

**An Exploratory Investigation of Intercultural  
Encounters Experienced by University Based  
International Students in an Australian University**

**Robyn Terese Donovan**

B.Sc. (UQ), M. Info. (CQU)

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the award of

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**Central Queensland University**

**School of Education and the Arts**

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The submission of this thesis is in fulfilment of the requirements of the Doctor of Philosophy at Central Queensland University.

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## Abstract

A grounded theory study of intercultural encounters experienced by international students was carried out to contribute to an understanding of these events. Intercultural encounters are events which students perceive as having different cultural norms and practices. While there is considerable research regarding students' experiences of overseas study, there have been relatively limited studies concerning student intercultural encounter experiences in an Australian context.

This research used interviews to explore how international students at an Australian university prepared for study and investigates their experiences of intercultural encounters in the early months of their student lives. The intercultural encounters were explored in community, cultural, academic, service and social contexts.

Analysis of the interview data identified three antecedents concerning the preparation for study:

- Settling in arrangements - assistance with accommodation and living arrangements;
- Student expectations -students' expectations regarding overseas study; and
- Proficiency in English - the ability to communicate in English.

Three circumstantial intercultural encounter themes emerged from data analysis, namely:

- Adjusting to diversity - international students experience a diversity of intercultural encounters in community, cultural, academic, service and social contexts;
- Australia has wide ranging rules and regulations - Australia's rules and regulations affected intercultural encounters in different contexts; and
- Australia provides for quality of life - international students prefer to study in a country which provides quality of life benefits.

Student reactions and outcomes arising from intercultural encounters were examined. The reactions can be immediate or considered and the outcomes can be described as affective, behavioural or cognitive outcomes. Furthermore the outcomes can contribute to an increased awareness of the new culture. This increased awareness may contribute to the development of intercultural competence which is the capacity to interact in intercultural situations. A model for the student intercultural encounter experience was developed that situates the results of this research within an experiential learning framework.

The findings from this research can be used as a platform concerning further research into intercultural encounters. Recommendations enabling the application of the findings are provided for universities, government agencies and policy makers involved in international education.

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## Abbreviations

ASIC	Australian Securities and Investments Commission
ELICOS	English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students
ESOS	Education Services for Overseas Students
GTM	Grounded Theory Methodology
NEAF	National Ethics Application Form
VET	Vocational Education and Training

# Table of Contents

Chapter 1	Introduction.....	1
1.1	Introduction.....	1
1.2	Background.....	1
1.3	Topic Identification and Rationale for the Research.....	8
1.4	Research Aims, Questions and Objectives.....	11
1.5	Descriptions of Terms.....	13
1.6	Organisation of the Dissertation.....	14
Chapter 2	Literature Informing the Research.....	16
2.1	Introduction.....	16
2.2	A Working Definition for Intercultural Encounters.....	17
2.3	Preparedness for Overseas Study.....	23
2.4	The Contextualisation of Intercultural Encounters.....	32
2.5	Intercultural Encounter Outcomes.....	46
2.6	Intercultural Competence.....	52
2.7	Summary and Conclusions.....	56
Chapter 3	Research Methodology and Design.....	58
3.1	Introduction.....	58
3.2	Research Approach.....	58
3.3	Research Paradigms.....	61
3.4	Choice of Methodology.....	64
3.5	Research Design.....	70
3.6	Data Collection using Interviews.....	71
3.7	Data Analysis.....	73
3.8	Sample Selection and Description of Sample.....	80
3.9	Research Ethics.....	84

3.10	Summary.....	85
Chapter 4 Design, Development and Administration of the Interview Schedule.....		86
4.1	Introduction.....	86
4.2	Design, Development and Administration of the Initial Interview Schedule .....	86
4.3	Design, Development and Administration of the Follow up Interview Schedule .....	97
4.4	Summary.....	102
Chapter 5 Results .....		103
5.1	Introduction.....	103
5.2	Antecedents.....	103
5.3	Intercultural Encounter Contexts .....	108
5.4	Student Intercultural Encounter Experiences .....	148
5.5	Summary.....	153
Chapter 6 Discussion of Results .....		154
6.1	Introduction.....	154
6.2	Student Intercultural Encounter Contexts .....	155
6.3	Student Intercultural Encounter Experiences .....	175
6.4	Consideration of the Working Definition of Intercultural Encounters.....	187
6.5	Summary.....	188
Chapter 7 Conclusions and Recommendations .....		191
7.1	Introduction.....	191
7.2	Scope and Limitations.....	191
7.3	Consideration of the Research Questions .....	195
7.4	Conclusions.....	198
7.5	Recommendations.....	201
7.6	Areas for Further Research.....	205
7.7	Concluding Remarks .....	208
References .....		209
Appendices.....		239

Appendix A1	Information Sheet.....	239
Appendix A2	Consent Form.....	241
Appendix B1	Initial Interview Schedule .....	242
Appendix B2	Follow-up Interview Schedule .....	246
Appendix C	CQUniversity Human Research Ethics Approval H12/05-113.....	238

## List of Tables

Table 1.1:	Countries with Highest Numbers of International Students.....	2
Table 1.2:	Australian Education Sectors Available for International Students.....	4
Table 1.3:	International Student Enrolments for the Period 2014–2016.....	5
Table 1.4:	Nationalities with the Highest International Student Enrolments in Higher Education in Australia (2013–2016).....	6
Table 2.1:	Frequency of use of Terms Associated with Intercultural Encounters.....	18
Table 2.2:	Identification of Features in Examples of Intercultural Encounters.....	20
Table 2.3:	Intercultural Encounter Features.....	21
Table 2.4:	Revised List of Features of Intercultural Encounter.....	22
Table 2.5:	Internal Factors Contributing to Student Preparedness for Overseas Study.....	25
Table 2.6:	External Factors Contributing to Student Preparedness for Overseas Study.....	28
Table 2.7:	Intercultural Encounter Contexts: Descriptions and References.....	32
Table 2.8:	Contextual Types - Community.....	34
Table 2.9:	Contextual Types - Culture.....	38
Table 2.10:	Contextual Types – Academic.....	41
Table 2.11:	Contextual Types – Service.....	43
Table 2.12:	Contextual Types – Social.....	45
Table 2.13:	Student Affective Outcomes from Intercultural Encounters.....	48
Table 2.14:	Student Behavioural Outcomes from Intercultural Encounters.....	50
Table 2.15:	Student Cognitive Outcomes from Intercultural Encounters.....	51
Table 2.16:	Student Outcomes Contributing to Intercultural Competence.....	54
Table 3.1:	Constructivist/Interpretivist Basic Belief System.....	62
Table 3.2:	Constructivist/Interpretivist Approach to this Research.....	64
Table 3.3:	Qualitative Research Methodologies.....	65
Table 3.4:	Purpose and Outcomes of Constant Comparison.....	68
Table 3.5:	Clarification of Personal Safety and Safety Measures Contextual Types.....	76
Table 3.6:	Memo Reflecting on Participants’ Comments Regarding Feeling Safe.....	77
Table 3.7:	Criteria for Sample Selection.....	80
Table 3.8:	Process Used to Obtain the Sample.....	81
Table 3.9:	Initial Interview Sample Summary.....	83
Table 3.10:	Follow-up Interview Sample Summary.....	84
Table 4.1:	Format and Types of Interview Questions.....	87

Table 4.2:	Draft 1 Examples of Introductory Questions .....	88
Table 4.3:	Sample Main Questions for Three Contexts, Sub-questions and Prompts.....	89
Table 4.4:	Interview Schedule - Changes to Conclusion Section .....	90
Table 4.5:	Questions Added to each of the Main Questions in Draft 2 .....	91
Table 4.6:	Questions Added in Draft 2.....	91
Table 4.7:	Development Testing Panel Member Feedback .....	93
Table 4.8:	Summary of Modifications to the Interview Schedule .....	94
Table 4.9:	Procedure for Conducting the Initial Interview .....	96
Table 4.10:	Summary of Administration and Delivery Enhancements.....	97
Table 4.11:	Initial Findings in Relation to Each Area Type.....	98
Table 4.12:	Examples of Draft 1 Introductory Questions .....	99
Table 4.13:	Follow-up Interview Draft 1 Questions.....	100
Table 5.1:	Antecedents and their Descriptions.....	104
Table 5.2:	Settling in Arrangements which Supported Participants .....	104
Table 5.3:	Sources of Information which Contributed to Student Expectations .....	106
Table 5.4:	Skills which Helped Participants Prepare for Living in Australia .....	107
Table 5.5:	Frequency of Intercultural Encounter Contexts (n=163) .....	109
Table 5.6:	Frequency of Community Contextual Types (n=54).....	110
Table 5.7:	Descriptors for the Community Contextual Types.....	121
Table 5.8:	Frequency of Culture Contextual Types (n=41) .....	123
Table 5.9:	Summary: Descriptors for the Culture Contextual Types .....	132
Table 5.10:	Frequency of Academic Contextual Types (n=31) .....	133
Table 5.11:	Descriptors for the Academic Contextual Types.....	138
Table 5.12:	Frequency of Service Contextual Types (n=20) .....	139
Table 5.13:	Descriptors for the Service Contextual Types.....	143
Table 5.14:	Frequency of Social Contextual Types (n=18).....	144
Table 5.15:	Summary: Descriptors for the Social Contextual Types.....	148
Table 5.16:	Examples of Two Intercultural Encounters.....	150
Table 5.17:	Analysis of Intercultural Encounters.....	150
Table 5.18:	Frequency of Participant Reactions and Outcomes (%) (n=163).....	152
Table 6.1:	Community Contextual Types and Descriptors.....	156
Table 6.2:	Community Context: Themes and Associated Contextual Types .....	157
Table 6.3:	Culture Contextual Types and Descriptors.....	159
Table 6.4:	Culture Context: Themes and Associated Contextual Types .....	160

Table 6.5:	Academic Contextual Types and Descriptors.....	161
Table 6.6:	Academic Context: Themes and Associated Contextual Types.....	161
Table 6.7:	Service Contextual Types and Descriptors.....	162
Table 6.8:	Service Context: Themes and Associated Contextual Types.....	163
Table 6.9:	Social Contextual Types and Descriptors .....	164
Table 6.10:	Social Context: Themes and Associated Contextual Types.....	164
Table 6.11:	Interaction of Antecedents with each Context for International Students Studying in Australia.....	176
Table 6.12:	Circumstantial Intercultural Encounter Themes Associated with each Context .....	189
Table 7.1:	Contextual Types for each Intercultural Encounter Context .....	196

## List of Figures

Figure 2.1:	Topic Areas Considered.....	16
Figure 2.2:	Process used to Develop a Working Definition for Intercultural Encounter.....	19
Figure 2.3:	Contribution of Preparedness Factors to Student Experience of Intercultural Encounters .....	31
Figure 2.4:	A Typology for the Examination of Intercultural Encounter Contexts.....	33
Figure 2.5:	Contribution of Outcomes to Intercultural Competence.....	53
Figure 3.1:	Ontological Approaches .....	59
Figure 3.2:	Epistemological Approaches .....	60
Figure 3.3:	Phases of a GTM Study (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) .....	66
Figure 3.4:	Theory Building .....	69
Figure 3.5:	Research Design .....	71
Figure 3.6:	Initial Coding in Community and Culture Contexts.....	74
Figure 3.7:	Further Refinement of Coding Results.....	74
Figure 3.8:	Final Coding Result in Community and Culture Contexts .....	75
Figure 3.9:	Exploration of Student Safety .....	76
Figure 3.10:	Constant Comparison of “Order, Governance” Code.....	78
Figure 3.11:	Concept Map Template .....	79
Figure 4.1:	Initial Interview Schedule: Design, Development and Administration .....	86
Figure 4.2:	Section to Record Participant Details.....	90
Figure 5.1:	Contextual Types – Community .....	109
Figure 5.2:	Descriptors for the Natural Environment Contextual Type .....	110
Figure 5.3:	Descriptors for the Personal Safety Contextual Type .....	112
Figure 5.4:	Descriptors for the Governance Contextual Type.....	113
Figure 5.5:	Descriptors for the Work Contextual Type .....	115
Figure 5.6:	Descriptors for the Safety Measures Contextual Type .....	116
Figure 5.7:	Descriptors for the Built Environment Contextual Type.....	118
Figure 5.8:	Descriptors for the Freedom Contextual Type.....	119
Figure 5.9:	Culture Contextual Types .....	123
Figure 5.10:	Descriptors for the Food Practices Contextual Type .....	124
Figure 5.11:	Descriptors for the Individual Contextual Type .....	126
Figure 5.12:	Descriptors for the Nature of Society Contextual Type.....	127
Figure 5.13:	Descriptors for the Family Contextual Type .....	129

Figure 5.14:	Descriptors for the Religious Practices Contextual Type .....	130
Figure 5.15:	Academic Contextual Types.....	132
Figure 5.16:	Descriptors for the Student Practices Contextual Type.....	133
Figure 5.17:	Descriptors for the Academic Practices Contextual Type.....	135
Figure 5.18:	Descriptors for the Teacher Practices Contextual Type .....	137
Figure 5.19:	Service Contextual Types.....	139
Figure 5.20:	Descriptors for the Service Above Expectations Contextual Type .....	140
Figure 5.21:	Descriptors for the Service Below Expectations Contextual Type.....	141
Figure 5.22:	Descriptors for the Experiential Contextual Type.....	142
Figure 5.23:	Social Contextual Types .....	144
Figure 5.24:	Descriptors for the Australians’ Company Contextual Type.....	145
Figure 5.25:	Descriptors for the International Students’ Company Contextual Type .....	147
Figure 6.1:	Process Adopted for Discussion of Results .....	154
Figure 6.2:	Process Used to Identify Emerging Circumstantial Intercultural Encounter Themes...	155
Figure 6.3:	Descriptors Associated with “Adjusting to Diversity” .....	166
Figure 6.4:	Descriptors Associated with “Australia has Wide Ranging Rules and Regulations” .....	169
Figure 6.5:	Descriptors Associated with “Australia Provides for Quality of Life” .....	171
Figure 6.6:	The Intercultural Learning Cycle .....	181
Figure 6.7:	A Model Representing Intercultural Encounter Experiences.....	185

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

Australia has hosted international students since the 1950s (Commonwealth of Australia, 2013) and is the third largest provider of international education after the US and the UK (Australian Government, 2017a). With these numbers of international student enrolments it is imperative that Australia provides appropriate support for international students (Marginson, Nyland, Sawir, & Forbes-Mewett, 2010).

International students who come to a new country for study find the initial months of their stay both socially and psychologically challenging (Cemalcilar & Falbo, 2008; Sherry, Thomas, & Wing Hong, 2010) and often face challenging situations (Pitts, 2009). Such challenging situations and other experiences are referred to in this dissertation as intercultural encounters. While these intercultural encounters can provide opportunities for personal growth (Gu, Schweisfurth & Day, 2010) they can also engender confusion in students (Brown & Holloway, 2008). There is currently limited understanding of intercultural encounters and of their outcomes, particularly in the Australian context. This dissertation addresses this research gap by exploring intercultural encounters in terms of the contexts in which they occur and through an investigation of their outcomes.

The remainder of the chapter provides the research background, the research topic and the rationale for this research. The research aims, questions and objectives are then presented, and the key terms used in the study are defined. The chapter concludes by presenting the chapter organisation of the dissertation.

### 1.2 Background

The intention of this section is to provide the context and setting for this research. It provides the global context of international education and positions Australia within that global environment. This approach was taken in order to provide the context in which this research was situated.

### 1.2.1 International student destinations

The globalisation of economies, together with the increased mobility of people, capital, goods and services has fuelled students' interest in seeking qualifications from educational institutions in other countries. Asian countries represent 53% of international students, with the largest numbers of international students coming from China, followed by India and Germany (OECD, 2016a). Based on recent data, more than 50% of all international students chose to study in the USA, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom (OECD, 2016a). Table 1.1 lists the four countries with the highest enrolments of international students in 2017.

**Table 1.1: Countries with Highest Numbers of International Students in Higher Education**

Country	International Students in Higher Education	Academic Year	Approximate % of the Worldwide Total
USA	1,078,822	2016/17	21%
UK	501,045	2016/17	10%
Australia	327,606	2017	6%
France	323,933	2016/17	6%

Source: Institute of International Education (2017)

As shown in the table, the USA had the largest numbers of international students, with the UK having approximately half that amount. Australia and France hosted similar numbers of international students. The table also shows that United States has the highest market share of international students worldwide, while the UK hosted approximately 10% of international students worldwide. Australia and France hosted approximately 6% of international students.

When deciding to study overseas, students and their families take a number of factors into consideration (Commonwealth of Australia, 2013; Yang, 2010). These factors include:

- the language of instruction;
- the fees;
- the potential of the qualifications to help gain employment;

- the relative ease of gaining a university place;
- the level of safety; and
- the potential for later migration.

International students, in most cases, want to improve their English skills (Australian Government, 2015; Eder, Smith, & Pitts, 2010). This preference is evident in the countries that have high ratios of inbound students, namely: the US, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and the United Kingdom (OECD, 2016a). The fees were also considered when choosing a country of study (OECD, 2016a; Singh, Schapper, & Jack, 2014; Yang, 2010).

Students study overseas because they recognise that the qualifications provide a level of prestige (OECD, 2016a) and that these qualifications could enhance their career opportunities (Eder et al., 2010; Yang, 2010). There are also lower barriers to entry particularly in developing countries whose governments were often not able to deploy sufficient resources to meet the needs of their domestic students (Azmat et al., 2013; Lien, 2008). High barriers to university entry in the student's country of origin may account for the 73% of international students who chose to study in developed member countries of the OECD (OECD, 2016a).

Students also choose a country and an area for study based on the level of safety that is provided (Eder et al., 2010). Students prefer to live in areas where they are not concerned about their personal safety. A further reason for studying in another country is the potential for migration (Azmat et al., 2013; Gribble & Blackmore, 2012; OECD, 2016a; Shah & Nair, 2011; Yang, 2010). This factor is supported by research which found that countries which offered migration opportunities to international students found that their enrolment applications increased after the policy change (Shaw, 2014).

### **1.2.2 Enrolment of international students in Australia**

International education in Australia has changed significantly since the 1980s. By 1987 international students' fees had changed from being fully subsidised to being partly subsidised and enrolment numbers were no longer small and capped. Australia has essentially moved from providing aid to international students to the adoption of a market-based approach (Adams, Banks, & Olsen, 2010) where the majority of students

now pay full fees (Shaw, 2014). This market-based approach has resulted in economic benefits for Australia, where, in 2014/5, international education provided Australia's third largest export revenue at \$18.8 billion (Australian Government, 2016d).

In light of the above, the Australian Government has demonstrated its commitment to international education by ensuring that international students are provided with quality education and study experiences (Australian Government, 2016c). In Australia the international education sector and the quality of educational services are highly regulated with universities complying with relevant legislation, including Education Services for Overseas Students (*Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000*) and codes of practice (Adams et al., 2010; Shaw, 2014). A further demonstration of Australia's commitment to international education was the Australian Government's establishment of The Council for International Education which aims to ensure that the international education sector remains competitive and vibrant (Australian Government, 2016b).

Australia's education system consists of four sectors. These sectors are listed and described in Table 1.2.

**Table 1.2: Australian Education Sectors Available for International Students**

Sector	Description
<b>Higher Education (HE)</b>	Includes both public and privately funded universities. Provides Bachelor, Masters and PhD qualifications and non-award courses.
<b>Vocational Education and Training (VET)</b>	Includes Technical and Further Education, dual sector universities and Registered Training Organisations. Provides practical training for both trades and professionals. Can provide non-award courses.
<b>English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS)</b>	Provides English classes designed to prepare international students for further study.
<b>Schools</b>	Primary and Secondary schooling including both public and private institutions.

Source: Commonwealth of Australia (2013)

International student enrolments in all sectors increased from 2015 to 2016, with enrolments in Higher Education increasing by 13.2% (Australian Government, 2016a).

The enrolment numbers of full-time international students and the growth of international student enrolment in Australia’s education sectors are shown in Table 1.3.

**Table 1.3: International Student Enrolments for the Period 2015–2017**

Sector	2015	2016	2017	% of total enrolment	% Growth on 2016
Higher Education	271,650	305,486	350,472	43.8%	12.8%
VET	168,297	186,533	217,696	27.2%	14.3%
ELICOS	144,225	150,272	155,448	19.4%	3.3%
Schools	20,532	23,270	25,762	3.2%	9.7%
Non-award	37,588	44,044	49,993	6.3%	11.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>642,290</b>	<b>709,605</b>	<b>799,371</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>12.7%</b>

Source: Australian Government (2017b)

It can be seen from the table that, in 2017, Higher Education represented 43.8% of the total enrolments of international students with a growth of 12.8% from the 2016 enrolments. This figure is different from HE enrolment numbers in Table 1.1 as the respective organisations vary in their statistical collection points. VET enrolments were 27.2% of total enrolments while ELICOS enrolments represented 19.4% of total international student enrolments. The remaining student enrolments were in Schools and in other educational institutions and represented 9.5% of the total student enrolments in Australia in 2017.

International students enrolled in Higher Education in Australia in 2016 were representative of 205 nationalities (Australian Government, 2016a). The nationalities with the largest numbers of international students enrolled in Higher Education in Australia are shown in Table 1.4.

**Table 1.4: Nationalities with the Highest International Student Enrolments in Higher Education in Australia (2014–2017)**

Nationality	2014	2015	2016	2017	% of total
China	89,083	96,775	112,566	133,891	38.2%
India	26,240	35,137	44,365	54,376	15.5%
Nepal	10,149	12,179	15,136	21,481	6.1%
Malaysia	14,345	14,400	14,596	14,680	4.2%
Vietnam	11,925	12,697	13,815	15,092	4.3%
Pakistan	7,239	9,034	10,086	11,000	3.1%
Indonesia	8,469	8,469	8,738	9,293	2.7%
Hong Kong	8,103	8,281	8,544	8,888	2.5%
Other nationalities	73,639	74,525	77,801	81,771	23.3%
<b>Total (All nationalities)</b>	<b>249,074</b>	<b>272,095</b>	<b>306,520</b>	<b>350,472</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Australian Government (2017b)

As shown in Table 1.4, in 2017, 38.2% of international students enrolled in Higher Education in Australia were from China, with 15.5% from India. Enrolments from Nepal, Malaysia, Vietnam, Pakistan, Indonesia and Hong Kong ranged from 2.5% to 6.1% of the total numbers of enrolments in Higher Education in Australia.

In addition to the economic contribution to Australia provided by international education, the provision of education services has flow-on community and cultural benefits (Commonwealth of Australia, 2013). These benefits include the development of stronger relationships within the Asian region and the potential for a workforce which is globally aware (Gribble & Blackmore, 2012). Additional benefits for Australia include an increased cultural diversity within Australia and contributions to regional development and to tourism (Australian Government, 2016d). The success of the sector has also contributed to the development of a skilled workforce and has created additional jobs (Group of Eight Australia, 2014).

### 1.2.3 Reasons for choosing Australia for study

International students choose Australia as a study destination for a number of well documented reasons:

- Australia's well-regarded qualifications and the quality of its institutions (Chang, 2011); its education system and the quality of teaching and research at the chosen institution (Australian Government, 2015);
- Australia's capacity to provide personal safety (Australian Government, 2015);
- Australia's political stability (Gunawardena & Wilson, 2012);
- the opportunity to apply for permanent residency after completing their studies (Gunawardena & Wilson, 2012; Yang, 2010); and
- the presence of family or friends already living in Australia (Azmat et al., 2013).

As noted above, students value the quality of teaching and research provided in Australian universities (Australian Government, 2015) together with the increased employment options that the qualifications provide (Gribble & Blackmore, 2012). In some countries a western education is perceived as providing more options than qualifications from the student's home country (Azmat et al., 2013; Gunawardena & Wilson, 2012). Students choose a country based on its capacity to provide an acceptable level of personal safety (Australian Government, 2015) and are also influenced by similar interests in sport. Students from the subcontinent believe that Australia is a safe country but also feel comfortable knowing that they share a common interest in cricket (Gunawardena & Wilson, 2012). The possibility of securing permanent residency is an additional factor considered when choosing a study destination (Group of Eight Australia, 2014; Gunawardena & Wilson, 2012). Furthermore, the presence of family and friends already in Australia was influential in that it provides students with a social network (Azmat et al., 2013). While Australia's food and cultural attractions are less appealing in some cases, students were attracted to Australia's natural environment, its water sports and the efficient transport system (Son & Pearce, 2005).

While the reasons cited above contribute to the choice of a country for study, Yang (2010) noted that the choice of institution within a country is influenced by factors including:

- the institution's reputation and quality of education provided;
- their prior knowledge and awareness of the institution;

- the range of study options at that institution;
- potential job prospects;
- the advice from educational agents, family and friends;
- the institution's administrative processes;
- the cost of education; and
- whether they have family or friends already studying at that institution.

The consideration of the choice of country for study and the selection of the institution within that country involves sometimes complex decision-making processes where the influence of family and friends plays a major role (Yang, 2010).

### **1.3 Topic Identification and Rationale for the Research**

As noted in the introduction, international students who study in other countries face challenges as they negotiate unfamiliar academic and cultural environments (Khawaja & Stallman, 2011; Ujitani & Volet, 2008; Wu & Mak, 2012). Students often commence classes with limited English skills (Nayak & Venkatraman, 2010) and are sometimes unaware of what to expect in social situations (Abusalem, 2004) and when making purchases (Rich, 2011). Furthermore, students are sometimes not prepared for Australian cultural practices and are particularly vulnerable at the start of their stay (Patron, 2006).

While unexpected challenges and situations can indicate a lack of preparedness, these situations can be a source of stress (Gunawardena & Wilson, 2012; Patron, 2006) and can lead to adjustment difficulties for students (Yakunina, Weigold, & McCarthy, 2011). Alternatively, an overseas study experience can be an opportunity for personal development (Choi, Slaubaugh, & Kim, 2012) where students successfully adapt to their new environment (Gu et al., 2010). This research seeks to explore the range of student experiences and challenges that students face through an investigation of intercultural encounters.

Intercultural encounters include those unexpected events and situations that students experience while studying overseas. These events often occur soon after arrival when the student is unfamiliar with practices in the new culture. This investigation revealed five

contexts in which intercultural encounters occurred and which were identified as *community, culture, academic, service* and *social* contexts. As will be shown in Chapter 2 there were gaps in the research literature with regard to the definition of an intercultural encounter and limited research on the contexts in which those intercultural encounters occur. Furthermore, there was no recognised typology which categorises intercultural encounters and there was limited research on the outcomes of intercultural encounters in different contexts.

Intercultural encounters can result in a number of after effects. Students came to Australia with existing expectations (Hassam, 2007) which did not necessarily align with their actual experiences. When these expectations are not met, intercultural encounters can evoke intense emotions (Brown & Holloway, 2008). In some cases, intercultural encounters can result in changed perspectives (Clapp-Smith & Wernsing, 2014; Erichsen, 2009; Kumi-Yeboah & James, 2014) while, in other cases, students' confidence and self-esteem can be negatively affected (Kormos, Csizér, & Iwaniec, 2014). In light of the above discussion, a number of assumptions are inherent in this thesis. These assumptions are now presented.

**Assumption 1:** A study of intercultural encounters is warranted in order to more fully understand students' perceptions of their overseas study experience.

Students' descriptions of their intercultural experiences provide a way of investigating how international students perceive their interactions with the new culture. Such an exploratory investigation of intercultural encounters provides an opportunity to develop a theory of intercultural encounters. Furthermore, a study of intercultural encounters could explore whether intercultural encounters might be learning experiences and whether international students could be better prepared for those experiences. A study of intercultural encounters might also lead to further studies which could explore how international students could monitor and possibly regulate their reactions to their intercultural experiences. Such investigations could contribute to research on resilience and adaptation in the international student community. Finally, an investigation of intercultural encounters is warranted in order to explore their role, if any, in the development of intercultural competence.

**Assumption 2:** Intercultural encounters are situations, events and experiences which are perceived by an international student to involve some aspect from another culture. Intercultural encounters can include a range of experiences which are described by international students as being associated with another culture in some way. Such experiences can occur in the student's home country or when they are in another country and can involve cultures other than the host culture. The international student can be a participant in the event or they can be an observer. Chapter 2 uses international students' experiences reported in the literature to develop a more detailed definition of intercultural encounters.

**Assumption 3:** Students experience intercultural encounters which can affect their emotions, beliefs, attitudes and behaviour.

As will be shown in Chapter 2, when international students first arrive for study in a new country they are required to adapt to their new life in Australia. Often these experiences are unexpected and are different from what they would have experienced in their home country. These differences can sometimes evoke positive and negative emotions such as happiness, surprise, shock, sadness, confusion, frustration, annoyance, relief, nervousness and fear. Similarly, intercultural encounters can also affect beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. As will be seen in Chapter 2, students report changed perceptions as a consequence of their experiences in the new country. In some cases, these experiences will also lead to new behaviours.

**Assumption 4:** Intercultural encounters can be subjective and memorable experiences and pertain to the person who describes the encounter.

Intercultural encounters are described by the student involved and pertain to that student. Each student has their own perspective regarding their experience of the event. Similarly, each student has their own perspective regarding how the event affected them. In some cases, an intercultural encounter may evoke emotions which can make the experience memorable for the person involved (Anderson, Wais, & Gabrieli, 2006). As will be shown in Chapter 2, intercultural encounters described by students can be associated with a range of emotions, some of which they describe to the researcher.

**Assumption 5:** International students may have experienced intercultural encounters prior to their arrival in Australia.

As will be revealed in Chapter 2, some international students experience intercultural encounters either at home or in other countries prior to arriving in a new country for study. These experiences may include briefing sessions about the new country, a previous study experience in another country or holidays in another country. These experiences may help to prepare students for studying in a new country.

In light of the above, an investigation of intercultural encounters has the potential to ensure that students are prepared for intercultural encounters and that they are provided with support (Shaw, 2014; Zevallos, 2012) so that they can adjust to a new environment (Azmat et al., 2013). When information and support are provided to international students, their experiences are likely to be positive, and consequently, they are more likely to adjust successfully (Kormos et al., 2014; Zevallos, 2012). This dissertation seeks to investigate and categorise intercultural encounters so that information and support can be provided to international students. An exploration of the outcomes of intercultural encounters can also identify if intercultural encounters have a role in the development of intercultural competence.

## **1.4 Research Aims, Questions and Objectives**

### **Aims**

This research, situated in the Australian Higher Education context, investigates intercultural encounters experienced by international students who are studying in Australia. Sub aims of the research are to:

- explore how students prepare for intercultural encounters;
- explore the contexts in which intercultural encounters occur;
- examine the reactions and outcomes of intercultural encounters; and
- examine the potential link between outcomes of intercultural encounters and the development of intercultural competence.

## **Research Questions (RQs)**

The foregoing research aims were addressed by the following research questions.

**RQ1:** How do international students prepare for intercultural encounters?

**RQ2:** What contextual types of student intercultural encounters can be identified in different contexts?

**RQ3:** What are the outcomes of intercultural encounters as experienced by international students?

**RQ4:** How do the findings contribute to knowledge in relation to the development of intercultural competence?

## **Objectives**

The following objectives were undertaken to address the research questions.

### Objective 1

To undertake a review of the literature to:

- establish the gap in the research in regard to intercultural encounters.

### Objective 2

Use interview data to:

- establish what helps students to prepare for studying in a new country (RQ1);
- establish the nature and type of intercultural encounters experienced by international students (RQ2); and
- identify the outcomes of intercultural encounters (RQ3).

### Objective 3

Use the results to:

- identify how intercultural encounters are related to the development of intercultural competence (RQ4).

## 1.5 Descriptions of Terms

A range of terms used in this dissertation are associated with the research topic. In order to avoid ambiguity and to ensure clarity of understanding, the following descriptions of terms are provided:

**Affective** – relating to emotions, moods, feelings and attitudes (Krathwohl, Anderson, & Bloom, 2001).

**Antecedents** – circumstances, conditions or events which precede an international student's arrival in Australia for study.

**Behavioural** – relating to observable activity or actions in people (Krathwohl et al., 2001).

**Built environment** – manufactured structures including buildings, sporting facilities and parks.

**Cognitive** – relating to mental actions or the processes of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses (Krathwohl et al., 2001).

**Context** – the setting in which an intercultural encounter occurs. This is the first level of the typology of intercultural encounters.

**Contextual type** – provides additional information in relation to intercultural encounters within each context. This is the second level of the typology of intercultural encounters.

**Culture** – “collective programming of the mind which distinguishes one group of people from another” (Hofstede, 1994, p. 4).

**Higher education** – education provided by publically and privately funded universities which provide Bachelor, Masters and PhD qualifications (Commonwealth of Australia, 2013).

**Intercultural competence** – the “ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (Deardorff, 2006, p. 249)

**International student** – students who are from a country other than Australia and who hold a student visa as described in the Australian Government’s ESOS Act (*Education Services for Overseas Students Amendment Act 2000*, s.5). New Zealand students who study in Australia are not included in Australian international student data as they do not require a student visa (Australian Government, n.d.).

**Preparedness** – a range of skills, knowledge and personal qualities that assist individuals to adapt to a new culture (Kim, 2001).

## **1.6 Organisation of the Dissertation**

### **Chapter 1 – Introduction**

This foregoing chapter introduced the research topic and established the research context in the global and Australian international education environment. The rationale for this exploratory research is presented, together with the research aims, research questions and objectives. The terms used in this research were defined and the structure of the thesis is outlined.

### **Chapter 2 – Literature Informing the Research**

This review takes a multidisciplinary approach and presents a synthesis of current research in relation to intercultural encounters. It proposes a working definition for and a typology of intercultural encounters and identifies what helps students to prepare for overseas study. The investigation reveals outcomes of intercultural encounters and suggests a possible relationship between those outcomes and the development of intercultural competence. The chapter concludes by establishing the need for an investigation of intercultural encounters and their outcomes; for the development of a typology of intercultural encounters; and for an examination of a possible relationship between intercultural encounter outcomes and the development of intercultural competence.

### **Chapter 3 – Research Methodology and Design**

This chapter details the research methodologies and design that was adopted for this exploratory research. The ontological and epistemological considerations and the approach adopted for this research is presented. The rationale is provided for the use of Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM) and the processes adopted for the collection and analysis of the data and for selecting the sample are presented. Ethical clearance details are provided.

### **Chapter 4 – Design, Development and Administration of the Interview Schedule**

This chapter provides details concerning the design, development and administration of the initial and the follow up interview schedules used for data collection in this research. The preparation and use of the interview schedules are described. The chapter also outlines the processes involved in the administration of the interview schedules.

### **Chapter 5 – Results**

This chapter presents the results of the research in response to the research questions. The results highlight three antecedents that can prepare students for study in another country and presents the results of the analysis of intercultural encounters in the *community, culture, academic, service* and *social* contexts. The chapter proposes a typology for intercultural encounters and presents the analysis of the reactions and outcomes of intercultural encounters.

### **Chapter 6 – Discussion of Results**

This chapter presents three circumstantial intercultural encounter themes which emerged from the results. These circumstantial themes are discussed in relation to each of the five contexts of intercultural encounters. Affective, behavioural and cognitive outcomes of intercultural encounters are also discussed. A proposed model for the intercultural encounter experience is also presented.

### **Chapter 7 – Conclusions and Recommendations**

This chapter presents conclusions drawn from the research and recommendations for addressing the research findings. The scope and limitations of this research are considered. The research questions are addressed and areas for further research are presented.

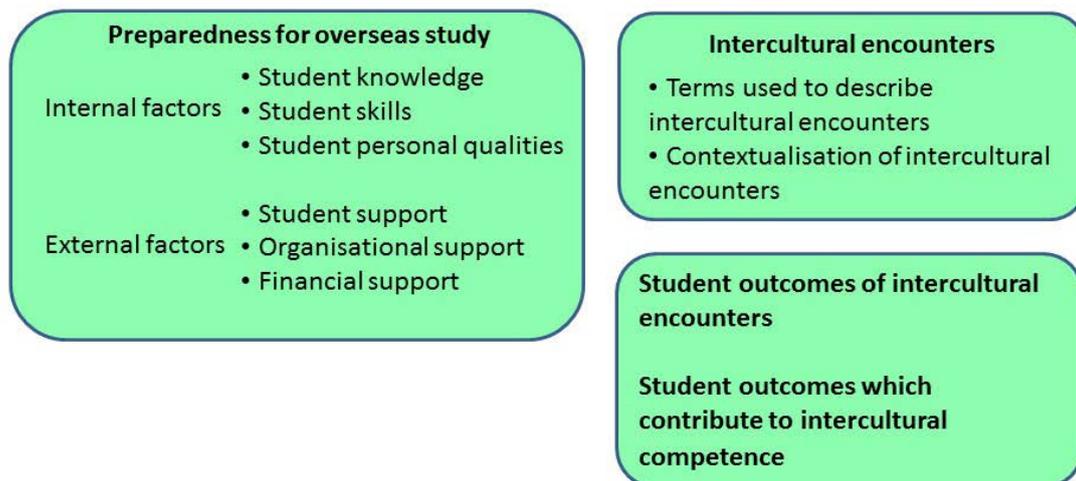
# Chapter 2

## Literature Informing the Research

### 2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 introduced the research topic and presented the background to this research. This chapter reviews the literature and identifies gaps for the investigation. A preliminary literature review revealed that the research regarding intercultural encounters covered three broad areas, as shown in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Topic Areas Considered



As shown in the figure, the major topic areas which are the subject of this review include preparedness for overseas study, intercultural encounters, and student outcomes of intercultural encounters.

This chapter:

- Critiques the literature as to ways that international students prepare for overseas study. The purpose of this was to establish how students may have prepared for intercultural encounters.
- Examines the use and definitions of the term intercultural encounters with the aim of developing a working definition of the term intercultural encounter for use in this research.

- Generates a typology of intercultural encounters as a framework to facilitate a detailed investigation of intercultural encounters.
- Examines the literature to establish student outcomes of intercultural encounters. The aim of identifying the outcomes of intercultural encounters was to develop a deeper understanding of the impacts of intercultural encounters on international students.
- Examines the outcomes of intercultural encounters which contribute to intercultural competence with a view to exploring how intercultural encounters may be associated with the development of intercultural competence.

The review draws from a range of literature including academic journals, books, reports, dissertations and electronic articles and online databases. Government and organisational reports were also sourced. Theses were accessed from online databases and repositories supplied by organisations such as ProQuest and Australian universities. Additional databases provided by CQUniversity were sourced including Emerald, ScienceDirect and EBSCOhost. Refereed journal articles in education, higher education policy, marketing for higher education; international education, intercultural relations, psychology, cross-cultural psychology and multicultural counselling were used. Publications in these fields were considered for their capacity to provide examples of student intercultural encounter experiences. In light of the fact that intercultural encounter examples were identified in disciplines including psychology, sociology, international education, and higher education, this thesis takes a multidisciplinary approach. Other research journals, books, edited books and online reports were also considered in this review. Research from 2005 was reviewed in order to consider a wide range of student experiences of intercultural encounters.

## **2.2 A Working Definition for Intercultural Encounters**

### **2.2.1 Introduction**

A preliminary review of the literature revealed the absence of a consistently used term for intercultural encounters (Bejjit, 2012; Branzei, 2002; Chang, 2011; Dorozhkin & Mazitova, 2008; House, 2012; Javier, Hendriksz, Chamberlain, & Stuart, 2013; Okamura, 2009; Sherwood, Cole, & Crissman, 2007). Based on the literature, the remainder of this section provides an overview of the use of the terms to denote intercultural encounters and develops a working definition of intercultural encounter.

### 2.2.2 Use of the terms

Fifteen terms denoting events and situations which could be described as intercultural encounters were identified. As noted above, terms were not used consistently and some studies used a number of terms interchangeably (Dorozhkin & Mazitova, 2008; Harrison & Peacock, 2010; Lasonen, 2010; Liu, Chua, & Stahl, 2010; Myles & Cheng, 2003; Okamura, 2009; Park, 2010; Wu & Mak, 2012). The search results for each term are listed in the table which follows.

**Table 2.1: Frequency of use of Terms Associated with Intercultural Encounters**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Frequency in Title</b>	<b>Frequency in Subject Term</b>	<b>Frequency in Abstract</b>
<b>cultural encounter</b>	0	41	709
<b>intercultural contact</b>	147	33	598
<b>intercultural interaction</b>	125	26	568
<b>cross-cultural interaction</b>	120	30	535
<b>cross-cultural experience</b>	131	12	346
<b>intercultural experience</b>	83	12	259
<b>multicultural experience</b>	62	15	225
<b>cross-cultural encounter</b>	71	9	211
<b>cross-cultural contact</b>	15	10	281
<b>intercultural encounter</b>	17	1	129
<b>cross-cultural transition</b>	14	7	78
<b>critical incident</b>	11	22	22
<b>acculturation experience</b>	5	2	109
<b>trigger event</b>	2	1	2
<b>intercultural service encounter</b>	1	3	3

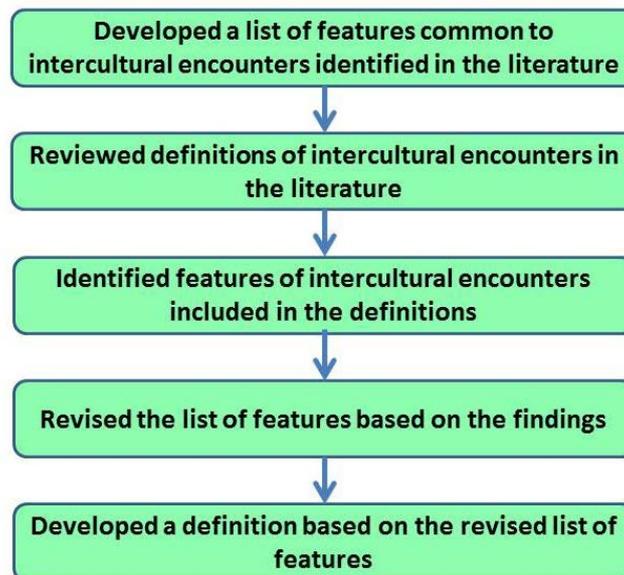
The search results in Table 2.1 were obtained through the use of a library search strategy involving searches for each of the terms. The frequencies list the number of articles in the search results. Three searches were conducted for each phrase or term, namely: in the title, as a subject term and in the abstract. In light of the extensive use of the term ‘critical incident’ in other fields of study, the literature search for that term was limited to intercultural research.

As shown in the table, while the term ‘cultural encounter’ did not appear in any title, this term appeared most frequently in the abstract and as a subject term. The four terms, namely: “intercultural contact”, “intercultural interaction”, “cross-cultural interaction” and “cross-cultural experience” were used in the title, as a subject term and in the abstract. The next most frequently used terms were “intercultural experience”, “multicultural experience”, “cross-cultural encounter” and “cross-cultural contact”. While the term “intercultural encounter” appeared in the title and in the abstract, the term was used only once as a subject term. As noted earlier, the search for the term “critical incident” was limited to studies which were intercultural in nature. The terms “cross-cultural transition”, “acculturation experience”, “trigger event” and “intercultural service encounter” were used infrequently in the literature.

### 2.2.3 A working definition for intercultural encounters

The process used to develop a definition from the literature took the approach shown in Figure 2.2.

**Figure 2.2: Process used to develop a Working Definition for Intercultural Encounter**



As shown in Figure 2.2, the researcher compiled a list of features common to intercultural encounters which were identified in the literature. This was followed by an investigation of definitions to establish the features of intercultural encounters included

in those definitions. Both lists of features were then revised, and based on these revised lists, a working definition was then developed. Table 2.2 shows the list of features developed as a result of the investigation of intercultural encounters in the literature.

**Table 2.2: Identification of Features in Examples of Intercultural Encounters**

Feature	Examples
<p><b>Can be verbal or non-verbal</b></p> <p><b>Does not need to involve other people</b></p>	<p>Waiting in a queue for public transport (Montuori &amp; Fahim, 2004)</p> <p>Arriving at an airport in a new country (Brown &amp; Holloway, 2008)</p> <p>Encounters with the environment (McLachlan &amp; Justice, 2009; Ying &amp; Davidson, 2008)</p> <p>Accessing library services (Hughes, 2010)</p> <p>Encounters with host country cultural (Kumi-Yeboah &amp; James, 2014) and religious practices (Okamura, 2009)</p> <p>An event involving communication between people (Bochner, 2003)</p>
<p><b>Unexpected cultural norms</b></p>	<p>Affronted by dress standards and by use of alcohol (Patron, 2006)</p> <p>Need to adjust to new ways of addressing teachers (Yue, 2010)</p> <p>Different social and cultural practices (Elenwo, 1988; Kumi-Yeboah &amp; James, 2014; Mason &amp; Lawrence, 2014; Reichard et al., 2015; Ujritani, 2006)</p> <p>Women can express their opinion (Kumi-Yeboah &amp; James, 2014)</p> <p>Different academic requirements (Abusalem, 2004; Howlett, 2011; Song-Turner, 2008)</p>
<p><b>Can occur in a range of contexts</b></p>	<p>As shown in Table 2.7</p>

While the majority of intercultural encounters involved verbal communication (Antonelou-Abusalem, 2011; Barsky, 2012; Beamer, 1995; Bejjit, 2012; Chamberlin-Quinlisk, 2010; Cheney & Valentine, 2001; Hiller & Wozniak, 2009; Holmes, Bavieri, & Ganassin, 2015; House, 2012; Jirwe, Gerrish, & Emami, 2010; Lindner & Méndez Garcia, 2014; Ling, 2002; Montoya & Briggs, 2013; Morkeset, 2007; Pride, 1985; Tan & Goh, 2006; Truong & Fuscald, 2012; Valadez, 2004; Volet & Tan-Quigley, 1999), as shown in Table 2.2, intercultural encounters included both verbal and non-verbal interactions (Beamer, 1995) and did not necessarily involve communication or other people. Furthermore, intercultural encounters were associated with unexpected and unfamiliar social and cultural norms (Sieck, Smith, & Rasmussen, 2013). These events varied from students' expectations and were likely to be remembered (Hulten, 2010). As will be shown in Table 2.7, intercultural encounters occurred in a range of contexts.

