

For this educator, travel and the new experiences associated with it were an important and memorable part of her upbringing. She shares that her mother ascribed a high value to travel, so much so, that she recalls her mother making significant sacrifices to ensure this value was realised. In turn, the educator seems to have internalised this value as her own. The educator’s desire to ‘travel and see the world’ appears to be one that has been cultivated and modelled for her at a very young age.

She hints towards an internalisation process by explicitly connecting her childhood travel experiences (even the lack thereof) with her present day views of travel. Interestingly, it appears that her own mother moved extensively, moving from ‘Dublin [to] Scotland and eventually England.’ The processes of travel and mobility, then, seem to have been modelled both through her direct experiences as well as through her family history.

Another critical incident drawn from the formative years was shared by educator 0011. Prior to the selected quote, the educator explained that she had always been a curious child and recalled being drawn to people who were different from her during her school years. When asked why she thinks that is, she shares the following incident:

When I was nine we moved to Alaska [from New York]. We drove to Alaska, so that was 21 days in the car next to my brother and the dog. . . and then we lived there for a year and I absolutely loved that new experience. And then we drove 21 days home and we went back to the same house . . . but I just had this experience and everything else remained the same. . .but I had changed.

She refers to a vivid memory in an attempt to explain decisions made later in her life, including her current life in the Netherlands. She never actually tells us what she experienced during her time in Alaska, choosing to focus on the car ride and what it symbolised instead. Here too, experiences in the formative years appear to have had a particularly lasting effect because of the emotive power behind primary socialisation. Indeed, primary socialisation is also referred to as *emotional* socialisation precisely because of the foundational role it plays in shaping identity (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

That educators chose to recall certain events in their lives, over others, is indicative of the personal value they ascribed to those events (Tripp, 1993). The desire to travel and see the world, then, did not appear to be a random interest. Furthermore, educators from Australia and New Zealand communicated a high regard for travel through their broader national values (as opposed to their family values alone). For these educators, travel was described as a very common and expected practice in their countries. All four Australian/New Zealand educators interviewed, for example, had made multiple moves throughout their formative and adult years, which they attributed to their national upbringing.

Whilst this transience initially took place within national borders, it nevertheless came with the unrest and adaptation inherent to any long-distance move. Below is a quote from Australian educator 0028 in response to a question asking whether or not he identifies himself by region when he is back in his home country:

In Australia, everybody moves, it's a very mobile country and everybody moves around, so people don't normally say which state they're from. There's not really any pride about being from a different state. You know, people will say, "I'm from Queensland" or whatever, but they really couldn't care less . . . people move around so much for jobs.

According to this educator, regional affiliation is not something that holds great value in Australian culture and mobility among citizens is so common that it is considered a non-event. Frequent mobility among the citizenry was communicated by the one New Zealander in the sample group as well. She communicated that overseas experiences – which are also known more simply as ‘OE’ – are common and expected practice in New Zealand, with most involving a few years away from the home country.

When asked if access to such experiences was related to socio-economic status, educator 0006 explained that even New Zealanders who are not well off will often backpack and take odd jobs. The institutionalisation of travel experiences in New Zealand, as described by educator 006, has been confirmed in several academic studies (Bell, 2002; Wilson, Fisher & Moore, 2009). In Australia, as well, research has indicated substantial concentrations of ‘temporary movers’ within national borders (Bell & Ward, 1998).

In cases where the broader Anglophone culture places a high value on travel, individual educators may be seen as having internalized the objective [national] culture into a subjective [personal] culture that reflects those same values. This aligns with the description of objective culture as one which, despite being socially constructed, is treated as if it were derived from the natural world (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). This value is communicated to young children via their family caretakers as well as through the larger institutional structures they join.

### *Adult Influences*

Besides experiences during the formative years, several educators referenced pivotal events during their young adult years. Most prominent among adult experiences were study abroad opportunities provided through university programmes, with many educators describing them

as an impressionable and enjoyable part of their lives. In such instances, one might view the study abroad experience as providing a type of transitional experience, in that it offers individuals a safe and short-term overseas opportunity. This experience could, arguably, shape an inclination (in the form of an optimistic view) towards a longer-term commitment abroad in later years.

The long-term career impact of study abroad programmes has been examined in several longitudinal studies (Franklin, 2008; Paige et al, 2009). One longitudinal study found that 73% of study abroad alumni had professions involving an international or multicultural dimension (Franklin, 2008). This included alumni who were either working overseas or worked with overseas companies as part of their daily work. Paige et al (2009) also identified a strong predisposition for alumni of study abroad programmes towards professions involving international dimensions. Below, educator 0011 shares some information about her study abroad experience:

I did a term abroad in England, at the University of Bath, loved Europe, loved the experience, travelled all around. So then I got a job teaching in Connecticut for two years and the whole time I just missed Europe and missed England a lot. So then after two years in Connecticut, I decided to try to find a job overseas.

Educator 0011 describes how she used her study abroad experience to visit other parts of the UK and Europe. Upon returning to the US, she found gainful employment, but continued to feel unsettled. One gets the sense that the overseas experience became a kind of 'calling' that she could not ignore. In the end, she applied for a post in the Netherlands.

Attention should be drawn to the fact that this educator was also exposed to travel during her childhood. In this case, we see a progression towards international work. It is possible that her

positive childhood experience influenced her to participate in a study abroad programme. This deeper and more independent level of participation, in turn, may have contributed to her ultimate decision to teach and live overseas. There were a number of other educators who also referenced critical incidents across life stages. In such cases, it was assumed that the high value ascribed to travel began in childhood and was subsequently validated through additional experiences.

Besides study abroad, several educators also referred to friends who had gone abroad to live and work. They described unusual visits to friends that kindled an interest in making travel a more permanent part of their lifestyles. This integration of travel into one's daily lifestyle stood in stark contrast to travel as a distinctly separate appendage that individuals normally partake in for only a few weeks out of the year. Below, educator 0008 from Canada, discusses her initial exploration:

My best friend growing up in Toronto moved to Bermuda. I went over and visited her several times. . . and I thought, 'Wow, this is pretty fun, to be able to work overseas.' So, I started looking into overseas teaching. I specifically was looking at Bermuda, but it's very difficult to get a job there as an expat. . .that got the ball rolling and then, I ended up looking into the overseas job fairs.

Like many stories pertaining to overseas friends, this visit sparked inquisitiveness about working outside of national borders. Whilst this educator originally looked towards the 'safety-net' of a familiar location where she also had a good friend, she eventually found herself in Europe where she has since remained for almost twenty years. The influence of friends can be framed loosely within the general context of social networks and their role in migration. Although many educators did not follow friends to specific locations, they did see themselves as joining a global social network of expatriates living overseas.



### *High Value: Change or Risk*

Contrasting with educators who ascribed a high value to travel, another group of educators described their choice to teach abroad as a whim or impulse decision. For this group, the possibility of teaching overseas began as an exploration with no definitive decision or commitment. These educators often found themselves in a life juncture whereby they were seeking change, but weren't necessarily certain what form that change should take on. The whim or impulse reason was often accompanied with a marginal view of schools in the home country.

Despite choices to teach abroad being described as whim or impulse decisions, analysis of interview data often conflicted with this explanation. More specifically, educators in this group seemed to be driven by a high value that they ascribed to change. This value came in one of two forms, a 'one-off' need for change or a recurring need for change. Data for each of the two categories is elaborated on below.

### *The 'One-Off' Need for Change*

Educators who sought a significant change in their lives explored the possibility of living and working abroad without necessarily expecting that they would make a final commitment. An apropos metaphor for such an exploration would be that of throwing a fishing line into a lake, just to see if anything will catch. For these educators the exploration was often framed by a 'one-off' need to make a significant life change, without necessarily seeking out change--or risk--as a systematic part of one's lifestyle. Below, US educator 0009 explains the process leading up to his application for an overseas post. His journey began when an acquaintance posted a job on an electronic board:

I sent him an e-mail just out of curiosity, you know, what's the deal, what's it about, I then figured I'd send a resume just to see . . . it was one of those, what

the heck? What could it hurt to ask or find out and so yeah, six weeks later I moved to Europe.

Despite the framing of the initial exploration as a whim or impulse decision, educators often revealed later in interviews other reasons that prompted their exploration. As the interview progresses, the same educator shares some additional information about his decision:

Part of the reason I guess I sent the e-mail inquiry was my position as the coordinator of math and sciences in that district was changing. . . it was budgetary, getting me out of *this* budget line and on to *that* budget line and to make the community happy “oh look we’re saving money here.” . . . I was guaranteed by the board a full time job, by the superintendent, by everybody around at my current salary. Monetarily it didn’t make a difference [to me]; I’d be doing much the same job.

Connecting this upcoming change with his decision to look abroad suggests that this educator had some reservations about the developing situation at the time he applied for the overseas post. He communicates complacency with his job security, as well as frustration with the role of politics in the upcoming change. Since his move abroad, the particular educator has worked in the same overseas location for nine years, suggesting that his choice to work abroad was of a ‘one-off’ nature. In another excerpt, the need for change is communicated by educator 0007 who expresses her difficulties working as an administrator in the US:

I was a young administrator at that time and our school district had a sister school relationship with an international school abroad. So, we would send people for the summer to do summer school. I remember having meetings just looking at the administrators who've been doing this for years and they looked really old and burned out, and not happy. And I wasn't sure I wanted to do administration for another 35 years at that point.

As in the previous excerpt, this educator had a very secure and comfortable job as a young administrator in the US. Yet despite having a job that many educators in the US aspire to, there seemed to be something lacking. In remembering her fellow administrators, she describes them as tired and unhappy. She finds this unsettling because she sees her future in them. This makes her question her own wishes for the future. At the same time, she mentions the sister relationship between her school in the US and an international school abroad. Although she never tells us if she attended the overseas summer school, her reference suggests that she might have been influenced by the institutional relationship.

#### *A Recurring Need for Change*

In contrast to the 'one-off' need for change, a distinctly different group of educators seemed to be motivated by a *recurrent* need for change and, for some, even risk. For this group, the idea of staying in one job until retirement was not an attractive one. Instead, these educators thrived on change and the new experiences associated with it. These individuals also experienced unusually high mobility during the formative years. Below, US educator 0017 illustrates the high frequency of change during her childhood:

We moved actually quite a bit because my parents divorced when I was little. . . we moved to California when I was little and then we moved back to Massachusetts but then we moved to Connecticut . . . and my dad was in the Navy and one of my cousins was in the Navy.

The educator highlights several states that she lived in as a child. This mobility, she later informs us, carries into her university studies where she talks about her decision to move to yet another state. She also informs us (in the excerpt) that her father travelled regularly through his work in the Navy. Mobility for this educator, therefore, was an integral part of her upbringing, making it an instilled quality of primary socialisation (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). It is of interest to note

that at the time of interview, this educator had worked in a total of 4 overseas locations in her 8 years of international teaching, further illustrating the need for recurrent change.

Mobility for this group of educators had always been a regular part of their lives and, in many ways, working internationally allowed them to recreate that mobility in their adult years. Whilst none of the educators interviewed resided outside of Anglophone borders during their formative years, they did describe a great deal of travel *within* Anglophone borders during their childhood. Such movement could, arguably, call on the development of particular adaptation skills. These skills include the need to adjust to a new location, a new school and the establishment of new friendships. Furthermore, with each move such individuals must also leave behind familiar friends, places and memories.

One might surmise that those who exemplified a recurring need for change shared characteristics similar to the 'maverick' educator described in Hardman's (2001) typology. A key difference, however, was that the educators interviewed were driven *less* by a desire to 'see the world' (as described by Hardman) and more by a need for frequent change. As such, whilst the maverick may use the same *means* of travel, the *ends* s/he is looking for may be quite different than those Hardman (2001) proposes (see section 3.2).

#### 5. 4 Complexity Behind Decisions

While many initial answers involved a single (often one dimensional) reason for choosing to teach abroad, it became evident as interviews progressed that educators considered not one, but multiple factors in their decision to work abroad. The majority of educators had worked in state funded schools in their home countries. Some educators were content with their work in state funded schools, while others were unhappy and felt the need to move on. Although several educators originally cited their discontent with domestic schools as a primary reason for

choosing to work abroad, further analysis of data did not support this assertion. The following excerpts taken from UK educator 00018 illustrate the complexity behind decisions to teach abroad:

My wife had taught overseas previously and persuaded me that it would be a much better experience. I really enjoyed teaching but I don't perhaps enjoy being a policeman, which I found I had to be in the schools in the UK. I found that my strength was actually working with students perhaps who want to work rather than not work. We originally only planned to go overseas for a short time, but that was 14 years ago because I found very early on that I was able to teach as opposed to manage or control.

His wife is mentioned briefly as someone who has taught overseas and persuades him to give the international circuit a try. The primary reason presented for his move, however, is discontent with schooling in the UK. In particular, he talks about playing the role of the 'policeman', alluding to student behavioural problems. He also references the work ethic of students he worked with back in the UK, describing them as not really wanting to work. When asked why he didn't seek out working in a better school within the UK (as opposed to going overseas), educator 0018 responds as follows:

I just got married; my wife had worked in Africa and said, "You know, you've got to try this game. You might get lucky and find that you really enjoy it." I've always had a wider view. I worked in a small part of Yorkshire in the UK which is quite inward looking. I travelled a lot as a kid. I moved around a lot as a child myself, not internationally, but within the United Kingdom. I don't like a small town view. I've always liked to think I could bring some kind of global view to what I did.

In this second quote, the educator shares several important pieces of new data. This data is best examined in its chronological order (as opposed to the order it is presented in the quote). Firstly, the educator tells us that a pattern of mobility existed in his childhood. This may be seen

as contributing to the 'wider-view' he sees himself as having and his inclination towards a more mobile lifestyle from the onset. Secondly, he briefly describes the town he taught in as being 'inward-looking,' indicating a potential mismatch between himself and the school/region he was employed in.

Thirdly, mentioning his newlywed status suggests that the timing was right for him to begin a new chapter in his life. And finally, he asserts once again that his significant other encouraged him to try overseas teaching. In this particular situation, the spouse may be seen as taking on the role of the 'overseas friend.' This is because the spouse, through her own direct experiences, provides both encouragement and reassurance that the overseas experience is not only safe but also enjoyable. As such, although this educator initially presents discontent with domestic schools as a primary reason for teaching abroad, further elaboration during the interview reveals that his decision was influenced by a combination of factors which, *together*, prompted the initial decision to move overseas.

While discontent with domestic schools can be seen as tying into, or supporting, the need for change, it is not likely that domestic schools alone can be attributed to driving an individual to leave their country. Indeed, an individual can change schools, opt for private schools instead of state schools, even change careers in response to their discontent for education in the home country. And so, whilst dissatisfaction may be a contributing factor, the choice to leave a country needs to have some other driving force to supplement and justify such a significant life change.

## 5.5 Summary

This chapter examined some of the worldviews that international educators came with prior to their work abroad, including how some of those worldviews came to develop. Establishing the

'starting point' of the sample group was fundamentally important because it provided entry level data that could later be compared to post-experience data. It is through such a comparison process that the first guiding research question could eventually be answered: *In what ways does the international school experience cause change in the world views of Anglophone educators?*

As such, whilst identifying the 'starting point' did not directly answer the main research question, it did gather the necessary background information in order to enable the researcher to eventually do so. It was during the process of establishing this 'starting point' that several inadvertent but worthy findings also emerged with regards to the motives and values of international educators.

One value that emerged prominently was the desire to travel and see the world. This included the processes of exploration and discovery which are inherent to the travel experience (Savva, 2013b). The development of this value seemed to be influenced, in part, by prior exposure to travel during the formative or young adult years. Those who were exposed to travel during childhood had vivid memories of trips within and/or outside their respective countries. These same individuals often came from families who themselves held travel and its benefits in high regard. This was the case even in situations where mobility was not a frequent or regular part of educator upbringing.

Positive short-term experiences abroad during the young adult years also played a significant role in value development. For many educators, short-term experiences served as transitional conduits that led up to longer-term experiences, such as those educators found themselves in at the time of interviews. University study abroad programmes played a prominent role in this

regard. This was the case even when the experiences were based in seemingly similar countries (e.g. Americans in the UK).

There were two instances, as well, where educators were influenced by an overseas programme implemented in the local schools they worked in. This included one summer-abroad and one short-term exchange programme. Like study abroad, the institutionalisation of programmes can be seen as providing important transitional experiences. Whilst study-abroad has become a wide spread phenomenon at the university level, it remains severely limited at the professional level.

Yet the institutionalisation of overseas teaching opportunities through local/international school partnerships has the potential to significantly widen participation in international experiences. This is because institutionalisation is a vehicle through which knowledge, experiences and easily accessible opportunities can be brought to practising educators. Such institutionalisation contrasts sharply with the present method of independent, ad hoc job searching, a non-cohesive method which may, in and of itself, be a deterrent to potential international school applicants.

Apart from individuals who ascribed a high value to travel, there was a distinctly different group of individuals who ascribed a high value to *change*. Whilst many in this group described their decision to teach abroad as a whim or impulse decision, analysis of interview data suggested that decisions to move abroad were not superficial or chance decisions. This is because educators often communicated feelings of stagnation or frustration with their personal and/or professional circumstances at the time the decision to teach abroad was made.

Variations in change-seekers included those who were responding to a 'one-off' need for change and those who demonstrated a recurring need for change. Whether the need for change was a one-time circumstance or a deep-seated personality trait could, arguably, be examined through



the years educators spent at each international location. Those who changed locations frequently, for example, were more likely to be expressing a personality trait. In turn, those who stayed in overseas locations for extended periods of time (e.g. five or more years) were more likely to be expressing a 'one-off' need for change.

Educators with a pattern for recurrent change were distinctly different from all other groups in that travel was not necessarily an end in itself. Rather, the process of change (or risk) was the end, with travel being a *means* to that end. Whilst educators in the former group may have moved locations so that they could 'travel and see the world', this latter group of educators was motivated more by the element of change and unpredictability. This may help to explain why many previously found themselves to be unsatisfied with stable and secure jobs.

Predictable employment, even when very gainful, left this group of educators feeling unfulfilled. They were not comforted by complacency and often felt the need for less predictable experiences. This group actively sought out ways in which they could integrate change into their daily lives, with international teaching providing a venue through which they could do this successfully. This tendency was also indicative of risk-taking behaviour.

It was not clear from the data, however, whether the processes of change and/or risk-taking were distinctly different qualities, overlapping qualities or even the same quality. Finally, across the various categories were educators who were enamoured by friends already residing abroad. After visits abroad, educators found themselves entertaining the idea of residing overseas, including visualising themselves within an overseas context as a result of such visits.

Overall, findings confirmed that early exposure to international experiences--whether through leisure travel, study-abroad or practically-oriented mobility--played a salient role in the development of predispositions for work outside of national borders. Prior experiences were

important in creating a positive outlook towards long-term travel experiences. Besides family experiences during childhood, study abroad experiences during the university years and/or domestic-international school partnerships appeared to be particularly effective in cultivating an openness towards international placement. Connecting individuals with others who worked abroad was also instrumental in easing anxiety and providing educators with a greater sense of stability. Knowledge of someone who had ventured into the overseas experience successfully also allowed educators to feel a greater sense of control.

A common thread across the described conditions was their important role in easing anxieties associated with entering the 'unknown' world beyond national borders. This aligns with previous research suggesting that a possible transitive relationship exists between factors influencing international teachers to return home and factors keeping teachers *out* of international teaching (Savva, 2013b). Theoretically, a transitive relationship assumes that if 'a' and 'b' are related, and 'b' and 'c' are related, then 'a' and 'c' must also be related.

Since the particular study (Savva, 2013b) indicated that many international teachers returned to their home country due to issues of instability, it may be that teachers who would otherwise consider overseas teaching do not because of the same instability factors. The absence of transitional conduits, such as childhood experiences, study abroad, overseas friends and other institutional supports further limit exposure to what appear to be the most ideal conditions.

The study of values has allowed us to explore how candidates arrive in the applicant pool to begin with. Like any educator, the international educator prioritizes values based on a multiplicity of factors relating to personality, background and circumstances. The research, therefore, did not aim (or expect) to find a single set of values which was claimed to apply to all

international educators. It did, however, investigate whether certain values emerged as more prominent than others and, if so, which values and why.

In identifying dominant characteristics, including ways in which those characteristics have come to exist, this chapter has added new layers of depth and clarity to our understanding of the inner workings of the international educator. This is a small but distinct contribution because it has delved beyond intermediary motives and incentives such as salary, professional development opportunities and the subsidized education of dependents (all of which are arguably available to varying degrees in state/independent schools in national settings as well) to understand the kind of individuals who consider working overseas *to begin with*.

By doing so, two goals have been achieved. Firstly, the dominant values that educators in this study possessed (as they relate to their choice to work abroad) have been identified. These values will serve as an anchor for the analysis of findings presented in upcoming chapters aimed at answering the study's key research questions. Secondly, and somewhat unintentionally, this data has helped to identify conditions that encourage openness towards international work among educators. As the need for individuals willing to work abroad grows, one can expect the cultivation of these conditions to become increasingly salient.

One important point needs to be highlighted before moving on to the next chapter. Educator categories presented in this research should not be viewed as mutually exclusive. It may very well be that an international educator values both travel *and* change. Similarly, while an individual may have been influenced by unusual mobility during the formative years, this does not preclude an interest in travel for its own sake.

Finally, whether motivated by ideas of travel, change or risk, all educators participating in the study demonstrated a level of openness and willingness in dealing with aspects of difference

*before* their work abroad. As a result, it is reasonable to also assume that participants were ethno-relative in outlook, or at the very least, not deeply ethnocentric (Bennett, 2004). This is important to keep in mind as we investigate any gains in intercultural development *as a result* of the international school experience.

## CHAPTER 6 – PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Once abroad, educators were faced with a variety of professional challenges and opportunities. This chapter begins to explore the professional lives of international educators within the school building or campus. After providing a detailed description of school and student characteristics, the chapter divides into three subheadings that are based on the most salient professional challenges/opportunities as communicated by educators: *Institutional*, *Cultural-Pedagogical* and *Socio-Economic*. The implications of these challenges/opportunities to the world views and professional practice of educators are discussed throughout the chapter and further deliberated in the *Summary* section.

### 6.1 School & Student Characteristics

In order to establish a context and enable the reader to more accurately visualize the type of setting that educators were working in at the time of interviews, a succinct description of the three participating international schools is provided. Interviews took place across three schools in China and the Netherlands. In China, the international school where educators were drawn from was a profit-driven British school. It spanned foundation, primary and secondary levels, following the National Curriculum of England all the way through to Key Stage 4 (GCSE). During the final two years of secondary school the curriculum switched to a full International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme.

One might describe this school as an offshore ‘brand name’ facility. This is because its UK counterpart, from which it was modelled after, is a well-established and elite school. Tuition fees were equivalent to 30,000 euro per child, per annum (secondary level). This did not include any extra fees associated with food, uniforms, bus transport and outside travel excursions. Facilities included an ice-rink, multiple music rooms, an atrium and a multi-levelled car park.

This was a selective school that required an entrance exam. It served approximately 1400 students spread across two campuses.

Since Chinese law mandates that children in China attend Chinese schools, 95% of the school's student body was made up of foreign passport holders. It would be misleading, however, to suggest that there was a particularly diverse student body in the school. Despite being foreign passport holders, the majority of the school population remained ethnically and culturally Chinese. That is, whilst students had 'official' foreign passports most had been raised in China and were children of Chinese parents.

The remaining 5% of the school's student body was made up of Chinese passport holders. This was due to a loop-hole in the law permitting foreign schools to have a Chinese-national intake of up to 5%. Not surprisingly, it was communicated during interviews that this 5% invariably represented children of the political elite. The largest proportion of non-Chinese students in the school was a South Korean population, which made up approximately 20% of the student body. The school conformed most closely to a non-traditional international school (Hayden & Thompson, 2013) because most of its student body was local, despite passports indicating otherwise.

In the Netherlands, the larger of the two schools was a non-profit American school that served students from over 65 nations. It spanned the foundation, primary and secondary levels and followed an American state curriculum. Like the British school in China, it too switched to a full IB diploma programme in the final two years of secondary school. Tuition fees were 20,000 euro per child, per annum (secondary level), non-inclusive of any extra fees. This was a multi-level and spacious facility that included two large cafeterias, an atrium and multiple conference rooms. This was a non-selective school with upwards of 1000 students on a single campus. The

school conformed most closely to a traditional international school because its student population was largely expatriate (Hayden & Thompson, 2013).

The smaller school in the Netherlands, a dual track Dutch/English primary school, provided one track that followed a formal Dutch curriculum and another track that followed the International Primary Curriculum (IPC). The international section was essentially an English speaking section, serving students who fit one of three profiles. The first profile involved students who were not Dutch, with parents working temporarily in the Netherlands. The second profile involved students who were of Dutch nationality, but were returning to the Netherlands after having already received an English-medium education elsewhere. This student profile fit Hayden & Thompson's (2008) description of 'the returnee.' The third and final profile involved students who were Dutch, but who expected to be relocated to a country other than the Netherlands for at least two years in the future. Proof from an employer was required for students fitting this profile.

