Acculturation of immigrant students in a higher education learning environment:

Assimilation as 'false consciousness'

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Lynette Marianne Lewis

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Dedication

To Geoff, my partner on the journey.

I know how proud you would be to see the finished product.

Thank you for believing in me!

Acknowledgements

First, I acknowledge the investment my university and academic colleagues have made in my study; their support has been immeasurable and deeply appreciated. I hope that I can reinvest the time and effort that enabled my scholarship, through contribution to the university's strategic direction for learning and teaching, and internationalisation.

Second, a big thank you to my primary supervisor, Ian Willis, who was always there when I needed a coffee and check-in, and who supported me, but left me unconstrained to explore the path through this exciting topic. Thank you for your just-in-time constructive feedback. I acknowledge the useful and critical feedback and input of my second supervisor, Paul McIntosh.

Third, the research could not have happened without the enthusiastic contribution of my immigrant student participants. I hope your voices resound in the practice-based outcomes that enrich the future experiences of immigrant students in the university learning environment.

Abstract

Acculturation of immigrant students in a higher education learning environment: Assimilation as 'false consciousness'.

Lynette Marianne Lewis

Acculturation is the process of immigrant adaptation when a minority culture comes into contact with the dominant majority culture in a host society. While changes in values, beliefs and behaviours occur in both groups as a result of contact, these changes are more prominent in the minority group. The thesis explores the process of acculturation of a group of New Zealand higher education immigrant students from their initial learning environment to their current university learning environment. Acculturation theory is led by John Berry, whose 1997 model proposes that immigrants will select one of four adaptation strategies. These include *assimilation* into the mainstream with a loss of one's own culture, and *integration* involving retention of one's own culture (in the private domain) and adoption of mainstream culture (in the public domain, which includes the education sector). Extending this concept to its logical conclusion, *integration* in education contexts involves a process of assimilation into the mainstream education system. The purpose of this study was to explore and explain the nature of participants' education acculturation in a higher education learning environment, drawing on the concept of assimilation as 'false consciousness'. This key concept is used to uncover the acculturation belief that assimilation into the mainstream learning environment is required by the dominant group, expected by the immigrant group and then normalised through the socialisation process of education for social reproduction rather than social transformation. The contextual influences in New Zealand of a political commitment to biculturalism (dating from 1840 when the Treaty of Waitangi was signed between indigenous Māori tribes and the British Crown) within a multicultural (multi-ethnic) society add complexity to the nature of the education system and the immigrant acculturation experience.

The qualitative research approach was constructionist and interpretive, using two main theoretical lenses: Bronfenbrenner's (1993) socio-ecological theory as a structuring and contextualising model; and Berry's (1997) acculturation theory, against which the participant experiences were scrutinised and critiqued with a particular focus on the *integration* strategy. A rich data set was collected from eight immigrant student participants using a bricolage of four methods: rich pictures, questionnaire, interview and card sort. Data were analysed using Maxwell's (2012) complementary contiguity-based and similarity-based analyses approaches. Findings revealed a set of contradictions between preferences and practices associated with acculturation in the higher education learning environment. While assimilation marked the participants' experience, and assimilation as 'false consciousness' had been strongly internalised to the extent that participants had no expectations beyond the status quo, I make an argument for a multicultural and intercultural approach to replace the assimilationist approach within Berry's (1997) *integration* strategy. A theoretical model of broader historico-political and sociocultural contexts is presented to reflect influences on the immigrant student in the learning environment. When applied to the New Zealand context, further contradictions and disconnections are revealed.

The main contribution to practice centres on an argument to internationalise the curriculum at home. This would benefit immigrant students as well as all students in a higher education learning environment. At my university, such a proposal is well aligned with the strategic goal that all graduates will have an international experience. Through an internationalised curriculum, the university can provide multicultural practice and intercultural opportunities while also acknowledging the value of the currently invisible immigrant group.

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List of Abbreviations

AUT	Auckland University of Technology
AUTEC	Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee
ESL	English as second language
ICSEY	International Comparative Study of Ethnocultural Youth
MOE	Ministry of Education
NZ	New Zealand
PGDipHE	Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education
PPCT	Process–person–context–time
PVRM	Participatory visual research methodology
TEC	Tertiary Education Commission
TES	Tertiary Education Strategy
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

My interest in immigrant student acculturation in the formal learning environment at Auckland University of Technology (AUT) was triggered during a course entitled Teaching Children from Diverse Ethnicities (School of Education, 2016), which was designed to provoke student teachers' awareness of their assumptions and beliefs about multicultural education in the New Zealand (NZ) primary school classroom. During a professional dialogue between immigrant (foreign-born) and 'Kiwi' (NZ-born) students, the belief was expressed by both groups that assimilation of immigrants into the formal learning environment was a normal and expected practice. In principle, they were exhibiting a position of *false consciousness*, a hegemonic belief imposed by the dominant group in society on minority others for the purpose of assimilation (Freire, 1993; Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). In practice, however, I observed engagement more akin to intercultural dialogue, reflected in respect, acceptance and equal status accorded to all cultures (Besley & Peters, 2012). Both Kiwi and immigrant groups demonstrated an increased awareness of personal attitudinal positioning, an openness to exploring and sharing their own ethnic experiences, and an acknowledgement by the Kiwi group of the value of immigrant groups in NZ society. Walker (2002) endorses the significance for a minority group to be *seen* or *recognised*, and this was displayed through immigrant student behaviours as well as informal feedback.

I began to critically question the apparent invisibility of immigrant students at the university. Why is assimilation as false consciousness assumed as the norm in higher education? What are the impacts of such assimilation on the acculturation of immigrant students to their learning environments? Why do we not utilise immigrant students as resources for intercultural enrichment of the curriculum? Such questions triggered my social justice interest in this topic because immigrant students seek better life chances through the education system (Bartley & Webber, 2009) yet social reproduction of values and behaviours of the dominant ideology might stifle social

transformation for all students if assimilation is at the heart of their learning experience.

I take a particular interpretation of the concept of 'false consciousness' and attach this to the concept of 'assimilation' to explain the acculturation process in a formal higher education learning environment. False consciousness has its roots in critical theory and Marxist schools of thought, used to describe the normalised belief held by subordinate social groups of their inequality within society. Such mental constructs of perceived social reality are held to be imposed through the hegemonic discourses of the dominant class (Eyerman, 1981). Freire (1993) argues that the term 'false' does not refer to the oppressed social group being deluded in their belief but rather that their consciousness is impaired through their submersion in the reality of the oppressed. They, in effect believe that "*to be* is *to be like,* and *to be like* is *to be like the oppressor*" (p. 30). In order to break free from oppression, the oppressed need to critically recognise the causes of their false consciousness. Applying this concept in the context of a higher education organisation in NZ does not, I believe, warrant the language of oppression and power as intended by Marx and Freire. I take the essence of the concept of false consciousness to be a distorted belief, not self-delusion nor a lack of critical discernment, but a genuine belief held by the host society and immigrant group that in order to belong, the immigrant needs to assimilate into the dominant society and into the learning environment in an education organisation. I would argue that such a belief is false because in a multicultural society, ethnic diversity and inclusion of cultural difference (particularly in the education sector) should be the norm.

My positioning as an insider researcher with an obvious passion for this topic is stated upfront.

1.2 Researcher positioning

I am a white, female South African immigrant who has lived in NZ for 24 years. My ethnic identity is complex. I cannot relate to the term *Pākehā*, a label usually claimed by those of NZ birth and European descent who support advocacy for Māori rights (Spoonley & Bedford, 2012). I cannot identify with *Māori* because I lack the language,

cultural knowledge and *whakapapa* (lineage). I am an NZ citizen with heritage links to South Africa, but I no longer have a sense of belonging to the country of my birth. I would choose a hyphenated ethnic identity label 'South African-New Zealander' to reflect my positive psychological and sociocultural acculturation; however, others often label me 'South African' based on my accent, which immediately sends a message that I do not belong. My ethnic identity is most challenged when I am forced to select the option of 'Other', such as on the 2018 census form (Statistics New Zealand, 2018).

In my professional role as a teacher in higher education, I have developed and taught courses on immigration and multicultural education. My personal and professional experiences drive my passion for this topic, and these have been of positive benefit in building rapport with my immigrant participants. However, these same experiences are potentially limiting in that I bring a set of assumptions regarding immigrant invisibility in the formal higher education learning environment. I am aware of the need to remain open-minded and to critically question my interpretations and assumptions. For example, while I might feel that immigrant visibility is the way forward in a multicultural or intercultural approach in higher education, I acknowledge that my immigrant participants might not hold the same view.

In my leadership role as Associate Dean Learning and Teaching, I am interested in how I might influence AUT's (2014) espoused policy and practice on diversity to recognise currently invisible immigrant students. While arguments for a culturally inclusive or internationalised curriculum at home are easy to make, I take Moon's (2016) point that issues of implementation at both the national and the local level are complex and can present challenges. I am aware that my findings will be opposed and resisted by colleagues who support biculturalism before multiculturalism. However, I choose to interpret as a positive sign the message in *AUT Directions 2017–2025* (AUT, 2018a) "we will learn from our students, prospective students and graduates the qualities of a desirable university education and consistently move towards developing them" (p. 3). It is in this spirit that I intend to present my findings to those in strategic positions within AUT.

As a researcher, I have aimed to provide evidence in the form of participant perspectives to support or refute my assumption of assimilation as false consciousness and immigrant invisibility in the formal learning environment. Acknowledging my bias, I was mindful of selecting a methodology that ensured centrality of the participant voice while also recognising the insider researcher as subjective and integrated in the research. To audit my subjectivity, I used a critical reflective framework to explore the inner and outer influences on my professional 'self' (Hartog, 2002; Marshall, 2016) throughout the research process. As a practitioner researcher, I seek to contribute to my field of practice through local, national and international discourse on minority immigrant acculturation experiences in higher education learning environments, and related possibilities of internationalising the curriculum at home.

1.3 The research problem

Globalisation forces of international migration (Castles & Miller, 2009) have affected the ethnic composition of NZ immigrants since the 1990s. These recent immigrants encounter a society with conflicting tensions of an emerging multicultural society within a bicultural country (a commitment between the British Crown and the Māori tribes, dating from the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840). While immigrant students might expect a multicultural approach to education, the political commitment to biculturalism is strongly reflected in policy within all education sectors. To complicate the immigrant education experience further, assimilationist approaches in education continue to reflect the dominant discourse of the NZ European mainstream. These conflicting influences of biculturalism, multiculturalism and assimilation form the context within which the immigrant student acculturates to the higher education learning environment.

The research problem is expressed in the invisibility of immigrant students in higher education learning environments being the result of assimilation as false consciousness. Acculturation in the formal learning environment presents no choice to immigrants other than assimilation into the mainstream curriculum and pedagogy, which currently favours the western European hegemonic discourse of the dominant

mainstream, with less enactment of the political bicultural commitment or the multicultural reality of the higher education student demographic. This research study aimed to understand and explain how immigrant students experience acculturation in the higher education learning environment, using the lens of assimilation as false consciousness to uncover participants' beliefs and experiences of what an assimilationist but normalised practice is. The social justice implications of this practice for immigrant students are important.

Assimilation as false consciousness in acculturation of immigrant students is the main argument developed and threaded through the thesis. In the introduction, assimilation is identified as a driver in NZ's immigration policy until 1987; the theoretical foundations of the ideology and its reflection in education are considered in the literature review. The concept of assimilation as false consciousness was named by Freire (1993) as a central force in the oppression of minorities by a dominant majority associated with discourses of power and social justice. In the education literature, it appears in critical multicultural theory and related critical pedagogy. It does not otherwise appear in the literature related to acculturation, although it lies invisibly in Berry's (1997) integration strategy. The concept was key to several of the thesis research questions, was foregrounded in data collection through the questionnaire and interview, and was used as a lens for analysis and discussion of findings. An original contribution to the field was made by using the concept of acculturation as false consciousness to understand and explain the acculturation of immigrant students in higher education learning environments.

A short background on the complex and multidimensional influences on immigrant students is provided through an examination of the history of NZ immigration policy that has informed the bicultural, multicultural and assimilation processes at work.

1.4 Context of the research study

1.4.1 *A brief history of immigration in New Zealand*

Three immigration periods have influenced the broader sociocultural and political context of the research, each illustrating the ideological positioning and consequent impact on immigrant settlement.

1.4.1.1 The Treaty of Waitangi: The first immigration policy

Māori have indigenous status in NZ and are regarded as *tangata whenua* (people of the land) after ancestral voyaging canoes arrived in *Aotearoa* (land of the long white cloud) around 1300, from a mythical place of physical and spiritual origin, *Hawaiiki* (King, 2003). Five hundred years later, in 1840, seeking to secure their colonial interest in Aotearoa NZ, the British Crown and Māori chiefs signed *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* (Treaty of Waitangi). The first and second Treaty clauses guaranteed the Māori continued chieftainship over their lands and treasured possessions in return for ceding power of governance to the British. The third clause granted Māori the rights and privileges of British citizenship (Orange, 2013). These clauses inform the spirit of the Treaty principles—participation, partnership and protection—and are reflected in NZ's political commitment to biculturalism. Since the Treaty preamble refers to settlement by British subjects, Bedford (2003) suggests that this was NZ's first immigration policy, an interpretation confirmed by Walker (1995), a leading Māori academic.

In the decades following the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, at best, 'lip service' was paid to its promises (Peters, 2001) as Māori were increasingly marginalised, and suffered dispossession of their land through wars and confiscations (King, 2003; Moon, 2011). Freire's (1993) concept of *cultural invasion* and oppression is evident in attempts by the government to suppress Māori culture through domination (Armitage, 1995) or modernisation (Peters, 2001), using education as a tool (Fleras & Spoonley, 1999; Walker, 1995). In short, traditional culture struggled to survive in the face of a rapid rise in British settler numbers and a dominant Eurocentric government. During the 1970s, activist demands for recognition and reparation suffered during colonisation resulted in a government response that included the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal in 1975 to negotiate Treaty claims with *iwi* (tribes), and *te reo Māori* was recognised as an official language in 1987 (Spoonley & Peace, 2012). The bicultural discourse was centre stage and firmly linked to the Treaty of Waitangi by Walker (as cited in Spoonley & Peace, 2012), who reiterated:

> I was the one who started using the term biculturalism in the 1970s to counter the ideology of monoculturalism, and it's

> worked: biculturalism is now thoroughly accepted as part of the discourse around who we are as a nation. The opponents of the ideology of biculturalism would always say "we're multicultural" … now that doesn't mean to deny the fact, that in reality, we are increasingly becoming multicultural, but the base cultures are Māori and Pākehā, the two mutually define each other. (p. 94)

Several salient features of the Māori perspective have bearing on this thesis. Their dispossession and cultural decline in the face of British settlement and power dominance has resulted in a legacy of grievance, and the moral responsibility for government to rectify shortcomings of the past is acknowledged as vital. Biculturalism is evidenced at policy levels and enacted within the compulsory school sector and, to a growing extent, in higher education. The critical question, however, is the status of immigrants within biculturalism. To a degree, Walker's words pre-empt the Māori response to those who actively progress issues of multiculturalism in the face of a prioritised biculturalism, one of the identified challenges of enacting the practice-related outcomes of this thesis. The relatively recent revival of Māori and biculturalism needs to be set against the 100-year period of British assimilation enacted through power and cultural dominance as the NZ 'mainstream'.

1.4.1.2 British settlement: An ethnically exclusive immigration policy

English, Scottish and Irish settlers arrived in NZ from 1880, via settlement schemes and subsidised passages, with unrestricted entry until 1974 (Spoonley & Peace, 2012). The unofficial 'whites-only' immigration policy ensured a homogeneous group that regarded itself as British, not New Zealander (Castles & Miller, 2009). The exclusive British immigration period in NZ has been well documented in the historical record (Moon, 2011) with consensus on the purpose, impact and outcomes of the assimilationist immigration policy (Ward & Lin, 2005) enacted through assimilation as false consciousness. As late as the 1970s, the majority of NZers continued to describe themselves as British subjects with a strong orientation towards the 'mother country' (Spoonley & Bedford, 2012) despite many being third or fourth generation NZers. Discriminatory policies and practices to ensure that foreigners were kept to a minimum particularly targeted Chinese and Indian immigrants, the former being subjected to poll taxes (Ip & Murphy, 2005) and the latter to English language tests

(Greif, 1995). Separation, rather than assimilation, ensured Asians remained a 'model minority' within the dominant mainstream (Ip, 1995).

Ethnic change was signalled from the 1950s when significant numbers of migrants were sought from the Pacific Islands as unskilled labour in the urban manufacturing industries (Macpherson, 2004). They too experienced a separation status from the mainstream, finding a closer fit with and experiencing many of the challenges faced by the urban Māori. During the decade of the 1970s, along with other traditional settler countries, NZ began to experience the globalisation pressures of international migration from non-traditional source countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. The focus on an assimilationist immigration policy was replaced in favour of a move towards multiculturalism, enacted in the 1987 Immigration Act, yet the legacy of a western European culture had been normalised as the dominant discourse of the mainstream, not least in an assimilationist approach to education in all sectors, including higher education.

1.4.1.3 The 1987 Immigration Act: A multi-ethnic New Zealand

Apart from globalisation, a number of factors converged in the early 1980s to create conditions necessitating a review of immigration policy. These included NZ's re-orientation from Britain as a natural trading partner towards the opportunities of the Asia-Pacific region, and the election of a Labour government in 1984 intent on neoliberal economic reform (Greif, 1995). The 1987 Immigration Act heralded an end to discriminatory policy based on ethnicity and the introduction of policy centred on transparent selection criteria targeting human capital (skills and qualifications) or wealth (Fleras & Spoonley, 1999). The result was a flood of immigrants from new source regions with significant flows from Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, Korea and Japan (Bedford & Lidgard, 1996). Immigrants from other parts of the world were less visible, although large numbers continued to arrive from the United Kingdom (UK) and smaller numbers from new source areas in South Africa, Europe, the Middle East and the Americas (Trlin, 1997). In the 1990s, such unplanned immigration resulted in a host of settlement issues for both immigrants and the government, including issues of language competency, access to employment, and separation rather than

assimilation or integration of ethnic minorities. Long-held xenophobic fears of an 'Asian invasion' were fanned by media and some politicians, resulting in amendments to the Act, particularly the requirement for acquisition of language skills and an offer of employment, as means to better manage for positive settlement outcomes. NZ has been slow to respond through policy and practice to the reality of an emerging multicultural society.

This brief synopsis of immigration history reflects immigration policies supporting biculturalism, assimilation and multiculturalism. The thesis contends that these ideologies co-exist in NZ's sociocultural and political context and affect the experience of immigrant students in higher education learning environments, and that assimilation as false consciousness is an invisible mechanism yet a widespread belief.

1.4.2 *Current New Zealand immigration context*

With its small population of 4.7 million (Statistics New Zealand, 2019a), the arrival of around 50,200 immigrants each year (Statistics New Zealand, 2019b) has significantly affected the New Zealand demographic, although balancing, to some extent, the ongoing emigration of NZers to the UK, the United States (US) and Australia (Spoonley & Peace, 2012). The 2018 census reports that 27.4% of the population was born overseas, an increase of 2.2% from the previous 2013 census. Five major ethnic groups are identified—European (70.2%), Māori (16.5%), Asian (15.1%), Pacific peoples (8.1%), Middle Eastern/Latin American/African (1.5%) and Other ethnicity (1.2%) (Statistics New Zealand, 2019c)—these generalised categories hide approximately 213 different ethnicities (Gray, 2016). It is worth noting that beyond their initial agreement to British settlers, Māori have not been consulted on immigration policy (Walker, 1995) and in national attitudinal surveys they record the lowest support for immigration (Ward & Masgoret, 2008).

Education has been identified as a migration trigger (Butcher, 2004) represented in global mobility of academics and students (Keller, 2007; Tremblay, 2005), many of whom seek educational opportunities in English-speaking countries such as Canada, Australia, NZ, the UK and the US. The export education sector in NZ is worth NZ$4.5

billion per annum with 60,000–80,000 international students (Martens & Starke, 2008; New Zealand National Party, 2018) providing a valuable income stream for schools and higher education institutions needing to supplement their state funding (Jiang, 2008). I do not include international students in this research study because these students have a study visa for a defined period (New Zealand Immigration, 2019b), they hold a distinct status within the university demographic and their educational experiences are well represented in the research literature (Holmes, 2004; Lee, Farruggia, & Brown, 2013; Li, 2016; Li & Campbell, 2008; Szabo, Ward, & Jose, 2016; Zhang, 2013).Seldom identified within the changing NZ higher education student demographic are those with immigrant status (a term used for those who cross a national border to seek permanent residence in another country). Kim and Díaz (2013) admit that classification of migration types is complex; for example, many international students seek to study in NZ to gain access to residency (Jiang, 2005b), while a counterargument is noted by Butcher (2004), that immigrants may achieve residency to benefit from domestic fees for education. While both variants may be accurate for a minority of students, the research assumes immigrant students to have a medium- to long-term commitment to residency in NZ. However, I do acknowledge the close links between the international student and immigrant student experience as described in the international student mobility literature and its recent debates on ethics and politics related to this student demographic in higher education organisations (Waters, 2006; Yang, 2019).

1.4.3 *Auckland University of Technology*

The research is contextualised within my university, which I have chosen not to anonymise because participants have specifically named and positively represented AUT in their rich pictures, and I have confirmed with university leadership (J. Bygrave, personal communication, 26 August 2019) that the organisation could be named.

AUT is one of two universities located in Auckland, the fourth most superdiverse and largest Polynesian city in the world (Gray, 2016; Spoonley & Peace, 2012) with 44% of its population being foreign born, and rising to 56% if second-generation children are included (Spoonley, 2015). In the Auckland region 51.2% of the population are

multilingual speakers, the most common languages being Chinese, Cantonese and Mandarin, followed by Samoan and te Reo Māori (May, 2015). AUT is the youngest and fastest growing of NZ's seven universities and brands itself as "The University for the Changing World" (AUT, 2018a) built on values of *tika* (integrity), *pono* (respect) and *aroha* (compassion). Its student demographic reflects a similar ethnic diversity to that of the city of Auckland, with 41% NZ European, 25% Asian, 16% Pacific, 11% Māori and 7% Other (AUT, 2019a). It is interesting to note that only four ethnic groups are specifically identified in these public statistics, and it is impossible to tell foreign-born from NZ-born students. Buried in the university analytics (AUT, 2019b) are statistics of domestic student citizenship status, the closest indicator of immigrant status. Over the five-year period 2014–2018, the proportion of domestic students with foreign citizenship ranged from 19.4% in 2018 to 21.5% in 2014, coming from 120 different countries, with the largest numbers in 2018 from China, the UK, India, the Philippines, Australia, Fiji, South Africa and South Korea. The fact that this is a significant proportion of students in study at the university but a statistic that is difficult to locate raises questions about the visibility and *recognition* (Walker, 2002) of the immigrant student group.

In common with other tertiary providers, state funding by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) is based on an investment plan with related accountability measures. The TEC uses the strategic priorities detailed in the Tertiary Education Strategy (TES) 2014–2019 (Ministry of Education [MOE], 2014) to set performance expectations with related funding for initiatives. Two priorities are of interest to this research study. First, TES Priority 3 requires "boosting achievement of Māori and Pacific students" (MOE, 2014, p. 6). Second, in response to the demands of a neoliberal market-driven economy (Strathdee, 2011) and to support additional funding streams, the TEC prioritises internationalisation of education through TES Priority 6, which identifies "growing international linkages" (MOE, 2014, p. 18) through international students, offshore provision, collaboration and an internationally competitive curriculum. It is no surprise that AUT, as a higher education provider, reflects the national TEC priorities, with an explicit commitment

to the Treaty of Waitangi and biculturalism, and the inclusion of an international focus in its strategic plans.

In the AUT *Strategic Plan 2012–2016* (AUT, 2012) under the "Learning and Teaching" theme a diverse student population is accommodated in a curriculum that "acknowledges our bicultural nation, the *tangata whenua* (people of the land i.e. Māori) and New Zealand's contemporary multicultural character in the way the curriculum is developed and delivered" (p. 23). The priority ordering is noted, but not unexpected, considering the sociopolitical nature of NZ. This acknowledgement of diversity in the student demographic and its reflection in learning and teaching is absent in the recent *AUT Directions to 2025* (AUT, 2018a), in which, under a similar theme entitled "Creating exceptional learning experiences", details are generalised to all students. In discussion with one of the main authors of the recent document (J. Bygrave, personal communication, 26 August 2019), I was assured that the intention was to present a message of holistic student experience to achieve the mission statement of "great graduates" (AUT, 2018a, p. 1). The document should therefore be interpreted through the detail and embedded references to Māori and other ethnicities in themes such as "Responding to our place in the world" and "Being a place where people love to work and learn". In the former theme, the document states "we will be active in our city, responding to its Māori heritage and identity, Pacific communities, and ethnic diversity" (p. 2), and in the latter theme, the point is made that "we welcome people of all ethnicities" (p. 3). Again, foreign-born immigrant groups, while a significant proportion of the student demographic, are hidden within a vague ethnicity label, and since there is no reference to multiculturalism in the indicators of progress, little accountability is likely for development in this direction. Internationalisation is more evident in this strategic plan, appearing under the theme of "Responding to our place in the world", where the point is made that "graduates will be global as well as national citizens" (p. 2), suggesting positive support for an internationalised curriculum. The potential to contribute to the indicator of progress "100% of our students having an international experience as part of their studies" (p. 3) through internationalising the curriculum at home is a practice-related outcome of this thesis.

It is in the formal learning environment that culturally inclusive curriculum and pedagogy is evidenced. The enacted culturally inclusive curriculum was explored through immigrant student experiences of learning and teaching within programme delivery, and the planned or official curriculum was explored through an audit of culturally inclusive paper titles in the list of undergraduate courses in the *Academic Calendar* (AUT, 2018b). The 26 bachelor's degree programmes offered 165 courses with a specific international or culturally inclusive focus. These included 49 courses specific to Māori culture and 29 to Pacific culture, 29 with an international focus and 58 with a multicultural focus. Unsurprisingly, most of the culturally specific papers were offered in the faculties of Culture and Society, and Te Ara Poutama: Māori and Indigenous Development, and the majority of international courses were offered in the faculties of Business, and Culture and Society. These statistics suggest that AUT is meeting its commitment to Māori and Pacific students, as well as offering a range of multicultural courses responsive to international and immigrant students. The experiences of the eight immigrant participants in the research, all studying for bachelor's degrees, provided a student perspective (albeit of limited size) on the actual curriculum and pedagogy in the formal learning environment.

Ethnic diversity in the informal learning environment (evidenced through a range of student activities, clubs, events and informal daily interactions) is a visible statement of inclusive practice as AUT successfully recognises its diverse student demographic. This success is due to work by student ethnic groups, a diversity manager in Student Services with a brief to work with ethnicities other than Māori and Pacific students, and a professor of diversity who is active in making diversity (including ethnicity) more visible in the university. A video on YouTube (AUT, 2017) entitled *What Is Diversity? And What Does It Mean to AUT?* presents a visual depiction of this multi-ethnic community, and while its exploration of the nature of ethnic diversity is superficial, it does build a message of inclusion and community.

Although AUT displays strong cultural inclusion in the informal learning environment, assumptions of similar practices and experiences in the formal learning environment may (or may not) be evidenced. Questions triggered by my observations of Kiwi and immigrant students expressing beliefs of assimilation as false consciousness in my

class suggested that culturally inclusive learning and teaching was not the norm in their higher education learning environments. Hence, the aim of this research study was to understand and explain the immigrant student acculturation experience in the formal learning environment through the lens of assimilation as false consciousness.

1.5 Summary of chapter and overview of the thesis

This chapter has introduced and justified the choice of topic and provided background and a literature review of immigration in NZ to point to the nature of the problem underlying the research. While I do not intend to refer to NZ's bicultural character beyond offering the context within which the immigrant student experience is set, I acknowledge the potential impact on Māori of findings that will draw attention to multiculturalism in higher education. One theme that has been raised and will be further pursued in the literature chapter involves the relationship between ideology at a national level, its reflection in immigration policy, and the resultant influence on education policy and practice.

The thesis has the following structure. Chapter 2 considers the literature and research in the fields of immigration theory, acculturation and internationalisation of curriculum. This is framed within Bronfenbrenner's (1993) socio-ecological model, which focuses on person–environment interactions, accommodating both proximal and distal relationships. Chapter 3 presents methodology based on constructionism and interpretivism, using a bricolage of methods and includes a literature review related to two of the less well-known methods. Chapter 4 presents findings and discussion based on Maxwell's (2012) contiguity-based analysis of participants' rich pictures from two contrasting immigrant learning environments over time, and Chapter 5 presents a similarity-based analysis (Maxwell, 2012) and discussion of the interview, questionnaire and card sort data. Chapter 6 focuses on the contribution to knowledge and theory, methodology and practice, and Chapter 7 draws conclusions and considers directions for further research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Three literature fields are explored in this chapter to support discussion on the topic of acculturation of immigrant students in higher education learning environments. The literature review involved a multidisciplinary approach across psychology, sociology, migration studies and education. The first field covers literature to support the argument that the broader contextual influences of the assimilation–pluralism nexus and its expression in immigration theory and approaches to education influences the immigrant student in the learning environment. The second field covers literature on immigrant acculturation and associated ethnic identity development. The third field takes what might initially appear as a sidetrack, into the topic of internationalising the curriculum. This focus aligns with the proposed practice-based outcomes of the research, and the literature serves to build a foundation for the 'so what?' or 'where next?' questions of the research study.