### Review of Existing Definitions and Descriptions in the Literature

A number of studies provided a definition or described the term used for intercultural encounters (Byram, 1997; Hoff, 2014; Holmes & O’Neill, 2012; Tan & Goh, 2006). The features of these definitions and descriptions are shown in Table 2.3.

**Table 2.3: Intercultural Encounter Features**

Features	References
<b>Communication can be verbal or non-verbal</b>	Hoff (2014); Holmes et al. (2015); Ling (2002); Ponzoni (2014); Westwood and Borgen (1988)
<b>Interactions can be between people of differing cultures and are culturally novel events</b>	Byram (1997); Holmes et al. (2015); Méndez Garcia (2016); Barrett, Byram, Barrett, Ipgrave, Jackson, and Garcia (2009b); Burkhardt (2013); Ponzoni (2014); Reichard et al. (2015); Westwood and Borgen (1988)
<b>Intercultural encounters can:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be transformative</li> <li>• develop self-awareness</li> <li>• result in reflection as participants make sense of experiences</li> <li>• affect future intercultural encounters</li> </ul>	Byram et al. (2009b); Chang (2009); Elo, Benjowsky, and Nummela (2015); Holmes and O’Neill (2012); Jon (2013) Kumi-Yeboah and James (2014); Lin (2012); Montuori and Fahim (2004); Ponzoni (2014)
<b>Can develop intercultural competence</b>	Byram et al. (2009b); Berwick and Whalley (2000); Clapp-Smith and Wernsing (2014); Peng and Wu (2016); Ponzoni (2014); Sample (2013)
<b>An event including verbal and non-verbal interaction</b>	Bochner (2003); Ponzoni (2014)

Table 2.3 shows that a number of studies include descriptions of intercultural encounters as including either verbal or non-verbal communications and that the interactions were between people who identified with different cultures. Byram (1997) recognises that people from different cultural backgrounds can have differing views of the world. Intercultural encounters were also described as “a meaningful social, cultural and linguistic encounter” (Lin, 2012, p. 264). This focus on an intercultural encounter being defined as an interaction involving people is evident in the following definition of an intercultural encounter by Holmes et al. (2015, p. 17):

...we define an intercultural encounter as interaction (verbal and non-verbal) between two or more people in situations (not necessarily countries) where they may perceive each other to have different backgrounds (cultural, linguistic,

geographical, etc.) and where these differences are salient and affect the nature of the interaction (which might include empathy, same-ness and shared understandings, despite apparent surface differences).

Intercultural encounters were also described in terms of their outcomes. Researchers described intercultural encounters as transformative (Chang, 2009; Kumi-Yeboah & James, 2014) where the experiences change participants’ values and beliefs (Ponzoni, 2014). Similarly Lin (2012) suggested that an intercultural encounter “works a pivotal change to the student in the sense-making process of old and new fields” (Lin, 2012, p. 264). This process of reflecting on intercultural encounters could help students learn from these experiences and could result in subsequent intercultural encounters becoming more routine (Elo et al., 2015). Additional outcomes of intercultural encounters included the development of cultural sensitivity (Sample, 2013) and other intercultural competence skills (Clapp-Smith & Wernsing, 2014). Intercultural encounters were also described as opportunities to learn about other cultures (Berwick & Whalley, 2000; Ponzoni, 2014).

Features of Intercultural Encounters

Based on the foregoing features, Table 2.4 presents the list of features included in the definitions.

**Table 2.4: Revised List of Features of Intercultural Encounters**

Feature
An event with a short duration
Can occur in a range of contexts
May not involve other people
May not include communication
Can exhibit unexpected cultural norms
Meaningful for the student

The table indicates that intercultural encounters are events with a short duration and can occur in a range of contexts. Ponzoni (2014) defined an intercultural encounter as an event, while Seick et al. (2013) proposed that intercultural encounters were brief and sometimes confusing.

As noted in Chapter 1, intercultural encounters can occur in a range of contexts, namely: *community, culture, academic, service* and *social*. In light of the above, intercultural encounters may not necessarily involve other people or include communication. Such events can exhibit new or unexpected cultural norms and they are meaningful in some way for the student. Based on the foregoing, the working definition used in this research was:

*An intercultural encounter is an unforeseen event which is experienced by a person where some feature of that event is perceived by the person to be novel or to have different cultural norms. The event has a short duration, can occur in different contexts and does not necessarily involve other people or communication. Intercultural encounters are meaningful for the participant and can result in participant reflection as they make sense of their experience.*

The development of the above definition has been done within the context of research in international education. Specific student experiences of intercultural encounters were identified and used to establish features of these intercultural encounters.

## **2.3 Preparedness for Overseas Study**

### **2.3.1 Introduction**

Preparedness for change, a component of Kim's (2001) Cross-Cultural Adaptation Theory, denotes a range of skills, knowledge and personal qualities that assist individuals to adapt to a new culture (Kim, 2001). Skills and knowledge associated with preparedness for change included cultural skills developed through prior training, formal education and prior experiences of other cultures, while personal qualities included flexibility and a willingness to be open to change (Kim, 2001). Preparedness for change can also contribute to the development of intercultural competence (Baumbaugh, 2015).

The importance of preparing students for attending university in another country was extensively researched (Kim, 2001; Kormos et al., 2014; Kuo & Roysircar, 2006; Mutai, 2007; Purnell & Hoban, 2014) with researchers finding that students were sometimes not prepared for the transition (Gu, 2016; Khawaja & Stallman, 2011; Kole, 2007; Rawlings & Sue, 2013). In this respect, both students (Fischer, 2012) and researchers (Kormos et al., 2014) recognised the need for preparation before studying in another country as

sometimes international students can be negatively affected by some intercultural experiences.

Student preparedness for study in another country was considered in terms of internal factors and external factors. Internal factors were associated with students' knowledge, their skills and personal qualities, while external factors included students' personal networks, organisational support and financial support.

### **2.3.2 Internal factors**

Internal factors identified in the review concerning student preparation for moving to a new country for study purposes are summarised in Table 2.5. Three factors—student knowledge, skills and student personal qualities—can be identified. Aspects were associated within each internal factor and accompanying references are listed for each aspect.

**Table 2.5: Internal Factors Contributing to Student Preparedness for Overseas Study**

Factor	Aspects	References
<b>Student Knowledge</b>	Pre-existing knowledge about the country and its culture	Bochner (1982); Chang (2011); Choi, Slaubaugh and Kim (2012); Elenwo (1988); Holmes et al. (2015); Elo et al. (2015); Howlett (2011); Johnson and Kumar (2010); Kambouropoulos (2014); Khawaja and Stallman (2011); Kim (2001); Mutai (2007); Okamura (2009); Patron (2006); Pitts (2009); Taylor (2008); Wilson (2011); Forbes-Mewett and Nyland (2008)
	Experience of western pedagogy	Gutierrez and Dyson (2009)
<b>Skills</b>	Language skills	Duru and Poyrazli (2011); W. Gu (2016); Harrison (2012); Kormos et al. (2014); Latif, Bhatti, Maitlo, Nazar, and Shaikh (2012); Lee, Park and Kim (2009); Mason and Lawrence (2014); Matsuda and Gobel (2004); McLachlan and Justice (2009); Nguyen (2010); Patron (2006); Ramelli, Florack, Kosic, and Rohmann (2013); Sherry, Thomas, and Wing Hong (2010); Son and Park (2014); Tsang (2001); Zhang and Goodson (2011); Ujitani (2006)
	Interpersonal skills	Demes and Geeraert (2015); Khawaja and Stallman (2011); Kuo and Roysircar (2006); Mason and Lawrence (2014); Weigl (2009)
	Life skills	Gong and Chang (2007); Khawaja and Stallman (2011); Kormos et al. (2014); Gu et al. (2010); Mason and Lawrence (2014); Nguyen (2010); Rich (2011); Taylor (2008); Song (2009); Wang et al. (2012)
	Intercultural skills	Harrison and Brower (2011) Kormos et al. (2014); Sato and Hodge (2009)
<b>Student Personal Qualities</b>	Specific personal traits	Aydin (1997); Burkhardt (2013); Gu et al. (2010); Gu (2016); Harper (2008); Harrison and Brower (2011); Khawaja and Stallman (2011); Kim (2001); Liu (2011); Reichard et al. (2015); Tsang(2001); Ward and Kennedy (1993); Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping, and Todman (2008)
	Confidence, self-esteem	Kormos et al. (2014); Wang et al. (2012); Tsang (2001)

Commentary on each of the factors shown in the table is provided in the remainder of this section.

### Student Knowledge

- Pre-existing knowledge about the country and its culture

Students were prepared for a new country when they knew what to expect when they arrived. When students had appropriate information regarding the host country, its culture, as well as information about the university, its location and their options regarding accommodation and health care, they felt prepared for the new country.

- Experience of a Western pedagogy

Prior experience of a Western academic culture prepared students for new teaching and learning practices (Gutierrez & Dyson, 2009). While these experiences helped students to establish what was required of them in the new academic culture, previous cultural conditioning meant that students still faced challenges in the new teaching environment.

### Student Skills

- Language skills

Being proficient in the host country's language prepared students for studying in a new country (Gu, 2016). This ability to communicate effectively helped students to establish their living arrangements and to establish a social network. While essential for everyday living, English skills were also important for the academic environment (Taylor, 2008). A range of studies which support this is shown in Table 2.5.

- Interpersonal skills

International students required skills for interacting with others. Skills including agreeableness and openness assisted students when interacting with people from other cultural backgrounds (Harrison, 2012) and helped students to make friends and build a social network. Researchers recognised the importance of making friends (Menzies & Baron, 2014) and recommended that universities host events where students could interact in a social environment (Sherry et al., 2010).

- Life skills

Life skills helped international students to prepare for overseas study. These skills included the ability to set goals, to be self-directed, to be able to cook, to care for themselves and to live independently. Being able to seek help when required was also a skill which was recommended for international students (Taylor, 2008). International

students faced challenges in a new country and the capacity to seek assistance helped students to respond to these challenging situations.

- Intercultural skills

Students were better prepared by having intercultural awareness training. An increased awareness of the new culture helped students to communicate effectively with people in the new country and prepared students for otherwise unexpected intercultural experiences.

### Student Personal Qualities

- Specific personal traits

Students who were tolerant, flexible and open to new experiences were better prepared for overseas study (Burkhardt, 2013). Students could adapt to a new culture when they were psychologically robust (Harrison & Brower, 2011) and when they could manage the inevitable challenging times. Similarly, students who were naturally outgoing, extraverted and who had an internal locus of control were more likely to respond effectively to challenges.

- Confidence, self-esteem

In addition to the psychological traits listed above, students who were confident and who had a healthy self-esteem were prepared for study in a new country. These students were able to solve problems and to overcome challenges.

### **2.3.3 External factors**

External factors which helped to prepare international students for study concerned student support, organisational support and financial support. Aspects identified within each external factor and references for each aspect are listed in Table 2.6. The references include both research findings regarding student preparedness for overseas study and recommendations for preparing students for studying in another country.

**Table 2.6: External Factors Contributing to Student Preparedness for Overseas Study**

Factor	Aspect	References
<b>Student Support</b>	Support helps students to adapt to a new country	Bodycott (2015); Briguglio and Smith (2012); Gomes (2015); Gu et al. (2010); Howlett (2011); Jackson (2004); Khawaja and Stallman (2011); Nguyen (2010); Ong and Ward (2005); Owens and Loomes (2010); Rich (2011); Shaw (2014); Timmala-Narra and Claudius (2013); Ward and Kennedy (1993); Yue and Lê (2012); Zhang and Goodson (2011); Australian Government (2015)
<b>Organisational Support</b>	Pre-departure and orientation programs	Andrade, (2008); Antonelou-Abusalem (2011); Harrison and Brower (2011); Howlett (2011); Hu (2014); Jackson (2004); Kambouropoulos (2014); Menzies and Baron (2014); Taylor (2008); Ward, Bochner, and Furnham (2001); Yuefang and Todman (2009)
	Host organisation support	Andrade, (2008); Bodycott (2015); Antonelou-Abusalem (2011); Baird (2012); Brydon and Liddell (2012); Hu (2014); Liu and Winder (2014); Pearce (2012); Roberts and Dunworth (2012); Wahyudi, (2016); Yue and Lê (2012); Zevallos (2012)
	Social support	Howlett (2011); Liu and Winder (2014); Ong and Ward (2005); Rienties and Nolan (2014); Sakurai, McCall-Wolf and Kashima (2010); Ward and Kennedy (1993); Zhang and Goodson (2011); Chang (2011)
<b>Financial Support</b>	Financial support	Nguyen (2010); Sawir, Marginson, Nyland, Ramia, and Rawlings-Sanaei (2009); Scheweisfurth and Gu (2009); Son and Park (2014)

It can be seen in Table 2.6 that support from people, organisations and financial support can prepare students for overseas study. The remainder of this section includes a commentary on each of the factors shown in the table.

### Student Support

- Support to help adapt to a new country

The support of family and friends and from those with a similar cultural background helped students particularly when they first arrived. Support provided to students, particularly on arrival, was in the form of assistance with basic living needs including accommodation and transportation (Ward & Kennedy, 1999). While support from homestay families was variable (Campbell, 2004), international students in Australia expressed satisfaction with the support that they received on arrival (Australian

Government, 2015). Support was also provided by members of the student's cultural community who were already resident in the host country and by people in the student's social network. Students whose friends included people from the host country experienced fewer negative emotions including loneliness and homesickness.

### Organisational Support

- Pre-departure and orientation programs

Pre-departure and orientation programs helped students to prepare for their overseas study experience. These programs included intercultural communication skill development and prepared students for living in a homestay arrangement.

- Host organisation support

The support provided to students by host organisations helped students to have a successful overseas study experience. However, that support needed to meet students' needs (Roberts & Dunworth, 2012). In more recent research, students were critical of pre-arrival documentation and reported that they were not made aware of support services nor were they aware of how these services could help students (Roberts, Dunworth & Boldy, 2018). The same research also recognised that, on arrival, students were more interested in arranging for accommodation rather than in organising their study support requirements. This need to organise their living arrangements may have meant that students were not able to focus on information relating to study resources. Students were, however, supported by the organisation's provision of preparation programs designed to develop academic and English language skills (Wahyudi, 2016). Such preparation programs helped to prepare students for writing in English. Recommendations for host organisations included the implementation of policies where students were informed regarding cultural differences between their country and the host country.

- Social support

Additional recommendations for host organisations were related to the facilitation of social events to help international students to interact with students from other cultures. Social events hosted by organisations helped students to get to know other international students and host country students and to establish a supportive group of friends.

Having a social network which included host country friends were predictors of successful adjustment.

#### Financial Support

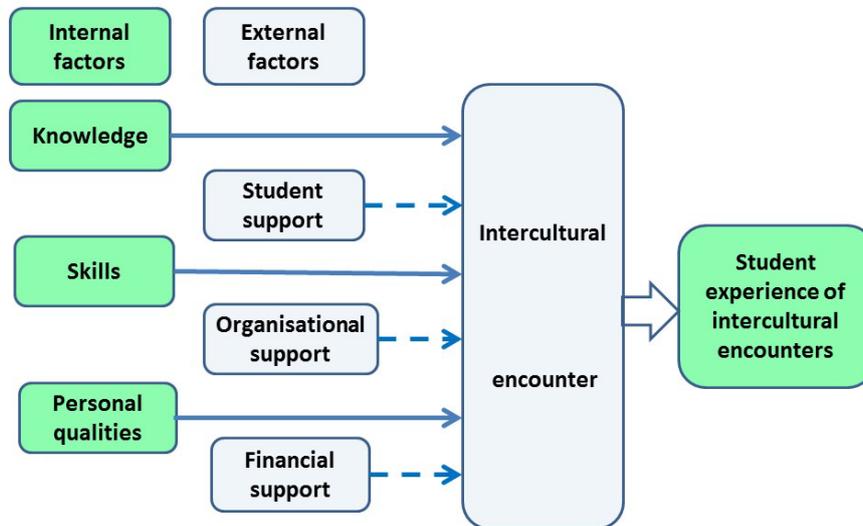
- Financial support

The cost of living and the tuition costs were matters of concern for international students in Australia (Howlett, 2011). Consequently, students were often required to seek financial support and counselling. However, financial support was also in the form of appropriately priced social activities and the provision of public transport concessions for international students. Harryba et al. (2011) found that when students were not provided with adequate support or when the support was removed, there was a potential for adjustment problems.

#### **2.3.4 Contribution of preparedness for overseas study**

The literature indicates that a range of internal and external factors and a level of preparation before coming to a country for study helped with the settling in process. In some cases, this settling in process was both challenging and emotional for international students particularly when they first arrived (Brown & Holloway, 2008). Consequently the provision of information, skills and support helped to prepare students for those challenging intercultural encounter experiences. The contribution of these factors to student preparedness for intercultural encounters is summarised in Figure 2.3. The figure provides a representation of both internal factors and external factors and how they prepare students for intercultural encounters.

Figure 2.3: Contribution of Preparedness Factors to Student Experience of Intercultural Encounters



## 2.4 The Contextualisation of Intercultural Encounters

### 2.4.1 Introduction

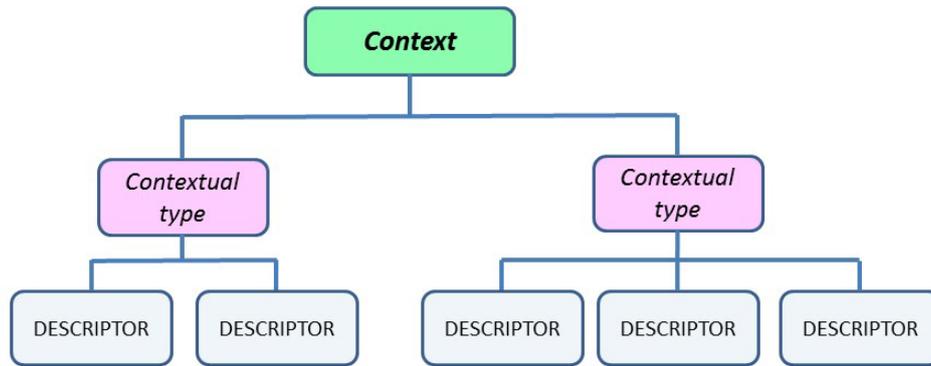
Chapter 1 introduced five contexts in which intercultural encounters occurred, namely: *community*, *culture*, *academic*, *service* and *social*. Table 2.7 lists these contexts and provides a brief description of each context, together with examples identified in the literature.

**Table 2.7: Intercultural Encounter Contexts: Descriptions and References**

Context	Description	References
<b>Community</b>	Occurs within the community and includes encounters with the natural environment, Australia's governance and other community based activities	Chung (2007), Edgeworth and Eiseman (2007); Johnson and Kumar (2010); Llewellyn-Smith and McCabe (2008); Mason and Lawrence (2014); McLachlan and Justice (2009); Son and Pearce (2005)
<b>Culture</b>	Occurs in a cultural setting and includes encounters with specific cultural practices which may be different from what would be expected in the home country	Chang (2011); Johnson and Kumar (2010); Kole (2007); Mason and Lawrence (2014)
<b>Academic</b>	Occurs in the learning environment and includes encounters with academic practices, with teachers and other students	Arkoudis and Ly (2007); Li (2004); Ly Thi (2009); Mason and Lawrence (2014)
<b>Service</b>	Involves the purchase of goods or services	Abusalem (2004); Rich (2011); Tam, Sharma, and Kim (2014)
<b>Social</b>	Occurs with friends or in other social situations	Burkhardt (2013); Edgeworth and Eiseman (2007); Gu (2016); Patron (2006); Zhao and Wildemeersch (2008)

In order to facilitate analysis of intercultural encounters within each context, a typology was developed. This typology, presented in Figure 2.4, was developed by selecting a range of isolated intercultural encounters described in the literature and shows the three levels in the typology, namely: contexts, contextual types and descriptors.

**Figure 2.4: A Typology for the Examination of Intercultural Encounter Contexts**



As can be seen in the figure, contextual types were revealed within each context and descriptors were assigned to intercultural encounters within each contextual type. Both contextual types and descriptors provided a way of grouping intercultural encounters which were experienced in similar ways by international students.

#### 2.4.2 Community context

Table 2.8 shows the presence of seven contextual types within the *community* context and a description of each. As noted above, the seven contextual types emerged from an investigation of the settings in which the *community* intercultural encounters occurred. Descriptors were assigned to intercultural encounters based on the student experience of each intercultural encounter. This table and the following tables for the remaining four contexts present contextual types, research findings, references, and descriptors within each contextual type. References include both students' descriptions of intercultural encounters and outcomes of research regarding intercultural encounters. Contextual types and descriptors were assigned to intercultural encounters with similar features. The tables show research findings for each descriptor and summarises intercultural encounters described by students and outcomes of research.

The remainder of this section provides further commentary on each contextual type based on the references listed in Table 2.8.

**Table 2.8: Contextual Types - Community**

Contextual Types	Research findings	References	Descriptors
<b>Natural Environment</b>	Students were attracted to the host country's weather, to the natural and clean environment	Chung (2007); Edgeworth and Eiseman (2007); Johnson and Kumar (2010); Llewellyn-Smith and McCabe (2008); Mason and Lawrence (2014); Son and Pearce (2005)	Attracted to the environment
<b>Personal Safety</b>	International students choose Australia for personal safety reasons	Australian Government (2015)	Australia is seen to be safe
	Importance of student safety	Shaw (2014)	Safety concerns
	Students concerned about their safety	Azmat et al. (2013); Babacan et al. (2010); Edgeworth and Eiseman (2007); Nguyen (2010); Lê, Auckland, Nguyen, and Terry (2013)	
<b>Governance</b>	Traffic system, public transport and signage	Kole (2007); Pearce (2012)	Traffic is organised
<b>Work</b>	Finding work was challenging	Howlett (2011); Owens and Loomes (2010); Sherry et al. (2010)	Finding work
	Adapting to the communication style at work	Mason and Lawrence (2014)	Work practices
	Finding time for work, study and a social life	Brown and Graham (2009); Burkhardt (2013); Gu (2016); Chang (2011); Howlett (2011); Ong and Ramia (2009); Outhred and Chester (2013)	Study-work-life balance
	Having work can improve host language skills	Chang (2011)	Working helps language skills
<b>Safety Measures</b>	Safe university accommodation	Forbes-Mewett and Nyland (2008)	University accommodation
	Health insurance	Forbes-Mewett and Nyland (2008)	Health insurance
<b>Built Environment</b>	Surprised by the built environment and by the variety of food outlets; Appreciated the space available	Edgeworth and Eiseman (2007); Johnson and Kumar (2010); Killick (2017); Mason and Lawrence (2014); Najjar (2016); Patron (2006)	Adjusting to the built environment

Contextual Types	Research findings	References	Descriptors
Freedom	Free to visit a beach, Enjoyed feeling the wind in hair; Women have more freedom	Kumi-Yeboah and James (2014); Lin (2012)	Freedom of movement Freedom of dress
	Concerns regarding discrimination	Burkhardt (2013); Nguyen (2010); Patron (2006); Trilokekar and Kukar (2011); Yue and Lê (2012)	Discrimination practices

Table 2.8 provides a summary of the literature regarding intercultural encounters in the *community* context. Seven contextual types are described and references associated with each contextual type are listed. Descriptors were assigned to similar intercultural encounter experiences. Based on the descriptors identified and the references listed in Table 2.8, the remainder of this section provides commentary on each of the contextual types in the *community* context.

#### Natural Environment

The *natural environment* contextual type was assigned one descriptor, namely: “Attracted to the environment”. Students were attracted to the weather and to the natural and clean environment in Australia.

#### Personal Safety

The *personal safety* contextual type was assigned two descriptors, namely: “Australia is seen to be safe” and “Safety concerns”. Student safety was a consideration when selecting a country for study. While international students chose Australia for personal safety reasons they had ongoing concerns regarding their safety.

#### Governance

Intercultural encounters within the *governance* contextual type were assigned the descriptor “Traffic is organised”. Students recognised that an organised society provided quality of life benefits particularly in relation to having an organised traffic system, public transport and signage.

### Work

The *work* contextual type was assigned the descriptors “Finding work”, “Work practices”, “Study-work-life balance” and “Working helps language skills”. Students found it challenging to find employment and, when they found work, students were concerned about losing their jobs. Students recognised the need for a different communication style while at work and found that being at work could improve their host language skills. However, students found it challenging to find time for work, study and a social life.

### Safety Measures

This contextual type refers to the measures adopted that contributed to students’ safety. These protective mechanisms consisted of the provision of university accommodation and the protection provided by health insurance. Both these measures were recognised as reducing risk for students. In the case of health insurance, the risk was increased when students were not aware of the protection provided by health insurance and sometimes did not renew their insurance. The descriptors assigned in the *safety measures* contextual type were termed “University accommodation” and “Health insurance”.

### Built Environment

Students were shocked and surprised in some cases when they first encountered Australia’s built environment. Students from large cities were surprised to find that the buildings were not as tall as they expected them to be. Students in rural areas were surprised with the space and the amount of available land. In some cases students were not aware that they had been enrolled at a rural campus and consequently were disappointed to find that the city was far away. Students from France were disappointed with the built environment at the Gold Coast, particularly with the prevalence of signs designed for tourists. In light of the need to adjust, these intercultural encounters were assigned the descriptor “Adjusting to the built environment”.

### Freedom

Situations which were associated with personal freedom and with discrimination were assigned the contextual type *freedom* and included intercultural encounters where a female Muslim student felt a sense of freedom when she felt the wind in her hair and when she enjoyed the freedom being able to go to the beach. While international students in the United States noted that women had more freedom in that country (Kumi-Yeboah &

James, 2014), students also voiced their concerns regarding discrimination and were concerned that host students would not engage with them for racial reasons. Similarly, a group of Pakistani-Canadian and Afro-Canadian pre-service teachers who were studying in China experienced negative reactions to their skin colour (Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011). In another case two international students from France were verbally abused for speaking in their own language while in Australia (Patron, 2006). As shown in Table 2.8, three descriptors were assigned, namely: “Freedom of movement”, “Freedom of dress” and “Discrimination concerns”.

### **2.4.3 Culture context**

Table 2.9 reveals four contextual types associated with the *culture* context together with the findings and sources used to identify the contextual types and descriptors.

**Table 2.9: Contextual Types - Culture**

Contextual Types	Research Findings	References	Descriptors
<b>Food Practices</b>	Missed traditional food	Chang (2011); Kole (2007); Campbell (2004)	Taste
	Halal food not always available	Wilson and Gunawardena (2012)	Availability
	Brought ingredients from own country	Brown, Edwards, and Hartwell (2010)	
	Food is not healthy	Brown et al. (2010)	Food quality
	Adapted to the host country's food	Cappellini and Yen (2012)	Food acceptability
	Cooked own meals	Brown et al. (2010); McLachlan and Justice (2009)	
	Opportunity to socialise	Brown et al. (2010); Wilson (2011)	Food habits
	Food provides comfort	Brown et al. (2010); Gu (2016); McLachlan and Justice (2009)	
<b>Individual Qualities</b>	Cultural practices different in the host country	Burkhardt (2013); Johnson and Kumar (2010); Kavaliauskas Crain (2016); Kumi-Yeboah and James (2014); Mason and Lawrence (2014); Patron (2006)	Adjusting to diversity
	Adjusting to living communally	Forbes-Mewett and Nyland (2008); Liu and Winder (2014); Root and Ngampornchai (2013); Ujitani (2006)	
	Difficult to adopt new values	Kumi-Yeboah and James (2014)	
<b>Nature of Society</b>	Women have more freedom	Kumi-Yeboah and James (2014)	Women have influence
<b>Religious Practices</b>	Use Halal food	Forbes-Mewett and Nyland (2008); Sherry et al. (2010); Wilson and Gunawardena (2012)	Maintain religious practices
	Room for praying	Sherry et al. (2010)	

The table provides a summary of the literature regarding intercultural encounters in the **culture** context. Four contextual types were identified, namely: *Food practices*, *Individual qualities*, *Nature of society* and *Religious practices*. The references identifying each contextual type are listed. Descriptors are assigned to similar intercultural encounters within each

contextual type. Based on the references listed in Table 2.9, the remainder of this section provides further commentary on each of the contextual types.

### Food Practices

Five descriptors were identified in this contextual type, namely: “Taste”, “Availability”, “Food quality”, “Food acceptability” and “Food habits”. Students preferred the tastes of their traditional food and went to great lengths to find appropriate food. Food availability was important particularly for Muslim students who were unable to find Halal food on campus. In other cases when ingredients were unavailable, students brought ingredients from their home country.

Students were also concerned about food quality particularly with the amount of fat and sugar in the host country’s food. The acceptability of food was variable with some students responding by cooking for themselves while others reported that they adapted to the local food over time. The descriptor “Food habits” was assigned to intercultural encounters where sharing a meal provided opportunities to socialise and where traditional food provided a source of comfort for students.

### Individual Qualities

This contextual type was assigned the descriptor “Adjusting to diversity”. Students found that the cultural practices of individuals in the host country differed from what they were used to. A study of Chinese students in the US identified the need for international students to adapt to a range of cultural elements including the including a less rigid approach to hierarchy, less formality and new communication norms (Kavaliauskas Crain, 2016). In another study, international students attending a social event in Australia were offended when they were asked to smoke outside. Students were affronted by Australians’ standard of dress and by their excessive use of alcohol. When sharing accommodation students found it difficult to adjust to roommates’ behaviours. International students also found it difficult to adopt the values of the host country particularly when these values were different from those of their home country.

### Nature of Society

This contextual type was assigned the descriptor “Women have influence”. Differences between the participant’s culture and the host culture were evident in descriptions of

intercultural encounters in relation to gender roles in society. Female students found that women had more freedom and that they could express their opinions freely.

### Religious Practices

This contextual type was assigned the descriptor “Maintain religious practices”. Students expected that they would be able to continue to practise their religion. For Muslim students this meant finding Halal food and a place for their daily prayers. However, students were dissatisfied with the prayer rooms that were supplied and were disappointed to find that appropriate food was not always conveniently available.

#### **2.4.4 Academic context**

Table 2.10 shows three contextual types within the *academic* context, descriptors within each contextual type, associated references and a synopsis of the literature for each descriptor.

**Table 2.10: Contextual Types – Academic**

Contextual Types	Research Findings	References	Descriptors
<b>Student Practices</b>	Importance of seeking help	Mason and Lawrence (2014); Russell, Thomson, and Rosenthal (2008)	Seeking help
	Addressing teachers by their first name	Edgeworth and Eiseman (2007); Yue (2010)	Teacher-student interaction
	Importance of speaking and listening skills	Briguglio and Smith (2012); Pyne, Dinwoodie, and Roe (2007); Taylor (2008)	Improving English skills
	The challenge of group work	Harryba et al. (2011); Khawaja and Stallman (2011); Pyne et al. (2007); Rich (2011); Taylor (2008)	Adapting to unfamiliar learning practices
	Adapting to the new academic culture	Briguglio and Smith (2012); Gu (2016); Gutierrez and Dyson (2009)	
<b>Academic Practices</b>	Academic writing skills	Abusalem (2004); Arkoudis and Ly (2007); Li (2004); Ly Thi (2009); Mason and Lawrence (2014); Townsend and Huay (2008)	Academic skills
	Critical thinking skills	Huang (2007); Nayak and Venkatraman (2010); Son and Park (2014); Taylor (2008); Yue (2010)	
	Independent learning skills	Gu (2016); Hughes (2010)	
<b>Teacher Practices</b>	Teachers are approachable, encouraging	Edgeworth and Eiseman (2007); Baird (2012); Briguglio and Smith (2012); Gutierrez and Dyson (2009); Swanson, Frankel, and Sagan (2005)	Encouraging teachers
	Use of humour to engage students	Edgeworth and Eiseman (2007); Gutierrez and Dyson (2009)	Using humour
	Felt excluded	Ryan and Viète (2009); Liu and Winder (2014)	Felt excluded
	Communication skills of teachers	Harryba et al. (2011); Schweisfurth and Gu (2009)	Lack of training

The table provides a summary of the literature regarding intercultural encounters in the *academic* context. Three contextual types were identified, namely: *Academic practices*,

*Teacher practices* and *Student practices*, and are listed together with the descriptors.

Descriptors were assigned to similar intercultural encounters within each of the three contextual types. The remainder of this section presents further commentary on each of the contextual types based on the references listed in Table 2.10.

### Student Practices

The *student practices* contextual type was assigned four descriptors, namely: “Seeking help”, “Teacher-Student interaction”, “Improving English skills”, and “Adapting to unfamiliar learning practices”. A number of international students required assistance, particularly in relation to academic practices and skill development. Students were also challenged by the less formal ways of addressing teachers. While students enjoyed the relaxed learning environment, they were uncomfortable with the practice of addressing teachers by their first names.

Students were required to communicate effectively using the host country’s language. Speaking and listening skills were crucial in the classroom environment where students were required to quickly develop new academic skills. Students faced challenges when they were required to work in groups and when adapting to the new academic culture.

### Academic Practices

This contextual type was assigned the descriptor “Academic skills”. Students were required to develop a range of academic skills which were crucial for their success at university. These skills included academic writing skills, critical thinking skills and independent learning skills. These skills were previously unfamiliar to students and consequently presented challenges for students in the development of these skills.

### Teacher Practices

This contextual type was assigned four descriptors, namely: “Encouraging teachers”, “Use of humour”, “Felt excluded” and “Lack of training”. While the first two descriptors had a positive impact on students, the remaining two descriptors were practices which had potential negative consequences for students.

Teachers were found to be approachable and encouraged students to develop the required academic skills. The use of humour and a relaxed learning environment also

helped students to learn. However, when international students were placed in a group apart from domestic students they felt marginalised and excluded. The importance of ensuring that staff members were provided with appropriate training in relation to communicating with students whose first language was not English was also a cause of concern.

#### 2.4.5 Service context

Table 2.11 shows three contextual types within the *service* context, research findings, references and descriptors within each contextual type.

**Table 2.11: Contextual Types – Service**

Contextual Types	Research Findings	References	Descriptor
<b>Service Above Expectations</b>	Convenient transport	Son and Pearce (2005)	Service with support
<b>Service Below Expectations</b>	High cost of living, no student discount on public transport, cost of books, tuition and health insurance	Howlett (2011); Sawir et al. (2009); Sherry et al. (2010); Son and Pearce (2005); Wilson and Gunawardena (2012)	Financial disadvantage
	Lower service levels, having to wait for services	Abusalem (2004); Hulten (2010); Rich (2011); Tam et al. (2014)	Reduced service
	Disappointed with public transport and reduced shopping hours	Chang (2011); Gu (2016); Okamura (2009); Wilson and Gunawardena (2012); Wilson (2011)	
	Being deceived and exploited when purchasing	Forbes-Mewett and Nyland (2008); Rich (2011)	Exploitation of students
<b>Experiential</b>	Arranging visas and accessing university services are confusing	Abusalem (2004)	Confused regarding services
	Not aware of obligations and fined for not complying	Hulten (2010)	Unaware of service obligations

Table 2.11 provides a summary of the literature regarding intercultural *service* encounters. Intercultural *service* encounters representing each of three contextual types are described and their references are listed. Descriptors were assigned to intercultural service encounters which were similar.

Participants' experiences of intercultural *service* encounters were influenced by the service levels which they would have expected at home (Hulten, 2010; Stauss & Mang, 1999). Students, particularly in the first few months of their stay, experienced a sense of frustration when *service* encounters did not meet their expectations (Rich, 2011). While speaking the host country's language was important when making purchases (Gu, 2016; Hulten, 2010), customers prefer to speak in their own language particularly when dealing with financial institutions (Holmqvist, 2011). This highlights an unrealistic expectation for international students when they first arrive in a new country. Based on the descriptors identified and the references listed in 2.11, the remainder of this section provides commentary on each of the contextual types.

#### Service Above Expectations

This contextual type was assigned the descriptor, namely: "Service with support". Students valued the support provided by being able to access convenient transportation.

#### Service Below Expectations

The *service below expectations* contextual type was assigned three descriptors, namely: "Financial disadvantage", "Reduced service" and "Exploitation of students". These included intercultural *service* encounters which were unsatisfactory or below students' expectations. In some intercultural *service* encounters students felt that they were at a financial disadvantage. Students felt that goods and services in Australia were expensive. A number of students indicated that they were unhappy with the lack of student transport concessions for international students, with the high cost of text books, university tuition and health insurance. Students were unhappy with reduced service levels. This included having to wait for services, reduced shopping hours and inconvenient transport services in some areas. There were also instances where students were both financially and sexually exploited by landlords. Students were also deceived when purchasing a phone plan.

## Experiential

This contextual type was assigned two descriptors, namely: “Confused regarding services” and “Unaware of service obligations”. Students were confused both with the processes involved in arranging for student visas in Australia and when accessing university services. Foreign workers in Sweden suggested that a checklist alerting them to their legal obligations would have helped them. In this case the foreign worker was fined as they were not aware of the requirement for an annual vehicle inspection.

### 2.4.6 Social context

Table 2.12 shows two contextual types within the social context, research findings, references and descriptors within each contextual type.

**Table 2.12: Contextual Types – Social**

Contextual Types	Research Findings	References	Descriptors
<b>Australians’ Company</b>	Homestay/university accommodation helped English skills	Edgeworth and Eiseman (2007)	Support on arrival
	Language difficulties	Gomes (2015); Latif et al. (2012); Harryba et al. (2011); Mason and Lawrence (2014); Yue and Lê (2012)	Language skills
	Use of alcohol	Edgeworth and Eiseman (2007); Patron (2006)	Adjusting to diversity
	Want to mix with host country students	Harryba et al. (2011); Briguglio and Smith (2012); Khawaja and Stallman (2011); Killick (2017); Nesdale and Todd (2000)	Want to mix with Australians
	Australians are not friendly	Killick (2017)	
	Joining clubs and playing sport to meet host country students	Killick (2017); Chang (2011); Liu (2016); Sakurai et al. (2010)	
<b>International Students’ Company</b>	Making friends with people from other cultures	Gu (2016); Burkhardt (2013)	Making friends

The table provides a summary of the literature regarding intercultural encounters in the *social* context. Intercultural encounters representing each of two contextual types are described and their references are listed. Descriptors were assigned to intercultural encounters to provide additional detail. Based on the descriptors identified and the references listed in Table 2.12, the remainder of this section provides commentary on each of the contextual types.

### Australians' Company

The *Australians' company* contextual type was assigned four descriptors, namely: “Support on arrival”, “Language skills”, “Adjusting to diversity” and “Want to mix with Australians”.

A range of intercultural encounters where students mixed socially with host country students was identified. These included living in homestay and university accommodation which provided additional benefits in that students were able to improve their English skills. However, homestay experiences varied, with some local families more hospitable than others. While international students expressed the desire to mix socially with host country students, they acknowledged the barriers caused by different cultural values and by the perceived lack of friendliness of the host country students. Students were, however, able to make friends by joining community sporting clubs and by participating in University organised social events. For instance, a university organised bus trip helped international students to make friends with host country students.

### International Students' Company

The *International students' company* contextual type was assigned the descriptor “Making friends”. Students found opportunities for social interaction as they wanted to make friends and to develop a support network. Students joined clubs and became involved in sport and consequently made friends with people from other cultures.

## **2.5 Intercultural Encounter Outcomes**

### **2.5.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this section is to review the research literature to identify outcomes of intercultural encounters in order to address Research Question 3. Outcomes of

intercultural encounters were described in terms which were classified as affective, behavioural or cognitive (Bateman, 2004). Affective outcomes are related to mood and attitudes, behavioural outcomes include observable behaviours and cognitive outcomes relate to thoughts, perceptions, knowledge and thinking processes (Krathwohl et al., 2001). The sections that follow consider outcomes of intercultural encounters in terms of affective, behavioural and cognitive outcomes for the following reasons:

- Affective, behavioural and cognitive domains have been used to describe outcomes of intercultural encounters (An & Chiang, 2015; Bateman, 2004; Kim, 2005; Taylor, 1994; Zhou et al., 2008).
- Researchers in psychology identified affective, behavioural and cognitive effects of intercultural experiences (Savicki, Vande Berg, Paige, & Lou, 2012).
- Outcomes of intercultural encounter experiences include affective or emotional responses, behavioural outcomes, skill development and cognitive or knowledge outcomes (Byram et al., 2009b; Heppner, Wang, Heppner, & Wang, 2012; Liu et al., 2010).
- International students may reflect on and learn from their intercultural encounter experiences (Elo et al., 2015; Mendez Garcia, 2016). Learning can be described in terms of affective, behavioural and cognitive domains (Kraiger, Ford, & Salas, 1993; Krathwohl et al., 2001; Ugur, Constantinescu, & Stevens, 2015).

### **2.5.2 Affective outcomes**

A range of affective outcomes resulting from intercultural encounters were identified in the literature and are summarised in Table 2.13. This table and the following tables were generated using the process described above. The table shows generalised outcomes of intercultural encounters which are classified as affective outcomes. These affective outcomes included feelings, emotions and attitudes such as tolerance. The table also includes references which described intercultural encounters together with the affective outcomes of intercultural encounters. The outcomes are described as generalised as the context in which they occurred was not always able to be determined.

**Table 2.13: Student Affective Outcomes from Intercultural Encounters**

Generalised Outcomes	References
<b>Appreciative of other cultures; expanded world view; became tolerant, open minded</b>	Bodycott (2015); Brown and Graham (2009); Chang (2011); Gu (2016); Killick (2017); Root and Ngampornchai (2013)
<b>Confident, assertive, pleased with skill development and with transformative changes</b>	Andrade, (2006);Chang (2011); Clapp-Smith and Wernsing (2014); Gu (2016); Killick (2017); McLachlan and Justice (2009); Montuori and Fahim (2004); Rich (2011)
<b>Satisfied with social and emotional support</b>	Hendrickson, Rosen, and Aune (2011); Menzies and Baron (2014); (Ramelli et al., 2013); Tawagi and Mak (2015); Yue and Lê (2012)
<b>Embarrassed by inadequate English skills; not confident speaking English</b>	Chang (2011); Ujitani (2006); Yue and Lê (2012)
<b>Sadness, frustration, confusion, anxiety, stress. Disappointed with accommodation, public transport and with the teaching environment</b>	Abusalem (2004); Bochner (2003); Chang (2011); W. Gu (2016); Kormos et al. (2014); Li (2004); Sieck et al. (2013); Ujitani (2006)
<b>Lonely, homesick</b>	Briguglio and Smith (2012); Burkhardt (2013); Chang (2011); McLachlan and Justice (2009); Outhred and Chester (2013); Sawir, Marginson, Deumert, Nyland, and Ramia (2008); Sherry et al. (2010); Wilson and Gunawardena (2012); Yue and Lê (2012)
<b>Difficult to make friends; angry, isolated and rejected; reduced self-esteem and confidence. Impact of discrimination and unable to find work</b>	Burkhardt (2013); Kormos et al. (2014); Liu and Winder (2014); Patron (2006); Pham and Saltmarsh (2013); Rich (2011); Sawir et al. (2009); Yue and Lê (2012)
<b>Offended by different cultural practices</b>	Andrade, (2006); Patron (2006); Ujitani (2006)
<b>Frustrated when service levels were below expectations</b>	Chang (2011); Okamura (2009); Rich (2011); Wilson and Gunawardena (2012); Wilson (2011)
<b>Satisfied, unsatisfied or stressed after intercultural service encounters</b>	Johnson, Meyers, and Williams (2013); Sharma, Tam, and Kim (2009); C-y Wang and Matilla (2010)
<b>Group work and quality of teaching were variable, language difficulties in class</b>	Chang (2011); Harryba, Guilfoyle, and Knight (2012); Khawaja and Stallman (2011); Mason and Lawrence (2014); Nayak and Venkatraman (2010); Patron (2006); Rich (2011); Wong (2009)

The table presents affective outcomes resulting from intercultural encounters and includes a range of positive and negative emotions experienced by international students. Affective outcomes included positive emotions where students were happy that they had made friends, and negative feelings of embarrassment, sadness, frustration and homesickness. As a result of intercultural experiences, international students became more interested in other cultures. For instance, students resolved to travel and to experience more of the world after an intercultural experience. They became more tolerant when interacting with others and developed confidence as their language skills improved and they began to make friends.