The school was partially subsidized by the Dutch ministry and, as a result, offered substantially lower tuition fees when compared to other international schools. Tuition fees were 4,000 euro per child, per annum, with most of the fees going towards the international recruitment of teachers, membership in international organisations and overseas book purchases. Facilities were located in a small Dutch house, which was older but well maintained. Enrolment in the international track, in particular, was in high demand and an extensive waiting list existed. Placements were based on student profile criteria and a first-come, first-serve basis.

Fitting this smaller school into one of Hayden & Thompson's (2013) international school categories proved a bit more challenging. Examined in isolation, the international track aligned most closely with a traditional international school. This is because an English-medium

education was provided to students who were, for the most part, not Dutch locals. On the other hand, the Dutch track provided a local curriculum to local students. It is worth noting here that there were several other schools of this nature in the Netherlands that were approached for participation. The practice of parallel language tracks, operating within a single school, appears to be common to the Netherlands and is a practice acknowledged in Hayden & Thompson's (2008) UNESCO report.

Before discussing the professional challenges and opportunities educators faced whilst abroad, some important points need to be made. Firstly, although interviews took place across three campus locations, the reader should keep in mind that many educators had worked in a variety of international schools prior to the schools in which interviews took place. As a result, educator responses were not limited to experiences in a single international school but, rather, reflected these broader and more diverse experiences.

Secondly, educators were asked to compare their school experiences back home to their school experiences internationally. The problem that materialised, however, was that educator experiences back home were often limited to government funded state schools, some of which were of an inner-city nature. Given that two out of the three international schools were relatively elite independent schools; this created a problem because educators were often comparing schools that were not on otherwise equal footing. Perhaps a more consistent comparison would have been one between independent schools *within* national borders and independent schools *outside* of national borders.

Thirdly, even within this adjusted comparison, a differentiation would need to further exist between selective and inclusive schools, as well as schools catering to the very wealthy (high-end tuition fees) and schools catering to an aspiring middle-class (low-end tuition fees). As such,



whilst the subheadings that follow present findings relevant to educators' domestic and international teaching experiences, one must keep in mind the multiple variables within these experiences. More specifically, differences communicated often existed not only as a result of the national/international context but also as a result of the state/independent context.

## 6.2 Institutional

Given these parameters, the morphology of the international school emerged as being distinctly different from the domestic school. This difference was based on the presence of three dominant institutional characteristics that included (1) a transient faculty and/or students (2) a usually independent classification (e.g. private) and (3) an overseas placement. These three characteristics interacted with each other to create a very unique set of professional challenges and opportunities for educators.

Transiency is a well-documented phenomenon in international schools (Hacohen, 2012; MacDonald, 2006; Mathews, 1989). Research has identified the average annual turnover to be approximately 30 per cent for students (Mathews, 1989) and 14.4 per cent for teachers (Odland & Ruzicka, 2009). Additionally, the average stay for school-heads has been estimated to be between 2.8-3.7 years (Hawley, 1994; Littleford, 1999). Below, American educator 0006 shares her thoughts on some outcomes of this phenomenon:

[International] schools would like to think they have a lot of structure but I think, compared to national systems, there is less structure because they have to do what they can do with the time and they're ever changing. A new person comes in and they decide they don't like the mass curriculum that the school's running with and so they go and choose something different and then the whole thing changes again.

In the above quote, a less structured environment is attributed to the relatively high turnover found in international schools. While one administrator or department-head may promote a particular curriculum or methodology, a successor (a few years later) may have very different views and plans. Add a changing student and teacher body to the mix and difficulties in creating a consistent learning environment become evident.

Besides transiency, the independent nature of the international school also lent itself to a less structured, sometimes more flexible, environment. Whilst some educators saw this as a welcome change, others found it confusing and chaotic. Below educator 0013, from the UK, provides a comparison in favour of working in an independent setting.

I think working in England with Ofsted over your head all the time really broke me as a teacher. I felt really bad about myself in the way that I was teaching and didn't feel that the environment was very positive, that there's this kind of just extreme things that you need to be able to achieve, and they weren't realistic within the comprehensive school setting. Here, confidence-wise, it's been amazing. . . the management and the people I work with make you feel like a good teacher.

The minimized role of the state is a welcome change for this educator. She feels free to focus on her teaching without having to over-burden herself with rigid checklists that she views as unrealistic. She makes a specific reference to expectations being unreasonable in certain school settings, alluding to the student body and implying issues of social capital in the home setting. The selection of certain national features, as opposed to others, can be compared to a form of curricular adaptation as described by Thompson (1998). Here we have a British school following the English National Curriculum without applying the same inspectorate pressures required back home.

In addition to a less controlling environment, some educators found that they were better equipped to succeed in international schools because of the improved work facilities and increased access to resources. Once again this appeared to be related to the independent nature of the international school. Below, educator 0001, a secondary teacher from the US, highlights this advantage by contrasting it with conditions in state schools back home:

I think that they really -- that the [education] system has not progressed the way it should, right? That the world has changed and the system is still stuck in the industrial age. I mean, the things that you read are true . . . the idea that you can have an effective teacher who teaches 180 students is just insane.

Here, an interesting comparison is drawn between state systems of education and the factory model of the industrial age. According to this educator, in a world that has undergone so much change the manner in which education is delivered domestically has changed little. She makes reference to the overcrowding of schools and the number of students for which teachers are held accountable. Using the example of unreasonably sized classes, she suggests that the problem of ineffective teaching, back home, lies in the larger structure of state education systems. This observation is not new, as there are scholars who have noted similar conditions and concerns (Connell, 2009; Shulman, Sullivan & Glanz, 2008).

The belief that flexible is better, however, was not unanimous among educators. Those who had a preference for more rigid structures saw the checks and balances employed within state schools as important quality assurance measures that were lacking in international schools. Below, educator 0028 discusses issues of accountability and planning as he compares his domestic experiences in Australian state schools with his international school experiences abroad:

In Australia, the governance, the management and so on is much tighter, much more accountable, much more professional, if you like, because in Australia, for example, you can't spend one cent without accounting for it because you'll get in a mess of trouble. . .and then you've got these international schools that have no budget whatsoever. So, they just say, "Well buy what you want" or "You can tell us what you want and then we'll say yes or no", and there's no budgeting and things like that. . . things are done on an ad hoc basis.

The open-endedness, which results from institutional flexibility, is seen as problematic. The educator appears to equate such flexibility with creating more room for error. He is particularly frustrated with the lack of planning and budgeting, that he views as being typical to international schools. There were several other educators who communicated similar concerns about what they saw as less stringent fiscal and policy management.

The transient nature of international school faculty, its independent classification and its overseas placement often interacted to create an environment that was notably different from what educators were accustomed to back home. This altered work environment was an unanticipated challenge for educators new to the international scene, with many of them being caught off guard. This phenomenon is expressed below by educator 0019:

I've worked with a lot of guys here who've come straight from the UK and find it quite difficult here. They say 'Why are we not meeting this standard? Why are we not doing it this way?' The UK system is so tied up with the checks and the standards and all the rest of it. And I've seen a different sort of system internationally and I think it's made me look back on the UK and say I'm glad that I've had more exposure to different places and different things than really becoming too engrained in that system.

This quote communicates a dissonance that is experienced by some newly arrived educators who are suddenly faced with frames of reference that deviate from what they already know and

understand. The educator contrasts this with his own response to difference. In particular, he notes that working outside of the UK has exposed him to other ways of doing the same thing. He feels fortunate about this experience and suggests that it has helped him to consider multiple perspectives. Indeed, educators rarely faced a rigidly exported education provision where policies and curricula were indistinguishable from those back home. More often, they faced an education provision that was adapted, integrative or even specifically created for international school clientele (Thompson, 1998). Educator 0015 provides further insight into the flexibility necessary to successfully operate within an international school environment:

I've been here four years and we've had three headmasters in those four years. . .so they come in thinking everything British is brilliant. And that doesn't sit very well with me because I think one of the great things about being international is that you can take the best from everywhere. . . Although we're predominantly British staff, we do have staff that are from the US, from South Africa, Australia, New Zealand. And we need to be sensitive to the fact that their systems are as good, and sometimes better, than our reference point of the UK.

While the English national curriculum provides the foundation on which the school is built, this educator communicates the necessity of considering multiple perspectives in determining how things are ultimately applied. She references staff in the particular quote, but also references location, student body and the overall school culture as the interview progresses. Here we see a proponent of a more integrative approach (Thompson, 1998). By being sensitive to these diverse dimensions, the educator hopes to draw on best practice from a variety of sources instead of imposing limits from a single source (e.g. UK).

Also within the realm of institutional challenges were educators who struggled to adjust to schools that did not represent their home country. For example, Americans struggled in British

schools and Britons struggled in American schools. Such educators often experienced more profound levels of what has been referred to as 'double culture shock' (Austin, 2007). That is, not only did they need to adjust to a foreign country on a personal level, but to a foreign education system on a professional level. Despite finding themselves in an unusually demanding predicament, the benefits for such educators were significant with regards to improved intercultural development. Below, American educator 0030 talks about some professional challenges working in a British school:

It's been hard because it's a British school so I've had to re-adjust my mind. . . I would teach other classes and stuff but it was very much the American system when you give a per cent for grades and all this kind of thing. Here, with the British curriculum, they do levels. They don't do percentages, so you wouldn't mark a piece of work that got 10 questions wrong [out of 100] and give them a 90%. . . It's getting used to, like, a totally different way of doing things.

We see that this educator begins her overseas experience with internalized and solidified frames of reference. This can be easily traced back to her years in the United States as a primary and secondary student, a university student and finally, as an education professional. Through processes of secondary socialisation (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) a particular way of grading has been reinforced and validated through a variety of institutions in her home country. Marking schemes have always been based on a number out of 100% for this educator. To change this 'self-evident' fundamental grading scheme, is to try and undo years of a distinctly American socialisation.

We are reminded here that a key component of intercultural competence is the ability to not only recognise the distinctiveness of one's own culture, but to be able to redefine it in a way that organises reality differently. It is through such re-organisation that people can have access to the experience of a different culture (Bennett, 2004). Interestingly, it is the educator's

immersion into the British school culture – the *work* culture -- that causes American practice to come into question.

Although she indicates some initial resistance, working in a British school gives her little choice but to contextualise the American way as just one of many other ways. This also indicates a shift in world views. Whereas, the educator initially begins her experience with an American frame of reference, she acquires a new one through her exposure to a new education system. We see a struggle leading up to this shift, as the particular educator has always believed the American way to be the most logical.

In considering the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Bennett, 1986; 1993; 2013), this educator's preliminary reaction to the British marking scheme would be considered ethnocentric. This is because she initially takes a defensive position towards new grading practices and is not pleased with what she views as an inferior way of grading. Despite her initial resistance, however, her immersion in a British school system requires her to re-adjust and extend her perspectives to include the canons that operate within this new education system.

As nationally accredited institutions international schools initially appeared to be a transplantation of the domestic school on foreign soil. The presence of some form of national curricula and a relatively high proportion of nationally certified teachers further supported this position. Yet the overseas placement of international schools also brought with it the influences from the local context in which they were situated. As such, local elements inevitably interacted with exported elements and transformed the education provision into something that was, quite often, distinctly unique. On the most basic level this included host country regulations that required certain holidays be observed or that the local language be supported through the availability of language lessons for native-speaking students in attendance. In schools where an

increasing number of enrolments belonged to local students, local influence ensured that community needs were met.

Here, the field of comparative education provides some insight into the distinctive interactive process between national and local contexts. Cowen's (2009) processes of *transfer*, *translation* and *transformation* prove to be particularly well-suited to both the institutional and pedagogical elements described by educators in the sample group. Indeed, the movement of a 'packaged' American or British education provision to faraway lands involved the transnational transfer of educational practice and/or ideas (Cowen, 2009). Translation, in turn, involved the reinterpretation of those ideas by the receiving entity. Finally, transformation was evident in the actual *change* that took place, over time, as a result of the various social and economic influences in the new context (Cowen, 2009). Education in international schools, therefore, proved to be far from a simple 'copy & paste' transplantation. This interaction was especially evident in changes educators reported with regards to their pedagogical practice.

### 6.3 Cultural-Pedagogical

Understandably, variations in the pedagogical domain proved to be more intense in non-European locations. This was because they reflected values that were new and, thus, were more challenging to Anglophone educators. Most interesting was that these types of adjustments were *not* teacher-initiated (unlike the changes that are discussed in chapter 9). Instead, these adjustments were distinct because they were initiated by the students and families in the local setting. Educators, therefore, found themselves struggling to respond to what were often unanticipated pressures from families or students. Below, educator 0029, a reception teacher in China, begins to illustrate this phenomenon:



The difficult part is that although it's a British school, this is not actually the same as teaching in England. You have to adapt to what the local parents want, because a lot of Chinese parents here -- the values that they hold -- might be different to what we've been taught to believe education is in England. It's quite different to what Chinese parents think education is. So it's quite difficult when they're asking me to do one thing, and then you're not sure, "Do I follow what we do in England? Do I follow what the parents want me to do?"

When asked to elaborate, the educator refers to pressure from Chinese parents to move their very young children up reading levels. Even in reception classes, parents want to see academic results. This stands in stark contrast to the way she has been taught to teach in England, which she later describes as a philosophy founded in 'learning through play.' Tensions emerge when Chinese parents look to impose their values within an Anglophone school. It is likely that a Chinese teaching methodology is what the particular parents have been exposed to in their own schooling. It is natural, then, for them to use this as their frame of reference and expect something similar for their children.

It is here that we also see further negotiation between the exported curricula, exported teaching staff and the local communities they often serve. This negotiation fits seamlessly into the identified processes of translation and, and we shall see shortly, transformation over time (Cowen, 2009). The unexpected imposition of a uniquely Chinese frame of reference causes the particular educator to question the training, teaching methods and philosophy she has been taught back in England:

I don't know if the way that we teach in England is the right way, because obviously, that's how we've been trained to teach, but Chinese teachers are trained to teach differently and children still do well and get good results. So I don't think that rote learning is the best way, but sometimes I think maybe completely learning through play is also not the best way.

The educator makes reference to the successful outcomes of the Chinese. She further notes that while she doesn't espouse rote learning as an appropriate teaching methodology for young children, perhaps the 'learning through play' methodology also falls short. Seeing her profession through the eyes of a different value system has caused this educator to look more critically at her training. The mental flexibility she demonstrates, including the ability to reframe fields of reference, has been identified as an important quality in determining educator success in international schools (Joslin, 2002). Sensitivity to different cultures and an ethno-relativist view of the world have also been identified as important qualities (Joslin, 2002). In the particular example, we see the educator being pushed out of her comfort zone. It is here that we also see the onset of change in both her world views and professional practice.

The negotiation between otherwise opposing viewpoints (e.g. between the national and local), however, did not always result in finding a middle ground. There were instances where parents demonstrated inflexible positions and educators needed to adapt to parents. This is because parents at the defense stage, although able to discriminate and understand differences, continued to view their own way of doing things as superior (Bennett, 1986; 1993; 2013).

This predicament draws attention to the fact that intercultural exchanges are interdependent and reliant on the abilities of multiple players. Below, British educator 0019 talks about the unrelenting pressure and high expectations many Asian students in his school had to withstand and how he bowed to such expectations:

I've got a kid in my form who is academically very strong. He's got a perfect score in every IB course except one and his dad came for a meeting with me last week because he was upset that he didn't have a perfect score in one subject. . . and I said, look, he is doing well. He is socially fitting in a lot better-- because he

was struggling--the teachers are happy. He seems happier. And dad did not care, "I don't care how happy he is. . . I care that he's got one grade lower in Spanish than everything else."

The educator brings into play his own values when he suggests that the student is 'socially fitting in a lot better' and that 'everyone is happy.' This is because happiness and social standing, in the Anglophone world, are not necessarily dependent on academic performance. Although it is not clear whether the educator recognises his own ethnocentric position, the parent communicates clearly that he is not open to elements from the educator's value system.

The educator responds by re-organising his own perception of reality to accommodate the parent. Since this re-organisation occurs despite the educator's disagreement with the parent's values and priorities, there is demonstrable evidence that the educator is operating out of the adaptation stage of the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Bennett, 1986; 1993; 2013). Here again, we see the need for mental flexibility to reframe fields of reference and the need for sensitivity to different cultural values (Joslin, 2002). Since the particular scenario may not only be different but also, in some ways contradict school values, it further requires the quality of emotional balance on the part of the educator (Joslin, 2002).

Further demonstrated in this quote is the educator's use of culture-specific information (knowledge), as well as a willingness to withhold the imposition of his own values on the parent (attitude) (Byram, 1997; 2009). This does not mean giving up his own opinion--as he communicates his opinion openly to the parent--but it does mean acknowledging the parent's position and recognizing it as one borne out of a specific cultural context. In this way, the educator also demonstrates skills in both contextual interpretation and relation (Byram, 1997; 2009).

The magnitude of local influence continued to manifest itself in a variety of other forms, with academic achievement continuing to emerge as a prominent value in China and other Asian countries educators had previously worked in. Several secondary level educators referenced exceptional academic rigour among South Korean students as well. These students typically followed the Korean national curriculum in the evenings, after completing their regular school day. This entailed attending a Korean school until 10pm each night and then going home to complete homework for both the international (Anglophone) and Korean schools. Not surprisingly, educators referenced sleep issues with these students, as they often looked tired. British educator 0019 explains:

I've got a girl in my form who I asked how she is sleeping. And she said, "I'm sleeping three hours a night. And that's too much. My parents tell me it should be two. In Korea, if you sleep three hours you will fail." And that's her view and that's what these guys are, incredibly driven by the results.

In general, Chinese and South Korean students were described as highly motivated and very eager to please. The focus on perfection and the constant search for the 'right' answer, however, was interpreted by other educators as coming at a price, with other skills and dexterities remaining underdeveloped. In particular, several educators noted a debilitating fear of failure and a notable aversion to risk-taking among this group of students. It was not clear, however, if this interpretation was an accurate one because it was based on certain Anglophone assumptions. It is possible, for example, that students did not take initiative because they felt it communicated disrespect towards authority.

Whilst international schools with culturally homogenous student populations brought unique challenges to teaching, they also offered unusual opportunities for educator growth. Working with a high proportion of English language learners, for example, required the development of

very specific teaching skills. Whilst these skills are illustrated in greater technical detail in chapter 9, the more conceptual challenges such populations presented are discussed here briefly. Below, American educator 003 recalls her experience in an international school in South Korea, where 99 per cent of her students were South Korean:

It was a huge shift into the Western curriculum for them because they're used to the teacher standing up and them just taking notes, and really direct lectures, and memorising . . . and then suddenly we were saying, "Oh, you need to work together. Oh, here's what critical thinking is about". . . education to South Koreans is so important. It's almost like next to godliness . . . so they really want to learn.

An increased awareness and understanding about South Korean culture is accentuated because of the high number of Korean students this educator must work with. Immersion in a class that is almost exclusively Korean has drawn her attention to the nuances and idiosyncrasies particular to that culture. The educator recalls how South Korean students experienced significant difficulty in shifting to a Western educational philosophy. Interestingly, immersion in the host culture helps the educator to identify differences in her own Anglophone culture. The educator observes that her country's own educational philosophy focuses on process and values creativity, compared with the South Korean education philosophy that focuses on rote learning and values outcomes.

In general, academic achievement was communicated as a non-negotiable commodity for Chinese and South Korean families. This was the case not only through the educators but also through informal conversations with Chinese outside of the school setting. The taxi driver who transported the researcher to and from the school daily, for example, described a high-pressure state education system. His young children attended state schools in the city and he explained

that competition was fierce for placements in central city schools. He had worked hard, however, to find placements for his children in what were perceived to be the better schools. The tour guide the researcher spent a Saturday morning with also communicated similar pressures growing up. She was a young college graduate who had studied English-for-Aviation in a Chinese college. She too spoke of a highly competitive environment in schools. As such, there was a strong sense that academic achievement in China cut across socio-economic boundaries.

It is important to differentiate here between academic achievement and academic success. Academic achievement, as it is used here, refers to attainment that is measured quantitatively. This type of achievement usually tests knowledge in the form of a 'right' answer and its emphasis is largely on the end product. This may include scores on standardized tests, exams and/or grades on report cards. Academic *success*, on the other hand, implies a more abstract concept that remains open to greater interpretation. Whilst academic achievement may certainly be one part of academic success, it may also include things like social growth and happiness or gaining exposure to a wide range of learning experiences without necessarily becoming 'expert' in any one area.

If we accept that academic *achievement* is a non-negotiable element in certain Asian cultures then this deep-seated value must also play a significant role in how Asian students would respond to *any* methodology. In other words, whether students are taught via a Western or eastern pedagogical philosophy would seem to matter less than the high (or low) value ascribed to educational achievement to begin with. According to this line of thought, it is the existence of particular values that are the driving force behind high achievement rather than any particular methodology.

Given this assumption, changing a teaching methodology would be limited in its effectiveness if the internalised value-driven aspects (such as those found in Chinese culture) were not present as well. Importing a rote methodology to classrooms in the United States, for example, would not likely result in the high scores that regions of China have enjoyed on international exams (e.g. PISA). Nor would exporting a more open-ended methodology to classrooms in China necessarily result in the lower scores that the United States has been problematized with.

This is because the student body in the United States comes with fundamentally different cultural capital than the student body in China, and vice versa. Here again, values materialise as an important part of objective and subjective culture (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Suffice it to say that based on the data collected from the sample group, the emphasis on academic achievement in China appears to be institutionalised through the larger objective culture found in schools and media, *as well as* through the more personal subjective culture transferred through family units.

#### 6.4 Socio-Economic

The vast majority of international school students had access to medium or high levels of wealth (Poore, 2005). Among educators, this position of privilege came with mixed responses. Educators who saw wealth in a positive light, felt that it was a contributing factor in increased learning potential. In contrast, educators who saw wealth in a negative light felt that it fostered a false sense of entitlement among students and their families. Like other variables, the socio-economic variable posed its own challenges and required degrees of adaptation on the part of educators. In the excerpt below, educator 0004 shares her struggles with switching from a state school in the US to her current international post in the Netherlands:

I don't come from a lot of money in my background and I don't—I worked in schools that were quite challenging economically. A lot of the kids I worked with

in upstate New York came from families where their only real option after high school was the army or any of the other armed forces or trade schools. So the biggest difference for me was the independent versus public school situation.

The shift from a relatively poor or working class student population to a wealthy student population appears to have created some initial disequilibrium for this educator. She states that she does not come from a wealthy background. The dissimilarity between her personal and professional experiences has required her to adjust her frame of reference to include a school where students come from backgrounds different from her own. This educator, however, manages to find common ground among students despite variation in socio-economic status.

What I wanted to make sure was that I was able to help students who needed it. I was able to be a resource for students who needed it. And both of those pools of students need informed, engaged, compassionate adults who know the difference between working *with* teenagers and acting *like* a teenager.

She rather maturely points out that the qualities students need in teachers remain the same, notwithstanding economic background. In this way, she chooses to focus on similarities among her students instead of differences. Such an adjustment aligns with the minimisation stage of the Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Bennett, 1986; 1993; 2013). The educator effectively neutralises initial threats and places all of her students into familiar categories. One gets the sense that she has made a concerted (and successful) effort to reconcile her own issues with her students' privileged backgrounds.

Paradoxically, whilst materialistic possessions remained plentiful among international student populations, there were instances where students nevertheless lacked the fulfilment of basic emotional needs. That neglect can exist even in the upper tiers of society was an unanticipated learning curve for several educators. Long parental absences due to work-related demands



were seen as being particularly problematic. In China, many students remained under the care of nannies (called 'ayis') who were usually migrant workers from the poorer rural areas of the country. British educator 0016 describes the role of these nannies in the upbringing of students:

So what happens, especially the rich family, they probably have one nanny per child, and it's good in a way because I suppose the parents they can go out and leave someone to look after them, cheap labour as well, but its replacing the parents, and a lot of kids whose parents are away on business trips etc., the nanny does bring them up, and they do have a magical hold on their nannies where they actually think they're king and they boss their nannies around.

Here, the privileges associated with wealth are highlighted. Hired help is both common and helpful in that it allows parents the freedom to focus on their work. A problem arises when hired help, like the nanny, begins to replace the parents. The educator further notes an internal hierarchy in this quote. Besides being cheap labour, the relationship between the child and nanny is described as being far from equal.

Other educators saw the improved socio-economic standing of students as a positive force. In particular, educators saw it as playing a part in a higher value ascribed to education. This, in turn, resulted in students who were increasingly motivated to learn. This was contrasted with educational experiences back home. Below, educator 0003 from the US shares her thoughts:

I think of my experiences back in Colorado, if I could have had that attitude in all of my students -- every teacher would want that attitude in all of their students. In the US there's a much higher element of apathy . . . you would have students who are fully capable but then just didn't care.

The power of motivated and enthusiastic learners is described as an important variable in successful learning and teaching. In comparing the level of engagement between students back home and students overseas, this educator finds a significant disconnect. She uses the word

'apathy' to describe students in the US, and notes their general lack of interest in learning even when fully capable of high achievement.

Although quite a few educators felt that students in international schools were a more motivated lot, this was a general feeling that varied according to each school and, certainly, each student. There were several instances, for example, where the student population (referring to previous school placements) was described as being wealthy, academically weak and generally unmotivated. As such, it was not a given that wealth equated to academic strength or motivation despite some educators' association between the two variables.