Two sections are covered prior to the literature review: common concepts used in the thesis, and a justification for the theory and framing structure selected. In discussing the literature, gaps are identified and the nature of the study is justified.

2.2 Common concepts used in the literature and the thesis

Four major concepts are embedded in any discussion on immigration.

Culture is a complex concept; its meaning varies from that of universalists, who emphasise the commonalities of being human beyond that of culture, to that of culturalists, who essentialise culture as complete, self-contained, bounded and with its own legitimate morality (May, 1999). McLaren (2003) takes a critical approach, linking cultural identity to historical and social structural constraints evidenced through racism, power and poverty. Finding a middle ground, Lentin (2005) supports the notion of difference as a marker of culture, whereas May and Sleeter (2010) argue for a more fluid, multidimensional and less bounded definition of cultural identity that encompasses influences beyond descriptions of ethnicity and religion. For the purposes of this study, reference to the concept of culture is aligned with Crowder's

(2013) definition: “a set of beliefs and values that is held in common by a group … through which a group identifies itself as a particular group distinct from others” (p. 14). This fits comfortably with Phinney’s (2003) definition of the related concept of ethnic identity: “a dynamic, multidimensional construct that refers to one’s identity or sense of self as a member of an ethnic group” (p. 63). These two definitions provide a coherency between the concepts of culture and ethnic identity as understood in this study.

The concept of *assimilation* was coined in the US to describe a process whereby ethnic minority groups become similar to the mainstream culture as the former abandon their group identity in favour of dominant culture values, leading towards a homogeneous and common society (Gans, 1992; Gordon, 2005). The concept came to be associated with Eurocentric assumptions of racial superiority (Zhou, 1997), the ‘melting pot’ as a metaphor for nation-building (Hirschman, 1983) and monocultural education as an opportunity for socialising a hegemonic ideology (Grant & Sleeter, 2007). It is unsurprising that European discourses refer to the same process by the more neutral term of *integration* (FitzGerald, 2015; Schneider & Crul, 2010). In the traditional settlement countries of Canada, Australia and NZ (Castles & Miller, 2009), assimilation was ensured through whites-only policies for immigration of homogeneous groups of English speakers intent on replicating their culture (Pearson, 2013; Van Krieken, 2012). The concept of assimilation as false consciousness refers to the belief held by the majority mainstream and minority cultures that assimilation is an expected and normalised process (Freire, 1993). This is the key concept used in the thesis to explore immigrant student acculturation.

The concept of *acculturation* describes the process of first-hand contact between the immigrant minority ethnic group and the dominant mainstream culture, and the associated bidirectional changes in values, attitudes and behaviours that lead to a psychological and sociocultural adaptation of the ethnic minority to the dominant host culture (Berry, 1997; Ward & Kennedy, 1992). The concept of *mainstream* was initially assumed to be an identifiable homogeneous group (Berry, 1997); however, it is now accepted that bicultural or multicultural mainstreams are possible (Bean &

Brown, 2015), thus creating complexities for acculturating individuals who may at times feel a fit with one or another culture (Nayar, 2015).

Multiculturalism emerged in the 1970s in Canada, Australia and the US in response to increased ethnic diversity of immigrants from non-traditional source countries in Asia, Africa and South America. Multiculturalism is a pluralist ideology that accepts and respects cultural differences of ethnic groups coexisting, with shared values, beliefs and behaviours supporting a cohesive society and common national culture (Banks, 2001; Kymlicka, 1995). Within this broad concept, various types of multiculturalism are recognised in the literature, each with a specific focus. *Biculturalism* suggests a focus on two cultures of equal strength (Fleras & Spoonley, 1999); *benevolent multiculturalism* (May, 2002) accepts cultural pluralism in society and celebrates difference in relatively superficial ways; *demographic multiculturalism* (Bloemwraad, 2011) simply identifies the existence of different ethnicities within a population; *corporate* or *conservative multiculturalism* (McLaren, 1994) reflects white supremacy and power associated with racialised difference; *political multiculturalism* (Modood, 2013) is concerned with the politics of identity involving minority voice; *critical multiculturalism* (May & Sleeter, 2010) takes a postmodern view of culture and identity based on emancipatory politics for social transformation; and *dialogical multiculturalism* (Parekh, 2006) argues the value of gaining and sustaining cultural understanding through intercultural dialogue. The latter ideology has found expression in the concept of *interculturalism* (Besley & Peters, 2012). As the literature review will show, multiculturalism and its variants have largely failed to deliver in practice to break the stronghold of assimilationist practices of dominant mainstream groups.

2.3 Selection and justification of theory

Acculturation theory has been dominated by the work of John Berry, a recognised leader in the field of cross-cultural psychology (Ward, 2008; Weinreich, 2009). Berry focussed on the change in values, attitudes and behaviours related to acculturation, triggered by contact-participation of a minority ethno-cultural group within a dominant mainstream group. According to Berry (1992; 2003) the adaptation

strategy selected by the acculturating immigrant results in a psychological and sociocultural adaptation in the new society. Depending on the perceived value of cultural retention of home culture or cultural accommodation to the host culture, the immigrant may assimilate, integrate, separate or become marginalised, each strategy associated with different levels of acculturative stress in the acculturative process (Berry, 1997; 2005). I have selected to use Berry's acculturation theory as the central theory in my study of immigrant acculturation experience, as his 1997 model continues to dominate the literature and is frequently the starting point for critique (Rudmin, 2003; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999) and applied research (Barker, 2015; Güngör & Perdu, 2017; Nayar, 2015; Titzmann & Fuligni, 2015). Most particularly, I am interested in the integration strategy as a means towards intercultural or multicultural education, rather than its current form which evidences assimilation as false consciousness in the formal or public domain of education. Recent literature in the field of migration studies, and most particularly international student mobility (Madge, Raghuram & Noxolo, 2009; Waters, 2018; Yang, 2019) supports an argument for integration of international students within higher education learning environments.

Several researchers have offered refinements of the model. For example, Ward and Rana-Deuba (1999) critique Berry's methodological approach of measuring acculturation and propose the Acculturation Index, designed to measure the adaptation strategies. Bourhis, Moïse, Perreault and Senécal (1997) offer the Interactive Acculturation Model, which takes the perspective of majority society members rather than ethnic minorities, and Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga and Szapocznik (2010) offer a more dynamic interpretation of the acculturation process that includes both the minority and the majority cultures. I aim to make a similar contribution to Berry's (1997) theory through proposing a refinement of the integration adaptation strategy (see Section 6.2.4), and to achieve this, I decided to apply the 1997 model in its original form without distraction of adaptations suggested by other researchers, who themselves take Berry (1997) as their starting point. The theory is detailed in Section 2.5.1.

Recognising that Berry's (1997) theory is specific to an individual or group and does not embrace the broader contextual influences within which I wished to frame (and explain) the immigrant experience, I sought a framing theory. My criteria included a model that could visually illustrate and explain through its structure the notion of contextual influences on and relationships with the immigrant student, both at a distance and in proximity. Furthermore, I needed theory to explain the individual interaction between immigrant students and their environmental influences. Two theories were identified and evaluated for this purpose: structure–agency theory and socio-ecological theory. Even though the latter theory was selected and applied, I propose as an outcome of the research an alternative framework for the contextual influences I wish to elucidate (see Section 6.2.2).

Structure–agency theory, while in line with the notion of bidirectional influence of society (structure) and person (human agency), did not provide the clear visual structure of multiple levels of contextual influences I was seeking to frame the research. However, the morphogenetic nature of structure–agency interaction, which Archer (2003) extends to include personal reflexivity as mediation between structure and agent, is a strength that could have been useful in explaining the uniquely individual acculturation experiences that participants evidenced in the learning environment. The application of structure–agency theory to practice in higher education by Connors and Sharar (2016) illustrating the agency of lecturers for pedagogical change in the face of wider university structural and cultural change presents a useful representation of structure and agency in a stratified world. This theory met the criteria I sought for framing the research, although it was weaker as a visual depiction of the theoretical elements and hence as a structural framework.

In contrast, Bronfenbrenner's (1993) socio-ecological theory was the best fit for the criteria of visual depiction of contextual influences and a structural framework, and it included within the process–person–context–time (PPCT) model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) a mechanism to explain individual acculturation experiences. Bronfenbrenner (1993) proposes four nested systems in relationship with the person at the centre (see Figure 2.1).

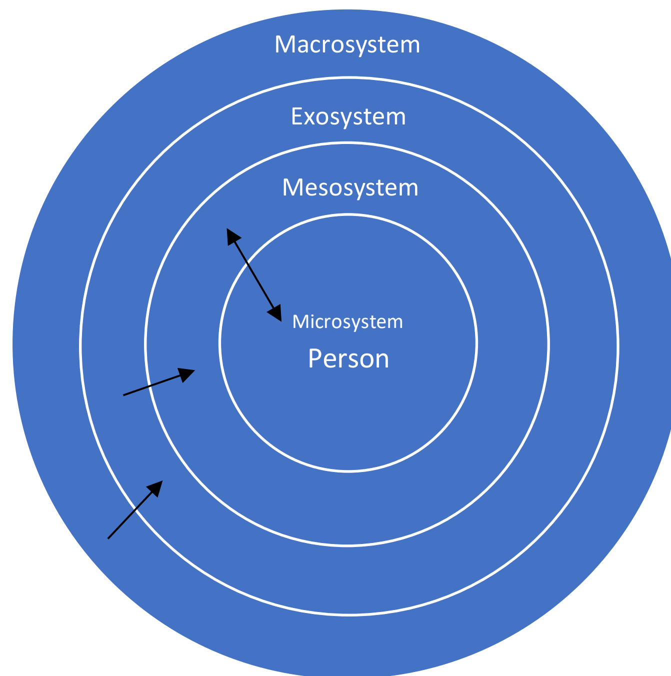


Figure 2.1: Bronfenbrenner's (1993) socio-ecological systems model

Society and its dominant culture, subcultures, social structures and ideologies reside in the macrosystem, which influences policies and practices in the ecosystem, which in turn affects the person in the microsystem. The mesosystem is not a setting but a symbolic representation of the links and bidirectional processes occurring between two or more elements of the microsystem directly involving the person. In 1986 Bronfenbrenner included the chronosystem, lying beyond the macrosystem and representing the temporal dimension of the model, particularly the historical era within which the contextualized study is set. I appreciated the suitability of this theory to capture and support the development of my argument that the acculturation of an immigrant student in the learning environment (microsystem) is affected by contextual influences both distant and immediate. Furthermore, the first two components of the PPCT, *process* and *person* (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), add a complexity useful for exploring and explaining interactions of person and environment at an individual scale. This aspect, I argue, is central to my interpretation of the participants' rich pictures of their acculturation experiences in learning environments.

Process refers to the interaction between individuals and their environment, which can be a proximal or distal relationship, the former being the most powerful influence in one-on-one interactions in the microsystem. Bronfenbrenner (1993) stresses that the phenomenological nature of the environment is internally perceived and interpreted by the person, and that researchers should not assume understandings unless the person has the opportunity to describe the setting and their response. I agree with this sentiment and have prioritised the participant voice in the research. *Person* represents the most complex aspect of the model because it incorporates the 'instigative' characteristics of the individual that uniquely influences their relationship with the environment. Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) identify three instigative characteristics: 'dispositions', which either generate and sustain or disrupt and inhibit proximal processes; 'resources' within the person, which influence functioning in the proximal processes; and 'demand' characteristics, which invite or resist the operation of the processes. The immigrant's 'personhood' is thus central to making meaning of the acculturation experience because each person has a unique psychological and sociocultural response to the environment (Berry, 2001; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999). *Context* is a critical element, particularly when combined with culture. Bronfenbrenner (1995) raises the question of environments that become unstable and predicts that proximal processes will be reduced with corresponding disruptive effects on psychological functioning. Thus, when a person's context is disrupted through immigration, and development is triggered in response to a new learning environment, culture may assume a larger role than in the previous learning environment. This was confirmed by Steinberg, Darling and Fletcher's (1995) research. Finally, *time* is represented at all levels of the model. It ranges from frequent proximal interactions in the mesosystem to the changing events in society, within or across generations in the macrosystem.

The theory has been through several title iterations, reflecting refinements in the focus of the components (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). Originally named 'ecological systems' theory in 1979, with a focus on bidirectional *developmental* influences of a person and the environment, the theory was renamed 'bioecological' (Bronfenbrenner, 1993; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) with the focus on *processes* involving person–

environment interaction and the PPCT model. Cairns and Cairns (2005) argue that Bronfenbrenner's early writings included the integrated nature of the person as part of a sociocultural ecology, thus justifying the model's label of 'socio-ecological'. Kim and Díaz (2013) use the term 'social ecological' in their support of the Bronfenbrenner theory as a framework to examine immigrant students' bidirectional interaction with their institutional environments. I refer to the theory as 'socio-ecological' because it supports my belief that immigration is a social construct contextualised within sociocultural ecological systems.

Bronfenbrenner (1993) stresses the importance of translating his theory into concrete research designs. The literature evidences his model in conceptual and applied research in human development (Ceci & Hembrooke, 1995; Mahoney, Gucciardi, Mallett, & Ntoumanis, 2014; Steinberg et al., 1995) and other fields such as health (Noeremberg Guimarães et al., 2019; Serdarevic & Chronister, 2005; Taylor, 2003), education (Cunningham & Rosenbaum, 2015; Maynard, Beaver, Vaughan, Delisi, & Roberts, 2014; Perry & Dockett, 2018), management (Bone, 2015; Insa, González, & Iñesta, 2016) and social work (Paat, 2013). Only one study applies the model in higher education (Poch, 2005), and another (Kimmel & Volet, 2012) mentions Bronfenbrenner when discussing higher education students in multiple social contexts. Whether research has been quantitative or qualitative, findings have supported the theoretical model in practice. Tudge et al. (2016) make a pertinent point in their critique of researchers who claim research based on Bronfenbrenner's theory but fail to apply or critique its central concepts, since little critique has been aired in the literature. Steinberg et al. (1995) have added to the theory, with culture as a significant context at every level, and Serdarevic and Chronister (2005), in their application of the model to immigrants and their environments, claim the model effectively shows bidirectional exchanges between immigrants and the environment at all levels and is versatile enough to capture a broad range of cross-cultural factors reflecting the complexity and richness of the acculturation process. One study that is critical of the model was located. Birman (2011) disagrees with Bronfenbrenner's closed system because she notes a global sociopolitical and economic context beyond the macrosystem that affects and influences the macrosystem. International

migration movements associated with globalisation would be one such force. Onwuegbuzie, Collins and Frels (2013) have used Bronfenbrenner's model to map research studies, suggesting that micro-research studies such as this topic on immigrant students and their learning environments would map onto Bronfenbrenner's microsystem. While I take this as a valid suggestion, I believe the influential historico-political and sociocultural settings at other levels in the model cannot be ignored in the immigrant learning experience. To date, no literature has been identified in which the socio-ecological model has been applied to immigrants in higher education learning environments.

I have used the Bronfenbrenner (1993) theory as a structure for the literature review to emphasise the contextual influences on the immigrant student at the centre. I have focused on the specifics of the PPCT model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) when interpreting and explaining the individual participants' experiences in the learning environment. My critique of the model is informed by the research findings and is elaborated in Chapter 6.

Figure 2.2 indicates the structure and focus of the literature review using Bronfenbrenner's (1993) socio-ecological framework. The first literature field focuses on critiquing the contextual influences of the macro- and exosystems. There are indications in the literature that coherent flows of contextual influences from the macro- and exosystem could be affecting the immigrant student in the meso- and microsystems, as in the Bronfenbrenner (1993) model. Bourhis et al. (1997) contend that state ideology will influence both immigration and integration policies, which in turn will affect the acculturation orientation of immigrants and those of the host society. They stop short of application to specific contexts such as education learning environments. Berry (1997) also notes a relationship between state ideology and acculturating immigrant, and Igoa (1995) focuses on the impact of institutional policy and learner experience. No literature has been sourced that fully develops this concept through all levels of the Bronfenbrenner (1993) systems; however, an emerging model is introduced through the different themes of the literature review. The first field considers the contextual influences of the macro- and exosystems.

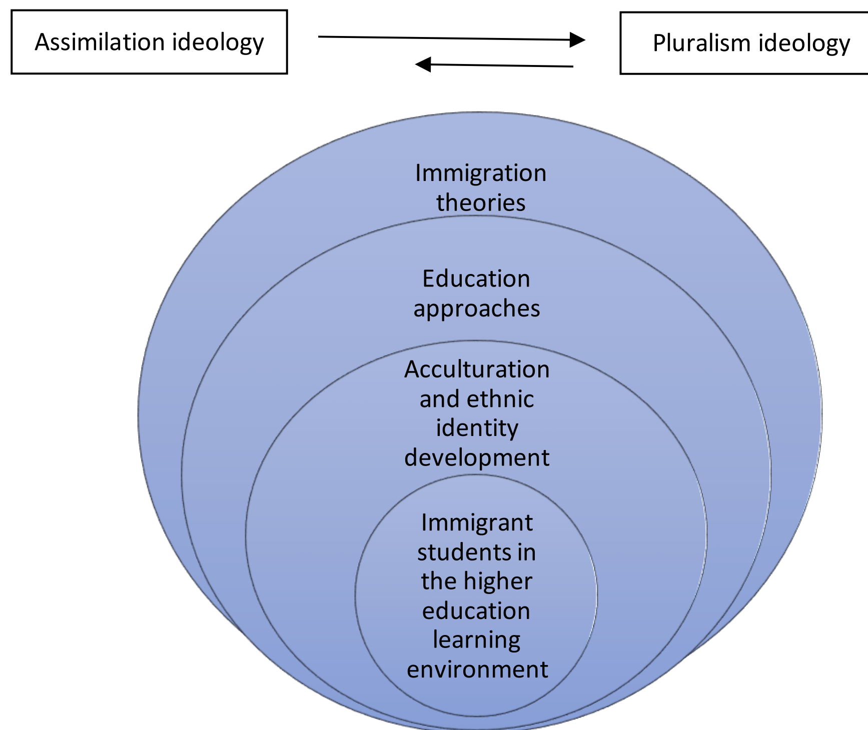


Figure 1.2: Literature review structure

2.4 Contextual influences: The assimilation–pluralism nexus in the macrosystem and exosystem

While the historical record suggests a sequential ideology development from assimilation to pluralism, the record is not linear, and one does not replace the other; rather, it tends towards a recursive pattern as scholars return to the philosophical debate of assimilation and/or multiculturalism. In Europe currently, there is strong support for a return to assimilation in the face of increasing ethnic diversity and perceived negative impacts on social cohesion (Verkuyten, 2011). At the same time, NZ has shifted from an assimilationist to a multicultural ideology (Sang & Ward, 2006) despite its bicultural commitment. The situation is thus not always clearly defined but is rather more fluid.

Education is recognised for its socialising role (Banks, 2001; Goldberg, 1994; McLaren, 1994; Sleeter & Grant, 2007) with potential to either maintain the status quo or act as an agent for social change and transformation. For immigrant students, education contexts play a particularly important role in cultural transmission (Darmody, Smyth, Byrne, & McGinnity, 2012), offering, according to Vedder and Horenczyk (2006), the

opportunity to acculturate (absorb mainstream culture) or enculturate (selectively adopt mainstream culture). They note that education practice tends to the former (assimilation) rather than the latter (multiculturalism). The literature focuses on specific approaches to education, such as multicultural education (Banks, 2001; Grant & Sleeter, 2007), critical pedagogy (May & Sleeter, 2010; McLaren, 1994) and intercultural education (Besley & Peters, 2012), rather than viewing these as integrated within ideology. It appears that education texts (Banks, 2001; Nieto, 2010), resources (Johnson & Wilson, 2014) and research in the compulsory schooling sector (Acuff, 2018; Kumi-Yeboah & Smith, 2016; Mampaey & Zanoni, 2016) are far more comprehensive than those in higher education, the focus of this literature review. The influences of assimilation and multiculturalism ideologies will be considered as part of immigration theory and related education approaches.

2.4.1 *Assimilation theory*

At the national level, assimilationist ideology informs immigrant theory and policy. Historically, this has been successfully applied to the ethnically diverse European immigrants of the 1880–1925 era into the Anglo-American mainstream (Gans, 1992) and the homogeneous British immigration in the traditional settlement countries of Canada, Australia and NZ (Castles & Miller, 2009) through whites-only policies. Classic assimilation theory has been strenuously critiqued in the literature for the moral responsibility placed on immigrants to make acculturation changes (Brubaker, 2001) and for the unidimensional model of cultural adaptation no longer relevant in multicultural societies (Bourhis et al., 1997). To acknowledge the failure of assimilation as a dominating and oppressive force, attempts have been made to rebrand and soften aspects of the ideology. Thus, Goldberg (1994) argues for the term *incorporation* rather than acculturation, and Gans (1992) suggests a bumpy rather than a straight-line trajectory to assimilation. Other critics point to the resilience of ethnic affiliations (Alba & Nee, 1997; Kivisto, 2017). Even within an apparently successful assimilation policy, such as that of the whites-only policy (Sang & Ward, 2006) in NZ, research findings on immigrant acculturation experiences during this era report immigrant perceptions of being ‘foreigners’ (Crezee, 2012;

Donaghey & Papoutsaki, 2008; George & FitzGerald, 2012), not only suggesting the resilience of ethnic cultures, but pointing to the influence of host society attitudes.

A variant of the classic assimilation theory can be found in the subsequent theory of segmented assimilation proposed by Portes and Zhou (1993). In this theory, assimilation takes three possible trajectories: 'upward' as in classic assimilation, 'downward' into marginalised minority groups and 'selective' towards biculturalism. The theory has dominated assimilation research since the mid-1990s, with some findings supporting the theory (Hirschman, 2001; Sampson, Marlowe, de Haan, & Bartley, 2016; Wang, Corcoran, Liu, & Sigler, 2018) and other findings questioning the predictability of the assimilation trajectories (Campolieti, Gunderson, Timofeeva, & Tsiroulnitchenko, 2013; Waters, Tran, Kasinitz, & Mollenkopf, 2010).

Assimilation theory is enacted in monocultural or assimilationist education, identified with the US state policy in the melting pot metaphor (Banks, 2001) when immigrant children were subjected to values inculcation in a patriotic model of citizenship education (Barr, 1996) through civics and social studies. More subtle are the ongoing monocultural perspectives reinforcing hegemonic discourses through the hidden curriculum, such as normalising whiteness (McLaren & Torres, 1999) or selecting texts prioritising values and practices of the dominant Anglo majority above the invisible achievements of those of different colour or ethnicity (Gay, 2000). Freire (1993) labelled this education approach a 'banking' model, an instrument of oppression used by teachers to 'deposit' knowledge (hegemonic discourses) in an empty bank account, while students accept and expect the mainstream curriculum and pedagogy (assimilation as false consciousness). A similar monocultural and assimilationist education approach can be traced in NZ (Snook, 1990) during the early years of the 20th century, when monolingual language policies were a powerful way of mainstreaming indigenous Māori and assimilating immigrant children (May, 2002).

Brown and Jones (2007) note the challenge to the elitist neocolonialist attitudes in higher education from the 1990s due to massification of education and associated globalisation effects that have resulted in increasing student diversity, including rising numbers of international students. The Anglocentric curriculum and pedagogy that

traditionally provided a classical academic education to an assumed homogeneous student body is being challenged by neoliberal market-driven policies (Lattuca, 2007) and the internationalisation of higher education curricula (Leask & Carroll, 2011; Turner & Robson, 2008). The literature addresses some of these challenges to traditional assimilationist mainstream practice through the call for curriculum reconceptualisation (Leask, 2013); however, Barnett and Coate (2005) note the power of curriculum as culture, and the resilience of the academic disciplines and their related territories and tribes (Becher & Trowler, 2001) through gatekeeping.

Notwithstanding strong critique of an assimilationist or monocultural education, the approach is resilient and normalised. Even when multicultural education started to move centre stage from the 1970s, assimilation was pushed to the wings but not offstage. Its roots remain deep in the psyche of the traditional settlement countries, as illustrated through recursive swings in public opinion whenever xenophobic fears are raised (Spoonley & Bedford, 2012). While classic assimilation theory as applied historically no longer finds widespread support, its enactment continues in various guises, from explicit integration policies in European countries, such as the Netherlands (Verbeek, Entzinger, & Scholten, 2015), through different forms of integration (FitzGerald, 2015) to the more subtle, yet powerful concept of assimilation as false consciousness. This is a foundational belief in immigrant assimilation, yet it is not explicitly addressed or articulated, thus exposing a gap in the acculturation literature. It is associated with Freire's (1993) concept of 'cultural invasion' and the false consciousness belief held by both the oppressor and the oppressed minority to accept and expect the hegemonic discourse. While I do support the social justice connotations of assimilation as false consciousness, I do not adopt the critical Freirean stance on oppression when applying false consciousness to my university context as I believe the terminology is too harsh and presumes a judgment of intention.

2.4.2 *Multicultural theory*

According to Kymlicka (2015), it was not until the 1990s that the concept of multiculturalism was theorised and contested. Today there is general consensus that

multiculturalism and its variants have not delivered on promises for social transformation for ethnic minorities (Crowder, 2013; Kymlicka, 2015; May, 1999; Parekh, 2006; Singham, 2006). In the literature, the impact of multiculturalism on immigrants is viewed from a philosophical, policy and practice perspective.

The philosophical stance towards multiculturalism can have a significant impact on the freedoms an immigrant might expect. In a liberal democratic multicultural philosophy, as expressed by Kymlicka (1995), cultural rights of polyethnic minority groups are recognised through differentiated laws and policies, thus valuing immigrants as different but equally contributing members to society. An egalitarian liberal perspective of multiculturalism, however, as expressed by Barry (2001), argues for the application of law to all regardless of culture to avoid cultural relativism. This stance triggers concerns when rights are awarded to illiberal group norms, feeding views of social dislocation by minority (read religious) groups (Hollifield & Wong, 2015) and has resulted in a hardening of public attitudes towards multiculturalism (Grant & Robertson, 2014) expressed in media and politicising of anti-immigration policies by right-wing political groups (Bedford, 2003; Spoonley & Bedford, 2012). Such a shift has been noted since the securitised responses to 9/11 and subsequent attacks that have been associated (rightly or wrongly) with ethnic minority immigrant groups (Kymlicka, 2015; Singham, 2006).

Multicultural philosophy informs the policy perspective of multiculturalism and reflects the strength of a country's commitment to recognising and affirming ethnic minority rights. The Multicultural Policy Index (Queens' University School of Policy Studies, 2011, 2016) measures the extent to which eight policy indicators are met, and classifies countries as *weak* (Denmark, Austria, France), *modest* (NZ, US, UK) or *strong* (Australia and Canada). Those countries classified as modest recognise and support ethnic diversity; however, the significant indicator of an official multicultural policy is not always met, as is the case in NZ.

The practice of multiculturalism, according to Berry (2001), reflects society-level attitudes towards cultural diversity. Research in NZ has focused on majority attitudes towards ethnic minorities (Butcher, Spoonley, & Gendall, 2015; Ward & Masgoret,

2008), and findings have identified discriminatory attitudes associated with stereotyping, prejudice and racism towards specific ethnocultural minority groups, rather than all immigrants. Hui, Chen, Leung and Berry (2015) would agree but note the complex bidirectional and intercultural relationship between mainstream multicultural attitudes and immigrant perceptions and experiences of welcome or discrimination. This is borne out in a survey of immigrants in NZ (Department of Labour, 2009) in which 89% declared themselves satisfied with life in NZ, but 43%, of whom 67% were Asian, felt discriminated against. Such a sense of discrimination is validated by Butcher et al. (2015), who report a hardening of Māori attitudes towards Asians, and by Ward and Masgoret's (2008) survey findings that Chinese and Indians were among the least preferred immigrants in NZ. This suggests that the lived experience of multiculturalism may differ from the mainstream attitudes towards the ideology of multiculturalism, as evidenced in Ward and Masgoret's (2008) national survey, which reported that 88% of NZers supported a multicultural ideology.

Multicultural education, in line with the philosophy, ranges from conservative or benevolent expressions of 'tolerance, acceptance and respect' (May, 2002) to critical liberal expressions of 'affirmation, solidarity and critique' (Banks, 2001; May, 2002; Nieto, 2010). Sleeter and Grant (2007) argue that the goals of multicultural education have a social purpose beyond the institution, aligned with democratic citizenship (structural equality and cultural pluralism); however, critics believe the practice has not delivered on its promises to bring change for minority students (Goldberg, 1994; May, 1999) because it depoliticises and objectifies culture as an artefact, perpetuates 'othering' and sustains asymmetrical power relations (May & Sleeter, 2010).

Multiculturalism has been strongly critiqued and challenged by critical multiculturalists. McLaren (1994), a recognised leader in the field, focuses on power inequalities for minorities who have been historically disadvantaged within the hegemony of the dominant group, drawing on Freire's (1993) concepts of cultural invasion and false consciousness to explain racism in the US. Raising the centrality of race and ethnicity has resulted in the anti-racist movement in the UK and the development of critical race theory in the US, both of which are reflected as specific education approaches. A limitation of critical multiculturalism has been its inability

to shift from theoretical debate into practice, except in the field of education, which references many critical multicultural research studies (Babaii, 2018; Chalmers, 2002; Chan, 2011; Elkader, 2016; Miretzky, 2010; Sleeter & Montecinos, 1999), most related to curriculum or teacher education.