On the other hand, students reported feeling disappointed with accommodation, and with the teaching environment. They missed their usual food and in some cases were lonely, homesick and found it difficult to make friends. Students were negatively impacted by discriminatory behaviour particularly when they were unsuccessful when seeking employment. Students were also offended by local cultural practices and frustrated with the reduced service levels when purchasing goods and services. Students displayed a mix of emotions when they were exposed to new teaching practices. While students were not always happy with the quality of teaching, they found that working in groups was both challenging and fulfilling.

### **2.5.3 Behavioural outcomes**

A number of behavioural outcomes resulting from intercultural encounters were identified in the literature as shown in Table 2.14. These are referred to as generalised outcomes by the researcher as they were not associated with intercultural encounters in specific contexts.

**Table 2.14: Student Behavioural Outcomes from Intercultural Encounters**

Generalised Outcomes	References
Outgoing; careful not to offend people; adjust behaviour, adopt local practices; stayed in safe areas	Killick (2017); Kumi-Yeboah and James (2014); Okamura (2009); Rich (2011)
Communication skills, non-verbal behaviour	Chang (2011); Mason and Lawrence (2014); Rich (2011); Ujitani (2006)
Host country language skills	Bodycott (2015); Chang (2011); Mason and Lawrence (2014); Root and Ngampornchai (2013); Sato and Hodge (2009)
Living independently; problem solving, self and time management skills	Andrade, (2006); Bodycott (2015); Brown and Graham (2009); Burkhardt (2013); Gill (2007); Gu (2016); McLachlan and Justice (2009)
Assertive, asked for advice	Brown and Graham (2009); Rich (2011)
Academic skills: group learning skills, asking questions; accessed tutoring and resources	Andrade, (2006); Burkhardt (2013); Edgeworth and Eiseman (2007); Hughes (2010); Jones (2013); Lin (2012); Rich (2011)

It can be seen from the table that intercultural encounters can result in behavioural outcomes. These generalised outcomes include being outgoing, being careful not to offend people, adjusting behaviour and adopting local practices. For instance, students adjusted their behaviour by remaining in safe areas rather than venturing to other parts of the city. The table also lists behavioural outcomes including the development of communication skills and making changes to non-verbal behaviours. Developing skills in the host country's language was a further behavioural outcome of intercultural encounters as were the abilities to live independently, to overcome challenges and to manage themselves and their time. Behavioural outcomes also include being assertive, asking for advice and developing academic skills. These academic skills included communication skills and group working skills. Students asked questions in class and accessed tutoring services and other resources when they needed assistance.

#### 2.5.4 Cognitive outcomes

Table 2.15 lists a range of cognitive outcomes associated with changing perspectives, reflective processes, and personal growth. These outcomes are referred to as generalised as intercultural encounter contexts were not able to be identified. As described earlier, this table was developed by identifying intercultural encounters where cognitive

outcomes resulted from students' intercultural experiences. Cognitive outcomes resulting from intercultural encounters concern mental processes, acquiring knowledge and understanding. Mental processes including reflection can help participants to make sense of intercultural encounters (Byram et al., 2009b; Elo et al., 2015) and can often lead to the development of new perspectives (Taylor, 1994) as shown in the table.

**Table 2.15: Student Cognitive Outcomes from Intercultural Encounters**

<b>Generalised Outcomes</b>	<b>References</b>
<b>Broadened cultural perspective, interest in other cultures</b>	Brown and Graham (2009); Choi et al. (2012); Clapp-Smith and Wernsing (2014); Jon (2013); Killick (2017); Nesdaile and Todd (2000); Reichard et al. (2015); Root and Ngampornchai (2013); Sharma et al. (2009)
<b>Reflective skills, making sense of experiences</b>	Bochner (2003); Briguglio and Smith (2012); Heppner et al. (2012); Lin (2012); Mason and Lawrence (2014); Pitts (2009); Rich (2011); Sieck et al. (2013)
<b>Question current beliefs</b>	Berwick and Whalley (2000); Clapp-Smith and Wernsing (2014); Heppner et al. (2012); Holmes et al. (2015); Kumi-Yeboah and James (2014); Montuori and Fahim (2004); Ritz (2010); Sato and Hodge (2009)
<b>Revised opinions, changed frame of reference; changed worldviews and perceptions; compared cultures</b>	Andrade, (2006); Chang (2011); Choi et al. (2012); Clapp-Smith and Wernsing (2014); Deardorff (2004); Gill (2007); Hassam (2007); Killick (2017); Kumi-Yeboah and James (2014); Lyon (2002); Montuori and Fahim (2004); Rich (2011); Ritz (2010); Taylor (1994); Trilokekar and Kukar (2011); Wright and Hodge (2012); Zhao and Wildemeersch (2008)
<b>Personal growth, self-awareness and confidence; developed maturity; setting goals and making career plans</b>	Andrade, (2006); Bodycott (2015); Brown and Graham (2009); Buchanan (2004); Chang (2011); Clapp-Smith and Wernsing (2014); Gu et al. (2010); Holmes et al. (2015); Jon (2013); Killick (2017); Mason and Lawrence (2014); McLachlan and Justice (2009); Montuori and Fahim (2004); Root and Ngampornchai (2013); Sample (2013); Sato and Hodge (2009)

It can be seen from the table that cognitive outcomes include thinking and reflective processes, the development of new perspectives, and new understandings about self and others. As a result of intercultural experiences, students broadened their perspectives and became interested in other cultures. Furthermore, the literature indicates that international students reflected on and made sense of their experiences and, in the process, sometimes questioned their current beliefs (Chang, 2011). These reflective processes resulted in changed opinions, worldviews and perceptions. As shown in

Table 2.15, students became self-aware and developed maturity as they became more independent (Clerehan, McCall, McKenna, & Alshahrani, 2012; Gu et al., 2010; Killick, 2017; Patron, 2006; Sato & Hodge, 2009). In some cases, students revised their career plans as a result of their intercultural experiences.

## **2.6 Intercultural Competence**

A preliminary review of the literature indicated that intercultural encounters may have a role in the development of intercultural competence. This section considers the affective, behavioural and cognitive outcomes of intercultural encounters which have been deemed to contribute to intercultural competence. The ability to be inter-culturally competent helps people to interact with those from other cultures and is important for social cohesion (Byram et al., 2009b).

### **2.6.1 Defining intercultural competence**

The term “intercultural competence” refers to the ability to effectively interact with people from other cultures (Deardorff, 2006). Intercultural competence has also been described as a mix of components within the affective, behavioural and cognitive domains which:

enable the person to think, to feel and to act appropriately within the situation: components that help the individual to evaluate the interactant and the situation/context correctly and to react flexibly and adequately according to the circumstances prevailing at that time and at that place.

(Hiller & Wozniak, 2009, p. 116)

The identification of these “thinking, feeling and acting” components is supported by research where intercultural competence is described in affective, behavioural and cognitive terms (Bennett, 2008; Byram et al., 2009b; Dignes & Baldwin, 1996; Gertsen & Soderberg, 2010; Hammer, 2015; Mendez Garcia, 2016; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009; Taylor, 1994).

### **2.6.2 Evidence for the influence of intercultural encounters in the development of intercultural competence**

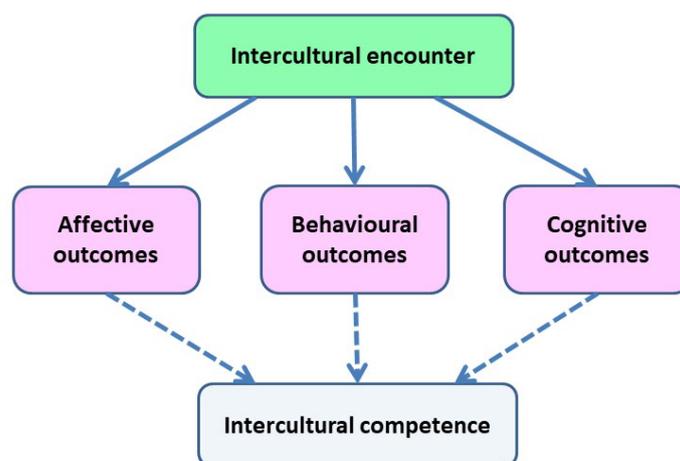
The literature shows that intercultural encounters experienced while studying abroad can have positive effects on intercultural competence (Brown & Graham, 2009; Jon, 2013).

This is supported by research which found that intercultural encounters can contribute to the development of intercultural sensitivity and intercultural competence skills (Byram et al., 2009b; Clapp-Smith & Wernsing, 2014; Peng & Wu, 2016; Ponzoni, 2014; Sample, 2013).

Not all intercultural experiences, however, had a positive impact on the development of intercultural competence. Byram, Barrett, Ipgrave, Jackson, and García (2009a) proposed that intercultural encounters can either contribute to or can detract from the person's ability to interact effectively in intercultural situations. The same authors proposed that these experiences can be "special or 'rare' events" (Byram et al., 2009a, p. 5) which have lasting impacts on participants.

Intercultural skills were described in terms of the affective, behavioural and cognitive domains (Byram et al., 2009b). Affective domain skills included attitudes and feelings such as respect and tolerance while behavioural domain skills included being flexible and cognitive processes included skills such as comparing cultures. A comprehensive investigation of 50 years' research on intercultural competence conducted by Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) identified 264 components of intercultural competence and aligned them with the affective, behavioural or cognitive domains. Figure 2.5 provides a representation of the affective, behavioural and cognitive outcomes of an intercultural encounter and shows that these outcomes can be associated with the development of intercultural competence.

**Figure 2.5: Contribution of Outcomes to Intercultural Competence**



The figure represents the affective, behavioural and cognitive outcomes of intercultural encounters which align with intercultural competence skills. Outcomes associated with each domain which could contribute to the development of intercultural competence are listed with the associated references in Table 2.16. The table provides the domain and the outcomes identified in the literature, together with the references. This table was developed using a similar process as described in Section 2.5.1. While the outcomes were able to be classified as affective, behavioural or cognitive, the outcomes were not able to be associated with intercultural encounters in specific contexts. Consequently, the table refers to these outcomes as generalised outcomes.

**Table 2.16: Student Outcomes Contributing to Intercultural Competence**

Domain	Generalised Outcomes	References
Affective	Openness, tolerance, respect and appreciation for other cultures	Brown and Graham (2009); Clapp-Smith and Wernsing (2014); Rich (2011); Root and Ngampornchai (2013)
	Learn how to “fit in” with other cultures, ethnorelative mindset	Killick (2017); Jackson (2008)
	Emotional intelligence, sensitivity to other cultures	Hiller and Wozniak (2009); Gullekson and Tucker (2012); Rich (2011)
Behavioural	Adjusted behaviour when expressing opinions, respectful communication, careful not to offend, changed dressing style	Killick (2017); Chang (2011); Kumi-Yeboah and James (2014); Rich (2011); Ujitani (2006)
	Engaging with the new culture	Burkhardt (2013); Gill (2007)
Cognitive	Knowledge about other cultures, gender and family roles, work and daily life	Brown and Graham (2009); Chang (2011); Clapp-Smith and Wernsing (2014); Gill (2007); Gu (2016); Gu et al. (2010); Nesdale and Todd (2000)
	Question and revise beliefs, making sense of intercultural experiences	Heppner, Wang, Heppner, and Wang (2012); Holmes et al. (2015); Killick (2017); Kumi-Yeboah and James (2014); Ritz (2010); Sato and Hodge (2009); Sieck et al. (2013)
	Recognition of the need to adjust	Gu (2016)

### Affective Outcomes which Contribute to Intercultural Competence

As can be seen in the table, affective, behavioural and cognitive outcomes which specifically relate to intercultural competence result from intercultural encounters. In the affective domain, these outcomes included being tolerant and respectful of other cultures. This capacity to respect other cultures was recognised as a component of intercultural competence (Byram et al., 2009b; Deardorff, 2004). Affective outcomes which aligned with these attitudes were identified and included having a positive disposition towards other cultures. This positive disposition was also evident when students were tolerant and respectful of other cultures and when they learned how to “fit in”. The ability to be respectful of other cultures was indicative of an ethnorelative mindset (Bennett, 1993). An alternative approach which primarily considers one’s own culture was described as an ethnocentric mindset and was recognised as a barrier to the development of intercultural competence. Table 2.16 also highlights research which found that respecting other cultures required patience, an ability to reserve judgement and was more likely to foster intercultural skills. Emotional intelligence and sensitivity to other cultures had similar roles in the development of intercultural competence.

### Behavioural Outcomes which Contributed to Intercultural Competence

Table 2.16 cites research where students adjusted their behaviour in order not to offend other people. Behaving appropriately and communicating effectively are actions in the behavioural domain which demonstrated intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2004). Engaging with people from other cultures was also recognised as a behaviour which contributed to intercultural competence (Byram et al., 2009b). As the table shows, behavioural outcomes included a change in the style of dressing. A further behavioural outcome which contributed to intercultural competence was the capacity to be engaged in the new culture. For instance students became outgoing in order to make friends and when developing a support network.

### Cognitive Outcomes which Contribute to Intercultural Competence

Cognitive outcomes listed in Table 2.16 included an understanding of other cultures, about gender and family roles and about practices relating to work and daily life. Intercultural competence requires the ability to make comparisons and to demonstrate cognitive flexibility (Deardorff, 2004).

## 2.7 Summary and Conclusions

This review has demonstrated that international students' experiences of overseas study have been extensively researched. This review has also demonstrated that the term intercultural encounter is considerably well documented. However, there has been no study specifically designed to investigate intercultural encounters in different contexts.

The review has established that:

- The term intercultural encounter is not well defined. Furthermore, the terms in use were neither consistently defined nor were they applied to experiences with similar features. In light of this inconsistency, the following working definition was developed for use in this research:

*An intercultural encounter is an unforeseen event which is experienced by a person where some feature of that event is perceived by the person to be novel or to have different cultural norms. The event has a short duration, can occur in different contexts and does not necessarily involve other people or communication. Intercultural encounters are meaningful for the participant and can help the participant to make sense of their experience.*

- The review established that the level of preparedness for overseas study may influence the intercultural encounter experience. Furthermore, the review revealed that a number of internal and external factors contributed to student preparedness for overseas study. Internal factors included student knowledge, student skills and student personal qualities, while external factors included student support, organisational support and financial support.

However, the review revealed that while internal and external factors contribute to student preparedness, there is a need for research to establish a connection between student preparedness and intercultural encounter experiences.

- The review revealed that intercultural encounters can occur in a range of contexts, namely: **community, culture, academic, service** and **social**. However, it was shown that there is a lack of detailed research regarding the nature of intercultural encounters in different contexts. For this purpose, a

typology was developed for intercultural encounters that can be used to undertake an exploration of intercultural encounters within each context.

- Outcomes of intercultural encounters as shown in this review are well documented and can be described in affective, behavioural and cognitive terms. While this review revealed these affective, behavioural and cognitive outcomes, there is a lack of detailed research designed specifically to identify the outcomes of intercultural encounters in different contexts. Consequently, there appears to be a gap in the literature in that outcomes of intercultural encounters have not been considered for intercultural encounter contexts.
- The review has established that affective, behavioural and cognitive outcomes of intercultural encounters can be associated with the development of intercultural competence. This association is worthy of further investigation to ascertain if outcomes of intercultural encounters have a role in the development of intercultural competence.

In summary, this chapter has established that an investigation of intercultural encounters is warranted in order to:

- further investigate the factors which can prepare international students for overseas study in order to address Research Question 1;
- undertake research to explore the role of context in intercultural encounters and to address Research Question 2;
- examine the outcomes of intercultural encounters within each context in response to Research Question 3; and
- respond to Research Question 4 by exploring the findings in relation to the development of intercultural competence.

The next chapter outlines the research methodology used in this research.

# Chapter 3

## Research Methodology and Design

### 3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed the literature and provided a justification for this exploratory research. This chapter describes the methodology and research design adopted for this research. The ontological and epistemological approaches are considered and the rationale for choosing the constructivist/interpretivist paradigm and Grounded Theory as a research methodology are presented. The research design is described, and detail is provided in relation to the use of interviews as a data collection tool. The processes involved in data collection, data analysis and theory generation are also outlined. This chapter concludes by describing the samples selected for the initial and follow up interviews and by providing details of the ethical clearance for this research.

### 3.2 Research Approach

#### 3.2.1 Introduction

When designing research investigations, the researcher is expected to articulate the assumptions related to the theory of knowledge and the theoretical perspectives which guide the study (Crotty, 1998). This section addresses this through a consideration of the ontological and epistemological underpinnings for this research. These considerations are related to the view of reality (ontology) and to the beliefs relating to nature of knowledge (epistemology) which are held by the researcher. This researcher planned to explore intercultural encounters as experienced by international students.

Guba and Lincoln (1994) recognised that three interrelated questions can contribute to the choice of paradigm which guides the research design. The questions, which are listed below, shape the ontology, the epistemology and the methodology used in this research.

- What is the form and nature of reality and, therefore, what is there that can be known about it?

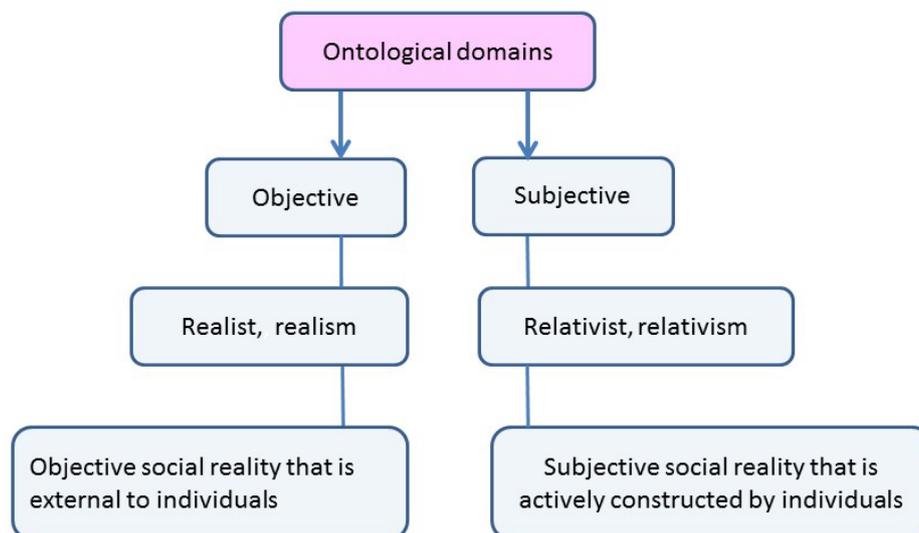
- What is the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known?
- How can the inquirer (would-be knower) go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known? (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108)

The above questions are addressed in the following sections. This section also provides a rationale for the choice of research design based on the ontological and epistemological assumptions.

### 3.2.2 Ontological and epistemological considerations

Ontology refers to the assumptions underpinning the nature of reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Ontology also provides a philosophical framework for articulating both the researcher’s view of reality and the assumptions which underlie that view of reality (King & Horrocks, 2011). Ontological approaches can be described as being in two domains, namely: objective and subjective (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011) as shown in Figure 3.1.

**Figure 3.1: Ontological Approaches**

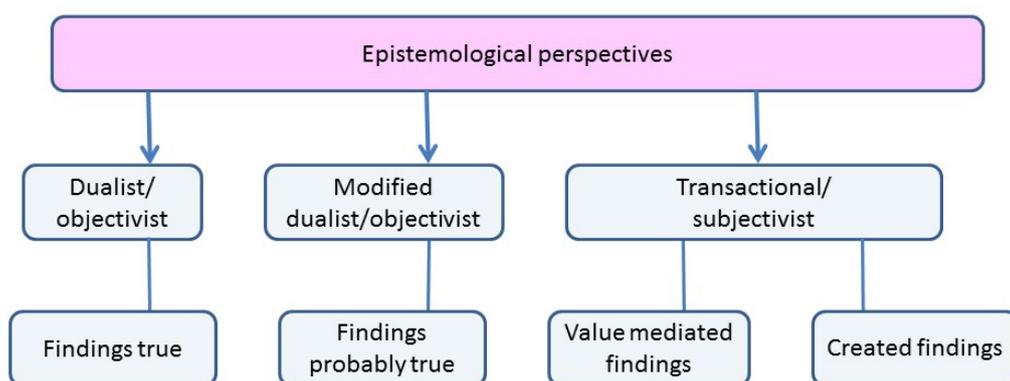


As can be seen in Figure 3.1, the objective domain takes a realist approach where social reality is seen as apart from individuals. Alternatively, the subjective domain takes a relativist perspective where individuals construct their reality. The ontological approach taken for this research is subjective and takes a relativist perspective as each student has

their own individual set of assumptions and expectations. Furthermore, students' experiences of and their reactions to intercultural encounters have been deemed variable. For instance, when students are faced with intercultural encounters their experiences either align with their expectations or alternatively deviate from their expectations. As students have individual beliefs and experiences, this has the potential for each student to have their own potentially unique sense of reality. Consequently, the underlying ontological assumption for this research regarding the nature of reality is that there are multiple realities. This perspective aligns with a belief that knowledge is constructed from personal experiences and subjective evaluations of those experiences (King & Horrocks, 2011).

Epistemology describes how knowledge is acquired and provides an explanation of the theory of knowledge. Epistemology is defined as a philosophy that explains how we know what we know (Finlay & Ballinger, 2006; Goduka, 2012). Other researchers have described epistemology as a philosophy based on the assumptions regarding the nature of the relationship between the entity which knows the knowledge and what is known (Creswell, 2007; Guba, 1990). Lincoln, Lynam, and Guba (2011, p. 98) describe three epistemological approaches which are shown in Figure 3.2. This research selected the transactional/subjectivist approach where the findings of the research are created.

**Figure 3.2: Epistemological Approaches**



As can be seen in the figure, two epistemological perspectives are aligned with the objective ontological approach while the remaining approach aligns with the subjective ontological approach. The dualist epistemological approach recognises that the

researcher is separate from what is researched whereas the transactional approach acknowledges the links between the investigator and what is being investigated (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). These links facilitate a collaboration between the researcher and what is being investigated which, in turn, leads to the creation of research findings (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln et al., 2011).

Epistemologically, this research aligns with the assumption that students construct their own understanding of reality and that knowledge is constructed when both students and the researcher make sense of students' experiences of intercultural encounters. The epistemological position taken in this research enables the research questions to be addressed by taking a transactional/subjective epistemological approach. This approach is based on the assumption that the researcher constructs new knowledge as a result of their interaction with the topic being researched. Furthermore, this knowledge developed by the researcher is shaped by the "lived experiences" of both the researcher and the subjects of our research (Lincoln et al., 2011, p. 104). The ontological and epistemological assumptions outlined above lead to the selection of a methodology and the articulation of a research paradigm which is explored in more detail in the following sections.

### **3.3 Research Paradigms**

#### **3.3.1 Introduction**

A paradigm is described as a "set of beliefs which guides action" (Guba, 1990, p. 17). Researchers conduct their research activities by following a set of beliefs or assumptions about the world (Krauss, 2005). These beliefs and assumptions that underpin a research methodology and the researcher's view of reality have also been described as a paradigm (Kuhn, 1970).

The articulation of a belief system in research design provides a link between the research objectives and the approach adopted to achieve those research objectives (Houghton, Hunter, & Meskell, 2012; Weaver & Olson, 2006). This section considers the use of paradigms in relation to this research and outlines the rationale for the selection of the constructivist/interpretivist paradigm for this research.

### 3.3.2 Use of an interpretivist paradigm

Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p. 13) posit that there are four main research paradigms in qualitative research, namely: positivist and post positivist; constructivist-interpretive, critical and feminist-poststructural. Both the ontological and epistemological assumptions point to the use of the constructivist/interpretivist paradigm to this research. The adoption of this paradigm informs the selection of the methodology for this research. The assumptions outlined above are akin to the constructivist/interpretivist belief system or paradigm which is summarised in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Constructivist/Interpretivist Basic Belief System**

	<b>Constructivist/Interpretivist Beliefs</b>
<b>Ontology</b>	The nature of reality is relative, local, specific and co-constructed. What is known is transactional, and subjective. There are multiple realities.
<b>Epistemology</b>	The observer and what is studied are related and have an effect on what is observed. It is not possible to separate the observer from what is observed. The results are a subjective interpretation of the observations.
<b>Methodology</b>	The aim of the constructivist/interpretivist methodology is an iterative process of data collection, analysis and interpretation. This process then leads to the emergence of a revised interpretation of the observations.

Adapted from Guba & Lincoln (2005)

As can be seen in Table 3.1, the ontological assumption underlying the constructivist/interpretivist paradigm was that the nature of reality is subjective, relative, local and co-constructed and consequently there are multiple realities. Research based on the constructivist paradigm supports the view that knowledge is created as a result of interaction between the researcher and the research participants (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Similarly, as described earlier, epistemologically, this research assumed that the observer was not able to be separated from what is observed.

In this research knowledge was socially constructed through the use of interviews where students described their experiences to the researcher. Both the observer and the observed interacted and these interactions led to subjective interpretations of what was being observed. This aligned with the assumption that students had their own individual views of reality and that these realities were local and subjective.

The theoretical perspective of constructivism/interpretivism is based on the assumption that students develop their beliefs about reality in a social context. The constructivist/interpretivist paradigm was deemed appropriate for this research as the research questions seek to provide a description of intercultural encounters experienced by international students. A further research question sought to describe the outcomes of intercultural encounters. Furthermore, the constructivist/interpretivist paradigm was selected for this investigation as the beliefs underpinning the paradigm align with the researcher's ontological and epistemological assumptions that reality is subjective and that results can be subjectively interpreted. Furthermore, constructivism supports the view that the critical reflections of both researcher and research participants can contribute to the investigation of the research questions.

The research questions stated in Chapter 1 sought to identify the characteristics of intercultural encounters and the types of settings in which they occur. As such, the research is exploratory in nature and aligns with the researcher's worldview where knowledge is socially constructed in a world where there can be multiple realities. As noted earlier, this view is consistent with the use of the constructivist/interpretivist paradigm in this research (King & Horrocks, 2011).

Table 3.2 provides a summary of the assumptions, the purpose, the approach taken and the researcher's role in constructivist/interpretivist approach and describes this approach in the context of this research.

**Table 3.2: Constructivist/Interpretivist Approach to this Research**

	<b>Constructivist/Interpretivist</b>	<b>Context of this Research</b>
<b>Assumptions</b>	Reality is socially constructed Primacy of subject matter	Students develop their sense of reality through intercultural encounters Primacy of students' experiences
<b>Purpose</b>	Contextualisation Interpretation Understanding actors' perspectives	To establish the contexts in which the intercultural encounters occur To investigate intercultural encounters To explore students' experiences of intercultural encounters
<b>Approach</b>	Begins with data and ends with a grounded theory Makes sense of the data  Researcher as instrument Searches for patterns Inductive Descriptive write up	Data is used to generate a grounded theory Sought to understand intercultural encounters Researcher analyses interview data and identifies themes and patterns
<b>Researcher Role</b>	Personal involvement and partiality Empathic understanding	The researcher brings her personal biases to the research investigation. The researcher took account of the participants' emotional reactions to intercultural encounters

Adapted from Glesne and Peshkin (1992)

The table provides more detail in relation to the constructivist/interpretivist paradigm. The constructivist/interpretivist paradigm is based on the assumptions that reality is socially constructed and that the subject matter is given pre-eminence. This researcher recognised the primacy of the students' experiences of intercultural encounters as the focus of this investigation. The purpose of constructivist/interpretivist research is to provide contextualisation and interpretation and to understand perspectives. This purpose aligns with this research.

### **3.4 Choice of Methodology**

#### **3.4.1 Introduction**

A number of methodologies were considered for this research. Creswell (1998) described five approaches to undertaking qualitative research. These research

methodologies are summarised in Table 3.3 and are discussed in the context of this research.

**Table 3.3: Qualitative Research Methodologies**

<b>Qualitative Research Methodology</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Ethnography</b>	An investigation of a particular social or cultural group in their natural setting	The sample being studied is not a homogenous cultural group
<b>Biography</b>	An exploration of a person's life	This research focusses on discrete experiences rather than a person's entire life
<b>Phenomenology</b>	The development of an understanding of peoples' lived experiences	Usually conducted through interviews with a small number of research participants
<b>Case Study</b>	An in-depth study	Can be used for taking a through approach to an investigation
<b>Grounded Theory Methodology</b>	The development of a theory which emerges from the data	Used when no current theory exists

Adapted from Creswell (2007)

As shown in the table, research which takes an ethnographic approach aims to study culture or people's behaviour in groups (Reeves, Kuper, & Hodges, 2008). Ethnography is often applied as a research method in the discipline of anthropology. Data is typically collected through the use of interviews and where people are usually located (Berg, 1995). As the sample for this research did not represent a single cultural group the ethnographic approach was not adopted for this research.

A biographical approach to research methodology is used when research questions aim to examine the life of a person. This research aimed to explore individual events rather than more broadly investigating students' lives. Consequently, a biographical approach was not taken for this research.

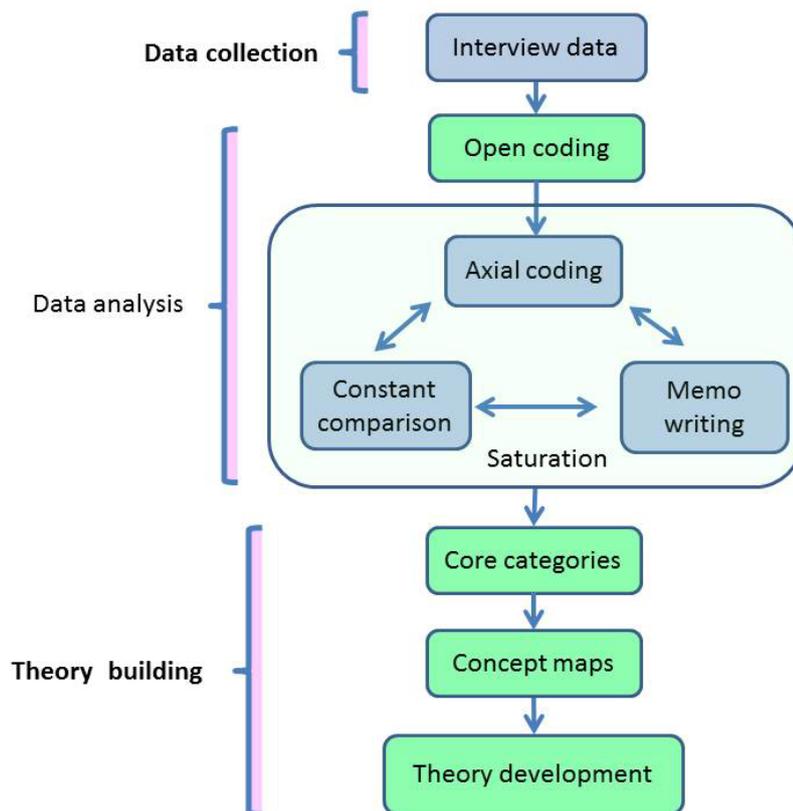
A phenomenological approach to research is taken when research aims to explore how individuals experience a particular phenomenon. The approach is used when the objective of the research is to describe and to develop an understanding of participants'

lived experience regarding a concept or an event (Creswell, 2007). While this approach may be suitable for a subsequent study, the phenomenological approach was not taken as this exploratory study aims to firstly describe intercultural encounters. As an exploratory study, this research used GTM which is outlined in the remainder of this section.

### 3.4.2 Use of GTM

GTM was developed by Glasser and Strauss (1967), refined by Strauss and Corbin (1998) and was further developed by Charmaz (2006). The methodology is used in a range of disciplines as a means of generating theory from data (Charmaz, 2006). The phases of this grounded theory study are presented in Figure 3.3.

**Figure 3.3: Phases of a GTM Study (Strauss & Corbin, 1998)**



As shown in the figure, GTM follows a process of data collection, data analysis and theory building (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this research, data was collected through the use of interviews and was subsequently analysed using the process which is described in the following section.

### Data Analysis

The process of GTM involved the data being allocated to specific codes which were then grouped into concepts. As shown in Figure 3.3, open coding was the initial stage of the data analysis where data was allocated to codes. While the term “open coding” was used by Strauss and Corbin (1990), Charmaz (2006) referred to “initial coding”. This initial coding process arranged the data into manageable units and allocated data to categories or codes which were then compared with other pieces of data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The data collection process continued until the researcher determined that no new codes emerged from the data. At this point in the analysis the data was “saturated” (Donalek & Soldwisch, 2004; Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006).

### Axial Coding

A number of terms were used in the literature to describe this stage of the coding. These terms include axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), selective coding (Glaser, 1978), focussed coding (Charmaz, 2006), and intermediate coding (Birks & Mills, 2011). While the open coding processes deconstruct the data by assigning pieces of data to codes, the process of axial coding effectively looked for new ways of rearranging the data, linking or combining categories and identifying patterns within the data (Birks & Mills, 2011).

### Memo Writing

Memo writing is a reflective activity where the researcher captures thoughts, opinions and reflections and identifies emerging themes (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Holton, 2004). Memos were used to provide an audit trail to record the planned and unexpected events associated with the research and thoughts regarding the progress of the research (Birks & Mills, 2011). As well as documenting data collection activities and communications, memos were used to organise thinking (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), to develop abstractions and as a prelude to building a theory (Birks & Mills, 2011).

### Constant Comparison

Concurrent with coding and memo writing a process of constant comparison was carried out to ensure that assigned codes were appropriate for, and were grounded in, the data (Gibbs, 2002). This ongoing comparison was done to establish and verify consistency in the analysis and to verify saturation of the data. This comparative process was repeated

as new concepts were compared with concepts and theories generated in the initial stages of data analysis (Salazar, Crosby, & DiClemente, 2006).

In their description of the constant comparative method, Glaser and Holton (2004) describe three types of comparison which can lead to the generation of theory. The purpose and outcomes of these comparisons are summarised in Table 3.4.

**Table 3.4: Purpose and Outcomes of Constant Comparison**

<b>Comparison</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>Incidents with incidents</b>	To establish similarities and varying conditions	Concepts and hypotheses
<b>Concepts with new incidents</b>	To achieve theoretical elaboration, saturation, and verification of concepts	Generation of new concepts, new theoretical properties of the concepts and new hypotheses
<b>Concepts with concepts</b>	To establish best fit of many choices of concepts to a set of indicators	Generation of a well-grounded theory

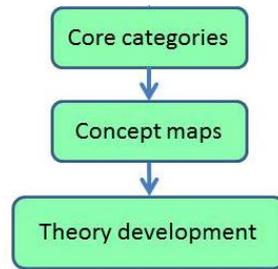
(Glaser & Holton, 2004)

In the initial stages of data analysis, specific incidents within the data are compared with other incidents. The comparison of these indicators within the data is done for the purpose of establishing and verifying similarities and differences between the incidents. The term “incident” is used to describe the indicators in the data which can lead to the clarification of properties and dimensions of each of the codes (Holton, 2010). Similarly as new incidents are identified these are compared with existing concepts. In some cases, this leads to the generation of new concepts. Finally, as new concepts are identified, they are compared with existing concepts. This results in the generation of a grounded theory.

### Theory Building

The approach taken in this research is shown in Figure 3.4 and involved the development of core categories and concept maps which led to the development of a theory. These processes are outlined below.

**Figure 3.4: Theory Building**



### Core Categories

Core categories emerged from the coding and constant comparison processes were used for the theory building process. As noted by Glaser (1998), core categories can be frequently observed in the data and can help to identify both consistencies and variations within the data. Glaser (1998) further notes that core categories take a longer time for saturation to occur and that their identification has an effect on the developing theory.

### Concept Mapping

Concept mapping was used in this research to visually represent the concepts and relationships between the concepts. Novak and Gowin (1984, p. 15) defined a concept map as “a schematic device for representing a set of concept meanings embedded in a framework of propositions”. More recently concept maps were described as “graphical tools for organising and representing knowledge” (Kinchin, Streatfield, & Hay, 2010, p. 3). While concept maps have traditionally been used in education they can also be used to enhance reflective thinking and in the research process (Daley, 2010). Reflective and creative thinking skills are essential steps in the research process and concept maps provide a means of visually representing the reflective processes. Concept maps can highlight relationships between concepts and can be used as a teaching and learning strategy (Coneição & Taylor, 2007).

In this research, concept maps were used for:

- identifying patterns and similarities within the data (Dinkel & Schmidt, 2014; Kinchin et al., 2010);
- as a way of interpreting interview data (Kinchin et al., 2010);
- communicating complex relationships and concepts (Dixon & Lammi, 2014);

- reducing data to a manageable amount (Dixon & Lammi, 2014);
- creativity and problem solving (Dixon & Lammi, 2014); and
- providing additional data (Wheeldon & Faubert, 2009).

Concept maps were developed by using the codes and core categories developed in the analysis of the interview data to construct relationships between those codes and core categories. This process involved discussions with the researcher's supervisors with feedback used to refine the relationships. Feedback, researcher reflection and further discussions resulted in the development of new concepts, codes, categories and relationships between those concepts. Examples of concept maps developed in this research are shown in Figure 3.9, Figure 3.10 and Figure 3.11.

### Theory Development

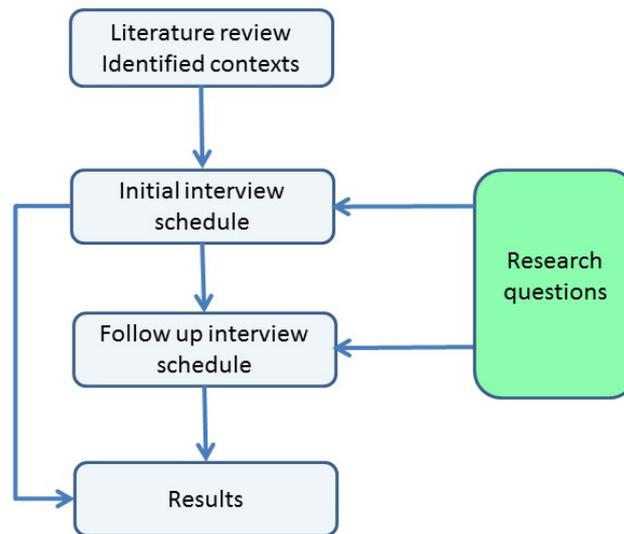
After the development of concept maps the analysis moves to a higher level of abstraction. The relationships between the core category and other constructs are clarified (Rabinovich & Kacen, 2010) and the process leads to the development of a grounded theory. The ongoing constant comparison process led to the identification of core categories. The categories were analysed to establish relationships which were represented in concept maps. These concept maps reduced the data and facilitated the creative process which resulted in the development of a grounded theory.

## **3.5 Research Design**

In choosing a research design the researcher seeks to answer the research questions (Creswell, 2007; Vogt, Gardner, & Haeffele, 2012). In this research, interviews were selected for their capacity to provide data to address the research questions as stated in Chapter 1.

The use of interviews provided a means of obtaining international students' perspectives on their preparedness for intercultural encounters. Interviews also provided data which enabled the remaining research questions to be addressed. This relationship between the research questions and the development of both the initial and the follow up interview schedules is shown in Figure 3.5.

**Figure 3.5: Research Design**



The figure shows that the research questions informed the development of both the initial and the follow up interview schedules. Both interviews provided data for analysis. As well as providing additional data for analysis, the follow up interviews enabled the initial findings to be taken back to the students for their comments.

## **3.6 Data Collection using Interviews**

### **3.6.1 Interviews**

Interviews can be described as meetings where one person obtains information about another person (Kvale, 2006). The research interview is defined by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) as a professional conversation where knowledge is co-constructed through an exchange of views between the interviewer and the interviewee. Interviews enable the lived experience of the research participants to be explored; an approach which Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p 124) described as a “life world” interview. A research interview has also been described as a conversation between a researcher and a research participant where the researcher asks questions and the participant provides answers to those questions (Vogt et al., 2012).

Interviews are used frequently in qualitative research for data collection (King & Horrocks, 2011) and are appropriate for research in social science, health and education disciplines (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Vogt et al. (2012) recommended the use of

interviews when the research questions seek to investigate participants' experiences and where the researcher aims to develop a new theory rather than testing an existing theory. Charmaz (2006) described the use of intensive interviewing for exploring a concept or an experience and recommended the use of interviews as an appropriate data collection tool for GTM.

Interviews can range from unstructured interviews where the interviewer has a small number of fixed questions to structured interviews where the questions and the order of those questions are predetermined (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Unstructured interviews are conversational in nature and are suitable for exploratory research while structured interviews are appropriate when interviewees require the questions prior to the interview. Semi-structured interviews provide a mix of questions which are fixed but which also enable the interviewer to ask prompting or follow up questions (Fontana & Frey, 2005).

### **3.6.2 Use of interviews in this research**

As described earlier, two interviews were used for data collection in this research: an initial interview and a follow up interview. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as they ensured that key questions were asked while still providing the flexibility to include prompting questions or questions of clarification. For the purpose of conducting an analysis of intercultural encounters to address Research Question 2, intercultural encounters were identified in the analysis of the data and then compiled and investigated. Individual interviews rather than group interviews were chosen for this research as there was a potential for sensitive information to be revealed by the research participants (Moss, Donnellan, & O'Neill, 2012). This approach was taken by Dunne (2008) in her research of Irish students' perspectives of intercultural contact.

Face-to-face semi-structured interviews were selected for this research because they provided structure and allowed for flexibility (Kvale, 1996). Face-to-face interviews also provided opportunities for participants to describe their thoughts, their personal opinions and their emotions. This flexibility was seen as a benefit for this exploratory research for its potential to generate a wider range of data (Fontana & Frey, 2005).

### 3.6.3 Role of the interviewer

With regard to the administration of the interview schedule and the data collection process the researcher was responsible for:

- recruiting students;
- selecting and booking an appropriate venue at each of the campuses;
- interviewing students;
- refining the interview questions; and
- complying with ethical standards.

It was important that the venue chosen for the interviews provided an environment that was comfortable, private and quiet for the interviews (King & Horrrocks, 2011). The researcher was also responsible for ensuring that participants were relaxed by asking questions in ways that established and maintained rapport with the interviewee (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In light of this, the researcher ensured that the needs of the interviewee were taken into account by listening attentively and by checking that participants felt both heard and understood.

## 3.7 Data Analysis

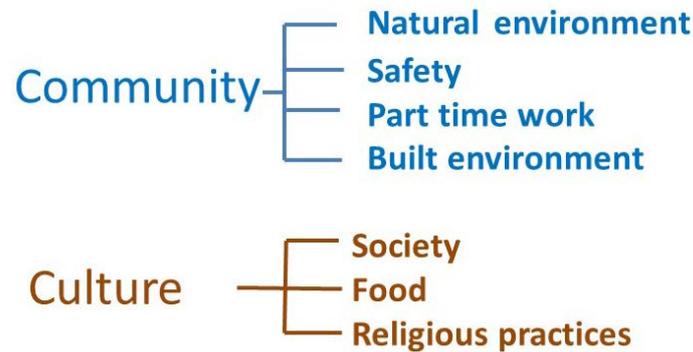
### 3.7.1 Introduction

This section presents the application of the data analysis and theory building processes as shown in Figure 3.3. The results of the initial data analysis are provided as examples to demonstrate the processes adopted in this research.

### 3.7.2 Open Coding: Identification of contexts and contextual types

As noted above, the point of theoretical saturation regarding the identification of contexts and contextual types was reached by assigning contextual types and descriptors to each intercultural encounter. As contextual types were identified these were incorporated into a classification system as shown in Figure 3.6. An initial classification of the *community* and *culture* contexts is shown to demonstrate the process adopted to identify contextual types within each of those two contexts. A similar process was used to identify descriptors within each contextual type. Figure 3.6 provides an example of the initial coding, while Figure 3.7 shows further refinement of the coding. The final coding results are shown in Figure 3.8.

Figure 3.6: Initial Coding in Community and Culture Contexts



As can be seen in the figure, initial coding revealed four contextual types in the *community* context and three contextual types were revealed in the *culture* context. With further analysis and using constant comparison of the codes assigned, the contextual types were refined as shown in Figure 3.7.

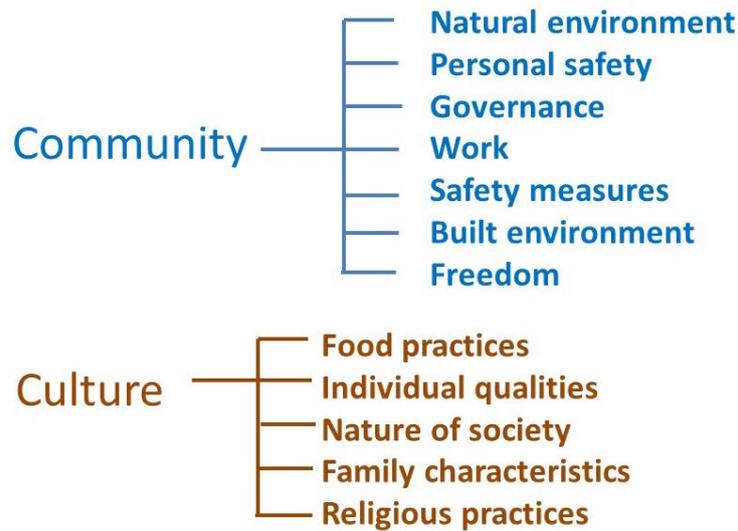
Figure 3.7: Further Refinement of Coding Results



As shown in Figure 3.7 further coding revealed additional contextual types in both the *community* and *culture* contexts. The contextual type *governance* was added to the community context while the contextual types *individual* and *family* were added to the *culture* context. This process continued until the point of saturation was reached when the analysis of further data did not reveal any additional contextual types. As this point follow up interviews were conducted with a view to establishing the validity of the

findings of the analysis. These follow up interviews were analysed for the potential presence of new codes and contextual types for each context. The final coding result showing the contextual types for the *community* and *culture* contexts is shown in Figure 3.8.