## 6.6 Summary

In returning to the research questions of the study, findings in this chapter suggest that the professional challenges and opportunities educators faced while abroad contributed to change in both world views and professional practice in several ways. Institutional characteristics of international schools that were most salient in stimulating such changes included a frequently transient faculty and student body, the independent status of most schools, as well as their unique overseas placement. These three characteristics typically interacted together to create a professional setting that was distinctly different from the domestic setting many educators came from.

The transient nature of faculty and students typically translated into what educators described as looser management styles and frequent curricular and policy changes. This called for greater flexibility on the part of educators who needed to be ready to adapt to these regularly changing conditions. Whether educators preferred flexible or rigid management structures depended largely on individual personalities. Whilst some educators found safety and comfort in more rigid interpretations of curricular standards and policy, others found them to be too controlling

and overbearing. These findings support research from a previous study that also found management style inclinations and preferences among international educators depended largely on individual personality traits (Savva, 2013a).

The independent classification of the international school was another central characteristic. Whilst this classification relinquished a controlling state presence, this was often replaced by an equally controlling parental presence. The socio-economic affluence of students and their families appeared to give the greatest impetus to this influence. Whilst some educators saw the improved socio-economic status of students as contributing to increased levels of student motivation, others saw it as contributing to a false sense of entitlement. Since the majority of the educators in the sample group came from state schools, this was yet another variable they needed to grapple with.

Finally, the overseas placement of the international school involved a process whereby national and local features interacted to transform the education provision. This interaction, in turn, resulted in varying degrees of hybridity. Although the education delivered in these schools began as an exported commodity, the cultural values of the local population exerted substantial influence. In cases where the school population was made up of predominantly local students, professional practice was also transformed. A high proportion of English Language Learners, the subjective cultural values of their families and the institutional values of the broader culture all contributed to this process of transformation.

Indeed, the *magnitude* of contextual influence was significantly greater in the overseas setting. That is, the setting out of which the exported provision of education operated exerted a much more powerful cultural influence than the more diluted cultural influences one might find back home. Within the cultural-pedagogic domain, examples of such altered contexts included a

more 'academically-inclined' foundation year (in China) or a primary curriculum that included components of rote learning (also in China), that are considered atypical in Anglophone schools back home.

Since traditional academic work is not normally considered developmentally appropriate for young learners in accordance with Anglophone educational philosophy, a middle-ground was often the solution to such tensions in the particular school in China. Using Bennett's (1986; 1993; 2013) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, we can envisage the existence of ethno-centric tension between both the Anglophone educators and Chinese/South Korean parents. The process of negotiation between two competing realities indicates a movement into an acceptance and adaptation stage, whereby both groups typically had to re-organise their realities to some degree.

This required a notable shift in the world views of educators as they processed and considered new frames of reference. These considerations often provoked educators to become more critical of the frames of reference they came with. Pedagogic assumptions that they took for granted prior to their work abroad, for example, were re-examined and re-contextualized within these newer experiences. In this way, the idea of culture was no longer something that was limited to the elusive 'other.' Educators became increasingly aware of themselves as cultural beings through a natural comparison process. This process effectively increased their awareness of their home culture as a distinct culture in and of itself, as well as how they were products of that culture.

Within some Asian countries, high stakes academic achievement was an internalized value emanating from both objective and subjective cultural influences. As such, it was difficult for parents of secondary students to accept the idea that 'being happy' was sufficient as students

prepared for high-stakes university entrance exams. It appeared that, for them, life was a serious endeavour and children needed to be prepared in order to compete successfully.

The Intercultural Communicative Model provides another perspective on how educators coped with two very different value systems given their knowledge, attitude and skills (Byram, 1997; 2009). The experiential impact of living and working abroad helped many educators to develop a critical cultural awareness about systems they took for granted prior to their overseas work. This included thinking more critically about how schools were managed and the teaching methodologies used to deliver instruction. As such, the world views and the professional practice of educators were challenged in the school setting, particularly with regards to institutionalized beliefs and methods they were trained to support and had always taken to be self-evident.

From a broader perspective, the international school as an institutional structure in a world marked by major political and economic hierarchies, as well as patterns of unequal power was especially evident in the clientele being served. Even in poorer countries, the socio-economic status of students and families being served consistently fell into an elite category. Somewhat surprisingly, some educators struggled with this level of affluence and tried hard to abstain from passing judgements on a student body that was, often times, more privileged than they were.

As such, despite recognised Anglophone accreditation British schools in China did not look like, or run like, typical British schools in the UK. Similarly, American schools in the Netherlands did not look like, or run like, typical American schools in the United States. Differences between home country school settings and international school settings showed substantial variance across institutional, cultural-pedagogic and socio-economic variables.

## CHAPTER 7 –PERSONAL CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Moving on to the personal realm, educators also needed to adjust to the world outside of the school building. This chapter explores the recurring personal challenges/opportunities that educators faced via sub-headings formed during the analysis process: *Language, Locals & Community, Travel* and *Loss*. Potential implications of these challenges and opportunities to the world views of educators are discussed throughout the chapter and further summarized in the *Summary* section.

### 7.1 Language

The most fundamental practical challenge faced by educators outside of the work environment was the issue of language. In Western Europe, this was alleviated to some degree by the increased likelihood that many Europeans had, at minimum, a basic command of the English language. This was certainly the case in the Netherlands and was apparently also the case in other Western European countries that educators had lived in. This advantage dissipated rather quickly in regions outside of Western Europe, including Eastern Europe. Below, educator 0008 talks about her previous experiences living in Hungary:

So, the Hungarians back then—they were, I don't want to say, less forgiving as a negative thing, but I really had to learn the language. I had to write out my shopping list and over there, you're not allowed to touch the fruit and vegetables sort of thing at the vegetable stand. They want to pick it for you so I had to know the names of fruits and vegetables if I wanted to get my groceries.

A simple trip to the supermarket requires additional preparation for this educator. She chooses to write out her grocery list in Hungarian, as locals may not understand her attempts to speak the language. Beyond linguistic ability there are other cultural aspects that she shares with us in this quote. More specifically, she tells us that it is a cultural taboo to touch fruits and vegetables in grocery stores (a very common practice in Anglophone and other Western European regions).

This challenges her to develop vocabulary skills so that she is able to get her groceries. More broadly, she tells us that the limited English language proficiency of Hungarians required her to learn the language in order to be able to get around successfully.

In China, as well, it was increasingly difficult for educators to manoeuvre themselves due to language barriers. English was not commonly spoken and its knowledge was often limited to individuals working in tourism jobs. In discussing life abroad, educator 0007, who was based in the Netherlands at the time of interviews, referenced a turning point during her stay in China several years beforehand:

What really hit home when I lived in China [is that] I was actually illiterate and I had never viewed that before. You go into a grocery, and at that time no-one spoke English in China, so you had to run around with taxi cards to give to the taxi driver and I thought, my gosh, I really am illiterate. But I had a support system, so what about immigrants who are just going to a country on their own without help? I can't imagine. So I think you always feel more compassion and empathy.

The educator describes her inability to communicate as a major challenge. The realization that she is illiterate is startling for her. It is through her struggles as the 'other', however, that she is able to make an important connection between her own difficulties and those immigrants face in other countries. Despite difficulties she acknowledges that she benefits from a support system, something that is not necessarily accessible to others who find themselves in new countries.

Indeed, although international educators maintained their higher status positions within the school setting, their status in the larger community was one of a minority. This dual experience prompted frequent movement in and out of very different social status groups on a daily basis. Such groups can be seen as imitating in-group/out-group memberships like those found in the

intergroup model (Turner & Tajfel, 1986). More generally, language remained a major obstacle that none of the educators were able to completely overcome. Instead, they had to seek ways of acclimating themselves and compensating for the absence of this valuable and central communication tool. Educator 0024 shares his own difficulties with language during his time in China:

You suddenly become like you're in a bubble and the language I think -- I didn't expect it to be as hard to learn, and the frustrations behind that because not only do you not speak the language, but you can't read the language either, and I think that's very difficult, but then, yeah, that has been hard because it's very difficult – you very easily become part of the expat bubble because there's no way out in that sense.

The inability to communicate continues to be a serious handicap. The particular educator differentiates between being able to speak and read a language, and suggests that if he were able to do one of the two things well, things would be easier. Consider, for instance, that the Chinese language is not written in Latin letters. This creates an added obstacle for this educator. He also refers to the expat bubble, which involves the tendency of expatriates to congregate with their own kind. British educators, for example, may regularly visit British-style pubs overseas where they fraternise with others like themselves. In this way, they tend to operate in a 'bubble' without ever really immersing themselves in the host culture.

The particular educator feels that the 'expat bubble' is unavoidable as he is unable to communicate effectively or meaningfully with anyone other than English-speakers (which also happen to be plentiful in the work environment). The phenomenon of circumventing immersion even while surrounded by a completely new culture has been described through a variety of metaphors. These metaphors include an 'encapsulated' presence of some international schools



(Cambridge & Thompson, 2004) as well as educators who are described as 'travelling through tunnels' or operating in 'bubbles' (Pearce, 1994). Educator 0013 elaborates further:

You kind of live, breath, work, and sleep the school so your colleagues are your friends. Obviously you have friends outside of school and things like that, but you form some very, very strong friendships in the time that you're there and it's very intense, but it's a lot of fun as well.

The existence of a dominant (and for some exclusive) social circle of other international educators has been confirmed elsewhere. Savva (2013b) found that while some educators enjoyed the closeness associated with colleagues as friends, others felt severely limited by this single association. In the excerpt above, the educator uses the words 'very strong friendships' as well as 'very intense' to describe the level of closeness between colleagues abroad.

Individuals who could have conceivably played a meaningful role in bridging the language/community divide for educators were those who spoke both languages. Since locals typically make up a certain percentage of staff in international schools, individuals who speak both the host country language and English could have hypothetically served as rich community resources. Besides being infrequent in number, however, one must also consider that these English-speaking locals had little or no incentive to invest time on otherwise migrant expatriate teachers. Unlike expatriates, who tended to group together, locals had multiple well-established familial and friendship-based social circles.

## 7.2 Locals & Community

The level of immersion was influenced, to a significant degree, by location of living quarters. Educators who lived in compounds remained relatively isolated from the local population in that they worked and socialised predominantly with fellow expatriates (e.g. expat bubble). In

contrast, educators who opted to move into the mainstream communities had more frequent interaction with locals, and thus were able to move well beyond the role of spectators.

In such cases, typical neighbourly relations formed between educators and locals. Whilst most educators found locals to be friendly, they also noted a cautious reservation towards Westerners. This was attributed, in part, to the knowledge that most educators were temporary residents who were merely passing through. As such, even educators who placed themselves within mainstream communities had to contend with the dual label of being foreigners and migrants (as opposed to resident foreigners).

There were a handful of educators who had become 'semi-permanent' in that they had remained in the same post beyond five years. Below, American educator 0011 in the Netherlands talks about her interactions with locals as part of her daily life and their reaction to her inability to speak Dutch:

Sometimes people are annoyed because I haven't learned my Dutch. It's different than how they would treat me if I've been here three months but I've been here 15 years. So sometimes, the people get a little impatient with me and I'm like, you're right. You are right. You should be impatient with me. But you don't want to hear my whole life story of why I haven't learned Dutch. And I have taken three years of Dutch and I took Latin in high school and I sucked at languages. I can teach you math but I'm so sorry that I haven't done well with languages.

The local Dutch are frustrated with the educator's inability to speak the local language after 15 years of residency. While she is fortunate that English is a commonly spoken language in the Netherlands, it appears that locals see it almost as a sign of disrespect that she has not taken the time to learn the language properly. The educator alludes to her own frustration towards

her unsuccessful attempts to learn the language. She attributes this to her lack of talent in learning languages.

In general, local reactions varied by country and also seemed to depend on the relationship the local country had to the Anglophone country the educator was seen as representing. In this way, world politics (and perhaps media) played an important role in how locals viewed Anglophones. Below British educator 0018 talks about the reaction of locals in Kuwait:

It [Kuwait] doesn't think very highly of many Westerners. They see us as being very mercenary because the salaries are high. Because the country is quite difficult to live in in terms of temperature and, you know, there is no alcohol which they see as contemptuously essential to Western culture that if they can't drink, then they won't come so we have to offer them big salaries. . .there was an element of superiority which they had over us.

The educator provides his interpretation of how the average Kuwaiti views the Westerner. According to this description, Westerners were seen as greedy and regular drinkers of alcohol. Interestingly, he also stated that the Kuwaitis saw themselves as superior to Westerners. When asked how this was communicated to him, he used the word 'contempt.' He referenced official processes such as loan applications that went missing and phones lines that were suddenly cut off. In discussing the reactions of locals in other international locations, the same educator provides a very insightful response:

Malawi was a complete culture shock because of the intense poverty of most of the locals there. . . the locals were very friendly but also they certainly knew that 'the Masungu', as they would call us, that White equals cash. Much as you might find that quite annoying, that the lady you employed to look after your house robs you, steals your food, steals your children's toys, you know that they are doing it because they have nothing. It's very hard to be angry about it.

A recurring theme communicated in the incidents in both Kuwait and Malawi is one of hierarchy. This hierarchy seems to be based on citizenship, with the Anglophone citizen standing to benefit the most. The inherent inequity of this hierarchy results in an undercurrent of resentment, which is communicated by the locals in a variety of ways. Although he uses the word 'superiority' in the earlier quote his description seems to align more closely with 'antipathy' which is communicated through passive attempts to inconvenience the Westerner.

In Malawi he notes that although the locals were friendly, the Westerner was seen very much as a symbol of money. This was not necessarily a stereotype, as Westerners who found themselves in Malawi were likely to be well-paid by the organizations they worked for. An incorrect assumption, however, was that all Anglophones are well-off and that there is no poverty in Anglophone nations.

The particular educator recalls that stealing was problematic among the hired help who worked in his home. He acknowledges, however, that this behaviour needed to take into account the larger context of the extreme poverty that existed in the particular country. Interestingly, the same educator (0018) acknowledges and struggles with the contradictions of his underlying belief system and the reality that he partakes in:

The girl who used to do our gardening in Malawi, she would never call me by my name. She would call me 'Sir.' I have an issue with that, but I am also well aware that she is not my equal. It can be very, very difficult to not appear to be some kind of bleeding heart liberal who is faking some equality that doesn't exist. At the same time, the idea that White equals power, equals right is just offensive and wrong. So yes, some people do have their stereotypes reaffirmed. I hear occasional comments about Chinese people that are not particularly accepting. I also know what "High Nose" is in Mandarin. I'm well aware that I am called

that quite a lot which is a term of abuse that Chinese people use towards Westerners.

Whilst being completely aware of the inequity and injustice of a global hierarchy, this educator nevertheless continues to enjoy the benefits of being an Anglophone citizen at the very pinnacle of the hierarchy he denounces. He is aware of the hypocrisy he partakes in and so are the locals of the country he has worked in. He references certain names that he has been called in relation to his Anglophone status, indicating that he is judged largely based on his group affiliation as opposed to his individual merit.

The tendency to perceive individuals in terms of characteristics associated with the groups to which they belong align with the tenets of the intergroup model (Turner & Tajfel, 1986; Reicher, Spears & Haslam, 2010). In particular, locals who had superficial contact with educators engaged in a process of depersonalisation. This typically involved projecting characteristics onto educators based exclusively on their national affiliation (Turner & Tajfel, 1986). This finding also supports research indicating that the nation-state remains the most prevalent identity frame when compared to other possible identity frames (Antonsich, 2009; Smith, 1992). In cases where the relationship between the host nation and the representative Anglophone nation were estranged, the process of depersonalisation involved negative connotations and attributes.

In another quote by educator 0007 in the Netherlands, privileges enjoyed as a result of citizenship status are explicitly acknowledged. Although educator 0007 is appreciative of these benefits, she expresses contradictory feelings about the role of her country in the larger global arena:

In some ways, I'm actually more patriotic than I have ever been because I appreciate the freedoms that Americans have. *And then, I'm here because I'm American in part* [italics added]. However, my frustration and disgust in my

country is heightened because I now can look at it through the eyes of people in other countries, which I couldn't do before. And so sometimes, depending on what's happening in the states, it's embarrassing, and sometimes you're trying to hide that you're American depending on where you're at. But I don't like other people from other countries saying bad things about my country.

Here we see a marked shift in world views. Whilst her opening and closing statements communicate a strong sense of loyalty to her country, the bulk of the quote describes a strong dissatisfaction with the home country in relation to other countries. She notes that she feels embarrassed and that she sometimes tries to hide the fact that she is American. Despite her difficulties with her country, she is also very aware that the US treats *her* well and that she is enjoying many privileges and benefits as a result of her US citizenship.

In Asian countries, educators were exposed to particularly unusual behaviours. Several educators (of Anglo-European descent) described what they interpreted as a pre-occupation of rural Asians with blonde hair or very fair children. Educator 0017 shares the following experience:

In Japan you just get used to people staring at you and usually you just smile back at them. I think on a subway a couple times I got my hair pulled out. . .they actually think blonde hair is good luck. Usually they are from the countryside if they've done that, like people who live in Tokyo proper won't pull your hair out.

One could reason that having blonde hair is simply a novelty in China (hence the pulling out of hair). Yet the fact that blonde hair is associated with good luck infers a hierarchy once more. Indeed, five educators out of the eighteen interviewed in China communicated a celebrity-like status, that they attributed to either their blonde hair or their fair children. Educator 0019 provides the following description:

Having two young children, they are very keen to talk to us and be a part of that. I wasn't expecting that. My sort of view of Chinese culture from overseas made me think it would be quite different. But when we go out we're mobbed by people most of the time because we've got two young blonde-haired children. . . I mean it's huge, it's non-stop. You notice it when they have trade shows on at the exhibition centre here and people come from all over China. You notice it much more from people coming in from the countryside.

Once again, this type of behaviour is attributed to a certain type of Chinese citizen. More specifically, it appears to be particular to the more insulated Chinese coming from the rural areas of the country. Seeing as the particular educator doesn't speak Mandarin and that the Chinese people he is referring to do not speak English, he is asked how he reaches the conclusion that it is his children's blonde hair that is the catalyst for such behaviour. He responds that they [the Chinese] just want to pick up the babies and that they're really keen to be involved.

Whether educators correctly interpreted Chinese behaviour as being correlated to their fairness or whether there was another cultural element at play is not something that this study is able to address. This is because these incidents are communicated from the perspective of the Anglophone educators and not the Chinese. There was general agreement among the educators, however, that the Chinese viewed Anglophone culture as one to aspire towards. One reason given for this was that Anglophone culture is seen as equating to material success and that Chinese culture aspires to some of these values while still trying to retain its own oriental values. This contrasted with some Middle-Eastern cultures where locals displayed a more agitated resentment towards Anglophones. Here, the political relationship between a host country and the Anglophone country represented by a given educator influenced local reaction.

This included media portrayal of the relationship, which sometimes presented an unbalanced and discriminatory relationship.

Unfortunately, this discriminatory relationship was often reaffirmed in the school building itself. Locals employed in international schools, for example, often worked for a fraction of the salary provided to Anglophones hired from abroad. One educator noted that he was very aware of the fact that some of his co-workers, who did exactly the same job as he, received a substantially lower wage because they were locals. As a result, he had to also adjust his expectations in terms of the work output he could anticipate from them. Unequal pay for equal work between locals and foreign hires is a common practice in international schools which has been confirmed in the work of Garton (2000); Hardman (2001) and Cambridge (2002).

### 7.3 Opportunities for Travel

Travel remained a cornerstone of the international experience, with it being a primary reason for choosing to teach abroad. Besides living in different countries, educators also utilised their changing posts to visit additional areas in the nearby vicinity. Educator 0015 explains the travel advantages offered by overseas teaching posts:

We can go anywhere in the world we want to and still carry on with our careers. Most people have to take a career break. . . I don't tell my friends in England where I'm going on holiday. It just sounds like you're showing off, that you've been in Thailand one week and Tibet the next, and Korea the next; whereas here, it's just normal, and you can talk about it with people here, and it's just what people do.

The benefit of a teacher schedule is highlighted as an important one. This is because it offers both the flexibility and the ability to plan other dimensions to one's life. Travel for international educators did not entail a career break but was incorporated instead into their daily lives.



Interestingly, this educator makes a point of not sharing his extensive travel experiences with his friends back home for fear of appearing to show off. As the educator points out, a trip to Thailand followed by a trip to Tibet are not typical encounters. Instead, he chooses to share his trips with individuals such as his international colleagues who are also engaged in a similar lifestyle.

In this extract, we see evidence of self-categorisation processes (Hogg, Terry & White, 1995; Turner, 1982). The educator's previous social group (friends back home) has become an out-group. The re-categorisation of the self seems to have occurred due to long-term changes in his lifestyle. This causes the educator to perceive more differences than similarities with his social group back home. He does not feel that his friends back home are able to relate to or appreciate his experiences. He goes on to say that they are likely to attribute any communication about his travels to arrogance.

For educators with children, teaching in international schools provided the additional benefit of a tuition-free education for their children, as well as cultural exposure through frequent travel. For families who had stayed in countries beyond the typical two-year contract children were quite often fluent speakers of another language. Beyond being language speakers, however, children of educators also demonstrated a unique cultural understanding of the countries they grew up in. Below, educator 0015 talks about her daughter's cultural awareness:

She grew up in Thailand so, reads, writes and speaks Thai and speaks reasonable Chinese and she has never lived in the UK really. She was born there, but we left when she was eight months. So essentially she's Asian in outlook and has a good understanding of the Asian mentality and will understand why Thai people are thinking a certain way. They say yes, when they mean no sometimes.

Having been raised by a Thai local during her early years, this educator's daughter has come to not only know the Thai language but also understand the deeper cultural values of the Thai culture. She understands subtle nuances and perspectives that her mother—as an older adult entering a foreign country—is unable to grasp. This finding aligns with the Intercultural Communicative Competence model (Byram, 1997; 2009), in which individuals not only learn the technical aspects of speaking a language but also acquire a deeper understanding of the cultural values. It is important to highlight that her daughter has gained this insight through immersion in the Thai community, as opposed to limiting her interactions with expatriates.

Along with travel came an increased sense of freedom. Whilst most educators described their foreigner status as one wrought with daily struggles, there were nevertheless aspects of this newcomer status that translated into a very welcome freedom from responsibility. Educator 0004 explains below:

It's kind of a relief. I think that I take some comfort or at least some rest in being a foreigner. I don't have as much responsibility and I feel like I could sit on the tram and if I want to tune into the German and understand, I can but if I don't, I don't have to. And in the States, it's non-stop—it's non-stop language and it's nonstop responsibility for the culture and it's non-stop decisions about how to live as an informed global citizen in the midst of a very insular-feeling country. And it's exhausting—it can be exhausting to be in that mind-set in America.

This educator finds solace in the periphery. As a foreigner, there are no grandiose expectations or demands from the community and this appears to soothe her. The absence of citizenship releases her from the obligations she feels back in her home country, where she feels burdened with all kinds of responsibility. Beyond national citizenship, an increased sense of freedom was articulated at the family level as well. Below, educator 0024 talks about some new discoveries:

I never realized I was quite as selfish as I am, in the sense that I wanted to come out here so I came out here. My life is very much dictated out here by what I want to do, whereas at home you're considering other people and your family, other friends and things like that, it's very much just directed at me and I didn't think I was like that, so that kind of shocked me a little.

The only person this single educator needs to worry about while overseas is herself. She contrasts this with her sense of obligation to family and friends when she is back home. Since her family and friends are far away, she no longer needs to consider them in her day-to-day decisions. She implies a guilty pleasure in this freedom and describes herself as selfish because her choices are based solely on her own wants and needs. Not all educators were able to rid themselves from such feelings of obligation. A few educators showed evidence of remorse due to leaving behind loved ones. This was a particularly strong feeling in the case of aging parents or parents who exerted pressure on their adult children to visit often. British educator 0014, based in China, talks about his continued sense of obligation and how it has carried over into his life abroad:

I've definitely travelled a lot more since I've moved away, but also, I've had a lot of pressure from my mum to go back pretty much every single holiday, which is a difficult thing to do. I go back at least once a year. But I would say never really more than three, even when I moved across to Manchester from Northern Ireland, which wasn't terribly far, but still it's quite a big jump to give up an entire weekend and spend two hundred quid just to go home and say hello.

For this educator, there is a strong sense of obligation despite his overseas placement. He describes pressure from his mother who wants him to visit regularly. Although he seems to have resigned himself to go back once a year, he discloses that he has gone back as often as three times in a year. He does this despite his acknowledgement that such frequent trips are

neither convenient nor financially worthwhile. This quote is representative of a negative-case and it directs us back to the personal histories of the educators. Whilst most educators communicated an increased freedom *from* obligation, this was not always consistent. In the quote above, for example, we see that even with great distances this educator's sense of obligation remains pervasive.