Support for a critical pedagogy to represent the 'other' in the face of hegemonic discourses in curriculum, to expose and critique power inequities in the classroom, and to address issues of racism and cultural difference as deficit thinking is strongly presented in the literature (Banks, 2001; Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh, & Teddy, 2009; Brookfield, 2001; May & Sleeter, 2010; Nieto, 2010; Stewart, 2010); however, much of it remains at a theoretical or philosophical level. In higher education, initial teacher education is a focus for critical multicultural education (Grant & Sleeter, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 2011) because a view exists that many educators struggle to make the required mindset change to teach from a critical perspective, being restrained by assumptions embedded within their own education in mainstream liberal multiculturalism (Goldberg, 1994).

Stokke and Lybaek (2018) believe that critical multiculturalism can be positively teamed with interculturalism, an ideology associated with a liberal theory of modernity that promotes democratic respect, and values freedom, human rights and tolerance of cultural difference (Besley & Peters, 2012). Interculturalism aims to promote an open and dynamic interaction and intergroup dialogue (Berry, 2013) emphasising equitable acceptance in any intercultural encounter (Jiang, 2005b, 2008). Some argue that interculturalism is a replacement for multiculturalism (Zapata-Barrero, 2017), some recognise that it moves beyond multiculturalism (Besley & Peters, 2012; Jiang, 2005b; Lentin, 2005) and others view it as essentially similar (Meer & Modood, 2012). It has roots in the post-multicultural period (Zapata-Barrero, 2017) in Europe in the early 2000s as a regional rather than an intra-national movement.

Debate in the literature on interculturalism identifies several concerns about the enactment of the theory into practice. Stokke and Lybaek (2018) identify the risk of westernisation in the disguise of democratic engagement. Murphy (2012) is in

accord, as he argues that many migrants in Europe have an experience of democracy that leaves them distrustful of the aspirational goals of intercultural dialogue. This resonates with the critique of critical multiculturalists regarding existing asymmetrical power imbalances, recognising that minorities speak 'from below' in contrast to the dominant group(s), which speak their homogenising discourses 'from above' (Stokke & Lybaek, 2018). They warn that, unless such power differentials are shifted, there will be increased unlikelihood of open dialogue in the Freirean (Freire, 1993) sense of the dialogical concept, where minority voices are heard as cultural exchange, not cultural difference. Zapata-Barrero (2017) makes a convincing argument for interculturalism to bring diverse groups inside the 'unity' aspect of the unity–diversity nexus, rather than their current position of being viewed inside 'diversity'. Such a positioning and action could draw groups closer together and potentially resolve current influences of transnationalism, globalisation, superdiversity and, not least, the rise of xenophobic anti-immigrant political views, against which multiculturalism has no defence.

Transnationalism has challenged traditional views on immigration as a linear process and reinforces the notion of multiculturalism as a complex set of processes and practices. Rouse (1995) challenges the bipolar framework of assimilation in the host society with associated loss of connection with the home society. With reference to identity and immigration in the US he argues for the emergence of "multi-local social settings that span the boundaries of the nation-states involved" (p. 354). Similarly, Spoonley, Bedford and Macpherson (2003) identify issues of identity, belonging and nationality in the transnational networks of Pacific Islanders living in NZ. They argue the circulation of people, capital and ideas present political and immigration/emigration challenges for both NZ and the Pacific homelands. Waters (2006) and Waters and Leung (2013) focus on social capital acquisition through transnationalism, reporting that Hong Kong Chinese higher education students studying in Canada (Waters, 2006) gain greater benefits for return to Hong Kong than students involved in transnational higher education offered in situ in Hong Kong through British programmes (Waters & Leung, 2013).

Links between intercultural education and an internationalised curriculum are easily made because their goals are compatible and complementary. The bridge with internationalisation is in what Kazepides (2012) calls 'education as dialogue', which seeks transformation of character, described by Barnett and Coate (2005) as students in a state of 'being and becoming'. These currently represent aspirational ideas that have yet to be translated into effective intercultural practice.

2.4.3 *Synthesising the first literature field*

The literature review thus far has considered each of the immigrant theories and their reflection in education approaches as discrete entities, whereas the reality is that they overlap or intertwine, present levels of complexity in their similarities and differences, and simultaneously form part of the wider debate on the assimilation–multiculturalism nexus. A reducing distance between assimilation and multiculturalism is argued by scholars (Brubaker, 2001; Gans, 2005; Glazer, 2005; Goldberg, 1994; Kivisto, 2005; Verkuyten, 2011), who suggest that multiculturalists would agree with assimilationists that for a coherent society, certain social values must be shared. The challenge acculturating immigrants may experience, regardless of their preference for an adaptation strategy, is their fit with the national ideology of their new society, raising the question of whether choice exists in reality (Birman, 2011). Berry (1997) was aware of the possible disconnect between ideology and adaptation strategy, noting that when host society attitudes and immigrant group acculturation strategy options are in conflict, the latter have little choice other than adjustment to the dominant culture, although with high levels of acculturative stress. Igoa (1995) recognises a similar tension, reporting from her research with young immigrant children the dissonance between espoused values of multiculturalism in policy and enacted values of assimilation in educational practice.

In terms of the impacts on immigrant students, the literature is quiet on assimilationist education and assimilation as false consciousness, while multicultural education approaches are visible in education policy and practice to a greater or lesser degree. Critical multicultural education fits well with the nature and purpose of higher education but is likely to be evidenced in institutional equity initiatives,

individual courses and staff with the ideological commitment. Finally, and arguably the education approach with potential to change the organisational culture, transform the student and subsequently the world through its graduates, is intercultural education through an inclusive and internationalised curriculum.

In most of the literature on education approaches, the immigrant student learner is invisible, subsumed under the umbrella label of 'diversity', yet these students are affected by the expression and enactment of the education approaches in the learning environments of the mesosystem, to which they respond through the process of acculturation. This is the second literature field to be explored.

2.5 Acculturation in the mesosystem

Literature on the concept and process of acculturation is primarily the work of cultural psychologists (Hernandez, 2009) and focuses on the separate but related psychological and sociocultural adaptation of acculturating groups and individuals (Ward & Kennedy, 1994). Ward and Rana-Deuba (1999) describe the former as emotional well-being as understood within a stress and coping framework, and the latter as the ability to conduct day-to-day social activities. Ward, Okura, Kennedy and Kojima (1998) report a close correlation between sociocultural and psychological problems during initial acculturation experiences, followed by greater variation as positive sociocultural adjustment increases over time, and psychological outcomes may evidence increased acculturative stress.

The terms acculturation and assimilation are sometimes used interchangeably (Sam, 2006); however, while all immigrant groups will experience acculturation, they may not all assimilate. Literature on acculturation theory and associated ethnic identity informs the proximal processes of immigrant students within the mesosystem. A broad approach is taken to cover literature in these fields because specific literature on immigrant student acculturation in higher education learning environments is limited.

2.5.1 *Acculturation theory*

The process of immigrant adaptation to a new society is the subject of acculturation models, and the most highly cited in the literature is Berry's (1992, 1997) acculturation and adaptation model. The model is based on research across diverse ethnic minority immigrant groups (Berry, Kalin, & Taylor, 1976; Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987; Berry & Krishnan, 1992) and presents central concepts of *cultural maintenance* versus *contact and participation* (Berry, 1997, 1992). There is no argument in the literature that acculturation presents a choice to the individual between maintenance of ethnic cultural identity and characteristics, and acceptance and adoption of the dominant group culture. According to Berry, the strength of response results in four *acculturation strategies,* which have been widely accepted, verified and extended through applied research (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Meca et al., 2017). Each strategy evidences related psychological and sociocultural adaptation outcomes.

A strategy of assimilation involves reducing one's own cultural characteristics in favour of close and positive interactions with, and adoption of, the host society cultural characteristics (Berry, 1997). Reports in the literature state that assimilation carries high levels of acculturative stress (Berry, 2005; Ward & Kennedy, 1994) and Schwartz et al. (2010) describe the 'immigrant paradox', in which strong assimilation towards commonality of cultural values and behaviours results in poor physical and mental health outcomes. I would argue that this may be true for assimilating individuals with large cultural distances from the mainstream, who in extreme cases would fit Phelan, Davidson and Cao's (1991) categorisation of hazardous or insurmountable boundary crossings spanning 'different worlds'. However, in cases in which cultural distance is small, congruent and smooth, transitions with minimal behavioural shifts and acculturative stress are possible. Assimilation as false consciousness is unquestioned and invisible in the acculturation literature, although the process of assimilation as an adaptation strategy is commonly accepted.

A strategy of integration involves maintaining one's own culture in the private domain, while also participating with the host society in the public domain (Berry,

1997). Research has confirmed the integration strategy as the preferred option for most immigrating groups, because it carries the least acculturative stress and leads to the most positive psychological and sociocultural outcomes (Meca et al., 2017; Nekby, Rödin, & Özcan, 2009; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013; Ward, 2013b; Ward & Kus, 2012). Dissenting voices, such as that of Rudmin (2003), are in the minority. He questions whether the integration strategy is the most adaptive, claiming an absence of "robust evidence" (p. 3). With a more focused contextual lens, Schotte, Stanat and Edele (2018) question integration outcomes in the assimilative context of Germany. Their research findings with adolescents supported integration but revealed variations in identity integration across immigrant groups, leading them to conclude that assumptions of integration as a universal orientation for the most secure and stable adaptation could be challenged. Others have argued that variations occur within groups or as outcomes of the integration process. Ward and Kus (2012) report that while integration is the preferred adaptation strategy, the level of positive sociocultural and psychological outcome is influenced by intercultural contact rather than adoption of cultural values and behaviours. Stuart and Ward's (2011a) research with Muslim youth in NZ describes a 'balance' of multiple identities as bicultural or multicultural identities are negotiated. Based on her research with Muslim immigrants, Ward (2013b) acknowledges the significant influence of sociopolitical conditions on the acculturation process of different ethnic minority groups, and she calls for further research into the ethnocultural and contextual aspects within Berry's (1997) integration strategy. Benet-Martínez and Haritatos (2005) consider the outcomes of integration as an emerging or unique blend of culture, a synthesis into a single combined culture or remaining as two separate streams. Their research findings conclude that blended bicultural individuals exhibit higher self-esteem and lower acculturative stress than those who keep the two cultures separate. In describing the integration strategy as bicultural, Berry (1992) identifies the private domain (ethnic or multicultural practices) as distinct from the public domain (mainstream or assimilation practices). Taking this to its logical conclusion, education as part of the public domain assumes an assimilationist ideology and practice, in other words, assimilation as false consciousness. In further elaboration (Berry, 1997) he stresses the mutual accommodation required of integration and, referring to

education, states that the dominant group should be prepared to adapt national institutions to meet the needs of all groups in a plural society. Such accommodation has not been reported in the literature related to his acculturation model. While education as a context for acculturation has been the subject of research in the compulsory schooling sector (Darmody et al., 2012; Makarova & Birman, 2016; Vedder & Horenczyk, 2006; Vedder, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Nickmans, 2006), no literature has been sourced that addresses the nature of the education approach within the integration experience. The critical question is why this should be assimilation and not multiculturalism.

Separation as a strategy involves maintaining one's own culture and avoiding interaction with the host society (Berry, 1997). This position is linked to high levels of acculturative stress (Hernandez, 2009), particularly if the reason for separation is an unwillingness on the part of the dominant culture to accept the minority group, which consequently experiences exclusion and discrimination.

A strategy of marginalisation involves losing one's own culture and having no participation with the host society (Berry, 1997), which leads to highly unstable psychological and sociocultural outcomes, with high levels of acculturative stress (Hernandez, 2009). This strategy has been strongly critiqued and questioned as to its existence as an adaptive strategy (Birman, 2011; Ward & Geeraert, 2016). Nevertheless, the traumatic dislocation experienced by some migrants who have a sense of belonging to two worlds is aptly described by Goldin (2002) in emotional terms of "mourning the loss … nostalgia … transition of identity" (p. 5). One concludes that if adaptation is unsuccessful, the immigrant may end up belonging to neither world.

Berry's (1992) acculturation framework (see Figure 2.3) summarises the acculturation process, highlighting two major acculturation concepts.

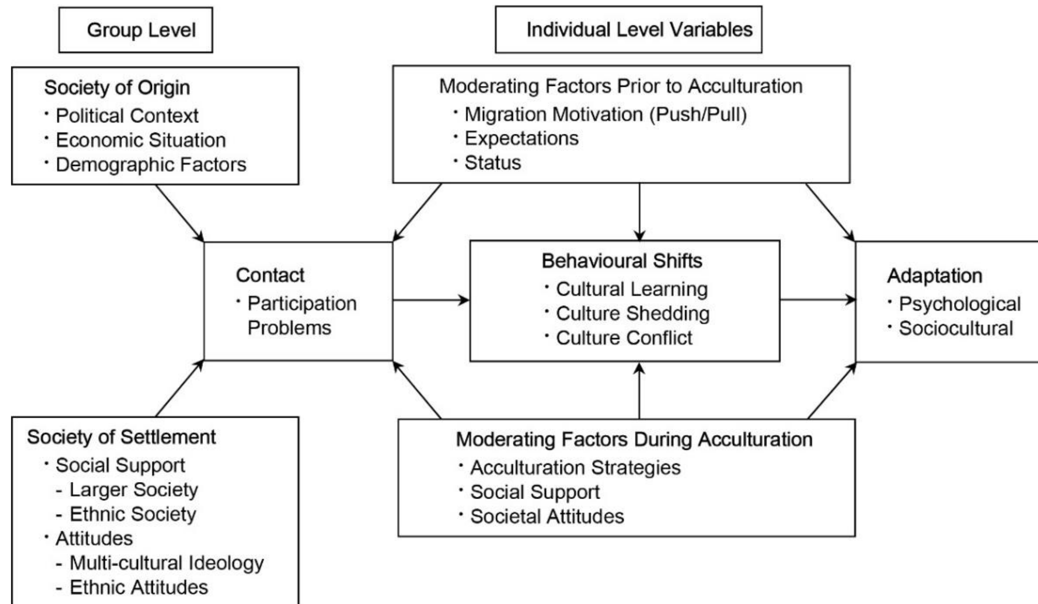


Figure 2.3: Berry's acculturation framework

(Source: Berry, 1992, p. 83)

First, *behavioural shifts* occur through *culture shedding* and *culture learning*. The degree of such shifts is frequently related to *culture conflict,* itself a measure of cultural distance between ethnic minority and host cultures. Second, acknowledging the variability of the acculturation process, Berry includes in the model a set of situational factors that influence group-level acculturation and a set of moderating factors that have an impact at the individual level. Schwartz et al. (2010) argue that increasing cultural distance experienced by immigrants from non-traditional source countries presents challenges related to the 'context of reception' not experienced in the unidirectional assimilation assumed for US immigrants from traditional source countries. It is not surprising that individual and contextual factors have become a common subject of acculturation research (Schotte et al., 2018; Stuart & Ward, 2011b; Titzmann & Fuligni, 2015), confirming the importance of Berry's (1992) variables and moderating factors.

Berry acknowledges the work of other contemporary scholars in the field and relates it to his 1997 model: Graves (1967) for group and individual level changes, and Ward and Kennedy (1994) on adjustment as part of the contact appraisal stage. He further notes differences in terminology in the literature that align with his concepts, citing

social skills acquisition (Furnham & Bochner, 1986) as similar to behavioural shifts, *culture shock* (Oberg, 1960) as similar to acculturative stress and *bicultural* (Cameron & Lalonde, 1994; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993) as similar to integration.

Berry's (1992, 1997) model has triggered a depth of critique that has served to advance the field. A reflection of social change is noted in the shift from the assumption of unidirectional immigrant change (Berry, 1997) to bidirectional change experienced by both immigrant and dominant cultures (Leong, 2014) and even multidirectional change within heterogeneous societies with no clearly defined dominant culture (Titzmann & Fuligni, 2015). Berry (2001, 2009) has continued work on refining and defending his model. A body of literature has emerged on cultural fit, reflected in ease (or not) of acculturation with the host society and reflected in acculturation orientations (Rohmann & van Randenborgh, 2008; Schiefer, Möllering, & Daniel, 2012). Ward and Masgoret (2006) have taken a culture learning approach to acculturation in studying the nature of a sociocultural adaptation, focusing on the importance of language proficiency and understanding of communication norms and values for effective intercultural and social interaction. Kosic (2006) acknowledges the impact of individual differences, such as personality, motivation, self-esteem and self or other orientation, as potential risk or protection factors for acculturation.

The application of Berry's (1992, 1997) model in acculturation psychology research with immigrant groups has been dominated by quantitative methodologies. Based on the literature reviewed for this topic, research at a national and group level is dominated by correlational or experimental design with standardised scales, questionnaire surveys and statistical test analyses (Abdulahad, Graham, Montelpare, & Brownlee, 2014; Berry et al., 2006; Conway, 2014; Demes & Geeraert, 2014; Grant & Robertson, 2014; Navas, Rojasb, Garcia, & Pumaresd, 2007; Roblain, Azzi, & Licata, 2016; Sam, 2000); measurement of individual acculturation (Zane & Mak, 2003) is focused on assessing behaviours and attitudes, with differentiated results depending on the nature of the question posed (Berry & Sabatier, 2011). Increasingly, discussion is centring on the impact and response within and across different ethnic groups, and the complex interplay of factors on the individual who is acculturating. Chirkov (2009) leads a well-founded critique of quantitative researchers (including Berry), whom he

criticises for their preference for positivist research that seeks to test and explain acculturation as if it were a universal law and often without useful application. In his review of 42 journal articles, only one article followed the interpretive social sciences, seeking to understand individual meanings constructed through experiences. He makes the case that an ontology and epistemology that centres on the subjectivity of immigrants' experience and their construction of meaning during acculturation fits better with a qualitative and interpretive approach, which can accommodate contextual factors. In this, he is supported by Rudmin (2003) and those who take a stronger sociocultural approach (Leong, 2014; Phelan et al., 1991; Stuart & Ward, 2011a).

NZ research on acculturation has been led by Ward with a strong leaning towards Berry's (1997, 2005) acculturation strategies (Ward, 2008, 2013b; Ward & Geeraert, 2016; Ward & Kus, 2012), acculturative stress (Ward & Kennedy, 1992) and social cultural learning (Ward & Masgoret, 2006). Other researchers have taken an interest in the education sector: Barnard (2009) focused on a single immigrant student in the classroom, Ho (1995) studied the adaptation strategies of secondary school Asian students and Jhagroo (2011) studied the acculturation of immigrant students in the mathematics secondary school classroom. No research has been located on acculturation of immigrant students in NZ higher education learning environments.

Apart from acculturation for psychological and sociocultural adaptation, immigrants also confront questions of ethnic identity in the new environment. This closely linked concept and related process of ethnic identity development is the subject of the next section.

2.5.2 *Ethnic identity theory*

There is general agreement that the two concepts of ethnic identity and acculturation are closely related (Cuéllar, Nyberg, Maldonado, & Roberts, 1997; Liebkind, 2006; Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001). Ethnic identity is recognised as a multidimensional social construct based on a sense of self (Brettell, 2015) and a subjective sense of group membership (Phinney, 2003), including deep cultural

influences such as language, religion, nationality and ethnicity (Liebkind, 2006) and a shifting base for self-identity in the face of altered contexts (Brettell, 2015).

Ethnic identity and acculturation centres on the twin concepts of ethnic self-identification and ethnic identity development triggered by acculturation. Research suggests that strength of self-labelling by ethnic identity (e.g. Chinese) declines from first to second generations, and a hyphenated bicultural ethnicity (e.g. Chinese-New Zealander) increases as ethnic language ability and cultural involvement reduces (Cameron & Lalonde, 1994; Liebkind, 2006; Rosenthal & Feldman, 1992). Phinney (2003) notes that labels can be ascribed by others regardless of one's own self-identification or degree of acculturation, frequently associated with stereotyping and discrimination. Research by Manuela and Anae (2017) on Pacific youth ethnic identity and well-being noted that ethnic identity can be a protective barrier against negative experiences as well as exacerbate such experiences. Brettell and Reed-Danahay (2012) argue that it is at the boundaries of contact that negotiation and construction of migrant identity occurs.

Dislocated environments (such as those experienced in immigration) trigger a renewed search for personal and ethnic identity (Phinney, 1990) along similar lines to Erickson's (1968) psychosocial adolescent stage of 'identity versus role confusion' (as cited in Duchesne & McMaugh, 2016). Phinney's (1989) ethnic identity theory supports a three-stage model for acculturating immigrants. In the initial or unexamined stage, the majority culture is preferred. Rouse (1995) would disagree as his research findings suggest that at the point of arrival ethnic culture is strong in the face of the dominant culture. He noted that Mexican migrants' personhood and cultural collectivity on encountering a different set of US identities, shifted from a world in which identity was assumed to one in which they were confronted with new understandings of self and group. Phinney's (1989) second stage involves an ethnic identity search, exploring one's own culture in the face of a different culture, which often leads to a deeper understanding and appreciation of one's own ethnicity. This is supported by Manuela and Anae (2017) and Zdrenka, Yogeeswaran, Stronge and Sibley (2015), who researched Asian and Pacific ethnic identity and national identity profiles. The third and final stage is an achieved ethnic identity or internalisation,

usually involving an acceptance of being different (Phinney, 1989, 1990). This conclusion is supported by the research findings of Webber, McKinley, and Hattie (2013) and Zdrenka et al. (2015). Aligned with the integrated position, and based on their research with adolescent minorities, Phinney, Ferguson and Tate (1997) hold that with an increasingly secure ethnic identity, acceptance of other groups increases. Liebkind (2006) cautions that a non-critical approach should be used, citing the importance of context that reflects variations across immigrating groups and across national settings and stressing that ethnic identity should be recognised as one aspect of acculturation and not as synonymous with the process itself.

Cultural identity, a sense of belonging to the ethnic or national group, is a measure of acculturation and a feature of the literature. Phinney et al.'s (2001) bidirectional model aligns with Berry's (1997) adaptation strategies in that a choice is made between the same two dimensions of retention or adaptation of one's own ethnicity and national ethnicity, with integration the favoured outcome in a bicultural identity. Zimmermann, Zimmermann and Constant (2007) question the linear concept and propose three possible paths of adjustment, assuming all start in separation: towards assimilation, integration or marginalisation. Stuart and Ward (2011b), studying ethnocultural identity conflict predictors in first-generation South Asian immigrant youth, highlight the complex identity issues (self-esteem, family cohesion, adolescent identity developmental stage) to be negotiated and balanced as ethnic and national identity are explored. While Phinney (1990) notes that the indicators of ethnic and national identity may be related, she stresses that interactional relationships cannot be assumed and notes that research studies often use overlapping indicators that assume such a relationship. Such is the case in the Berry et al. (2006) International Comparative Study of Ethnocultural Youth (ICSEY) research, in which overlapping indicators measure acculturation preferences and ethnic identity profiles. Drawing on these data, Sam, Vedder, Ward and Horenczyk (2006) identify four discrete acculturation profiles based on strength of ethnic or national identity: *integration* (strong national and ethnic identities), *ethnic* (strong ethnic language proficiency and peer contact), *national* (assimilation characteristics) and *diffuse* (low on ethnic identity but used ethnic language). Unsurprisingly, based on the common data set,

these bear a close relationship to Berry's (1997) discrete acculturation adaptation strategies and are acknowledged as doing so in his later work (Berry, 2003).

Many research studies stress factors that affect individual outcomes in the complex interaction between ethnic identity and acculturation. These include generational status (Phinney, 2003), discriminatory attitudes of majority groups (Manuela & Anae, 2017; Pilvisto & Valk, 2019), immigrant perceptions of ethnic identity barriers (Gonzales-Backen et al., 2018), time since immigration, individual settlement experiences (Catalano, Fox, & Vandeyar, 2016) and gender differences (Nekby et al., 2009). Ethnic identity issues, therefore, should be considered related, but independent of the acculturation process, because ethnic identity development reflects greater continuity than acculturation.

If acculturation and ethnic identity development are the 'process' component of the PPCT model (Bronfenbrenner, 1993) in the mesosystem, then 'person' and 'context' are the focus of the microsystem.

2.5.3 *Higher education students in the microsystem*

The individual is the immigrant student, with their unique characteristics and instigative attributes (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Kosic, 2006) and culture that she/he brings to the proximal processes within the context of the learning environment. The context of the learning environment is experienced at a holistic level, including physical, cognitive, emotional and social dimensions (Barnett & Coate, 2005), and coloured by the institution's valuing and recognition of diversity (Kim & Díaz, 2013). The view that learning is identified with the formal curriculum is judged too narrow by Barnett and Coate (2005) and Jones and Killick (2007), who suggest that the student learning experience is holistic and influenced by all that happens in the formal, informal and hidden curricula. The spatial dimensions of the higher education learning environment ranges through formal spaces of lecture halls, laboratories and the library, into informal learning spaces of online and digital learning in virtual spaces. According to Mills and Craftl (2014) informal learning includes "everyday and spontaneous learning experiences" (p. 1), suggesting that learning within the informal and hidden curriculum will occur at the margins as well

as outside defined learning environments, an argument developed by Sellers and Souter (2012). Such informal learning in a higher education organisation will also occur in social and recreational spaces. Thus, the boundary between formal and informal learning environments is likely to be blurred, and contexts for acculturation processes will be provided in multiple environments. This literature review does not set out to explore the parameters of any of these learning environments but focuses on research contributions to the field of immigrant students in higher education, before moving into the specific domain of immigrant students in higher education formal learning environments.

There is a general view in the literature that immigrant students and higher education is a field that is underexamined and under-researched, with gaps in understanding the nuances of ethnicity, language, gender, immigration experience and institutional policy on the acculturation of immigrant students (Barnett & Coate, 2005; Kim & Díaz, 2013; Porland & Pearce, 2002; Teranishi, Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2011). Kim and Díaz (2013) pose the following pertinent questions: How do institutions help immigrants adapt to the higher education environment? How are they served in practice? How creative are programmes in serving the unique set of challenges these students face? There is little indication in the literature that these questions have been answered.

Literature that focuses on immigrant students in higher education is limited. Crozier, Reay, Clayton, Colliander and Grinstead's (2008) US study examined university provision in the face of widening participation, Harris and Chonaill (2016) studied the impact of English language proficiency on academic achievement and equality of opportunity for immigrant English second language (ESL) learners in an Irish institute of technology, and Adamuti-Trache (2011) in Canada focused on the value and motivation of higher education to open employment opportunities and career pathways. Acculturation is mentioned in three studies. Birani and Lehmann (2013) uncover the significance of social capital bonding and social bridging as part of the adaptation process for Asian immigrants in a Canadian university. Roblain et al. (2016) report that immigrants choosing assimilation as an acculturation strategy are more acceptable to their local peers in Belgium. Catalano et al. (2016), in a qualitative

narrative study with postgraduate immigrant students in the US and South Africa, find similarities in the metaphors they used to describe the challenges of new learning contexts, noting the resilience and identity development of immigrants. It appears that while an immigrant focus does exist, it is not deeply developed as a field of interest in higher education.

It might be possible to generalise immigrant acculturation experiences from those of international students, because one might assume that for recent immigrants from similar international origins, particularly for ESL speakers, the experience would be similar and familiar. According to Madge, Raghuram and Noxolo (2009) traditional literature has taken a deficit lens to the international student experience rather than pursuing an ‘engaged pedagogy’ characterised by care and responsibility. Thus, Cao, Zhu and Meng (2016) identify constraints such as language and social integration differences between Chinese internationals and local students in France, while Li (2004) notes the academic language skill challenges faced by Chinese international and immigrant ESL higher education students in Canada as they confront educational and cultural differences in the learning environment. Relationships between international and domestic student groups features in the literature. Sawir’s (2013) research in Australia reports that domestic students avoided opportunities for intercultural engagement with international students, but lecturers were more responsive. In addition, in Australia, Guillen and Ji (2011) used trust-based activities to explore discrimination between domestic and Asian international students, finding significant discrimination by the home group against Asians. Supporting some of the Australian findings, Brunton and Jeffrey’s (2014) research with international student learners in an NZ university found that the lack of competency of staff and local students in intercultural communication was a barrier to the successful acculturation of the international students. Li and Campbell (2008) endorse this view in their findings on international students’ views of group work, which highlight the challenge of crossing the cultural divide, rather than being socialised into the culture of group work. These views are reflected in a national survey of student satisfaction in NZ, as Ward and Masgoret (2004) report that international students’ satisfaction rates are lower than those of their domestic counterparts; they acknowledged a sense of

inclusion, but felt their cultures were not referenced in class. The current debate in the literature around postcoloniality and ethics of care and responsibility afforded to international students (Madge et al., 2009), including the politics of international student mobility on organisations (Waters, 2018; Yang, 2019) challenges the acculturation argument for assimilation of international and immigrant students into the formal learning environments of higher education. An engaged pedagogy as described by Madge et al. (2009), which recognises the international (and immigrant) student as an integral part of curriculum and pedagogy, will benefit all students.

Recognition of the impact of the learning environment on the immigrant student as 'person' (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) is addressed in a small literature field, most of which turns to qualitative approaches with a focus on student voice. Shanker, Ip and Khalema (2017) call for a critical pedagogy to address their finding that Canadian indigenous and immigrant students describe a learning and teaching culture of ongoing racism in which they feel marginalised and silenced. Lee and Sheared (2002) urge educators to understand cultural concepts such as cultural discontinuity (cultural gap or distance) and cultural ecology (the immigrant 'story') to socialise students more positively in the learning environment and reduce the impacts such concepts have on student self-esteem, self-efficacy and even achievement. The value of early socialisation of immigrants to make sense of the learning environment is a theme in the literature including skills and behaviours in academic discourse (Alfred, 2013). Several studies report on the impact of immigrant students on their domestic peers' achievement levels. Severiens and Wolff (2008) report that immigrants enhanced the quality of learning. Svetlana, Lissitsa, Shavit and Ayalon (2016) report that Israeli immigrants slightly increased the likelihood of domestic students earning matriculation certificates, and Hermansen and Birkelund's (2015) research in Norway describes immigrants positively influencing the achievement levels of their local peers.