**Figure 3.8: Final Coding Result in Community and Culture Contexts**



While contextual types were also identified for the *academic*, *social* and *service* contexts, Figure 3.8 shows contextual types for only the *community* and *culture* contexts. These contextual types were verified in analysis which included axial coding, memo writing and the development of concept maps. The processes applied to this research are presented in the following sections.

### 3.7.3 Axial Coding: Clarification of contextual types

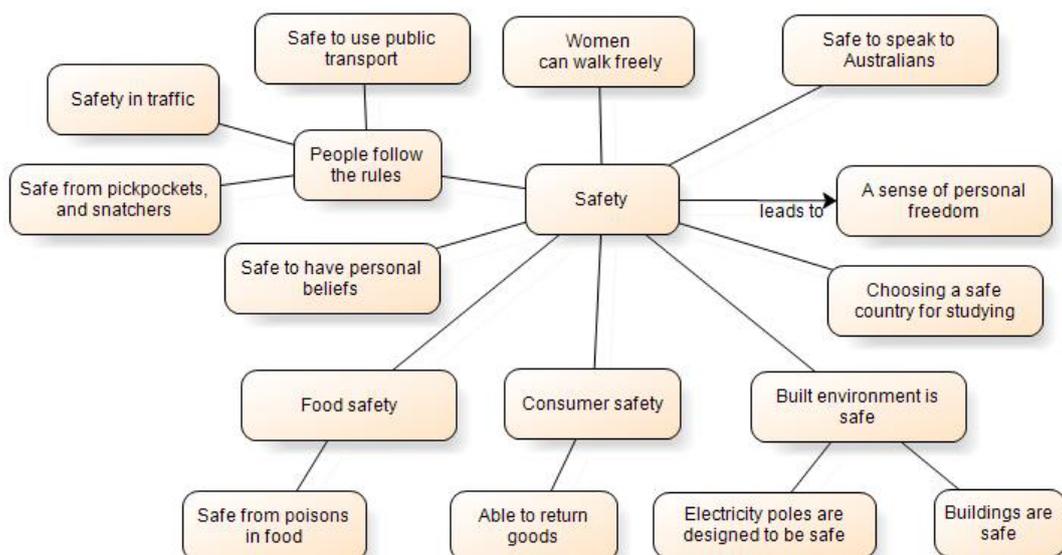
The process of axial coding enabled the development of concepts and relationships between those concepts. Prior to this, the researcher ensured consistency and clarity in the use of codes by identifying features which distinguished between potentially similar contextual types. An example of the use of axial coding follows to illustrate the process used in clarifying each contextual type. The example used clarifies the meaning of the two contextual types: *personal safety* and *safety measures*. Examples of intercultural encounters which were assigned each of these contextual types are shown in Table 3.5.

**Table 3.5: Clarification of Personal Safety and Safety Measures Contextual Types**

Contextual Type	Participant Quote	Feature
<b>Personal Safety</b>	<i>I can feel very comfortable on the train, or in the park or go to Luna Park. Some places here are very secure. In my country most of the time you can't do that. My sister told me that it was safe. Said when you take the train, just follow the rules. Respect other people and they don't have to do anything. (Aldo)</i>	Focussed on the participant's feelings in relation to their personal safety
<b>Safety Measures</b>	<i>If we will see an electricity pole, these are also made of wood (in Australia). But in India these are made of iron. That is the biggest danger for life. Sometimes (there is an) electricity fault. (Vajrin)</i>	Focussed on the safety measures adopted

Table 3.5 provides two quotes, one of which was assigned the contextual type *personal safety* and the other was assigned the contextual type *safety measures*. The first quote highlights how participants felt in relation to their personal safety while the second quote focusses on the measures that were put in place to ensure community safety. The concept map shown in Figure 3.9 assisted in exploring the concept of student safety.

**Figure 3.9: Exploration of Student Safety**



This exploration represented in Figure 3.9 was part of the axial coding and constant comparison process which enabled the concept of student safety to be more fully

investigated. This investigation led to further memos and to the clarification of a distinction between two contextual types. As a result the contextual type *personal safety* was assigned to intercultural encounters where participants described their feelings in relation to their own safety, while the contextual type *safety measures* was assigned to intercultural encounters where participants referred to practices that were adopted or to measures that were put in place to ensure students' safety. Similar processes were used to identify and to clarify contextual types within the remaining intercultural encounter contexts. These processes were supported by reflective activities including constant comparison and memo writing as discussed in the following section.

#### 3.7.4 Constant Comparison: Finalisation of contextual types

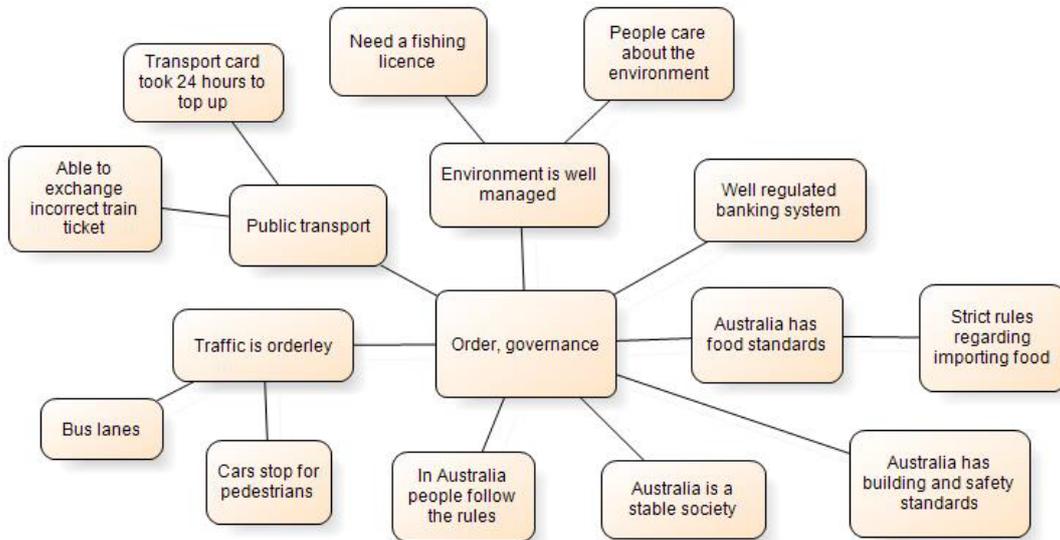
As noted earlier in Table 3.4, the constant comparison process helped to ensure that codes were applied appropriately and consistently and that concepts were verified and that saturation was achieved. The reflective process of memo writing assisted in this constant comparison and data analysis process. As an example, the concept of safety was explored in a reflective memo, part of which is shown in Table 3.6 and in visual representations which are shown below.

**Table 3.6: Memo Reflecting on Participants' Comments Regarding Feeling Safe**

There seems to be a pattern emerging - that students are grateful for the order and they have a sense of safety being here.  
In Friday's interviews a student talked about the electric poles being made of iron in India - and here they were made of wood.  
A Chinese student spoke of the shock that she felt when cars stopped for her - and talking to a colleague from South Africa today, he mentioned the same thing - in his country people in cars will speed up when someone puts their foot on the road!

The memo shown above led to further analysis through the use of visual representations including concept maps where contexts and contextual types were explored. An example is shown in Figure 3.10. Each intercultural encounter was investigated and assigned codes which were compared with those assigned to other intercultural encounters. This constant comparison process described in Table 3.4 ensured that no additional findings emerged from the investigation. As an example, the code of "order, governance" was assigned to a number of intercultural encounters. A concept map showing intercultural encounters sharing this code is shown in Figure 3.10.

**Figure 3.10: Constant Comparison of “Order, Governance” Code**



As shown in Figure 3.10, similar intercultural encounters were compared with a view to identifying patterns and similarities in the data. The contextual type *governance* emerged from this comparison of intercultural encounters as did the contextual types of *personal safety* and *safety measures*. As the interviews proceeded, each additional intercultural encounter identified in the analysis was investigated and compared with the concepts, contexts and contextual types which emerged from earlier analysis. Comparisons at this level enabled the researcher to develop core categories and to build a theory. This process is described in the following section.

### 3.7.5 Theory development

In this research as shown above the ongoing constant comparison process enabled the identification of core categories that more fully described the types of intercultural encounters and their outcomes.

In this research three core categories were identified as a result of the constant comparison process, namely:

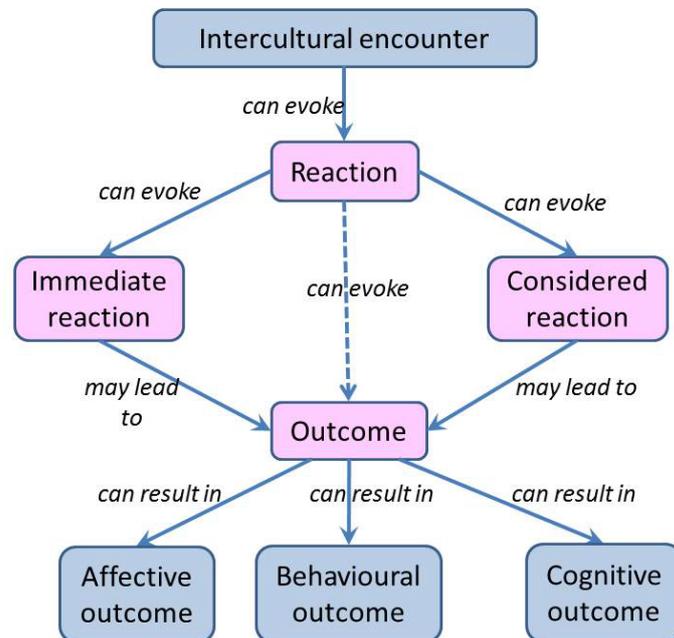
- intercultural encounters can be classified into contexts and contextual types;
- intercultural encounters result in short term reactions and longer term outcomes; and
- outcomes can be affective, behavioural and cognitive.

These core categories emerged following the analysis of the data from the initial and follow up interviews. The core categories were then presented in the form of a concept map template which showed the relationships between intercultural encounters and reactions and outcomes. This template was used in conjunction with a pivot table to analyse each intercultural encounter identified in the interview data and to create summaries. This process is described in the following section.

### 3.7.6 Use of concept map template and pivot table

A concept map template together with a pivot table was used to analyse the results and to address Research Question 3 which sought to identify outcomes of intercultural encounters. The concept map template was used to investigate the presence or absence of reactions and outcomes in each intercultural encounter while the pivot table recorded and summarised these findings. The concept map template is presented in Figure 3.11.

**Figure 3.11: Concept Map Template**



It can be seen from Figure 3.11 that reactions and outcomes can result from intercultural encounters. The use of the concept map template enabled the researcher to take a consistent approach when comparing the reactions of participants and the outcomes they described. As will be shown in Chapter 5, short term reactions include immediate and

considered reactions and longer term outcomes include affective, behavioural or cognitive outcomes.

The pivot table generated summaries of intercultural encounters within specific contexts and contextual types. Preliminary analysis was done to explore the data in terms of age and gender. It was found that the sample was too small to enable interpretable results. The following section describes the sample for this research.

### **3.8 Sample Selection and Description of Sample**

#### **3.8.1 Introduction**

The selection of the sample of students to be interviewed was subject to a number of constraints. These included time and resource constraints as the researcher was required to travel to other campuses and was there for a limited time period. The sample was also limited to include only those students whose teachers or lecturers provided them with the information about the research. The section which follows describes the criteria used to select the sample, the process adopted to obtain the sample and the description of the sample.

#### **3.8.2 Sample selection criteria**

Table 3.7 lists the aspects and the criteria used for the selection of the sample. A mix of cultures and genders was selected in order to provide a range of student perspectives of their intercultural encounter experiences.

**Table 3.7: Criteria for Sample Selection**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Criterion</b>
<b>Culture</b>	Students from a range of cultures
<b>Gender</b>	A mix of genders
<b>Enrolment Status</b>	Full time international students at CQUniversity

The sample consisted of exclusively full-time students at CQUniversity. Selecting full time students from the one university would be expected to ensure that these students

shared similar experiences of university life. Part-time students were not selected as having a full-time study load was a condition for applying for a Student Visa.

### 3.8.3 Process used to obtain participants

The process adopted by the researcher involved initially contacting lecturers and other university staff at each of the campuses to identify appropriate ways of obtaining a sample of participants. The process used to obtain the sample for this research is summarised in Table 3.8.

**Table 3.8: Process Used to Obtain the Sample**

	<b>Researcher Activity</b>
<b>1</b>	Phoned and/or visited lecturers and ELICOS teachers at each campus. Provided these staff members with information about the research and answered their questions
<b>2</b>	Emailed Information Sheet and Consent Form to lecturers and ELICOS teachers who agreed to pass on the information to full-time international students
<b>3</b>	Arranged campus visits and provided dates of the interviews to lecturers and ELICOS teachers. Phoned lecturers and teachers to remind them of the interview dates
<b>4</b>	Visited each campus on the interview dates, made presentations to full-time international students and answered their questions in relation to the research
<b>5</b>	Provided hard copies of Information Sheet and Consent Form to potential participants
<b>6</b>	Emailed Information Sheet and Consent Form with details of the venue, date and time of interview

The table shows that the researcher contacted lecturers and ELICOS teachers at each campus to inform them about the research and to invite students to participate in the research. The Information Sheet and Consent Form were then emailed to the lecturer and teachers who indicated that they would forward the information to full-time international students. Two weeks prior to each campus visit, the researcher contacted the lecturers and ELICOS teachers informing them of the date of the visit.

At each campus the researcher met with international students explaining the purpose of the research and inviting them to participate. At those meetings, the researcher provided hard copies of the Information Sheet and Consent Form to students who agreed to be

interviewed. Prior to the interview, the researcher emailed students with the date, time and venue for the interview. The Information Sheet is reproduced in Appendix A1 while the Consent Form can be seen in Appendix A2.

#### **3.8.4 Description of the sample for the initial interviews**

As noted above, the participants in this research were full time international students enrolled at CQUniversity. The sample was an opportunistic sample and consequently was not representative of international students enrolled in the university at that time. This university is geographically distributed and includes campuses in both regional and in metropolitan areas. At the time of the research, campuses at Sydney, Melbourne and the Gold Coast catered solely for international students while the Rockhampton and Mackay regional campuses enrolled both international students and domestic students.

Students' living arrangements varied with 25 students living in shared accommodation with other students or members of the community for some of the time. Some students changed their living arrangements as they were not happy with the food provided or with the cost. Four students had spent some time in a residential college; three students had lived in homestay arrangements and four students were living with family members who were already in Australia. Students enrolled in the regional campuses had the option of living in the University residential college while students who were enrolled in the metropolitan campuses did not provide student accommodation. Consequently, students enrolled at the Sydney and Melbourne campuses were required to travel to the university for classes.

Of the 33 participants, 16 were ELICOS students and the remaining 17 participants were enrolled in either an undergraduate degree or a research higher degree. Students enrolled in undergraduate or research higher degrees did not necessarily complete a VET or an ELICOS course prior to their enrolment. Students were required to provide evidence of their English skills prior to their enrolment being accepted. Table 3.9 provides a summary of the numbers of participants with part-time work, the participants' countries of origin and the numbers of participants interviewed at each campus location.

**Table 3.9: Initial Interview Sample Summary**

	Male	Female	No. of Participants
Participants with part-time work	3	3	6
<b>Country of Origin</b>			
Vietnam	5	3	8
China	4	3	7
India	3	1	4
Iran	2	1	3
Japan	1	1	2
Colombia	2	0	2
Jordan, Kuwait, Mexico, Mongolia, Nepal, Papua New Guinea and the Philippines	4	3	7
<b>Total no. of initial interview participants</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Campus</b>			
Melbourne	10	7	17
Sydney	5	2	7
Rockhampton	5	1	6
Mackay	0	2	2
Gold Coast	1	0	1
<b>Total no. of participants</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>33</b>

As can be seen from the table, of the 33 participants 21 were male and 12 were female. Participants were from countries including Vietnam (8), China (7), India (4), Iran (3), Japan (2), Colombia (2), with one participant each from Jordan, Kuwait, Mexico, Mongolia, Nepal, Papua New Guinea and the Philippines. While approximately six participants mentioned that they would like to find employment, an additional six participants were engaged in part-time work. All participants who were interviewed had English as a second language. While all of these participants were interviewed initially, a selection of these participants was involved in a follow up interview.

### 3.8.5 Description of the sample for the follow up interviews

Participants were selected for the follow up interviews by randomly selecting participants from the list of those who had been previously interviewed. Participants were phoned

and were asked if they would be interviewed for a second time. If these participants agreed to a follow up interview they were asked to nominate a time and a date for a phone interview. A summary of the follow up interview participants is provided in Table 3.10.

**Table 3.10: Follow-up Interview Sample Summary**

	Male	Female	No of Participants
Participants with part-time work	2	2	4
<b>Country of Origin</b>			
China	1	0	1
India	0	1	1
Mongolia	0	1	1
Japan	1	0	1
Nepal	1	0	1
Papua New Guinea	0	1	1
Philippines	0	1	1
<b>Total no. of participants</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Campus</b>			
Rockhampton	1	0	1
Mackay	0	2	2
Sydney	2	0	2
Melbourne	1	1	2
<b>Total no. of follow up interview participants</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>

As the table shows, participants in the follow up interviews were from the following countries: China, India, Mongolia, Japan, Nepal, Papua New Guinea and the Philippines. Seven participants were interviewed by phone over a two week period with the data analysed after each of the follow up interviews.

### 3.9 Research Ethics

The researcher was granted ethical clearance from CQUniversity's Human Research Ethics Committee (Ethical clearance number H12/05-113). Notification of this clearance can be found in Appendix C. The National Ethics Application Form (NEAF) for this research described the measures adopted to ensure that the research would cause

no harm to the research participants; the processes for protecting the confidentiality of research participants and the strategies adopted to ensure that the research participants would be fully informed regarding the research (Information Sheet in Appendix A1). The application for ethical clearance also provided details of measures that were adopted to address issues including informed consent (Consent Form in Appendix A2), privacy and confidentiality.

### **3.10 Summary**

This chapter has described the methodology and the research design used for this research. The ontological and epistemological considerations were presented and the rationale for choosing the constructivist/interpretivist paradigm and GTM as a research methodology were outlined. The design adopted for this research was then described together with the use of interviews as a data collection tool. The processes involved in data collection, data analysis and the development of a theory for this research were presented.

The chapter concluded by describing the selection of the samples for the initial interview and the follow up interviews. Finally, the chapter noted the details of the ethical clearance obtained for the conduct of this research. The next chapter describes the design and development of the interview schedule.

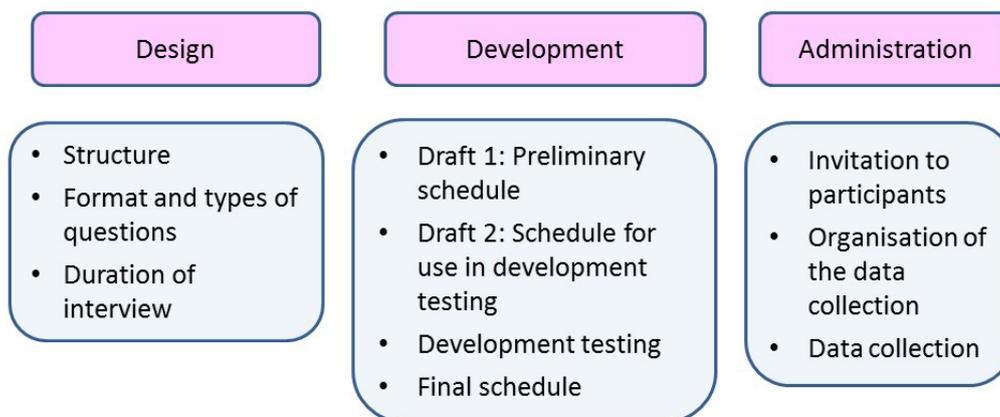
# Chapter 4

## Design, Development and Administration of the Interview Schedule

### 4.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 described the methodology and design for this research which collected data through initial interviews and later using follow up interviews. This chapter details the approaches taken to the design, development and administration of these two interview schedules. Figure 4.1 presents an overview of the steps taken in the design, development and administration of the initial interview schedule. A similar three step process was used for the follow up interview schedule.

**Figure 4.1: Initial Interview Schedule: Design, Development and Administration**



### 4.2 Design, Development and Administration of the Initial Interview Schedule

#### 4.2.1 Design considerations

This section provides details concerning the design of the initial interview schedule.

##### Structure

The five contexts in which intercultural encounters occur, namely: *community*, *culture*, *academic*, *service* and *social* were used as a structure for the interview schedule. These

contexts formed the basis of interview questions which asked participants to describe situations which occurred in the community, a situation in class, a situation when they were making a purchase and a social situation. Questions around these situations were used as they represented students' familiar daily activities and provided opportunities for participants to describe intercultural encounters in each of the five contexts.

#### Format and Types of Interview Questions

The initial interview schedule used short questions that were easy to understand. This approach was recommended by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) and ensured that international students could easily respond to the questions. The interviews followed a format recommended by the same researchers where questions were asked in a specified order and where the questions were designed for specific purposes. A specific order of questions was chosen to ensure consistency in the interview schedule. Questions were selected based on their capacity to provide interview data appropriate for the research questions. Table 4.1 provides the format of the interview sections and the purpose of the questions in each section of the interview schedule.

**Table 4.1: Format and Types of Interview Questions**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Purpose of Question</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	Warm up questions designed to put the participant at ease, to develop rapport with the interviewee and to prepare participants for the main questions. These questions also enabled the interviewer to establish the participant's level of English skills.
<b>Main Questions</b>	Open ended questions designed to elicit descriptions of particular situations or events that the participant had experienced.
<b>Sub-questions</b>	Used when asking participants to provide additional information regarding the situation or the event. These are used to probe for more detailed information.
<b>Prompts</b>	Acts as a reminder for participants and used to bring participants back to the topic or the situation under discussion.
<b>Conclusion</b>	Final questions designed to bring the interview to a close.

Adapted from Kvale & Brinkmann (2009)

### Duration of Initial Interview

The duration of the interviews was determined by the numbers of questions in the interview schedules and the time that participants had available for the interview. The interview schedule was designed for a 45 minute duration.

#### **4.2.2 Development of the initial interview schedule**

The initial interview schedule was developed in stages using two drafts prior to the development of the final schedule. Successive drafts were enhanced as a result of feedback.

#### Draft 1: Preliminary Schedule

An initial draft of the interview schedule was developed that included items for the introductory questions and items that were used for the main questions. The questions were developed by the researcher in consultation with her supervisors and were based on situations with which international students were likely to be familiar. Participants were asked to reflect on their initial few months in Australia and describe how they found accommodation and how they settled in. This approach was taken as students from another culture can find social activities different from what they are used to (Kumi-Yeboah & James, 2014). Examples of the introductory questions are provided in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2: Draft 1 Examples of Introductory Questions**

Questions
Did you know people who were already living and/or studying in Australia?
Who helped you to settle in?
How long did it take for you to find accommodation, and feel that you had settled in?
How did you make friends and start a social life?

The main questions were designed to elicit student descriptions of intercultural encounters in their daily lives. Table 4.3 provides examples of questions, sub-questions and prompts for the *social*, *academic* and *service* contexts.

**Table 4.3: Sample Main Questions for Three Contexts, Sub-questions and Prompts**

Main Questions	Sub-questions	Prompts
<p>Context: <i>social</i>            Could you choose a social event that you experienced when you first came to Australia and tell me about it?            What happened?</p>	<p>Did you go to the event with friends or did you go by yourself?            Was the [party/meeting/etc.] with people from your own country or were there people from other countries or cultures?            How did the [party/meeting/etc.] have any impact on your life as a participant here in Australia?            Do you go to [that type of event] now?            What sort of [party/meeting/etc.] was it?</p>	<p>Where was the [party/meeting/etc.]?            What time of the day was the event held?            Do you generally go out with people from your country and how often?            Did the event affect you in the choice of social events that you now go to?            Have you kept in contact with the people that you met at that event?            What led up to the event?</p>
<p>Context: <i>academic</i>            Could you tell me about a situation in your academic life where you wanted to speak to or to contact your lecturer, teacher or tutor?            Was that experience challenging or different from your home country?</p>	<p>What led up to the event?            What happened before the meeting/event?            What plans did you make beforehand?            Were there other people involved before or during the event?            What were your expectations before this meeting/event?            Have you experienced similar situations in Australia since this one?            Do you get other students to help you with your studies?</p>	<p>What part of the term did this happen – for example, in the first weeks, or in the middle or final weeks of the term?            What did they do?            Is it usual for students to contact lecturers in [student’s country]?            How were these situations the same or different?            Do you find it easy to ask other students for help?</p>
<p>Context: <i>service</i>            Could you now think about the times you’ve bought something. It might have been health insurance, or groceries or it might have been a situation when you were arranging to rent the place where you live?</p>	<p>What led up to the [event]?            How did you make the decision regarding this purchase?            How well prepared were you for this situation?            Did the situation go as you expected?            [If the situation was difficult for the student] What helped you to recover/manage this situation?            [If the purchase was successful for the student] What helped you in this situation?</p>	<p>How long did the [event] last?            Were others involved in the decision-making process?            Did you ask others for advice before you made the purchase?            What was their level of involvement?            How was it the same/different?</p>

### Draft 2: Schedule for use in Development Testing

The purpose of this draft was to use feedback to enhance the structure and to refine the questions. The structure was enhanced to improve the ease of use by the interviewer and questions were both refined and added to provide additional data. Feedback was provided by the researcher's supervisors. Consultation with the researcher's supervisors ensured that the questions were appropriate for the research questions.

### Refinement of the Interview Schedule Structure

The structure of the interview schedule was changed as a result of discussions with the researchers' supervisors. These changes involved the addition of a section for recording participants' details which is shown in Figure 4.2. Concluding questions were also added.

**Figure 4.2: Section to Record Participant Details**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ [include pronunciation] Age \_\_\_\_\_ Sex M/F \_\_\_\_\_ Years of English \_\_\_\_\_  
Marital status \_\_\_\_\_ Country of origin \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Start time \_\_\_\_\_ Finish time \_\_\_\_\_  
Program enrolled in \_\_\_\_\_ How long has the student lived in Australia? \_\_\_\_\_

The section concluding the interview included a statement which thanked the participant and asked them if they were happy to be contacted again if the researcher required clarification on some of their comments. The conclusion is shown in Table 4.4.

**Table 4.4: Interview Schedule - Changes to Conclusion Section**

Thank the research participant. Ask them if they have any questions of me.  
Ask them if they would be happy if I get back to them in the event that there are things that need clarification.

### Use of Sub-questions and Prompts

Sub-questions and prompting questions were added to provide data that addressed Research Question 3 which sought to identify the outcomes of intercultural encounters. Sub-questions which were added to each of the main questions as shown in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5: Questions Added to each of the Main Questions in Draft 2**

Sub-question	Prompt
Are you doing anything differently as a result of this experience?	How long did the event last?
Was the experience a positive experience or a negative experience?	How did this all affect you?

In consultation with her Principal Supervisor, the researcher also added questions which were designed to address Research Question 2: *What contextual types of student intercultural encounters can be identified in different contexts?* The questions added to the interview schedule are shown in Table 4.6.

**Table 4.6: Questions Added in Draft 2**

Sub-question	Prompt
Was the [party/meeting/etc.] with people from your own country or were there people from other countries or cultures?	Do you generally go out with people from your country and how often?

The completed Draft 1 was then used for development testing.

### 4.2.3 Development testing

#### Introduction

Development testing provides a way of ensuring that the data collection tool provides data that is valid and reliable (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007; de Vaus, 2002; Jones, 1996). In addition to providing practice for the interviewer, in this research, the development testing process was designed to:

- evaluate the introductory questions for their capacity to help participants to be relaxed for the interview session;
- establish whether all questions were easily understood;
- check on the duration of the interview;
- test the audio recording device for the interview session;
- establish the appropriateness of the venue for the interview;
- test the instructions provided to the interviewee; and
- establish the capacity of the interview schedule to address the research questions.

Feedback from development testing was then used to prepare the final draft.

#### Development Testing Panel Members

The development testing used a panel of three international students. Panel members were enrolled PhD international students and included two students from China and one from Malaysia.

#### Process used for the Development Testing

The process used for development testing involved feedback from three sources, namely: panel members, researcher reflections and discussions with the researcher's supervisors. Panel members were asked to trial the interview schedule and were asked to provide feedback in relation to the interview process, the clarity of the questions and the ease with which they remembered situations. The researcher took the role of the interviewer while also recording observations for later reflection. These reflections in regard to the interview data together with panel feedback formed the basis for discussions with the researcher's supervisors. As a result of these discussions a number of enhancements were made to the initial interview schedule.

#### Feedback

Panel members provided feedback in relation to their experience of the interview. The questions which panel members were asked and summaries of the feedback they provided are shown in Table 4.7.

**Table 4.7: Development Testing Panel Member Feedback**

Feedback Area	Questions	Summary of Feedback
<b>Interview Process</b>	How helpful was the information provided to you at the start of the interview? How comfortable did you feel at the beginning of the interview?	Panel members were sufficiently informed about the research. Panel members were comfortable at the start of the interview and during the interview. The questions asked at the start of the interview helped them to relax.
<b>Clarity of Questions</b>	Which questions did you find difficult to understand?	Some questions required clarification.
<b>Ease of Remembering Questions</b>	How easy or difficult was it for you to remember situations that you were asked to describe, for example, when you were asked to describe when you bought something?	While in most cases it was easy to remember situations and to describe those situations, panel members needed adequate time to remember and to choose an event to describe.
<b>Other</b>	Do you have other comments?	The interviewer spoke too quickly at times.

As can be seen in the table, while panel members found that it was generally easy to recall situations they reported that they needed sufficient time to remember and choose a situation to describe. Panel members also reported that the interviewer spoke quickly at times. Feedback from panel members and observations of the interviewer indicated that panel members were relaxed during the interview and that discussions about food and the environment seemed to further relax students and also reminded panel members of further intercultural encounters. While most questions were easily understood, panel members found that some questions required clarification.

The interviewer found that the duration of the interviews was less than 45 minutes in each case; that the audio recording device worked well and that the venue was easy to locate and appropriate for the interviews. The instructions provided to the interviewee also seemed to be clear and unambiguous.

In light of the panel members' enthusiastic responses to questions related to food and to the environment, a reminder was included to ask participants about their experiences in these areas. An investigation of the interview data together followed up with discussions

with the researcher’s supervisors identified additional questions in order to address the research questions.

### Final Schedule

As a result of panel member feedback and discussions with the researcher’s supervisors changes were made to the interview schedule. These changes are summarised in Table 4.8.

**Table 4.8: Summary of Modifications to the Interview Schedule**

<b>Change</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Questions added to the introduction</b>	What is the biggest difference between your culture and what you’ve experienced of the Australian culture? How prepared were you for the Australian culture? How many Australians have you met?
<b>Sub-question added</b>	Added sub-question to questions about social situations: “What language do you tend to speak with your friends?”
<b>Prompt questions added</b>	Ask students about their experience of food and the environment
<b>Order of main questions</b>	Changed order of the main questions so that the academic context was first and the social was at the end of the interview

As shown in Table 4.8 questions were added to the interview schedule and the order of the questions was changed. These changes were made to ensure that participants were asked about the differences between their culture and the Australian culture and about their level of preparedness for the Australian culture. Prompt questions were included to ask participants about their experiences of both the food and the environment in Australia if they had not previously referred to them. These prompt questions were added as they resulted in participants providing additional examples of intercultural encounters.

An additional change was made to the order of the main questions. In Drafts 1 and 2 students were asked about their social life after the introductory questions. However, after discussions with the researcher’s supervisors this order was changed so that students were asked about their life as a student first. This was done as students may have been more comfortable speaking about their student life initially rather than about

their social life which could have been seen as more personal. Consequently, given that participants could be more relaxed as the interview progressed, the order of the questions was changed to: academic, service and then social.

A further change was made in the section which recorded participants' details. It was realised that the student's country of origin was not included in the sections which recorded student details. Consequently, this was added to the information collected about each participant. The changes described above are included in the final schedule which is reproduced in Appendix B1.

#### **4.2.4 Administration of the initial interview schedule**

##### Invitation to Participants

Chapter 3 provided details of the processes adopted by the researcher to select the sample for this research. The researcher initially contacted lecturers and ELICOS teachers at each of CQUniversity's campuses where international students were enrolled. These lecturers and teachers invited students to participate in the research and provided them with an Information Sheet (Appendix A1) and a Consent Form (Appendix A2). International students who expressed interest in participating then met with the researcher who arranged an appropriate time for the interview.

##### Organisation of the Data Collection

As described in Chapter 3, data was collected through the use of interviews. The researcher took a written record of participants' details and the interview was recorded as an audio file. After each interview the audio file was transcribed and the name of the participant was replaced with a pseudonym. Text records of the interviews were then analysed using qualitative data analysis software.

##### Data Collection

The procedure adopted for the data collection in the initial interview involved welcoming the participant, putting them at ease and providing them with information about the research. These and the remaining procedures adopted for the initial interview are detailed in Table 4.9.

**Table 4.9: Procedure for Conducting the Initial Interview**

	<b>Interviewer Activity</b>
<b>1</b>	Welcome the participant and thank them for agreeing to be interviewed
<b>2</b>	Briefly explain the process of the interview and ask participants if they are happy for the audio to be recorded
<b>3</b>	Read the Information Sheet and explain the aim of the research
<b>4</b>	Read and explain the Consent Form and ask participant to sign
<b>5</b>	Ask participant if they have any questions
<b>6</b>	Record participant's contact details
<b>7</b>	Check with participant that they are happy for the audio recording to commence
<b>8</b>	Start the audio recording and conduct the interview
<b>9</b>	Ask the participant if they would like to ask the interviewer any questions
<b>10</b>	Ask the participant if the interviewer could contact the participant again if there was a need to clarify some responses
<b>11</b>	Thank the participant again for their contribution and wish them well in their studies

The procedure as shown in the table commenced with the interviewer welcoming students and thanking them for participating in the research. The interviewer explained the process of the interview, asked the participant if they were happy for the interview to be recorded, explained the aims of the research and read and explained the contents of the Information Sheet. The Consent Form was also read and explained to the participant. The participant was asked if they had any questions and, at an appropriate time, the participant was asked to sign the Consent Form.

After the researcher recorded the participant's contact details the interview commenced. At the conclusion of the interview the interviewer asked the participant if they would like to ask the interviewer any questions. The interviewer then asked if they could contact the participant if there was a need for clarification before thanking them for agreeing to be interviewed before wishing them well.

As a result of student feedback and the researcher’s observations, additional enhancements were made to the initial interview schedule. These changes are listed and described in Table 4.10. The rationale for making each change is also provided.

**Table 4.10: Summary of Administration and Delivery Enhancements**

<b>Change</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
<b>Delivery of Questions</b>	Interviewer to speak more slowly	Participants were more likely to understand the questions
<b>Clarity of Questions</b>	Interviewer to check for student understanding	Ensured that participants understood what the question was asking them to describe
<b>Record Keeping</b>	Included country of origin	Ensured that the participant provided this information and that it was recorded

As shown in the table, student feedback in relation to the delivery of the questions and the clarity of the questions was used in the enhancement process. Speaking slowly was recommended as participants’ English skills were sometimes not sufficiently well developed.

### **4.3 Design, Development and Administration of the Follow up Interview Schedule**

This section described the design, development and administration of the follow up interview schedule. Chapter 3 outlined the use of follow up interviews to seek participants’ opinions in relation to the initial findings. The follow up interviews also enabled the researcher to verify saturation of the data.

#### **4.3.1 Design considerations**

##### Structure

The initial findings of the analysis of the interview data revealed seven area types. These area types represented similar intercultural encounters which participants described. These then formed the basis for the main questions asked in the follow up interviews. The seven area types are described in Table 4.11.

**Table 4.11: Initial Findings in Relation to Each Area Type**

<b>Area Type</b>	<b>Initial Findings</b>
<b>Safety</b>	Participants together with their parents considered the safety of a country when choosing a country for study. Participants compared the safety of Australia with the safety in their own country.
<b>Environment</b>	Participants commented on Australia's natural environment and compared it with their own country's environment.
<b>Service</b>	Making purchases when participants first arrived were important initial tasks. Participants compared the service levels and service costs with what they would have expected in their home country.
<b>Family/ Other Support</b>	Participants acknowledged that a support network helped them to settle in when they first arrived. Support provided included assistance when arranging accommodation and when making initial purchases.
<b>Student Life</b>	Participants found some academic intercultural encounters challenging and recognised the importance of succeeding at their studies.
<b>Social Life</b>	Participants enjoyed making friends and participating in social events. Making friends seemed to help students to settle into university life.
<b>Food</b>	Participants compared the local food with their traditional food.
<b>Order/ Governance</b>	Participants observed that in Australia people followed the law and that was associated with an organised society.

The area types described in the table provided the structure for the follow up interview schedule which was designed to seek participants' opinions in relation to the initial findings.

#### Format and Types of Interview Questions

The format and types of interview questions were similar to the initial interview schedule with introductory questions, main questions and concluding questions. An additional area type, namely work/life balance, was identified during the course of the follow up interview. A question relating to this area type was added for the remaining follow up interviews. At the end of the interview participants were thanked for their participation and asked if they had any questions for the researcher.

### Duration of Follow-up Interview

The follow up interviews were designed to take no longer than 45 minutes. However, as the follow up interviews were held outside class time students were not restricted in their time available.

### **4.3.2 Development of follow up interview schedule**

The purpose of the follow up interview schedule was to establish participants' opinions in regard to the initial analysis of the interview data and as a means of ensuring that the initial findings were grounded in the data. Findings from the initial interviews provided the basis for the questions included in the follow up interview schedule.

### Draft 1: Preliminary Follow-up Schedule used in Development Testing

The questions included in the follow up schedule were designed to firstly re-connect with the interviewer and then to establish participants' opinions in relation to the initial findings. Examples of questions used as introductory questions are shown in Table 4.12.

**Table 4.12: Examples of Draft 1 Introductory Questions**

Introductory Questions
How are your studies going?
Do you still live in the same accommodation?
What does the whole experience mean for you - coming to Australia?
What did you know about the Australian culture before you arrived?

The introductory questions were then followed by the main questions. These questions asked students for their opinions in relation to each of the topic areas. The main questions are listed in Table 4.13.

**Table 4.13: Follow-up Interview Draft 1 Questions**

---

The interviews have identified a number of things that people have commented on. I will read them now: [Interviewer reads out the area types below]

- Safety
- Environment
- Service
- Family/other support
- Student life
- Social life
- Food
- Order/governance

---

**Safety**

Let's take each of these in turn. The first is "safety"  
How important is safety to you?

---

**Environment**

A number of students commented on the natural environment here; particularly the clean air, the beach, the fact that you could see the ground from an aeroplane and the birds.  
Has the Australian environment had any impact on you?  
How important is the environment to you?

---

**Service**

How important is it to be able to buy the things that you want?  
Are there other comments that you would like to make regarding buying things?

---

**Family/Other Support**

Having support when they first arrive is important particularly when settling in.  
How has that made a difference for you?

---

**Student life**

How important is it for you to have a good experience at university?

---

**Social life**

How important is it for you to spend time with friends out of the classroom?

---

**Food**

How important is it to find food that you like?

---

**Order/Governance**

Some people commented on the fact that things in Australia seem to be more "ordered" or "organised" and that we are governed more closely – as an example, one person noted that the traffic seems to be more orderly, and another student noted that if Australians want to fish they need a fishing licence. Another student noticed the special lanes for buses which helped the traffic to be more organised.  
Are these things that you have noticed?  
What other cultural differences have you noticed in Australia?  
Has your experience here in [insert name of city] as a student been as you expected it to be?

---

As shown in the table, the questions covered each of the topic areas. The questions were open ended and encouraged students to provide their opinions in relation to each of the topic areas.

#### Development Testing

As the numbers of interviews were small, the development testing for the follow up interviews was done in the first two follow up interviews. This development testing was done to trial and to further refine the follow up interview schedule.

#### Final Follow up Schedule

Researcher reflection together with supervisor consultation and feedback resulted in a number of changes to the follow up interview schedule. These changes were made to questions and involved the addition of comments made by the participant in the initial interview. The researcher added and referred to these comments prior to asking each of the main questions. As an example, the researcher included a participant's comment regarding a sports day that she had attended:

*“You mentioned in your last interview that you enjoyed the sports day. How important is it for you to spend time with friends out of the classroom?”*

The inclusion of participants' comments in the preamble served a number of purposes:

- They reminded the participant what they had said in the initial interview;
- The comments gave participants the opportunity to expand on their previous description and to think of further situations;
- The personalised comments showed the participant that their comments were valued; and
- The additional data had the potential to enhance the quality of the interview data.

The final version of the follow up interview schedule is in Appendix B2.

### **4.3.3 Administration of follow up interview schedule**

#### Invitation to Participants

Participants in the initial interviews were emailed an invitation asking them if they could be available for a second interview. While the initial interviews were face-to-face, the follow up interviews were held by phone to expedite processes as students were in a

number of locations. Seven of the initial participants agreed to be interviewed a second time. The researcher then made appointments for a follow up phone interview with each of those participants.

#### Organisation of the Data Collection

As noted previously, data was collected through the use of interviews which were recorded as audio files and were later transcribed. These transcripts enabled the text to be analysed using qualitative data analysis software.

#### Data Collection

The procedures adopted for the data collection in the follow up interviews were similar to those adopted for the initial interviews. The follow up interviews, however, were conducted by phone rather than face-to-face so the interviewer was careful to check that participants had understood the questions. At the end of the interviews, the interviewer thanked the participant for their contribution and wished them well for the future.

### **4.4 Summary**

This chapter described the processes undertaken by the researcher in the design, development and administration of the two interview schedules used in this research. Chapter 5 presents the results of the research.

## Chapter 5

### Results

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results from the analysis of the interview data. Results were obtained by analysing the data obtained from initial interviews and follow up interviews as described in Chapter 3.

The chapter begins with the analysis of responses in order to address Research Question 1 which seeks to establish how international students prepare for intercultural encounters. This is followed by results of the analysis of intercultural encounters within each of the five contexts. This analysis led to the development of a typology. These results address Research Question 2 which seeks to identify the types of intercultural encounters within each context. The typology emerged from the investigation of intercultural encounters within each context.

The final sections of this chapter present the results of the analysis of the student intercultural encounter experience in terms of immediate reactions, considered reactions and affective, behavioural and cognitive outcomes. The chapter concludes with a summary of those results.

#### 5.2 Antecedents

##### 5.2.1 Introduction

This section presents the results of responses to the interview questions which asked participants to describe their experiences of intercultural encounters and how prepared they were for these events. Chapter 2 identified a range of internal factors—student knowledge, skills and personal qualities—and external factors—student support, organisational support and financial support—which helped to prepare students for studying in other countries. The results are referred to as “antecedents” as this term potentially encompasses the concept of “preparedness” which was considered in Chapter 2. While the term “preparedness” focuses on the individual and their skills, knowledge and abilities, the term “antecedent” is broader and includes other circumstances and

conditions which are external to the individual. The analysis of the data identified three antecedents which are shown in Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1: Antecedents and their Descriptions**

<b>Antecedents</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Settling in Arrangements</b>	Assistance with accommodation and living arrangements
<b>Student Expectations</b>	Students' expectations regarding overseas study
<b>Proficiency in English</b>	The ability to communicate in English

The remainder of this section presents the results for each of the identified antecedents.

### 5.2.2 Settling in arrangements

Participants commented that family, friends and other acquaintances helped them to settle in when they first arrived. These settling in arrangements and the numbers of participants who were assisted are presented in Table 5.2. In some cases, participants were provided with more than one type of support.

**Table 5.2: Settling in Arrangements which Supported Participants**

<b>Settling in Arrangements</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>
Met at the airport on arrival	13
Family or friends provided accommodation	13
Support when shopping and accessing services	8
<b>Total number of participants</b>	<b>24</b>

It can be seen from Table 5.2 that 24 participants indicated how they were helped to settle in on arrival in Australia. The most common form of assistance with settling in concerned arrival and accommodation matters. It is noted that 13 participants lived with family members or friends when they first arrived in Australia while eight participants reported that they were helped when shopping and when accessing services.

Participants reported that family members also helped them to settle in after arrival. Family and homestay people introduced participants to friends, helped them to use public transport and provided assistance when setting up bank accounts and making initial purchases. The following quotes are typical of the support provided to participants when settling in and when purchasing a mobile phone:

*Friends are (already living) here. I have an uncle. (He) met me at the airport (and provided me with) accommodation. (I was) staying with him. Then I shift (in) with my friends*  
(Adhita)

*That home's owner, the landlord, he just came with me. He was very nice, he told me this one Virgin, Optus, we have this kind of operator, you can choose one. I will recommend you this one and you can choose, you have to consider these two and you can choose.* (Cyrus)

In other situations, as the following quotes show, participants described how they were not prepared for purchasing practices or for banks being closed on public holidays:

*I chose one laptop and they (the shop assistant) helped me. But I did not know how to use the credit card. I was feeling very embarrassed. They told me to enter my pin and they told me how to take it out.* (Sabal)

*On the holiday where there was bank holiday, but, in China shops (are) not closed, but here (in Australia) we come to the city and (everything is) closed, and no people, closed! Six o'clock is the peak time (for shopping) in China.* (Chiki)

### **5.2.3 Student expectations**

The analysis revealed that student expectations were informed by information accessed from a range of sources as shown in Table 5.3. This information, together with participants' previous experiences which included, in some cases, previously living in another Western culture, contributed to their expectations regarding overseas study.