#### 7.4 A Sense of Loss

One of the questions posed to educators during interviews was '*What does the word 'home' mean to you?*' During interviews, the definition of home was left open to interpretation and educators who sought clarification were directed to translate the concept in whatever way they wished. This flexibility allowed for educators to explore the concept in the most meaningful way possible. Definitions of home consistently revolved around the three central features of people, place and memory. 'People' typically involved family and friends, whilst 'place' often had to do with a childhood home or neighbourhood. In contrast, 'memory' had more to do with past *experiences*. The sense of memory has been described elsewhere as contributing both to collective and individual forms of identity construction (Osler & Starkey, 2005). Which of the three features received the greatest emphasis was dependent largely on individual educators and, again, their personal histories.

For some educators, home was a static concept. This static concept often included images of a childhood home in a specific geographic space, from which particular people and memories were associated. Whilst the sense of place remained the most salient feature of this imagery, this became problematic in cases where home had actually proved to be a more malleable and changing concept. A number of educators attempted to fit transient life events into static images with limited success. These transient events sometimes included the loss of a childhood

home or the movement of loved ones from a familiar geographic space to one that was unfamiliar. This difficulty was exacerbated further in cases where parents (people) no longer existed as the family unit that had occupied the childhood home (place), either due to divorce or death.

In situations where the people, places and events associated with home no longer existed in their original form, educators struggled to position themselves within a more fluid and changing concept of home. This was an especially difficult challenge, given that educators needed to re-define their concept of home while living in a foreign country, far away from familiar associations. The sense of loss was communicated most prominently among single educators who were travelling alone. In the excerpt below, educator 0030 illustrates a changing sense of home:

I grew up in the same house for 23 years and then my parents had to sell it. That was heart-wrenching. They both moved into separate places after that. So then it was like even if there wasn't a physical representation of home, if your parents are still in the same place, that feels like you can just go home to your parents but when they're in two different places, then it's like, "Oh, where is home?"

This educator deals with a myriad of changes. The people associated with home have been removed from the associated place, which in this case is the house she grew up in for 23 years. She is aware that she has lost the physical representation of her home (as in the house she grew up in) but she also feels that she has 'lost' the people associated with that place. Here, she seems to be referring to her parents as a single unit/entity that no longer exists in its original form. She goes on to say:

When I went back to Seattle to visit in December, I really struggled with that. My mom moved in with some new guy or boyfriend. She has a home. It's hers

but I have no place in it. . . . I was on vacation visiting my old friends and family but I didn't have a home. So, I'm still struggling with what home means. I feel I would still call Seattle home but I don't have a place for me there.

Not only has her parental unit ceased to exist but her mother has also moved on to build a new life that the educator does not share any part of. While she continues to identify Seattle as her home, going back home no longer includes a familiar place or a cohesive group of people. The personal challenges for this educator, therefore, are significant as she must look to reconstruct her sense of home at a time when the people and places in her current life abroad are likely to be temporary. As a single educator she is left somewhat in limbo in that she has lost her original home before she has had the opportunity to build a new one through some form of companionship, marriage or children. A similar story is shared by educator 0009 in the Netherlands:

Home is where my mother is, but home is not home anymore. I grew up in New York, I moved to Europe and then about a year later my parents moved to North Carolina and when they moved they basically -- they have fully re-modelled the house and they built me a nice little suite downstairs. So I will always have a room and my space but it's not home -- home to me is New York. My friends are there; the people I know are there. The way of life in New York is very different from North Carolina but North Carolina is where my family is.

Unlike the previous educator, this educator's family unit has stayed intact. His parents have even created a physical space for him in their new home. Even so, this is not where the educator grew up. There are no childhood memories associated with the house or the area. He makes a point of mentioning that his friends and the people he knows are not there. As such, the idea of home is not so simple for this educator. During his nine years abroad, things have changed and he struggles to make sense of these shifts. When he goes back to visit, he finds

the physical change of home to be disconcerting. His childhood home is no longer accessible and the new one doesn't have any emotional attachment or memories.

For others, the concept of home did not hold any immediate emotive qualities. Educators who fit this description acknowledged that they were engaged in a process of re-defining their sense of home but did not feel any immediate pressure to do so. They seemed comfortable with the possibility that a new concept of home would emerge in its own time. Most of these educators, however, continued to have a stable home base where people and place remained intact. Educator 003 communicated such a position:

I don't really know what home means. I guess it means wherever I'm at. So, I know I try and build a home even if temporary wherever I'm living, a place that's comfortable for me. And I suppose home is where my parents are, but in the future, when -- at some point, when my parents are no longer here, I don't think I would call that home. So, I'm not sure that I have a home.

Educator 003 entertains the possibility of varying versions of home. The place she goes home to every day is certainly one version. This may be treated as a more immediate descriptor of home. She also considers her parents (people) as a form of home. Although she communicates an attachment to the location (place) of her parents for the time being, she is aware that this connection is likely to change once her parents are gone.

Besides changes in family, educators who had been away for an extended period of time (e.g. five years or more) noted a marked weakening of friendships back home. This weakening appeared to have more to do with changes that took place with the educators than with their friends. Whilst educators developed new frames of reference through new and varied experiences, the lives of friends back home remained relatively unchanged. This created a gap in shared experiences whereby educators created a new in-group among their international

school colleagues (Roskell, 2007). Educator 0011 shares her disappointment with friendships back home in the following simple, yet powerful, statement:

I have so many things that I have experienced, but many times when I go back to the States, they ask me how the weather is and that's it.

Despite her unique experiences abroad, the people she knows show little interest in her life abroad. The educator seems disappointed with the lack of depth in her relationships. A frequent sentiment among educators was the feeling that friends back home were 'inward looking' or 'parochial' in that they were unable to see past their day-to-day routines. British educator 0022 contributes a similar disconnect about her relationships back home:

So, I think the difficult part is now I feel like I no longer really belong anywhere. And that's -- sometimes that's where the freedom is the positive side, but then, there's not a sense of belonging anymore. . . I used to go for the full summer [back home] and I used to go see friends and shop. And now, there's just less excitement about going home. I don't have the same connections with friends because now, what do I talk about? Nobody can talk about my life and I don't really want to talk about their lives.

There is an interesting contrast between the words 'freedom' and 'belonging.' The educator seems to suggest that there is a trade-off involved between freedom and belonging. While she enjoys the increased freedom of being abroad (e.g. no family responsibilities and frequent travel) she has also lost her sense of belonging. She notes that although she goes back to the States every summer, she no longer spends the full summer there. Her life is markedly different from her friends back home and it does not appear that her friends have much of an interest in this new life. Likewise, this sentiment is reciprocated by the educator herself. She communicates very explicitly that she doesn't really want to talk about their lives either.



Despite becoming increasingly critical about the unchanging ways of their family and friends back home, many educators nevertheless found solace in an unchanging definition of home. Childhood homes that remained intact with regards to people and place, allowed educators to enjoy the dual benefit of maintaining secure roots back in their home country, while simultaneously spreading their wings to explore the world before them. In the excerpt below, UK educator 0018, who has been teaching internationally for 14 years, is asked if he considers himself fortunate that he is able to associate home with a place:

I think so . . . because it is roots. I'd still see people if I walk down the street and into the little village where I was brought up. . . I see people I haven't seen for 10 years and they'll say, "Hey Jack. How are you doing?" There are people who still know who I am and I like that.

From the quote, we are able to identify people, places and experiences that have remained intact. No matter how far he travels or how long he is away, this educator can always go back to his childhood home and immediately connect with the people, places and experiences he holds dearest. As such, there is a sense of security and comfort that comes with his unchanging definition of home. Despite his extensive career in the international circuit, he maintains a stable home base.

The sense of loss was notably diminished among couples, including married couples with children. Perhaps the married group of educators had managed to create a sense of home with their new families and, as a result, did not give the same weight to changes in their originating families. Indeed, research supports that families living overseas often develop an increased dependency on each other (Schaetti & Ramsey, 1999). This is likely the result of not having access to the multiple family members and social circles that would otherwise be available back in the home country. In this way, distance from extended family may help to solidify

relationships within 'newer' families. Australian/Canadian educator 0025 sheds light on his concept of home:

I think we feel like we can make our home anywhere. You know, so there's home here in China where we live now. We have all our possessions and our dog and our cat and stuff and our base is really here. So we don't have any possessions really back in Australia, except, you know, our house, which is being rented. So home in the big sense, Australia, but home in the immediate sense is wherever we are.

This educator makes an interesting differentiation between home in the literal sense and home in the conceptual sense. In the literal sense, he describes home as the physical space that he goes home to every day. According to him, this could be anywhere in the world. He does not appear to associate any emotional attachments to this literal interpretation. On a more conceptual level, he notes that Australia is the place where he feels most at ease. Yet he doesn't appear to assign a particularly strong emotional attachment to this interpretation either.

Although he grapples with the concept of home as a place, his repeated use of the word 'we' is revealing. This is because the question he is responding to is 'What does the word home mean to *you*?' His recurrent use of the word 'we', therefore, suggests that his sense of home may actually have more to do with a defined group of people than a specific place. The defined group of people includes himself, his spouse and children. For this educator, there was no sense of loss associated with place nor was there any reference to his childhood family (e.g. parents) during the interview.

More generally, factors that contributed to a sense of loss among educators included being single, whilst *simultaneously* experiencing significant changes in the home setting (either through people or place) while abroad. Those who were away for extended periods also noted

a weakening of friendships back home. This sense of loss did not apply, however, to single educators who indicated extensive mobility during their childhood. Additionally, single and married educators who maintained access to the childhood homes they grew up in did not communicate a sense of loss, irrespective of how much time they had spent abroad.

## 7.5 Summary

Let us now relate the findings directly back to the first research question. In what ways did the personal challenges and opportunities faced by educators cause change in the world views of educators? Changes in world views occurred primarily through challenges educators faced with regards to language, local/community reaction, augmented travel experiences and feelings of loss.

Outside of the school building, educators had to contend with a new language and the sharing of community space with locals. The degree to which educators were challenged by these two factors depended largely on whether they chose to live within the mainstream communities or school compounds. Those who lived within mainstream local communities had increased contact with locals whilst educators who lived in compounds had more limited forms of contact. In both types of living arrangements, educators became peripheral figures who took on the label of 'foreigner' and faced challenges similar to those faced by foreigners in their own countries.

Language, for example, became a difficult obstacle to overcome in non-European countries where English speakers were increasingly rare. Simple tasks became monumental challenges, with educators expressing frustration with things like getting a taxi, food shopping or even basic communication with neighbours. At times, this frustration was reciprocated by locals themselves, as not everyone was sympathetic to the foreigner's plight. As a result, educators views became more sympathetic to the struggles that foreigners face in their own countries.

Limited language proficiency further fed into the creation of 'expat bubbles' from which many international educators operated. These in-groups (which were out-groups to the locals) created a sense of safety and comradery among educators (Bochner et al, 1985, Turner & Tajfel, 1986). The in-groups, however, were often exclusive to other Anglophones who worked in the same school building. These findings align with similar grouping behaviours found among migrant professionals in Canada (Austin, 2007). Whilst there were some locals in the school building who spoke English and the local language, they had little need or interest in investing in friendships of a transient nature.

Beyond language, there was another obstacle educators came across. Educators based in non-European countries *looked* different. As such, they were often judged even before there was any attempt at communication. One educator mentioned, for example, her blonde hair being pulled out in Japan and several educators mentioned the extra attention their children received because of their fairness.

While one incident may be seen as a nuisance and the other as complimentary, the educators remained powerless to the reactions that were visited upon them from the locals. In multiple instances, educators also dealt with undercurrents of resentment from locals. This is because Anglophones were often seen as individuals who were over-compensated, perhaps at the expense of the locals. Becoming an object of depersonalization proved to be an unpleasant experience for educators, as many found that they were judged largely based on their national affiliation rather than their individual merit.

One may compare these feelings of resentment to reactions in the UK or the US towards foreigners. Some Americans and Britons, for example, see foreigners as a threat believing that they effectively take jobs from citizens. A key difference is that foreigners in Anglophone

countries typically work at a significantly lower wage. The international educators in this study, however, worked at a significantly higher wage. In both the home and overseas context, we see an underlying resentment directed towards the foreigner and a tendency to cast blame on the elusive 'other.'

In contrast to challenges, travel remained a unique and important opportunity for educators. Due to the variety in locations, educators were able to integrate travel into their lives on a regular basis. Those who lived in China, for example, had travelled to Korea, Malaysia, Japan, Thailand and Mongolia. Similarly, those who lived in the Netherlands managed to travel throughout Europe and Russia. This was largely possible due to the reduced costs of such trips given their point of departure. A trip to Bangkok, for example, was much less expensive from Beijing than from New York. Travel was one of the most valued opportunities described by educators.

For many educators there existed an interesting play on freedom and obligation. Most enjoyed the freedom that came with being away. Responsibilities associated with their families, and perhaps even citizenship, seemed to dissipate rather effortlessly. Overseas, single educators were able to make choices based on their personal inclinations without needing to consult or consider others opinions. Even among married educators, the choices they made rested on their joint decisions, as opposed to the opinions and judgments of extended family and friends. As such, the obligation to accommodate others was tempered by the overseas placement. From this perspective, educators who sought this freedom were successful in their endeavor to get away from any difficult issues in the home setting.

Whilst many educators enjoyed the freedom from responsibilities back home, this came at a price for some. The sense of loss regarding friends, family and home was partly reflective of

symptoms experienced as a result of culture shock (Oberg, 1960; Bochner & Furnham, 2001). The sense of loss, however, was not unanimously communicated. Instead, it was most prominent in single educators who experienced a significant family change during their absence from the home country (e.g. parental divorce, moving). These educators struggled with this loss and attempted to piece together a new sense of home and identity while abroad. This proved especially difficult due to the continuously transient lifestyle they engaged in. Metaphorically, not only was there an absence of roots for these educators, but also no 'ground' for them to establish the growth of *new* roots.

The most evident shift in world views among educators was the development of an increased sensitivity towards the challenges faced by foreigners. Educators no longer took for granted the role of language or the powerlessness that might subsume an individual who lacks this critical communication tool. In countries where educators looked different, this was the first time they were troubled with carrying a visible and constant marker of difference. For the average Anglophone educator (white, female and of mono-cultural background) potential implications of such experiences were immensely powerful.

As such, it is through direct experiences *as* the other that educators were in a better position to empathise with the grouping behaviours of minorities. Likewise, it was through direct experiences *as* the other that educators became sensitive to the stressors associated with looking (and sounding) different. This brings us to the second research question. In what ways did the personal aspects of the international experience affect changes in professional practice? Whilst personal challenges and opportunities certainly affected world views, it was not yet clear whether (or how) these world views translated into the school or classroom setting. Before

answering this question (in chapter 9), the next chapter delves more deeply into the findings and analysis of world views.

## CHAPTER 8 – CHANGES IN WORLD VIEWS

Thus far, we have looked at the world views that educators began with (chapter 5) and the unique challenges and opportunities that they faced once abroad (chapters 6 and 7). In doing so, the ways in which professional and personal encounters prompted change in world views and professional practice have also been explored. This chapter continues the conversation on world views by tracking the processes involved in how educators began to rethink their own cultural norms and values, including the relationship of those norms and values to political influences and national perspectives.

### 8.1 Rethinking Cultural Norms

Cultural norms, as described in this chapter, refer to the unspoken but understood aspects of culture. Solidified over time, they are social constructs taken to be self-evident among individuals who are exposed to them as a daily part of their lives (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Despite their informal nature, cultural norms can exert a great deal of social control. Failure to heed them can result in disapproval, rejection or even retribution in many societies. Values, in turn, may be seen (in part) as reflections of the cultural norms individuals acquire through these societal settings.

In the present study, existing cultural norms were challenged regularly when educators faced new cultural norms. Disequilibrium was a common condition experienced as educators struggled to align internal norms to what were sometimes very different external norms. The struggle to re-gain a sense of balance was frequently accompanied by symptoms described in Oberg's (1960) crisis stage. They included a sense of loss, anxiety and identity/role confusion. Despite the discomfort experienced by educators, the process of struggle played an important part in educator engagement of critical thought and introspection.



One could argue that in order to see the world through the eyes of the other, one must first walk in the shoes of the other. Living abroad provided first-hand experiences whereby many educators had to take on the role of foreigners for the first time. This role came with eminent challenges that typically materialised in the form of critical incidents. As is typical of many critical incidents, they often began in seemingly trivial ways (Cunningham, 2008; Tripp, 1993).

Educators began to note small and seemingly superficial differences between old norms and new norms. These initial observations, despite appearing trivial, set the stage for an introspective journey that eventually led to important shifts in world views. In non-Western nations, new cultural norms were identified rather quickly in both the professional and personal domains. Even in Western Europe, however, nuanced cultural differences were ample. At times, it was the *absence* of protocol within norms that both confused and enlightened educators. Below, educator 0027, based in China, illustrates:

I think one of the good things about living abroad is that you start to look at your country a bit more critically. In Britain, pubs used to close at eleven o'clock at night. . . and then I went to Spain where bars don't close at eleven at night. And, I went home [Britain], and suddenly, at ten to eleven, you're sent home. You're told to go home because the bars will close. And, it's just like, that's really silly. But, when you live there, it's perfectly normal. The idea of looking at your own country from other eyes is good.

Whilst in Spain, this educator observes that there are no restrictions in place for how late bars remain open. This is markedly different from his experience in Britain, where all bars are required to close at eleven (at the time). A natural comparison process begins with the educator concluding that it is 'silly' for the British government to impose curfews on its adult citizens. Although this observation initially appears to be trivial, the choice to share it implies some level of significance (Tripp, 1993).

Interestingly, Spain was the first country this particular educator resided in when he began his rather extensive overseas career. The fact that he refers to an incident dating back to his first overseas experience suggests that the particular incident may also have symbolic value. It may be that this incident, perhaps, represents the first time he recalls questioning something that he had always accepted as a given. This would be indicative of him beginning to develop a more critical cultural awareness.

In the Netherlands, as well, educators described learning about seemingly small but essential protocol. In the following quote, American educator 0002 talks about his life living in a typical Dutch community. The act of living within the community (as opposed to a compound) has exposed him to the more subtle customs of Dutch culture. Whilst these customs are self-evident among the Dutch, they are not self-evident to this educator who finds that he is learning largely through a process of trial and error:

An example would be the coffee-thing. We were invited over for coffee by the neighbours and we didn't realise how serious that was. And so, finally, somebody was like "If they invite you, you really need to go and expect there's going to be cake and--" Then, it was like, "Do we need to take something when there?" They don't expect that but they do expect you to reciprocate.

We see Dutch neighbours extending themselves to the educator, who does not initially take the invitation for coffee to mean anything more than what it appears (another seemingly trivial event). He finds out later, however, that there is much that is implied with the invitation in Dutch culture. Since these social customs are new to the educator, he looks into the matter to ensure that he follows the expected protocol so as not to inadvertently offend his Dutch neighbours. Idiosyncrasies, which are particular to the Dutch, continue to emerge with other incidents that the educator recalls:

And then, we had work done in our house. And, we came to school and said, “Yes, work is going to be done today. We have it all set up.” And somebody says, “Well, did you leave the coffee out?” I was like, “What?” “You have to have coffee for the workers.” And so, that was kind of a big—it’s always the little subtle things. The last time we had work, we made sure we left the coffee out.

In juxtaposing the Intercultural Communicative Competence model (Byram, 1997; 2009) onto these two incidents shared by the educator, we see attempts to gain awareness of interactive protocol (knowledge) and a strong valuing of the other (attitude). It is through knowledge and attitude that this educator attempts to actively build his skills so that he is better able to interpret, relate, discover and interact with the host country locals. He appears to be learning through direct experiences the unspoken expectations of the Dutch community.

Looking at the same two incidents using the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Bennett, 1986; 1993; 2013), we see the educator taking an ethno-relative stance (as opposed to ethno-centric). He indicates a positive attitude towards the Dutch culture, which he accepts as complex and valid. He struggles, however, with his ability to experience the culture in great depth. Such a challenge is typically found in the ‘acceptance’ stage of the model, indicating that his progress lies at the early stages of ethno-relative development.

The intergroup model (Tajfel, 1981; Turner, 1982) also brings valuable insight into the two incidents described. In the first quote, we see members of a dominant in-group (Dutch neighbours) extending themselves to a member of a minority out-group (the American foreigner). The concept of social groups can also be likened to the formation of communities, in which individuals can hold multiple memberships (Osler & Starkey, 2005). It is possible that the boundaries between the two groups are permeable because of the *shared* membership they hold in the neighbourhood community.

The American educator becomes increasingly aware of the symbolic power behind the invitation for coffee (in the first quote) and his adherence to other cultural norms (in the second quote). He also seems to be aware of the grouping hierarchy, including which group he belongs to. He puts great effort into taking all the necessary precautions to ensure his acceptance by members of the dominant in-group/community. Part of the difficulty educator 0002 experiences is that these emerging expectations are deeply ingrained in Dutch culture. So much so, that they are an unspoken part of the culture that is taken for granted and understood to be self-evident.

An inadequate understanding of these ways, however, can easily lead to misunderstandings with locals in the community. Failure to reciprocate the invitation for coffee, for example, is likely to offend the neighbours without one necessarily understanding the seriousness of the error. Whilst these incidents may initially appear superficial, one could argue that they serve as a precursor to understanding the deeper values supporting cultural norms.

Subtle differences in cultural norms were often compounded with more blatant differences in locales outside of Western Europe. While all countries had government offices with official procedures in place, cultural norms were sometimes communicated through stronger *informal* processes. Despite operating in a type of shadow-market, these processes were an accepted part of the way the community functioned. Below, Australian educator 0028 recalls what was involved in getting his driver's licence in Vietnam:

I had to get a car licence, and the guy at the motor registry said that if I got him some wheat powder--it helps you with your liver--I think it's got some wheat in it because in Australia, it's wheat powder, so I said, "I agree to that" and so, I went back home [to Australia], and I bought a bag of this wheat powder and it cost me 20 bucks, and then I sent it to him and he sent through my paperwork in the mail.

In this quote, a government worker at the motor registry expects an additional payment in order to expedite the educator's paperwork. His requested payment takes on the form of wheat powder, a product which is not available in Vietnam, but is available in Australia. The educator understands that the processing of his paperwork is dependent on this informal payment. He further notes that the paperwork is processed soon after this barter payment is made.

Despite the illegitimacy of the government worker's request, the educator recognises quickly that he needs to play by a different set of rules. He adjusts his actions accordingly to achieve the desired results, which in this case involves obtaining his car licence. His behaviour demonstrates acquisition of more complex skills related to discovery and interaction (Byram, 1997). In particular, he shows us that he is effective in achieving specific outcomes by reading into and successfully manoeuvring himself through what are 'real time' cultural restrictions.

The same educator described another shadow market in the same country (Vietnam) involving the breeding of dogs. Due to his living quarters, this educator was able to witness elements of the culture that would easily go unnoticed had he lived in an isolated compound. Once again, the benefits of living within the mainstream community are highlighted. Below, he describes how the community cooperated in specific ways to gain income and avoid scandal:

You'll see little puppies being raised by all types of people in the neighbourhood, and they will just have this dog that they will care for. I mean, they just feed it every day and it lives with their family, and then, they're just really raising it for this guy who comes around every couple of months and says, "Okay, thanks a lot, here's the money" and takes that puppy and then it's just.... that way they don't have a venue or a scandal. And, also, people will also have a couple of piglets in the house, and they'll raise them too until they either kill it themselves or someone buys it off them. So, that's another way of getting some income.

The system in place for breeding dogs is a cultural norm that falls under the radar of official processes and relies, instead, on the needs of the larger community to support it. Families need money and they look for different ways in which they can earn it. In this instance, puppies are fed for a period of time and are then given back to their original owner, at which time he pays the caretakers a fee. Later in the interview, the educator goes on to explain that dog is actually a very expensive meat in Vietnam because of the more complicated logistics involved in their breeding.

The fact that the same is done with piglets indicates that puppies and piglets are categorised similarly in the Vietnamese culture. Despite the stark contrast with Western norms, the educator shows no indication of making a value judgment, an important tenet of intercultural development (Byram, 1997; 2009). He also does not appear to lose his sense of identity in order to operate effectively in the particular cultural context (Bennett, 1986). He never tells us if he agrees or disagrees with the practice, but instead is alert to the world as a place that can be viewed through a multiplicity of lenses.

Indeed, without suspension of judgment it would be difficult to get into the mind-set of the individual or event one was problematizing. Suspension of judgment, therefore, allowed educators to temporarily 'remove' their own cultural bias when assessing a situation. It is important to note, however, that this suspension of judgment did not necessarily constitute agreement. Instead, it was indicative of a willingness to consider a situation from a different perspective.

It was not surprising, then, that suspension of judgment was often accompanied by a marked attempt to understand. At times, the two skills led educators to enlightening experiences. A

powerful illustration of a change in world views as a result of one's ability to demonstrate these two skills was provided by educator 0030. When asked what she feels she has gained from her international school experience, she begins by reflecting back on her teaching experiences in a rural area in the United States:

I think cultural awareness is definitely one of them because where I did actually teach was in a very homogenous school and it was mostly white farm kids. I mean we had 'Take Your Tractor to School Day.' Even with that, I think I sometimes would judge that because I came from a white, suburban background so I'd be like, "Oh, I can't believe you have 'Take Your Tractor to School Day'. What about your pigs?" That would be going through my head. I know it's terrible.