Again, the literature addresses international student issues in the formal learning environment, some of which could possibly be generalised to immigrant students, particularly those experiencing a large cultural gap during the initial acculturation process. This includes challenges of critical thinking skills (Manalo, Kusumi, Kyasu,

Michita, & Tanaka, 2013). Language challenges, such as linguistic capacity, discipline-specific discourse, and familiarity with the expectations of the academic context (Borland & Pearce, 2002) as well as cultural distance are often expressed through passiveness and silence (Alfred, 2013; Chataway & Berry, 1989), which is interpreted by educators as a deficit in the student (Holmes, 2004). Hsieh (2007), a Hong Kong Chinese student, describes feeling invisible, ignored and disregarded in a western class, leading her to interpret and internalise the message that she is deficient.

Narrowing the field of literature to NZ, research on immigrant students in higher education is limited to two theses. Smith (2010) in her honours study, explored the experiences of identity and cultural adjustments of immigrant students transitioning into an Auckland university, and Jiang (2005a) undertook a case study of higher education Chinese international and immigrant students at an Auckland university in her doctoral work. There is a clear gap in the literature on research of immigrant students in the university formal learning environment in NZ and elsewhere.

2.5.4 *Synthesising the second literature field*

The literature review has considered the contextual influences on an immigrant student in the formal learning environment. In the first literature field, assimilation as false consciousness was tracked through the ideologies of assimilation and multiculturalism, and their expression in immigrant theory and related education approaches. The second literature field has focused specifically on acculturation and ethnic identity, again identifying assimilation as false consciousness (while invisible) as an influencing factor, particularly in the integration strategy and ethnic identity profile. The third literature field considers the 'so what?' question of the literature review by introducing the concept of internationalising the curriculum at home as a counterbalance to the concept of assimilation as false consciousness.

2.6 Internationalising the curriculum at home

Leask (2013) grounds the aspirational nature of interculturalism in her definition of an internationalised curriculum: "the incorporation of an international and intercultural dimension into the content of the curriculum as well as the teaching and learning arrangements and support services of a programme of study" (p. 106).

Others would argue that such a curriculum has the potential to offer more, citing global graduates with global citizenship skills (Clifford & Montgomery, 2017; de Wit, 2010), a curriculum for transformation reflecting values, attitudes and competencies beyond curriculum content (Barnett & Coate, 2005) and drawing on social and emotional intelligences (Dulabaum, 2012). Several authors see the transformational potential of an internationalised curriculum to lift a university's reputation domestically and internationally (Knight, 2004; Leask & Carroll, 2011) because such an education approach would activate the processes of "international connectivity, social connectivity and intercultural learning" (De Vita, 2007, p. 165).

The subject of internationalising the curriculum at the home campus is an emerging field in the literature (Dunne, 2011; Kelm & Teichler, 2007; Mestenhauser & Ellingboe, 1998; Soria & Troisi, 2014), with Leask recognised as a leader (De Vita, 2007). A strong theme in the literature is the value of such a curriculum for all students, not only international students, who are usually the target group (Haigh, 2002; Leask & Bridge, 2013). Jones and Killick (2007) make the point that domestic students may benefit more from such an education than international students, who are often bilingual and have already functioned across cultures. These foreign-born students are recognised as bringing potential resources into higher education curricula (De Vita, 2007; Harman, 2005; Leask, 2001; Stier, 2003). Immigrants are specifically mentioned by Brown and Jones (2007), who note that domestic students, many of whom would be first- or second-generation immigrants, increasingly present a diverse range of cultural backgrounds. Jiang (2010) describes this group as 'internal internationals', as compared with 'external internationals', noting that both are a consequence of globalisation, they have similarities in carrying their culture into new learning environments and both acculturate to a new host culture. Universities, she concludes, need to be responsive in their accommodation of these new demographic groups.

The content of an internationalised curriculum evidences similarities across the literature (Ardakani, Yarmohammadian, Ali, Abari, & Fathi, 2011) with arguments for students to learn a foreign language (Cooper, 2007); achieve competency in intercultural skills, knowledge and attitudes (Besley, 2012; Deardorff, 2006; Harvey,

2018; Leask, 2001; Leask & Carroll, 2011; Stier, 2003; Stone, 2006); and include international topics and issues, as well as experiences in overseas settings for professional practice (Leask, 2001; Roskvist, Harvey, Corder, & Stacey, 2014). While not part of the literature on internationalisation, it could be argued that a commitment to resourcing English language support for ESL students for positive outcomes rather than from a deficit perspective should be part of an internationalised curriculum (Borland & Pearce, 2002; Humphreys, 2017; Roach & Roskvist, 2007). Clifford and Montgomery (2017) argue that an add-on to existing curricula of international elements is unlikely to change worldview or behaviours. They support a redesign of curricula with strong structural and intercultural foci to achieve transformative learning for global citizenship, and argue for a responsiveness to indigenous, diaspora and minority voices at the local level. I support such an approach as it would include critical pedagogies as a transformative teaching and learning strategy for all students. Clifford and Montgomery (2017) make the pertinent point that this approach would necessitate a philosophical and structural review at an organisational level. Jiang (2008) would agree and contends that changes must be reflected beyond the internationalised curriculum itself, through all levels of the university and beyond. Only one aspect of such change involves staff professional development, essential to moving such curricula forward, particularly in relation to discipline focus (Leask, 2013) and deficit theorising regarding cultural difference (Biggs, 2003; Bishop et al., 2009; Haigh, 2002; Leask & Bridge, 2013), and Danylchuk (2011) goes so far as to challenge staff to internationalise themselves.

While internationalisation of the curriculum does have a values base with a focus on developing attitudes of openness, responsibility, ethics and social justice aligned with global citizenship, it equally has been advanced and enacted for pragmatic reasons aligned with the competitive and economic drivers associated with globalisation, international migration and the knowledge economy (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Jiang, 2010; Tremblay, 2005). De Vita (2007) is critical of such market-driven initiatives and their failure to deliver a student experience through what he terms ‘osmosis’ of intercultural interaction. Haigh (2002) agrees and argues for an inclusive curriculum as he identifies deficit models in internationalised curriculum that have been

designed to “bring foreigners up to speed” (p. 57) through benevolent multicultural approaches. De Vita (2007) agrees with such deficit underpinnings and critiques Biggs’s (2003) ‘stereotypical misconceptions’ about international students, arguing instead for a culturally inclusive pedagogy at the core of an internationalised curriculum with a holistic approach towards what he terms a ‘global imagination’. This is, in fact, Biggs’s (2003) central argument against deficit thinking and for educative teaching that places the student at the centre of the curriculum.

While arguments for an internationalised curriculum on the home campus are easily made, home culture needs to be considered. Moon’s (2016) research in South Korea revealed that international students are marginalised in the learning and social environment by the dominant ethnic nationalism. Likewise, Abdul-Mumin’s (2016) research findings in Brunei reported that curriculum developers had strong views that internationalisation perspectives should fit with the existing culture, religion and political context. In NZ, too, national pressures on higher education institutions to prioritise Māori equity initiatives as part of biculturalism (Strathdee, 2013) constrain interculturalism in a country that not only lacks a multicultural policy (Jiang, 2005b) but has sparse literature on internationalising the curriculum, apart from attention to specific curriculum elements such as global citizenship (Grimwood, 2018) and intercultural competencies (Harvey, 2018).

2.7 Synthesising the literature

The apparent shift from assimilation to pluralism has been critiqued and an argument has been developed that assimilation continues its hold on mainstream education through the concept of false consciousness, and thus ethnic minorities are socialised to accept the hegemonic discourse of the majority or dominant culture group. Multiculturalism has failed to displace assimilation and has not delivered on its promises to accommodate diversity in meaningful policy and practice. It has, however, offered a platform for critical multiculturalists who reject assimilation and its socialising processes. The rhetoric of critical multiculturalism is strong on assimilation because false consciousness and intentions for social action and transformation of society are well founded but ineffective in practice. The emerging

intercultural movement provides hope in an increasingly culturally polarised world but currently is more aspirational than action oriented. Its basic premise of intercultural engagement with equality of culture groups offers an opportunity for the values-based, social and cultural drivers of an internationalised curriculum to make a difference for all students. For the immigrant student, the process of acculturation and associated ethnic identity development occurs within this broad sociocultural and ideological context, reflecting a fit with Bronfenbrenner's (1993) socio-ecological model.

A number of gaps in the literature have been identified. Bronfenbrenner's model has not been applied to immigrant students in higher education. The related relationship of influences from national through organisation to learning environments and individual students has been touched on in part but not fully developed in the literature. No research on immigrant student experiences of contrasting learning environments over the period of their acculturation has been identified. A gap reflecting the voices of immigrant students on the value and nature of an internationalised curriculum has been noted. Finally, no literature has been identified on immigrant students in higher education formal learning environments in general or in NZ specifically, the subject of this thesis.

Most literature on immigrant acculturation has taken a quantitative approach with statistical analyses, and there have been far fewer qualitative studies reporting the student voice. My research topic has the potential to contribute to these literature gaps as it explores the *process* of acculturation and ethnic identity expressed in the *person* and their learning environment *context* through the research question: *How does the concept of assimilation as false consciousness explain the immigrant students' acculturation experiences in the higher education formal learning environment?*

2.8 Chapter summary

The literature review has used Bronfenbrenner's (1993) framework to structure assimilationist and multicultural immigration theories and related education approaches, with the aim of providing the context within which acculturation

processes occur for the higher education immigrant student. Greater attention has been paid to literature on acculturation theory and research, and related ethnic identity theory to support the research design. Literature on internationalising the curriculum has been introduced and linked to interculturalism to indicate a potential way forward for culturally inclusive practice in the formal learning environment. Gaps in the literature have been identified in higher education immigrant acculturation studies as justification for the research topic. The focus of Chapter 3 is on the research design.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Grey (2014) contends that internal coherence and consistency across all elements of the research design should be led by the research question. Crotty (1998) agrees and argues that triggered by the research question, the design framework starts with methods, and moves through methodology and theoretical perspectives to epistemology. While I concur that the research question does naturally lead one to consider methods rather than epistemology, I argue that the disciplined approach of justifying ontology, epistemology and axiology first ensures a visibility and coherency of the high-level perspective through all elements of the research design. This chapter states the research question and presents the subquestions, then follows my preferred sequence through the design and concludes with ethical considerations, quality and trustworthiness.

3.2 Research questions

The title of the thesis, *Acculturation of Immigrant Students in a Higher Education Learning Environment: Assimilation as 'False Consciousness',* highlights the focus on acculturation concepts and the role of assimilation as false consciousness in the immigrant student learning environment experience. This concept is foregrounded in my main research question because it was triggered by my professional practice observations in higher education and was a lens through which data were viewed. To avoid bias and critique of leading the research process to this conclusion, the research subquestions were designed to foreground the participant understandings and voice prior to my own interpretation, explanation and recommendations. I intended to remain true to Galman's (2009) call to 'faithfully' represent and privilege the participant voice, while also engaging in the 'artistry' of crafting the research story.

Main research question:

How does the concept of assimilation as false consciousness explain the immigrant student's acculturation experiences in the higher education formal learning environment?

Subquestions:

1. *How do immigrant students' perceptions of their initial and current learning environments reflect their acculturation experiences?*
2. *How do participants' views on acculturation concepts signal their expectations of cultural inclusion in the higher education formal learning environment?*
3. *What are the views of immigrant students on the value and nature of an internationalised curriculum at home?*
4. *What is the theoretical underpinning that links immigrant students' acculturation experiences with wider policy and ideology, and how does this apply to the New Zealand context?*
5. *How might a higher education institution be responsive to immigrants' invisibility, if it values diversity and student voice?*

3.3 Researcher positionality

3.3.1 *Ontology and epistemology*

My ontological position is one of critical realism, in that I believe the natural world exists outside of human experience and subjective meaning making. To contextualise this within my research topic, humans are distributed across the globe and it is a fact that people have moved from a home location elsewhere to an NZ location. All else is a construction, whether it be the creation of national states, 'immigration' as theory, policy and process, or the immigrant acculturation experience itself. Therefore, I am a social constructionist in my epistemology because I believe that knowing about the world is a social construction with meaning making through sensory and cognitive constructs that are interpreted via socialisation within a culture. Crotty (1998) contends that such an ontological and epistemological positioning makes sense, because social constructionism is comfortable with a world

that is “at once natural and social” (p. 57). Maxwell (2012) names this stance ‘critical realism’, a label I accept because his understanding of the term fits the nature and spirit of this research.

Furthermore, within the social sphere, I agree with Crotty’s (1998) view that each of us operates at two levels. First, we are inextricably bound in the ways of knowing (worldview) of our culture group, reflected in values, behaviours and interpretation of experience as part of that group’s way of ‘being’. Crotty terms this collective meaning making ‘constructionism’ in contrast to ‘constructivism’, which he holds to be individual meaning making. I take a critical stance on constructivism, believing that individuals can have a transformed or altered consciousness following insight into their socialised beliefs and behaviours, as in the case of false consciousness. Maeve’s (1997) argument that human beings can self-reflect and critique their perceived reality as the knowers of that reality further supports this constructivist position, which accords the individual a degree of fluidity within culture. I follow the advice of Gubrium and Holstein (2014), who suggest that the terms constructionism and constructivism are used interchangeably, and for pragmatic reasons one should be selected and used consistently. I will therefore use the term constructionism to cover both group and individual social construction of meaning.

In applying this social constructionist approach to the research, I believed that the immigrant participants would reflect their group-level cultural ways of knowing and interpreting the NZ learning environment, while they demonstrated individual meaning making of their unique immigrant acculturation experiences within the microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1993) of the higher education learning environment. Furthermore, I acknowledge that as a white South African-New Zealander I bring my group cultural way of knowing as well as my individual interpretation of my perceived reality, expressed through my experiences and assumptions. This is the social construction of reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1967) within which I aim to understand and explain the immigrant learner’s acculturation experience.

Figure 3.1 depicts the organisation of this chapter, reflecting a coherent flow from ontology and epistemology through axiology, to theoretical perspectives and into methodology and methods.

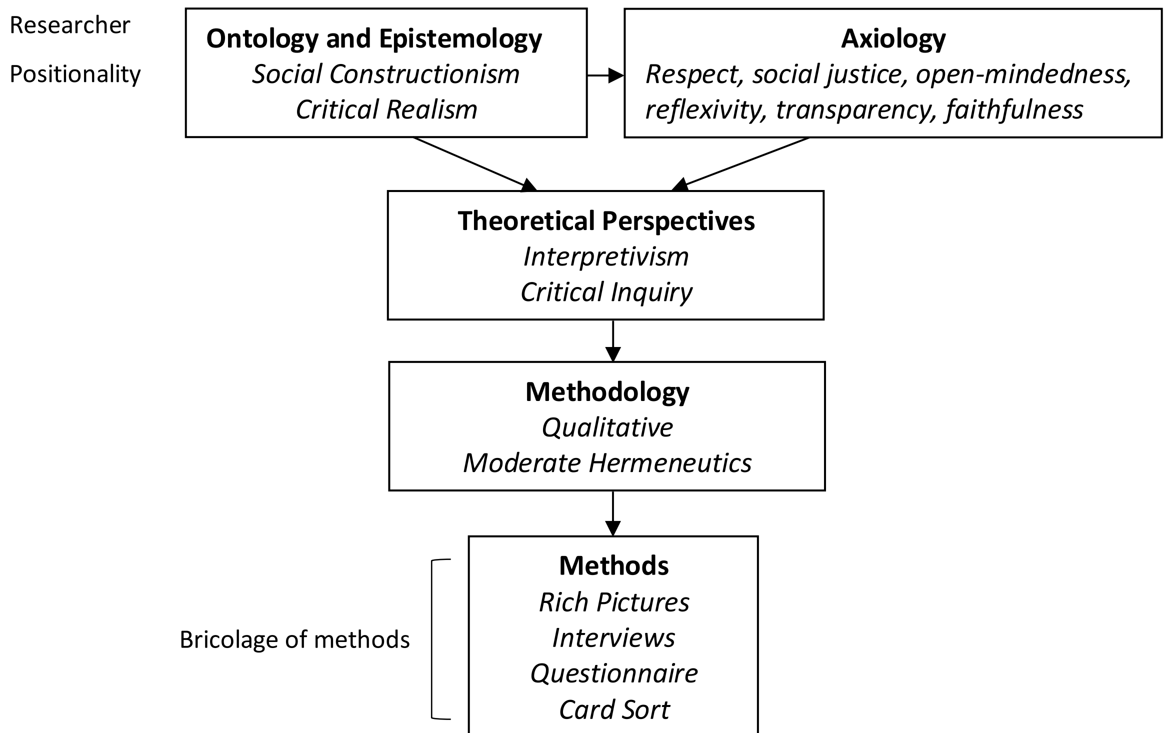


Figure 3.1: Research design

3.3.2 *Axiology*

I agree with Greenbank (2003) that research is value laden. My research design reflects my professional values of respect for immigrant learners and social justice for their inclusion in curriculum and pedagogy in recognition of their potential contribution to interculturalism. I acknowledge my belief that immigrant learners are invisible because of assimilation into the dominant group through the concept of assimilation as false consciousness, and I therefore hold open-mindedness and critical reflexivity as important values to question this assumption, particularly during the analysis phase. I am mindful of the potential power position I hold and the influence I may hae through my network of relationships with strategic leaders across in the university in my position as Head of School of Education, and Associate Dean Learning and Teaching in the Faculty of Culture and Society. I believe this influence can be positive in the dissemination of findings and influence on policy and practice,

however I am equally aware of the need to maintain the highest ethical standards in my research conduct, as such power can be open to abuse. Furthermore, as an insider researcher at AUT, I am aware of my perception of a distance between espoused and enacted values regarding diversity in university policy, and that transparency of this bias is necessary. While I acknowledge an epistemology of acceptance and respect of knowing and knowledge associated with social constructionism, my acknowledgement is tempered by a critical interpretation of culture with its constructed hegemonic discourses of power, structural inequities and social reproduction processes. My positionality is reflected in the theoretical perspectives underlying the research.

3.3.3 *Theoretical perspectives: Interpretivism and critical inquiry*

According to Gubrium and Holstein (2014), most constructionist research attempts to address the question of *how* social reality is constructed or experienced, or *what* the experiences (often hidden elements and organisation) of that reality might be. As reflected in the research questions, I move between the *how* and *what* as I explore the individual immigrant acculturation experience within a university context, which reflects the broader sociocultural and historico-political context of NZ.

Constructionism as an epistemology incorporates a wide range of theoretical perspectives for understanding the social world, ranging from interpretivism through critical inquiry to postmodernism, each in turn becoming more critical and subjective in their focus on the object of study. The philosophical stance that informs my methodology is interpretivism, through a moderate hermeneutic approach (Gallagher, 1992).

Crotty's (1998) description of interpretivism suggests an approach that is uncritical of culture, and cultural norms and practices are unquestioned in relation to understanding and explaining the "social life-world" (p. 67). He identifies three main streams of interpretivism: symbolic interactionism, phenomenology and hermeneutics. In light of my research purpose, symbolic interactionism and its related methodologies of ethnography and grounded theory are developed from assumptions different from those I hold. These both seek to understand and

represent the participant’s interpretation of experience without the subjective involvement of the researcher. Phenomenology also does not fit my epistemology because it seeks the participant’s lived experiences (Creswell, 2007) with the researcher in an objective role, ‘bracketing’ the researcher’s interpretation in favour of the participant’s interpretation of a phenomenon. I am interested in understanding what lies behind the narrative to explain the immigrant’s experience rather than the phenomenon of acculturation itself. The interpretivist approach I follow is that of hermeneutics expressed in a broad view of text as spoken, written, art and action, and with the purpose, as articulated by Grant and Giddings (2002), to understand the subjective ‘truth’ of the participant as well as the interpretation of the researcher, who may perceive the participant’s self-understandings in ways that might not be apparent to the participant. The relationship is intersubjective and therefore requires critical reflexivity and transparency by the researcher of what could be regarded as her dominant interpretive position. Interpretivism serves the status quo because it seeks to understand and explain the social world from the viewpoint of the participant. The interpretive approach has value for my research, but in my view, does not go far enough to critique the culture within which the experience is situated. As my topic has a social justice driver, I also at times reference a critical inquiry lens.

Critical inquiry challenges the perceived norms of the social world and assumes we live in an unjust world characterised by social inequities, such as those of race and ethnicity. It seeks change for (and by) those who are oppressed and marginalised by the hegemonic discourses imposed by those with power (Freire, 1993; McLaren, 1994). Grant and Giddings (2002) support Cocks’s (1989) argument that critical social theory shifts from the interpretivist focus on lived experience, towards a level of abstraction because the truth of a participant’s experience may be the result of a false consciousness of an imposed hegemonic reality. The relationship between researcher and participant in this approach moves towards co-construction, collaboration and power sharing, with the researcher expressing her beliefs about the social structure needing change to raise awareness for transformational insight and action. My justification for selecting this approach to my topic rather than any

other arises from my informal professional observations that immigrant students bring rich cultural resources to their learning; however, they become invisible in the formal curriculum and pedagogy because higher education reflects the hegemonic forces of acculturation through assimilation.

Berry's (1997) acculturation theory has been commonly used for immigrant groups using a positivist approach and quantitative methods; however, the theory can equally accommodate constructionism and interpretivism if applied at the individual immigrant level, such as in this qualitative research study. The intentional use of two contrasting methods—a structured questionnaire juxtaposed with rich picture drawings—purposefully aims to challenge assumptions and identify contradictions in the data across the quantitative–qualitative divide of interpretivism.

Bronfenbrenner's (1993) socio-ecological theory fits well with a critical realist ontology because his whole system rests on social relationships within a context (including culture) and time. The interactions between elements of the socially constructed systems and the immigrant student may suggest a deterministic interpretation of social structure; however, the agency of the student through bidirectional relationships in the mesosystem displaces a deterministic or predicted outcome.

The research findings in this regard bring together both Berry's (1997) theory of *integration* and Bronfenbrenner and Morris's (2006) theory of *person* and *process* in what I will argue is a constructionist space that neither theories have adequately covered.

3.4 Methodology: Moderate hermeneutics

The topic of immigrant student acculturation could take either a quantitative (Berry et al.'s, 2006, ICSEY survey of 5,000 immigrant youth) or a qualitative approach (Jhagroo's, 2011, hermeneutic phenomenological study of 10 immigrant students). My ontological position would permit me to go in either direction; however, my epistemological, axiological and theoretical perspectives clearly direct me towards a

qualitative study. I have settled on moderate hermeneutics as a methodology that supports an interpretivist approach.

Wellington (2015) defines hermeneutics as "the art or science of interpretation" (p. 342). Gallagher (1992) identifies four approaches to the methodology. The first is *conservative hermeneutics*, which reflects a set of rules or hermeneutic canons applied to textual discourse to grasp the author's intentions within its historical context (Brown & Heggs, 2005). I move away from this traditional approach towards the more subjective interpretation of *moderate hermeneutics*, based on a philosophical approach for 'understanding' the author's intention as a part of a dialogical communication between text and interpreter, rather than a method of interpretation to be applied to the text. The level of understanding or interpretation is partial, influenced by language, context and historical era, as well as the prejudice and preconceptions of the interpreter (Gallagher, 1992). Thus, readers of the text may find revised explanations and reinterpretations, in a "fusion of horizons" (Gadamer, 2013, p. 331) as greater insight or understanding occurs with deeper interpretation and vice versa. I have chosen an expanded concept of 'text' to include artwork (Hammond & Wellington, 2013; Sarantakos, 1998) with an understanding of hermeneutics as a focus on reading and questioning or interrogating such a text. While the focus of the research takes a moderate hermeneutical approach, the principles rather than the practice of *critical hermeneutics* are included, particularly its purpose to expose ideological distortions of social consensus, such as false consciousness, although specific textual analysis is not intended as the focus of the research methodology. *Radical hermeneutics*, likewise, with its poststructuralist epistemology, does not fit the methodology of the research.

Analysis of data was framed by the hermeneutical circle (Gallagher, 1992; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Moses & Knutsen, 2012), involving juxtaposition of the parts against the whole and the whole against the parts in a circular structure to provide insights for understanding that may have remained hidden if the focus was entirely on the parts or the whole. I anticipated these two perspectives in my selection of analyses approaches, settling on Maxwell's (2012) contiguity-based approach, with a focus on the holistic, temporal and thematic nature of the data for rich picture

analysis, and the complementary similarity-based approach, to focus on the segmented detail of questionnaire, interview and card sort data. The recursive process involved increasing levels of preconception because interpretation is informed by increased understanding with growing knowledge as both the parts and whole become more meaningful, although never complete. Moving between the parts and the whole, the hermeneutic circle structure accommodated flexibility and fluidity as I expanded my understanding of the immigrants' interpretation of their acculturation experience and my understanding of my interpretation of the immigrant experience.

Bronfenbrenner's (1993) socio-ecological model also served as a framework for the hermeneutic process because this model supports the notion of parts and the whole, reflecting the former in the person, process and context in the micro- and mesosystems within the exosystem of the university, all of which are contextualised within the whole of the sociocultural macrosystem. Before considering the methods, the participant sample is introduced.

3.5 Recruitment

I used purposive criterion sampling to target a specific group of participants who met a set of selection criteria. This approach was considered more appropriate for a qualitative in-depth study of a small group than random sampling, which draws from a more general population and from which generalisations are made (Merriam, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Ethical constraints associated with insider research prevented me from recruiting participants. I drew on my collegial networks to approach immigrant students with an invitation to participate, which resulted in 15 participants. I also attempted purposive snowball sampling (Merriam, 2009), requesting participants to identify other students who might be interested. While one student was named and approached, nothing eventuated from this sampling technique.

The recruitment phase lasted from April to September 2018 until the data were saturated at eight participants. Fifteen potential participants responded to the invitation to participate, of which one was excluded because she had lived in NZ for

14 years. Fourteen received participant information sheets and consent forms, and 10 of these returned the consent form and followed through to interview. The 10 who were interviewed were reduced to the final sample size of eight. One was excluded because of her personal issues since immigration, which clouded her acculturation process in the learning environment, and the other had spent early and later school years in NZ, and thus identified more as an NZer than an immigrant. The sample size, while small, was considered appropriate for the level of exploration and analysis intended through the four methods, which yielded rich and multi-focused data on each participant. The sample size ensured that the unique individual experience was not lost, while providing sufficient data for tentative similarities and differences to be drawn across the group.

The three selection criteria had the specific purpose of restricting the sample to foreign-born students with immigrant status (residency in NZ) gained within the previous two to eight years. The minimum of two years was to ensure that the participants had time for both an initial and current learning experience, and the maximum of eight years reduced the potential impact of majority schooling in NZ. I sought participants in their second or third year of undergraduate study at the university, assuming that two years in higher education study would mean they had a broader set of higher education papers and learning experiences to be drawn from. I found I had to respond flexibly to some of these criteria for reasons outlined in Table 3.1; however, I do not believe the data were adversely affected by these exceptions.

Table 3.1: Participant characteristics

Participant pseudonym	Ethnicity & language	Gender	Arrival in NZ	First learning experience	Enrol date AUT	Qualification at AUT	Year of study	Fit with selection criteria
Bruce	British (English)	Male	2014	University	2016	Bachelor of Hospitality	1	Year 1 over 2 years part-time
Coco	Sudanese (Arabic)	Female	2016	English Language School	2017	Bachelor of Business	2	Fits
Enid	Chinese (Chinese)	Female	2014	English Language School	2014	Bachelor of Arts	3	International student 2011–2012
Fish	British/Indian (English)	Female	2012	Secondary School	2016	Bachelor of Arts	3	Fits

Jane	Vietnamese (Vietnamese)	Female	2013	University	2016	Bachelor of Business	3	Fits
Miho	Japanese (Japanese)	Female	2010	Tertiary College	2016	Bachelor of Business	2	International student 2010–2011
Sisifa	Tongan (English)	Female	2011	Secondary School	2018	Bachelor of Law and Arts	1	Year 1 of study
Zana	Malaysian Muslim (English/ Malay)	Female	2013	Secondary School	2017	Bachelor of Culinary Arts	2	Time spent in Australia as a child

The group of participants reflected the diversity of the student demographic at the university. I was surprised at the wide range of ethnicities in the sample, and if all 15 had followed through, the sample would have included a further Malaysian, Indonesian, Brazilian, Colombian, Russian and two British students. Several points of interest are highlighted in the participant group:

1. One of the participants, while a recent immigrant to NZ, spent some time as a child in Australia. This influenced language acquisition and cultural familiarity and had subsequent positive impacts on adaptation as an immigrant learner, but not sufficient to mute the distinction between initial and current learning environments.
2. Two of the participants had initial learning experiences in NZ as international students several years before gaining immigrant status. This illustrates the complexity of the international–immigrant nexus when education is used as a means of gaining residency, as identified by Jiang (2005b), and their status as both internal and external internationals (Jiang, 2010), having experience of both. I decided to include them in the sample because the initial learning experience and acculturation of immigrant and international students may be similar and these two participants had long-term intentions for acculturation in NZ. Miho, in sharing her first picture, did feel her international status in a class of domestic students may have explained her traumatic experience. It does illustrate the close link between international student mobility and its expression in international or immigrant student status.