**Table 5.3: Sources of Information which Contributed to Student Expectations**

Sources of Information	Number of Participants
Family already living in Australia	8
Previous knowledge of Australia	8
Prior experience of a Western culture	5
Information from friends	4
Conducted own research prior to arrival	3
<b>Total number of participants</b>	<b>25</b>

It can be seen from Table 5.3 that, of the 33 participants, 25 mentioned that they already had some information about Australia or some previous experience which helped them to prepare for their move to Australia. For eight of these participants this information was provided by family members already living in Australia. Participants also developed expectations as a result of research where they identified suitable countries and cities in which to live. The participant quoted below chose Melbourne as a study destination as it was consistently rated in the top five most liveable cities worldwide.

*There is a reason I came to Melbourne. I came to Melbourne (because it was) on the top high standard of living. (Melbourne has) been three years first, second and third Vancouver, Melbourne and Sydney. (Miguel)*

A further participant was advised by a friend prior to her arrival that the laws in Australia were strict and that she was required to declare all food which she brought with her into the country. The participant then shared this advice with her friends who were preparing for study in Australia.

*I told my friends, when you come to Australia, you need to be careful about bringing food....When my friends ask me about Australia, the first thing I need to tell them is the immigration in the airport, (you) need to declare (all food) to immigration. (Hien)*

Generally however, participants' expectations were informed by their prior perceptions regarding Australia. Participants had some knowledge about Australia's sporting stars, traffic rules, dangerous animals and the potential for skin damage caused by the sun.

Student expectations were also informed by having lived in another western country as is reflected in the following comment.

*I've done this before. When I was 17 I went to London to study English and then applied to Uni for 3 years. (I went) back to Colombia, finished my degree and then I work in a company for 9 months and then I came here. (I am) used to living on my own so (it's) not that hard.*  
(Miguel)

#### 5.2.4 Proficiency in English

The ability to communicate in English was recognised by participants as important for them to prepare for intercultural encounter experiences. The numbers of participants who acknowledged the value of being able to communicate in English are shown in Table 5.4.

**Table 5.4: Skills which Helped Participants Prepare for Living in Australia**

Skills	Number of Participants
English language skills	18
<b>Total number of participants</b>	<b>18</b>

As shown in Table 5.4, 18 of the 33 participants interviewed intimated that English language skills were crucial for overseas study. A participant who noted that his English skills were more advanced than his classmates' skills felt that his proficiency in English helped him to quickly adjust to the new country. Other participants noted that English skills were essential when making purchases and when applying for part-time work. The following comment is from a participant who arrived in a regional city and whose limited English skills prevented him from communicating when he first arrived.

*First here (it was) very hard, just word by word, and I cannot understand what they are talking about. I tried to talk more and more (and) maybe one month later I can make a sentence and talk with them.* (Liang)

#### 5.2.5 Summary

The analysis identified three antecedents which emerged from the interview data, namely: *settling in arrangements*, *student expectations* and *proficiency in English*. Participants recognised

that the provision of support when settling in helped them in a number of ways. Friends and family helped participants by meeting them on arrival, by providing them with accommodation and assisting them with initial purchases. This support helped participants to feel welcomed in the new country and, in some cases, helped them to establish a social network which provided participants with emotional support. Conversely, when participants were not provided with assistance when settling in, they sometimes lacked confidence and consequently were not as prepared for intercultural encounters.

Participants' expectations regarding overseas study were acquired from a range of information sources including family, friends, from the internet and in pre-departure briefings. In the cases where such information was provided to participants, it helped them to have realistic expectations in regard to life in Australia. Being equipped with this information helped participants to prepare for new cultural and academic practices. The analysis also identified that being proficient in English helped participants to prepare for life in Australia. The importance of being able to communicate in English was essential for success in their academic life and also helped participants to live independently and to apply for part time work.

## **5.3 Intercultural Encounter Contexts**

### **5.3.1 Introduction**

This section presents results from the analysis of the interview data using the typology developed in Chapter 2 where intercultural encounters were assigned contexts, contextual types and descriptors. As described in Chapter 3, intercultural encounters were identified and contexts, contextual types and descriptors were assigned to each intercultural encounter. The analysis of the interview data identified 163 intercultural encounters and similarly assigned contexts, contextual types and descriptors to each intercultural encounter. The numbers of intercultural encounters within each context and contextual type were summarised in a pivot table. This chapter shows the frequencies of both contexts and contextual types. However, as the numbers of intercultural encounters are small at the descriptor level, the frequencies of the descriptors are not included in the results.

Table 5.5 represents the numbers of intercultural encounters within each of the five contexts.

**Table 5.5: Frequency of Intercultural Encounter Contexts (n=163)**

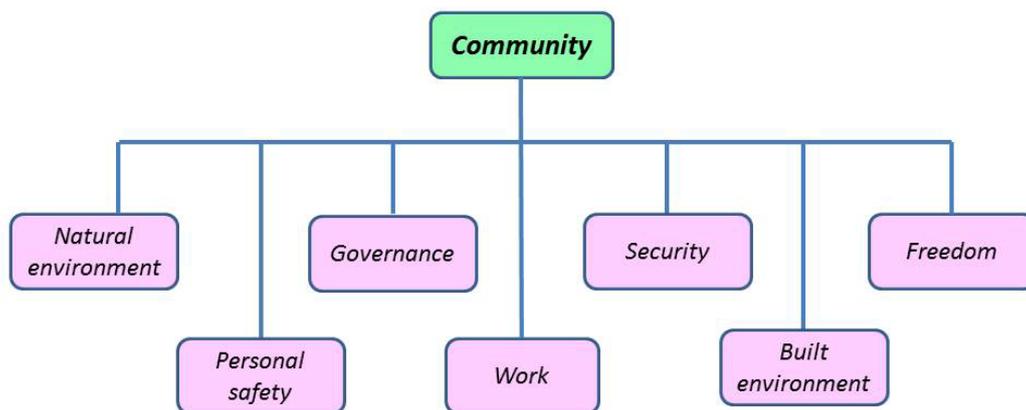
Context	Frequency
Community	54
Culture	40
Academic	31
Service	20
Social	18

As can be seen in the table, the most frequent intercultural encounters experienced by participants were for the *community* and *culture* contexts. The typology developed in Chapter 2 was applied in the analysis of the 163 intercultural encounters and is now presented for each intercultural encounter context.

### 5.3.2 Community intercultural encounters

The contextual types identified for the *community* context were *natural environment*, *personal safety*, *governance*, *work*, *safety measures*, *built environment* and *freedom* and are shown in Figure 5.1.

**Figure 5.1: Contextual Types – Community**



The frequency of each of the seven *community* contextual types is shown in Table 5.6.

This table and the tables in the sections which follow show frequencies which represent the numbers of intercultural encounters in the pivot table summary which were assigned each contextual type.

**Table 5.6: Frequency of Community Contextual Types (n=54)**

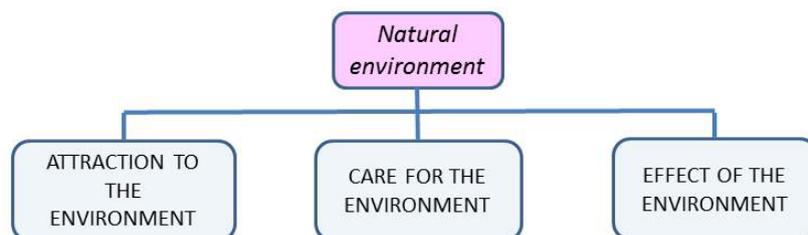
Contextual Type	Frequency
Natural environment	12
Personal safety	10
Governance	7
Work	7
Safety measures	7
Built environment	7
Freedom	4

As shown in the table, of the 54 intercultural encounters assigned the *community* context, the most frequent contextual types were *natural environment* and *personal safety*. The next most frequently occurring contextual types were *governance*, *work*, *safety measures* and *built environment*. The contextual type *freedom* was assigned to four intercultural encounters. The sections which follow provide examples of quotes assigned to each of the descriptors within the seven contextual types. The frequencies of each descriptor are not included as the frequencies were typically small.

Natural Environment

The analysis identified three distinct descriptors associated with this contextual type. These descriptors are presented in Figure 5.2.

**Figure 5.2: Descriptors for the Natural Environment Contextual Type**



The quotes which follow provide examples of participants' comments associated with each descriptor within the *natural environment* contextual type.

### **Attraction to the Environment**

A participant from China described her attraction to the environment and how her friends at home enjoyed seeing her photos:

*I take pictures and I send to my Chinese friends in China and I think they always comment on my pictures. After this I like to take photos. They think it is very clear and landscape is very beautiful and they are very jealous of me. (Cath)*

### **Care for the Environment**

Participants noted that people in Australia cared about the environment. The following quote provides an example:

*I found out that the most different thing is, you know, when people have litter everywhere in China. We probably need to pay attention to that. Sometimes you pass and you throw something. People here don't throw the litter and care about the environment. (Chiki)*

### **Effect of the Environment**

Participants commented on the fact that being in the fresh air improved their mood as the following quote demonstrates:

*The environment makes me feel very good. I stayed (in the) house and in morning I walk out(side). I had fresh air and my emotion feels better. (Cath)*

Participants were aware of issues associated with the ozone layer and of the need to take care of their skin:

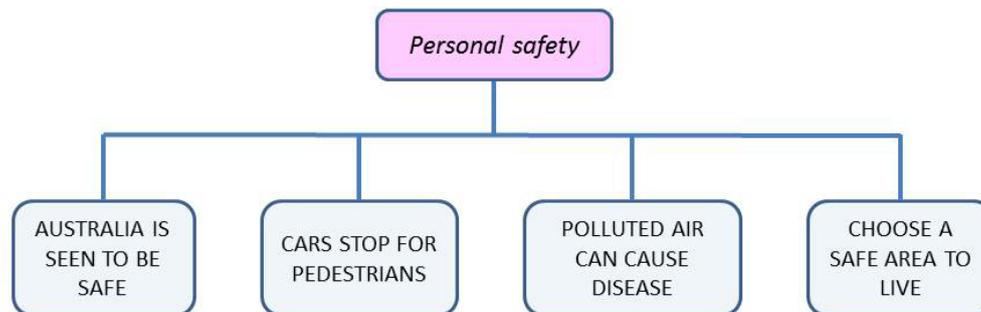
*The sunshine here is very strong. It is not comparable with anything else. I mean the angle of sunshine is really strong. It will burn you if you are in the sun for a little while... I knew that the ozone atmosphere in Australia has a problem and I knew that it is near Queensland, that (ozone) hole. So I knew that I had to take care of my skin. (Cyrus)*

### **Personal Safety**

Participants reported that they and their families considered the country's reputation in relation to its level of safety when choosing a particular country for their higher education. The analysis identified six distinct descriptors associated with intercultural

encounters which were assigned this contextual type. These descriptors are presented in Figure 5.3.

**Figure 5.3: Descriptors for the Personal Safety Contextual Type**



The quotes which follow provide examples of participants' comments associated with each descriptor within the *safety* contextual type.

### **Australia is seen to be Safe**

After arrival participants noted that Australia was, in most cases, safer than their own country. The following participant compared Australia and with their home country.

*Here in Australia, it's just so safe compared to my country. There are no snatchers, pick pockets and everything. There are less crimes; that is true. (Shalimar)*

Participants reported that they felt safe while using public transport. A participant from Mexico describes the safety of the trains in the following comment.

*Also the security I can feel very comfortable on the train, or in the park or go to Luna Park. Some places here are very secure. In my country, most of the time, you can't do that. My sister told me that it was safe. She said when you take the train, just follow the rules; respect other people and they don't have to do anything. (Aldo)*

### **Cars Stop for Pedestrians**

Participants described their relief and appreciation of being able to cross a road at designated pedestrian crossings:

*If I compare with traffic system, I felt in Australia, like I am going on a walk; if the car driver, any person if he will see me he will stop the car, he will stop and he will allow me to go first. I*

*will compare to India, he will not care about you. They only try to go fast. So from that point of view Australia is (an) awesome country.* (Vajrin)

### **Polluted Air can Cause Disease**

The following quote describes the participant’s preference for living in a disease free environment:

*I like living in a clean environment. (I) like Australia because everything is clean and the air is clean and that also contributes to the health of the people because, the ground if the environment is polluted if it is full of dirt and rubbish, that can affect us as human beings because the polluted air can cause those environmental diseases.* (Mivai)

### **Choose a Safe Area to Live**

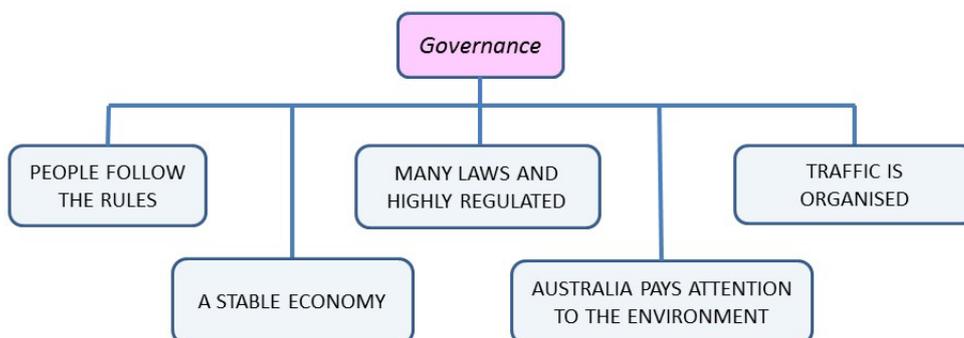
Participants ensured that they chose a safe area to live as the following quote shows:

*And in my opinion, Japanese are concerned about the security very much so we Japanese tend to live in the area north of Sydney, for example, or along the north of Sydney station area.* (Hiki)

### Governance

The contextual type *governance* referred to Australia’s rules and regulations and to the impact of the regulatory and legislative environments. The analysis identified five distinct descriptors associated with the country’s rules and regulations. These descriptors are presented in Figure 5.4.

**Figure 5.4: Descriptors for the Governance Contextual Type**



The quotes which follow provide examples of participants' comments which were associated with Australia's legislative and regulatory environments.

### **People Follow the Rules**

Participants commented that Australia was highly regulated with strict rules in regard to bringing food into the country:

*I told my friends, when you come to Australia, you need to be careful about bringing food... When my friends ask me about Australia, the first thing I need to tell them is the immigration in the airport, (you) need to declare (all food) to immigration. (Hien)*

Participants, however, appreciated that people followed the rules and that legislation and regulations were enforced:

*In Australia people follow the rules. Everyone follows you. So it's a pretty good thing. (Maralit)*

### **Many Laws and Highly Regulated**

Participants noted that Australia's economy seemed to be stable, and commented on Australia's financial regulatory bodies:

*I read an article about how Australia is very organised – (particularly) the security and insurance market. There is one company, ASIC and I read about the main duty of the ASIC, and I thought "Oh my God, Australia is totally different from our country!" There is a lot of organisation, laws that regulate everything, every each state and it's very organised, and I thought that "How many years later Mongolia will become like this?" I thought that Australia is very organised in every field. (Biny)*

### **Australia Pays Attention to the Environment**

The participant quoted below noted that environmental protection was a priority in Australia:

*But in Australia is better, so many flowers, trees, I think Australia pays a lot of attention to protect the environment. (Chicki)*

### **Traffic is Organised**

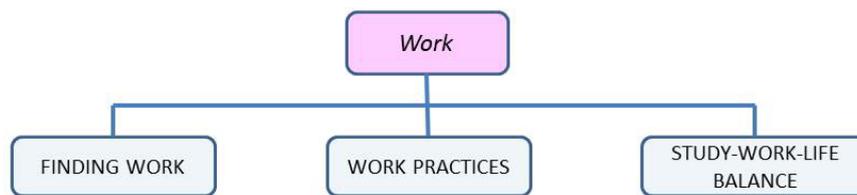
A Chinese participant expressed his belief that traffic rules in Australia were designed to avoid accidents rather than simply to apportion blame for insurance purposes:

*The using of the law is to avoid accidents. So this is the most important thing. Australia living is very organised (Hong)*

## Work

The analysis identified three distinct descriptors associated with this contextual type. These descriptors are presented in Figure 5.5.

**Figure 5.5: Descriptors for the Work Contextual Type**



The quotes which follow provide examples of participants' comments related to the descriptors associated with the contextual type *work*.

### **Finding Work**

In this comment, the participant was concerned when she was initially unsuccessful in her efforts to find part-time employment:

*When I looked for a job, a lot of restaurants were looking for people who looked like Western people so I thought "Why don't you want to hire me?"...Maybe a lot of people prefer Western people here. Maybe, I don't know – that is the thing that I felt at that moment. (Biny)*

### **Work Practices**

The following participant who worked in a restaurant noted that it was important to make a request of a colleague in an acceptable way:

*There is a way to ask (for) favours. (It the way you) treat people. I see the way managers talk to staff. Some are rude. I am also working in a place. Working with managers even though is a restaurant. You can see the styles you can relate...If you are working with different people, make sure even though you ask 100 questions, you need to ask the right question. (So that you can) work together. (Miguel)*

The following quote demonstrates that a participant recognised the importance of checking her work:

*Everything I have to check, after leaving the restaurant. So one time I did not check the freezer, that I closed it properly or not so when I came yesterday, my boss said “Biny, the freezer wasn’t closed properly, so right now some foods melt so next time be more sure to close it.” There are a lot of situations where I have to double check. Double check is the most important thing.*  
(Biny)

### **Study-Work-Life Balance**

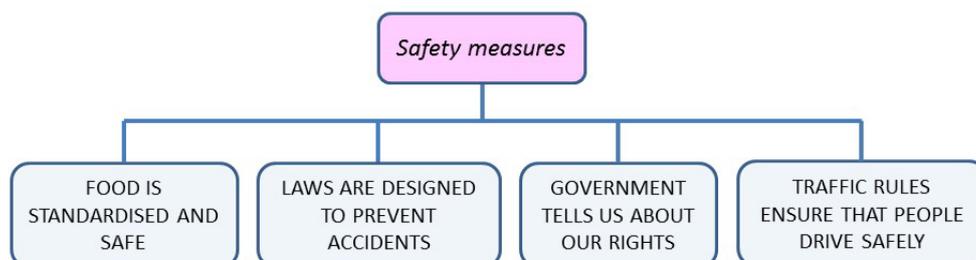
The participant quoted below found it difficult to find a time to socialise with her friends as her hours of work were not always predictable:

*Most of the time (my friends) they spend working. Because most of the jobs here are hourly paid. And so they do not have a time schedule. When that person will get (time) off. So whenever you want to catch up with someone, you have to be prepared very well in advance. You are not sure about your own work time.* (Mal)

### Safety Measures

While the contextual type *personal safety* was assigned to intercultural encounters where participants described whether or not they felt safe, the contextual type *safety measures* was assigned to intercultural encounters which were associated with measures that were adopted to ensure student safety. The analysis of these intercultural encounters identified four distinct descriptors associated with this contextual type. These descriptors are presented in Figure 5.6.

**Figure 5.6: Descriptors for the Safety Measures Contextual Type**



The quotes which follow provide examples of participants' comments in relation to each descriptor associated with the contextual type *safety measures*.

### **Food is Standardised and Safe**

Participants described their perceptions regarding food standards in Australia. The following comment is representative of participants' comments:

*The food safety is better than Chinese. I think the people all probably know, sometimes they will put some poison, especially in the milk, everything.* (Chicki)

### **Laws are Designed to Prevent Accidents**

The participant quoted below recognised the importance of ensuring that electricity poles were constructed of safe materials:

*If we will see an electricity pole, these are also made of wood (in Australia). But in India these are made of iron. That is the biggest danger for life. Sometimes (there is an) electricity fault.* (Vajrin)

### **Government tells us about our Rights**

A participant from India was surprised to find that a police representative visited his class and informed the students regarding their rights in Australia:

*In this university, Jans - she was a police officer; she came here to tell us about our rights and what we should do to ... if we are in a situation. In India this would never happen. I was living in India from birth to the last three months but in my school and in my university they never organised these kinds of activities. We did not know about our rights too much.* (Vajrin)

### **Traffic Rules Ensure that People Drive Safely**

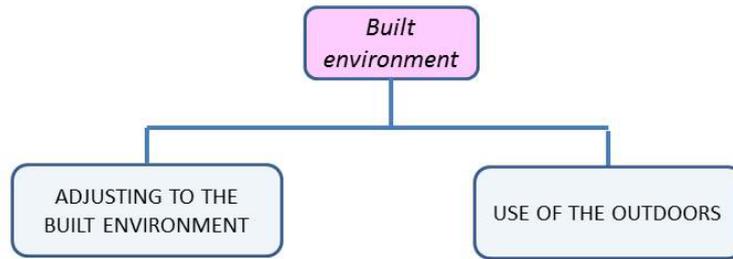
Participants found the traffic to be organised as the following quote shows:

*No matter how jammed the traffic is, the bus lane goes first.* (Hong)

### **Built Environment**

The analysis identified two distinct descriptors associated with this contextual type. These descriptors are presented in Figure 5.7.

**Figure 5.7: Descriptors for the Built Environment Contextual Type**



The quotes which follow provide examples of participants' comments related to each of the two descriptors associated with the contextual type *built environment*.

### **Adjusting to the Built Environment**

Participants were surprised to find that there were fewer high rise buildings and that the regional city was not as crowded:

*It was interesting that there were no big tall (buildings) and the living wasn't in a small flat. It wasn't crowded like my country.* (Cyrus)

A participant commented on the extensive use of timber as a construction material and explained that he would not have expected these buildings to be still in use:

*If I compared with India, buildings (there) are made of bricks and cement. (The) life of a building in Australia; (the timber) buildings are very old and are still standing. (This is) not (the case) in India. This is surprising.* (Vajrin)

### **Use of the Outdoors**

Participants noted that barbeques were provided in public parks for community use and that facilities were provided for outdoor sports. The comment which follows refers to outdoor sports facilities:

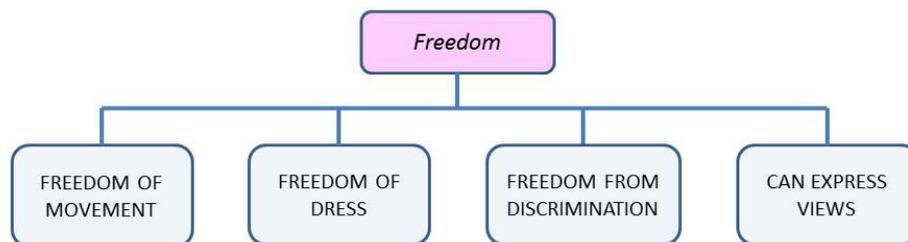
*In Australia there are many outdoor sports, the swimming... Yes, maybe you have found swimming pools outside. And the baseball, football, soccer... So that is outdoor sports, if you don't have a very good environment, who (would) choose that? There is pollution everywhere, industry everywhere, buildings everywhere, who (would) choose the other place? In China - no. So the environment makes the Australian sports (able to be held) outdoors.* (Hong)

While the *built environment* contextual type was assigned to this intercultural encounter this was an example of a quote which could have been assigned another contextual type, namely *natural environment*. This was not applied in this case as the participant had already described an intercultural encounter which was assigned the *natural environment* contextual type.

### Freedom

The analysis identified three distinct descriptors associated with this contextual type. These descriptors are presented in Figure 5.8.

**Figure 5.8: Descriptors for the Freedom Contextual Type**



The quotes which follow provide examples of participants' comments related to each of the three descriptors associated with the contextual type *freedom*.

#### **Freedom of Movement**

Participants referred to being free to go where they chose as the comment below demonstrates:

*So I can walk wherever I want.* (Aldo)

#### **Freedom of Dress**

Female participants were pleased that they had the freedom to choose what they wanted to wear:

*(After) coming here I started to wear the things that I really wanted (to wear). Like jumpers, jeans, clothes make me feel freedom – they give me a sense of freedom.* (Biny)

### **Freedom from Discrimination**

The quote which follows is from a participant who was free to live according to his personal beliefs. This participant had previously disclosed that he was gay and then went on to describe the way that gay people were treated in Mexico:

*In my country (it) is not secure to walk free, to have beliefs and personal opinions because some people are very aggressive and here I am living new ways of culture, people try to respect you.*

*They don't say anything about you, about your preferences, about religion. (Aldo)*

The participant had come to Australia on the advice of his sister who assured him that Australian laws protected him from discrimination.

### **Can Express Views**

The participant quoted below noted that in his country he had not been given the opportunity to vote for public positions:

*After 18 years (here) you are allowed vote. But I am 24 years old and I have NEVER voted.*

*And all of the results (in my country) are controlled you know, by black box. Who is the next leader of the country, or the leader of the factory or the leader of the province they are controlled in the black box. No one knows how. (Hong)*

### Summary

The analysis of the **community** context identified seven contextual types and descriptors for each of the contextual types. The contextual types and the descriptors identified for the **community** context are show in Table 5.7.

**Table 5.7: Descriptors for the Community Contextual Types**

<b>Contextual Type</b>	<b>Descriptors</b>
<b>Natural Environment</b>	Attraction to the environment; Care for the environment; Effect of the environment
<b>Personal Safety</b>	Australia is seen to be safe; Cars stop for pedestrians; Polluted air can cause disease; Choose a safe area to live
<b>Governance</b>	People follow the rules; A stable economy; Many laws and highly regulated; Australia pays attention to the environment; Traffic is organised
<b>Work</b>	Finding work; Work practices; Study-work-life balance
<b>Safety Measures</b>	Food is standardised and safe; Laws are designed to prevent accidents; Government tells us about our rights; Traffic rules ensure that people drive safely
<b>Built Environment</b>	Adjusting to the built environment; Use of the outdoors
<b>Freedom</b>	Freedom of movement; Freedom of dress; Freedom from discrimination; Can express views

As shown in Table 5.7, the *natural environment* contextual type was assigned to intercultural encounters where participants described their experiences with the natural world.

Descriptors for this contextual type concerned participant's attraction to the environment and their observations that people took care of the environment. Participants also noted that the environment and being in the fresh air helped to improve their mood.

Descriptors for the contextual type *personal safety* were associated with the participants' need to feel personally safe. While one participant was concerned about their personal safety in Australia, the majority of participants felt safe in Australia. Participants also appreciated feeling protected from disease, feeling safe as a pedestrian and while on public transport. Participants also preferred to live in a safe part of the city.

Descriptors for the contextual type *governance* concerned Australia's regulatory environment and student perceptions regarding the pervasiveness of Australia's rules and

regulations. Descriptors concerned the tendency of people to follow the rules and noted the legislation that regulated the environment and traffic.

Descriptors for the contextual type *work* concerned finding work, work practices and study-work-life balance. A participant who had work was pleased that they were successful while another student was concerned that they may have experienced discrimination. The descriptor work practices were assigned to intercultural encounters where participants described specific behaviours or practices at work. The descriptor study-work-life-balance was assigned to intercultural encounters where participants focussed on their preference for a balanced life.

Descriptors for the contextual type *safety measures* concerned food safety; the observation that the law was designed to prevent accidents and that traffic rules ensure that people drive safely. An additional descriptor for the contextual type *safety measures* concerned the practice of providing information to students regarding their rights.

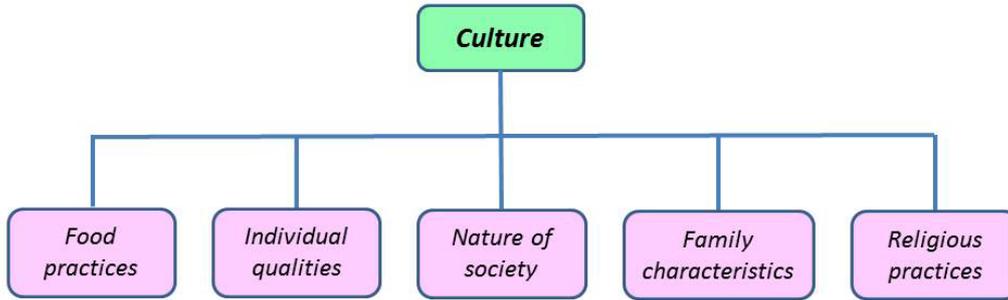
Descriptors for the contextual type *built environment* concerned participants' observations of buildings; of building materials and on outdoor spaces. Participants commented on the size of the buildings and on the use of timber as a construction material. Participants noted that there were sports facilities and community barbeque areas in public places. A participant noted that while popular sports such as table tennis were held indoors in China, the environment in Australia, together with the available space, enabled sports to be played outdoors.

Descriptors for the contextual type *freedom* concerned the ability for participants to move freely and to wear what they wanted to wear. Participants also observed that they were free from discrimination and that they were free to express their opinions without fear of harm.

### 5.3.3 Culture intercultural encounters

The analysis of interview data for **culture** intercultural encounters revealed five contextual types as shown in Figure 5.9. The contextual types *individual qualities*, *family characteristics* and *nature of society* represent participants' perceptions of culture at the individual, family and societal levels.

**Figure 5.9: Culture Contextual Types**



The frequency of the five *culture* contextual types is shown in Table 5.8.

**Table 5.8: Frequency of Culture Contextual Types (n=41)**

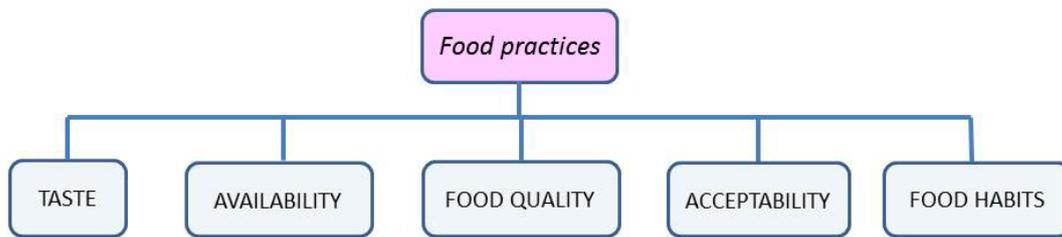
Contextual Type	Frequency
Food practices	17
Individual qualities	8
Nature of society	8
Family characteristics	4
Religious practices	3

While differences in *food practices* were most frequently noted in the analysis, participants commented less frequently on the *individual qualities* and *nature of society* contextual types. Smaller numbers of intercultural encounters were related to the contextual types, *family characteristics* and *religious practices*.

Food Practices

Five descriptors for *food practices* contextual type were identified. These descriptors were taste; availability, food quality, acceptability and food habits. These descriptors are shown in Figure 5.10.

**Figure 5.10: Descriptors for the Food Practices Contextual Type**



The quotes which follow provide examples of participants' comments in relation to *food practices*.

### **Taste**

Participants expressed their disappointment with the food particularly when they first arrived in Australia. The following quote is representative of participants' comments:

*Here, (the food has) no spice, (only) salt. (We eat) curry powder, chilli, turmeric, very spicy cumin, ginger. But in here, when I ate, it was tasteless for me. (Sabal)*

### **Availability**

Participants were pleasantly surprised that food from their country was available as the following quote demonstrates:

*I never thought that I would get Indian food in Australia but it was really very strange, in Australia, that people have all kinds of Indian food. (That) surprised me! Because I never thought that it can be in this way. (Vajrin)*

The participant quoted below refers to the need to find other dishes to cook as traditional ingredients were not available in Australia:

*The food in Australia) is not similar food, I know but chicken is chicken - it is how we prepare the food. In Mexico, we have plants, fruits, corn, we can cook everything. Here it is difficult for me to find plants, the spices. Mexico has a lot of variety and here is difficult to find them. So I must have to try new ways of (cooking) food. (Aldo)*

## **Food Quality**

Participants commented on the quality of food in Australia and noted that food was of a consistently high quality.

*I also think the same and I think the food is (compared) to my country (is) more healthier. Because, the Mongolians, our country is developing, and people are selling their products (and they are) poor quality. But here every food is standardised and very healthy. I love the foods here because they are healthy and a lot of kinds of food. (Biny)*

## **Food Acceptability**

Alternative views relating to the food were provided by participants who lived in a residential college. The following quote provides an example where the participant was not happy with the food provided.

*In Nepal I was 58 kg and in six month gained eight kilograms. Normally I don't eat a lot but after that I look for the reason and at the contents (shown in the packaging of the food). In here, in Australia, all foods have a lot of calories. One slice of pizza has more calories than one whole bread in Nepal. I don't have a habit of eating. If I eat Australian food for a long time I'm sure I will gain weight in a short time. (Sabal)*

## **Food Habits**

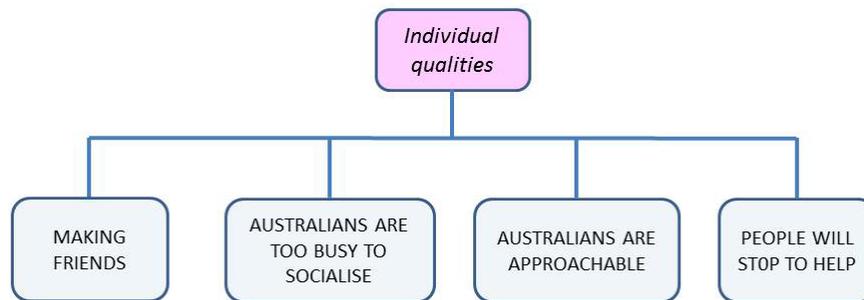
A number of participants reported that they preferred to cook for themselves. The participant quoted below provides an example.

*I prefer to cook for myself. I don't want to go for something that I don't like. So here I am really thankful that (the) ingredients for me to cook my own food are easily available. (Mal)*

## Individual Qualities

Four descriptors for the *individual qualities* contextual type were identified. As noted earlier, this contextual type was assigned to intercultural encounters where participants described cultural practices of individuals. These descriptors are presented in Figure 5.11.

**Figure 5.11: Descriptors for the Individual Qualities Contextual Type**



The quotes which follow provide examples of participants' comments associated with each descriptor within the *individual qualities* contextual type.

### **Making Friends**

Participants commented on peoples' friendliness and approachability and compared people's behaviour with what they would have expected at home. The comments included both positive and negative comments. The following quote provides an example of a negative comment where a participant felt that people weren't as friendly as they were at home.

*When I left my neighbourhood in Australia when they (are) walking and go back home they don't go to other house for talking, but in Vietnam they go to other house (for) talking. (They are) very friendly (in Vietnam). (Hien)*

### **Australians are too busy to Socialise**

The participant quoted below was disappointed to find that people did not seem to have time to socialise as they did in his country:

*In my country when I go out, I see my friends everybody talk together, (whereas) in Australia everybody works, and do not talk too much, together. (Danh)*

### **Australians are Approachable**

The comment below is representative of participants who commented that generally, Australians are friendly and approachable:

*I think in Vietnam communication is not good, because when I come to Australia (if) I don't understand I can ask everyone (for help). But in Vietnam it is not good to speak with a*

*strange person. Because they might (not trust you). In Australia (I) feel safer to speak to an Australian person....When I want to ask someone I look around and they feel happy to answer a question. (Thuan)*

### People Will Stop to Help

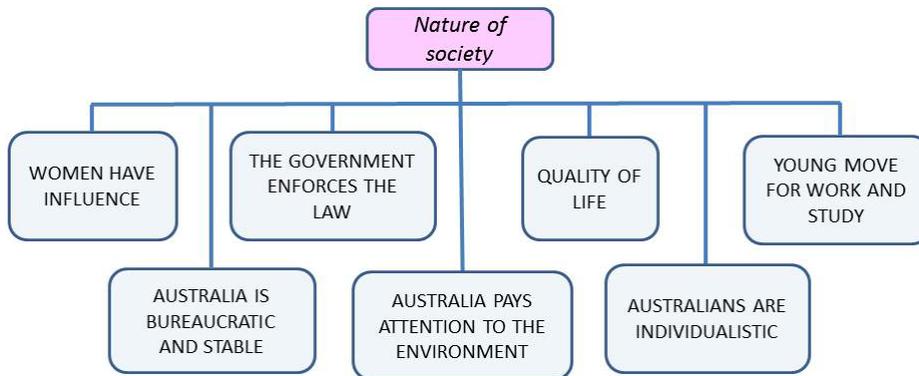
The following comment describes a participant’s surprise when she found that people stopped and offered to help when she was involved in a small accident:

*In Australia people (are) very friendly and willing to help other people. But in Vietnam people are a little bit scared for example, some people (are) friendly, some people just ignore accident and they pass and they don’t care. (Giang)*

### Nature of Society

Eight descriptors for the *nature of society* contextual type were identified. These descriptors are presented in Figure 5.12.

**Figure 5.12: Descriptors for the Nature of Society Contextual Type**



### Women Have Influence

Participants described differences in the position and influence of women in Australia compared with their own country. The comment which follows was from a research higher degree participant from Papua New Guinea who noted that, without education, women had limited influence in her country:

*Men are more dominant in the society (at home). And that makes us women are being just a second class, so we don’t have a say unless we are educated at that level. (Mivai)*

### **Australia Is Bureaucratic and Stable**

Participants commented on the level of bureaucracy in Australia and on the organised nature of society:

*Australian culture is very organised, pushing for, really good and stable economy. It is like, even though in the city there are a lot of people in the city, people tend to be organised. In Colombia (it is) crazy in the streets. In Australia (you) walk on the right, (but) in Colombia, (it is) not organised. (Miguel)*

### **The Government Enforces the Law**

Participants appreciated that the law is enforced in Australia:

*Every country makes regulation but, when it comes to implementation that is the real test of the government. You can simply (be) making the rules but if you are not controlling that then I don't think the rules should be made then. In Australia my experience is that people follow rules and regulations. (Mal)*

### **Australia Pays Attention to the Environment**

Participants commented on society's attitude to the environment; and referred to the clear air and unpolluted landscape and to the environmental regulations. The following quote was representative of participants' comments:

*The difference is in Australia (people) pay more attention, (and are) more focussed on the environment. (Hong)*

### **Quality of Life**

Participants commented on their desire for a work-life balance with enough time for work, study and friends. A participant from Japan, however, had come to Australia with a view to experiencing a healthier work-life balance:

*I think working environment is the biggest difference because in Japan working a lot every day is usual. So as a country people cannot stand it anymore. If they working, if they continue to work in Japan... I think in Australia there is more work-life balance is better compared to Japan. (Hiki)*

### **Australians Are Individualistic**

The following quote highlights a participant's suggestion that Australians tend to be more concerned with their privacy:

*Is that the Chinese is a very traditional country; the people (in China) value their relationships very much ...maybe the Australians more care about their privacy, yes? (Xue)*

### **Young Move for Work and Study**

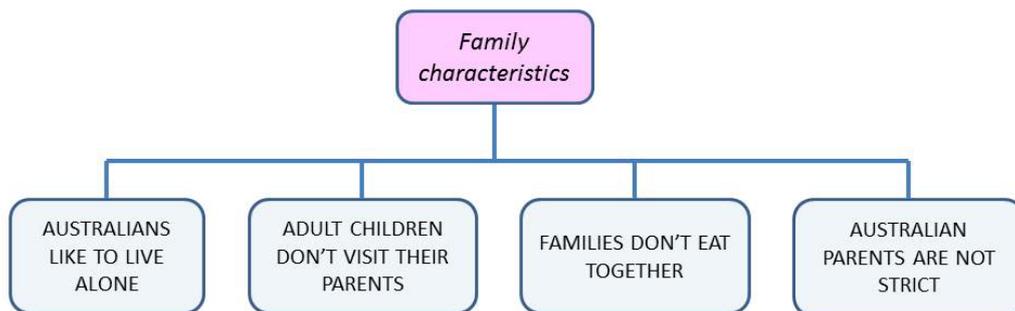
The expectation that participants would leave home for study is evident in the quote below.

*In China we say the boy (or) the young people should go out to work or study leaving their parents. That is good for themselves, good for the family. (Hong)*

### Family Characteristics

Four descriptors for the *family characteristics* contextual type were identified. These descriptors are presented in Figure 5.13.

**Figure 5.13: Descriptors for the Family Contextual Type**



The quotes which follow provide examples associated with each descriptor within the *family characteristics* contextual type.

#### **Australians Like to Live Alone**

The comment below refers to a participant's observation that people tend to live alone:

*I only see that many people like to live alone. We like to live with our family, (Alberto)*

#### **Adult Children Don't Visit Their Parents**

The participant quoted below was shocked to find that children did not keep in regular contact with their families:

*So when I came here I met my homestay, she is a very kind lady, I find out that she has a little bit problem with her children and during a week, and another week has passed, I find out that no one is coming to visit her. I was shocked, I was really upset. Why does it have to be like this? She has got two daughters, so they must come to visit their mother! It is quite wrong, but they don't. You know, when I was I went to one of those girl's house, When we talked to those girls it was something usual, easy for them but for me it was not acceptable at all. (Cyrus)*

### **Families Don't Eat Together**

The quote below describes a participant's surprise to find when she first arrived in Australia that family members did not wait and eat together:

*In the Philippines all of us all eat at the same time. When someone was not at home we would wait for that person to be in. Because that person is, he realises that at 6 o'clock or six thirty-ish he or she should be at home because we have to eat dinner together. But when my first day in there we had dinner and was only me and the daughter eating dinner in the lounge and it was like, for me, ah... ok... this is how you eat in here. (Maralit)*

### **Australian Parents Are Not Strict**

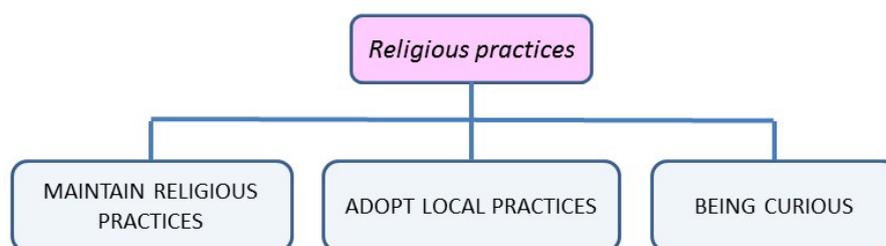
The same participant observed that parents in Australia did not seem to be as strict with their children:

*More like our culture is more family oriented, I think and really strict and time conscious for kids to go home in time. (Maralit)*

### Religious Practices

Three descriptors for the *religious practices* contextual type were identified. These descriptors are presented in Figure 5.14.

**Figure 5.14: Descriptors for the Religious Practices Contextual Type**



The quotes which follow provide examples associated with each descriptor within the *religious practices* contextual type.

### **Maintain Religious Practices**

The participant quoted below was disappointed with the variety of Halal food and consequently brought prepared food rather than purchasing cooked food:

*I don't eat pork and sometimes (it is) hard to find Halal food. (I) have to go to other suburbs like Bankstown and have to bring my own lunch to class. We live, (there are) three people in a house, we share the food, and buy food (to last) for two weeks. It saves in the fridge for two weeks. This is good food. In town, (sometimes we) buy Halal food. But sometimes you have to buy the same place, every day, every day (but that is boring). (Ahmed)*

### **Adopt Local Practices**

This participant reported that, contrary to his religion, he was now eating beef:

*Before, I came from Nepal, and, in Nepal, beef is prohibited because the cow is the national animal. And we regard the cow as our God. We are Hindu, not only Indian people. They worship cow as a God. But now sometimes I eat beef. (It's) because of this culture. (Sabal)*

### **Being Curious**

Another participant was curious about religions and described his conversations with other international students about their religious practices:

*In Australia tattoos are normal on the bodies of some persons. I asked my classmates, those from Lebanon and Moslem countries they told me they can't mark their body because it is not good. It is against their religion. But in my religion we can mark – these kinds of things I have come to know. (Vajrin)*

### Summary

A summary of the five contextual types associated with the ***culture*** context is presented in Table 5.9.

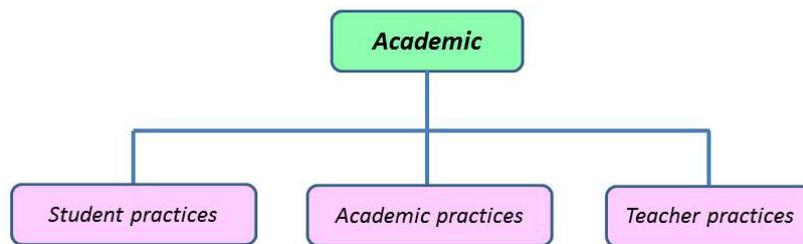
**Table 5.9: Summary: Descriptors for the Culture Contextual Types**

Contextual Type	Descriptors
<b>Food Practices</b>	Taste; Availability; Food quality; Food acceptability; Food habits
<b>Individual Qualities</b>	Making friends; Australians are too busy to socialise; Australians are approachable; People will stop to help
<b>Nature of Society</b>	Women have influence; Australia is bureaucratic and stable; The government enforces the law; Australia pays attention to the environment; quality of life; Australians are individualistic; Young move for work and study
<b>Family Characteristics</b>	Australians like to live alone; Adult children don't visit their parents' Families don't eat together; Australian parents are not strict
<b>Religious Practices</b>	Maintain religious practices; Adopt local practices; Being curious

### 5.3.4 Academic intercultural encounters

The analysis of interview data for *academic* intercultural encounters revealed that three contextual types emerged as shown in Figure 5.15.