The educator describes her views prior to her international school experience. She describes herself as judgmental and uses the example of how she differentiated her own status as superior from her students' status in the rural community she worked in. Such strategies are indicative of human tendencies identified in the intergroup model (Tajfel, 1981; Turner, 1982). In particular, the educator's view prior to her work abroad shows evidence of strong self-categorisation, self-enhancement and depersonalisation strategies. She goes on to explain how this tendency to group and judge changed as a result of her overseas experience:

I think even more now, the script that's running through my head is one of, "How do I understand this culture?" more than, "How do I judge this culture?" I think that I would be able to take that through to my teaching to other students, especially, in a more diverse school . . . how do I understand where you're coming from?

A significant shift is this educator's replacement of the word 'judge' with the word 'understand.' This is an especially noteworthy change as it positions the teacher as one who seeks to learn

from her students as much as one who seeks to transfer knowledge. This educator no longer sees her way of doing things as the only way, and it has taken some jolting experiences abroad to reshape her view of the world.

This changed view is one which is rooted in attitude (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002), with the educator illustrating these changes through mental narratives presented both before and after her work abroad. Evidence of new constructs drawn from other cultural frameworks and an expanded world view also align this shift with the adaptation stage of the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Bennett, 1986; 1993; 2013).

## 8.2 Value Prioritisation

Whilst local etiquette did not always appear to have a rhyme or reason, certain patterns of local behaviour were easier to decipher in terms of the cultural values they reflected. In many instances, values were not necessarily different from those that educators espoused but, more simply, just prioritised differently. For the most part, preliminary exposure to host country values came from the local students and families educators worked with. Chinese families, for example, considered academic achievement to be a high stakes endeavour. Expectations ran high and students were held accountable to what was interpreted, by many educators, to be a quest for perfection.

Contrasting with Anglophone education philosophy, which placed a healthy and happy mind-set ahead of academic achievement, the values of Chinese culture were organised *differently*. Final outcomes were weighted much more heavily and this was the marker by which student and family success was measured. In this way, Chinese students were not only letting themselves down when they received mediocre grades, they were also letting their families down. The interdependent relationship among members in Chinese families emerged in other areas as



well. In the excerpt below, educator 0024 describes some personal information about one of her students to further highlight this variation in values:

I wouldn't visit my grandma every week. And, if she [the student] doesn't go, she gets told off by her grandma. You know, it's like, it's her obligation to go; whereas, I don't think in Britain we have that obligation to visit family every week. I mean, I would visit my grandparents every week or two weeks to see how it goes. If you're busy one week, you tell them you can't make it, but they seem to have an obligation to visit family more often.

Here, the educator describes a deep sense of obligation towards elders in China and contrasts it with a much weaker sense of obligation in the UK. She uses her own relationship with her grandparents to illustrate a less demanding bond, which she also appears to prefer. Yet another example of re-prioritised values was communicated vis-a-vis the position of sport in Australia relative to the position of sport (or lack thereof) in China. In the quote below, educator 0019 recalls two Australian students, who were exceptional athletes, attending the school in China. He discusses one of them below:

'Jon' was a sports star in Australia. Those kids are worshipped at school. They have everything. They get scholarships. They go to the best universities. They are everything. He represented the country; it's a big deal. Here, no one cares. . . All his friends [in China] were going to Oxford and Cambridge and Harvard and Yale and this was the big thing. And he said, "What could I do? I'm not going to these places."

Since the educator is Australian himself, he shares a deeper insight into the value hierarchy that these Australian students come from. He notes that, in Australia, athletic prowess is highly valued, with strong athletes celebrated in schools and often gaining access to top universities. When these same students find themselves in China, however, their high status positions are no

longer valid. Since sport is not highly valued in China, such students become marginalised if they are not also academically strong.

Depending on which two value-systems are being examined, the re-prioritisation of values can be viewed from multiple comparative perspectives. One perspective may involve two-value systems, which may actually hold similar values, but assign different levels of importance to them. In contrast, another perspective may involve two value-systems, which are actually significantly *different* from each other. Still a third perspective, and probably the most common, may involve two-value systems that present a combination of similar values, whilst at the same time demonstrating certain distinct values.

In considering the reprioritization of values the work of Renee Descartes, a French philosopher of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, provides some useful insights. In his treatise, entitled *Discourse on Method*, he argues that good sense and reason are naturally and equally distributed among people (an assertion that I would not necessarily agree with). His second assertion that follows immediately after the first, however, resonates particularly well with how differences of opinion arise from the fact that individuals do not give priority to the same things:

. . . the diversity of our opinions does not result from some of us being more reasonable than others, but solely from the fact that we conduct our thoughts along different paths, and consider different things. (Descartes, 1637, p.1).

Indeed, two individuals may choose divergent paths not because one is more reasonable than the other but because they do not consider the same things in their decisions. Value prioritization, therefore, appears to play an important role in the choices individuals make. These choices are certainly influenced by individual values, but individual values themselves are influenced, as well, by cultural values.

Moving on to work communities, if we remove the term culture from national or regional confines and define it more flexibly as a way of life, then international educators can also be seen as engaging in a very distinct community-culture as well. That is, regardless of the national, regional or local cultures international educators find themselves in, they are consistently faced with similar professional and personal challenges (albeit at different intensities depending on how different each location is from the home country).

Professional challenges related to transience, for example, can be found across many overseas international schools. Similarly, personal challenges related to language acquisition and communication issues can also be found, in varying degrees, across overseas locations. Indeed, if the feeling of community involves a sense of common identity and characteristics (Osler & Starkey, 2005) then international educators can be seen as participating in a type of international community with its own distinctive set of characteristics.

Given the unique community-culture that educators were immersed in, it was not surprising then to find evidence of value re-prioritisation as a result of participation in that community-culture. In this way, value changes seemed to be influenced just as much by the distinct community-culture found in international schools as the traditional national/regional/local cultures. One powerful example of value re-prioritisation was the notable shift from material-centred values to experience-centred values.

International educators consistently assigned a diminished value to the accumulation of material objects; including the place and space those objects took up in their daily lives. The view of material objects as burdensome was logical given that the community-culture international educators engaged with involved a relatively mobile lifestyle. Educators frequently

found themselves in situations where they had to either give away or transport their material possessions. As a result, material objects took on a very different meaning.

As educators re-prioritised some of their values, they naturally began to view the world through an altered lens. The obsession with material items back home, for example, became a point of contention among numerous educators. Below, American educator 0030 reflects on her views:

People are really focused on building a life, if you will, because coming here I noticed that life is so much more transient and uncontrollable than anyone wants to believe that it is. That's all a little bit new for me because I feel like I was raised, and many Americans are raised, with this idea that you have to continue to build for something. Save for the future; build that house so that you have somewhere to grow old in. Buy all the things and that you'll have them forever and pass them down to your grandchildren.

Although the educator uses the word 'building,' her description is more indicative of 'accumulating.' She refers to American values as revolving around the collection of material goods. She suggests that the greater one's collection is the more successful one is judged to be. Her experience abroad, however, has given her a different world view. She has developed the view that life is much more transient and uncontrollable. One could argue that perhaps it is her own current life that she is describing as transient and uncontrollable. Yet it does not appear that she sees her experiences within a narrow context. Instead, she connects her individual experiences to a much broader picture about life. She uses the following example to illustrate her point:

It was kind of like a paradigm shift, I guess, so that when I go back home and people are talking about how they spent all week shopping and how they bought this really cool vase to put some random glass balls in . . . I am thinking

well that took money and time and why are they doing this? Like, why are you buying stuff anyway? How much of this do you really need?

The American culture as a consumption culture is questioned in this quote. The educator begins to question the purpose behind random and seemingly unimportant purchases. She considers money, time and purpose. There is a level of introspection whereby this educator is questioning whether American values are actually her own. Within this introspection she seems to be looking to find answers that are not imposed on her through cultural habit, but through personal thought and consideration.

We see the educator engaging in a particularly complex process because she has taken a 'third person' perspective not only in examining the beliefs of other cultures, but in examining her own beliefs as constructs of her own culture. The transformational focus of moving from materialism to experiences was not exclusive to American educators. Educator 0025, with Australian/Canadian citizenship, provided the following insight:

There's a risk of material possession as well. What you do is you accumulate more stuff, and all these things become anchors of your freedom, really, but they're also very comforting, and they become cocooning and nesting, so there is that...if you're aware of this, you can become sort of like, okay, I de-clutter and I just simplify and I keep what I want.

Material possessions are described as anchors to freedom. That is, they are seen as weighing down individuals and inhibiting freedom. At the same time, the educator recognises their value as sources of comfort. He suggests that if an individual is aware of this delicate balance, selectively de-cluttering can create an increased sense of freedom while still maintaining the comforts associated with selected objects. In this quote, we see evidence of critical thought as the educator re-contextualises the value of material goods and their place in his life.

### 8.3 Human Rights, Politics & Belonging

#### *Human Rights*

Up to this moment, the values we have explored have been different or, more simply, *prioritised* differently (although not necessarily different in and of themselves). We now enter a more difficult juncture whereby the values educators faced sometimes explicitly *contradicted* their own. This type of challenge was problematic because if one values freedom, for instance, it is difficult to operate within a culture that looks to limit it.

The initial disequilibrium experienced when a contradictory value (or value-system) appeared was not necessarily one that resolved itself. Although there was an immediate attempt to adapt, success was limited because of the contradictory nature between value systems. For Westerners, examples of this included corporal punishment and the role of women in some Muslim societies.

Below, the challenge of contradictory values is illustrated by American educator 0001. She recalls two instances where students in Taiwan, who were not succeeding in school, were beaten. Given the cultural context and the lack of social services, it became necessary to eventually exert pressure through corporations that served as intermediaries. The educator elaborates on the symptoms of abuse and the ultimate outcome:

I followed up with a couple of the girls who I knew were having difficult times at home with how their parents were responding to their grades. And sometimes they were cheating because this kind of stuff leads to a whole host of other dysfunctional behaviours. So I had a meeting [with the mother] and I felt like the meeting went okay. And I remember talking to her afterwards [the student] and she just looked at me stone cold and she said, "Yeah, she's going to tell you just what you need to hear."

In interpreting the final quote of the student, the educator surmises that it was not likely that the beatings stopped but more likely that she (and the school) were not going to be given any means to pursue the matter further. Whilst processes and agencies are in place for cases of physical abuse in Anglophone nations, this is not necessarily the case in other areas of the world. The example provided by this educator highlights the difficulties in communicating a particular value position to individuals who may very well have a contrasting value position (in this case, the parents).

In fact, the educator acknowledges later in the interview that several mothers from this area outwardly rejected Western criticism. The belief that hitting children was wrong was challenged with the argument that hitting was a parent's right, one that was also in the best interest of the child. Furthermore, some mothers rendered Western criticism as invalid because corporal punishment was viewed as an effective way of producing desired results.

According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), article five states that 'no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.' Furthermore, article nineteen in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, 1989) also states that 'all children are entitled to freedom from all forms of violence, abuse and neglect.' As such, freedom from violence is seen as a fundamental and non-negotiable human right. Despite the universality of human rights and the acknowledgement of those rights by 171 member nations (Osler & Starkey, 2005), several educators communicated a lack of adherence in the more conservative cultural contexts. Inconsistency in the successful enforcement and implementation of human rights across contexts has been acknowledged elsewhere (Osler & Starkey, 2010).

Whilst educators in the sample group were able to exert some pressure to change human rights violations within the school building, they were quite often deemed powerless outside of the school building. This is because educators were operating within a larger system that they were a small, and transient, part of. The most that many were able to do, at the time, was to express their concern and try to explain the rationale in support of their position to the parties concerned.

The presence of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), that monitor such behaviours, was not something that educators seemed to be aware of or informed about. Finally, there were a few educators who, despite making some attempts to create more positive environments, felt that it was not their place to pass judgement on the host country seeing as they were just visitors. Withholding judgement is one of the key tenets of intercultural development (Byram, 1997; 2009). At what point, then, does the suspension of judgement become problematic? Furthermore, at what point does the relativizing of behaviours, in the name of culture or tradition, cross the line with regards to human rights violations?

These are difficult questions that scholars continue to grapple with and the scope of the current study does not allow for great elaboration. Suffice it to say that the relativizing of culture(s) to justify human rights violations has been rejected by scholars and organisations (Osler & Starkey, 2010; Osler & Starkey, 2005; UNCHR, 1994). Instead, human rights are seen as providing a set of common core values applicable across cultures. As such, the rights described in the declaration are believed to be fundamentally human and resistant to claims of cultural relativism.

### *Politics*

Moving on to politics, the teaching of history proved to be an interesting endeavour in many countries. Whilst the role of politics in shaping the teaching of history is not always



acknowledged, it can be implicitly understood to play a role in the formulation of its curricula. British educator 0018 highlights a heightened cultural and political awareness as he recalls his time working at an international school in Kuwait:

In Kuwait, there are special maps and globes that don't have Israel on them and God help you if you have one that does. You get into real trouble if you do. The teaching of the Holocaust is very, very hard. I know many historians have a real issue with the way that they have to teach the Second World War.

Whilst the state of Israel enjoys full recognition in most countries of the world, its acknowledgement as a valid state remains adamantly contested among many, predominantly Arab, nations. In Kuwait, this educator quickly picks up on the political tension and adjusts his instruction accordingly. More importantly, the mandated removal of a country from all maps prompts curiosity. Whilst the average Kuwaiti citizen may take the reason(s) for its removal to be self-evident, an Anglophone who has not been adequately exposed to Middle-Eastern politics will need to seek out such reasons. In the process, new perspectives are unveiled, including the origins of resentment, anger and conflict.

Using the Intercultural Communicative Competence model (Byram, 1997), we see the particular educator engaging in the two skill clusters of interpreting/relating, as well as discovery/interaction. The educator must work with 'real time' restrictions whereby he must quickly interpret a cultural taboo and then seek to understand it. He must do this while simultaneously ensuring that he does not offend the local community. Since the educator is not of Arab or Israeli background, he is able to glean information from a comparatively neutral position.

Other stories that were shared, however, put educators in a more direct line of tension. This included a critical incident shared by educator 0028 during his work in Vietnam. In the excerpt below, the educator provides important background information on an incident he faced whilst chaperoning local Vietnamese students on a trip:

You got to go to a Vietnamese military museum kind of thing, but not the ones the Westerners go to, the ones that the older [local] children go to. So, our school, we had a lot of Vietnamese students, and then they had to learn Vietnamese history. So, sometimes the Vietnamese teachers would say I need a man to go on this field trip, would you come with me? And so, I said okay, and the whole trip was in Vietnamese, and I was standing at the back, watching the Vietnamese kids watching a documentary that was made for them.

The institutional division between military museums for Westerners and military museums for locals implies that each museum is designed to present and transfer different information to two types of audiences. It is also suggestive of grouping behaviours described in the intergroup model (Tajfel, 1981; Turner, 1982). The educator goes on to describe an eye-opening experience on perspective:

And I'd say what are they saying there? Every time they were talking about a hero, they didn't call him hero; they called him 'American Killer.' That was the nickname for hero, 'American Killer' . . . and so the Vietnamese guys there didn't know that I was Australian. They just thought I looked like an American. And, she [a Vietnamese teacher] would say to them, "No, no, he's Australian."

It is true that in circumstances of war, heroes of one group are inevitably villains to another. Which perspective is internalised is influenced greatly by which social group one holds membership to. As a Westerner, this particular educator's frame of reference is questioned when US military personnel are suddenly being presented as 'American Killers' in the documentary. This experience puts the educator in a place where he needs to assess who is

actually correct. It is unlikely that he will reach a conclusive answer. Instead, what becomes more evident is the powerful role that both politics and perspective plays in the teaching of history.

It is of special interest that the Vietnamese teacher feels the need to justify the educator's presence by announcing that he is not an American but, instead, an Australian. Given the fact that the students have just been conditioned to view Americans in a negative light, this clarification appears to serve a dual purpose. Firstly, it ensures that there is no disturbance among the students towards the educator. Such a disturbance would expose the educator to feelings of disapproval or rejection.

Secondly, without such clarification, students may question the claims of the documentary, particularly since it is likely that the 'American' educator in the room doesn't accurately match the documentary portrayal of a killer. By providing this clarification, a careful balance is maintained whereby the documentary remains valid for the students, whilst the visiting educator maintains his immunity.

Examining this incident via the intergroup model (Tajfel, 1981; Turner, 1982) we are able to see the human tendency to create in-groups and out-groups. Besides the institutionalisation of two museums aimed at two different groups, we see evidence of self-categorisation, self-enhancement and depersonalisation strategies. Firstly, Vietnamese students are inculcated to identify with a particular national group. This involves the process of self-categorisation.

At the same time, the documentary utilises self-enhancement strategies by cultivating negative feelings against another group and making selective intergroup comparisons that are more flattering to one's own group (Brown, 2000; Hornes, 2008). Finally, the depersonalisation of Americans as belonging to one single uniform group solidifies a nationalistic 'us' and 'them'

view of the world (Reicher, Spears & Haslam, 2010).

Increased political awareness was also communicated through exposure to different media in overseas locations. Several educators felt strongly that media in China, for example, were more balanced than media in the United Kingdom or the United States. They developed this view by being in the unique position of having simultaneous access to the same news via two national media venues. It was through engagement in a comparison process that educators came to such conclusions. The role of media in the home country, therefore, was one other area where some educators became increasingly critical.

### *Belonging*

The most fundamental sense of belonging can be seen as emanating from family unit. Much like national citizenship, the family each individual inherits at birth is based on nothing more than chance. As such, whether one is born into a life of kindness, cruelty, wealth or poverty is beyond the control of any individual. This holds true for the individual family unit as well as the country of citizenship, both of which are present at birth. The emotions associated with the family unit may be seen as one of the fundamental building blocks from which concepts of national citizenship are based. One could further argue that the success of national citizenship is rooted in its ability to tap into the *emotions* typically associated with the family unit.

Osler & Starkey (2005) describe citizenship as being comprised of status, feeling and practice. Whilst these three dimensions are seen as fundamental and complementary, it is the feeling of belonging, in particular, which is experienced most immediately. Indeed, it is this feeling of belonging that many educators grappled with when asked what the word 'home' meant to them (see chapter 7).

On a national level, many educators expressed a renewed appreciation for simple things they typically took for granted back in their home countries. These things included clean air, water and even rain. An increased appreciation for the efficient day-to-day operation of services was also communicated. This included reliable transportation, internet services, basic plumbing and uninterrupted electricity. The new lens through which educators viewed their country was also accompanied, however, by a more critical citizenship. Below, educator 0007 in the Netherlands articulates this new position:

So I think being an American, I feel like I can never complain about life because I know that my life is so great compared to most of the world that doesn't have enough. So that's my difficulty with my own country, that people complain and life is really so good. And I've been to places where there's just so much poverty, and it makes me appreciate what I have more.

Living abroad has helped this educator appreciate the privileges afforded to her as a result of her American citizenship. Experiences in other countries, which do not offer the same privileges, have steered her towards this new world view. This appreciation is accompanied, however, by a more critical view of the average citizen back home. The educator suggests that people at home remain ignorant to their good fortune. She describes Americans as complaining often, yet if they were to see how much of the world lives, they would be much more grateful for their daily comforts.

This sentiment existed among educators who had worked in relatively affluent countries as well. Female educators, for example, were not granted the right to drive in certain countries of the Middle-East or had to plan their days around imposed government curfews. Other inconveniences included bans on alcohol, cigarette consumption and even holding hands in public. These experiences all served to provide a bigger picture in which educators were able to place their own country as well as themselves. It is this bigger picture--gained through lived

experiences abroad--which friends and family back home lacked. And it is this perceived deficiency that educators expressed particular frustration towards. Below, a similar sentiment is shared by educator 0027 based in China:

I go back to Britain and people moan about the trains, they're mad about the health service and a few other things, and the trains are just amazing because they run. And the health service is just absolutely brilliant. It's fantastic. I mean, you've got a health service in the States [referring to the researcher] where you just walk in and get treated for nothing. You have to wait sometimes, but people have been moaning about it their whole life.

Like the educator before him, this educator has a renewed gratitude for all the services available to him as a British citizen. Along with this gratitude, however, he communicates frustration with his fellow citizens who continue to take such services for granted. He mentions public transport and health services as prime examples of public services which, according to him, operate efficiently and successfully in the United Kingdom and the United States.

Association with national identity remained strong among educators living abroad, with most identifying themselves first by nationality, second by region and third by profession. When in their country of citizenship, however, educators reported that they identified themselves first by region and second by profession. In this way, nationality was taken for granted when educators were back home. It was interesting to note that whilst most educators had lived outside of national boundaries for extended periods of time, their sense of identity continued to resonate *within* their respective national borders.

## 8.5 Summary

Change in world views usually began through the simple observation of a new culture(s). This included an exploration of cultural norms and values through a country's institutions, people,

their beliefs and behaviours. This initial examination was followed by a natural comparison process whereby educators contrasted new cultural norms and values against their own cultural norms and values. It was during this time, that educators noted a variety of differences and similarities, adding an additional layer of depth to their intercultural understanding.

At a still deeper level, educators used their knowledge of other culture(s) to not only compare, but to also closely examine and question their *own* culture. It was at this time that educators also became distinctly aware of themselves as cultural beings. They became mindful of their own ethnicity through the institutions they grew up in, the way those institutions functioned, and the beliefs and behaviours they were taught to embrace. This level of depth was made possible through the frequent and extended cultural contact educators were exposed to as a result of their overseas placement.

Educators who reached this level of depth also revealed the ability to suspend judgment, which was often accompanied by a marked effort to understand. The act of suspending judgment may also be likened to the ability to view one's own, and other cultures, from a 'third person' perspective. Educators demonstrated a keen awareness of the self as well as an increased willingness to view things from alternative perspectives.

Suspending judgment did not necessarily constitute agreement on the part of educators, but it did allow them to effectively distance themselves in order to understand the multiple factors that played a role in cultural norms, values and their resultant behaviours. This was especially useful when dealing with unfamiliar political issues. This finding aligned very closely with aspects of the Intercultural Communicative Competence model (Byram, 1997; 2009), which also identifies attitude and the ability to withhold judgment as an important component in the development of intercultural competence.

This area of intercultural development became problematic, however, when educators were faced with values that contradicted their own. In such cases, suspending judgement could be seen as being equivalent to turning a blind eye to what might be described as human rights abuses. This included incidents of corporal punishment against minors as well as the devalued status of women in Middle-Eastern societies. Whilst some educators tried to assert their influence within the school building, others felt it was not possible (or necessarily appropriate) for them to change what they believed to be long-standing cultural constructs.

Besides the influence of traditional notions of culture, educators were also influenced by the distinct community-culture found in international schools. This included an increasingly transient lifestyle, which required educators to give away, or transport, many of their material belongings with each move. This resulted in educators assigning a diminished value to material goods, while at the same time assigning a heightened value to life experiences. Experiences gained through travel, for example, continued to rank high on educators' value hierarchy.

Educators also communicated a renewed appreciation for their home countries and the privileges that came with their citizenship. Reliable transport, advanced healthcare, clean water and air were cited as valuable resources that were not available everywhere in the world. Apart from the material comforts offered *within* national borders, educators also became increasingly aware of the benefits their citizenship secured for them *outside* of their national borders.

This was evident in salary comparisons between Anglophone educators and locally hired colleagues, who were paid considerably less. One educator noted that despite her 'disgust' with her home country, she recognized that it was her US citizenship that provided her with access to the lifestyle she was able to enjoy abroad. In fact, the exponential growth of international schools remains largely an Anglophone phenomenon (Hayden & Thompson, 2008).



Renewed appreciation of the home country, however, also came with a more critical citizenship. Educators became more intimately aware of how the rest of the world saw their country, especially once they were exposed to more diverse forms of media. Several educators were critical of Western media and described the presentation of news in their respective countries as one-sided. They also became increasingly aware of the role of politics in shaping both media delivery and the teaching of history. Besides criticism pertaining to the nation, educators also became increasingly impatient and critical of family and friends back home who failed to realise their good fortune. Interestingly, criticism against their own country or family was the one area where educators did *not* suspend their judgment. Perhaps educators felt they knew enough about their own country/family to pass judgments.

The experience of having lived abroad as foreigners, prompted many educators to develop new frames of reference through which to understand the 'other.' This included an increased sensitivity to the *practical* challenges of otherness such as difficulties with language and community integration, but it also included an increased sensitivity to more *conceptual* challenges such as feelings of loss and the powerful need to belong.

As such, educators communicated significant and profound changes in their world views. Yet these changes, although very commendable, still remained highly intangible and abstract in nature. After all, what are the implications of these findings with regards to the endeavour of education? And do these seemingly profound changes translate into the school building or classroom setting? It is with these questions in mind that we move on to the next chapter, which looks for evidence of intercultural abilities from a more practical perspective.

## CHAPTER 9 – EVIDENCE OF IMPROVED INTERCULTURAL ABILITIES

One of the guiding research questions of the study was whether changes in world views transferred to the professional practice of educators and, if so, for whom and in what ways? This chapter, therefore, looks to directly link theoretical changes associated with world views (discussed in the immediately preceding chapters) to practice-based changes in the classroom or school setting. This is considered an important link for several reasons. Firstly, it explores the relevance of intercultural development within the context of improved instruction. Secondly, by doing so, the overseas international school can be effectively supported, or precluded, as a potential resource for the professional development of educators.