3. Gender differences are noticeable in that the sample included only one male, who was also a mature student; the rest of the sample were female, of whom one was a mature student. Warren (2002) comments that gender difference in a participant group can affect the relationship with the researcher. I experienced the female participants as quieter and more reflective than the single male; however, I sensed that his very strong personal presentation was due more to his personality than to his gender. Gender has been recognised as a modifying factor in adaptation (Berry, 1992) because males tend to sever ties with their home country more easily. The fact that the male participant was from England added to his ease of adaptation in NZ because the cultural distance was small.
4. Cultural differences across the group were subtler in communication competency and behaviours than I expected from the range of ethnicities represented. This could be due to the homogenising of ethnic difference through globalisation influences, which tend to smooth out distinctive cultural expressions (Ryan, 2001). Most of the female participants were products of the socialising influences of the NZ school system, where they learned the protocols of engagement with others different from themselves.

3.6 Methods

To incorporate interpretive and critical inquiry perspectives through the hermeneutic methodology, I adopted a 'bricolage' of methods. Kincheloe, McLaren and Steinberg (2011) describe this approach as an informed selection of the most appropriate methods to answer the research questions. Crotty (1998) refers to Lévi-Strauss's concept of 'bricoleur' as a person who re-visions or reinterprets the objects of research to create something different. By using four methods that may appear initially as four discrete tools, I intended, through the integration of the parts, to create meaning from a larger whole. This is visually represented as four triangles within a larger triangle in Figure 3.2.

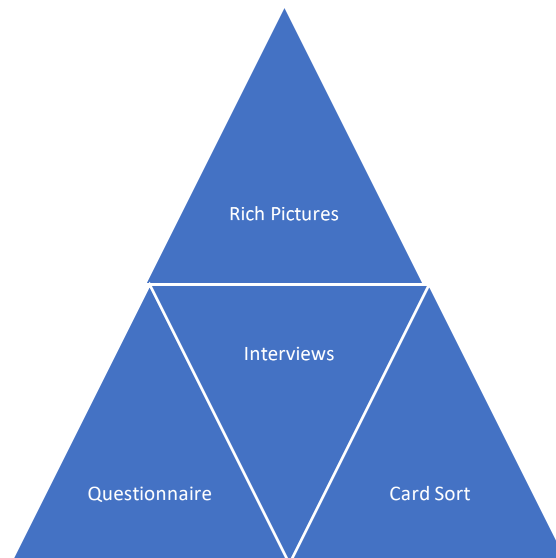


Figure 3.2: Research methods

The selection and justification of these tools to focus and trigger different perspectives reflected the complex and faceted nature of the participants' acculturative experiences as immigrant learners. There is support in the literature to justify combining several research methods to tap into different cognitive abilities. Cristancho (2015) contends that in the combination of interview and rich pictures, the latter acts as a cognitive disruption that fosters big-picture thinking towards new insights that may not be triggered during discussion. In a similar way, card sort serves to elicit semi-tacit knowledge (Fincher & Tenenberg, 2005) and the structured questionnaire involves reasoning and positioning. The interview integrated the various research methods, offering a space and place for researcher and participant to explore stories through discussion and to engage in co-construction of specific concepts. Using multiple tools also served to verify and triangulate the data. It was intended that each method would contribute a unique perspective to the data and thus produce thick descriptions of the immigrant learner's acculturative experience.

Analysing four data sets could have presented an issue if each set was restricted to standing alone. The data fell naturally into two sets: the drawings and related participant stories, and the interview narrative enhanced by the questionnaire and card sort data. To have focused on one set of data to the exclusion of the other would not have reflected the richness of the data and much would have been lost in reducing the data to one set. Maxwell (2012) argues that two complementary but

different analytic strategies are required to reflect the relationship between similarity-based strategies (seeking to segment data into categories) and contiguity-based strategies (connecting data to focus time and context). He refers to researchers, such as Seidman (2013) and Coffey and Atkinson (1996), who have successfully implemented this dual analytic approach.

To accompany the rich pictures, I followed the profile-development process outlined by Seidman (2013) and created a vignette or short story from the interview narrative. The vignette powerfully presents the voice of the participant to the reader. Data for a similarity-based categorisation approach using thematic analysis was provided by the interview transcript, questionnaire and card sort activity. The analytical approach I used with the data sets is visually represented in Figure 3.3, which shows the two sets of complementary analyses: visual analysis and categorisation. An overlap between these two indicates some commonality of approach to data as categorisation through thematic analysis is common to both approaches.

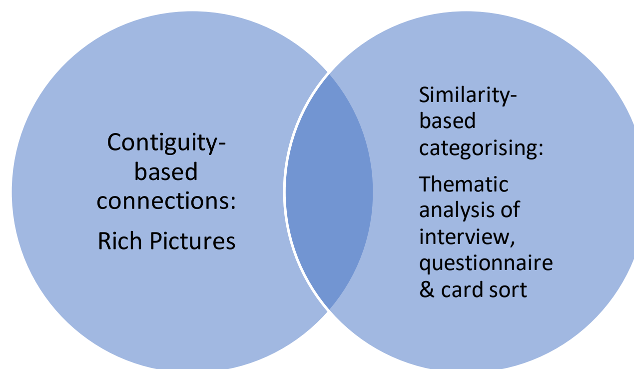


Figure 3.3: A dual approach to analysis

A brief literature review followed by detail on data collection and analysis for each of the four methods follows. I provide more detail on rich pictures and card sort because these are less well-known methods, plus I intended to apply them in new ways.

3.6.1 *Rich pictures*

The leading work of Bell, Berg and Morse (2016), Bell and Morse (2013a, 2013b) and Cristancho (2015) illustrate the value, purpose and process of rich pictures as a participatory visual research methodology (PVRM). Rich picture methodology is

linked to systems thinking (Bell et al., 2016; Cristancho, 2015), has a constructionist approach and accommodates complexity thinking. It engages 21st-century skills (Bell et al., 2016) such as integration, creativity and holistic thinking. Cristancho (2015) notes that a rich picture is "both a tool for understanding and a space to support dialogue" (p. 139), and Bell and Morse (2013b) highlight its participatory nature for "surfacing and exploratory" processes (p. 34). In the case of an initial immigrant learning experience and the subsequent adaptation to cultural variations in curriculum and pedagogy, rich pictures can accommodate the complexity of educational, social and psychological dimensions, as well as reflect values and attitudes, beliefs and behaviours, identity and the self.

According to Rees (2018), drawings are increasingly being recognised for their inherent value as a visual methodology rather than their previous role of supporting talk and text associated with interviews. While drawings may take many forms and have different characteristics, they have in common the means to display meaning through visual symbols or markings, thus transcending barriers such as language, cultural differences and drawing ability. Rich pictures are hand-drawn, free-form, cartoon-like drawings of an experience or situation in which the participants explore pictorially their perceived reality of a situation. They are often messy and complex, with no artistic purpose but to represent the inner world of the participant's experience (Bell et al., 2016).

I intended to use rich pictures as a PVRM, as described by Mitchell, Theron, Stuart, Smith and Campbell (2011), in which drawings combine a focus on the participants as producers, the production process itself and, most significantly, the engagement of the participants to add narrative to their product. My passion to explore adult immigrant experiences through drawings has had a long incubation. My professional interest lies in the value of drawings to convey knowledge and emotions that might be hidden or difficult to articulate. As a teacher, I often asked children to draw a map of the route from home to school. These simple (yet complex) maps not only revealed spatial understandings related to networks, scale and direction, but also reflected emotional aspects. Anxiety about a parent's driving skills is likely to be difficult for a young child to articulate, yet in its visual form as a drawing of a disproportionately

sized traffic circle, it carries strong meaning for the viewer. While the use of drawing as a visual method with children is common (Cristancho, 2015; Guillemin, 2004; Igoa, 1995) and a large field of literature covers drawing as art therapy (Akthar & Lovell, 2019; Hass-Cohen, Bokoch, Findlay, & Witting, 2018; Silver, 2001), the methodology has been underutilised with adults, particularly in higher education settings (Galman, 2009; Ganesh, 2011; Rees, 2018).

Drawings have appeared relatively recently in medical education (McLean, Henson, & Hiles, 2003) and teacher education, in the latter case, as a useful tool to understand teacher identity (Bennett, 2013; Freer & Bennett, 2012; Katz et al., 2011; Weber & Mitchell, 1995) and teacher resilience (Dinham, Chalk, Beltman, Glass, & Nguyen, 2017). Three examples highlight different aspects of the method. Storytelling through metaphor and symbols is a strength of drawing. Everett's (2017) study of 31 first-year students' drawings of initial expectations of their path through a programme to its end-of-year reality uncovered a mix of negative and positive emotions. Paired drawings are commonly used to contrast experiences and attitudes over time, as in research with student teachers in mathematics (Lee & Zeppelin, 2014) and science (Bennett, 2013; Freer & Bennett, 2012). Finally, in an innovative approach to seek evaluation of a first-year problem-based curriculum in a medical school, McLean, et al. (2003) asked students to visually represent themselves at the start and end of the year and write a brief accompanying explanation. In all of these projects, apart from the value of the visual dimension to understand participant experiences, drawings surfaced hidden dimensions such as depictions of self, emotions and coping mechanisms that may have remained hidden as tacit knowledge. These examples fit Pain's (2012) finding from her literature review of author justifications for choices of visual methodologies, in that most authors selected drawings to enhance data richness. She found far fewer authors sought to capitalise on the relational aspects that can occur between researcher and participant in the use of drawings.

Researchers have responded to the participatory aspect of PVRM in various ways. Cristancho et al. (2015), aiming to understand the complexity of 10 surgeons' expert judgement during surgical procedures and to avoid their tendency to simplify explanations and describe procedure rather than judgement, asked the surgeons to

draw instead of explaining in words. The results revealed a strong moral and emotional dimension that had not previously been identified. Subsequent discussion for corroboration with the participants confirmed the analysis of the researchers. Taking the process of collaboration to its obvious conclusion involves the participants as interpreters of their drawing during an interview discussion. In one of the few research projects reported in the literature with this approach, Guillemin (2004) requested participants to draw after they had been interviewed. I argue for drawing to precede the interview. I value the participatory opportunity for the participant to take the lead in storytelling related to their drawing, while the researcher actively listens and probes for understanding. Such engagement of the participant at the start of the interview results in a reduction of power positioning of the researcher and the empowerment of the participant as a respected expert, or a knowing subject (Koro-Ljungberg, 2008). PVRM thus aligns with my epistemology and theoretical perspectives because it involves the participants representing and making meaning of their reality, while the researcher seeks to listen and understand. No literature has been sourced that takes this approach when using drawings.

Interpretivism and moderate hermeneutics are central to the approach I took with rich pictures. My purpose was to provide a means to revisit and recapture memories of past experiences, as well as focus attention on recording current experience. These drawings capture through metaphor and symbol the perceived reality as well as associated emotions, underlying tensions and relationships that may not be selected for narrative, but that might be triggered and translated into a spoken narrative when used as a focus for associated storytelling. Dinham et al. (2017) acknowledge the critique that images are unreliable and open to subjective interpretation; however, they follow the central tenet of hermeneutics in their argument that all texts, whether written, spoken or drawn, carry meaning, and with reference to the multiliteracies paradigm, justify drawings “speaking for themselves” (p. 129). I am mindful of McIntosh’s (2010) point regarding the level of visual literacy necessary for interpretation of metaphor when he argues that “any analysis would not be precise, only a version seen through the lens of my own experience” (p. 132). I believe the

participants' interpretation of their drawings should be privileged in the research process, and that my subsequent interpretation should be visible and transparent.

I have long felt that drawings of an immigrant's experience will yield hidden depth and emotion, of which the immigrant may not be aware, because many of the beliefs, behaviours and shifts during initial acculturation are held as tacit knowledge, an unconscious response to confronting new societal challenges. Only two acculturation studies have been identified in which drawings were part of the data collection. Linesch, Aceves, Quezada, Trachez and Zuniga (2012) engaged immigrant families in drawing and then verbally sharing their acculturation experiences. They concluded that drawing was of value for expression of emotions as well as triggering enthusiasm in verbal sharing. Stuart and Ward (2011a) also found value in their NZ Muslim youth identity maps which expressed more concisely the term 'an integrated identity' than verbal discussion in a focus group.

Rich pictures are one of my main data collection tools. Each participant was asked to draw two rich pictures, one of their initial learning environment in NZ and the other of their current learning environment at the university. The period between drawings reflected the period of acculturation, which ranged from two to eight years. Berry (2006) calls for a longitudinal research design to study the process of acculturation but raises the impracticality of a two-point comparison using the same person and same research instrument. I believe my approach through rich picture methodology goes some way to addressing these concerns, albeit the initial drawing is a memory. However, the value of rich pictures lies in their ability to trigger memory, emotion and tacit knowledge that is often locked away in the subconscious.

Mitchell et al. (2011) note that participants often feel inadequate in their drawing skills and need frequent reassurance that content is more important than quality of drawing. Even though this message was given prior to the interviews, most participants apologised for what they perceived as their poor drawings. I noted that this lack of confidence fell away as they were drawn into storytelling and was replaced by a sense of pride in the contents of their drawings. They fluently and enthusiastically explained the pictures, responding quickly to probes for meaning of

symbols and metaphors. I was impressed with the immediate rapport built as both our heads leaned towards the picture, which became the focus of attention. I do not believe I could have created a similar sense of connection and communication so early in the interview if we had been engaged in face-to-face conversation. After examining the initial learning environment, our discussion shifted to adaptation behaviours, attitudes and values (Berry, 1997) before refocusing on the rich picture of the current learning environment. In many cases, the drawings were made in pencil, often on lined paper that had to be torn from notebooks. For reproduction purposes, I used a black felt pen to trace around the pencil marks, and apart from 'cleaning' the page, the drawings have been reproduced in their original form.

Three analytical approaches are commonly used with drawings: content, aesthetic and thematic analysis. I will briefly describe the strengths and limitations of each in turn before outlining the approach I adopted. Content analysis involves frequency counts of images (both concrete and abstract) using categories, either predetermined (Galman, 2009) or emerging from the data (Everett, 2017). These are presented in tables with number counts that offer a visual interpretation across cases. The issue with content analysis is its quantitative character, which, if used as a single analysis tool, remains at a relatively superficial descriptive level and fails to surface deeper meaning such as occurs through aesthetic analysis. Although Bengtsson (2016) states that the researcher must choose between *manifest* analysis (broad, surface reporting) and *latent* analysis (deeper, tacit and intended messages), I have chosen to adopt both manifest analysis of concrete elements within the drawings and latent analysis of abstract and hidden meanings.

Aesthetic analysis offers a rich tool for uncovering levels of meaning within a drawing through interpretation of metaphor (Black, 2012; McIntosh, 2010), design elements (Bell et al., 2016; Surtees & Apperly, 2012) and theoretical links. Because visual analysis, particularly in art, is multidimensional and open to individual interpretation, the voice of the participant as creator ideally should be the starting point for analysis. Unfortunately, this is seldom the case; conclusions are often drawn from the researcher's interpretation, as occurred in the work of Everett (2017) and McLean et al. (2003). When verification of meaning is sought, such as the member checking of

researcher interpretation by Cristancho et al. (2015), the analysis has greater credibility. In my view, eliciting the view of the participant as a starting point for analysis, followed by the researcher's interpretation, maintained the accuracy of surface and sub-texts.

Most researchers use thematic analysis often in association with content or aesthetic analysis. Coding for themes can be done in a variety of ways. McLean et al. (2003) used three specific keywords to code the intent of student drawings, Everett (2017) used three broad categories to generate codes and Guillemin (2004) posed a set of questions. The strength of thematic analysis is its synthesis of meaning into descriptors that summarise characteristics of the data at an individual level and across cases, moving beyond the detailed data into a more holistic interpretation. Bell et al. (2016) have developed a rich picture analytical framework. They move from context, description of elements and aesthetic features to the subject focus, and include a critical judgement of the quality of the rich picture. They are aware that such an evaluative approach will result in strong critique from those (including myself) who believe rich pictures have inherent value and that quality exists in whatever the participant has drawn.

To analyse my set of rich pictures, I felt it was paramount to privilege the interpretation of the participant prior to my own interpretation. I justify this on both ethical and methodological grounds. In the first instance, the participant explained and made meaning of the drawings through storytelling and responses to probes during the interview. This narrative was captured in the interview transcript and recrafted into a first-person vignette in which the drawings were embedded. Humphreys (2005) describes vignettes as "an enriching representational strategy" (p. 854) that, quoting Ellis (1997), "bring life to research [and] bring research to life" (p. 2). Furthermore, they enabled my commitment to 'faithfulness' (Galman, 2009) in prioritising the participant voice, and aligned with Fine's (1998) claim that presenting a first-person voice allows movement to the left of the "Self-Other hyphen" (p. 131). The vignettes were used only for illustration in the final reporting.

Each individual rich picture was analysed using a specifically designed rich picture analytical framework based on a set of contiguity strategies which reflected contextual, temporal and theoretical categories that emerged from the data and were informed by literature. Themes across each paired set of drawings were then considered, including links to acculturation and ethnic identity theory and the broader NZ sociocultural and political context. At this point, I wrote an interpretation of each set of paired rich pictures highlighting content, aesthetics and links to theory.

Cross-group analysis using the same matrix was conducted, seeking similarities and differences across the group (see Appendix C) to inform emergent themes. This included a frequency count to uncover additional themes that did not emerge at the individual level.

I believe the use of rich picture methodology and the associated contiguity-based analysis, with its focus on context and temporal dimensions, contributed a unique perspective on the immigrant student acculturation experience.

3.6.2 *Questionnaire*

Much immigrant research has been conducted through structured questionnaire surveys that process large samples, such as the ICSEY Project (Berry et al., 2006). A widely held view is that quantitative findings from large-scale surveys can be generalised (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). While it is undeniable that authors who hold this view can justify their approach, the lack of depth into individual participant cases does not suit the approach I have taken. For my purposes, the value of the questionnaire as method lay in confirming or challenging the data collected through the qualitative methods of drawings and interview. Saldaña (2016) supports the use of questionnaires in qualitative research to serve as paradigmatic corroboration. Silverman (2006) suggests that such an approach may provide a level of verification for those critics accusing qualitative researchers of being open to subjective reporting. The data confirmed as well as challenged views expressed during the interview discussion and thus proved to be of significant value in highlighting contradictory positioning on a number of immigration concepts held in

principle but not enacted in practice, thus adding a depth to the data that might otherwise have remained hidden if analysis had depended on the interview alone.

In the design of my structured questionnaire (see Appendix A), I drew on Berry et al.'s (2006) survey. I acknowledge this source for items 1–8 and used these in their original form. These statements have been tested for reliability and validity and have been applied to immigrant adaptation strategies across cultures and contexts. Using a similar format, I designed items 9–35 for the higher education context in NZ. These were pilot tested and refined prior to their use with the participants. The reason for a structured questionnaire was to stay close to the model provided by Berry et al. (2006) and to collect immediate responses from participants to sets of structured statements, leaving further discussion for the interview. The opportunity for participants to add additional information at the end of the questionnaire was only taken up by one participant.

During the process of negotiating an interview time and place with participants, the questionnaire was emailed out with a request for it to be returned prior to interview. During the interview, I explored the questionnaire data, naming, confirming and exploring adaptation strategies and behaviours, probing reasons for neutral answers (ticks placed between two columns) and exploring contradictions with views expressed during interview discussions. In two instances, participants chose to alter a response in their questionnaire following their clarification of conceptual understanding.

Because the research approach was qualitative, drawing on constructionism and interpretivism, the questionnaire data were analysed through simple descriptive statistics. Analysis was conducted at the individual participant level using a matrix to record levels of agreement for clusters of questions. Cross-group analysis involved number counts of participants' agreement responses translated into percentages. The numerical analysis was displayed visually through pie charts and bar graphs. These are considered fit for purpose and suited to the nature of the data being displayed, with the focus on description and illustration (Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell & Guetterman, 2019).

3.6.3 *Interview*

Interviewing is a common data collection tool (Silverman, 2006; Tierney & Dilley, 2002) usually associated with qualitative research. Warren (2002) describes its purpose for researchers to seek understanding and interpretations of participants' experiences and their life worlds. The interpretivist and social constructionist approach that overarches my research was best reflected in a semi-structured interview design that acknowledged the interview as a space for inter-view (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) between researcher and participant. This approach was flexible enough to allow the flow of the interview to follow that of a natural conversation, yet because a set of main questions were covered, data could be collected on common topics, allowing a degree of comparison across cases in the sample. The semi-structured interview design (see Appendix B) was piloted with critical friends as part of the research design.

I selected Rubin and Rubin's (2005) responsive interview approach to guide the first part of the interview, when participants told the stories associated with their drawings. The role of the researcher was to actively listen for meaning, contradiction, shifts in perspective and social or cultural cues, and to use probes and follow-up questions for greater understanding. The aim was a dynamic and responsive interview process, in which the typical asymmetrical power structures of traditional interviewer–interviewee were reduced and shifted as the relationship became one of storyteller and listener. This approach was achieved in the first part of the interview.

In the second part of the interview, I selected Holstein and Gubrium's (1995) active interview approach because the purpose and nature of the interview changed when participants were asked to reflect on specific concepts, many of which were new and challenged their thinking. I expected that active interviewing would support co-construction towards a shared expression of conceptual understanding. Based on behavioural observations of the limited conceptual understanding of participants regarding acculturation concepts (hesitation, bewildered facial expression, confused and conflicted reasoning), I deviated from active interviewing for co-construction,

and moved towards providing conceptual explanation and used leading questions to stimulate thought and provoke responses, as suggested by Jacobsson and Åkerström (2012). I became aware of the lack of acculturation conceptual knowledge held by participants, and while disappointed that discussion was slow and superficial, I was heartened when participants' insights brought exclamations of new understandings and self-awareness of the acculturation process. This supports Maeve's (1997) argument that assumptions once exposed can bring a new and changed understanding of individual reality.

Following the advice of Jacob and Paige Furgerson (2012), I planned a script for the start of the interview (research purpose, reasserting confidentiality, inviting questions regarding new terminology) and at the end (member checking, request for follow-up if necessary). The interviews were held in a campus location at a time suitable for the participant and ran for an hour and were audio recorded.

I observed that participants were enthusiastic and fluently articulated their experiences with reference to the drawings. The related conversation was fast paced, often peppered with laughs, and body language was relaxed. This was true for the ESL speakers as well. During the second part of the interview, I noted that the participant's behaviour changed, with a shift towards a slower pace, longer thinking time and less spontaneous sharing of opinion but greater consideration of responses. I expected this change as discussion moved from the familiar context of one's own experience to more abstract conceptual ideas, many of which were new to the participant. This was particularly difficult for some of the ESL speakers who evidenced comprehension and communication challenges through pauses, requests for clarification and hesitant articulation.

I had prepared myself to be sensitive to several challenges during the interview. First, effective cross-cultural interviewing requires a safe and trusting environment, often strengthened through self-disclosure to build trust (Dunbar, Rodriguez, & Parker, 2002). During the introduction, I shared my immigrant status and I felt this led to a reduction of power and a closer rapport. Second, I was aware of potential triggering of emotion when participants revisited past sensitive experiences. Prosser (2011) and

Mitchell et al. (2011) both warn of the ability of drawings and stories to raise emotion. Fortunately, even though some of the drawings presented traumatic initial experiences, no participants exhibited any distress during the interview discussion. A further challenge identified by Rubin and Rubin (2005) involves the emotions and personality of the interviewer, which can influence the interview dynamic and thus the data. My interest in the topic and my response to the participants' stories will have had an influence on participant confidence and trust. My sense during the interviews and from expressed feedback at the end was that my interest was positively received. This may be seen by some as a limitation of the study; however, considering the subjective role of the researcher in an interpretivist approach (Grant & Giddings, 2002), I believe the relationship gains at the cost of an objective researcher were authentic for this research.

I decided to transcribe the digital recording myself to ensure consistency of interpretation and verbatim recording of the words and non-verbal expressions. In a further transcript, I smoothed the language used for member checking as a sign of respect for the participant and had these confirmed as accurately representing the interview process and expressed views.

I engaged in iterative data gathering and analysis, as recommended by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) for qualitative research. The value of such practice informed subsequent participant interviews and explored emergent themes. The thematic analysis was based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach of generating categories and codes and searching for themes using the observational techniques of repetitions, similarities and differences, as well as seeking theory-related material through the process of the hermeneutic circle. I created a code book, drawing on several practical guides (deCuir-Gunby, Marshall, & McCulloch, 2011; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Saldaña, 2016). My coding framework was both theory and data driven. Theories of acculturation, ethnic identity and multiculturalism were reflected in categories of adaptation, ethnic identity and culturally inclusive experience. Data-driven codes were fluid during the initial coding of the first four transcripts until a more stable set was achieved. Initial exploration of the data and identification of codes was done by hand, using coloured highlighters, and coded material was then

entered into NVivo 11, which aided retrieval and similarity sets of data extracts for individual participants, as well as across the sample group.

3.6.4 *Card sort*

Card sort is a simple and time-efficient method commonly used for categorisation of concepts (Fincher & Tenenberg, 2005; Sanders et al., 2005). The method is participant centred rather than researcher driven and allows comparison across a group of participants (Rugg & McGeorge, 2005; Wood & Wood, 2008). Card sort engages a participant's construction of meaning, drawing on prior knowledge, perception and experience. The method was originally designed for use in psychology and has been adapted for use in medical research (Abbey, Esteves, Vogel, & Tyreman, 2014; Rees et al., 2018; St. Jean, Greene Taylor, Kodama, & Subramaniam, 2018) and educational practice (Huss, 2003). Sorts may involve objects, pictures or cards. The latter, in turn, may range from minimalist information of one word to a detailed description of a concept. Where the purpose includes probing judgement and justifying decisions, card sorts tend to be part of group interviews (St. Jean et al., 2018) or conference workshops (Abbey et al., 2014).

I aimed to follow a similar approach to that of St. Jean et al. (2018) who asked their focus group participants to sort cards according to their relative usefulness and probed for judgement and justification of preferences. My card sort was unusual in that it focused on ranking rather than the more common practice of categorising and involved individuals during interview rather than focus groups. My approach to card sort during the interviews had several purposes. I wanted to draw the attention of the participant to a specific activity and away from the general discussion of the interview, to introduce the elements of an internationalised curriculum. This allowed me to explore the participant's conceptual understanding, view and value of each element because ranking not only produces a visual display of significant elements for the participant, but it also forces a consideration and related commitment to the positioning of each card. The tactile activity of moving cards indicated thinking processes, particularly when cards were shifted from one position to a subsequent position after explanation or discussion, or when cards were ranked of equal

importance. The card sort activity consisted of 10 small index cards, each containing an element of an internationalised curriculum (see Table 3).

The card sort activity was introduced as the last stage of the interview. A clear, identical set of instructions was given to each participant to rank the cards from his or her perspective as an immigrant learner. There was a period of silence as the participant worked through sorting the cards. Explanation of concepts was sought by some, and probes were used to check understanding or refer to linked answers in the questionnaire. This approach is supported by Wood and Wood (2008), who note that in card sort, researchers can be overoptimistic about participant familiarity with terms. At the end of the ranking activity, I asked the participants two questions: first, how significant they felt it would be for immigrant students to experience such a curriculum and, second, what their view was on such a curriculum for NZ-born students.

During the interviews, the rank of a card was recorded at the top of the card and was then transferred to a template for each participant, which included additional information for each card element drawn from interview discussions, questionnaire responses and researcher observations about participants' behaviours during the card sort. In addition, a matrix was created to reflect all eight participants' rankings for the 10 cards, to enable cross-case analysis.

Bearing in mind that the type of analysis should suit the purpose of the method and its link to the research question, I was more interested in a qualitative approach to the card sort data, even though the method is typically analysed quantitatively (Wood & Wood, 2008). Because the card sort activity focused on ranking rather than the usual categorising skills, data analysis was confined to calculation of percentages and means. The activity proved more difficult for participants than anticipated, largely owing to their superficial or lack of understanding of several of the concepts.

3.7 Ethical considerations

I have been mindful of the arguments presented by Rossman and Rallis (2010) on "research as moral practice" (p. 380) and by Williams (2009) on being an ethical

researcher, sensitive to ethics beyond the formal protocols required by a university ethics committee. I have therefore intentionally considered ethical implications at each stage of the research, as has been indicated in the various sections of the chapter. The following subsections refer to ethics already discussed and raise further considerations.

3.7.1 *Framing the research topic*

I am aware that the topic I have selected, while of immense interest to me and providing professional satisfaction in an issue of concern, needs to be handled sensitively in its presentation to stakeholders. The immigrant participants had an opportunity to have their voices heard and to know that they contributed to more informed practice for future students; however, by stripping away the false consciousness of assimilation in practice, they could have been left feeling vulnerable or critical of the institution in which they were invested. While I adopt a critical stance on aspects of hegemony associated with assimilation, it is not my intention to adversely affect the university's reputation, but rather to grow reputation through my potential research contribution. To test response to my proposed topic prior to the ethics application, I consulted with students, staff and senior leadership in the university and received positive feedback from all.