**Figure 5.15: Academic Contextual Types**



The three contextual types were identified as *academic practices*, *student practices* and *teacher practices*. The frequency of each of these *academic* contextual types is presented in Table 5.10.

**Table 5.10: Frequency of Academic Contextual Types (n=31)**

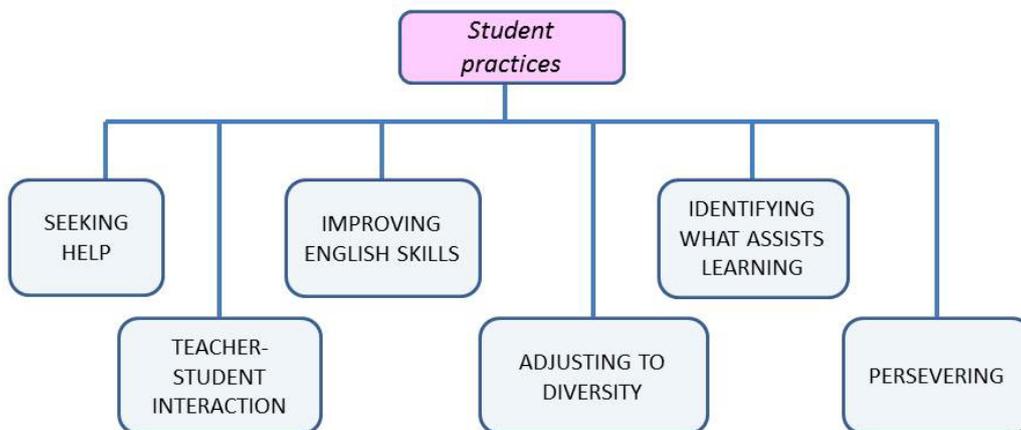
Contextual Type	Frequency
Student practices	17
Academic practices	7
Teacher practices	7

The table indicates that participants provided more examples of *academic* intercultural encounters which described *student practices* rather than *academic practices* or *teacher practices*. The following sections provide examples of each contextual type.

Student Practices

The analysis identified seven distinct descriptors associated with this contextual type. These descriptors are presented in Figure 5.16.

**Figure 5.16: Descriptors for the Student Practices Contextual Type**



The quotes which follow provide examples associated with each descriptor within the *student practices* contextual type.

**Seeking Help**

The participant quoted below sought help from his teacher when preparing an oral presentation for his English Language class. The participant was researching a

controversial topic and was reluctant to choose one of two opposing views to support in his presentation:

*I was in big trouble, (My presentation was on) Falun Gong- exercises. (I found) information from Chinese website, all most information talk about (this) evil religion. When I search on Google, I get information Chinese government make the Falun Gong –out - illegal. I was confused, and Mike said “(There is) no need to talk (describe) this, just tell people if you want to get information, you need to consider the two extreme opposite views” – I think (it was a) very, very good suggestion. (Liang)*

### **Teacher –student interaction**

Participants were surprised by the less formal ways of addressing teachers as illustrated by the following comment:

*But when I came here, (the) professors told me just call my name. But if I call my Professor Darryl, I think it is not showing respect, in my heart, I can't do because he is my teacher. ...I can't call my professor (by his name, so) I call (him) Sir, Ma'am. (Sabal)*

### **Improving English Skills**

A number of participants described their need to improve their English skills particularly when they first arrived. Participants noted that initially it was very difficult for them to understand what was being said in class and to communicate with other students as the following comment demonstrates:

*In my classroom I did not understand anything. I have a lot of Australian professors and in my classroom I felt at that time I just stay here and someone is talking and I can't understand. But after couple of months (it was better). (Sabal)*

### **Adjusting to Diversity**

Participants described the importance of accepting diversity when working with other people. The following quote is from a participant who observed that it was important to be open-minded:

*When you are working with other people in another country you have to accept the changes. You have to work out the changes you are facing. Be open-minded and be aware there are changes. (Mal)*

## Identifying What Assists Learning

Participants noted the relaxed classroom environment and that being relaxed helped in the learning process as exemplified by the following example:

*Here the classes are very relaxed, laugh and make jokes but in China almost impossible because (there are) many students, teacher is strict and...(students) cannot finish. Here is relaxed, also can learn something. (Ting)*

The following quote provides a similar example where a participant observed that asking questions helped him to learn:

*There are many Chinese in my class, they always don't like to speak too much and the person who was from Lebanon, they are like me, (and) ask a lot of questions. It is my hobby (to) ask so many questions. But in my class the majority of Chinese, they only like to speak up to the subject, not anything else. I think if you want to learn then you should speak too much - all the time. (Vairin)*

## Persevering

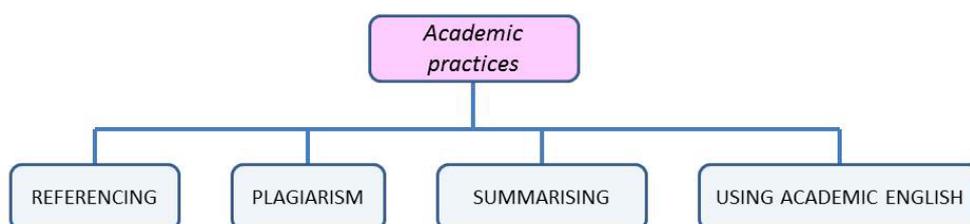
The following example describes a situation where a participant noted the importance of persevering with their studies, particularly after being given negative feedback on their work:

*I had to submit and then resubmit. I felt like giving up, I needed to talk to someone. And my supervisor, she said "Never give up". My supervisors were very supportive of me. (I was) so stressed. (Mivai)*

## Academic Practices

The analysis identified four distinct descriptors associated with this contextual type. The descriptors for the contextual type *academic practices* are shown in Figure 5.17.

**Figure 5.17: Descriptors for the Academic Practices Contextual Type**



The quotes which follow provide examples associated with each descriptor within the *academic practices* contextual type.

### **Referencing**

Participants found referencing and complying with plagiarism presented challenges when adapting to the new academic environment. An example of these comments is provided:

*The most hardest is the referencing. Not hard but the form is very – (it) makes me (get) a headache. The form of the referencing (is very difficult).* (Hong)

### **Plagiarism**

Similarly, participants found the need to comply with plagiarism rules was not something that they were familiar with:

*Those things I was a little bit familiar (with), but plagiarism, it was something strange to me in here. The focus on the teachers is really a lot about the plagiarism. (They) take it very, very seriously. And that was a surprise as well.* (Cyrus)

### **Summarising**

Participants commented on the difficulties involved in learning how to summarise as reflected in the following comment:

*So I find a heavy scientific materials and getting summary from them is very difficult for me. The topic is very difficult for me to understand and making summarised form can make problem.* (Mivai)

### **Using Academic English**

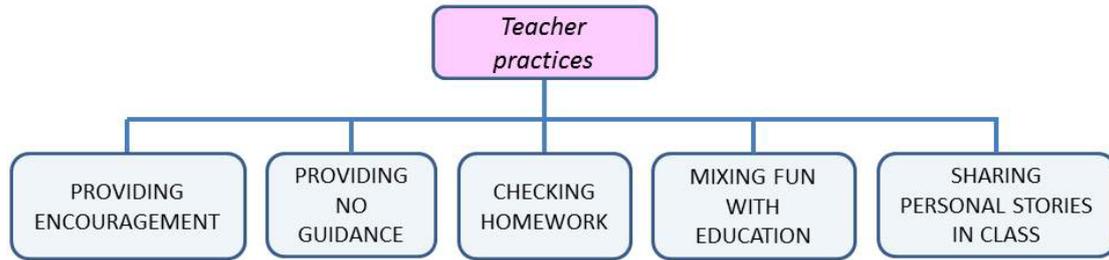
Writing using academic English was a challenge for participants as exemplified in the following quote:

*Writing essay (is very difficult). I did not know about academic English. It was really hard.* (Asako)

### **Teacher Practices**

Participants described intercultural encounters where they made observations and commented on in the classroom environment. The analysis identified five distinct descriptors associated with *teacher practices* contextual type. Participants' comments are summarised in Figure 5.18.

**Figure 5.18: Descriptors for the Teacher Practices Contextual Type**



The quotes which follow provide examples associated with each descriptor within the *teacher practices* contextual type.

### **Providing Encouragement**

The comment which follows provides an example where teachers provide students with encouragement and where they check students' work:

*Before I come here I thought I don't like study. But now I like to study and finish my work. It is because of teacher. The teacher always says positive words to us, tries to teach positive attitude every day. And also if I do my homework, he remembers.* (Ting)

### **Providing No Guidance**

While comments relating to *teacher practices* were generally positive, an undergraduate participant noted that in his courses, lecturers did not provide him with sufficient guidance:

*In my view, studying in Australia is like studying (by) ourselves. (You) can't depend on Professor for guidance. Don't get a lot of guidance from Professors; everything we have to do ourselves. In Nepal we get guidance. Here you need to do own assignment, and plagiarism. In Nepal you can google and copy for assignments. Here you can't do that, we have to write everything ourselves.* (Sabal)

### **Checking Homework**

The following quotes describe the teacher practice of checking homework where the participant appreciated the attention that teachers gave students:

*Rules are tight, strict... Dan and June, if they give homework, they give the responsibility to ask the students whether they have done the homework or not. At the same time, they will ask*

*“How did you do it?” “Did you face any difficulty?” And if you faced any difficulty they will explain again and again. So this is quite different from India. (Prashanth)*

### **Mixing Fun with Education**

Participants commented on the practice of including informal and fun activities in their classes. An example of a typical comment is as follows:

*When you mix the fun with education, it makes it easier to understand, and even like harder to forget it. I like fun, I am that person, always smiling, (I) like the fun. (Ahmed)*

### **Sharing Personal Experiences in Class**

Participants noted the *teacher practice* of sharing personal experiences with their class. For instance:

*Somewhere whenever teacher is teaching you a particular topic, here we discuss personal life examples. In Australia teachers will share their personal experiences. More case studies and real life examples, not specifically will they stick to the book. (Mal)*

### Summary

The **academic** context results have three contextual types. These contextual types were *student practices*, *academic practices* and *teacher practices*. The three contextual types with their descriptors are listed in Table 5.11.

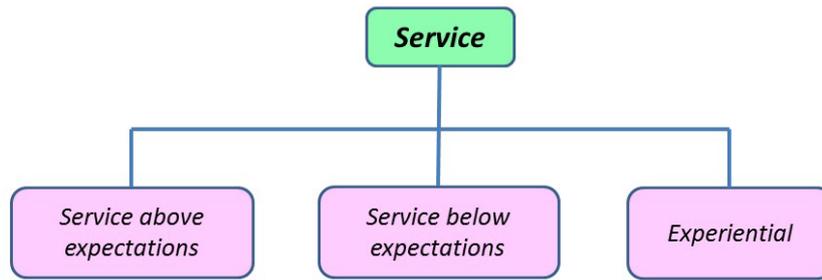
**Table 5.11: Descriptors for the Academic Contextual Types**

Contextual Type	Descriptors
<b>Student Practices</b>	Seeking help; Teacher-Student interaction; Improving English skills; Adjusting to diversity; Identifying what assists learning; Persevering
<b>Academic Practices</b>	Referencing; Plagiarism; Summarising; Using academic English
<b>Teacher Practices</b>	Providing encouragement; Providing no guidance; Checking homework; Mixing fun with education; Sharing personal experiences in class

### **5.3.5 Service intercultural encounters**

The analysis of interview data for **service** intercultural encounters revealed three service contextual types as shown in Figure 5.19.

**Figure 5.19: Service Contextual Types**



Participants described *service* encounters which occurred in their first few months in Australia, some of which were below their expectations while others which were above their expectations. Consequently these contextual types were referred to as *service above expectations* and *service below expectations*. Participants described additional *intercultural service encounters* where their own experience was the focus of the description. These were assigned the contextual type “experiential”. The frequency of each of these *service* contextual types is presented in Table 5.12.

**Table 5.12: Frequency of Service Contextual Types (n=20)**

Contextual Type	Frequency
Service above expectations	9
Service below expectations	8
Experiential	3

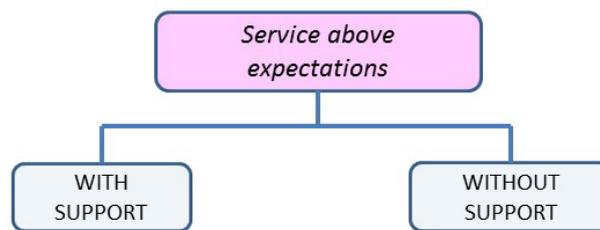
As can be seen in the table participants described more intercultural *service* encounters where the service level was above participants’ expectations than were below expectations. There were fewer intercultural service encounters where their experience of the event was the focus rather than the service level. The following sections provide examples of each of the contextual types.

### Service Above Expectations

The analysis identified two distinct descriptors associated with this contextual type. The descriptor ‘With support’ was assigned to intercultural service encounters where students described support which helped them to negotiate the new purchasing environment.

These descriptors are presented in Figure 5.20.

**Figure 5.20: Descriptors for the Service Above Expectations Contextual Type**



The quotes which follow provide examples of each of the two descriptors associated with the *service above expectations* contextual type.

#### **With Support**

The following quote provides evidence of support provided by the brother of a participant when they were choosing a car to purchase. In this case, the participant was astounded when the car salesperson invited him to take a car for a test drive:

*When I bought my car in Canberra, I went with my brother and with a (salesperson) she took this car and she said, “You can keep this car and go”. But in my country, you could not do that, because you could go with a car and never come back! This kind of confidence (makes me) feel nice because this is my way. (Alberto)*

When students initially arrived in Australia they were required to set up bank accounts, apply for credit cards and purchase mobile phones. In some cases, participants were provided with support when bank employees could communicate with the student using their own language. The following student was both relieved and surprised to find that she was not required to speak in English when setting up her bank account:

*There are so many Chinese in Australia. Even (when) I go to the bank I can use my own language to open an account. (It was) quite easy as the (sales)person (in the bank) spoke Mandarin! (Chicki)*

## Without Support

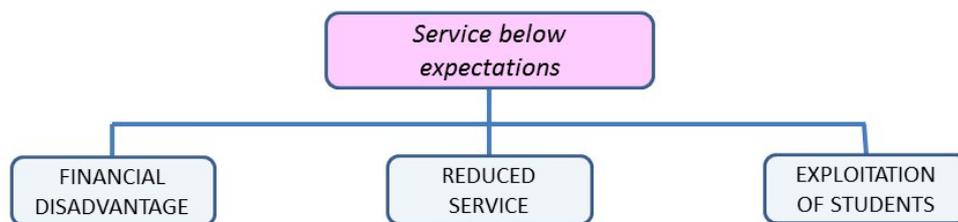
The following quote describes an intercultural *service* encounter where the participant was pleasantly surprised to be treated favourably when purchasing:

*..the behaviour of the seller here is different from my country (Vietnam) maybe ..the seller here is very friendly and they don't care who you are, whether you are rich or poor, you can just come to take a look to buy or not buy. (Lanh)*

## Service Below Expectations

The analysis identified three descriptors associated with this contextual type. These descriptors are presented in Figure 5.21.

**Figure 5.21: Descriptors for the Service Below Expectations Contextual Type**



Examples of quotes for the three descriptors are provided in the following section.

### **Financial Disadvantage**

The quotes which follow provide examples of service intercultural encounters where participants reported a financial disadvantage. When the data was collected for this research, international students in some Australian states were unable to obtain student transport concessions. Participants were unhappy with this situation and felt that international students were treated inequitably in comparison with Australian university students who had access to student transport concessions:

*About public transport, I read the website (and) they have discount for students, but they did not provide any discounts for international students. Maybe they treat us differently. (Ting)*

### **Reduced Service**

Participants described their frustration with having to wait for services. In this case, the participant was required to wait for a replacement key for his accommodation.

*If I want to do something I need wait for a few days. In China I can do immediately. For example, if I want to get a credit card, I need to wait for a long time. In China (it takes) one hour...Yesterday I lost my key I have to wait to get a new key. In China I can make a phone call and they come at night. (Liang)*

### Exploitation of Students

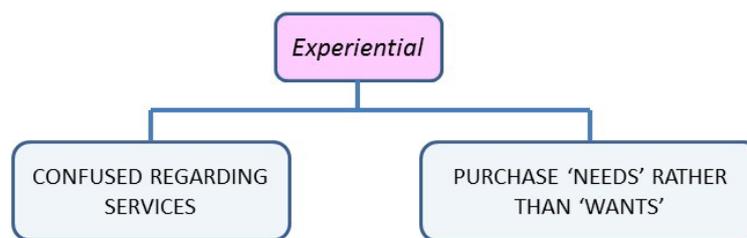
While most participants reported that the *intercultural service encounters* were conducted appropriately, a participant described a situation where he felt that he had been treated badly:

*(I took) a room for rent to live in Australia. The landlord said. "I give you a free week; the first week is a free week." But when I leave and go to the new place, he ask me to pay for this week! And there is no paper, no receipt, no contract. (What do) I do? I am not Australian, and he is Australian, he can sue me. I do not know enough Australian law. (Nguyen)*

### Experiential

The *experiential* contextual type was assigned to **service** intercultural encounters where participants focussed on their experience rather than the on the attributes of the service. The analysis identified two descriptors associated with this contextual type. These descriptors are presented in Figure 5.22.

**Figure 5.22: Descriptors for the Experiential Contextual Type**



The quotes which follow provide examples associated with each of the two descriptors within the *experiential* contextual type.

### Confused Regarding Services

In the quote below the participant described his embarrassment at the start of his stay when he did not know how to use a credit card:

*I chose one laptop and they (the shop assistant) helped me. But I did not know how to use the credit card. I was feeling very embarrassed. They told me to enter my pin and they told me how to take it out. (Sabal)*

### **Purchase “Needs” Rather Than “Wants”**

The comment which follows describes how a participant resolved to purchase only those items that she needed so that she could keep to a budget:

*I always write my list - the lists of groceries that I need so that I keep to the budget. I looked at the list and I got what I wanted to buy, put them all in the trolley...I always stick to my budget. Walk around shopping mall, there are so many things that are very attractive. Very nice. I think: “Want or need?” If it is a want, I won’t buy. (Mivai)*

### Summary

The **service** context has three contextual types. These contextual types were *service above expectations*, *service below expectations* and *experiential*. The three contextual types and the descriptors in each are listed in Table 5.13.

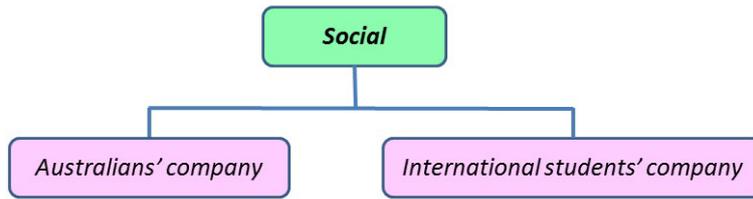
**Table 5.13: Descriptors for the Service Contextual Types**

<b>Contextual type</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>
Service above expectations	With support; Without support
Service below expectations	Financial disadvantage; Reduced service; Exploitation of students
Experiential	Confused regarding services; Purchase ‘needs’ rather than ‘wants’

### **5.3.6 Social intercultural encounters**

The analysis of interview data for **social** intercultural encounters revealed that two contextual types emerged as shown in Figure 5.23.

**Figure 5.23: Social Contextual Types**



Intercultural encounters which occurred in the *social* context were events which students participated in during their free time. The frequency of each of these *social* intercultural encounter contextual types is presented in Table 5.14.

**Table 5.14: Frequency of Social Contextual Types (n=18)**

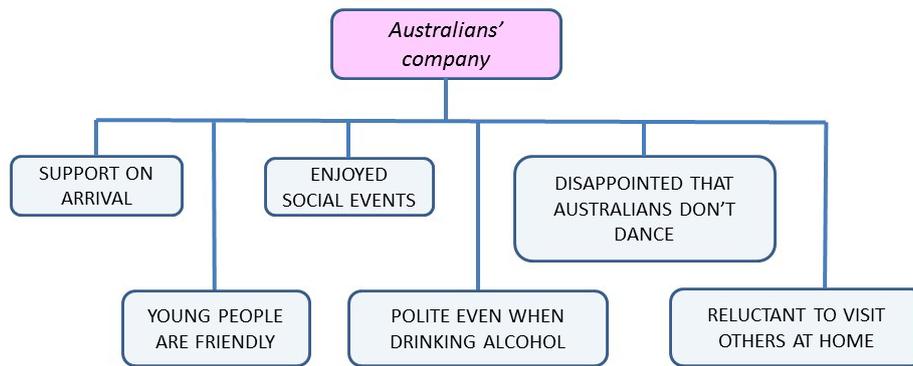
Contextual Type	Frequency
Australians' company	9
International students' company	9

It can be seen that nine *social* intercultural encounters were identified for each of the two contextual types.

Australians' Company

Five descriptors for *Australians' company* contextual type were identified. These descriptors are shown in Figure 5.24.

**Figure 5.24: Descriptors for the Australians' Company Contextual Type**



The quotes which follow provide examples associated with each descriptor within the *Australians' company* contextual type.

### **Support on Arrival**

The quote which follows provides an example of the support provided by a homestay family to a participant when they first arrived:

*First I was hesitant to talk to Australians. Because I have difficulty understanding their accent and also my accent is really like difficult to understand. But I am lucky, because my homestay family, they exposed me to parties and everything, and really encouraged me to talk and because it will help me more. (Maralit)*

### **Young People Are Friendly**

A participant noted that, in comparison with other age groups, Australians of his age group were friendly:

*In Australia, they are friendly, some people are not friendly but people, my age people, are more friendly (than older people). (Tuan)*

### **Enjoyed Social Events**

The analysis identified participants who enjoyed socialising with Australians at the beach, barbeques and at other social events. The following comment provides an example:

*Now I have lots of Aussie friends and we went to the beach at Newcastle. And in Newcastle beach I communicate with lots of Australian and lot of party style. (We had) barbeques on the beach, (we went) camping, spend time on the beach at night, and went fishing. (Giang)*

### **Polite Even When Drinking Alcohol**

In the following cases a participant described his surprise when finding that Australians are polite even when drinking alcohol:

*For example, I have been in a pub, with some of my friends and we were just sitting around the table was two Australian guys already. They were really nice, although they were drunk but they were really polite. I was shocked because I had been in this situation in many countries when they are drunk they speak in a different language. (Cyrus)*

### **Disappointed That Australians Don't Dance**

A participant from Colombia, when socialising with Australians in a hotel was disappointed to find that Australians did not dance at social events:

*When I go to a party (at home) it is different. In Colombia we go to a party and we dance and drink and speak and here (in Australia) we drink and speak – (no dancing). I like dancing. (Alberto)*

### **Reluctant To Visit Others At Home**

Some participants however reported a reluctance to visit neighbours as the following quote demonstrates:

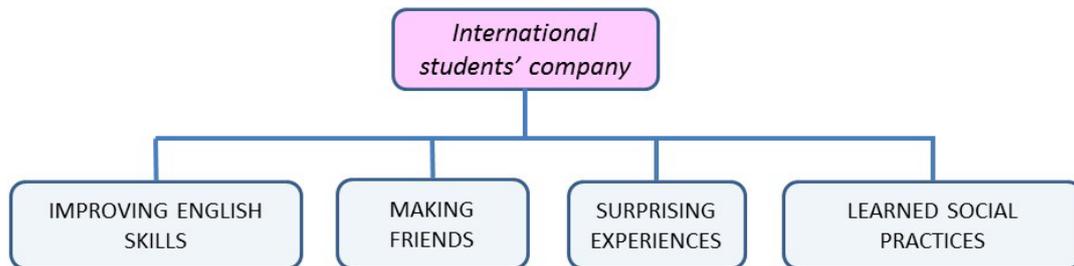
*I (like to) talk to neighbours, but in Australia have a little bit barriers. I feel a little bit confused to come to their house. Because anytime (they are) working, tired, cannot talk to me a lot and I'm scared to come to their house (for) talking eating or something. But in Vietnam you can come, you can go anywhere and you can talk to each other (Hien)*

While the quotes above show that participants socialised with Australians, participants also reported socialising with other international students.

### International Students' Company

Six descriptors for *International students' company* contextual type were identified. These descriptors are shown in Figure 5.25.

**Figure 5.25: Descriptors for the International Students' Company Contextual Type**



The quotes which follow provide examples associated with the descriptors within the *International students' company* contextual type.

### **Improving English Skills**

Participants described meeting people from other countries and practising their English:

*Went (to Bondi) with people from other countries. Sometime I meet people and after two days I go with them I try to speak less Arabic and more English. (Ahmed)*

### **Making Friends**

Participants at an international city campus reported that their attendance at a university organised sports day helped them to make friends with other international students and to feel more connected to the university:

*Four days ago we went to a sports event. We met there and we enjoyed a lot, through the whole day. Played volleyball, and we played badminton, we enjoyed a lot, total university students. We enjoyed a lot there, it's most memorable moments in my life; I can't explain that! Up to that (time) I did not spend time with other students, even ... (so it was) quite useful to me. (It helped me to) settle in. If I keep in contact, if I get in trouble, they will help me. (Prashanth)*

### **Surprising Experiences**

The participant quoted below described a visit to the beach with other international students:

*I remember first time I went to the St Kilda beach first time, before I stay in China I did not see beach. When I came here my friends took me to the beach. I think it was very exciting.*

*Because, when I see the beach; very big and my heart is broken a lot. It is very exciting. Together with my friends in the water, (the water was) clear, and is very interesting. (Cath)*

### Learned Social Practices

The quote below describes a **social** intercultural encounter where the participant observed and learned social practices:

*So we all decided to go out and have dinner and watch a movie. So I went with three of my friends at the Uni...One of the things that I learned was how to go out: clothes, dressing, this was my first time. I learned something, this is what they wear when they go out. I was just trying to learn these things. (Mivai)*

### Summary

The **social** context has two contextual types. These contextual types were *Australians' company* and *International students' company*. These contextual types and their descriptors are listed in Table 5.15.

**Table 5.15: Summary: Descriptors for the Social Contextual Types**

Contextual Type	Descriptors
Australians' Company	Young people are friendly; Support on arrival; Enjoyed social events; Polite even when drinking alcohol; Disappointed that Australians don't dance; Reluctant to visit others at home
International Students' Company	Improving English skills; Making friends; Surprising experiences; Learned social practices

## 5.4 Student Intercultural Encounter Experiences

### 5.4.1 Introduction

This section presents the results in addressing Research Question 3 which seeks to identify the outcomes of intercultural encounters experienced by international students. In this respect, the analysis of the student reactions and outcomes of intercultural encounters was done through the use of a concept map template together with pivot table summaries.

The process adopted in this dissertation for the identification of outcomes of intercultural encounters began with the identification of intercultural encounters in the literature. These intercultural encounters were either described by students or were referred to in the literature. Outcomes of these intercultural encounters were then identified and were classified as being in the affective, behavioural or cognitive domains. In relation to this process, the context in which these intercultural encounters occurred was not included. While assumptions could be made by the researcher as to the context in which the intercultural encounter occurred, this was not always possible.

Consequently the contexts of the intercultural encounters were not recorded. An additional point to note is that the researcher made the assumption that the outcomes of intercultural encounters were long term outcomes. This was done as students' descriptions of their experiences and the results of research implied that the outcomes were enduring.

#### **5.4.2 Process for the analysis of intercultural encounters**

Prior to the consideration of the results of the concept map analysis, it is deemed appropriate to describe the process adopted for the analysis of intercultural encounter experiences. As detailed in Chapter 3 a concept map template was used to analyse each intercultural encounter by investigating and recording the presence or absence of reactions and outcomes. The process of analysis used is demonstrated by the use of two intercultural encounters which are shown in Table 5.16. These intercultural encounters were described by the same participant.

**Table 5.16: Examples of Two Intercultural Encounters**

Example	Quote
A	<i>I think this is very funny, even if you go fishing on a river you need a licence! Here (you) have to have licence. I went fishing with my friend (Australian) and they explained to me “Giang, you need to buy the licence”. (I said) “Are you serious? No joking?” I said “Really?” I was fishing from the beach? ... Yes I got a licence for \$30. The licence was for one year. I think Australian Government (has a law which requires) people have to have a licence before they go fishing is good because they limit people and protect the natural environment. Not destroy environment; not catch a lot of fish from the sea is good. But some, the price of licence is not high \$30 for one year. People can (afford to) buy (the licence). (Giang)</i>
B	<i>I think, for overseas students, the government should have a policy to help overseas students because I have to spend \$200 per month for the train. Because I take the train from Cabramatta to here. (It is) very expensive! \$200 per month! I could send back to Vietnam. (It is) enough (money) for poor people to live in one month. (Giang)</i>

The results of the analysis in terms of the immediate and considered reactions and affective, behavioural and cognitive outcomes are presented in Table 5.17.

**Table 5.17: Analysis of Intercultural Encounters**

	Example A	Example B
<b>Immediate Reaction</b>	Surprised that a licence was required in order to fish. Student questioned the requirement for a licence	No immediate reaction was identified
<b>Considered Reaction</b>	Recognised that it was important to protect the environment. Noted that government regulations required a licence	Shocked at the high cost of transport and compared the cost of transport with the cost of living in their own country
<b>Affective Outcome</b>	Initially surprised and shocked but later accepted the need to protect the environment	Resentful that international students could not access public transport concessions
<b>Behavioural Outcome</b>	Complied with the law and purchased a licence	No behavioural outcome identified
<b>Cognitive Outcome</b>	Became aware of Australian laws which protected the environment	Student believed that the government should subsidise public transport for international students

As shown in Example A the participant was initially surprised to find that a licence was required in order to fish. However, in Example B which concerned the cost of travel, the participant had no immediate reaction but, instead, described their considered reaction to the high cost of transport. Similarly, in Example A the participant described a considered reaction when they noted that a fishing licence was required. The investigation of Example A identified the presence of affective, behavioural and cognitive outcomes while in Example B there was no evidence of a behavioural outcome.

The above process was used to analyse each of the 163 intercultural encounters in order to identify the presence or absence of an immediate reaction, a considered reaction and affective, behavioural and cognitive outcomes. The results of this analysis are summarised and are shown in Table 5.18.

The table presents the summary of the participant reactions and outcomes of intercultural encounters. Intercultural encounters have been grouped by contexts with the contextual types within each context listed. The table shows the percentages of intercultural encounters within each context which resulted in a reaction or an outcome. This percentage is shown for immediate reactions, considered reactions, affective outcomes, behavioural outcomes and cognitive outcomes. The percentages for each intercultural encounter context are shown in the top row of each section.

**Table 5.18: Frequency of Participant Reactions and Outcomes (%) (n=163)**

Contexts/Contextual Types	Immediate reaction	Considered reaction	Affective outcome	Behavioural outcome	Cognitive outcome
<b>Community n=54</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>89%</b>
Natural environment n=12	50%	100%	75%	25%	75%
Personal safety n=10	30%	100%	90%	30%	90%
Governance n=7	57%	100%	100%	29%	100%
Work n=7	43%	100%	86%	71%	100%
Safety measures n=7	29%	100%	57%	0%	86%
Built environment n=7	57%	100%	86%	0%	100%
Freedom n=4	0%	100%	75%	75%	75%
<b>Culture n=40</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>83%</b>
Food practices n=17	47%	100%	82%	41%	76%
Individual n=8	25%	100%	100%	63%	100%
Society n=8	0%	100%	75%	0%	75%
Family n=4	50%	100%	75%	0%	75%
Religious practices n=3	0%	100%	67%	67%	100%
<b>Academic n=31</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Student practices n=17	59%	88%	76%	76%	100%
Academic practices n=7	86%	100%	100%	0%	100%
Teacher practices n=7	57%	100%	100%	86%	100%
<b>Service n=20</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Service above expectations n=9	89%	67%	100%	33%	100%
Service below expectations n=8	75%	100%	100%	0%	100%
Experiential n=3	67%	67%	100%	100%	100%
<b>Social n=18</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>94%</b>
Australians' company n=9	56%	89%	89%	67%	89%
International students' company n=9	33%	89%	89%	78%	100%
<b>Total n=163</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>91%</b>

It can be seen from the table that while 95% of intercultural encounters resulted in considered reactions, 48% of intercultural encounters resulted in an immediate reaction.

There were, however, more immediate reactions in the *academic* (65%) and *service* (80%) intercultural encounters.

The table also shows that while 91% of intercultural encounters resulted in cognitive outcomes and 86% resulted in affective outcomes, only 42% of intercultural encounters resulted in behavioural outcomes. Finally, the incidence of behavioural outcomes was lower in the *community*, *culture* and *service* contexts than it was in the *academic* and *social* intercultural encounters.

## 5.5 Summary

In summary, the foregoing results indicate that:

- Three identified antecedents appear to influence students' ability to settle into life in Australia. These concern *settling in arrangements*; *student expectations*; and *proficiency in English*. Participants were helped by family and friends when arranging accommodation and when purchasing goods and services. Participants' prior knowledge about Australia informed their expectations regarding overseas study. The ability to communicate in English also helped students to prepare for overseas study.
- The five intercultural encounter contexts, *community*, *culture*, *academic*, *service*, and *social*, can be described in terms of contextual types each of which have associated descriptors. Contextual types and descriptors complete the three level typology of intercultural encounters and enable similar intercultural encounters to be grouped based on the student experience of those events.
- Intercultural encounters result in immediate and considered reactions and in affective, behavioural and cognitive outcomes. Approximately half of the intercultural encounters resulted in immediate reactions and behavioural outcomes while most intercultural encounters resulted in considered reactions, affective outcomes and cognitive outcomes.

These results are discussed in detail in the following chapter.

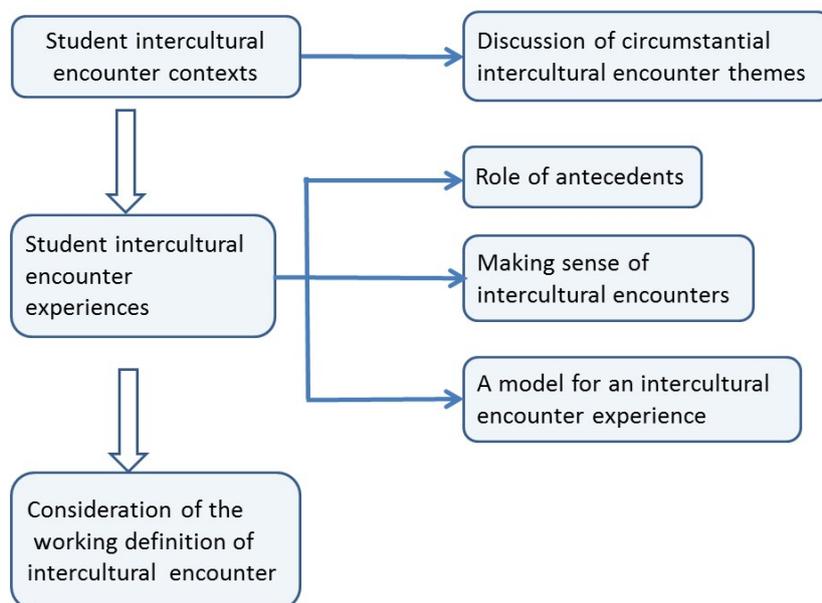
# Chapter 6

## Discussion of Results

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the results presented in Chapter 5. Figure 6.1 presents the process adopted in this chapter for the discussion of the results.

**Figure 6.1: Process Adopted for Discussion of Results**



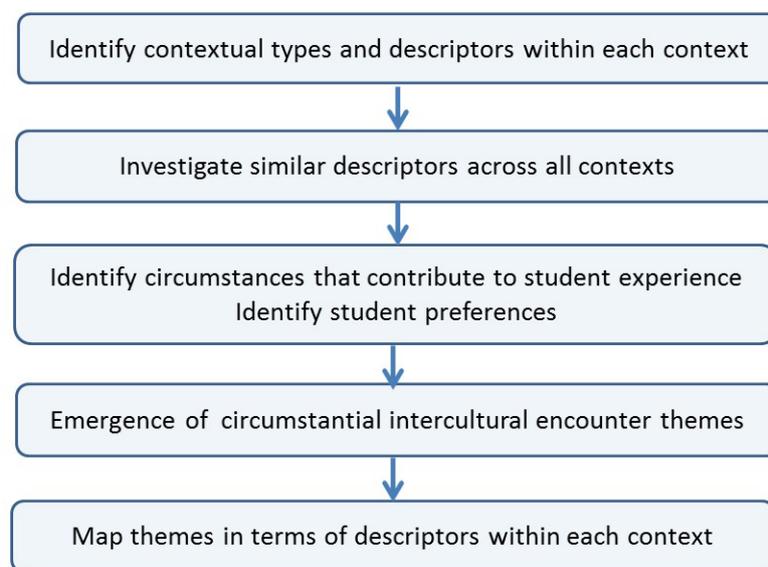
This discussion starts with a comparison of the descriptors identified in Chapter 2 with those identified in Chapter 5. Tables are used to highlight these comparisons and to foreshadow the emergence of the circumstantial intercultural encounter themes in each of the intercultural encounter contexts. The chapter then discusses the student intercultural encounter experiences, how participants prepared for, and made sense of, these experiences and proposes a model for the intercultural encounter experience. The discussion concludes by considering the working definition of an intercultural encounter.

## 6.2 Student Intercultural Encounter Contexts

### 6.2.1 Introduction

This section discusses the insights which emerged from an investigation of the descriptors across the five contexts. Three circumstantial intercultural encounter themes emerged from this discussion using the process shown in Figure 6.2.

**Figure 6.2: Process Used to Identify Emerging Circumstantial Intercultural Encounter Themes**



As can be seen in the figure, themes emerged from a consideration of contextual types and descriptors within and across contexts. Common pre-existing circumstances and conditions were then collated and participants' perceptions of, and preferences for, intercultural encounter experiences were ascertained. The circumstantial intercultural encounter themes which emerged from these considerations are discussed across each of the five contexts.

### 6.2.2 Community context

The synthesis of the research literature in Chapter 2 identified seven contextual types within the **community** context. The seven contextual types, namely: *natural environment*, *personal safety*, *governance*, *work*, *safety measures*, *built environment* and *freedom* were similarly established in this research. Table 6.1 presents the contextual types which emerged in

this research for the *community* context together with the literature review findings. For each contextual type, the table lists the descriptors which emerged in Chapter 2 together with the descriptors that emerged from the results of this research.

**Table 6.1: Community Contextual Types and Descriptors**

<b>Contextual Types</b>	<b>Literature Findings Descriptor</b>	<b>Findings of this Research Descriptor</b>
<b>Natural Environment</b>	Attraction to the environment	Attraction to the environment Care for the environment Effect of the environment
<b>Personal Safety</b>	Australia is seen to be safe  Safety concerns	Australia is seen to be safe Cars stop for pedestrians Polluted air can cause disease Choose a safe area to live
<b>Governance</b>	  Traffic is organised	People follow the rules A stable economy Many laws and highly regulated Australia pays attention to the environment Traffic is organised
<b>Work</b>	Finding work Work practices Study-work-life balance Working helps language skills	Finding work Work practices Study-work-life balance
<b>Safety Measures</b>	University accommodation Health insurance	Food is standardised and safe Laws are designed to prevent accidents Government tells us about our rights Traffic rules ensure that people drive safely
<b>Built Environment</b>	Adjusting to the built environment	Adjusting to the built environment Use of the outdoors
<b>Freedom</b>	Freedom of movement Freedom of dress Discrimination practices	Freedom of movement Freedom of dress Freedom from discrimination Can express views

It can be seen from the table that this research confirmed the majority of the findings with those reported in the literature. However, the table provides further insights regarding the way participants perceived intercultural encounters in the *community* context. Participants experienced a diversity of intercultural encounters; their experiences of some intercultural encounters were affected by Australia’s rules and regulations and some intercultural encounters provided quality of life benefits. These insights resulted in the emergence of three circumstantial intercultural encounter themes from the *community* context results, namely:

- adjusting to diversity;
- Australia has wide ranging rules and regulations; and
- Australia provides for quality of life.

Table 6.2 shows the contextual types whose descriptors were mapped to each circumstantial intercultural encounter theme.

**Table 6.2: Community Context: Themes and Associated Contextual Types**

Theme	Contextual Types
Adjusting to diversity	natural environment, personal safety, governance, work, safety measures, built environment and freedom
Australia has wide ranging rules and regulations	natural environment, personal safety, governance, safety measures, built environment and freedom
Australia provides for quality of life	natural environment, personal safety, governance, work, safety measures, built environment and freedom

It can be seen from Table 6.2 that the circumstantial intercultural encounter themes “*Adjusting to diversity*” and “*Australia provides for quality of life*” were mapped to all contextual types, namely: *natural environment, personal safety, governance, work, safety measures, built environment and freedom*. The theme “*Australia has wide ranging rules and regulations*” mapped to all contextual types except *work*. The mapping process showed that the themes overlapped and that contextual types were associated with more than one theme.

### 6.2.3 Culture context

In Chapter 2, the synthesis of the research literature identified four contextual types within the **culture** context, namely: *food practices*, *individual qualities*, *nature of society* and *religious practices*. Intercultural encounters which were assigned the **culture** context were associated with food, religious or other cultural practices. Chapter 5 highlighted an additional contextual type within the **culture** context, namely *family characteristics*.

The contextual type *family characteristics* was assigned to four intercultural encounters within the **culture** context. These intercultural encounters were described by three participants who had lived either in homestay situations or with other Australians. These living arrangements provided participants with an experience of Australian family culture that was not available to other international students. Students compared cultural practices that they observed with what they would have expected in their own family situation. These cultural practices included family mealtime arrangements; the frequency of children contacting their parents; and the level of parental authority within the family. Research identified corresponding differences in cultural practices within the family. In one case an international student from an African country was disappointed to find that US families tended to restrict Christmas and Thanksgiving gatherings to family members only (Aydinol, 2013). Different perceptions regarding what was considered to be a good host was a concern for Japanese students living in homestay arrangements with US families (Kobayashi & Viswat 2015). These students sometimes felt uncomfortable when family cultural practices did not align with what they would have expected at home. As an example, a US homestay mother would encourage Japanese students to help themselves to food in the fridge whereas such behaviour by the host was not consistent with what the Japanese considered as being a good host. These different cultural practices within the family caused students to reflect on what would have been acceptable in their home country and to compare the situations.

While the numbers of intercultural encounters and students were small, the addition of the *family characteristics* contextual type complemented the existing contextual types, namely: *nature of society* and *individual qualities*. The addition of this contextual type also enables the Australian culture to be considered at three distinct levels, namely: the society level, at the family level and at the individual level

Table 6.3 presents the contextual types and descriptors recognised in the literature review together with the contextual types and descriptors which emerged in this research for the *culture* context.

**Table 6.3: Culture Contextual Types and Descriptors**

Contextual Types	Literature Findings Descriptor	Findings of this Research Descriptor
<b>Food Practices</b>	Taste Availability Food quality Food acceptability Food habits	Taste Availability Food quality Food acceptability Food habits
<b>Individual Qualities</b>	Adjusting to diversity	Making friends Australians are too busy to socialise Australians are approachable People will stop to help
<b>Nature of Society</b>	Women have influence	Women have influence Australia is bureaucratic and stable The government enforces the law Australia pays attention to the environment Quality of life Australians are individualistic Young move for work and study
<b>Family Characteristics</b>		Australians like to live alone Adult children don't visit their parents Families don't eat together Australian parents are not strict
<b>Religious Practices</b>	Maintain religious practices	Maintain religious practices Adopt local practices Being curious

It can be seen from Table 6.3 that this research has confirmed the findings with those reported in the literature for the contextual type *food practices*. However, the table provides additional insights regarding cultural practices and how participants perceived intercultural encounters in the *culture* context. In examining the table, the three circumstantial intercultural encounter themes which emerged from the contextual types and descriptors in the *academic* context also apply to the *culture* context. They are:

- adjusting to diversity;
- Australia has wide ranging rules and regulations; and

- Australia provides for quality of life.

These three overarching circumstantial intercultural encounter themes relate to the way that intercultural encounters in the **culture** context were perceived by participants. Participants experienced a diversity of intercultural encounters some of which were associated with Australia’s legislative environment. Participants recognised that people tended to comply with the law which, together with other experiences, provided quality of life benefits. The contextual types whose descriptors were associated with each circumstantial intercultural encounter theme are shown in Table 6.4.

**Table 6.4: Culture Context: Themes and Associated Contextual Types**

Theme	Contextual Type
Adjusting to diversity	food practices, individual qualities, nature of society, family characteristics and religious practices
Australia has wide ranging rules and regulations	nature of society
Australia provides for quality of life	food practices, nature of society, and religious practices

As shown in Table 6.4, the circumstantial intercultural encounter theme “*Adjusting to diversity*” was mapped to all five contextual types, namely: *food practices, individual qualities, nature of society, family characteristics and religious practices*. The theme “*Australia has wide ranging rules and regulations*” mapped to one contextual type *nature of society*, while the theme “*Australia provides for quality of life*” mapped to three contextual types, namely: *food practices, nature of society, and religious practices*. The mapping process also showed that circumstantial intercultural encounter themes overlapped and that contextual types aligned with more than one theme.