Practice-based literature in the area of culturally sensitive instruction has gone under a variety of names including culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2000), culturally relevant teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1992), and intercultural competence in practice (Byram, Nichols & Stevens, 2001). Such research normally considers how educators use student context to teach formal curricula or, alternatively, how students themselves are taught intercultural skills and abilities. Although the two areas are closely linked, findings in this chapter emphasize the former. This is because the development of the educator and how s/he relates to the student, as opposed to the student and how s/he relates to the world, fit more closely with the aims of the research study.

Questions related to practice are not easy because they require educators to move beyond the broad-based changes typically associated with intercultural development (e.g. disposition and attitude) to the articulation of specific outcomes and behaviours. Among the questions asked during interviews was whether educators did anything differently in their teaching practice *that they did not do prior to their international work abroad*. Educators were further encouraged to

move beyond elusive descriptions and provide specific examples where they utilised their intercultural abilities with students or parents. Explicit outcomes, therefore, were an important part of the data collection and analysis process.

The complexity behind questions is one reason why educators were given the interview questions several months prior to scheduled interviews. This allowed the needed time for the appropriate thought and reflection. While teacher data was by no means expected to be all-inclusive, it was a valuable step towards a less abstract, more tangible, understanding of intercultural development as it relates to the educational setting.

### 9.1 Language

The greatest area of intercultural growth was reported in language. Before delving into the various aspects of language growth, a clear distinction must be made between the English language learner, the *non*-native English speaker and the native English speaker. This is because all three types of students are commonly found in an international school setting.

The English language learner (ELL), as used in this study, refers to any student who has a developing command of the English language. Such a student may be in the early stages of their language development or in more advanced stages. The key criteria, however, is that the English language learner (ELL) is still in the process of *learning* the language. It is also worth interjecting here that depending on country or region, such a student may alternatively be referred to as EAL (English as Another Language) or ESL (English as a Second Language). The meaning behind these acronyms, however, is understood to be the same.

In contrast, the *non*-native English speaker, as used in this study, refers to a fluent English speaker who does not actually have an Anglophone background (e.g. citizenship) or any long-term experiences living in an Anglophone country. An example of a *non*-native English speaker

would be a locally-based student who has received extensive (if not exclusive) English-medium schooling, but who otherwise speaks a different language and adheres to non-Anglophone norms with his family and friends in the larger community.

This brings us to the *native* English speaker who usually has some form of Anglophone background and/or has grown up, to some extent, in an Anglophone country. The distinction between a native English speaker and a *non-native* English speaker, both of whom are linguistically fluent, often (although not always) delineates those who have access to implicit cultural cues (usually the native) with those who must try to make sense of cues through more artificial means such as explicit instruction (usually the non-native). This is particularly relevant to the international school setting where one finds a wide variety of speakers falling into what are sometimes hybrid language categories.

#### *Explicit Aspects of Language*

Improved growth in the area of language was an expected outcome. This is because educators frequently faced language challenges both in their professional and personal lives whilst overseas. On a professional level, educators usually worked with an increased number of English language learners in their classrooms. This was especially the case for educators who worked in international schools that catered predominantly to local children. On a personal level, educators were also language learners themselves in the overseas communities they joined. The concurrent experience of being a language learner, whilst working *with* language learners proved to be a particularly powerful learning opportunity.

In considering the three dimensions of culturally responsive pedagogy: institutional, personal and instructional (Richards, Brown & Forde, 2006) the simultaneous exposure to both institutional and personal dimensions accelerated the intercultural sensitivity of educators.

Most notably, it was difficult for educators to become frustrated with English language learners in their work setting (institutional) when they recognized, in those same students, many of the personal struggles they faced themselves as non-natives in the outside community (personal). This dual experience sensitized educators to the complexities of language and language learning.

Overt aspects of language were typically the first to be noticed. This included knowledge about conventions related to grammar, idiomatic usage and pronunciation. Knowledge at this stage was culture-specific because it was relevant only to a particular cultural group(s). Below, British educator 0013 illustrates how she acquired culture-specific knowledge through her own attempts to learn Mandarin:

I've done, I don't know, maybe 10 hours of Chinese lessons-- very unsuccessfully-- but the actual technicality of learning that language and then being able to apply that in my classroom has been really interesting because you learn things about Chinese. . . . like they don't use indefinite or definite articles or prepositional phrases. That becomes a focus in your lessons because suddenly you recognize, well, actually that's why they are not using them because they don't use them in day-to-day.

The educator gains important information about Mandarin through her own independent language lessons. This information helps to explain some of the difficulties her Chinese students experience in their writing. She explains that, unlike European languages, the Chinese language does not use common grammar conventions such as indefinite/definite articles and prepositional phrases. Given the acquisition of this new knowledge, the educator adjusts her instruction to focus on specific aspects of writing with which her students struggle. The educator has effectively used her knowledge about the Chinese language to better inform her teaching of the English language. Whilst this quote illustrates a relatively narrow application of knowledge, its potential implications are much more far reaching. Recognising that not all

languages function like European languages is an important step towards understanding fundamental language differences and their unique challenges. It is also possible, for example, that this educator has become more sensitized to error patterns of ELL students from *other* backgrounds more broadly.

Moving to a different region of the world, another example of culture-specific knowledge had to do with the awareness that Kuwaitis read from right to left. Most educators easily applied this knowledge to all cultures that spoke the Arabic language. A select few, however, were able to apply it to non-Arabic language groups as well (e.g. Hebrew or Urdu speakers). In such instances, an awareness of possible variance in language directionality informed classroom instruction more generally. This resulted in adjustments to the quantity of reading and/or extra time to account for students unique pacing needs (which were understood to be slower due to the change in directionality).

### *Implicit Aspects of Language*

Whereas explicit differences in language were highly visible and easier to detect, implicit differences were more complex. It was at this point also that differentiation among the three categories of learners, discussed earlier, became increasingly important. The use of idioms, for example, had to be restricted in classrooms that had a high proportion of English language learners (ELL). Educators necessarily had to become more cognizant of their language usage in order to teach effectively. Below, British educator 0022 describes how the day-to-day language she used needed to be re-evaluated:

I'll be using a phrase like, 'oh just jot this down' or 'it's raining cats and dogs' and all those little phrases that have just been a part of my life forever and now people don't understand them. And, teaching techniques that I've used for

years, like getting students to write lonely hearts ads, every child in the UK will understand what that is but these students have never even heard of them.

Phrases that this educator took for granted in England cannot be taken for granted in China, as they have no meaning to her students even if translated literally, or rather, *especially* if translated literally. Popular English practices like writing lonely hearts ads are suddenly devoid of any meaning. The realization that the world outside of England does not share these culturally engrained practices seems to catch this educator off-guard.

Interestingly, the ‘third person’ perspective (discussed in chapter 8) emerges through the disequilibrium this educator experiences from an unanticipated incident, at which time she realises that much of what she has taken to be self-evident is by no means obvious to her students. As the interview progresses the educator talks about how she needs to screen her language carefully during instruction. Likewise, when using a phrase which may cause confusion, she must also be ready to explain and clarify its usage to her students.

Whereas such gaps in understanding may go unnoticed in a national setting with only one or two language learners in the classroom, it becomes an important area of growth in the international setting. The institutional characteristics of the international school, therefore, lent themselves to changes in professional practice, particularly via the distinct student body.

Below, British educator 0023 elaborates:

I have so many students now in EAL compared to where I was. I’ve really learned how to deal with those students and how to provide for them in different ways and I think that’s really improved me as a teacher because in the past, I only had one student . . . and now I have five or six in each class, if not more.

Moving on to even less visible differences, problems emerged when the language educators used was laden with inferences that were uniquely cultural. This did not necessarily involve the use of 'catch phrases.' Instead, it involved deep layers of hidden meaning that non-Anglophone students had no way of detecting and that even educators had never developed an awareness for. In such cases, the challenge was not limited to English language learners but extended to *non-native* English speakers as well. Below, British educator 0027 illustrates the case in point:

Semi-detached houses. It means two houses joined with one wall, but it's got a massive social meaning as well. It's the middle class, suburban house, and detached housing means you're richer, and a terraced house means poorer, and that's hard for people from other countries to understand, because why can't you have a big, massive terraced house? Well, because there aren't any.

This educator notes that even when descriptions are jargon-free, language still comes with a variety of inferential meanings that are difficult to understand if one is not well-versed in the culture producing the language. Whilst most Britons understand implicit differences between varieties of houses, individuals who have been raised outside of Britain have difficulty discerning their inferred social meaning. In a classroom setting, this background information needs to be provided to the students. As the educator points out, however, even when this is done the full underlying meaning does not always make immediate sense. Indeed, such situations prompted educators to reflect more deeply about their own language and the multi-layered meanings that can be attached to it.

This quote also sheds light on the cultural and political implications inferred through language as well. In particular, it intersects with the Intercultural Communicative Competence model (Byram, 1997; 2009), which sees cultural awareness and political education as emerging from cultural knowledge, attitude and skills. It is through his attempts to teach the 'other' that this



educator becomes aware of the cultural and political aspects of his own language and how it reflects a social order. The same educator, after having lived in Latin America notes another challenge:

I had friends who taught English in El Salvador who used to complain that so much poetry used words like autumn and winter. There's no such thing as autumn and winter in tropical countries. So, you're talking about the "winter of misery" or the "autumn of your life" or whatever, in poetry symbolism. You know, they don't have summer and winter. They have rainy season and dry season. So, you've got to think about the vocabulary you use.

In El Salvador, many students did not have any lived experiences with the autumn and winter seasons. Instead, their understanding was related more closely to rainy and dry seasons. Through his experiences abroad, the educator is able to understand that frames of reference are often linked directly to experiences not always shared among groups. It is through conflicts in language and communication that these differing frames of references become evident.

Even among countries that speak the same language very different cultural inferences or meanings can be attached to particular phrases and words. In a group of study abroad students, Root & Ngampornchai (2012) found that students visiting Latin American countries noted important differences in the use of colloquial language between different countries speaking the same language (Spanish). This is not unlike differences between the United Kingdom and the United States where commonly used English words may hold very different meanings or no meaning at all (e.g. rubber/eraser, public/private, surgery).

### *Emotive Aspects of Language*

Besides the practical aspects of language learning, educators also became better acquainted with the affective aspects involved in language learning. It was here that the power of experiential learning was most apparent. This is because educators had gained real-life insight

into the emotions involved in being a language learner through their own lived experiences. Below, British educator 0023 shares her dual experience and how this influenced her teaching practice:

I've been taking lessons in Chinese . . . so I feel like I've gone back to being a student and I've been sitting there during lessons and I go, "What on earth is the teacher talking about?" I really don't – you know, that feeling of complete misunderstanding. I feel overwhelmed and actually, the things that I started doing to help me cope with words . . . I've now taken that into the classroom.

This educator taps into the emotive aspects of being a language learner through her direct experience. She describes the overwhelming feeling of not understanding anything, as well as the powerless feeling of being unable to do anything about it, for fear of being misunderstood. Most importantly, the affective knowledge she has gained through her personal experience abroad has informed her instructional practice. Below, she describes how she has taken strategies she uses in her own language learning process and applies them in the classroom:

Chemistry has got its own vocabulary. . . even if students have learned it and have done really well in the past in chemistry, if they didn't learn it in English, the vast majority of the time is then translating between the words. They'll understand the concept but not the words. So I learned to use Quizlet.com and I now – I actually – even if the students don't want to use flashcards, I always provide flashcards for each class.

Recognizing her own struggles in learning conversational Chinese the educator has become sensitive to how much more difficult it is for students to learn subject-specific vocabulary in the sciences. She notes that vocabulary related to chemistry is often difficult even for native speakers, let alone for students whose first language is not English. This knowledge prompts her to take concrete steps to assist students in achieving success in the classroom.

Although the educator uses a culture-specific incident to illustrate how she comes to make the connection between the personal and instructional dimensions (e.g. learning Chinese), her teaching methodology remains applicable to any language learner. Within the instructional domain, therefore, this educator demonstrates culture-expansive knowledge and skills. That is, she draws on her own experiences as a language learner to inform her teaching methods of students *across cultural contexts*.

Pearce (2012) and Shaklee & Bailey (2012) note that since no single person is knowledgeable in every form of difference, it is logical to expect that educators will have a limited range of experience when dealing with community cultures different from their own. In order to transform awareness into informed instruction, therefore, educators need to be aware of the community and home cultures represented in their classrooms (Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Villegas, 1991). It should be noted that educators in the study were especially keen to do this because of the utilitarian value such knowledge had in their own day-to-day lives both inside and outside of the school building.

## 9.2 Communication Styles

Educators who understood the broader influence of culture had an effective tool through which new cultural information could be filtered and understood. This placed them in an ideal position to manage difference successfully. Educators who had worked in more than one international location brought even deeper insights into how cultural frameworks influenced individual thought and behaviour. Below, American educator 0002 illustrates the difficulties he experienced when he transferred from an international school in Taiwan with a predominantly Taiwanese student body, to an international school in the Dominican Republic with a predominantly Dominican student body:

I had my little tricks, but it just wasn't working--it wasn't working with the Dominicans. . . and to figure out what the differences were culturally I mean--that's a generalisation--but Dominicans are very social, they want to talk, they want to discuss and they'll talk over each other and it's just part of what they do, especially when they're teenagers.

Prior to this quote, the educator described Taiwanese students as being similar to students in China and South-Korea. That is, they were hard-working, compliant and quiet. These internalized cultural values resulted in certain anticipated and consistent behaviours that this educator had grown accustomed to during his time in Taiwan. When he found himself in a very different location, however, cultural norms and values changed drastically. Students in the Dominican Republic were not compliant or quiet students. Instead, they were talkative and social students. He had to adapt quickly:

I went to group work. Very much guided group work in putting them in groups of three to five or maybe I would have them work in pairs to try to motivate them and. . . after that initial first year it was great . . . I realized that this is where they are going to find the success is if they are going to be doing something that they're interested in, something that comes naturally rather than I'm going to do like I've done it before, that I'm going to lecture.

The ability to contextualize his teaching within a larger cultural framework highlights a critical turning point in his growth as a professional educator. Without his prior experiences working in different cultural contexts we do not know that he would have been able to adapt so quickly to his students and the cultural backgrounds that they came with (he had previously worked in North America, Europe and Asia). Whilst this educator has acquired specific information about Taiwanese and Dominican students, he has also gained a more expansive framework through which he is able to contextualize student behaviour.

His understanding of how culture works via norms and values, the institutionalization of those norms and values and how they are reflected in particular communities suggests that he has developed the capacity to recognize cultural difference quickly and respond to it appropriately. Most notably, he has successfully considered the cultural context that his students come from. He has further tapped into their frames of reference so that they learn more easily and thoroughly by using methods that have a higher interest appeal (Gay, 2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

The educator's ability to respond quickly is also indicative of discovery and interaction skills (Byram, 1997; 2009). In particular, we see the educator working within 'real time' restrictions as he attempts to find a balance between his old teaching methods and the new student body with which he is faced. Finally, like many educators who have worked abroad, he demonstrates a greater ability to appreciate cultural and language diversity issues, as well as an increased capacity to teach from a global perspective (Alfaro & Quezada, 2010; Cushner, 2012; Marx & Moss, 2011; Merryfield, 2000; Shaklee & Bailey, 2012; Tang & Choi, 2004).

The culture-specific findings communicated by educator 0002 also align closely with research in the US, which found that behavioural norms of non-dominant cultures such as those of African Americans and Latinos often call for communication that is active, engaging and participatory (Gay, 2002; Irvine 2003). This stands in stark contrast to the mainstream American norm that calls for speakers, for example, to take turns. Irvine (2012) further notes that these cultural variables are often overlooked by educators, even though they help to explain how some culturally diverse students understand and interpret their school experience.

Some scholars have suggested that the disproportionate representation of minorities being referred to special education services may be due to educators wrongly attributing cultural

differences to academic deficits (Irvine, 2012; Winstein, Tomlinson-Clarke & Curran, 2004). Continuing along the lines of communication styles, educators became increasingly attuned to methods of communication beyond language. This included the use of gestures and body language to supplement language and, thus, aid in understanding. Below, Canadian educator 0008, an art teacher, talks about the assistive role of gestures and body language when communicating with her students:

In art, they can learn by watching other people so I use my body more and just watching them learn and seeing what I can do to help them with the language. And just taking more time with those kids . . . you can observe it and also it gets brought to me by being a non-Dutch speaker knowing that I need to be shown how to do stuff or someone needs to take steps with me to help me understand.

This educator uses her own needs as a Dutch language learner to inform her teaching. This helps the more diverse students in her classroom to understand and grasp her art lessons without drawing unnecessary attention or stigmatizing them as different or less competent. We see an increased sensitivity to alternative forms of communication through the use of body language. Once again, the close link between the institutional and personal dimensions provides powerful impetus to changes in instructional practice.

### 9.3 Religious & Gender Considerations

Communication styles were also affected by religious and gender considerations. Regions in the Middle-East, in particular, adhered to strict interpretations of gender roles that were often founded in religious beliefs. This posed unique challenges for educators as they often grappled with their own conflicting values. In the quote below, American educator 0007 describes her experience working in an international school in Egypt:

You have these little boys coming in who are king of the household looking at women like 'you're not going to tell me what to do' and so . . . I had to shift back to being a more disciplined teacher with really some overt behavioural expectations but not because children were naughty, but because children had been raised in a culture where they got to dominate women.

The role of women in Egypt is described as subservient to men. As a female educator, this creates additional challenges with the boys in her classroom. She finds herself drawing on very different classroom management strategies in order to maintain her power position in the classroom. During the interview she also refers to her inner-city experience, which she feels provides her with the skills necessary to manage resistant behaviour. Whether she agrees or disagrees with the particular value becomes irrelevant. Instead, she successfully uses strategies to reduce the friction between two opposing value systems.

Whilst it is tempting to label Egyptian boys as badly behaved, this educator is careful not to make a value judgment (Byram, 1997; 2009). Instead, she recognizes that student behaviour reflects the cultural values of the larger society. This allows her to effectively distance herself from the behaviour (e.g. 'third person' perspective) so as to both avoid personal offense *and* manage the situation successfully. Interestingly, this particular educator also sees herself as having a higher mission:

I had to teach these boys how to be in an American school, as well, because families had sent them to have an American experience. Interestingly enough, the mothers there were very grateful that the female teachers would be tougher on the boys and asked for strategies for home.

Although the school is in Egypt, it remains an American school. The educator communicates that since families send their children to the school by choice, there is a tacit understanding that students will be held to American norms and values. As such, she sees it as her responsibility to

expose students to the American way. This includes the idea of gender equality. That the mothers are grateful for the educator's more structured way of teaching and look to learn from her suggests that the school community welcomes her views.

In the more conservative Arab countries, educators had to contend with even greater measures of austerity in the religious and gender domains. Outside of the actual classroom setting, for example, educators talked about meetings with parents where they struggled to operate within a more conservative protocol. Below, American educator 0001 elaborates:

I had a meeting with a higher-ranking diplomat from a Middle Eastern country. Now we always struggle with that. So maybe I didn't read up on my cultural stuff ahead of time, but his wife was very modestly dressed and I wanted to shake her hand, but I could tell that it was not appropriate. I was like, "Oh" and then I realized what was going on.

Restrictions also needed to be considered when planning outdoor activities for students. In particular, educators needed to consider the separation of girls and boys, as well as ensuring that activities did not involve any touching. Taking this back to the national setting, such experiences might help to explain certain avoidance behaviours that diverse families/students demonstrate in schools. Sensitivity to the reasons behind absences may help create a more positive school environment for students coming from these more conservative cultural backgrounds.

Awareness of variations in norms and values among cultures also changed the way that teaching material was presented. American educator 0003 talked about the book 'The Colour of Water' which is a story of a Jewish woman who grows up and denounces her faith to become a Baptist. Although the educator uses a distinctly Christian-centred text, she brings in a variety of perspectives to account for multiple interpretations. This ensures that the various faiths



represented in her classroom are also acknowledged. As the interview progresses she reveals that she sees the text less as a religious one and more as a story about self-discovery and change. These are also the aspects that she chooses to focus on during instruction.

Here we see evidence of applied strategies from a culturally responsive framework. More specifically, the educator has differentiated her instruction to provide a wide range of opportunities for students of different backgrounds. The curriculum is treated as flexible and adaptive to the lived experiences of her students, who she carefully considers in her instruction. By doing this, she also ensures that their own lives are reflected in the daily learning opportunities (Ladson-Billings, 1995a; 1995b). Audience matters and the educator adjusts her instruction so that she engages her audience in a meaningful way. Such knowledge and skills could prove equally useful with students of non-Christian faiths back in her home country.

#### 9.4 Negative Cases

Although well meaning, a minority of educators continued to associate culture with traditional notions of exotic food and celebrations (Pearce, 2012; Sleeter, 2011). Such educators did not necessarily connect surface-level behaviours to deeper values and assumptions. Based in the Netherlands, British educator 0005, a primary level teacher, presents a classic case of how some educators continue to translate culture:

My last topic was on clothes, so I got pictures of clothes from their home country and they had to describe the clothes and then they went back home and asked their mums and dads. . . I had one of the dads come in and talk about Diwali, and he did a huge presentation. I've got a mum tomorrow coming in to make some lamps. . .

Whilst she considers student backgrounds, this consideration is limited to the parameters of clothes, food and celebrations (the latter two of which she continues to elaborate on in the

interview). Furthermore, in categorizing each student's culture discretely, it is presented as being distinctively separate from the mainstream 'standard.' She makes no reference, for example, to any discussion about the English (or Dutch) cultures as being distinctive as well. One could argue that the *absence* of the English/Dutch culture sends an implicit message that culture is something that is associated with the exotic or 'different.' Finally, there is no indication during the interview that student cultures are integrated into other aspects of the curriculum.

Here, the weakest link of the international school experience is exposed. Problems associated with independent learning arise when there is no supportive mechanism in place, such as those found in classwork or fieldwork models (Byram, 1997). Unlike participants in study-abroad university programmes, most international educators do not have the benefit of pre-departure or post-departure discussions, nor do they usually have formal on-site or re-entry activities in place (Bennett, 2004). Yet such support can make a marked difference in encouraging guided reflection, something that has been identified as a powerful tool in stimulating positive changes in the intercultural development of individuals (Byram, 1997; Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002; Merryfield, 2000). Most importantly, since not all individuals are inclined to initiate self-reflection or to problematize their positions, one can expect missed opportunities for intercultural growth.

Another negative case emerged concerning the institutional value of the international school and its relationship to improved instruction. One educator felt that while the international school experience was culturally enriching, it did not affect the teaching methods he used in the classroom setting. A quote from Australian educator 0028 is provided below:

A lot of international schools think their pedagogy is excellent, and they think that they are doing wonderful things with the school children. . . we do wonderful things, but the environment allows us to do that. The parents are supportive, the children come to school fit, fed, clothed, mentally not scarred, they come prepared to learn each day, and therefore, you can do wonderful things. So, in terms of learning, I haven't learned much really internationally in terms of how to teach.

The educator explicitly rejects the idea that his instruction has improved as a result of his overseas work. He also feels that his instruction would have been the same regardless of whether he worked abroad or not. Since the researcher has limited personal knowledge regarding Australian schools and culture, it is difficult to place his argument within an appropriate context. It is presented here, however, as a negative case whereby an educator rejected the relationship between his cultural experiences abroad and improvements in his instructional practice.

This brings us to an important limitation of the study that needs to be reiterated. Namely, that the sample group of educators who participated in the study were of a self-selected nature. Given this, it is also likely that the majority of educators were ethno-relative in their world views *prior* to moving abroad (Bennett, 1986; 1993; 2013). This is based on the belief that ethno-centric educators would not be inclined to choose a life outside national borders.

The success of the international school experience as a form of intervention, then, needs be contextualized within this more advanced starting position in mind. Continuing along this line of thought, it is also possible that other international educators (who did not choose to participate) may *not* have reported the same positive experiences or demonstrated evidence in support of improved instructional practice much like the negative case presented.

This limitation, however, also strengthens the case for the creation of more systematic support for international educators. This is because systematic guidance and support would ensure that *more* individuals are able to make the most of their intercultural encounters (Bennett, 2010; Gu, Schweisfurth & Day, 2020; Merryfield, 200; Tang & Choi, 2004). As such, despite the fact that the sample group demonstrated growth in intercultural abilities, the importance of expert guidance in the professional development of educators should not be minimized.

### 9.5 Summary

This chapter explored how changes in world views translated into changes in professional practice. These findings were directly relevant to the second research question that guided the study: *In what ways does change in world views transfer into the classroom or school setting?* To answer this question, educators were encouraged to think concretely and articulate specific instances where they demonstrated increased intercultural capacities in the classroom or school setting as a direct result of their work abroad.

Evidence of changes in professional practice fell into one of three dominant subject categories: *Language, Communication Styles and Religious/Gender Considerations*. Like changes in world views, there was substantial overlap between categories. Communication styles, for example, were sometimes influenced by gender or religious beliefs. Likewise, views on gender were sometimes influenced by religious beliefs. As such, although subject categories in this chapter have been organised discretely to aid in the readers understanding, it should be understood that they did not always operate in isolation.