3.7.2 *Ethical protocols and approvals*

Ethics application was made to my university and approval granted on 15 March 2018 with one requirement that I not recruit participants from the School of Education (see Appendix C). In addition to the ethical protocols and considerations common in an ethics application, my university required a response to the three principles of the Treaty of Waitangi: partnership, participation and protection. With reference to my research design, partnership and participation is clear through the interview process and the participants' contribution and interpretation of their drawings. Protection is reflected in the use of pseudonyms, availability of counselling services and building a safe environment for discussion.

An application was then made to the University of Liverpool ethics committee for recognition of external ethics. Approval was granted on 9 April 2018 (see Appendix

D) with two requirements: (1) a letter informing the deans of faculties of the research and requesting access to students, and (2) consideration of the impact of possible student drop-off with two planned interviews. The first requirement was met, and after reflection, I decided to schedule only one interview with each participant, which in retrospect was sufficient time for the planned data collection.

Informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, and conflict of interest were ethical issues detailed in the ethics applications. Interested immigrant students received a participant information sheet outlining the nature of the research, identifying risks and detailing measures to ensure confidentiality. The consent form highlighted the voluntary nature of participation and the ability to withdraw at any stage, and requested permission to use data in publications other than the thesis. Participants returned signed consent forms prior to the start of data collection. Confidentiality of information was ensured through anonymising drawings, questionnaires and interview transcripts with pseudonyms, and ensuring their safe storage. All subsequent data analysis and reporting used these pseudonyms and participants were assured in the participant information sheet that they would not be identifiable in the thesis report, or in any publication. They were informed that should I wish to use an exemplar that might be identifiable, I would contact them for further written permission. This I did after crafting the vignettes, requesting accuracy checking and permission to publish in this reworked format. Privacy of participants was ensured because all correspondence was on a one-on-one basis between the researcher and participant, so individuals were unaware of others in the sample group. Ethics regarding recruitment involved the use of neutral recruiters, thus minimising any potential power perceptions related to my role as a leader in the university. Selection criteria were clearly stated in the invitation to participate, while the gift card in recognition of time invested in participation was mentioned in the participant information sheet.

3.7.3 *Data collection and analysis*

Ethical issues regarding data collection included briefing and debriefing participants, power sharing in the interview, smoothing of transcripts and member checking.

Oliver (2003) points out that researchers should be wary of persuading interviewees to adopt their viewpoint, but rather provide the space for participants to reason, reflect and assume a personal position. I was particularly aware of the need to find a balance between providing sufficient information for participants to grasp the concept of false consciousness without leading them to my personal standpoint and I was encouraged by the fact that several of the participants expressed disagreement with my views regarding this concept. I ensured that I privileged the voice of the participant (Galman, 2009) prior to my own interpretation during analysis.

3.7.4 *Insider researcher status*

The potential advantage of insider research as prior knowledge and experience of the setting also creates the potential problem of preconceptions and prejudices. To audit my insider status within the university, particularly in my reading and understanding of the strategic documents, and to check my expression of findings as they related to the university's reputation, I set up a formal meeting in August 2019 with a member of AUT's Senior Leadership Team who has responsibility for strategy and planning. I shared my interpretation of the strategic documents, how assimilation as false consciousness was being reported in the findings and my ideas for contribution through internationalising the curriculum. Other potential problems related to insider status were considered during the interview planning, when I took note of Merriam's (2009) caution about interviewer and respondent interactions involving power, subjectivity and bias. The fact that the participants were unaware that I worked at the university and that I drew on my immigrant rather than my professional experience aided the reduction of power imbalance and building of rapport.

I have been aware of the need for reflexivity on my own subjective lens through which I view my research, and that reflects my epistemological and axiological positions as researcher, informing the assumptions underlying my passion for the research topic. To monitor and self-regulate, as well as to probe and uncover my assumptions and biases, I engaged in reflective journaling as both a process and a product (Borg, 2001). Not only have I critically reflected on my 'doing' and 'being' as a researcher (Hartog,

2002) but I have written memos on specific aspects of the research, primarily to record problems encountered and decisions made, and to monitor my thinking about recruitment, interview design and theoretical perspectives. Saldaña's (2016) guidance on analytic memos was helpful for the emergent weaving of research components in response to the research questions.

3.7.5 *Reporting*

Two ethical aspects have strongly influenced me in the reporting phase. First, I have taken seriously Galman's (2009) call to qualitative researchers to be both *artists* who craft their research story and *messengers* who audit their subjectivity and report participant stories. Second, I accept the ethical obligation to share my research findings with participants and university leaders and staff at conferences and through publications. In this way, the investment by the researcher and participants has the possibility of positively influencing practice in the wider field of higher education.

3.8 Quality and trustworthiness

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) contend that issues of reliability and validity can be applied to both quantitative and qualitative research, and while retaining similar terms, they address the issues in different ways. There appears to be consensus in this view (Gibbs, 2007; Silverman, 2006), and reliability, validity and generalisability have been applied to qualitative research to determine quality and trustworthiness.

3.8.1 *Reliability*

To support replicability and thus reliability of my research process, I have provided transparency and detail on each aspect of the data collection and analysis process. I have also heeded Silverman's (2006) suggestion to provide theoretical transparency through my epistemological stance as well as my interpretivist and critical inquiry lens through which the research has been contextualised and interpreted. The presentation of vignettes in the participants' voice provides transparency to my subsequent interpretation. I have followed Gibbs's (2007) recommendation for the single researcher to use transcription checking as a way to check consistency and reliability.

3.8.2 *Validity*

The accuracy of the social phenomenon represented can be affected by the positionality and values of the researcher (Silverman, 2006). I have been transparent about my personal positioning in the research in an attempt to explain the selected research design. Gibbs (2007) suggests triangulation of data as a means of reassuring the reader of an effort to check accuracy. This was one of the reasons for the bricolage of methods, including the questionnaire as a check against interview responses on the same topic. Silverman (2006) also suggests that quantitative expressions such as statistical drawings within qualitative research can give the reader confidence in the researcher's interpretation. However, Silverman argues against triangulation in that varying perspectives on the same topic may not provide a truer representation of the topic, but rather a richer data set. While richer data were generated by the questionnaire, interview and card sort, the significant role of the questionnaire to reveal contradictory positioning on the same concept was of value for later clarification and exploration of conceptual understanding during interviews.

3.8.3 *Generalisability*

The temptation to generalise from a small qualitative sample is cautioned against (Cohen et al., 2000; Gibbs, 2007); however, Silverman (2006) makes a valid point when he argues for qualitative researchers to share and seek resonance for their findings in a wider field than the research context, and not to dismiss the value of a single case as representing the complexity of social life. This has given me confidence to seek tentative patterns across my sample, and I have presented these as potentially indicative of other immigrant student learners at AUT and in other higher education contexts.

3.9 Chapter summary

The chapter has articulated my researcher positionality in ontological, epistemological and axiological terms, traced through the theoretical perspective, methodology and methods. A substantial part of the chapter has been devoted to describing and justifying the four methods selected, detailing data collection and

analysis approaches. Ethical considerations have been integrated into the various sections as well as considered a separate topic alongside quality and trustworthiness. The research questions were identified at the start of the chapter, reflective in their expression of the epistemological and methodological approach and grounded in the methods.

The next chapter presents findings and discussion related to the rich pictures, and focuses on the research subquestion: *How do immigrant students' perceptions of their initial and current learning environments reflect their acculturation experiences?*

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion: Participant Vignettes and Rich Pictures

4.1 Introduction

My decision to craft vignettes to accompany the rich pictures was influenced by strong messages in the literature (Fine, 1998; Humphreys, 2005; Seidman, 2013) about the advantages of foregrounding the participants' voice. The eight vignettes allow the reader to 'hear' the participants interpret, elaborate and reflect on the meaning of their drawings. Furthermore, they serve as an authenticity check, thus allowing the drawings to 'speak for themselves' (Dinham et al., 2017) and justifying the focus of the researcher's analysis and interpretation solely on the paired rich pictures.

Data analysis and findings in this chapter seek to answer the research subquestion *How do immigrant students' perceptions of their initial and current learning environments reflect their acculturation experiences?* In the first part of the chapter, I provide my researcher interpretation of each set of paired rich pictures, drawing on content and aesthetic analysis and making theoretical links. The second part of the chapter presents cross-group analysis and findings, drawing on contiguity-based strategies (Maxwell, 2012) to reflect the temporal and contextual dimensions of the participants' rich pictures.

4.2 Participants' rich pictures and vignettes

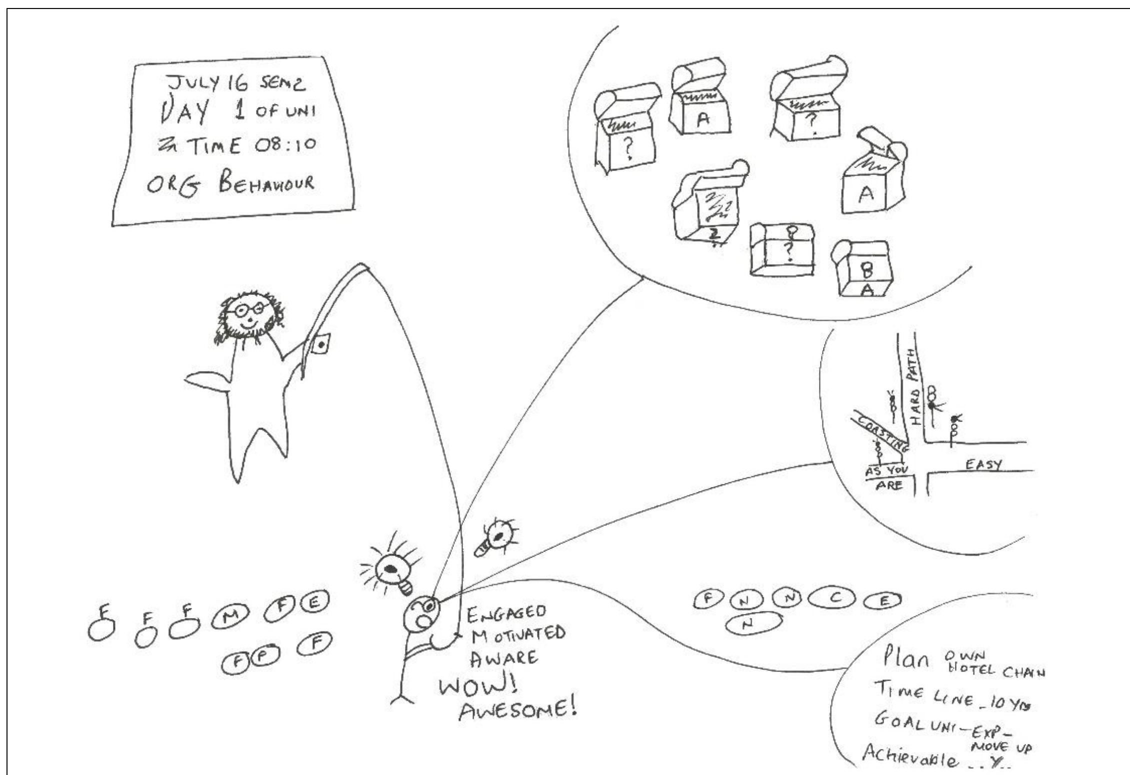
4.2.1 *Bruce*

Bruce is a mature student and an English immigrant who arrived in NZ in 2014. His first learning experience was at AUT in 2016, and he has completed two years' part-time study towards his bachelor's degree. Bruce was the only male participant in the sample.

4.2.1.1 Initial learning environment (2016)

"My first day ever attended as a university student started at 08:10 and it was Organisational Behaviour. [The lecturer] had me hooked within the first 10 minutes!

I was a little apprehensive, but 10 minutes and that was it—I was in! I was under no illusion at that point that I was doing the right thing.”

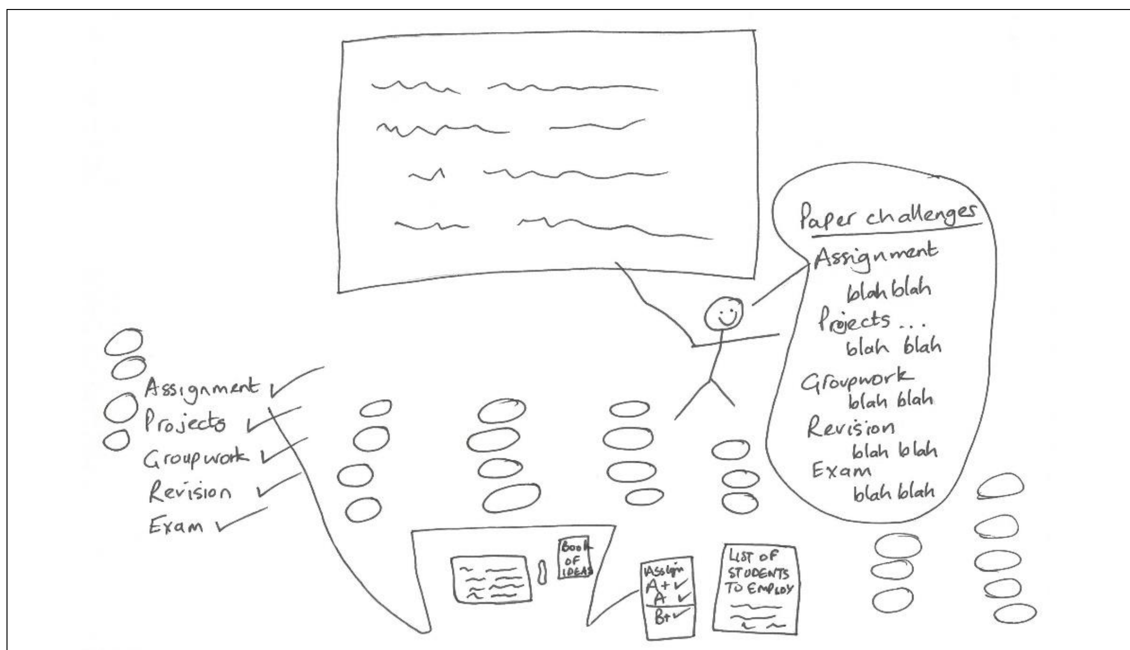


“These [small circles] were the students. I could just look around and think, ‘You’re not paying attention; this is appalling! Facebook, Facebook, movies, emailing, Facebook, Facebook, N for nothing … oh no! N for notetaking.’ The lecturer ‘had’ me, and I was thinking, ‘GOLD, GOLD is being served to us by the lecturer and you can’t even see it!’ Within this time ... lightbulbs Pow! Pow! Pow! in my head, it’s ‘wow’, he’s just got me totally thinking, it got me engaged, motivated, awake, aware. After the first 20 minutes, I’m fully hooked in, and everything he’s telling us, I could see real world applications. That’s me with a smile, and a big hook in my mouth. It [NZ teaching style] seemed familiar and it was kind of what I expected it to be: lecturer was lecturing; I was taking notes. These [treasure chests] were things that were coming to mind, unlocking treasure chests of information for me to access now and into the future. These are questions and answers, and there’s more here that are still locked as I haven’t finished uni yet … there’s going to be eureka moments!

Then I've got this crossroad and the reason I wanted to come to uni in the first place was all to do with when I was 17 or 18. I always wanted to work in hotels, to be a hotel manager, but unfortunately, I also wanted to join the air force. So, I joined up and 25 years passed, and I find myself in New Zealand and I thought to myself, 'What else do I want to do?' and I suddenly remembered way back to hotel catering and management. It came to me in the lecture [crossroads] there's easy street, stay as you are; they are all red lights! Then there's the hard path; it's got a green light and I thought, 'Right, here we go!' So, at the end of the hard path is my plan to own my own hotel chain and the timeline is 10 years, so the goal is to get through uni, get some experience and then move on to getting a hotel, and is it achievable? As far as I'm concerned, yes, it is!"

4.2.1.2 Current learning environment (2018)

"This is a year later. Here are all the other students in the class; I have no idea what they're doing, because I'm no longer paying attention … I'm not interested in them. This here is the generic instructor telling us about the structure of the paper: assignments, projects, group work, revision, exam. I'm 'yeah, easy, easy, easy, not a problem, get these done!'"



“These are the challenges they are giving me, but I don’t see them as challenges; they are just gold! Here’s my desk, my book of ideas. I have a big A4 index book. Things come to me about what I might need to know or look at in the future, so I index it and make a note. I’ve also got a list of students I’d employ. I’ll be out headhunting at some point!”

4.2.1.3 Interpretation of Bruce’s rich pictures

Bruce made use of metaphor to depict his initial learning environment. He depicted himself larger in size and centrally located, drawing attention to his transformational learning experience. Symbols reflect his awakening to learning: the hook in his mouth, flashing light bulbs, capitalised and emotional words, and links to treasure chests, a road map and career intentions. Strong connectors such as the fishing line and the lines drawn to his learning insights narrate his story. The mood is positive and the message powerful. Applying Black’s (2012) criteria of *emphasis* (strength of unstated implications) and *resonance* (the degree of potential elaboration), I judge this a strong metaphor because the viewer is left thinking about the immediate and long-term implications of such a powerful initial learning experience. Within the drawing, two images appear at odds with the main message. First, while the lecturer has been given recognisable features (suggesting the impression he has made on Bruce), he does not appear to be intentionally fishing for Bruce’s attention, having a general gaze across the class. Second, Bruce’s lack of connection with or interest in his student peers is depicted in a set of faceless blobs, undifferentiated except by their distractions in class. These suggest an individual with personality characteristics of self-orientation and motivation, identified by Kosic (2006) as risk or protection factors in acculturation in the learning environment. In this instance, they indicate that Bruce is an egocentric, self-contained individual. Only a year later, Bruce’s second drawing tells a different story.

The bland drawing of the current learning environment shows a generic lecturer and lecture theatre where learning has become predictable, boring and mechanistic. This is illustrated through Bruce’s confident response to paper challenges with ticks alongside tasks, high grades and expressive words (“blah blah”). Most significantly,

Bruce is absent, although we assume his perspective from the desk at the back of the lecture theatre.

Interesting links can be made to theory in this pair of rich pictures. Bruce's initial enthusiasm has been dulled as he has been drawn into the mainstream learning and teaching approaches, suggesting an expectation on the part of the lecturer and an expectation by Bruce of becoming part of the system, thus demonstrating assimilation as false consciousness. The success of this is reinforced through his invisibility in class. Bruce appears to fit Berry's (1997) assimilation profile, although he does not exhibit the positive sociocultural outcomes in everyday relationships that Ward and Kennedy's (1994) findings associate with the assimilation strategy. Referencing the 'person' component of Bronfenbrenner and Morris's (2006) PPCT model, Bruce displays dispositions and attitudes that are likely to disrupt and inhibit the proximal processes of group work and peer interactions. He is only interested in a lecturer who grabs his attention and has little intention of relating with his peers, as evidenced through his distant location at the back of the class, the size and anonymity of the students and the lack of connectors. Within two years in NZ, Bruce appears to have successfully and completely assimilated into the mainstream.

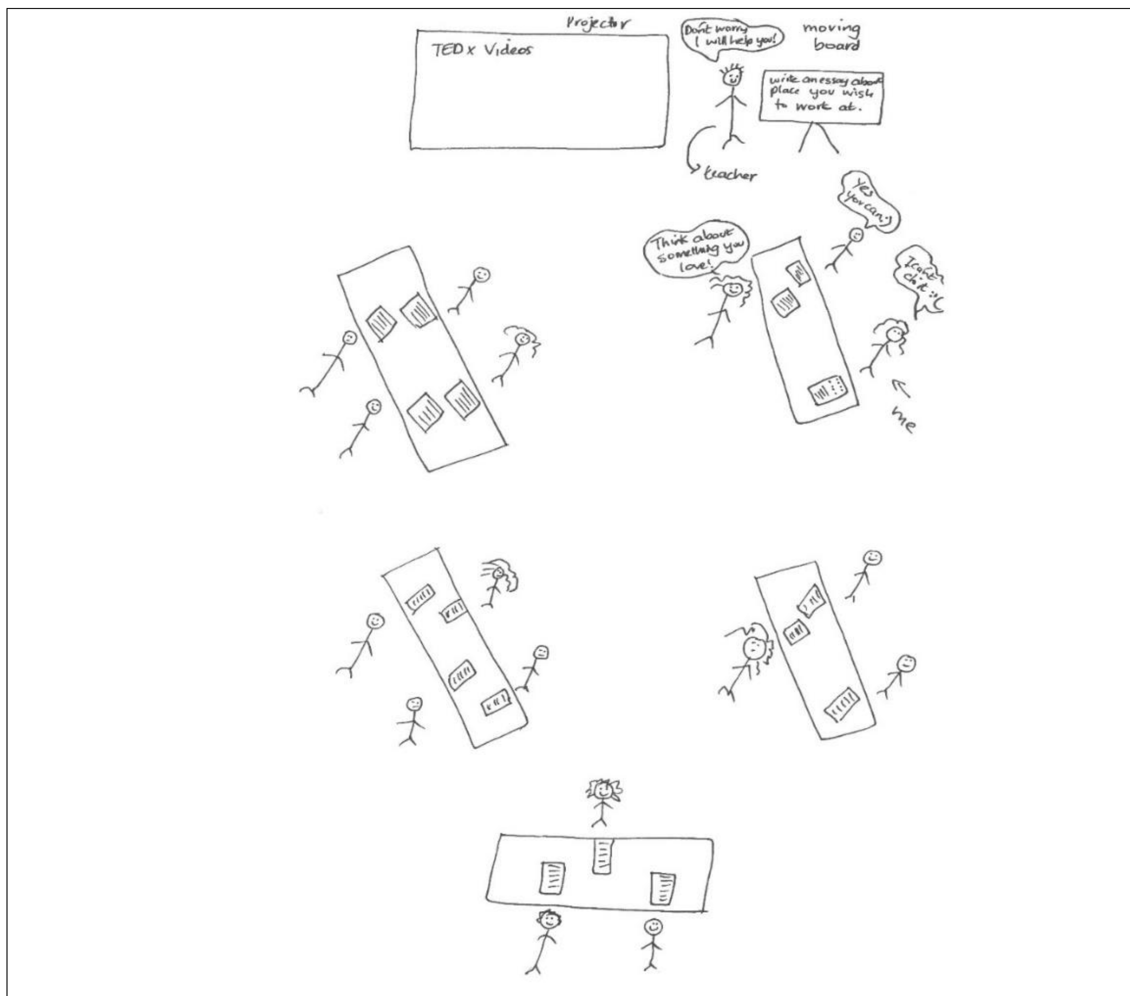
4.2.2 *Coco*

Coco is Sudanese and immigrated to NZ with her father and brother in 2016. She is Muslim and Arabic speaking with a heritage that draws from an Egyptian grandmother and a German grandmother. This created for Coco a set of identity issues concerning being Sudanese, Arab and Muslim. Coco left Sudan with just months remaining to attain her university degree. She initially attended a language institute before enrolling in her bachelor's programme at AUT in 2017, where she is in her second year.

4.2.2.1 Initial learning environment (2016)

"This is the class [with] five tables, the teacher and there is a projector. The teacher was very supportive, very nice, even the welcome they do [using] ice-breakers—'tell us about yourself'—it was totally different! Even the building and the facilities were

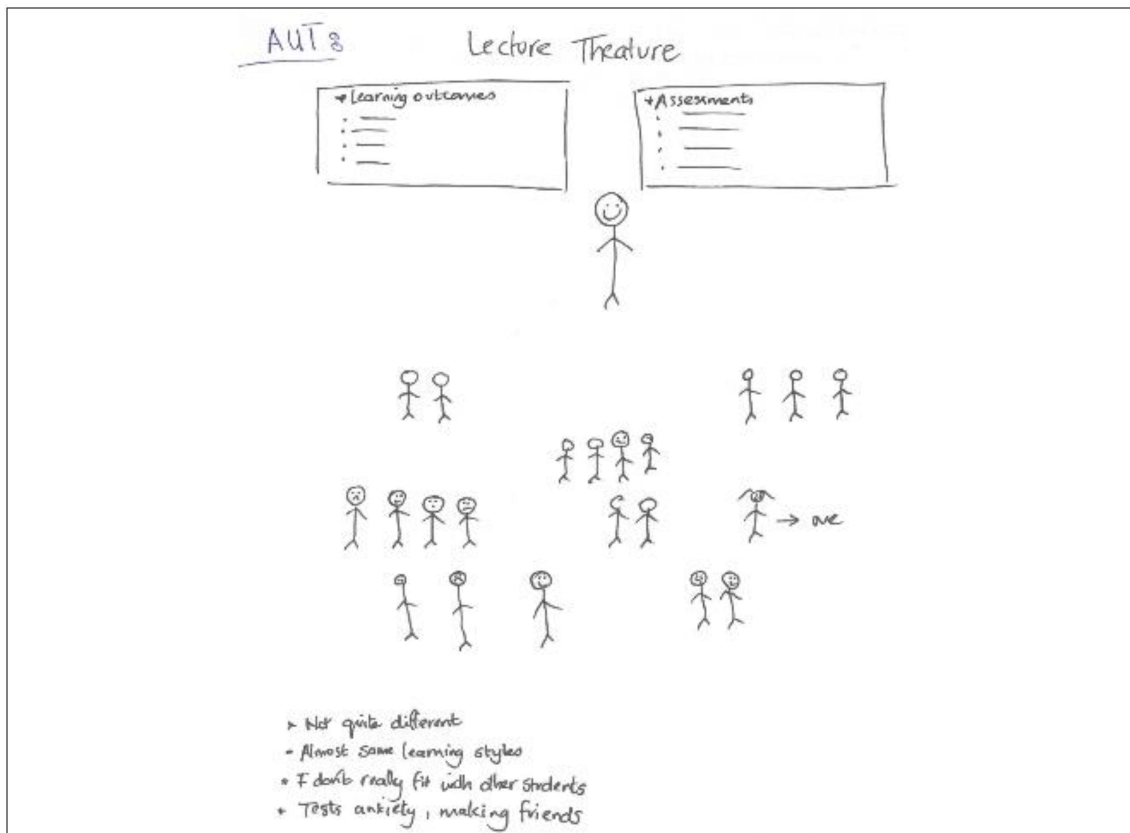
different because in my country we all sit in the normal lecture theatre and the lecturer talks.”



“All the people were really nice, they are all smiling, and most are Asian and immigrants. There are different learning styles. We had an essay to write about the place you wish to work. This is me, I’m saying, ‘I can’t do it!’ First of all, I have test anxiety and the second thing is my writing skills are really bad … I was very frustrated, and I remember we had the writing test and I didn’t do well. I went out [of the room] and I was so angry, I decided to keep walking, walking, walking and then found myself home and it was raining and very cold, and I was crying. When I came here, I had this shock that ‘actually, I don’t know how to do anything’, so I started to figure out that ‘actually, I’m not as good as I thought I was’. The homework we got in Sudan—you memorise things. Here, it’s different, it’s about your experience, you reflect yourself in your work. I can’t go on the internet and find the answer and copy it! We always

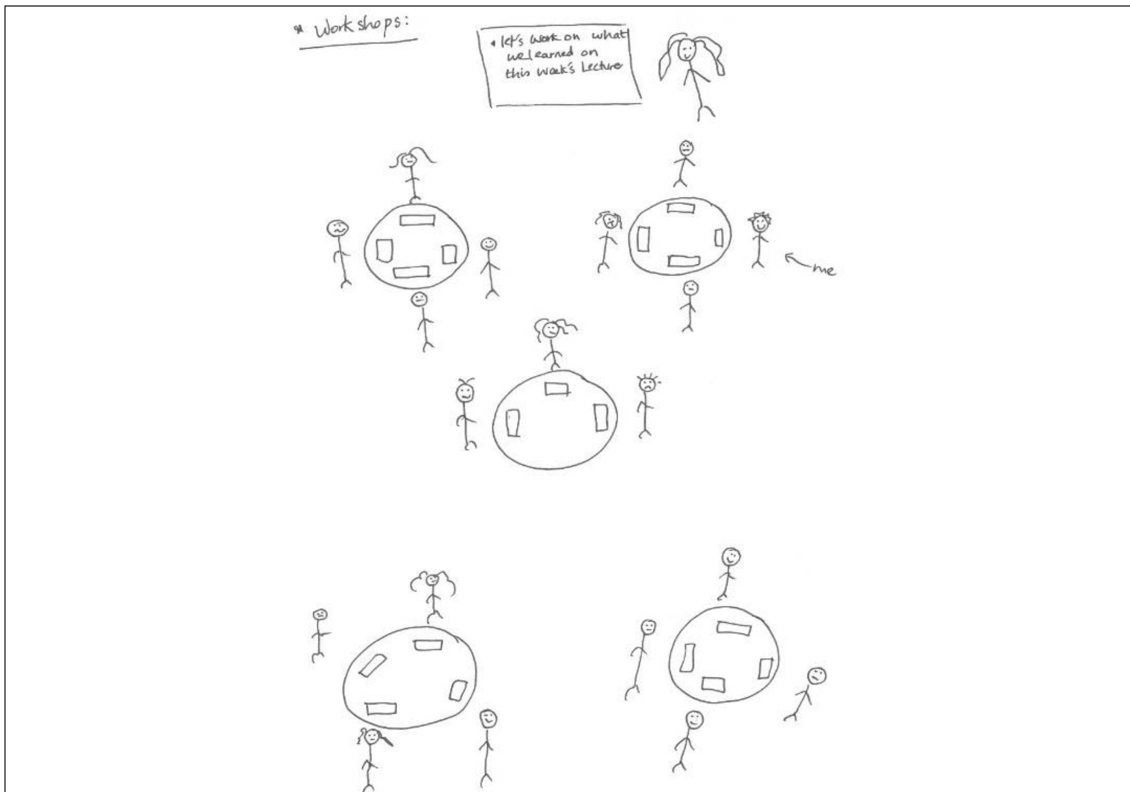
used to work together. People were very supportive; everyone around you, starting from the teacher and students, they'd show you that it's OK that you don't know, that you feel stupid. I had to work it out. I had to go home, read the newspaper and watch a video … I had to experience things, so I can learn."