#### 6.2.4 Academic context

The review of intercultural encounters in Chapter 2 recognised three contextual types in the **academic** context. These three contextual types namely: *student practices, academic practices* and *teacher practices* were found both in the literature and in this research. Table

6.5 presents the literature review findings together with the contextual types and descriptors within the *academic* context which emerged in this research.

**Table 6.5: Academic Contextual Types and Descriptors**

Contextual Types	Literature Findings Descriptor	Findings of this Research Descriptor
<b>Student Practices</b>	Seeking help Teacher-Student interaction Improving English skills Adapting to unfamiliar learning practices	Seeking help Teacher-Student interaction Improving English skills Adjusting to diversity  Identifying what assists learning Persevering
<b>Academic Practices</b>	Academic skills	Referencing Plagiarism Summarising Using academic English
<b>Teacher Practices</b>	Providing encouragement Using humour Inability to foster a sense of belonging Lack of training	Providing encouragement Mixing fun with education  Providing no guidance Sharing personal experiences in class

As can be seen from the table, this research confirmed the majority of the findings with those reported in the literature. However, the table provides further insights regarding the way that participants responded to intercultural encounters in the *academic* context. While participants recognised the need to adjust to the new academic and teaching practices they also reflected on their own learning style and on the importance of persevering in their studies.

The circumstantial intercultural encounter theme “*Adjusting to diversity*” emerged from the consideration of contextual type and descriptors in the *academic* context. Table 6.6 shows the contextual types whose descriptors were mapped to the theme.

**Table 6.6: Academic Context: Themes and Associated Contextual Types**

Theme	Contextual type
<b>Adjusting to Diversity</b>	Student practices, academic practices and teacher practices

As can be seen in the table, the theme “*Adjusting to diversity*” mapped to the three contextual types, namely: *student practices*, *academic practices* and *teacher practices*. This theme emerged from intercultural encounters where participants experienced a diverse range of practices associated with their student life and recognises the need for students to adjust to, and engage with, new teaching practices.

### 6.2.5 Service context

In Chapter 2, three contextual types were recognised in the research literature within intercultural **service** encounters, namely: *service above expectations*, *service below expectations* and *experiential*. While service encounters between people of different cultures were extensively researched, there was limited research relating to intercultural **service** encounters involving international students. Nevertheless, the review of the literature identified intercultural **service** encounters involving people from different cultures. Table 6.7 presents the contextual types and descriptors which emerged in this research and compares the findings in Chapter 2 with the findings which emerged in this research.

**Table 6.7: Service Contextual Types and Descriptors**

Contextual Types	Literature findings Descriptor	Findings of this research Descriptor
<b>Service Above Expectations</b>	Service with support	With support Without support
<b>Service Below Expectations</b>	Financial disadvantage Reduced service Exploitation of students	Financial disadvantage Reduced service Exploitation of students
<b>Experiential</b>	Confused regarding services Unaware of service obligations	Confused regarding services  Purchase ‘needs’ rather than ‘wants’

Table 6.7 shows that this research confirmed the majority of the findings with those reported in the literature. However, the table led to additional insights in relation to the provision of support to international students. Other insights were related to the diversity of intercultural encounters that participants experienced and to the impact of Australia’s rules and regulations on intercultural **service** encounters. Participants’ favourable experiences of some intercultural **service** encounters were associated with

quality of life benefits. Three circumstantial intercultural encounter themes emerged from these insights, namely:

- adjusting to diversity;
- Australia has wide ranging rules and regulations; and
- Australia provides for quality of life.

Table 6.8 shows the themes together with the contextual types whose descriptors led to the emergence of each theme.

**Table 6.8: Service Context: Themes and Associated Contextual Types**

Theme	Contextual Type
Adjusting to diversity	Service above expectations, service below expectations and experiential
Australia has wide ranging rules and regulations	Service above expectations
Australia provides for quality of life	Service above expectations

As shown in the table, the circumstantial intercultural encounter theme “*Adjusting to diversity*” mapped to each of the three contextual types, namely: *service above expectations*, *service below expectations* and *experiential*. The circumstantial intercultural encounter themes “*Australia has wide ranging rules and regulations*” and “*Australia provides for quality of life*” mapped to one contextual type: *service above expectations*. The mapping process showed that the themes overlapped and that contextual types were associated with more than one theme.

### 6.2.6 Social context

In Chapter 2, the review of the literature in relation to intercultural encounters in the **social** context assigned two contextual types, namely: *Australians’ company* and *International students’ company*. Intercultural encounters within the **social** context included events which occurred in students’ leisure time. The two contextual types namely: *Australians’ company* and *International students’ company* were similarly discovered in this research. Table 6.9 presents the contextual types and descriptors which emerged in this

research for the *social* context and compares the literature review findings with the findings of this research.

**Table 6.9: Social Contextual Types and Descriptors**

Contextual Types	Literature Findings Descriptor	Findings of this Research Descriptor
<b>Australians' Company</b>	Support on arrival  Language skills Adjusting to diversity Want to mix with Australians	Support on arrival Young people are friendly Enjoyed social events Polite even when drinking alcohol Disappointed that Australians don't dance Reluctant to visit others at home
<b>International Students' Company</b>	Making friends	Improving English skills Making friends Surprising experiences Learned social practices

It can also be seen from the table that this research confirmed the majority of the findings with the literature. However, the table provides additional insights regarding participants' positive and negative perceptions of social interactions with Australians and with other international students. In light of participants' range of experiences, the circumstantial intercultural encounter theme "*Adjusting to diversity*" emerged from the *social* context. Table 6.10 shows the theme with the contextual types whose descriptors were associated with the theme.

**Table 6.10: Social Context: Themes and Associated Contextual Types**

Theme	Contextual Type
<b>Adjusting to Diversity</b>	Australian's company and International students' company

As can be seen in the table, the theme "*Adjusting to diversity*" mapped to each of the two contextual types, namely: *Australians' company* and *International students' company*. The three circumstantial intercultural encounter themes are now discussed.

## 6.2.7 Discussion of circumstantial intercultural encounter themes

### Introduction

While Chapter 2 established that intercultural encounters occurred in different contexts, these contexts were not considered in any detail. In overviewing the results in Chapter 5, in some cases it was recognised that contextual types and descriptors from different contexts were associated with similar underlying pre-existing circumstances. In other instances, contextual types and descriptors within different contexts were found to be linked to common student perceptions of intercultural encounters.

The identification of these pre-existing circumstances helped in understanding student perceptions of intercultural encounters, particularly when the pre-existing circumstances were different from what would be expected in their home country. As an example, the existence of Australia's consumer laws can be described as a circumstance which contributes to a student experience where they could easily return an incorrectly purchased train ticket.

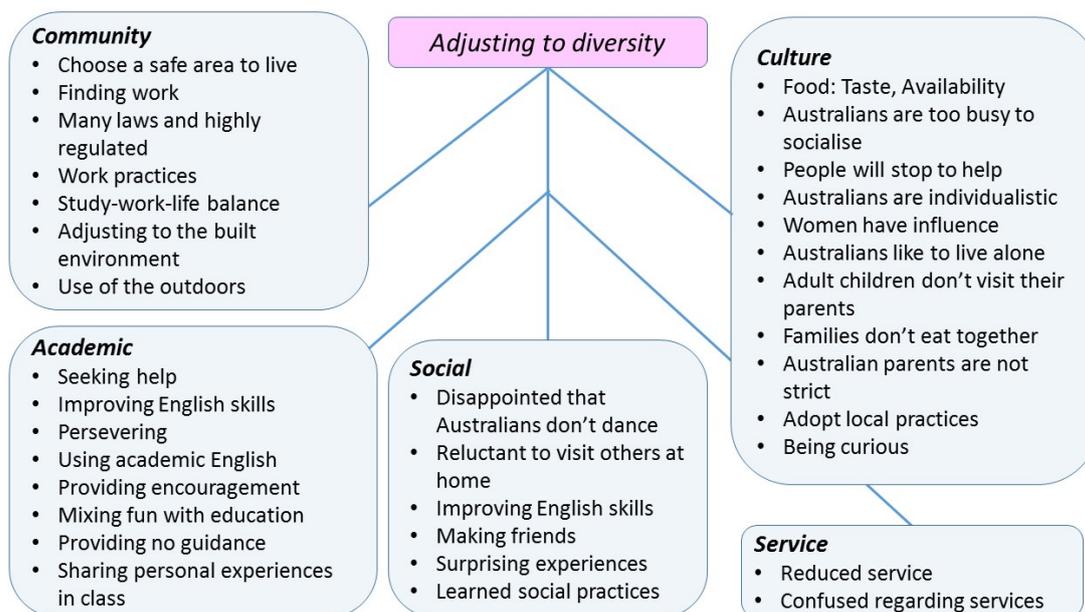
Similarly, descriptors assigned to intercultural encounter experiences can help to describe the student experience and how that experience affects international students. A consideration of similar descriptors in all the contexts also helps to identify commonalities within a range of intercultural encounters. Descriptors are assigned as part of the coding process in GTM and can indicate students' perceptions of their experiences. The use of codes in GTM does not necessarily mean that a specific descriptor applies to more than one intercultural encounter. However, students' perceptions can be part of the process where students make sense of their experiences.

These associations between descriptors, student perceptions and pre-existing circumstances led to the emergence of what has been referred to as circumstantial intercultural encounter themes. This section discusses each of the three circumstantial intercultural encounter themes which emerged from each of the contexts.

### Adjusting to Diversity

*“Adjusting to diversity”* emerged in all contexts, namely: **community**, **culture**, **academic**, **service** and **social**. Figure 6.3 presents descriptors from each context that were associated with this theme.

**Figure 6.3: Descriptors Associated with “Adjusting to Diversity”**



As can be seen in the figure, this circumstantial intercultural encounter theme emerged from intercultural encounter descriptors in each of the five contexts.

### **Community**

The descriptors shown in Figure 6.3 are representative of intercultural encounters where participants were required to adjust to diversity in the *community* context. The descriptors shown in Figure 6.3 represent intercultural encounters where participants were faced with intercultural encounters which required them to adjust to their role as a community member and in some situations, as an employee.

### **Culture**

As shown in Figure 6.3 “*Adjusting to diversity*” emerged from descriptors in the *culture* context. Again, while descriptors in the *culture* context required participants to adjust to new cultural practices, the new descriptors in the contextual types *individual qualities*, *nature of society* and *family characteristics* are new findings in relation to participants’ perspectives on cultural practices at the individual, family and society levels. The descriptors highlighted the need for participants to adjust to diversity particularly in regard to food and cultural practices within the Australian society. Similarly, the results presented in Chapter 5 found that participants adjusted their behaviour to align with local practice when they

realised that visiting friends was not encouraged. Some adjustment in eating habits was also required when participants were unable to find their traditional food.

### **Academic**

The descriptors shown in Figure 6.3 represent intercultural encounters where participants were required to adjust to intercultural encounters in the *academic* context. Chapter 2 established that participants adapted by improving their English skills and by developing new academic skills. While descriptors associated with the three contextual types were associated with the need to adjust to diversity, the descriptors shown in Figure 6.3 provide further insights in relation to specific *student practices* and *teacher practices*. Such descriptors included “Seeking help”, where students asked questions in class, contributed to class discussions, asked for and provided feedback to other students and where they shared ideas particularly when working in groups. Students were also challenged to improve their English skills, and in some cases were required to seek guidance when none was provided by the lecturers.

These new findings suggest that participants adjusted to their student role by reflecting on how they learn and by persevering. This capacity to adjust was also evident when participants were required to complete assessed group tasks by working cooperatively with people from other cultures. These descriptors provide evidence that participants adjusted to the diversity in *academic* intercultural encounters.

### **Service**

The descriptors shown in Figure 6.3 are representative of intercultural encounters where participants were required to adjust to intercultural encounters in the *service* context. While Chapter 2 established that students were required to adjust to lower service levels, Chapter 5 highlighted additional descriptors which aligned with this theme. Service practices and service levels were easier to adjust to when participants were provided with support particularly when they were not proficient in English. The need to adhere to a budget also required participants to adjust particularly when, as consumers, they were presented with a wider choice of products and services. In summary, the theme “*Adjusting to diversity*” concerns participants’ need to be flexible as they adjusted to new service practices and when keeping to a budget.

## Social

The descriptors shown in Figure 6.3 represent intercultural encounters where participants were required to adjust to intercultural encounters in the *social* context. Chapter 2 established that intercultural encounters in the *social* context helped students to build a support network and to make friends. Chapter 5 presented new descriptors in a range of intercultural encounters in the *social* context which provided more details in relation to participants adjusting to a diversity of social situations. These intercultural encounters included leisure activities with friends such as camping, going to the beach and other social activities. Participants demonstrated their capacity to adjust to diversity in these sometimes challenging situations. For instance, while participants were initially embarrassed about their language skills, they recognised the need to adjust and to practise their English skills. This resulted in increased confidence and helped them to make friends.

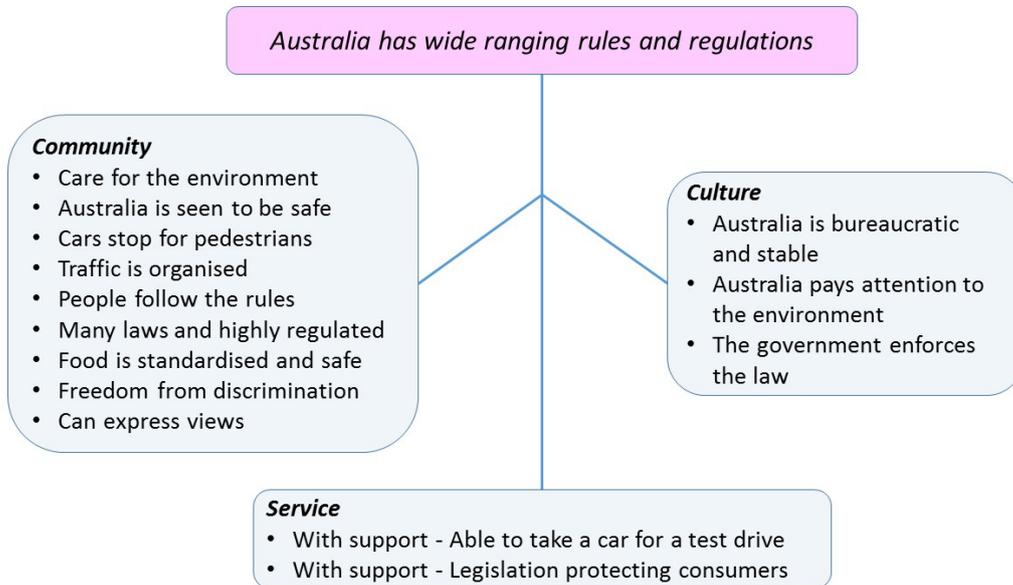
## Summary

The descriptors associated with contextual types in each of the five contexts and their association with this theme “*Adjusting to diversity*” represent new findings in relation to international students’ need to adjust to a wide range of intercultural encounters. In the *community* and *culture* contexts participants were required to adapt to their role as a community member and to their role as an employee in the workplace. Participants were expected to comply with the law and, in some cases, with Australian cultural practices. Similarly participants adjusted to their role as a student in the *academic* context and complied with service practices in the Australian *service* environment. Furthermore, this research confirms that participants adjusted to diversity in international encounters in the *social* context particularly when they made friends and when they established a social network.

## Australia has Wide Ranging Rules and Regulations

The circumstantial intercultural encounter theme “*Australia has wide ranging rules and regulations*” emerged in three contexts, namely: *community*, *culture* and *service* contexts. Figure 6.4 presents descriptors from the contexts that were associated with this theme.

**Figure 6.4: Descriptors Associated with “Australia has Wide Ranging Rules and Regulations”**



As can be seen in the figure, this theme emerged from three contexts, namely: *community*, *culture* and *service*.

### **Community**

The descriptors in the *community* context shown in Figure 6.4 are representative of intercultural encounters which were associated with Australia’s rules and regulations. While descriptors within all five contextual types except *work* were associated with this theme, additional descriptors in *natural environment*, *personal safety*, *governance*, *safety measures*, *built environment* and *freedom* represented new findings. These descriptors included those associated with legislation in relation to traffic rules, food standards, the protection of the environment and being free from discrimination. In addition to regulating the environment, Australia’s wide ranging legislation regulated finances, consumer practices, imports and safe working practices. While participants were previously unfamiliar with such wide ranging rules and regulations they recognised the benefits resulting from a regulated environment.

## **Culture**

The descriptors listed in the **culture** context in Figure 6.4 represent intercultural encounters which were linked to the theme “*Australia has wide ranging rules and regulations*”. The results presented in Chapter 5 for the *nature of society* contextual type highlighted that Australia is bureaucratic and stable and that the law is enforced. This theme is associated with an organised society where laws protect the natural environment and where they regulate the financial sector. Participants inferred that Australians seemed to “pay more attention” to the environment as there was less litter and pollution. In some cases, participants were surprised to find that protecting the environment was a priority and compared this approach with the approach taken regarding environmental protection in their own countries.

## **Service**

The descriptor shown in the **service** context in Figure 6.4 represents intercultural encounters which were linked to the theme “*Australia has wide ranging rules and regulations*”. As shown in Chapter 5, the results presented for the **service** context represent new findings which highlighted intercultural encounters where participants could return an incorrectly purchased train ticket and where they were permitted to take a car for a test drive. It would seem from the intercultural **service** encounters in the *above service expectations* contextual type that Australia’s wide ranging set of rules and regulations, and specifically its consumer regulations, are associated with participants’ positive experiences in these instances. These rules and regulations provided legislative support and safety for participants, particularly in unfamiliar service situations.

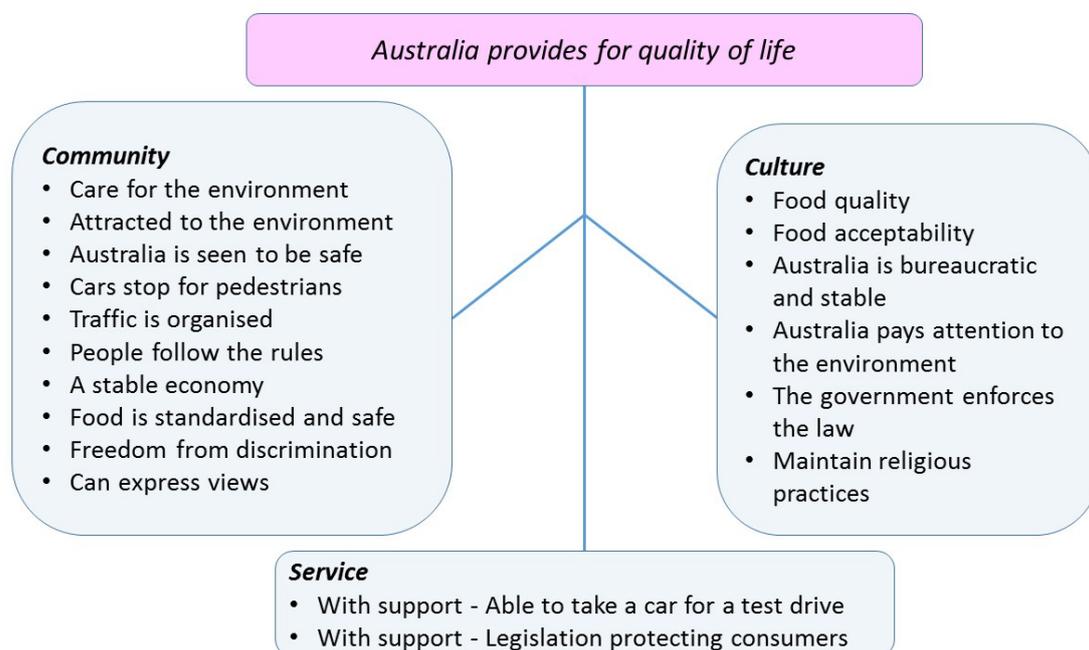
## **Summary**

The theme “*Australia has wide ranging rules and regulations*” is a new finding from this research and provides insights into international students’ perceptions regarding Australia. This theme also provides an insight into the conditions that are in place which are associated with participants’ intercultural encounter experiences. The theme recognises participants’ perceptions that Australia’s rules and regulations are pervasive and that there is an expectation within society that these rules and regulations are adhered to. These perceptions were evident in the **community**, **culture** and **service** contexts where participants were expected to comply with Australia’s laws and were associated with participants’ roles as a community member and as a consumer.

### Australia Provides for Quality of Life

The circumstantial intercultural encounter theme “*Australia provides for quality of life*” emerged from contextual types and descriptors in the **community**, **culture** and **service** contexts. This theme represents a new finding of this research. Quality of life can pertain to countries and was quantified by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as a function of factors including housing, health, income, education, jobs, environment, life satisfaction, safety, civic engagement, community and work-life balance. Australia compares favourably with other countries with regard to quality of life (OECD, 2016b). While Chapter 2 identified isolated incidents where international students appreciated the quality of life afforded by factors such as having organised traffic, this investigation has provided a number of intercultural encounters where additional descriptors support this sentiment. The association of descriptors with this theme is represented in Figure 6.5.

**Figure 6.5: Descriptors Associated with “Australia Provides for Quality of Life”**



As can be seen in the figure, this theme emerged from three contexts, namely: **community**, **service** and **social**.

## Community

The descriptors shown in Figure 6.5 for the *community* context are representative of intercultural encounters where participants' experiences contributed to their quality of life. Australia's capacity to provide for quality of life was associated with descriptors in the each of the seven contextual types, namely: *natural environment*, *personal safety*, *governance*, *work*, *safety measures*, *built environment* and *freedom*. Descriptors included those which were associated with a clean and protected natural environment, with a sense of order and safety, where measures were in place to ensure that people were free from harm, protected from discrimination and where they could express their personal views. Participants referred positively to these circumstances and, consequently, these preferences were recognised as providing international students with an acceptable quality of life.

It was established in Chapter 2 that some students chose to study in other countries because of the potential to improve their quality of life (Berends, 2011). Chapter 5 found that participants preferred a well-managed and clean natural environment where they were protected from disease and where the presence of flora and fauna enhanced sense of well-being. Participants described their exhilaration at seeing a beach for the first time, their improved mood when being in the fresh air and their excitement at being able to see the ground from a plane.

Participants recognised the quality of life implications resulting from good governance. This is a new finding of this research. The results presented in Chapter 5 ascertained that descriptors within the *governance* contextual type were associated with the protective function of the legislative framework and the practice of enforcing the law equally across the community. Similarly, descriptors within the *safety measures*, *built environment* and *freedom* contextual types showed that participants had a preference for living in a country where food was standardised and safe and where laws were designed to protect people. Freedom from discrimination and being able to choose what to wear added to the quality of life experienced by participants. This protective nature of the legislative framework for international students did not emerge in the review of the literature.

## **Culture**

As can be seen in Figure 6.5, descriptors for the **culture** context are representative of intercultural encounters which were associated with quality of life. Descriptors within the *food practices*, *nature of society* and *religious practices* contextual types associated with quality of life represent new findings. The results presented in Chapter 5 indicated that participants preferred to eat their traditional food. They also valued being able to purchase food that was free from contaminants. Participants placed a high priority on being able to source appropriate ingredients for cooking and on being able to locate suitable restaurants. In some cases participants indicated that the local food lacked flavour while in other cases participants were not able to adjust to the new diet. These adverse negative experiences could have a negative impact on participants' quality of life experiences.

Participants' quality of life was also associated with their preferences in relation to having an acceptable work-life balance, being able to practise one's religion and with living in a country where the law is enforced. The accepted custom of adhering to Australia's rules and regulations was seen as a practice which contributed to an improved quality of life.

## **Service**

The descriptors shown in Figure 6.5 for the **service** context represented intercultural encounters which exceeded participants' expectations. Intercultural encounters associated with this theme included situations where participants were pleasantly surprised with service situations. As noted earlier, Australia's consumer laws enabled participants to return incorrectly purchased goods and to take a car for a test drive. The association of these intercultural **service** encounters with quality of life represents a new finding of this research.

## **Summary**

The theme "*Australia provides for quality of life*" represents a new finding from this research where participants' experiences of intercultural encounters in the **community**, **culture** and **service** contexts were associated with their quality of life preferences. Intercultural encounters in these contexts resulted in participants reflecting on these experiences and in regard to their quality of life.

### Summary of Circumstantial Intercultural Encounter Themes

Based on the foregoing the three circumstantial intercultural encounter themes discussed above are summarised as follows.

#### **Adjusting to diversity**

This circumstantial intercultural encounter theme recognises the need for international students to be flexible and to be willing to adapt to a diversity of intercultural encounter experiences. Participants faced a range of new situations in each of the five contexts. Participants also acted in various roles including that of a community member, a student, as a worker and as a friend in social situations. These roles required participants to adapt to unfamiliar community, cultural, academic, work and social practices.

#### **Australia has wide ranging rules and regulations**

As was shown above, this theme recognises pre-existing conditions that underlie participants' experiences of intercultural encounters, namely: Australia's rules and regulations. These rules and regulations are pervasive and were associated with intercultural encounters in the *community*, *culture* and *service* contexts. Consequently, this new finding provides evidence regarding the impact of Australia's wide ranging rules and regulations on participants' experiences of intercultural encounters. While participants sometimes felt constricted by the legislative and regulatory environment, they also recognised the benefits provided by having such laws in place.

#### **Australia provides for quality of life**

The circumstantial intercultural encounter theme "*Australia provides for quality of life*" recognises the value that participants placed on living where their various needs were met. Participants valued living in a country where they were satisfied with their living environment, their work environment and with the natural and built environments. This theme is also linked to Australia's regulatory and legislative environments as participants recognised that quality of life was associated with living in an organised society where laws are designed to protect both people's safety and the natural environment. Additional quality of life benefits were afforded by Australia's laws which protected consumers. This theme represents a new finding from this research in that participants recognised the quality of life afforded in the *community*, *culture* and *service* contexts.

## 6.3 Student Intercultural Encounter Experiences

### 6.3.1 Role of antecedents

The interaction of the antecedents with each of the five intercultural encounter contexts was explored to address Research Question 1: *How do international students prepare for intercultural encounters?* Table 6.1 summarises the interaction of the three antecedents, namely: *settling in arrangements*, *student expectations* and *proficiency in English* with each of the intercultural encounters contexts.

**Table 6.11: Interaction of Antecedents with each Context for International Students Studying in Australia**

Research Findings	Context				
Antecedents	Community	Culture	Academic	Service	Social
<p><b><i>Settling in Arrangements</i></b> Arrival support, accommodation and help with living arrangements</p>	Family, friends and organisations provide support regarding accommodation and living arrangements, and information concerning Australian laws, the environment, safety and work practices	Family and others introduce students to Australian cultural practices and customs	Support provided by teachers and through the use of library resources and other academic support	Family and others provide support when making initial purchases, when seeking accommodation and when accessing other services including public transport	Family and friends provide introductions and social opportunities. University facilitates social events to help students to make friends
<p><b>Student Expectations</b> Students' expectations regarding overseas study</p>	Expectations about the natural environment and work practices. Expectations regarding Australia's governance system and safety, particularly in relation to traffic rules, food safety, personal freedom and the built environment.	Expectations regarding food availability and its quality. Expectations about Australian cultural practices. Expectations in relation to being able to maintain religious practices	Expectations about academic practices including plagiarism, about teaching practices and about student practices such as asking questions. Expectations resulting from previous experience in a western country	Expectations regarding service practices and consumer law. Expectations in relation to the cost of living, service levels and shopping hours	Expectations regarding social practices and leisure activities in Australia. Expectations concerning the need for a social network
<p><b>Proficiency in English</b> The ability to communicate in English</p>	English language skills needed for complying with Australian laws including those relating to traffic and the environment and for communicating at work	English language skills needed when involved with cultural practices with people from other cultures	Ability to speak and to write in English required for academic work, tutorials, lectures and class discussions	English language skills needed when purchasing goods and services	English language skills needed for social situations and to make friends

The following section discusses how each of the three antecedents in Table 6.11 may have influenced intercultural encounters in each context.

### Settling in Arrangements

It was detailed in Chapter 5 that assistance with accommodation and with other living arrangements helped participants to settle into student life in the new country. This confirmed the literature finding in Chapter 2 which established that support from family and organisations together with financial support prepared international students for overseas study. As can be seen in Table 6.11, this antecedent has a role in all intercultural encounter contexts through:

- the provision of support with accommodation and other living requirements; and
- the delivery of information associated with each of the intercultural encounter contexts.

This provision of support and information in each of the contexts represents a new finding of this research. International students can be prepared for overseas study by being supported with accommodation, other living arrangements, and also through the provision of information concerning adherence to Australian law, the environment, and practices in relation to work and safety. In the ***culture*** context, international students can be supported by family and others, including homestay family members who provide opportunities for participants to become familiar with Australian cultural practices and customs. In the ***academic*** context, international students can be supported by teachers in class and through access to library and other academic support services.

Similarly, in the ***service*** context, international students can be supported when making initial purchases and when learning how to use public transport. This antecedent has a role in the ***social*** context in the assistance provided by family and friends and by the University particularly when helping participants to make friends and to develop a social network. In summary, the support and information provided to students when settling in can help to prepare international students for intercultural encounters.

### Student Expectations

As shown in the table, the antecedent theme *student expectations* has a role in each of the intercultural encounter contexts. Chapter 5 revealed that information from a range of

sources contributed to participants' expectations in regard to overseas study in Australia. Students' previous experiences can also contribute to their expectations about life in a new country. While Chapter 2 identified that three internal factors, namely: knowledge, skills and personal qualities helped students to prepare for overseas study, this antecedent *student expectations* represents a new finding of this research.

This antecedent *student expectations* prepares students for intercultural encounters in two ways. Firstly students' previous experiences prepare them for practices which may be different from what they would expect in their home country. Secondly, students' expectations about the new culture can be managed through the provision of resources and information from a range of sources. This contribution of previous experiences and knowledge concerning practices in the new country to student preparedness for intercultural encounters within each of the contexts represents a new finding of this research.

As can be seen in Table 6.11, students have expectations in regard to intercultural encounters within each of the five contexts. Students arrive with expectations which have been informed by their previous experience and by their knowledge of practices in the new country. Within the ***community*** context, students can be aware of Australia's work practices and of the impact of Australia's system of governance, particularly in relation to traffic rules, food safety, the natural and built environments and personal freedoms. Similarly, student expectations concerning intercultural encounters in the remaining contexts could be managed through previous experiences and the provision of information. For intercultural encounters in the ***culture*** context, students could be informed in relation to cultural practices, religious practices and food availability in the new country. Student expectations concerning intercultural encounters in the ***academic*** context could be managed by encouraging students to seek out Western educational experiences and through the provision of information regarding academic skills and practices.

Students could be prepared for intercultural encounters within the ***service*** context by being aware of service practices in the new country. Finally, students could be prepared for intercultural encounters within the ***social*** context by being aware of social practices

and leisure options in Australia. Student expectations could also be managed by making students aware that they may need to be proactive when making friends.

### Proficiency in English

As can be seen in Table 6.11, the antecedent *proficiency in English* has a role in all of the contexts, namely: **community**, **culture**, **academic**, **service** and **social**. Chapter 5 confirmed that being proficient in English helped to prepare participants for intercultural encounters. This confirms the literature findings in Chapter 2 which identified the importance of language skills for international students. The role of this antecedent within each of the intercultural encounter contexts is, however, a new finding of this research.

International students' level of proficiency in English prepared students for intercultural encounters within the **community** context by helping them to clarify what was required in order to comply with Australia's laws. Being proficient in English also prepared international students for applying for work and also for communicating while at work. International students' ability to effectively communicate in English prepares students for intercultural encounters within the remaining contexts. Within the **culture** context, being proficient in English helps international students to develop an awareness of cultural practices. English skills are particularly important, however, for intercultural encounters in the **academic** context. In these situations, the ability to speak, comprehend and to write in English is required for engaging in class activities, for essay writing and for other academic purposes such as working in groups.

English language skills are also required for intercultural **service** encounters. In most service situations international students are required to speak English. Similarly, within the **social** context international students who are proficient in English are able to more easily make friends with people from other cultures. In light of the above, the need to communicate effectively in English helps students to prepare for intercultural encounters in each of the five contexts.

### **6.3.2 Making sense of intercultural encounters**

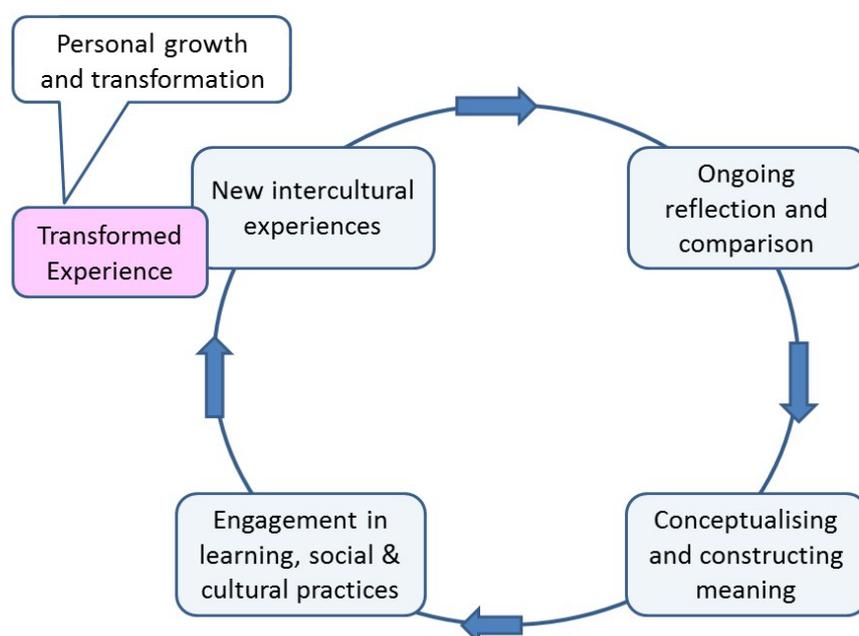
#### Introduction

This section considers the reactions and outcomes of intercultural encounters and their role in the experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984). The experiential learning cycle was adopted for consideration for its capacity to depict an intercultural encounter experience as an opportunity for intercultural learning. While critical incidents and subsequent reflection on these events can lead to the development of intercultural competence (Chang, 2009; Collins & Pieterse, 2007; Kilianska-Przybylo, 2009), intercultural encounters can similarly lead to reflection where participants make sense of their intercultural encounter experiences. The processes of experiencing an intercultural encounter and reflecting on that experience can be situated within an experiential learning cycle. This approach was taken in order to explore potential links between processes of reflection where participants made sense of their experiences and the outcomes of intercultural encounters.

#### Intercultural Learning

The experiential learning cycle described by Kolb (1984) consists of a four stage process where a learner undergoes an experience, reflects on that experience, develops new understandings and then applies those understandings to future situations. The experiential learning cycle has been used by Owens (2005) for the development of intercultural competence for teaching staff and is represented in Figure 6.6. The figure depicts a cyclical process where an intercultural experience is followed by reflection on that experience. This reflection could then lead to participants making sense of that experience where they draw conclusions and make generalisations about their experiences. This experiential learning cycle may continue with engagement in social practices and can lead to transformative change (Taylor, 1994).

**Figure 6.6: The Intercultural Learning Cycle**



Adapted from Kolb and Fry, 1975; Kolb, 1984 in Gill (2007, p. 178)

It can be seen in the figure that new intercultural experiences followed by reflection may lead to participants constructing meaning from their intercultural experiences. These reflective processes help participants when comparing their own culture with other cultures (Weigl, 2009). Reflection was also associated with “learning, adaptation, and further improvement of behavioural schemes” (Elo et al., 2015, p. 45) and with the development of intercultural skills (Holmes & O’Neill, 2012; Reichard et al., 2015). As shown in the figure, the cycle can be repeated for each intercultural experience and can potentially lead to knowledge and skill development and changes in perceptions and opinions (Gill, 2007).

#### Evidence for Reflection as a Component of the Intercultural Learning Process

The reflective processes used by the participants were evidenced in a consideration of the reactions and outcomes that result from intercultural encounters. The following sections provide evidence of participants’ reflective processes in this research.

#### **Reactions and Outcomes as Evidence of Constructing Meaning**

The immediate and considered reactions resulting from intercultural encounters presented in Chapter 5 provide evidence of participants’ reflections. While immediate

reactions included feelings of surprise, disappointment or confusion, considered reactions included statements of comparison which provide evidence of reflective thinking. The results presented in Chapter 5 suggest that these processes of reflection, making comparisons and constructing meaning helped participants to make sense of their experiences. The quotes which follow are examples of participants' reflective processes:

*If I want to do something I need wait for a few days. In China I can do immediately. For example, if I want to get a credit card, I need to wait for a long time. In China (it takes) one hour...Yesterday I lost my key. I have to wait to get a new key. In China I can make a phone call and they come at night. (Liang)*

*In our culture you can say is narrow minded. I found that the culture here, I found that people are very open to each other. If you are walking on a road; even you are looking at someone, automatically smile at someone and say 'Hi'. In India (it is) a different situation; (it) might be taken as an offence. (Mal)*

*There are many Chinese in my class; they always don't like to speak too much. And the person who was from Lebanon, they are like me, ask a lot of questions, it is my hobby to ask so many questions. But in my class, the majority of Chinese, they only like to speak up to the subject not anything else. I think if you want to learn then you should speak too much all the time. (Vajrin)*

The findings from this research align with Gill's (2007) proposed model for intercultural learning. As shown in the above quotes, participants reflected on their experience and made comparisons with what they would have expected in their own culture. These reflections then led to understandings where students constructed meaning about their intercultural experiences.

Further evidence of constructing meaning from intercultural encounters was found in the affective, behavioural and cognitive outcomes of intercultural encounters. The three quotes which follow include examples of affective, behavioural and cognitive outcomes:

*When I bought my car in Canberra, I went with my brother and with a (salesperson) she took this car and she said "You can keep this car and go". But in my country you could not do that*

*because you could go with a car and never come back! This kind of confidence I feel nice because this is my way. (Alberto)*

*Australia has critical thinking. In my country we don't have this. Most of the time, just read this, and that is all. So now I push myself to study by myself. To do some research, to do my personal opinion, to explain why I am thinking in that situation. (Aldo)*

*One week before I did volunteering – that helped me to improve my English. Volunteer in Melbourne (for a) welcome day to new students at the airport. That experience was really nice, really incredible; I met a lot of new students. I think the volunteering is a very good idea. (Biny)*

As shown in the quotes, participants displayed affective outcomes where they expressed their feelings about their intercultural encounter experiences. Biny enjoyed her experience volunteering and Alberto was both surprised and grateful that he was able to take a car for a test drive. Furthermore, Alberto recognised that he appreciated living in a country where this practice was common and acceptable. Similarly, the behavioural and cognitive outcomes described in the above quotes show that students constructed meaning in relation to their experiences. Aldo developed the skill of critical thinking while Biny believed that volunteering helped to improve her English skills. These outcomes of intercultural encounters provide evidence that participants reflected on and constructed meaning from their intercultural experiences and represent new findings from this research.

### **Behavioural Outcomes as Evidence of Transformed Experience**

The results presented in Chapter 5 found that while affective and cognitive outcomes resulted from the majority of intercultural encounters, behavioural outcomes occurred less frequently. In those intercultural encounters which reported behavioural outcomes it could indicate that participants were motivated to change their behaviour in specific intercultural encounters. The following quote provides evidence of a behavioural outcome in the *academic* context:

*...sometimes we talk with each other, for example, I'll read someone else's writing, their assignment, I'll give my opinion, we judge each other's work. I have not done this type of cooperation (before). (Cyrus)*

In this situation, the participant recognised that he was able to provide feedback on other students' work. The following quote provides evidence of a behavioural outcome in the *social* context:

*I went to that dinner, I talked to them and after that we started speaking and after that we started feeling like friends. I don't think, before, I knew him but we didn't feel like we were friends but we talked about our culture and we started calling each other (became friends); (and started) playing football. ...After that dinner I made lots of friends, it changed my behaviour. Before I feel very embarrassed (and did not speak).* (Sabal)

The behavioural outcomes in the quotes above provide evidence of reflection and transformation. In the former quote, the participant adapted his behaviour in order to succeed at his studies while in the second quote the participant changed his behaviour in order to make friends. In both situations these behavioural outcomes could provide evidence that students reflect on and learn from their intercultural experiences.

### **Summary**

The above discussion has indicated that intercultural encounter reactions and outcomes provide evidence of reflective processes. This evidence of reflective processes represents a new finding of this research. While the investigation in Chapter 2 identified isolated intercultural encounters which resulted in affective, behavioural and cognitive outcomes, this research has established that student reactions and outcomes of intercultural encounters provided evidence where participants constructed meaning of these experiences. This is a further new finding of this research.

### **6.3.3 A model representing intercultural encounter experiences**

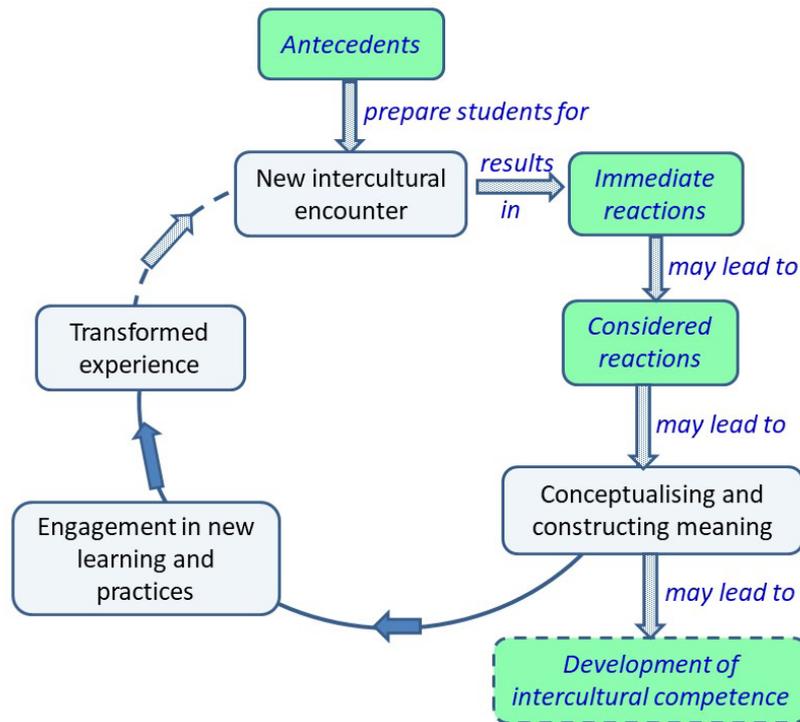
A model representing the intercultural encounter experience has been developed for the following reasons:

- to provide a visual representation of an intercultural encounter experience;
- to represent the sequence of processes within an intercultural encounter experience; and
- to situate the findings of this research within existing research.

Based on the foregoing discussion, Figure 6.7 presents a model for the intercultural encounter experience based on the experiential learning cycle (Gill, 2007; Kolb, 1984).

This cyclical model incorporates the findings of this research where participants experience an intercultural encounter and reflect on that experience. Subsequently participants construct new meanings about their experiences before experiencing further intercultural encounters.

**Figure 6.7: A Model Representing Intercultural Encounter Experiences**



Adapted from Kolb and Fry, 1975; Kolb, 1984 in Gill (2007, p. 178)

The model shows the contribution of this research by highlighting the changes made to Figure 6.6. These changes, shown in italics, include the antecedents and their role in helping to prepare students for new intercultural encounters. The model also highlights that immediate reactions can result from intercultural experiences and may lead to considered reactions where participants reflected on their experiences. These immediate reactions and considered reactions may then lead to affective, behavioural and cognitive outcomes which have been shown above to provide further evidence of reflection where participants construct meaning about these experiences.

The sequence of these processes can be demonstrated in the following description of an intercultural encounter:

*When I bought my first ticket on the train, I said "Oh God! \$50 for one week!" In Mexico, for one day, I pay 50 cents in the transport! So it was, "Oh my God, I am going to pay a lot of money for this". But maybe (it is) in comparison for the security. In Mexico, if you travel in public transport maybe some thief steals your wallet or your iPhone, your iPad. Here you can sit and be free to talk with your iPhone. (You can also) look at your laptop. (Aldo)*

As can be seen in the quote, the participant was not previously aware of the high cost of transport. Consequently, the intercultural encounter resulted in immediate reactions of shock, surprise and concern in relation to the cost. However, after consideration, the participant recognised that the ticket price may be associated with the benefits of additional security while on public transport. This reflection then led to affective, behavioural and cognitive outcomes where the participant recognised that he felt confident that he could safely use his mobile devices and that they would not be at any great risk of being stolen.

The following intercultural encounter also shows that the participant made sense of an intercultural encounter experience:

*One week before I did volunteering – that helped me to improve my English. Volunteer in Melbourne (for a) welcome day to new students at the airport. That experience was really nice, really incredible; I met a lot of new students. I think the volunteering is a very good idea. (Biny)*

The intercultural encounter described above provides an example of affective and cognitive outcomes resulting from welcoming new students at the airport. The participant recognised that she enjoyed the experience and that it helped her to improve her English skills. This improvement in English skills, could in turn, contribute to the development of intercultural competence skills.