By far, the greatest growth was reported in the area of language. Conducive to this growth was working with a high proportion of English language learners, as well as educators' own difficulties as language learners in the host countries they resided in. Specific areas in language

growth included explicit, implicit and emotive aspects of language, including growth in one's *own* language. With regards to explicit aspects of language, educators became aware of overt differences such as language directionality as well as grammar structures in languages that were markedly different from European languages. This knowledge typically informed educator practice through appropriate instructional modifications. Educators, for instance, often ensured that English language learners were given additional time for assignment completion or reduced quantities of work to accommodate for slower processing of the English language.

Contrasting with explicit aspects, the implicit aspects of language involved a much deeper awareness. Interestingly, it was through working with a high proportion of English language learners that the hidden cultural inferences of the English language began to materialize. This included a developing awareness of imagery that words cultivated in the mind of the native-speaker that was not necessarily present in the mind of the non-native speaker. A seemingly simple descriptor like 'semi-detached housing', for instance, was not only a physical description of a type of house but carried with it a deeper social and economic meaning that was sometimes difficult for educators to articulate.

Finally, sensitivity to the emotive aspects of language learning was augmented largely due to educators' own language struggles outside of the school building. The direct experience of being a language learner (and a foreigner) provided educators with new frames of reference that allowed them to better relate to students who spoke a language other than English. As language learners themselves, educators also developed strategies that they later applied in their classrooms. These strategies included, for example, the use of technology to aid student understanding.

Increased knowledge and skills in the area of communication styles was also evident among educators. Since educators were exposed to multiple cultures they became increasingly aware of the influences of culture on the dispositions and demeanour of individuals. Educators, for example, described social and participatory students in certain Latin American cultures, compliant students in some Asian cultures and domineering male students in particular Arabic cultures. Recognising culture and its relationship to behaviours helped educators to better understand and connect with students as they adjusted instruction to accommodate to these communication styles.

Lastly, gender/religious considerations were a third area of reported growth. This area of growth was particularly relevant to educators working in the more conservative countries of the Middle-East. Indeed, educators reported working in settings where there was a deliberate and calculated separation of male and female students. One educator described the process of changing classes in secondary school as one where girls would leave a classroom through one door and boys would then come in through another door, so as to ensure no contact between genders.

Likewise, even in schools in Europe activities had to be planned in such a way that there was minimal physical touching between genders so that students from these more conservative cultures could participate. On an intellectual level, such experiences sensitized educators to the values of particular cultures. This was further reflected in the way that the curriculum was delivered. When dealing with traditionally Christian-centred texts, for example, one educator talked about how she made sure she acknowledged other faiths represented in the classroom in a fairer and more equitable manner.

Within the context of instruction, therefore, intercultural abilities seemed to fall on a spectrum ranging from culture-specific, culture-expansive or both. Culture-specific abilities involved knowledge and skills that were particular to a distinct culture. On its own, the culture-specific domain proved useful when planning instruction for students who belonged to a particular cultural group. Although an important tool for educators, it remained narrow in its scope because it was applicable only to a select group of students. In contrast, culture-expansive knowledge and abilities extended application beyond particular cultural contexts. In this way, it served as a *further extension of* more specific knowledge and abilities. The most adept of educators were able to use data specific to cultural groups to deduce and better understand cultural differences more broadly.

From an institutional perspective, then, the international school was seen as unique in both its location and its student body. This gave it substantive value in its potential to address the intercultural development of educators. With regards to the personal dimension, world-view changes (discussed in preceding chapters) played a central role in how educators chose to utilize new cultural knowledge. Finally, the instructional dimension remained critical because it was the most direct link to the students. In this way, the process of intercultural development came full circle with the materialization of sound instructional practices. The international school experience, therefore, contributed institutional, personal and instructional dimensions towards the cultivation of intercultural competence (Richards, Brown & Forde, 2006).

Taking into account the limitations of the study discussed earlier (see section 2.6) findings indicate that the international school experience provided educators with culture-specific and culture-expansive knowledge and skills. Evidence of improved intercultural abilities in both domains was apparent through concrete examples provided by the educators themselves.

Findings support that the international school experience is not limited to changes in world-views, but has direct implications on the professional practice of educators. This is an important finding when we consider that the lack of intercultural abilities is an identified problem among educators (Alfaro & Quezada, 2010; Merryfield, 2000; Ortloff, Shah, Lou and Hamilton, 2012).

The lack of intercultural abilities becomes even more problematic when considering the increasingly pluralistic nature of Anglophone societies *within* national borders and the speed of globalisation *outside* of national borders. While national schools and international schools have historically run parallel but non-convergent paths, exploring how these paths might begin to connect seems a worthwhile and timely endeavour. It is with this thought in mind that the final chapter turns to the bigger international picture, including a deeper exploration of implications of this and supporting studies.



## CHAPTER 10 – CONCLUSION

This chapter aims to synthesize the data gathered into a coherent ‘story’ whilst relating it back to the original research questions that guided the study. The synthesis is presented in four headings. *Key Original Findings* summarizes the research findings, whilst *Discussion of Results* situates the various findings within the context of other research in the field. This is followed by *Distinct Contribution* which looks at why the particular findings are important and the distinct contribution that they make. Finally, *Recommendations for Future Research* discusses some possible directions for the future.

### Key Original Findings

The study was organised around two overarching research questions. It is these questions that the first section discusses and responds to in the form of a concluding summary. As such, we begin by revisiting the research questions that guided the study:

*In what ways does the international school experience cause change in the world views of Anglophone educators? In what ways does this change (if any) transfer to the classroom or school setting?*

In order to respond to each of the two questions in an orderly fashion, the section that follows has been separated into smaller subheadings. *Identifying the Starting Point* provides a quick summary of important background information about educators. This is followed by *The Personal/Professional Experience* which recaps the actual opportunities and challenges educators faced once abroad, followed by *Outcomes*, where the consequences of those opportunities and challenges are deliberated.

### *Identifying the Starting Point*

In order to gauge whether the world views of educators changed as a result of their overseas experience, it was necessary to first establish what kind of world views educators began with. Besides gaining insight into initial motivations, investigating the reasons behind choices to teach abroad also prompted a deeper exploration into the values that supported those motives. Although reasons behind educator choices were multiple and complex, there were nonetheless some identifiable patterns that emerged from the sample group. A rather *unsurprising* finding was the high value many international educators ascribed to travel. This appeared to be related to life experiences during the formative and/or young adult years, including impressionable travel experiences with family (that were not necessarily frequent) and/or participation in university study abroad programmes.

In contrast, a smaller group of educators was driven by a desire for either a 'one-off' need for change or, alternatively, a *recurrent* need for change. For the former group, the choice to work abroad typically coincided with a juncture in their life whereby they were looking for a significant change. The move overseas satisfied this 'one-off' need, with educators in this group typically staying in overseas locations well beyond the typical two year contract period. In contrast, the latter group ascribed a high value to *recurrent* change. These educators indicated a pattern of frequent mobility and typically moved on to new locations every one or two years. Data further indicated that although educators in this group grew up within national borders, they often experienced frequent mobility within those borders during their childhood years.

Numerous educators across categories also referenced visits to friends or family members who lived abroad. It was during such visits that the interest in overseas work also intensified. As such, it appeared that visiting someone who lived in a foreign country, participating in studying

abroad programmes and/or travelling during childhood served as transitional experiences. These transitional experiences appeared to play a role in decisions to live abroad later in life. Only in cases where educators experienced frequent mobility during childhood (not the mobility associated with going on holiday) did such experiences move beyond transitional and into what seemed to be an internalized personality trait.

Given the sample group profile and the data drawn from the group, it was presumed that participants were most likely ethno-relative (or at least very close to it) even before beginning their sojourner experience. This assumption was made for two reasons. Firstly, it was believed that the very act of choosing to live abroad was *one* indicator of an increased propensity towards travel and culture. Secondly, the sample group was made up of individuals who also *chose* to participate in the study, with full knowledge of the topic under study. This suggests that participants had a reasonable interest in intercultural development to begin with. Outcomes of the study, therefore, need to be considered within these parameters and broader generalisations should be approached with caution.

### *The Personal Experience*

Once overseas, educators had to contend with a variety of personal and professional challenges and opportunities. On a personal level, moving to a new country required adjusting to a new language, a new social environment and, in general, new ways of doing things. An important feature of this adjustment was educators' newly acquired minority status in the societies they joined. For many educators this was the first time in their lives that they carried the label of the 'other,' including the difficulties often associated with such a status.

Besides language difficulties, educators who lived in non-European countries like China or Malawi also had to contend with *looking* different (29/30 educators were of European descent).

In such instances, the label of 'other' included a visible marker that educators carried with them at all times, as it was not physically possible for them to blend into the majority group. Educators who found themselves in such predicaments discovered quickly that they were frequently judged based on their physical characteristics, even before any attempts were made to speak the language of the host country. Beyond physical characteristics, educators also found that they were judged according to their country of citizenship. In cases where educators' representative country maintained good relations with the host country, interactions with locals were more positive. Conversely, in cases where educators' representative country maintained estranged relations with the host country, they were judged more harshly.

Among single educators, there was an acute and/or chronic sense of loss communicated. Those who described a more chronic sense of loss also expressed unresolved issues back home that had often occurred in their absence. These issues involved events like the loss of a childhood home due to the relocation of loved ones, parental death or divorce. In contrast to the complexities behind a chronic sense of loss, an acute sense of loss for single educators was less surprising. This is because single educators travelled alone and had no readily available social networks in the new countries they found themselves in. As a result, they relied heavily – often exclusively -- on friendships formed in the work environment.

Interestingly, whilst single educators expressed a sense of loss, there were a few who simultaneously expressed a sense of relief. These educators felt free from the pressures and expectations of citizenship back in their home country. From this perspective, the label of 'other' was seen as advantageous because it was a less demanding one. On a more private level, being far from home also meant that educators were liberated from obligations to family or

friends. This was seen as an advantage because day-to-day decisions were based on the exclusive needs and wants of educators alone.

Practically speaking, educators expressed frustration with the lack of transparency and poor infrastructure in some of the countries they lived in. In some parts of the Middle-East and Asia, for example, educators had to deal with shadow markets whereby civil servants expected personal payment for installing phone lines or providing other utility services. Likewise, excessive pollution or lack of hot water was problematic in some Asian and African countries.

With regards to opportunities, the most sought after and valued aspects of the overseas experience were the frequent travel opportunities to neighbouring countries. Educators were able to travel extensively and see many parts of the world at a comparatively low cost due to their point of departure. Educators described spending their summer months or holiday breaks tracking gorillas, visiting monks and seeing things that their colleagues back home did not have the same access to.

Finally, another important opportunity educators valued was the free tuition afforded to dependents. Since most international school fees were upwards of 15,000 euro per annum (with some as high as 30,000) this was seen as a valuable benefit, particularly for educators who had several children travelling with them. For most educators, such schooling would not be something they could afford back in their home countries. As such, educators considered their children fortunate to be receiving what they believed to be a 'world-class' education.

### *The Professional Experience*

Whilst challenges in the personal domain were anticipated, challenges in the professional domain were less anticipated. Professional challenges/opportunities faced while abroad spanned the institutional, cultural-pedagogic and socio-economic dimensions. Institutionally, a

trademark characteristic of the international school was the frequent turn-over of students and faculty. This frequent change typically resulted in a looser translation of curricular and management structures and processes.

Besides working with national curricula, educators also found themselves grappling with new international curricula that many overseas schools adopted either in part or in whole. There were several educators, as well, who found themselves working in schools that were not representative of their home country. There were Britons, for example, who worked in American schools and vice versa. In such instances, educators were surprised to find themselves struggling with a school system that would, at first glance, appear to be very similar.

The student population in international schools was also unique. Whilst some schools catered largely to expatriate students, the majority of schools maintained a high proportion of students from the local community. In several instances, educators described working in international schools that catered almost entirely to a local population. Understandably, higher proportions of local students equated to higher proportions of English language learners (ELL). In schools where the majority of students were locals, therefore, educators had to quickly develop effective skills in teaching such populations.

Beyond language challenges within the school building, a largely local student body influenced the 'softer' aspects of pedagogy as well. In conservative Muslim countries, for example, strict adherence to gender protocol was expected and touching remained a sensitive matter in planning classroom activities or field trips. Likewise, in China, 'learning through play' was not a pedagogical philosophy Chinese families were ready to accept in the early years. Traditional forms of learning such as rote memorization and repetition were an expected part of the education provision, even for the very young. Educators, therefore, needed to re-think, re-

adjust and re-negotiate their methods of teaching to reflect the demands of the communities they served.

Finally, the independent nature of the international school—including the socio-economic status of students—required adjustment on the part of educators as well. Whilst most educators saw the improved socio-economic status of students as making a positive contribution to the learning environment, others took a more critical stance. In particular, the independent fee-paying nature of international schools was seen as fostering a false sense of entitlement among students and their families. This usually involved demanding parents who educators perceived as exerting unreasonable control over the teaching and learning process. This level of involvement was seen as intrusive and difficult to deal with, particularly since many educators had come from state schools where parent input was much more constrained.

### *Outcomes*

Returning back to the research questions: In what ways did the personal and professional challenges, described above, contribute to change in both world views and professional practice? Despite the discrete categorization of personal and professional challenges in the preceding section, these domains did not actually operate in separate spheres. Instead, it was the *intersection* between both the personal and professional domains that made these experiences particularly powerful. The dual experience of being a language learner whilst working *with* language learners, for instance, prompted significant change in world views that, in turn, also prompted changes in instructional practice.

Educators' increased awareness of both explicit and implicit aspects of language learning prompted them to pay greater attention to the pace and clarity of their speaking during instruction, as well as their choice of phrases and words. Phrases like 'jot this down' or 'pocket

change', for example, held little meaning to students who were non-native English speakers, *even if they were fluent English speakers*. Beyond practical aspects, educators also gained important insights into the emotional aspects of language learning. This happened as a direct result of their own personal struggles as language learners in the larger community. These insights cultivated an increased sensitivity to the feelings of vulnerability that often come with the struggle of learning a new language.

Educators also became progressively aware of how culture influenced the learning styles of students. One educator noted significant cultural influences, for example, when describing the *compliant* behaviour of students he taught in Taiwan with the *social* behaviour of students he taught in the Dominican Republic. He went on to explain how he changed his teaching methodology to make learning meaningful and accessible to his students by moving from a lecture format (what he used in the Taiwanese context) to an interactive group work format (what he used in the Dominican context).

In another instance, a female educator described how boys in Egypt behaved in a domineering manner because of the submissive role assigned to women in the larger society. She responded by adjusting her form of discipline and classroom management so that she remained effective within the changed cultural context. Most notable was the educator's ability to withhold judgment whilst trying to understand the reasons behind behaviours (which did not necessarily constitute an agreement with those behaviours).

The ability to withhold judgement when faced with unfamiliar ways was an important component in working effectively with groups that held different values from educators. This capacity allowed educators to effectively take on a 'third person' perspective whereby they were able to step back and observe not only the culture of the 'other', but their *own* culture as



well. The ability to withhold judgement was most closely tied with a change in attitude that was facilitated by educators' own experiential learning abroad.

Whilst overseas, educators also became sensitized to the role of politics. This included a growing awareness of the political hierarchy of their own country relative to other countries of the world. Whilst educators were sometimes critical of their country's role in world events, they nevertheless acknowledged the privileges that their Anglophone citizenship afforded them in many parts of the world (e.g. such as international opportunities for well-paid employment). Besides the advantages of Anglophone citizenship outside of home borders, educators also developed a greater appreciation for the luxuries they enjoyed *within* their home borders. Clean air, hot water, convenient store hours and transparent governmental processes were no longer taken for granted. In this way, educator experiences abroad strengthened ties with the home country.

The idea of 'home' was an important one in the study because it dealt directly with feelings of belonging and safety. Whilst interpretations of home varied, most educators continued to associate home with a physical space. Home, as a place, included national associations (e.g. 'New Zealand is my home'), as well as more immediate and practical associations (e.g. 'home is the place I go home to at the end of each day'). In addition to place, educators also made strong associations with people and memories. Still others (a minority) were no longer sure where they belonged. Single educators who endured significant changes back home whilst they were living abroad continued to communicate strong feelings of loss, disorientation and even identity confusion.

Finally, beyond traditional notions of national/regional culture the presence of a very distinct international school community culture was also evident. The most exceptional feature of this

culture was the intrinsic mobility of its educators. This feature contributed towards a marked shift in some key values. More specifically, many educators began to ascribe a *diminished* value to material possessions that became a burden to their mobility. At the same time, they appeared to ascribe an *increased* value to experiences. This was an important change because it occurred at the value-level indicating a process of internalization (see section 8.2).

Most thought-provoking was that the intercultural growth of educators seemed to have less to do with sustained and prolonged interaction *with* the other, and more to do with prolonged and sustained interaction *as* the other. In this way, the personal experience of being the ‘other’ played a key role in both changes in world views and professional practice. It was through personal experience that educators were able to internalise new frames of reference and important changes in attitude. It was through personal struggle, as well, that educators demonstrated culture-specific and culture-expansive knowledge and skills in working with diverse groups of students.

#### Discussion of Results

How do these findings situate within other studies in the field? Whilst the previous section presented a summary of findings in a chronological ‘story’ layout, this section discusses those findings within the context of other research. The section begins by looking at relationships between findings and the various cultural adaptation/intercultural models, then goes on to connect relevant literature to changes in professional practice.

#### *The Sojourner Experience & the Professional Realm*

Although the current study did not measure the role of time intervals in the process of cultural adaptation, it did identify a U-shaped relationship in educator adjustment (Lysgaard, 1955; Oberg, 1960). The majority of educators, like most sojourners, began their journeys with a

positive outlook that was eventually followed by a low point. This low point correlated with the crisis or culture-shock stages identified in the work of Lysgaard (1955), Oberg (1960) and Ward, Bochner & Furham (2001). Single educators demonstrated more symptoms associated with 'culture-shock,' whilst married educators demonstrated a lesser degree.

One small group of educators appeared to be immune to the U-shaped hypothesis. This pertained to those who had experienced frequent mobility during their childhood years. Educators in this category did *not* acknowledge, or show evidence of, a crisis or culture-shock stage. It is possible that since mobility was a normative part of their everyday lives during childhood, they became de-sensitized to the difficulties otherwise associated with intermittent mobility. Besides suggesting a process of internalization, this finding disturbs literature that supports a consistent experience for all sojourners (Lysgaard, 1955). Instead, findings align more closely with the argument that both individual differences and particular environments play an important role in how the sojourner experience is interpreted (Black & Mendenhall, 1991; Church, 1982).

For most educators the crisis or culture-shock stage aligned with many of the conditions described by Oberg (1960) and later confirmed by Ward, Bochner & Furnham (2001). Most prominent was the condition indicating 'feelings of loss regarding friends, family, home or professional status.' All of these feelings, *except loss of professional status*, proved relevant. This exception existed because international educators continued to maintain a relatively high professional status, even as many of them struggled professionally to adapt to new curricula and an influx of local students.

Although the majority of educators anticipated some form of culture-shock with their move to a new country; they did not always anticipate the same with regards to the work environment.

This finding supported other research indicating that educators were not always prepared for the professional challenges of working in an overseas setting (Roskell, 2013). High student and staff turnover (Hacohen, 2012; Hawley, 1994; Mancuso, Roberts & White, 2010; Mathews, 1989; Odland & Ruzicka, 2009) a more flexible management style (Savva, 2013a) and, in the case of non-traditional international schools, an unusually high enrolment of local children (Hayden & Thompson, 2013) all contributed to institutional characteristics that were unique and quite often unexpected.

The process whereby the exported education provision interacted with the receiving community mirrored concepts of transfer in the field of comparative education (Cowen, 2009; Steiner-Khamsi, 2013). The use of Cowen's (2009) 'transfer, translation and transformation' model proved particularly useful in understanding the complex morphology of the international school. Beyond the process of education *transfer* (e.g. the transnational movement of national curriculum, accreditation and educators), the education provision in international schools also underwent a process of translation.

*Translation* typically involved a re-interpretation of exported components to reflect the demands and needs of two distinct communities. The first was the local community that welcomed and accepted the international school into its physical space. The second was the international *school* community itself that came with its own unique characteristics described above (e.g. transiency). Finally, the *transformation* stage involved the changed or 'morphed' (Cowen, 2009) provision of education over time. This was evident in the hybridized pedagogy and methods that educators described during interviews (see section 6.3).

On an individual level, professional difficulties were further exacerbated for those who worked in schools that were not representative of their own Anglophone country (e.g. Britons working

in American schools). This suggests the existence of important differences between Anglophone education systems. The particular finding runs parallel to the work of Marx & Moss (2011) who found that American student-teachers struggled to adjust to cultural differences that arose through UK-based student-teaching placements.

#### *Grouping Behaviours & the Personal Realm*

The dual demands of having to adjust both to new personal and professional contexts resonated with the concept of 'double' culture-shock as described by Austin (2007). Very similar to Austin's (2007) description, adjustments in the personal domain did not necessarily coincide with adjustments to the professional domain, resulting in an unsynchronized struggle to find balance. Group formation was one common response to the culture-shock/crisis stage. This was a protective mechanism that involved a greater dependence on others of similar backgrounds and circumstances (Bochner et al, 1985; Oberg, 1960).

Despite reliance on mono-cultural group relationships, findings contradicted research that reported a tendency of educators to idealize aspects of their home culture whilst being highly critical of the host culture (Austin, 2007; Oberg, 1960; Roskell, 2013). That is, whilst educators engaged in grouping processes associated with self-categorization, they did not engage in processes of self-enhancement or the depersonalization of other groups (Hogg, Terry & White, 1995; Turner, 1982).

As such, whilst educators developed a greater appreciation for their home country they also became increasingly *critical* of their home country. This was true both in relation to global events and friends and family back home. This suggests that the grouping behaviours described served more as coping mechanisms rather than exclusionary mechanisms. Finally, although the

sample group did not show evidence of engaging in self enhancement or depersonalization strategies, educators in the group were nonetheless subjected to these processes *by others*.

As minorities, educators often found themselves on the receiving-end of grouping behaviours that marginalized them (Turner & Tajfel, 1986). A determining factor in the quality of interactions between educators and locals in the community, for example, was dependent on the national affiliation of educators. Where the relationship between the host country and the representative Anglophone country was positive, educators were viewed in a more positive light. In contrast, where the relationship between the host country and the representative Anglophone country was estranged, educators were treated more harshly. This finding coincides with research pointing to national identity as one of the most salient identifiers (Antonisich, 2009; Malesevic, 2003; Smith, 1992).

National identity was a salient category among educators themselves, with most identifying strongly with national, regional and professional affiliations respectively. Educator definitions of 'home' also showed strong links to national affiliation in a broader sense, with more specific associations to a particular neighbourhood or childhood home. It was unclear, however, whether the tendency to associate home with a place existed as a result of an externally imposed expectation.

This possibility was considered because there were numerous instances where educators tried, with limited success, to fit their transient lives into *physical spaces* defined as 'home.' Furthermore, although educators made reference to people and memories (Osler & Starkey, 2005), most stopped short of defining them as 'home.' This occurred even when data they provided indicated that their sense of home better matched an association with people and memories (as opposed to a place).

### *The Role of Motives & Values*

Research on the motives of international educators has been limited to recruitment and personnel perspectives (Cambridge, 2002; Garton, 2000; Hardman, 2001; Hawley, 1994). The current research has contributed something new to this area by looking beyond motives to try and understand the underlying values of international educators, including how those values form in the national setting. Despite the small sample group, particular patterns forming loose classifications did emerge. The largest classification belonged to educators who ascribed a high value to travel, followed by educators who ascribed a high value to change. The latter category of educators was further divided into those who indicated a 'one-off' need for change and those who indicated a recurrent need for change.

The latter group appeared to share characteristics similar to the 'maverick' described in Hardman's (2001) typology and elaborated on by Cambridge (2002). Educators in this classification, for example, moved about regularly. A contradiction, however, was that educators who sought recurrent change did so as an end, with the international school being a means to that end. This was distinctly different from Hardman's (2001) 'maverick' who was described as wanting to travel and see the world as an end. Evidence on how these values developed included narratives from educators who recalled impressionable travel experiences during their formative years, participation in study-abroad programmes during university years and visits to friends/family living overseas.

Finally, since international schools had their own unique community the values of educators began to reflect aspects of this community. In particular, many educators described a marked shift in values from the accumulation of material goods to a search for experiences. This could

be understood within the context of their comparatively mobile lifestyles, with the accumulation of objects losing their value due to the difficulties they created in mobility. In this way, the internalization of new values (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) was evident through prolonged exposure to the international school community.

#### *How the ICC and DMIS Models Fared*

An advantage of the Intercultural Communicative Competence model (Byram, 1997; Byram, 2009) was that it did not rely on a linear scale. Indeed, it did not appear that educators' intercultural development occurred in a neat or orderly fashion. Instead, educators were exposed to a variety of cultural factors in an unsystematic and often arbitrary manner. This was true both with regards to the development of knowledge, skills and attitude, as well as the emerging qualities of cultural and political awareness.