4.2.2.2 Current learning environment (2018)



"Here is the lecture theatre and again I really like the university. I am so excited when I'm sitting, and the lecturer is lecturing. I'm enjoying the experience and even how they're presenting the lecture or topic is interesting … how they're transferring that information to you. You're just sitting there, and you find it's in your mind, but how it came in you don't know! Here, we have everything, you have speakers all around, you have projectors, you have air conditioning, this helps you to be in the mood, to be comfortable and help you focus. Here they have Kiwis and Asians; it's quite different from where I come from. Middle Eastern people talk a lot, we are excited about things but here, not everyone … some of them you see, some of them you don't see in the big lecture theatre.

This is the workshop [which] is very new to me."



"When you enter the room you sit wherever, but then a group forms and you will sit with that group for the semester. Actually, it's easier to connect with others, to help you understand the topic, to work on what you've learnt, to work on assignments, there are lots of interactions. These are laptops on the tables ...they offer you laptops in the workshop classes! But it's risky, because some of the people don't do the job; some want to be bossy. I'm still struggling with the group work. [Some students] are chatting. What I figure is that students here don't know the value of what they have."

4.2.2.3 Interpretation of Coco's rich pictures

Coco's initial learning environment is in a Language School as an ESL programme which, while positive and supportive, tells through the speech bubbles of her academic learning challenges in an NZ education system that is very different from her previous learning. She uses symbols to convey the associated emotions through incomplete notes on her desk, no mouth on her face, suggesting a lack of 'voice' or a challenge with English communication in contrast to her peers, most of whom have smiles (and voices). The students appear to be differentiated by gender, giving a

sense of social familiarity, so while there are no connectors in the drawing, there is a sense of community. Three years later, Coco is at AUT.

In her second set of pictures she presents stereotypical learning in a traditional lecture theatre and small group workshop, both with low energy levels. While she identifies herself in the class, she is one of a crowd of homogeneous students, depicted as stylised, one-dimensional figures. She appears assimilated into the learning environment and welcomes (as familiar) the transmission mode of lecture delivery with its focus on instrumental learning. However, she is physically disconnected and separated from others in the lecture, yet she is observant of most of her student peers, indicating a range of their facial expressions (grumpy, unimpressed, neutral, friendly). Of those that are faceless, she admitted when probed, "Yeah, some of them you don't see in the big lecture theatre". Coco felt the need to add explanatory details on the picture through phrases that spelled out her psychological and sociocultural challenges, reinforcing her poor adaptation in the current learning environment. Even in the group workshop context, while she is physically part of the small group, the lack of connectors suggests that her bonds with her peers are weak.

Coco clearly exhibits Berry's (1997) concept of acculturative stress in her first learning environment, with signs that she experiences Phelan et al.'s (1991) hazardous cultural boundary crossing because of her large culture distance from the mainstream reinforced by the type of language challenges facing ESL learners (Borland & Pearce, 2002). She appears to carry these scars and the resultant low self-efficacy and self-confidence common to ESL learners (Badiozaman et al., 2018) into her experience of the university, where she is isolated and invisible to her teachers and student peers. She appears to be assimilated into the mainstream learning environment, yet is separated by a lack of social bonds, which continues to have a psychological impact on her self and her learning, putting at risk her sociocultural adaptation. This suggests a strong belief in assimilation as false consciousness as a pre-requisite for belonging. Ward et al.'s (1998) research suggests that sociocultural adjustment increases over time, but this is not the case for Coco, and while she is aware of her self in the learning environment and wants friends, she lacks the person

resources (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) to effectively trigger positive proximal processes in the microsystem. Coco's experiences are not unique; Chataway and Berry's (1989) study of Hong Kong Chinese students acculturating in Canada found that they exhibited similar academic difficulties and loneliness. She shared during the interview the significant impact of her ethnic and cultural identity issues both in Sudan and in NZ, yet these have not featured in her drawings, remaining hidden, just as her Muslim faith is not outwardly represented in her person. Her drawings suggest that Coco may be maladapted at the present.

4.2.3 *Enid*

Enid is a Chinese student whose initial learning experience reflects her two years as an international student in a language school in Auckland. She was granted residency in 2014. In 2015, Enid enrolled at AUT, where she completed a certificate before moving into her bachelor's programme. Enid has drawn both learning environments on one page. The initial learning environment is shown at the bottom and the current environment at the top of the page, where she represents her three years at AUT.

4.2.3.1 Initial learning experience (2015)

"This is when I was back in China. The teacher is really strict, and it won't be funny, no jokes in the classroom and you can't eat or drink. This [NZ initial experience] was the teacher and this was how we were sitting in the classroom. There was not much restriction; someone drinking coffee, eating. The teacher, his personality was outgoing, funny, interesting and [he was] good-looking. That was my first impression of the class. They [other students] all were from other places, and not really good at English. It was so much fun; the teachers were really good and their teaching methods were really good as well. I was looking forward to studying here, so everything felt fresh and I just dived into the environment."

4.2.3.2 Current learning environment (2018)

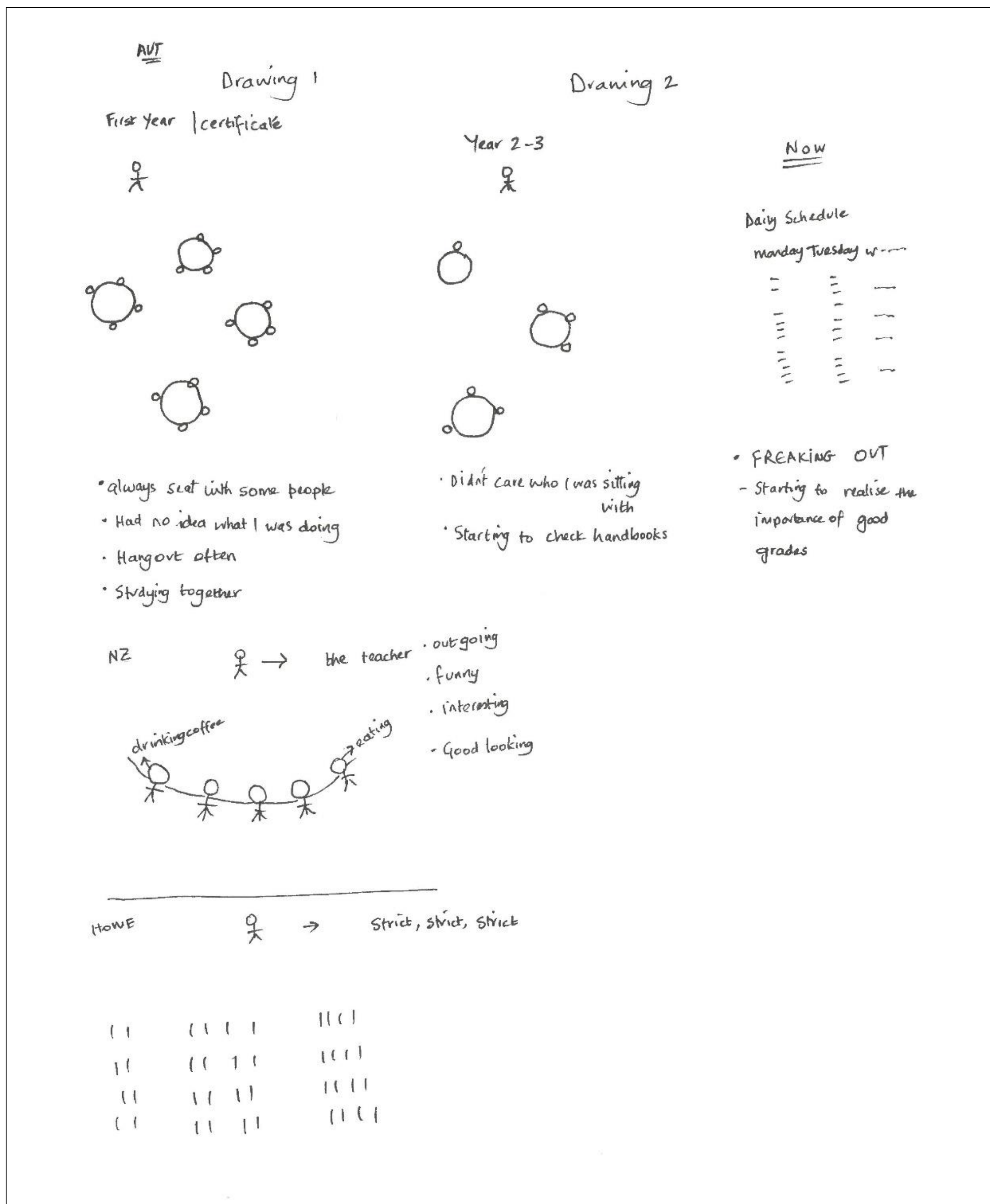
"This [top of page] is my time at AUT. We had four papers together with all the same people. I tried really hard to fit in because I didn't want to be the only person that was sitting at a table, so I tried really hard to make friends. I had no idea what I was

doing for my first year; I didn't know to look at handbooks and stuff … maybe I had a problem understanding the lecturer as well. I wasn't really used to the English environment before I came to the university. I wouldn't say it was hard to understand, but maybe I just wasn't paying attention. I listened really carefully; I thought I understood. My grades were pretty good back then, and because when you're in China you have to learn English grammar, and I think my speaking was pretty good as well, so, they [lecturers] didn't really understand that I, well, I didn't feel like I had problems, but now when I think about it, I feel like 'Oh, I didn't know what I was doing!' In my second and third year at university because everybody has different papers, I don't really care if I have a friend or not, so I just come in and listen to the lecturer and then I just go… Now I feel like I understand, well I'd say that maybe 80%. Sometimes I feel a little left out because there are some things that only people with western culture know and we don't really know. I hated group work at first, and now I still hate it."

4.2.3.3 Interpretation of Enid's rich pictures

In her first drawing, Enid depicts a sharply contrasting initial learning environment in a Language School in NZ from that of China, identifying a large cultural distance between education systems and expectations, which suggests a cultural conflict on contact (Berry, 1997) and even potentially hazardous boundary crossings (Phelan et al., 1991). The vital role of a teacher in acculturating students has been identified by Vedder et al. (2006) and is illustrated in Enid's picture as she was scaffolded and engaged in collaborative work. Such a transition made learning accessible for Enid, and she appears to have had a positive experience and sense of belonging. Seven years later, Enid draws her current learning environment at AUT. Her acculturation trajectory is opposite to that expected from her initial learning environment, highlighting the significance of contextual influences on acculturation. In the AUT context, she shows a decline in social interaction and academic confidence over the three years of the programme, and currently expresses feeling overwhelmed and stressed by the academic challenges, to the extent that people are missing in her current learning environment. It is possible that Enid's linguistic and academic needs as an ESL leaner have not been met during her acculturation period as they appear

as major barriers to her academic success, similar to those identified by Li (2004) in her study of Chinese EFL learners in Canada..



By using one page for both drawings and with small images, Enid presents a picture that at first glance appears simple and superficial. However, the pictures tell a rich story of increasing marginalisation in the learning environment, both socially and psychologically, expressed through written phrases and the capitalised “FREAKING OUT”. Enid is invisible in both the learning environments, and while she connects the

peer group in her first drawing, no connectors are used in or across the depiction of AUT learning environments.

Enid's acculturation experience shows an assimilation into the mainstream but not an increased adaptation, as predicted by Berry's (1997) theory, instead revealing the psychological variations noted by Ward et al. (1998). Because no connector or self-identification is depicted, it is difficult to ascertain her sociocultural adjustment except to assume that she has become increasingly disconnected, at odds with the findings of Ward et al. (1998) of the expected trajectory over time. While Enid appears in the drawings to be completely assimilated into the learning environment, suggesting a belief of assimilation as false consciousness, her message through words suggests Berry's (1997) adaptation strategy of separation bordering on marginalisation. Unlike Coco, who experiences stress through lack of contact with social groups, Enid appears not to seek such connections. Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) would explain that Enid's instigative characteristics inhibit positive and sustainable proximal processes of engagement in the mesosystem. It is possible that, along with her invisibility, Enid displays similar passivity in the classroom to that of Hsieh (2007).

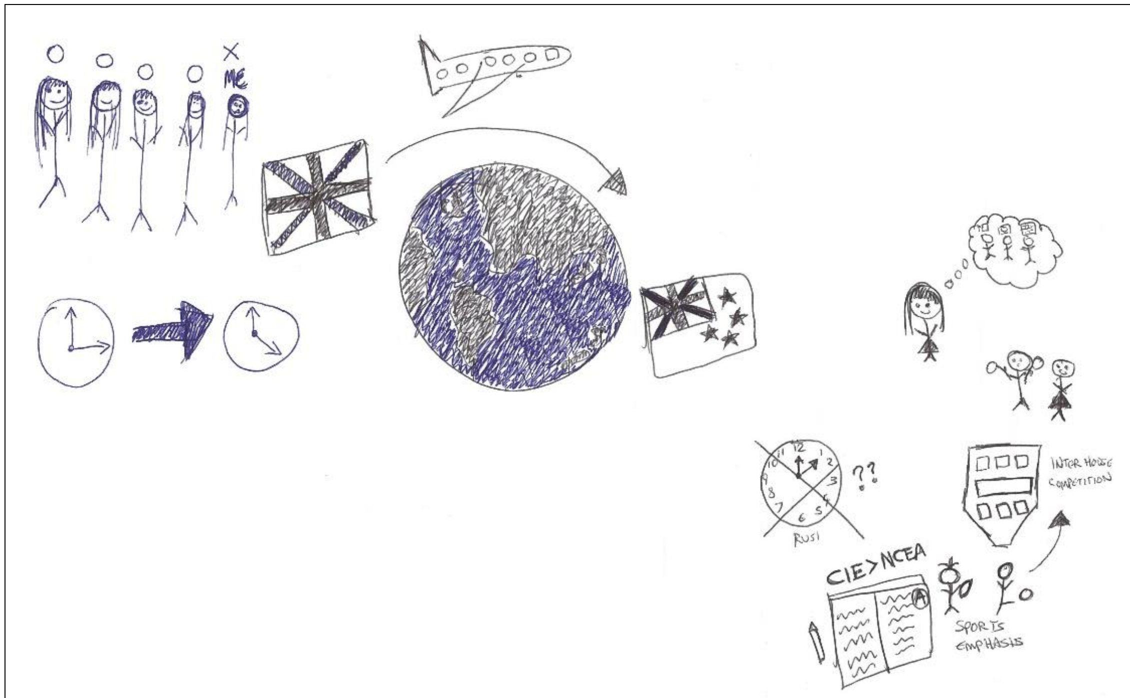
4.2.4 *Fish*

Fish is British with an Indian mother and English father. In late 2012, her family moved to NZ, where she finished her secondary schooling. Fish is enrolled in a bachelor's degree programme and is in Year 2.

4.2.4.1 Initial learning environment (2012)

"I've got the globe in the middle, Britain over here and New Zealand over this side. This section is life before I moved here. Growing up in England, I felt very different to everyone else because of my background, and where I used to live wasn't a lot of different cultures; it was predominantly European people. Sometimes I felt very different. They [peers] were all the same, so they had a lot of things in common; they're all smiling. And this is me here: I've not got a circle; I've got an X to show that I was different. I was the only coloured student at my school, so I stood out a lot. I wasn't always happy; I had friends, but didn't feel included. During my studies, while

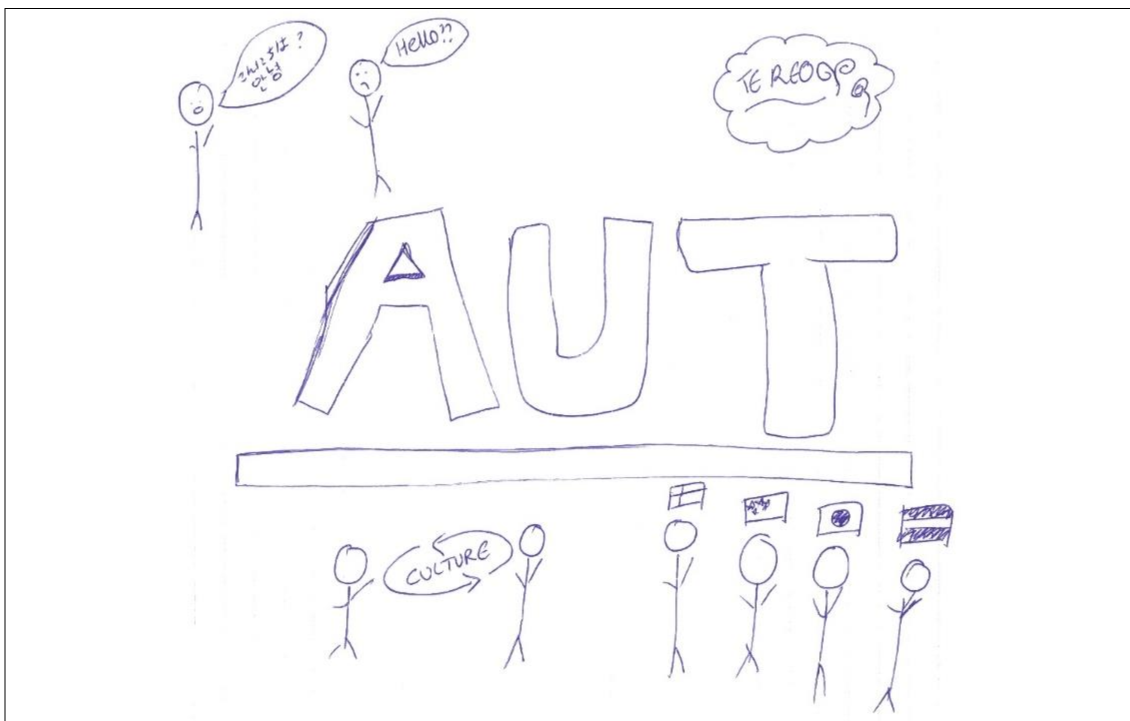
I was at school in England, I felt like I wasted a lot of time. I didn't really take school very seriously and I just sort of got through the school day and with tests, it's very calm.



"One day my dad sprang on us, 'Let's move to New Zealand'. I was excited; it was a nice place, completely different, different way of living and there's new opportunities. Here everything was rushed because I moved here in September, so I'd missed most of the school year, and I had to catch up on a lot. I didn't have a lot of time to do school work and then they put a lot of emphasis on sports in New Zealand and also cultural activities and co-curricular activities, which I'd never done before. In my high school, we had the option to do the Cambridge exams and the NCEA exams, and there was a lot of debate with my parents because I'd already done some of the GCSEs in the UK. I got to meet lots of different people. My school had lots of international students from all over the place, something that I had never experienced before: Russians, Chinese, Koreans, Japanese. It was just fascinating to me; I learnt about all these people, all about their countries and I got to learn about all the cultures, meet their families, have Chinese food together and, of course, the Māori part with the kapa haka groups. It made me feel good, how they embrace different cultures here. And it's not just about European culture; it's incorporating

the indigenous, Māori side as well. That's where I started learning Japanese at high school. I've tried to draw little people with flags flying on top of them: where they come from and all the potential people I could meet from different cultures. I just loved learning about culture. When I said that I'm from the UK and everyone's like 'Well, you don't really look like you're from the UK!' But, they're just as interested in me as I am in them! I think it's made a difference how open they are to other cultures."

4.2.4.2 Current learning environment (2017)



"Some of the challenges that I face are language barriers [with] a lot of international students not having the confidence to speak English. My major is Japanese, so we do get some Chinese or Korean students. Just approaching these students, you want to make everyone feel included and in group work it's difficult when you've got a project and you're speaking in English, they find it difficult. The Kiwi students are fine in groups. I noticed also in Japanese papers, we do a lot about our own cultures. I did a paper in English language and we also included *te reo Māori* as well. My lecturer wasn't Māori, but she was so enthusiastic about it and she wanted us to learn about it as well. We all enjoyed it!"

4.2.4.3 Interpretation of Fish's rich pictures

In the first picture, the viewer's eye is drawn to the strong vectors in the arrow from the British to the NZ flag, the aeroplane flying across the globe as the story of immigration, and the separation of Fish's British and NZ experiences. A significant theme relates to Fish's ethnic identity issues, contrasting the negativity of discrimination in the UK (she drew herself smaller than her peer and marked herself with a cross and downturned mouth) with the positivity of diversity in NZ (she drew herself larger, with a smile on her face expressing a sense of growing self-confidence and interactions with other ethnicities). After six years of acculturation, Fish drew her current learning environment, dominated by the naming and underlining of the university as the context within which she experiences ethnic diversity and multiculturalism. While Fish is not identifiable, we have a sense of her presence in the four vignettes, in which she illustrated through symbols her appreciation of Māori culture and language (*te reo*), intercultural dialogue (connectors), interactions with international students (language symbols) and ethnic diversity (flags). Her focus is on building relationships, and she experiences a sense of belonging with others who are ethnically different. This is an expressive and expansive picture and a happy place for Fish because she fits well with her perceived multicultural environment.

Phinney (1989) argues that ethnic identity development is triggered for immigrants on contact with a new culture group, and this is followed by a period of ethnic identity search. Fish, however, experienced the reverse, finding an immediate fit not with the European mainstream as one might expect because of her small cultural distance, but with the ethnically diverse immigrant and international student group. Fish has easily assimilated into the mainstream learning environment, appearing to accept the belief of assimilation as false consciousness as part of the acculturation process; however, she has chosen Berry's (1997) integration strategy whenever possible in the public domain of education, as revealed though her cultural programme of study. Acculturation for Fish has been a welcomed opportunity for personal growth—a positive experience that has given her a new beginning in NZ. The drawings suggest that she has the personal attributes and resources to generate and sustain positive proximal interactions in the mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) with a

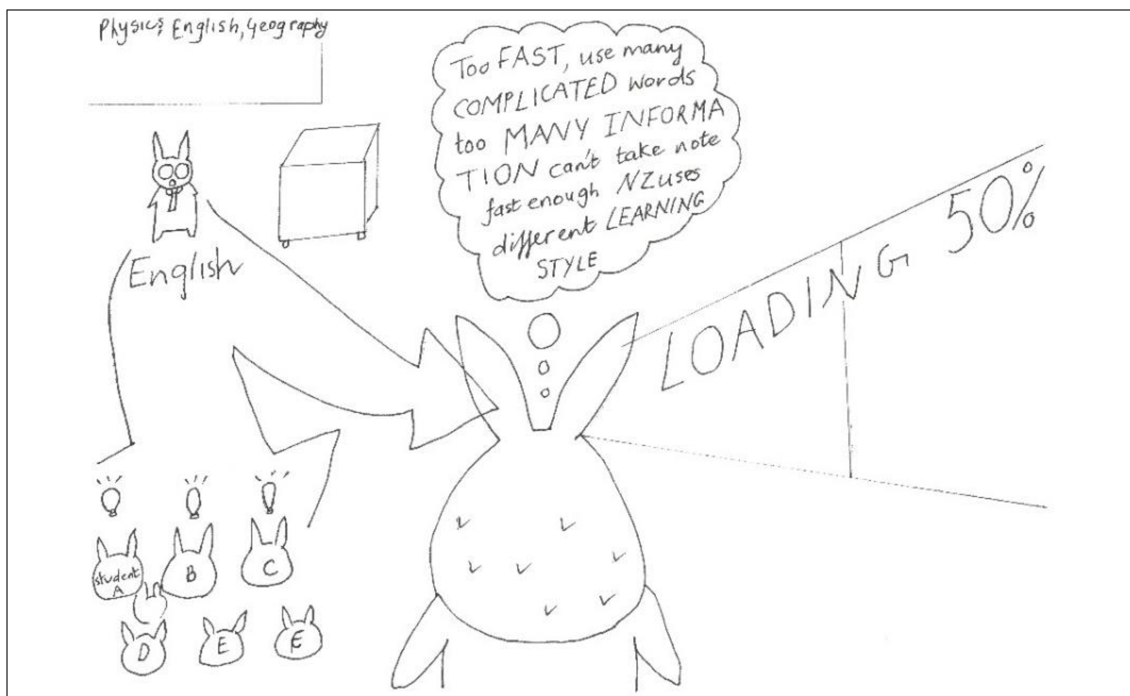
strong others orientation, which Kosic (2006) identifies as valuable in developing and maintaining relationships, and a level of ethnic identity development that Phinney et al. (1997) align with acceptance of the self and others. Fish carries little acculturative stress, has resolved her ethnic identity issues and has adopted an integration strategy during acculturation.

4.2.5 *Jane*

Jane is a Vietnamese student who immigrated to NZ in 2013. Her initial learning experience was a foundation course at another Auckland university. In 2016 she enrolled in her bachelor's programme at AUT, where she is in her third year of study.

4.2.5.1 Initial learning environment (2013)

"I am the main character in the picture, so I just draw it bigger; this is the back of me and this one doesn't wear clothes. This is the lecturer. In Vietnam, the teacher explained things slowly and I could understand it because it's in Vietnamese."

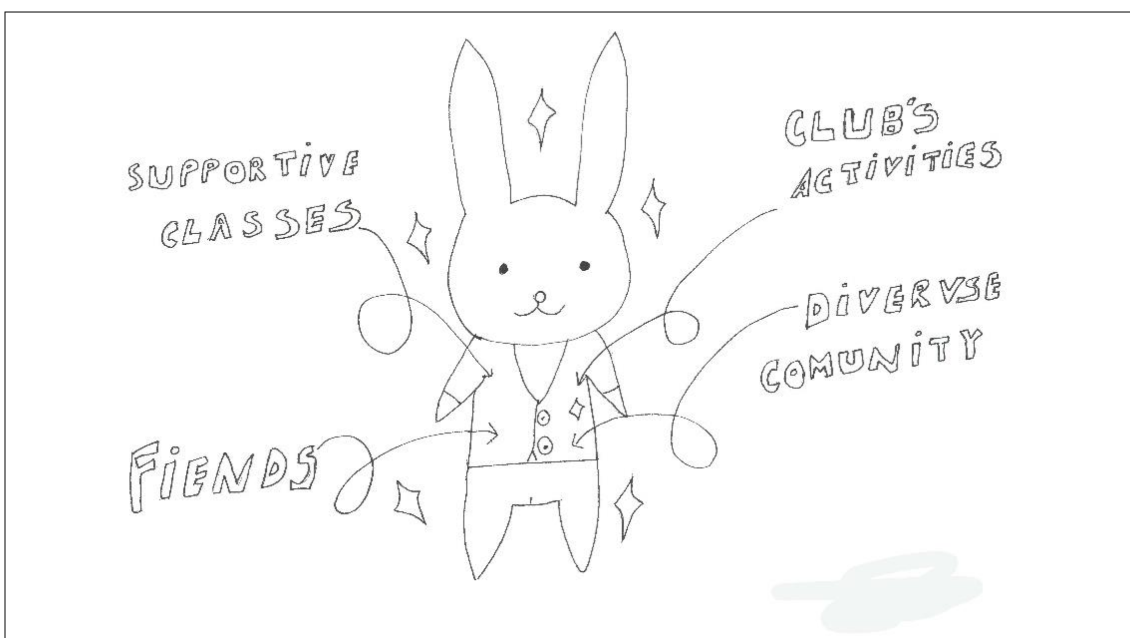


"For the teaching style, in New Zealand they expect students to be more independent. The foundation course was general study; they teach you the subjects from high school, to fill in the gaps of knowledge. I have physics, English, geography and maths. I didn't mention maths as it is just numbers so it's easier to understand,

but geography, English and physics are heavily dependent on English, like they have to explain a lot, so for me sometimes I feel that the lecturers speak a bit fast, and then they use complicated words to explain. This is the reason why I can't get 100% of what the lecturer says, just 50%. I was shy when I came here in my first year. I did make a few friends [but] no Vietnamese in my class. My friends (New Zealanders) can easily understand it, they get the idea quickly, and they can respond quickly, but for me, I felt worried, so I had to go home and read the textbook and it took a long time. I also started talking with my friends and asked them what the lecturer said, so they can explain to me."

4.2.5.2 Current learning environment (2016)

"My learning now at AUT, we have supportive classes, the lecturer is friendlier and sometimes they also give out a cookie or candy to encourage us to answer the question; it's really cute! They also encourage us to email them if we have any questions. AUT has diverse students so we have different clubs. I have joined the AUT Asia Connect, mainly Asian students born here, and we also invite Kiwis to participate. We have lots of activities; we want to raise the awareness of Kiwi students about Asia. AUT has different ethnicities, and we also have lots of Vietnamese studying here, so I don't feel alone. I've made more friends at AUT; not too many but it's OK. I don't mind sitting with Kiwi students or others with immigrant backgrounds."



"In the clubs it becomes important for anyone who wants to know about Asians, but in the classes it's just a bigger group and not everyone cares about the Asian culture. I think that I've become more confident in my English, so it's helped me to be more open, to be able to talk to other people. Here we do group work and group assignments a lot and I'm used to it now. I feel that I fit in, I feel comfortable with that … sometimes it's a bit hard for me when I have to talk with an important person, like a guest speaker or this interview; it's a bit scary so language is a big barrier for me."