This research has shown that intercultural encounters result in affective, behavioural and cognitive outcomes. Chapter 5 found that the majority of intercultural encounters in each of the five contexts resulted in cognitive outcomes. As a consequence of intercultural encounters in the **community** context, participants became familiar with

Australian work practices, with its rules and regulations, with the natural and built environment. Similar outcomes resulted from intercultural encounters within the **culture** context where participants developed an awareness of Australia's organised and bureaucratic environment, of the food that was available and in regard to family and other cultural practices.

Participants made sense of intercultural encounters in the **academic** context where they compared their own country's academic and teaching practices with those they encountered in Australia. Such comparisons were also made by participants after experiencing intercultural **service** encounters where they compared shops' opening hours and service levels. These intercultural **service** encounters resulted in cognitive outcomes where participants became familiar with Australian service practices. Finally, intercultural encounters in the **social** context resulted in participants developing an awareness of what to expect in social situations. As a result of attending social events, participants became more confident and willing to engage in future social events.

These affective, behavioural and cognitive outcomes may then lead to an increased awareness of the new culture which contributes to the development of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2004). As shown in the figure, the cycle continues with engagement in new learning, social and cultural practices and further new intercultural experiences which can lead to personal growth.

#### **6.4 Consideration of the Working Definition of Intercultural Encounters**

The working definition developed in Chapter 2 is as follows:

*An intercultural encounter is an unforeseen event which is experienced by a person where some feature of that event is perceived by the person to be novel or to have different cultural norms.*

*The event has a short duration, can occur in different contexts and does not necessarily involve other people or communication. Intercultural encounters are meaningful for the participant and can result in participant reflection as they make sense of their experience.*

The results in Chapter 5 showed that intercultural encounters can result in short term reactions and long term outcomes. In light of these findings, the existing definition has shortcomings in that, participants' immediate reactions and the outcomes of their

reflective processes are not included in the definition. The inclusion of these additional features of intercultural encounters extends the working definition by recognising that intercultural encounters can result in reactions and in affective, behavioural or cognitive outcomes. A modified definition of intercultural encounter is as follows:

*An intercultural encounter is an unforeseen event which is experienced by a person where some feature of that event is perceived by the person to be novel or to have different cultural norms. The event has a short duration, can occur in different contexts and does not necessarily involve other people or communication. Intercultural encounters are meaningful for the participant and can result in participant reflection as they make sense of their experience.*

*Intercultural encounters can result in short term reactions and longer term outcomes. Short term reactions include emotional reactions and considered reactions and longer term outcomes include affective, behavioural and cognitive outcomes.*

## 6.5 Summary

The foregoing discussion has been summarised in terms of:

- Insights regarding the interaction of antecedents with intercultural encounter contexts;
- Insights regarding the interaction of circumstantial intercultural encounter themes within different contexts;
- The development of a model for the intercultural encounter experience; and
- A working definition of intercultural encounter.

### **Insights regarding the interaction of antecedents with intercultural encounter contexts**

This research builds upon previous research which found that students were better prepared for overseas study when they were proficient in English and when they were equipped with appropriate support, knowledge, skills and personal qualities. This research has demonstrated the associations between the antecedents, namely: *settling in arrangements*, *student expectations* and *proficiency in English* and intercultural encounters in each of the five contexts.

**Insights regarding the interaction of circumstantial intercultural encounter themes within different contexts**

This investigation of students’ experiences of intercultural encounters provided further insights through three circumstantial intercultural encounter themes within contexts.

The themes are:

- Adjusting to diversity;
- Australia has wide-ranging rules and regulations; and
- Australia provides for quality of life.

Each of these circumstantial intercultural encounter themes was associated with contextual types and descriptors across a number of contexts as shown in Table 6.12.

**Table 6.12: Circumstantial Intercultural Encounter Themes Associated with each Context**

Theme	Context				
	Community	Culture	Academic	Service	Social
Adjusting to diversity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Australia has wide ranging rules and regulations	✓	✓		✓	
Australia provides for quality of life	✓	✓		✓	

These themes provide further insights regarding intercultural encounters and the student experience of intercultural encounters. Specifically, the circumstantial intercultural encounter themes underpin the importance of students’ need to adapt to the diversity of intercultural encounter experiences. The theme regarding Australia’s wide-ranging rules and regulations is a new finding and recognises that Australia’s legislative environment contributes to participants’ experience of intercultural encounters. Participants commented favourably on the organised society and were generally protected by Australia’s rules and regulations. The theme “*Australia provides for quality of life*” is also a new finding which recognises participants’ preference for choosing a study destination which provides them with quality of life benefits.

### **Development of a model for the intercultural encounter experience**

The model represents the intercultural encounter experience as an experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984) where participants reflect on, and make sense of, their experiences.

The model shows:

- the role of the three antecedents in helping to prepare students for new intercultural experiences;
- the immediate reactions resulting from these new intercultural experiences;
- considered reactions as reflective activities resulting from intercultural encounters and which lead to the construction of meaning in relation to their experiences;
- that the processes of constructing meaning may lead to increased awareness of the new culture and consequently contributes to the development of intercultural competence; and
- the continuation of the cycle with further engagement in the new culture, potential personal growth and ongoing intercultural experiences.

This representation of an intercultural encounter experience and the link between the outcomes of intercultural encounters and the development of intercultural competence represent new findings of this research.

### **Working definition of intercultural encounter**

This chapter revisited the working definition following consideration of Chapter 5 results. The reactions and outcomes were included in the working definition as additional features of intercultural encounters.

The next chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations of this research.

# Chapter 7

## Conclusions and Recommendations

### 7.1 Introduction

This research has explored international students' experiences of intercultural encounters during the initial months of their stay in Australia. This chapter considers the scope and limitations of this research, presents a consideration of the research questions stated in Chapter 1 and draws a number of conclusions arising from the research. This is followed by recommendations for universities which were informed by the research findings. The final sections of this chapter present areas for further research and provide concluding remarks.

### 7.2 Scope and Limitations

#### 7.2.1 Scope

The scope of the research was to investigate intercultural encounters experienced by international students in different contexts. The intercultural encounters were restricted to those experienced by international students in the first few months of their stay in Australia.

#### 7.2.2 Limitations

The limitations of this research follow.

##### Sample

The sample used in this research introduced a number of limitations:

##### **All students were enrolled at the same university**

The sample consisted of students who were enrolled in the same university in Australia. This was a limitation in that the findings were not necessarily representative of international students elsewhere in Australia. Results, therefore, may not apply to intercultural encounters experienced by international students at other universities.

### **Students' variable English skills**

English was not the first language of the participants. This introduced a limitation in that the quality of the data may have been affected by the ability of the participants to express themselves in English. Consequently, the interview data may have been compromised and accounts of intercultural encounters may not have been sufficiently descriptive.

### **A diversity of courses was represented**

The sample was comprised of participants enrolled in a diversity of courses which ranged from non-award courses to research higher degrees. Some intercultural encounters may have been associated with specific courses while not occurring in other courses. This diversity of courses introduced limitations in that intercultural encounters may have pertained to specific courses.

### **Impact of previous intercultural encounter experiences**

The participants included international students who may have previously experienced negative impacts resulting from intercultural encounters. Such experiences which may have resulted from racism or discriminatory behaviour were not considered in this research. This is a limitation in that students' previous experiences may have had an impact on the outcomes of any subsequent intercultural encounter experiences.

### Sample Size

The sample consisted of 33 international students who volunteered for the research. The sample introduced a number of limitations as follows:

### **Interviewees were self-selected**

The sample was opportunistic and not representative of the international student population enrolled at that time. In each of the campuses where interviews were held, students were invited to participate in the research on specific days. Participants who were available on those days and who were willing to be interviewed volunteered to participate in this research. The fact that all interviewees were self-selected based on their availability on the day of the interview could have introduced bias into the sample.

### **Gender and age differences**

Due to the small number of participants, age and gender differences and their impacts on student intercultural encounter experiences were not investigated and is therefore a limitation of this research.

### **Influence of culture and country of origin**

The sample size was too small to examine matters such as the influence of culture and country of origin. Practices and features which are specific to a particular cultural group or country of origin may have affected participants' reactions to, and the outcomes of, the intercultural encounters.

### Data Collection

The data collection process introduced the following limitations:

#### **Only those encounters which occurred in the first few months were considered**

Intercultural encounters were restricted to those which occurred in the first few months of participants' stay in Australia. Limiting intercultural encounters to this time period may have resulted in the intercultural encounter data not being representative of participants' experiences over the long term. Consequently, the results apply only to those intercultural encounters which occurred in the first few months and not for the duration of their studies.

#### **Data was collected regarding students' experiences of intercultural encounters. Students were not specifically asked questions which related to psychological concepts such as resilience**

The data collection process was limited to students' descriptions of their experiences of intercultural encounters. Consequently, this research did not explore concepts such as resilience and personal agency.

#### **Students were not asked to describe their experiences in the online environment**

Data was collected regarding students' experiences of intercultural encounters in five contexts, namely: *community, culture, academic, service* and *social*. This data was collected when international students' experiences in the online environment were not extensively researched. Such research regarding online behaviour of international

students (Chang & Gomes, 2017) is now available and intercultural encounters have been investigated in learning and teaching research (Chan & Nyback, 2015). While intercultural encounters which occurred in the five contexts could potentially have occurred in a digital environment, students were not specifically prompted to reflect on their online and other digital encounters.

### Data Analysis

The analysis of the data introduced the following limitations:

#### **The antecedent *student expectations* was not analysed in order to identify differences between the impact of knowledge of Australia and the effect of prior experience of a Western culture**

The analysis of the data revealed three antecedents which can prepare international students for intercultural encounters, namely: *settling in arrangements*, *student expectations* and *proficiency in English*. As shown in Table 5.3, the two sources of information which contributed to the antecedent *student expectations* were 'Previous knowledge of Australia' and 'Prior experience of a Western culture'. Further investigation of the differences between the effects of knowledge and experience in their respective capacities to prepare students for overseas study was not done and consequently is a limitation of this research.

#### **The contextual types and descriptor naming process**

The process of naming contextual types and descriptors was done using coding processes consistent with GTM data analysis techniques. Contextual types and descriptors were assigned based on their capacity to group intercultural encounters which were experienced by international students in similar ways. This naming process was guided by interview data and may not be able to be applied to data from international students in other institutions or in other countries. Consequently, the naming of contextual types and descriptors is a limitation of this research.

### **The descriptor findings may be misinterpreted as representing a larger population**

The three level typology was designed to enable intercultural encounters where students' experiences and perceptions were similar, to be more easily analysed. The use of descriptors within each contextual type introduced a limitation in that descriptors were assigned to small numbers of intercultural encounter experiences. Consequently, the descriptor findings may be misinterpreted if applied to a wider population.

### **The impact of social networks was not investigated**

The differing perceptions between international students with Australian friends and those international students without Australians in their social network were not investigated. International students who socialise Australians may have different perceptions of their intercultural encounter experiences particularly in the *culture* context. These perceptions of the Australian culture may be different from the perceptions of international students whose social networks do not include Australians. An investigation of these perceptions and their potential impacts was not conducted and consequently is a limitation of this study.

## **7.3 Consideration of the Research Questions**

### **RQ1: How do international students prepare for intercultural encounters?**

This research established that participants prepared for intercultural encounters in a number of ways and to varying degrees. Chapter 2 established that a range of skills and personal qualities including English skills, intercultural skills, tolerance and confidence helped international students to prepare for studying in another country.

Chapter 6 revealed three antecedents which can prepare participants for intercultural encounters, namely: *settling in arrangements*, *student expectations* and *proficiency in English*. The antecedents *settling in arrangements* and *proficiency in English* confirmed the literature findings. The antecedent *student expectations* builds on the literature review finding in that international students' pre-existing knowledge can contribute to their assumptions and expectations in relation to the new country.

Chapter 6 also established that the identified antecedents have roles in preparing international students for intercultural encounters in different contexts. The interactions

between the antecedents and the contexts were not identified in previous research and are therefore a new finding. The role of the antecedent *settling in arrangements* in the intercultural encounter contexts is particularly important as it demonstrates the value of supporting international students when they first arrive. Similarly, the antecedent, *student expectations* has a role in preparing students for intercultural encounters. When international students have prior knowledge about a country it informs their expectations about their intercultural encounter experiences. The antecedent, *proficiency in English* is associated with the importance of international students being able to communicate. Participants who were not able to adequately communicate in English found intercultural encounters in the *service* and *social* context particularly challenging.

**RQ2: What contextual types of student intercultural encounters can be identified in different contexts?**

The findings from the research, as detailed in Chapter 5, revealed that intercultural encounters occurred in five distinctive contexts, namely: *community, culture, academic, service* and *social*. Contextual types for each of the intercultural encounter contexts were associated with each context as shown in Table 7.1.

**Table 7.1: Contextual Types for each Intercultural Encounter Context**

Context	Contextual Types
<b>Community</b>	Natural environment, personal safety, governance, work, safety measures, built environment and freedom
<b>Culture</b>	Food practices, individual qualities, nature of society and religious practices
<b>Academic</b>	Academic practices, student practices and teacher practices
<b>Service</b>	Service above expectations, service below expectations and experiential
<b>Social</b>	Australians' company and International students' company

The importance of this finding is that the contextual types listed in Table 7.1 provide further detail in relation to the intercultural encounters. These contextual types also enable similar intercultural encounters to be distinguished within each context. This

finding has the potential for targeted support to be provided to students to prepare them for intercultural encounters within a specific contextual type.

It was shown in Chapter 6 that three circumstantial themes that emerged in this research can be linked to the five contexts and contextual types, namely: “*Adjusting to diversity*”, “*Australia has wide-ranging rules and regulations*” and “*Australia provides for quality of life*”. The importance of this outcome is that these themes provide an indication of what students may prefer when selecting a country for study. The themes also provide insights as to the underlying circumstances that exist in Australia which can be associated with the student intercultural encounter experience. The foregoing findings contribute to an understanding of the impact of Australia’s legislative and regulatory environment on international students’ intercultural encounter experiences.

**RQ3: What are the outcomes of intercultural encounters as experienced by international students?**

This research revealed that intercultural encounters can result in short-term reactions and long-term outcomes. Short-term reactions included both immediate and considered reactions. Longer-term outcomes included affective, behavioural and cognitive outcomes. These reactions and outcomes provide details of the way that participants made sense of their intercultural encounter experiences.

The identification of affective, behavioural and cognitive outcomes of intercultural encounters is important as the outcomes provide an understanding of the intercultural encounter experience. Specifically, these outcomes contribute to an understanding of the impact of intercultural encounters on students’ emotions, on their behaviour and on their knowledge. This increased understanding of students’ experiences of intercultural encounters can potentially enable student support to be enhanced.

Furthermore, the findings established that intercultural encounters can be described as an experiential learning process where participants experienced the event, reacted to the event and then reflected on their experience. The processes of reflection were evident as participants described their reactions and outcomes resulting from their experiences. Specifically, reflection was evident in the cognitive outcomes where participants constructed meaning in relation to their intercultural encounter experiences. The identification of outcomes within affective, behavioural and cognitive domains enables

these outcomes to be described as learning outcomes. Consequently, the outcomes of intercultural encounters can be associated with experiential learning.

**RQ4: How do the findings contribute to knowledge in relation to the development of intercultural competence?**

This research has proposed that intercultural encounters can be considered in terms of an experiential learning cycle where international students make sense of their intercultural encounter experiences through reflective processes. Reflective processes are thoughtful considerations resulting from an experience whose outcomes can be described as affective, behavioural and cognitive. These outcomes may include the development of an understanding and awareness of the new culture. This understanding of the new culture resulted from a range of intercultural encounters in each of the five contexts where students became familiar with practices in Australia.

Consequently, the findings contribute to knowledge in relation to the development of intercultural competence through an experiential learning process. Reflective processes together with affective, behavioural and cognitive outcomes can provide evidence of intercultural awareness, which, in turn contribute to the development of intercultural competence.

## **7.4 Conclusions**

The following conclusions can be drawn from the findings of this research:

- **The three specific antecedents identified in this research have an important role in preparing students for intercultural encounters**

The research findings indicate that the three antecedents, namely: *settling in arrangements*, *student expectations* and *proficiency in English*, have a contributing role in preparing international students for intercultural encounters. When students are provided with support when arranging accommodation and other living requirements they can settle in to life in the new country. Furthermore, this support when settling in can help them to make friends and establish a social network.

The antecedent *student expectations* has a role in preparing students for intercultural encounters in that international students can be prepared when their expectations about

the new country are realistic. Consequently, the intercultural encounters that they experience will be similar to what they may have anticipated.

The antecedent *proficiency in English* also has a contributing role in international student preparation for overseas study. The results intimate that when students are proficient in English, their confidence increases as they are more able to communicate. The results also suggest that international students' English skills help them when developing academic skills, when making friends, when shopping and when seeking employment.

- **Intercultural encounters can be described in terms of five distinctive intercultural encounter contexts**

Five distinctive contexts have been identified that can represent intercultural encounters in specific contexts, namely: *community, culture, academic, service* and *social*. Each of these contexts is distinctive in that they describe the environment or the setting in which the intercultural encounters occur. These contexts can be further distinguished by contextual types and descriptors within each of the contexts. Intercultural encounters are therefore able to be considered based on their contexts and contextual types. This may enable international students to be provided with targeted support for specific intercultural encounters. The foregoing has resulted in the formulation of a new definition for intercultural encounters, namely:

*An intercultural encounter is an unforeseen event which is experienced by a person where some feature of that event is perceived by the person to be novel or to have different cultural norms. The event has a short duration, can occur in different contexts and does not necessarily involve other people or communication. Intercultural encounters are meaningful for the participant and can result in participant reflection as they make sense of their experience.*

*Intercultural encounters can result in short term reactions and longer term outcomes. Short term reactions include emotional reactions and considered reactions and longer term outcomes include affective, behavioural and cognitive outcomes.*

- **The circumstantial intercultural encounter themes link contextual types**

Three circumstantial intercultural themes emerged from the contextual types and descriptors and represent new findings from this research. The circumstantial themes were shown to provide links between the contextual types across the five contexts. Each of the three themes intimates that international students prefer to live where they can

access support and where they can feel safe. This was evidenced when participants valued the support provided and when they indicated that they had a preference for living in an organised society where, in general, people tend to follow the rules and regulations. Similarly, participants recognised the benefits provided by legislation which ensures that people are generally protected from harm and that the environment is protected. This preference for living in a country with a relatively clean natural environment contributes to a quality of life which students also may consider when choosing a country for study.

It can be concluded that the three themes provide important insights in two areas. Firstly, the themes provide a basis for establishing participants' preferences when choosing a country for study. Secondly the themes provide underlying information in relation to the circumstances that were in place and which contributed to participants' experiences of intercultural encounters.

- **Intercultural encounters experienced by international students may lead to the development of intercultural competence**

Previous research showed that intercultural encounters may result in the development of new perspectives. This research has provided evidence that participants' intercultural encounter experiences can result in immediate and considered reactions where participants made sense of their experiences. The outcomes of intercultural encounters in this research have provided further evidence where participants developed new perceptions and understandings as a result of their experience.

It was found that for some intercultural encounters these outcomes included the development of a new awareness and understanding of the new culture. This awareness of the new culture contributes to the development of intercultural competence. The model developed in Chapter 6 positions these findings within an experiential learning context where the development of an awareness of the new culture can lead to intercultural competence.

- **The consideration of reactions and outcomes within an experiential learning process contributes to an understanding of intercultural encounters**

This research has situated the intercultural encounter experience within an experiential learning process. This consideration of intercultural encounters and their reactions and outcomes within an experiential learning process has contributed to an understanding of intercultural encounters. In this research the reactions and outcomes provide evidence of reflection and of experiential learning. This association of intercultural encounters with the experiential learning cycle has contributed to an understanding of intercultural encounters as an opportunity for learning.

Furthermore, the affective, behavioural and cognitive outcomes describe attitudes, behaviours and new knowledge that may result from international students' intercultural encounters experiences. The identification of these outcomes and their consideration within the experiential learning process has positioned intercultural encounters as opportunities for students to develop new attitudes, behaviours and knowledge and to learn from these experiences.

## **7.5 Recommendations**

### **7.5.1 Introduction**

This section presents a number of recommendations arising out of the conclusions and concern international students, university staff who are involved in international education, and research. Typically universities support international students by helping them to settle in when they first arrive, by providing academic support services, organising networking and social events and by providing information to students regarding life in Australia (CQUniversity, 2017). Such information provides details regarding orientation and other support services when they first arrive, helps them to connect socially, and introduces international students to a range of academic services. Furthermore, university staff encourages international students to attend orientation and social events where they can network with other students and to make friends.

## 7.5.2 Recommendations

### Recommendations for Recruitment and Marketing Staff Practices Prior to Arrival

#### **Recommendation 1: That international students are prepared for intercultural encounter experiences in Australia.**

This recommendation arises from the research findings where antecedents—*settling in arrangements, student expectations* and *proficiency in English*—helped participants to prepare for intercultural encounters. International students are more likely to have a positive overseas study experience when they are provided with support and when their expectations are similar to their intercultural encounter experiences. Similarly, when international students have well developed English skills they could be expected to be prepared for overseas study. This present research found that some international students were not fully prepared for some intercultural encounters. This recommendation supports current practices which prepare international students for intercultural experiences in Australia.

#### **Recommendation 2: Recruitment and marketing staff to provide resources for international students in relation to the intercultural encounters that they are likely to experience in Australia.**

This recommendation arises from findings where international students' intercultural encounter experiences indicated that they were not always prepared for intercultural encounters they were likely to experience in Australia. Consequently, there is an opportunity to enhance existing resources developed by universities to prepare students for intercultural encounters. However, strategies should also be adopted to ensure that both support staff and students are aware of these resources (Roberts, Dunworth & Boldy, 2018). Such resources could include examples of intercultural encounters in each of the five contexts which international students would not normally experience in their home country. These descriptions of intercultural encounter experiences could be made available to international students at pre-departure seminars and online. Potential international students could have access to resources regarding:

- the benefits associated with having support to help them to settle in;
- the need to be proficient in English;
- laws that are likely to affect international students including consumer law, laws relating to the environment and laws which safeguard their rights;

- the diversity of intercultural encounters that they are likely to experience; and
- the types of support available at universities.

Such resources address the findings in relation to the antecedents where international students are provided with support and information particularly when settling into life and study in the new country. The provision of resources which refer to the need for English skills addresses the antecedent *proficiency in English*.

The resources outlined above also address the findings in relation to the circumstantial intercultural encounter themes namely: “*Adjusting to diversity*”, “*Australia has wide-ranging rules and regulations*” and “*Australia provides for quality of life*”. Such resources could help to prepare students for intercultural encounters in each of the five contexts. These resources could also help to increase student awareness of Australia’s rules and regulations. These resources could also provide information regarding the quality of life benefits as outlined in Chapter 6.

**Recommendation 3: Recruitment and marketing staff to address with international students the quality of life benefits for prospective students.**

This recommendation arises from the circumstantial intercultural theme “*Australia provides for quality of life*”. This finding recognises that international students value the quality of life benefits which are afforded by an Australian study experience. References to the clean environment and the organised nature of the Australian society in marketing information may assist international students and their families when choosing a country for study. This marketing information and resources could include features such as the organised traffic system and the protection provided by food safety practices and consumer law in Australia. Information related to the freedom to practise one’s religion, the anti-discrimination laws and Australia’s reputation as an economically stable country could also be included in the marketing information.

**Recommendations for University Teaching Staff and Other Staff who Support International Students**

The following recommendations are for university teaching and other staff who directly provide support for international students.

**Recommendation 4: University teaching and support staff use an ongoing process to encourage international students to develop a support network.**

This recommendation arises from the findings associated with intercultural encounters in the *social* context. Both contextual types in the *social* context, namely: *Australians' company* and *International students' company*, include intercultural encounters where students were provided with opportunities to socialise and to make friends, particularly at the start of their stay.

University teaching and support staff could ensure that international students are regularly made aware of social activities and community events. University support staff and students could collaborate to host social events and sporting activities for students to enable them to mix in a relaxed social environment. Participating in such events could help international students to make friends and to feel more engaged in university life.

**Recommendation 5: University teaching staff and support staff to provide informal opportunities for international students to enhance their English skills.**

This recommendation addresses the need for international students to be proficient in English. This research found that international students' limited English skills presented challenges for them particularly for intercultural encounters in the *academic, service* and *social* contexts. Furthermore, students' lack of familiarity with academic writing was similarly concerning for students. University support and teaching staff could assist by providing opportunities for students to enhance their English skills. As noted earlier, informal social or sporting events could be hosted by university support staff, by the student association or by sporting or leisure groups. Furthermore, university staff could encourage students to practise their English skills by participating in community social activities.

**Recommendation 6: University teaching staff and support staff to increase international student awareness of academic support services.**

This recommendation arises from the contextual types and descriptors associated with intercultural encounters in the *academic* context. International students faced challenges associated with the development of unfamiliar academic skills and recognised the need to persevere and to seek assistance. University teaching and support staff could increase international student awareness of the availability of academic and library

support services. Volunteers in student mentor organisations could also be invited to speak to students regarding the benefits of seeking assistance. Such approaches could help international students to develop academic skills and to adapt to Australian teaching practices.

University staff could also identify students who do not have family or others who can provide them with support when they arrive. This research found that initial support when arranging accommodation and when making initial purchases helped international students to settle into life and study in Australia. International students without identified support could be put in contact with student organisations whose volunteers could help students to access support. Such support could assist international students to develop a social network. The application of these recommendations is suggested soon after international students' arrival in Australia.

## **7.6 Areas for Further Research**

A number of areas for further research have arisen from the research findings and from the limitations and conclusions of this research as considered above.

- **Investigation of intercultural encounters using a larger sample**

This exploratory research did not consider student variables such as the place of study, the course of study, country of origin, student cultural background and gender or age differences. Further research could establish the extent that these variables contribute to student intercultural encounter experiences. A larger sample of international students from a range of universities could enable these variables to be investigated.

- **Investigation of the contribution of intercultural encounter reactions and outcomes to the development of intercultural competence skills**

This research found that affective, behavioural and cognitive outcomes which result from intercultural encounters increased participants' awareness of the new culture. Further research could clarify how intercultural encounters and their outcomes could contribute to the development of other intercultural competence skills. This could be done by aligning affective, behavioural and cognitive outcomes of intercultural encounters with specific intercultural competence skills.

- **Investigation of student role in intercultural encounters**

International students participated in intercultural encounters which sometimes required them to adopt specific roles. These roles included those where students were part-time workers, students, homestay family members and community members. Each of these roles may have been associated with specific responsibilities such as those of a student or as an employee. The roles adopted by students during intercultural encounters were not investigated in this study. Consequently, further research could investigate these roles and could establish if the roles have an impact on student intercultural encounter experiences.

- **The efficacy and application of the model for the intercultural encounter experience**

The model for the intercultural encounter experience proposed that intercultural encounters can be an experiential learning process where participants make sense of their experiences. Further research could investigate the model's efficacy and its application to student intercultural encounter experiences in other universities and in other countries. Additional research could also investigate the influence of the antecedents on student intercultural encounter experiences and on students' reflections in regard to their experiences.

- **Student intercultural encounters in other educational sectors**

Situated in a university setting, this research explored participants' experiences of intercultural encounters while enrolled in higher education or in ELICOS classes. Further research could investigate students' experiences of intercultural encounters in other educational sectors including the Vocational Education and Training sector and the schools sector. Such research could investigate any differences in student intercultural encounter experiences.

- **Investigation of the student homestay experience to the development of intercultural competence**

This research identified a contextual type *family characteristics* which was assigned to four intercultural encounters and experienced by students who had experienced living with Australians. Further research could investigate students' experiences of intercultural encounters in situations where international students lived with Australians or with

Australian families. Such research could provide an opportunity to investigate whether intercultural encounters associated with family cultural practices helped international students to adapt to life in Australia.

- **Investigation of country of origin as an antecedent**

This research identified three antecedents which have roles in preparing students for overseas study. These antecedents, namely: *settling in arrangements*, *student expectations* and *proficiency in English* have the potential to be varied in their use and application. Such changes could then help international students to be better prepared for study in a new country. Further research could establish whether the international student's country of origin could also be considered as an antecedent.

- **Investigation of the student experience of intercultural encounters with psychological concepts including resilience, self-regulation, personal agency and social connectedness**

As noted above, an investigation of the concepts of resilience, personal agency and social connectedness were out of the scope of this exploratory study. However, recent research conducted by Cao, Meng and Shang (2018) identified a link between intergroup contact and the concept of social-connectedness. However this intergroup contact was not specifically linked to students' intercultural encounter experiences. Similarly, Cheung and Yue (2013) identified an association between social connectedness and enhanced resilience and adjustment. In light of this finding, further research could explore the link between intercultural encounters in the *social* context and psychological constructs including resilience, personal agency and social-connectedness.

- **Investigation of the impact of different social networks on international student perceptions of their intercultural encounters**

This research found that international students experience intercultural encounters in the *social* context with Australians and with other international students. Further research could investigate whether international students who have Australians in their social networks have a different experience and perception of the Australian culture in comparison with international students who do not include Australians in their social network.

## 7.7 Concluding Remarks

This research has addressed a gap in the research through this exploration of the nature, types and influences of intercultural encounters experienced by international students. Specifically the findings are relevant and important for those who are involved in international education including policy makers and university staff who teach and who provide support services for international students.

The increased understanding of the student intercultural encounter experience has the potential to positively contribute to Australia's reputation as a provider of international education. Developing a clearer understanding of the types of intercultural encounters and of their outcomes can help provide more targeted support to international students so that they can settle into their studies.

It is hoped that this research stimulates discussion and can serve as a platform for further research into intercultural encounters experienced by international students. Further investigations of intercultural encounters and of their outcomes by researchers has the potential to more fully understand the international student experience of study in Australia.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A1 Information Sheet



### Information Sheet

#### **Topic Title: An exploration of the intercultural encounters that international students experience in Australian universities**

#### *Description of the research*

International students are often faced with a variety of new experiences as they start their university studies. Some of these experiences will be related to the new academic environment and other experiences will be with people from cultures other than their own. The aim of this research is to investigate the types of experiences that international students have during their initial few months in Australia. The researcher will be interviewing students who have recently arrived in Australia and who are enrolled in university for the first time this term. As one of these students, you are invited to participate in this research. The participants will be interviewed and asked to share the different types of experiences that they have had while settling into study and living in the community. The interviews aim to explore the experiences from the student's perspective.

This research will describe the range of experiences that international students have during their initial few months at university in Australia. The research findings will contribute to the development of a body of knowledge regarding international students' experience of a new culture. Consequently, this research will assist international students to effectively settle into their program of study in Australia.

#### **How does it work?**

Participation in this research is voluntary and all information that you provide during the interview will remain completely anonymous. Your name will not be recorded for this research. As a research participant you have the right to withdraw from the interview at any time. If there are questions that you do not wish to answer you have the right to refrain from answering those questions. Please note that if you experience any anxiety or discomfort from participating in the interviews please contact the CQUniversity Student Services on 07 4930 9456.

You will be required to provide your consent in writing to participate in the research. This means that you will be asked to sign a "consent" form. While signing this form means that you have agreed to be interviewed, and that the interview will be taped. You can withdraw from the interview at any time. To ensure that you are happy with what has been recorded, you will be given the opportunity to review and approve the transcript of your interview. The information provided in the interviews will be used for a Doctor of Philosophy and some may also be published in research articles and conference papers as findings from the research.

## Appendix A1 Information Sheet (Cont'd)



### Confidentiality

The information collected in the interviews for this project is subject to the University's Code of Conduct for Research. All data relating to the research project will be retained for a period of five years and will be stored in a secure location in compliance with CQUniversity's policies relating to ethical research.

### Information and concerns

If you would like more information about the research investigation you can write, telephone or email

The investigator,	Principal Supervisor
Robyn Donovan,	Professor John Dekkers
Building 41, G.14	Faculty of Business, Informatics and Education
Bruce Highway,	Phone: 07 5440 7000
Rockhampton, QLD, 4702	Email: <a href="mailto:j.dekkers@cqu.edu.au">j.dekkers@cqu.edu.au</a>
Email: <a href="mailto:r.donovan@cqu.edu.au">r.donovan@cqu.edu.au</a>	
Telephone: 07 4923 2417	
Mobile: 0409 212 980	

Signed .....

If you would like to receive feedback about this research, please tick the box below.

Should there be any concerns about the project, please contact CQUniversity's Office of Research, Building 361, CQUniversity, Rockhampton, QLD, 4702 Phone 07 4923 2603 Email [ethics@cqu.edu.au](mailto:ethics@cqu.edu.au)

CQU HREC clearance number: H12/05-113

## Appendix A2 Consent Form

### Consent Form for Research Participants



*An exploration of the intercultural encounters that international students experience in Australian universities*

I .....of ..... confirm that:

1. I agree to be interviewed.
2. The purpose of the research has been explained to me.
3. I understand that the information gained during the research will be used within the PhD thesis and may be published.
4. I understand that I will not be directly identified by name in any publications.
5. I understand that the interview will be recorded.
6. I understand that I can withdraw from the research at any stage.
7. I understand that I have the right to refrain from answering any questions.
8. I understand that I may not directly benefit from taking part in the research.
9. I understand that confidentiality is guaranteed.
10. I understand that all data collected for this research complies with the Code of Conduct for Research.
11. I have a right to withdraw from the research at any time without penalty.
12. I confirm that I am over 18 years of age.

.....  
Signature of participant: ..... Date



If you would like to obtain feedback about the research please fill out your contact details below.

Name: .....

E-Mail: .....

Telephone: .....

Send to:

Robyn Donovan  
Bldg 41 G.14  
CQUniversity  
Bruce Highway  
NORTH ROCKHAMPTON QLD 4701  
[r.donovan@cqu.edu.au](mailto:r.donovan@cqu.edu.au)

Robyn Donovan | Participant consent

CQU HREC clearance number: H12/05-113

## Appendix B1 Initial Interview Schedule

Name \_\_\_\_\_ [include pronunciation] Age \_\_\_\_\_ Sex M/F Years of English \_\_\_\_\_  
 Marital status \_\_\_\_\_ Country of origin \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Start time \_\_\_\_\_ Finish time \_\_\_\_\_  
 Program enrolled in \_\_\_\_\_ How long has the student lived in Australia? \_\_\_\_\_

**Introduction:** Could you please think back to the time when you first arrived in Australia? I'm going to ask you to tell me about events that you experienced. I will also ask you to tell me later why you chose that particular thing to tell me about.  
 I'd like to ask you a few questions about when you first arrived. Did you know people who were already living and/or studying in Australia?  
 Who helped you to settle in?  
 How long did it take for you to find accommodation, and feel that you had settled in?  
 How did you make friends and start a social life?  
 What is the biggest difference between your culture and what you've experienced of the Australian culture?  
 How prepared were you for the Australian culture?  
 How many Australians have you met?

**Transition:** Thanks for sharing what happened when you first arrived here.  
 Could you remind me what program you are enrolled in? I'd now like to ask you about your life as a student.  
 Do you have face-to-face classes? How many students tend to be in your classes? What countries are the students from?  
 [This introduction assists the interviewer to identify the words that the student uses and is familiar with when referring to terms such as lecturers, teachers or tutors. In the following questions, the interviewer can use the terms used by the interviewee.]  
 What is it like studying in a different country? During term, how much contact do you have with your lecturer/teacher/tutor?

Context	Main Question	Sub-questions	Prompts
Academic	What is the most difficult thing you have encountered doing your study at university in Australia? Could you tell me about a situation where you wanted to speak to or to contact your lecturer, teacher or tutor? Before telling	What led up to the event?	How long did the event last?
		What plans did you make beforehand?	What part of the term did this happen – eg first weeks, middle or final weeks of the term?
		Were there other people involved before or during the event?	What did they do? Did you ask others for advice before you made contact with the lecturer?

**Appendix B1 Initial Interview Schedule (Cont'd)**

me about this meeting, why have you chosen this one to talk about?	What were your expectations before this meeting/event?	Is it usual for students to contact lecturers in [student's country]?
	Have you experienced similar situations in Australia since this one?	How were these situations the same or different?
	How prepared were you for studying in Australia?	Do you find it easy to ask other students for help?
	Do you get other students to help you with your studies?	
	Are you doing anything differently as a result of this experience /Has the event changed you in any way?	What advice would you give a new student who was in a similar situation?
	Was the experience a positive experience or a negative experience?	How long did the event last?

**Transition:** Thanks for sharing what happened when you first arrived at the university. You've covered the question very well [compliment them on their English].  
 [Add a sentence referring to something they have said earlier and which provides a link to introduce the next question]

Could you now think about the times you've bought something. It might have been groceries or it might have been a situation when you were arranging to rent the place where you live.

<b>Service</b>	Could you choose one of those situations, one that happened in the first few weeks in Australia, and tell me what happened.	What led up to the [event]?	How long did the [event] last?
		How did you make the decision regarding this purchase?	Were others involved in the decision-making process?
		How prepared were you for this situation?	Did you ask others for advice before you made the purchase?
		Who was involved?	What was their level of involvement?

**Appendix B1 Initial Interview Schedule (Cont'd)**

		Did the situation go as you expected?	How was it the same/different?
		[If the situation was difficult for the student] What helped you to recover/manage this situation?	What advice would you give others in a similar situation?
		[If the purchase was successful for the student] What helped you in this situation?	How did this all affect you?
		Are you doing anything differently as a result of this experience or Has the event changed you in any way?	
		Was the experience a positive experience or a negative experience?	

[After the student has described the situation where they purchased a product or arranged for a service and if they appear as though they would be happy to reflect on this question] Could you tell me why you chose tell me about this [name the event] event?

Transition: Thank you [name]. I'd now like to ask you about your social life. What do you like to do in your free time?

<b>Social</b>	Could you choose one of those social activities and tell me about it? What happened?	Did you go to the event with friends or did you go by yourself?	Where was the [party/meeting/]? What time of the day was the event held?
		What language do you tend to speak with your friends?	
		Was the [party/meeting/etc] with people from your own country or were there people from other countries or cultures?	Do you generally go out with people from your country and how often?
		How prepared were you for this social event?	

**Appendix B1 Initial Interview Schedule (Cont'd)**

		How did the [party/meeting/etc] have any impact on your life as a student here in Australia?	Did the event affect you in the choice of social events that you now go to?
		Do you go to [that type of event] now?	Have you kept in contact with the people that you met at that event?
		What sort of [party/meeting/etc] was it?	What led up to the [event]?
		Are you doing anything differently as a result of this experience	How long did the event last?
		Was the experience a positive experience or a negative experience?	Has the experience changed you in any way? (inserted 24/1/13)

[After the student has described the social event and if they appear as though they would be happy to reflect on this question]  
 Could you tell me why you chose this event to describe?

**Reminder:** If the student has not described their experience of the food or the environment ask them if they would like to comment on either the food or the natural environment.

**Conclusion:**  
 Thank the research participant. Ask them if they have any questions of me.  
 Ask the participant for approval to contact them if there are things that need clarification.

## Appendix B2 Follow-up Interview Schedule

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**Introduction:** Thanks \_\_\_\_\_[name], for agreeing to be interviewed. As I mentioned I am conducting additional interviews so that we can ask you about our initial findings.

How are your studies going?

Do you still live in the same accommodation?

What does the whole experience mean for you - coming to Australia?

What is it like – living in a new country?

Do you think you will travel to or live in other countries?

What do you want to do when you finish your course?

What did you know about the Australian culture before you arrived?

How have your experiences here changed you - in your outlook?

Some students have mentioned the freedom here in Australia – Is that something that you would like to make a comment on?

The interviews have identified a number of things that people have commented on.

I will read them now: [Interviewer reads out the list below]

- Safety
- Environment
- Service
- Family/other support
- Student life
- Social
- Food
- Order/governance

[The following sentence was added for the fifth and the remaining interviews:]

And a couple of people mentioned ‘work/life balance’

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### **Safety**

Let’s take each of these in turn. The first is “safety”

How important is safety to you?

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### **Environment**

A number of students commented on the natural environment here; particularly the clean air, the beach, the fact that you could see the ground from an aeroplane and the birds.

Has the Australian environment had any impact on you?

How important is the environment to you?

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### **Service**

Addition of a personalised introduction to the question e.g. “You mentioned that you were surprised about the shopping – the fact that you could buy lots of things at the supermarket.”

How important is it to be able to buy the things that you want?

Are there other comments that you would like to make regarding buying things?

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### **Family/Other Support**

Personalised introduction example “You also mentioned the importance of making friends – or having some contacts before you arrive. How has that made a difference for you?”

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### **Student Life**

How important is it for you to have a good experience at university?

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## Appendix B2 Follow up Interview Schedule (Cont'd)

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### **Social**

Personalised introduction example “You mentioned in your last interview that you enjoyed the sports day. How important is it for you to spend time with friends out of the classroom?”

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### **Food**

Personalised introduction example: “You also mentioned that you are mostly cooking for yourself at home. Have you been able to find the cooking ingredients that you like? Have you tried any other types of food in Australia? – for Example foods that are new to you?”

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### **Order/Governance**

Some people commented on the fact that things in Australia seem to be more “ordered” or “organised” and that we are governed more closely – as an example, one person noted that the traffic seems to be more orderly, and another student noted that if Australians want to fish they need a fishing licence. Another student noticed the special lanes for buses which helped the traffic to be more organised.

Are these things that you have noticed?

What other cultural differences have you noticed in Australia?

Has your experience here in [insert name of city] as a student been as you expected it to be?

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Work/life balance (added after four of the seven students were interviewed)

How important is it for you to be able to have enough time for work and for study?

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Are there any other experiences that you would like to describe?

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Do you have any questions you would like to ask me?

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Thank you for your participation in this interview. All the very best for your future studies. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

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Secretary, Human Research Ethics Committee  
Ph: 07 4923 2603  
Fax: 07 4923 2600  
Email: [ethics@cqu.edu.au](mailto:ethics@cqu.edu.au)

BE WHAT YOU WANT TO BE

Professor John Dekkers  
Emeritus Professor  
Noosa Campus

25 June 2012

Dear Professor Dekkers

**PROJECT H12/05-113, HIGHER EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE OF INTERCULTURAL ENCOUNTERS**

The Human Research Ethics Committee is an approved institutional ethics committee constituted in accord with guidelines formulated by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and governed by policies and procedures consistent with principles as contained in publications such as the joint Universities Australia and NHMRC *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*. This is available at [http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/\\_files/r39.pdf](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/_files/r39.pdf).

On 29 May 2012, the committee met and considered your application. The project was assessed as being greater than low risk, as defined in the National Statement. On 25 June 2012, the committee acknowledged compliance with the requested revisions made to your research project *Higher education international students' experience of intercultural encounters* (Project Number H12/05-113) and that it is now **APPROVED**.

The period of ethics approval will be from 25 June 2012 to 30 September 2014. The approval number is H12/05-113; please quote this number in all dealings with the Committee. HREC wishes you well with the undertaking of the project and looks forward to receiving the final report and statement of findings.

The standard conditions of approval for this research project are that:

- (a) you conduct the research project strictly in accordance with the proposal submitted and granted ethics approval, including any amendments required to be made to the proposal by the Human Research Ethics Committee;
- (b) you advise the Human Research Ethics Committee (email [ethics@cqu.edu.au](mailto:ethics@cqu.edu.au)) immediately if any complaints are made, or expressions of concern are raised, or any other issue in relation to the project which may warrant review of ethics approval of the project. (A written report detailing the adverse occurrence or unforeseen event must be submitted to the Committee Chair within one working day after the event.)
- (c) you make submission to the Human Research Ethics Committee for approval of any proposed variations or modifications to the approved project before making any such changes;

- (d) you provide the Human Research Ethics Committee with a written "Annual Report" on each anniversary date of approval (for projects of greater than 12 months) and "Final Report" by no later than one (1) month after the approval expiry date; *(A copy of the reporting pro formas may be obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee Secretary, Sue Evans please contact at the telephone or email given on the first page.)*
- (e) you accept that the Human Research Ethics Committee reserves the right to conduct scheduled or random inspections to confirm that the project is being conducted in accordance to its approval. Inspections may include asking questions of the research team, inspecting all consent documents and records and being guided through any physical experiments associated with the project
- (f) if the research project is discontinued, you advise the Committee in writing within five (5) working days of the discontinuation;
- (g) A copy of the Statement of Findings is provided to the Human Research Ethics Committee when it is forwarded to participants.

Please note that failure to comply with the conditions of approval and the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* may result in withdrawal of approval for the project.

In the event that you require an extension of ethics approval for this project, please make written application in advance of the end-date of this approval. The research cannot continue beyond the end date of approval unless the Committee has granted an extension of ethics approval. Extensions of approval cannot be granted retrospectively. Should you need an extension but not apply for this before the end-date of the approval then a full new application for approval must be submitted to the Secretary for the Committee to consider.

The Human Research Ethics Committee is committed to supporting researchers in achieving positive research outcomes through sound ethical research projects. If you have issues where the Human Research Ethics Committee may be of assistance or have any queries in relation to this approval please do not hesitate to contact the Secretary, Sue Evans or myself.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Phillip Ebrall  
Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee

Cc: Ms Robyn Donovan (Student)  
Project file

**APPROVED**