Whereas the Intercultural Communicative Competence model focused on the actual *processes* involved in intercultural development, the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity model (Bennett, 1986; 1993; 2013) presented stages of intercultural development as *final outcomes*, along with objectives to match each stage of development (also in the form of final outcomes). Given this adjusted vantage point, the DMIS model contributed a very different dimension to the study. Whilst the linearity of the DMIS made it a very user-friendly model that was easy to follow, it did not always represent intercultural development as precisely as the ICC model.

This is because the same educator could conceivably fall into very different stages depending on what cultural difference they were being challenged with. One educator, for example, fell into the minimization stage (ethno-centric category) with regards to the socio-economic status of her students. The same educator, however, also fell into the acceptance stage (ethno-relative



category) when faced with religious challenges she discussed later in the interview. As a whole, most educators in the sample group seemed to move fluidly through the minimization, acceptance and adaptation stages depending largely on the type of difference they were faced with.

#### *Changes in Professional Practice*

The most prominent changes in professional practice occurred across the areas of *Language, Communication Styles* and *Religious/Gender Considerations*. Like changes in world views, there was substantial overlap between categories. Communication styles, for example, were sometimes influenced by gender or religious beliefs. Likewise, views on gender were sometimes influenced by religious beliefs. Beyond the identified subject categories, the study also considered the institutional, personal and instructional dimensions of culturally responsive pedagogy (Richards, Brown & Forde, 2006).

From an institutional perspective, the international school was seen as unique in both its location and its student body. This gave it substantive value in its potential to address the intercultural development of educators. With regards to the personal dimension, the struggle with 'otherness' in the outside communities educators joined had a marked impact on their world-views. Finally, the instructional dimension remained critical because it was the most direct link to students. In this way, the process of intercultural development came full circle with the materialization of instructional practices that considered the lived experiences and frames of reference of students (Gay, 2000).

Within the context of instruction, knowledge typically fell on a culture-specific and culture-expansive continuum. Culture-specific involved knowledge that was particular to one culture or cultural group. On its own, this knowledge proved useful when planning instruction for students

who belonged to that particular cultural group. Although an important tool for educators, it remained narrow in its scope because it was applicable only to a select group of students. In contrast, culture-expansive knowledge extended application into broader cultural contexts.

The most adept educators were able to use data specific to cultural groups to deduce and better understand cultural differences more broadly and vice versa. These two subdivisions of knowledge aligned closely with Byram's (1997; 2009) description of knowledge which considers knowledge about a specific culture (e.g. gestures and protocol) and knowledge about how individuals and societies work more broadly.

Examples of culture-specific knowledge included a familiarity with specific non-European languages and the unique challenges they posed, including the usage of a different alphabet, altered reading directionality (e.g. right to left), as well as language systems that required much more than just a shifting placement of subject and verb. Transcending specific cultures, educators also became increasingly aware of their own language and took care to screen their language during instruction. In short, 'frames of reference' were no longer taken for granted by educators (Bennett, 2004).

Educators also demonstrated an increased capacity to adapt instruction according to culturally-based learning styles (Ladson-Billings, 1995a; 1995b). Several educators who had worked in Central and South American countries observed a more social learning style among students in some Caribbean and Latin American countries. These specific findings coincided with research conducted in the US that also found that behavioural norms of non-dominant cultures such as those of Latinos (and African Americans) often call for communication that is active, engaging and participatory (Gay, 2002, Irvine, 2003; 2012). These variables are often overlooked by

educators, even though they help to explain how some culturally diverse students understand and interpret their school experience (Irvine, 2012).

Whilst educators demonstrated a notable shift away from *judging* to *understanding* difference, this was difficult to do when values were not only different but contradictory. This was the case, for instance, in several of the more conservative Muslim countries where educators sometimes faced practices of corporal punishment or behaviours aimed at restricting or controlling individuals of the female gender. In such instances, educators usually behaved in one of two ways.

In the first instance, educators accepted the status quo because they either saw themselves as visitors who were passing through and did not feel it was their place to pass judgment *or* they saw themselves as having limited power to make a difference in something that seemed to be much larger than them. Educators who responded in this way sometimes referred to the idea of relativism and the need to respect the ways of the host country. In the second instance, educators chose to utilize their power positions in the school building to exert influence, usually through educating families or having parent meetings. Beyond the school campus, however, educators did not have knowledge or access to resources in the community that might contribute to more significant structural change.

The idea of relativism has been rejected by Osler & Starkey (2010) who have argued, instead, for what they call a relationalist approach based in intercultural dialogue between groups. According to this line of thought the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, recognised by all UN member states, provides inalienable rights that cannot be denied under the pretext of relativism. Instead, these rights can be attained through accommodations that respect both the cultural traditions of groups and equal rights of individuals (Osler & Starkey, 2010). Given the

limited access to resources and knowledge that educators had, one possible solution to this problem may be a stronger presence of Non-Government Organisations. This may be facilitated through shared affiliations between NGOs and international schools such as those with the British Council (in the case of British international schools) or the American embassy (in the case of American international schools).

### *Limitations*

Now is an appropriate time to acknowledge, once more, some limitations of the study. A major difficulty in the research had to do with the self-selected nature of the sample group. This had a double-impact because not only was the sample group made up of educators who decided to teach abroad, but it was also made up of educators who elected to participate in the study. Given this, two arguments can be made against the generalisability of the findings. Firstly, it can be argued that educators in the sample group were likely to be interculturally competent to begin with. As noted earlier in the thesis (see section 2.6) this is believed to be a valid argument. As a result, it should not be assumed that the international school experience would have the same impact on the nationally-based educator who would not, of their own accord, choose to work abroad.

Another argument is that educators in the sample group were only representative, and therefore limited, to those who had experienced intercultural growth as a result of their international school experience (hence their choice to participate). According to this line of thought, educators who were not as interculturally competent or had not experienced any intercultural growth simply did not choose to participate. The truth is that we do not really know why some educators chose to participate and others did not. It could be just as likely, for

instance, that some were much too busy to be bothered or, perhaps, were not comfortable with the intimacy of a personal interview with a stranger.

Taking into account the limitations discussed in this section, empirical evidence in this thesis nevertheless points to the international school as a potent resource for the intercultural development of Anglophone educators who participated in the study. Evidence of increased sensitivity and empathy towards minority cultures and the explicit use of knowledge and skills to improve classroom management and instruction can be found throughout the Findings & Analysis chapters in support of this position.

The overseas placement of the international school, in particular, appeared to play an important role in the cultivation of these intercultural capacities. In the study, educators had to contend with two competing worlds while abroad. The world inside of the school building was a place where many maintained their high status positions and a relatively secure locus of power. Simultaneously, however, educators also had to deal with the world outside of the school building where they were quickly relegated to a minority status. The dual experience of being powerful and powerless, therefore, caused many educators to become intimately and personally aware of the advantages of majority membership and the contrasting struggles of minority membership.

As institutional diaspora of the Western world, overseas international schools can be seen as potential resources for the national education systems that they represent abroad. Whilst international schools based abroad have long benefited from a teaching supply emanating from nationally based schools in Anglophone countries, national schools have been comparatively slow in tapping into the benefits that their institutional contemporaries overseas may also be able to offer them. Given the benefits of international work discussed in this thesis, the

institutionalisation of cross-cultural experiences becomes one alternative pathway that would benefit from further exploration.

There are a variety of forms that this institutionalisation can take on. Partnerships between nationally based<sup>4</sup> international schools and overseas international schools offer one pathway that is conducive to promoting cross-cultural experiences—particularly given their shared ‘international’ ethos. The establishment of partnerships between state schools and overseas international schools is yet another form. Such partnerships may involve short term or long term teacher exchange components that allow educators to take temporary leaves abroad, whilst securing their teaching posts upon return.

Other potential partners in the institutionalisation of cross-cultural experiences may include universities and/or international school organisations. Exchanges between schools may, for example, be brokered through these larger bodies which could conceivably oversee the design of the programmes as well. Ideally, teachers who participate would also be able to use their work abroad towards the fulfilment of mandatory professional development hours and/or receive the equivalent in university credit.

Regardless of partnership form, critically important is that multiple learning pathways are fused into such programmes to ensure that the intercultural development of educators is properly facilitated (see section 3.4). This will inevitably require a commitment to the establishment, integration and evaluation of appropriate policies, protocol and training. This commitment, in turn, will ensure that those who participate (educators and institutions alike) will benefit the most from the unique opportunities that emerge as a result.

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<sup>4</sup> The term nationally based refers to schools based in Anglophone countries (e.g. American schools in the USA or British schools in the UK).

## Distinct Contribution

There are several contributions that the study makes and I will use this section to briefly summarize the *key* contributions in the order in which they are presented in the thesis. Firstly, the research contributes new findings on the values of international educators. This includes how those values come to develop in the national setting, as well as how they change as a result of the distinct international school community they participate in. This is a fairly new contribution to the field of international education that has, up until now, been restricted to the study of motives from a personnel perspective. Admittedly, this contribution only begins to scratch the surface of value development in the international educator. Nevertheless, the contribution is distinct and it hopefully sets the stage for further research in this area.

Secondly, the study re-affirms the finding that overseas experiences can have profound effects on world views. Whilst the finding itself is not new (there are a plethora of studies that support the overseas experience) the study makes a distinct contribution by documenting how such changes begin to formulate in the mental landscape of the international educator. This includes an important delineation between interaction *with* the other, compared to interaction *as* the other, with the latter process playing a particularly significant role in personal and professional transformation. As such, the study adds further weight to the argument in favour of overseas experiences through its unique data set and context.

Finally, the most distinct contribution is the explicit connection the research makes between changes in world views and changes in professional practice. The study illustrates concrete instructional strategies educators use with regards to English language learners, learning styles related to culture and gender/religious differences *that they did not use prior to their work abroad*. By doing so, the study goes beyond the exploration of changes in disposition and looks

at how those changes affect the actual practice of educators in relation to students. It is this connection to practice that further supports the international school experience as a potential tool for educator development.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

Human mobility has created pluralistic societies which have, in turn, resulted in diverse student populations. This has posed challenges for a teaching force that is not very diverse itself. Coursework based in the classroom setting, such as multicultural education, has had limited success in addressing these difficulties. In short, it has been difficult for educators who have grown up as part of a dominant culture to understand the challenges that students from minority cultures face. It is from this vantage point that the present study explored the international school as a potential tool for providing educators with cross-cultural experiences aimed at improving intercultural abilities. Beyond the contribution of this research, there are several recommendations that I would make for future research:

- Given the qualitative nature of the present study, a quantitative study covering the salient data points would provide greater breadth and support to findings (or alternatively, refute findings). Survey distribution to educators working across a wide cross-section of ECIS (or other) member schools would be especially ideal.
- Classroom observations comparing teacher claims against what is actually done in the classroom would allow for the triangulation of data and increase validity. These observations could occur within the framework of the ICC and/or DMIS models.
- Whilst the present study focused on the challenges and opportunities of the overseas international school, it would be of interest to conduct a similar study with educators in



domestically-based international schools. In what ways might the domestic international school contribute to the intercultural (or other) development of educators? A comparative study of results may provide some useful insights.

- The international school community as one that has its own objective culture is an area that would benefit from further exploration. Whilst the present study identified a notable shift from material-centred values to experience-centred values it is possible that there are more subtle shifts that exist. These shifts could be teased out further through a more focused study on the value changes that international educators undergo.
- Within the context of teacher training, a study of student-teachers completing their practicum in state schools compared to student-teachers completing their practicum in international schools (whether domestic or overseas) would help to delineate differences and similarities in benefits. This might incorporate individual interviews, classroom observations and, perhaps, an analysis of student-teacher reflective journals.
- A longitudinal study that follows educators back to their home country and tracks data on long-term changes with regards to intercultural development would provide a broader perspective into the findings presented in this study. This could be done through a combination of staggered interviews and periodic survey distribution.

These are just a few recommendations on further research that might help to inform the intercultural development of educators in relation to international schools. In closing, it is the hope of the author that this research has made a small but meaningful contribution to the field of intercultural development. It is further hoped that the study has contributed meaningfully to

a better understanding of long-term cross-cultural experiences, particularly as they relate to the growing field of international education.

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## GLOSSARY

of acronyms used in this thesis

ATA	Applied Thematic Analysis
DMIS	Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity
ECIS	European Council of International Schools
ELL	English Language Learner
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
EU	European Union
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
IB	International Baccalaureate
ICC	Intercultural Communicative Competence
IPC	International Primary Curriculum
NCATE	National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
TCK	Third Culture Kid(s)
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UWC	United World Colleges

## APPENDICES

- Appendix A: School Invitation Letter
- Appendix B: Survey Questions
- Appendix C: Introductory E-mail
- Appendix D: Informational Letter
- Appendix E: Semi-Structured Interview Questions
- Appendix F: Netherlands Interview Schedule
- Appendix G: China Interview Schedule
- Appendix H: Acknowledgement Letter

## Appendix A: School Invitation Letter



Fourth Floor, 146 Buckingham Palace Road,  
London, SW1W 9TR, UK  
Tel: +44 (0)207 824 7040  
FAX +44 (0)207 824 7041

[DATE]

[ADDRESS]

Dear [NAME OF HEAD]:

Your school has been selected as a candidate school for the research study entitled: *'Investigating the Development of Intercultural Competency among Anglophone Educators in International Schools.'* This study is sponsored by the European Council of International Schools and is also receiving research support through the doctoral school at the Institute of Education, University of London (IOE). The aim of the study is to better understand the role which the international school experience plays in the development of intercultural competency among Anglophone educators.

The study will involve visits by the researcher to your school over a period of several days. The exact dates of the visits can be pre-arranged at a mutually convenient time during the 2013/2014 school year. During the visits, the researcher will conduct a series of interviews, lasting approximately 40 minutes each, with educators in your school who have expressed an interest in participating in the study.

***What kinds of questions will be asked during the interviews?*** A copy of the research questions which will be asked are attached to this invitation for your review. Please note that all responses will be confidential and no identifying information will be used in the study.

***Will my school remain anonymous?*** All schools receiving this invitation are located in countries where multiple international schools are based. While the countries where participating schools are located will be identified, individual schools will not be identified.

***What criteria do educators need to meet in order to qualify for an interview?***

- A qualifying educator must be a licensed/certified teacher, psychologist, counselor or administrator.
- The educator should not speak the language of the host culture beyond a rudimentary level.
- There should be no personal ties to the host culture. In other words, educators who are married to host country nationals do not qualify.
- Qualifying educators must have been born and raised (at least for a significant portion of their upbringing) in an Anglophone country.

- Educators must have experience working in both their home country and internationally.

***What kind of time commitment is involved?*** If you accept the invitation to participate in the study you can expect the following processes to take place:

- (1) You will be asked to distribute a short survey to your staff via email (this will be provided by the researcher). The aim of the survey is to identify qualifying educators who are also interested in interviewing. The researcher will do everything else, including communicating with interested educators who provide their contact information.
- (2) A mutually convenient time (lasting no more than a block of five days) will need to be arranged for the researcher to visit your school.
- (3) During the visit, the researcher will need (A) an empty room which provides the necessary privacy to conduct interviews and (B) some assistance in coordinating schedules so that educators are enabled to interview during the school day.

***What should I do if I would like to accept the invitation?*** If you are interested in participating please RSVP to the researcher, Maria Savva, at the following e-mail address [mstefanidessavva@ioe.ac.uk](mailto:mstefanidessavva@ioe.ac.uk). Once you accept the invitation, you will be contacted with additional information.

We hope that you will take this opportunity to participate in this important study aimed at advancing the field of international education. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Maria Savva  
Researcher, IOE

Jean Vahey  
Executive Director, ECIS

## Appendix B: Survey Questions

**(1) Gender:**

Male ☐

Female ☐

**(2) Which country are you originally from?**

Australia ☐

Canada ☐

United Kingdom ☐

United States ☐

Other ☐

**(3) Did you grow up in an English-speaking country during most of your childhood?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

**(4) Which best describes your current position? (Check all that apply)**

Administrator ☐

Counselor ☐

School Psychologist ☐

Pre-primary Teacher ☐

Primary Teacher ☐

Secondary Teacher ☐

Specialist Teacher (e.g. ELL) ☐

Other ☐

**(5) How long have you been an educator?**

This is my first year ☐

Less than five years ☐

More than five years ☐

**(6) Which best describes you:**

I have taught both in my home country and internationally ☐

I have only taught in international schools ☐

I have only taught in my home country ☐

**(7) Check all that apply:**

I have no personal ties to the host country beyond my work ☐

I am a national of the host country ☐

My spouse (or significant other) is from the host country ☐

I own property or have other investments in the host country ☐

I have family and/or relatives in the host country ☐

I speak the host country language fluently ☐

**(8) Are you a citizen of more than one country?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

**(9) If yes, is one of your citizenships to the country you are currently working in?**

Yes ☐

No ☐

**(10) Which category best describes your ethnic background?**

Asian ☐

Black ☐

Hispanic ☐

Mixed ☐

White (non-Hispanic) ☐

**(11) Which category best describes your age range?**

Under 30 ☐

30-39 ☐

40-49 ☐

50+ ☐

**(12)**

**Would you be willing to participate in an interview to discuss your experiences working in international schools? You will be provided with the interview questions ahead of time and any information you share will held in strict confidence.**

Yes ☐

Maybe ☐

No ☐

**(13)**

**Please provide us with your email address below so that we can send you additional details about the research study. Participation is completely voluntary and your contact information will not be used for any other purposes.**



## **Appendix C: Introductory Email**

FORWARDED TO EDUCATORS VIA HEAD OF SCHOOL

Dear XXXX faculty,

The XXXX International School has been selected to participate in a study sponsored by the European Council of International Schools. The aim of the study is to better understand the experiences and intercultural development of educators in international schools all over the world.

The link below will take you to a very short survey of 13 questions. The aim of the survey is to identify educators who may be eligible to participate in the study. Educators who express an interest and meet certain research criteria may be asked to take part in one interview some time during the 2013/2014 academic year.

Interviews will take place during the school day, on school premises, and all information shared will be held in strict confidence. Interview time is estimated to be 30-40 minutes in length. Participants will also receive interview questions well in advance of each scheduled interview.

**Please click on the link below:**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ecisXXXX>

Regards,

Maria Savva

Researcher/Interviewer

## Appendix D: Informational Letter

SENT TO EDUCATORS EXPRESSING INTEREST BASED ON SCREENING SURVEY

[DATE]

Dear Educator,

Thank you for your interest in the upcoming research study. The purpose of the study is to examine the experiences of Anglophone educators working in international schools, with a particular focus on the contribution such experiences make to the intercultural development of individuals.

### ***Who can participate?***

In order to qualify for an interview, the following criteria need to apply to you:

- You must be an Anglophone educator who has been born and raised in an Anglophone country. Anglophone countries include Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States.
- You *cannot* have any personal attachments to the international location you are currently working in. Being married to a local, for example, is a disqualifier.
- You must have experience working both nationally (back in your home country) and internationally. A minimum of one year in each setting is required.

### ***What does participation involve?***

Participation involves one interview. The series of questions to be asked are being sent along with this letter as a separate attachment. The purpose behind sending questions earlier is to provide you with the necessary time to consider your responses, since some of the questions may require some additional thought. The interview will be flexible in format. This means that the interviewer may ask additional questions (e.g. for clarification purposes) and you may also share information you feel is important that is not included in the original set of questions. Please also note that *there are no right or wrong answers*. This study is only interested in understanding educator experiences and perspectives. You are encouraged to answer questions honestly and openly.

***Will what I say in this study be kept confidential? What will you do with the results?***

Interviews will take place on your school premises, in a one-to-one private setting, during a mutually convenient time. All interviews will be audio-recorded for transcription purposes only. Audio-recordings will be destroyed after transcription. Everything you say will be confidential. The information you give will be used to analyse the relationship between international school experiences and intercultural development.

***Do I have to take part?***

Participation is completely voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. Please note that if you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

***What should I do if I want to take part?***

You will be contacted shortly, through a separate email, to schedule a time for an interview. Each interview is expected to last approximately 40 minutes.

We would like very much to hear about your experiences in the international school setting and feel that your participation will add great value to our research.

Best Wishes,

Maria Savva

Researcher

## Appendix E: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

### PART I –DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

#### **Gender**

M ☐

F ☐

#### **Ethnicity**

Asian ☐

Black ☐

Hispanic ☐

Mixed ☐

White (non-hispanic) ☐

#### **Position**

Administrator ☐

Counselor ☐

School Psychologist ☐

Pre-primary Teacher ☐

Primary Teacher ☐

Secondary Teacher ☐

Specialist Teacher (e.g. ELL) ☐

#### **Home Country:**

Australia ☐

Canada ☐

United Kingdom ☐

United States ☐

Other ☐

**Years of Experience Working in Home Country:** \_\_\_\_

**Years of Experience Working in Internationally:** \_\_\_\_

**Listing of Locations (by nation):**

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

## **PART II – BROAD CULTURAL EXPERIENCES: SELF & OTHERS**

- What has been the most enjoyable/difficult part of working internationally?
- In your view, what is the most important thing(s) you have gained as a result of your international school experience?
- Have views *of yourself or your country* changed as a result of your international school experience? If yes, how?
- In what ways do you predominantly identify yourself to others while overseas?  
[Example: By national citizenship, ethnicity, gender, profession etc.]
- In what ways do you feel *others* identify you while overseas?
- In what ways do you predominantly identify yourself to others when back in your home country?
- In what ways do you feel *others* identify you back home?
- What does the word 'home' mean to you and has this changed as a result of your work abroad?
- How have locals reacted to you in the locations you have lived and taught in?
- In your opinion, have you been able to immerse yourself in your host country culture or have you encountered some difficulties? Please explain.

### **PART III– INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS & INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE**

#### DEFINITION OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

- The ability to recognize and accept *difference* in its many forms (e.g. race, class, gender, language, religion, age and ability).
- The ability to recognize the impact difference (i.e. 'being different') has on an individual and on group dynamics.
- The ability to take action aimed at neutralizing or improving the impact difference may have on an individual and the group dynamics he/she is a part of (e.g. in a classroom/work setting).

- How do your educational experiences internationally compare with your educational experiences back home?
- Do you consider yourself to be interculturally competent?
- In your opinion, has working in an international school contributed to the development of your intercultural competence?

**If yes –**

- Why do you think that is?

- In what ways? Can you give one (or two) example(s) of specific incidents where you were able to *apply* your increased intercultural understanding in the classroom and/or school setting? Please be as specific as possible.

**If no –**

- Why do you think that is?
  - Do you think that something could be done differently in the *international* school setting to help facilitate increased intercultural competency among educators?
- 
- Is there anything you would do differently within the classroom/school setting now that you have taught internationally?
- 
- Besides the international school experience, is there anything else which you feel has contributed to the development of your intercultural competence? Feel free to discuss personal and/or professional experiences.

#### **PART IV – CLOSING DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

##### **Family Status:**

*\*Single Category includes those who never married, are divorced or widowed.*

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| Single with no children*                             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Single with children (travelling with educator)      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Single with children (not travelling with educator)  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Married with no children                             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Married with children (travelling with educator)     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Married with children (not travelling with educator) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Years teaching in current location: \_\_\_\_**

##### **Level of Education:**

- |                      |                          |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Undergraduate Degree | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Graduate Degree      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Doctoral Degree      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other                | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Name of region(s) educator is originally from in home country (e.g. New York, Manchester):**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Languages Spoken and Fluency Level (other than English):**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Beg/Int/Adv

\_\_\_\_\_  
Beg/Int/Adv

\_\_\_\_\_  
Beg/Int/Adv



### Appendix F: Netherlands Interview Schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	8:30-9:15 4	8:00-8:45 8		
		9:00-9:45 9	9:00-9:45 11	
	11:00-11:45 5	10:00-10:45 10	10:30-11:15 12	
12:10-12:50 1			11:15-12:00 13	
1:00-1:45 2	1:30 -2:15 6 <i>SCHOOL 2</i>			
2-2:45 3	2:30-3:15 7 <i>SCHOOL 2</i>			

\*Names have been replaced with numbers in order to protect participant anonymity.

### Appendix G: China Interview Schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:30-9:15 14	8:30-9:15 19		8:35-9:20 22	8:30-9:15 26
			9:45-10:30 23	10:00-10:45 27
10:50-11:35 15	10:30-11:15am 20			11:00-11:45 28
1:00–1:45PM 16				1:00 29 Pre-Primary Campus
2:00-2:45 17	2:00-2:45 21		1:40-2:30 24	
3:00-3:40 18			2:30-3:15 25	2:30-3:15 30

\*Names have been replaced with numbers in order to protect participant anonymity.

Appendix H: Acknowledgment Letter  
[Sent to Heads of School]



Fourth Floor, 146  
Buckingham Palace Road,  
London, SW1W 9TR, UK  
Tel: +44 (0)207 824 7040  
FAX +44 (0)207 824 7041

18 July 2014

Name

Address

Dear [Name]:

We would like to thank you for your recent participation in the study sponsored by the 2013 ECIS Fellowship grant. Whilst participating schools remain anonymous to the public, we feel it is important to recognise School Heads who have taken the time to support research in the field of international education. Under your leadership, [Name of School] has demonstrated its commitment to the broader international community by opening up its school's doors to the study.

Please accept this letter of acknowledgement for your valued support.

Maria Savva  
Researcher  
IOE, University of London

Kevin J. Ruth, PhD  
Executive Director  
ECIS

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