4.2.5.3 Interpretation of Jane's rich pictures

On initial contact with the mainstream learning culture, Jane evidenced the cultural conflict and participation problems that Berry (1992) would anticipate. High levels of acculturative stress are evident in the challenges Jane depicts as an ESL learner related to those identified by Borland and Pearce (2002) . Her picture expresses emotions of anxiety and vulnerability, the message conveyed by volume of space utilised by her story, the centrally placed and capitalised letters in the thought bubble, as well as the large proportional arrows with arrowheads acting as strong vectors leading the eye to read the message of "50% loading". Jane's plight as an immigrant ESL learner is juxtaposed with the depiction of her peers, who have flashing light bulbs as symbols of their understanding. Jane appears marginalised, looking on objectively as an outsider and wearing no clothes. She agreed (on probing) that this represented her vulnerability in the learning environment. This feeling is reinforced by the lack of links with her peers and the one-way arrow from the lecturer. I probed why she thought the lecturer, who has very big eyes but does not 'see' her, was unaware of her learning needs. She responded, "This course is for domestic students and the majority of students are New Zealanders they look different but were born in NZ", highlighting her invisibility to the lecturer, who assumed she was also NZ born. Jane is the only participant who drew animals rather than people, yet she did not intend this as a metaphor; it is possibly a stylised way of drawing.

Jane drew her current learning environment, six years later, with a completely different mood and energy and a turnaround of her position so that she is centred and forward-looking in the picture. Her eyes are open, she has a smile on her face, and sparkles surround her body, including one on her heart. She radiates happiness because she is 'clothed' or embraced by the learning environment, which she represented abstractly through lighter, spiral lines that link Jane with social relationships, the diverse community and her friends. There is a sense that she has moved through the acculturation process outlined by Berry (1992) through behaviour shifts involving cultural learning and shedding, towards a positive sociocultural and psychological adaptation. While Jane is assimilated into the formal learning environment with little acculturative stress, suggesting that her belief in assimilation as false consciousness is well aligned with her behaviours, she has depicted through words her strong position of integration in the informal environment. This picture suggests that Jane has the demand characteristics (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) that invite positive proximal interactions within the mesosystem, resulting in a stable sense of self and a sense of group belonging.

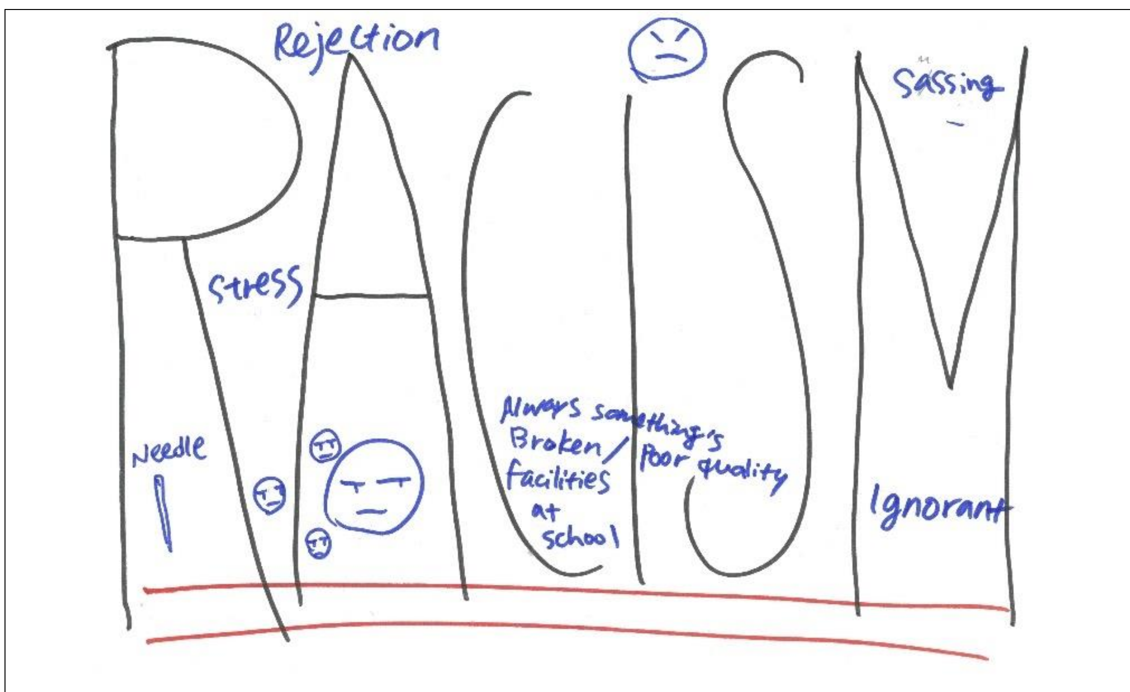
4.2.6 *Miho*

Miho is Japanese and had her initial learning experience in 2010–2011 in NZ as an international student in Auckland, at a private training institution. She worked in Australia for six months before returning to NZ, where she gained residency and started study at AUT in 2016 towards her bachelor's degree. Miho is in her second year of study.

4.2.6.1 Initial learning environment (2010–2011)

"I had no issues with understanding and could communicate easily. I was the only international student there and the whole class wasn't really used to having an international student. A lot of students there were younger than me—I was about 31 years old and everyone else was straight out of high school—and they didn't know how to connect with me, they didn't know how to communicate with me, so they kind of sussed me a lot—they wanted to know about me; whatever I did they always wanted to see *how* I was doing it. I felt like everyone at the school was watching me

all the time. Sometimes in class we had to pair up to do something practical, and they refused to be paired with me. I didn't know why, but the tutor didn't mind; she didn't change the situation, so I found it was quite hard. I often was separated, and I was watching how everyone else was doing and when I went home I practised on my flatmates. When I was studying, the school was bought by a Singaporean business and the tutor was telling all the students, 'Because there are Singaporeans buying our school we have to start using chopsticks!' I was offended by that and I left the class, and the tutor followed me. Apparently, the students found it was offensive; they pushed the tutor to follow me and apologise, and when the tutor came up to me, she said, 'I'm so sorry if you are offended, **BUT** I find it very difficult to teach someone who doesn't speak English'. I didn't feel that was an apology! I had like spots on my body, but it calmed down during the break, so it must have been from the stress."



4.2.6.2 Current learning environment (2018)

"I'm quite happy learning at the university. I'm doing quite well at studying and I feel relaxed and everyone's very friendly. In my Japanese background we communicate a lot during the day by using Facebook Messenger but here it's not so common. Some [students] communicate very well, like checking Messenger every day, at least twice

a day, but most of the students they don't check Messenger a lot. At first, I thought it was 'laziness', but now I understand that is their culture.

We have a lot of group work. I don't say I love it but some of the groups I find difficult because as part of my background as a Japanese person, we tend to be very punctual and we work, we research before even the programme starts, but it's not the culture here sometimes, and some students have a lack of commitment."

4.2.6.3 Interpretation of Miho's rich pictures

Miho's first picture carries a powerful message of racism and discrimination from both the teacher and her student peers, resulting in her sociocultural marginalisation in the learning environment, with physical (rash) and psychological (acculturative stress) impacts. She depicts the experience by using large capitalised letters spelling out RACISM across the page, reinforced by red underlining. Miho places herself at a distance, an outsider and an observer. The teacher and student peers are drawn within this racist frame, with grim, unwelcoming and judgemental expressions. The symbol of a needle illustrates an example Miho shared during the interview, about not having a partner with whom to practise electrolysis. When I probed the impact of this learning environment, she responded, "It makes me stronger, I guess". Six

years have passed and her acculturation into the current learning environment tells of positive assimilation and integration.

Her second picture is powerfully different from the first: warm colours are used to express light and energy, acceptance, and a sense of belonging and inclusivity. There are signs of social connections and engagement in a multicultural and equitable learning environment at the university. Abstract elements of engagement and participation are suggested through the close communication and connection with others who are different, including referencing to AUT's Rainbow Tick for diversity. Miho has become an insider. She values the close connections with her peers, which she shows through sparkles, linked hands, smiling faces and the strong facial vectors (of noses, mouths, eyes, heads), which draw the reader's eye. She is aware of and secure in her Japanese values, different from those of the mainstream in work ethic and commitment to regular communication through Messenger on Facebook, and illustrating Phinney et al.'s (1997) conclusion that when the final stage of ethnic identity development is reached, there is an acceptance of self and others.

Miho's polarised experiences could be explained (but not excused) by her initial status as an international student, and the subsequent eight years of acculturation have moved her from Berry's (1997) position of separation on arrival to assimilation into the mainstream learning environment. Her focus on multicultural elements in the learning environment suggests that she is most comfortable in an integration position and has found her fit within the diversity of AUT, where she no longer experiences acculturative stress. She appears to have accepted assimilation as false consciousness as the mechanism for her fit.

4.2.7 *Sisifa*

Sisifa is an English-speaking immigrant from Tonga who arrived in NZ in 2011. Her first learning experience was in Year 7 at a secondary school in Auckland, and in 2018 she started a bachelor's degree programme at AUT.

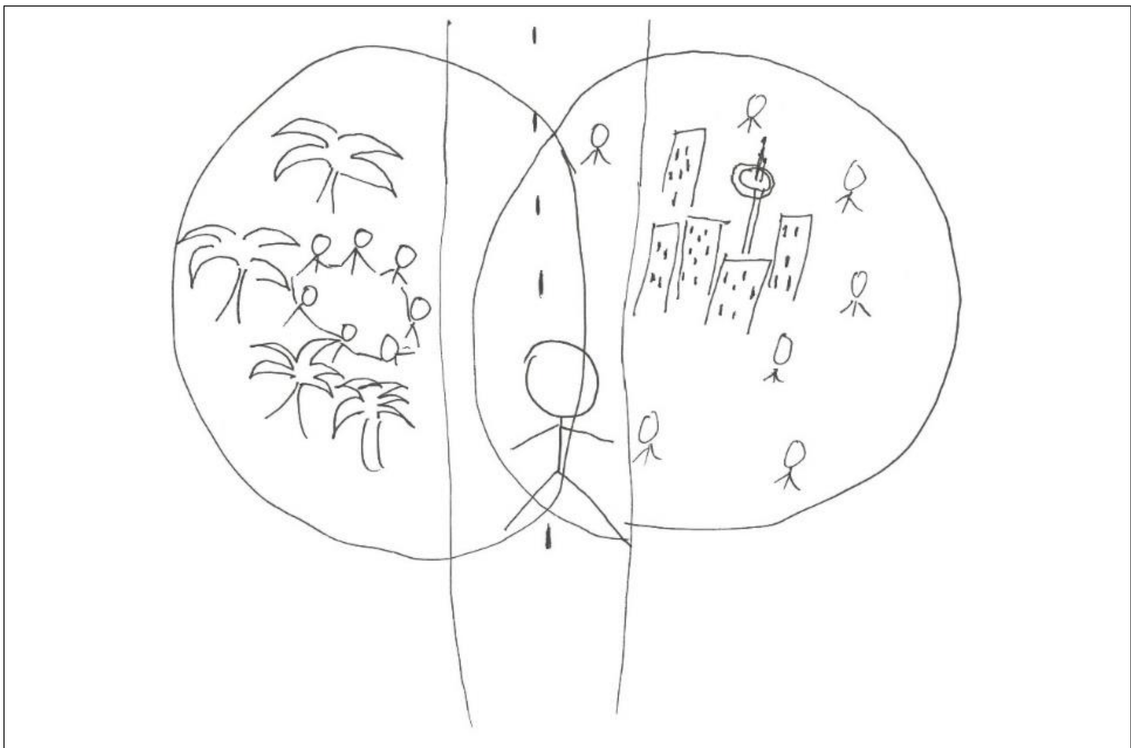
4.2.7.1 Initial learning environment (2011)

"This is the start of my journey when I came to New Zealand. It felt more of a bit of a stretch and a straining relationship for both sides of my world, because I did come from the motherland of Tonga to a new motherland, which is Aotearoa New Zealand. Back home in Tonga, it felt more like a communal base—there's more of a sense of community—whereas here, there's concrete jungles, skyscrapers, many houses but less of a home, everyone's more of an individual here, they like to be independent, we have many neighbours, but we don't exactly want to know what happens to our neighbours! Initially it felt like I had to hold on to both worlds while I was living here, like holding on to the past while living in the present. Always going back to what's happening at home, while I should be keeping up with what is happening here. [That was] really hard for me, so I felt that I had to stretch myself."

"In the beginning, especially education-wise, I felt that as an immigrant student I was sort of invisible but also visible. Some groups that weren't a part of my ethnicity group, I felt invisible to them, whereas for my own people that I recognise, I would feel visible because I felt as if we had some sort of connection towards each other. There were times I felt invisible to my own people who were raised here; there's still quite a difference between us, because they were born with the culture here, so sometimes looking at me, it'll either be a mirror or a shadow to them. A *mirror*

because I reflect their ancestry. I reflect what their parents had been through coming here. It's giving them a reminder of the past. But the *shadow* is I will never be on the same page as them because I wasn't born here, so I'll always be one step behind. I had my [English] fluency at home. My parents were fine with me speaking English rather than my own language, because of this mentality back home, that if you could speak English well then you were considered 'intelligent' and you've got a good future. I'm still a walking contradiction because back home I felt like I wasn't accepted because I couldn't speak my own language and I still question it to this day, because when I came here I decided to pick up the language. I decided to learn so when I started speaking and getting fluent in my language, the students started liking the fact that I could speak my language flexibly with other people of my ethnicity, but it was still not enough to make me feel accepted here."

4.2.7.2 Current learning environment (2018)



"Now I've had to walk in both worlds. This is the road I'm taking, I decided I should walk in two worlds, where I should appreciate both cultures because I do appreciate living here in New Zealand, the culture is nice, there are some parts of the individuality here that I quite like. Sometimes a communal base won't always be the

best because in a community everyone's in on your story, whereas everyone here minds their own business. Surprisingly, I don't enjoy group work at times, I like to do my own work and that's why I appreciate the individual work."

4.2.7.3 Interpretation of Sisifa's rich pictures

Sisifa's pictures reflect the concept of 'being a person of two worlds', which she uses as a metaphor for her physical, social, emotional and learning experiences in NZ. In the first picture, she juxtaposes two circles representing her home culture and host culture, with herself between the two, being pushed and pulled by thoughts and emotions. The large number of arrows, each with an arrowhead vector converging on her person, carry weight and pressure. Her outstretched arms are a counter to these arrows as she tries to acculturate. The mood is tense and stressed, and she is alone, not part of either world, but tugged by each. Her ethnic identity is central to her experience, and there is a sense of her isolation in the initial learning environment because she represents Auckland with structures but no significant people in contrast to the community back home. This is a strong metaphor that initially appears simple but is multileveled and complex in both resonance and emphasis (Black, 2012). Interpreting the metaphor benefited from engagement with the participant, which is the essence of PVRM as defined by Mitchell et al. (2011). Sisifa's interpretation was essential to understanding the elaboration of the metaphor to the level of the learning environment and to appreciating the ethnic identity issues embedded in the pictures. She demonstrates the link between language acquistion and culture as described by Borland and Pearce (2002) although in her case, the issue is competency in Tongan language rather than English. This is represented in her second rich picture where she has successfully integrated her two worlds, language acquisition being one of the levels of integration in the metaphor....

In her second picture, Sisifa inserts a road in her integrated world, which suggests moving forward along a defined path as well as acknowledging and bringing the two cultures closer together in her person. The mood of the second drawing is far more settled and calmer; the two circles are larger, perhaps indicating a maturing understanding of her position relative to each. Sisifa's relaxed body language and the

lack of arrows indicate that acculturative stress is reduced. While this drawing contains people and relationships at AUT, there are no connections but an acceptance of individualism as part of the learning environment. The depiction of Tonga has remained unchanged after eight years and raises questions of whether Sisifa is romanticising her memories or whether she still holds to the traditional cultural values.

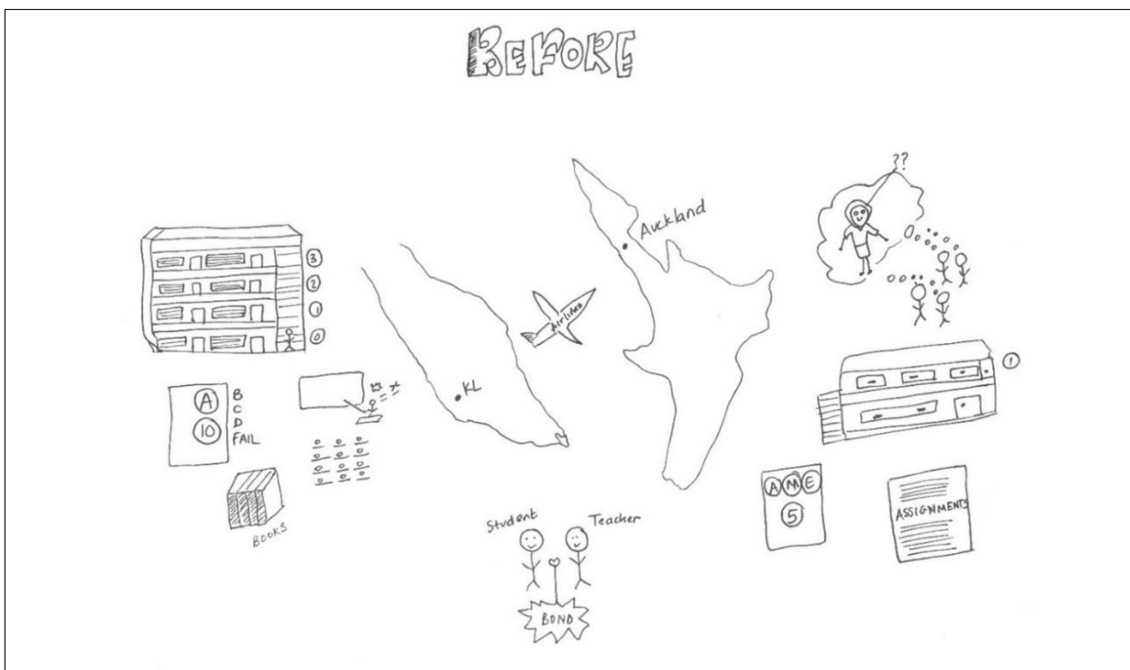
The concept of 'belonging to two worlds' is a common experience for immigrants, who draw from both but belong fully to neither worlds, as expressively described by Goldin (2002). Berry's (1997) acculturation theory can be seen in elements of cultural distance, cultural-values conflict and acculturative stress. While Sisifa appears to have integrated into her new society and assimilated into the mainstream learning environment, she is conscious of the tension that Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) describe between individualistic and collectivistic national cultures, holding these within her person. Sisifa's rich picture metaphor seems to suggest that she has not fully accepted assimilation as false consciousness as she continues to maintain strong beliefs, attitudes and behaviours aligned to her heritage culture. This suggests a mindset of transnationalism, linked to questions of identity, belonging and nationality as identified by Spoonley et al. (2003) as typical of Pacific Island immigrants to NZ. The fact that she continues to include the community-oriented values of the Pacific culture hint at a downward segmented assimilation trajectory, as described by Portes and Zhou (1993), as she identifies with the Pacific and Māori group rather than the European mainstream. This was confirmed in a later interview discussion as was her strong intention to reinvest her knowledge and skills in her Tongan homeland, evidence of transnationalism. Zana

4.2.8 *Zana*

Zana has a Malay ethnicity and emigrated from Malaysia to NZ in 2013. In 2014 she entered secondary school in Auckland at Year 11; she began her university study in 2017 and is in Year 2 of a bachelor's degree programme.

4.2.8.1 Initial learning environment (2014)

“This is Malaysia and this is Auckland and I have compared the differences I had. [Auckland] is the opposite culture, where assignments are based on ‘achieved, excellence or whatever’ and it’s not a fail. You only learn five subjects and three of these you pick yourself. And it’s assignment-based; the tests are not major. People ask me what I’m wearing, like a scarf. My parents had already warned me that they would do that because when I was in Australia I didn’t wear a scarf. When I came here, lots of people ask me why I wear it—the people who know me, like my friends, they will ask, but the teachers don’t because they know. When I entered the college, I think I was the only one that was wearing a scarf but later when I was in the final year, many people were wearing it.”

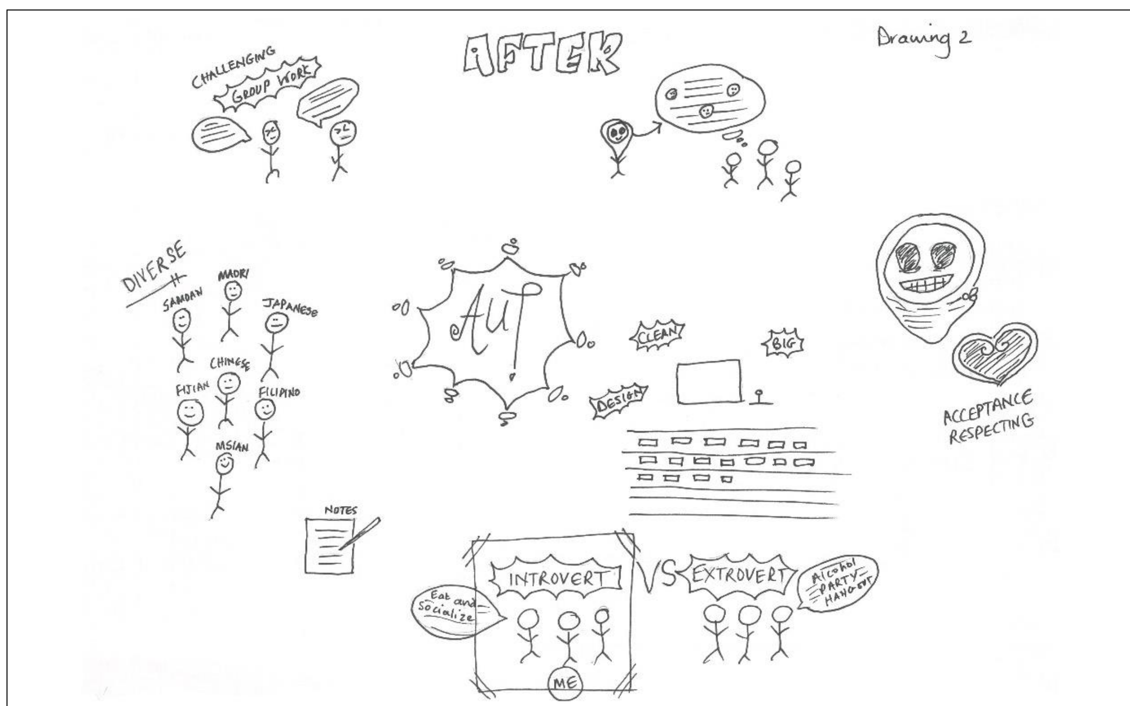


“The teachers here approach students more, especially those that are struggling—they would give them extra help, extra tuition, without anything in return. It’s a very different culture here, even in high school; students [mainly NZer], they don’t really see a teacher as a high person. They just treat them like a friend. Seeing that, I couldn’t do that; that was not right! I still have that relationship, but I have a limit; I don’t go up to a lecturer and say ‘Hi’. I think the people I was surrounded with didn’t make me feel different. They accepted me, and they were friendly, and didn’t treat

me as if I wasn't supposed to be here, mainly because my high school is very international, not only local. I think because my English is OK, they didn't really recognise that I am totally different because they can still communicate with me."

4.2.8.2 Current learning environment (2018)

"There's lots of taking notes here and listening to what lecturers say. I think the environment is so clean and the design is nice at the university. Everyone doesn't ask me about my hijab anymore, maybe because there are a lot more here. And it's more diverse. I'm happy probably because I made good friends. In high school I made these two friends and they were very close with me and we ended up in the same course at university so I'm always with them. Group work is the most challenging thing; I get frustrated but at the end of the day I have to do it!"



"My friends are immigrants too: one's Filipino; one's Fijian. AUT is really diverse, these are all my friends from different ethnicities. I'm accepting towards different cultures; I don't judge them by the way they look, because I don't want people to do that to me."

4.2.8.3 *Interpretation of Zana's rich pictures*

Zana's rich pictures tell a clear story of acculturation, from her first learning environment to AUT, the former having formal structures, assessment and pedagogy with limited personal expression, in contrast to her AUT environment, which includes six individual vignettes expressing belonging, three of which centre on her self. Central to the first drawing is the immigration journey with the strong vector indicating direction by the nose of the aeroplane, drawing attention towards the NZ experience and clearly differentiating the two periods in her life, as noted in the titles on her two drawings: "Before" and "After". While she is an ESL learner, her competency is at a level which creates few challenges, however, in the initial rich picture Zana marks her cultural difference by drawing herself large, clothed and wearing her hijab inside a soft-bounded bubble, with question marks to indicate her peer students' interest. Her open and friendly facial expression tells of a secure ethnic identity. The vignette of close relationships between students and teachers suggests a new way of relating. There are few indicators of community or a sense of belonging; however, her second picture tells a more complex story.

The second drawing is filled with high-level energy, some of which is positive (AUT as a special place, a sense of belonging, appreciation of diversity) and some representing challenges (group work) and negative experiences (values conflict with Kiwi students). Zana appears more present and grounded. Larger than her peers, and referencing her previous cultural interactions with the hijab, she now places herself outside of the students' thought bubble, suggesting less stress in being marked as different. The hijab continues as a strong identifier of her cultural values and the large decorated heart next to her, plus the all-capitalised words "acceptance" and "respecting" reveal her secure ethnic identity, which is similar to the description of Rouse's (1995) Mexican participants on initial contact with a new culture.

Zana presents as an immigrant who has an internalised ethnic identity (Phinney, 1989). However, when experiencing a cultural-values conflict with a group of NZ students in the learning environment, she withdraws into a safer and more comfortable position of separation, seeking the protection and support of her ethnic

peers, a common reaction noted by Manuela and Anae (2017) when discrimination is experienced. The rich pictures indicate that Zana has adopted Berry's (1997) acculturation strategy of integration. Even though she copes in the assimilationist mainstream, her cultural identity expressed by the hijab marks her as different and suggests that her belief in assimilation as false consciousness is tempered by her strong links with her heritage culture. This was confirmed during the interview discussion. Her exposure to a western European education system in Australia as a young student would qualify as one of Berry's (1992) moderating influences to smooth the initial acculturation experience and to reduce her cultural distance on contact with the NZ mainstream. Zana presents a strong cultural presence in her drawings, indicative at best of integration and sometimes of ethnic separation.

4.3 Cross-group findings

The chapter thus far has presented the participants' voice through individual vignettes and rich pictures. Analysis at an individual participant level uncovered the complex and unique acculturation experiences of individual participants, and links with theory (Berry, 1997; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Phinney, 1989) were easily made, although not always endorsed. Interestingly, while all participants had assimilated into the mainstream learning environment, they displayed a range of positions within that assimilation: Bruce had assimilated into the mainstream and Sisifa was closer to segmented assimilation. Miho and Fish had integrated within assimilation. Zana and Coco showed signs of separation within assimilation, and Enid was close to marginalisation within assimilation. Berry's (1997) theory does not anticipate nor accommodate such individual differences, and this endorses Chirkov's (2009) call for qualitative rather than quantitative research at the individual rather than group level. I was surprised at how the rich pictures revealed the participants' personality and dispositions, which either generated and sustained relationships or inhibited and disrupted their progress in the interactions of the learning environment. The analysis now shifts to the cross-group data.

The cross-group analysis of the paired rich pictures used content, aesthetic and thematic approaches for holistic interpretation of contiguity-based contextual and

temporal elements, as advanced by Maxwell (2012). While each analysis process provided a different lens on the data, the final four categories and seven codes reflected a high degree of similarity across the three processes, which assisted in drawing themes from the collated analyses. These are detailed in Table 4.1, following which, findings from the rich picture methodology are reported and discussed as themes under the four categories.

Table 4.1: Themes related to rich picture analytical processes

Category	**Code**	**Type of analysis process**	**Contiguity-based element**	**Themes in the rich pictures**
Personal	The self	Content Aesthetic Thematic	Temporal Contextual	Depiction of the self as visible or invisible in the learning environment supports a temporal dimension to the acculturation process.
	Emotions	Content Aesthetic		Emotions are expressed through images, symbols, metaphors and words, giving insight into personal instigative characteristics as indicators of potential proximal processes in the learning environment.
Cultural	Ethnic identity	Content Aesthetic	Contextual	When cultural diversity and ethnic identity issues are of significance to an immigrant, they assume a central focus in drawings.
	Cultural diversity			
The Learning Environment	Relationships with peers and teachers	Content Aesthetic	Contextual	Relationship dimensions within the learning environment context, which might otherwise be hidden, are revealed through rich picture images, symbols and metaphors.
	Learning and teaching	Content Aesthetic	Contextual	Curriculum and pedagogy experiences depicted in rich pictures suggest assimilationist and traditional approaches to teaching and learning in higher education, with greater multicultural experiences in informal rather than formal learning environments.
Theoretical	Assimilation as false consciousness	Thematic	Temporal Thematic	Paired rich pictures, considered through a temporal dimension, reveal the concept of assimilation as false consciousness.
	Acculturation theory Ethnic identity theory			Links to acculturation theory and ethnic identity theory are evidenced in and inform interpretation of pictures of learning environments.
	PPCT model			The components of the PPCT model (process, person, context, time) reveal and explain the uniqueness of individual experiences.

4.3.1 *Personal*

The category of personal produced two codes: *the self* and *emotions*. These closely relate to the personal instigative characteristics identified by Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) and explain the nature of interactions between the immigrant student and learning environment elements in the active zone of the mesosystem. The

participants' rich pictures endorsed the view of Bell et al. (2016) and Cristancho (2015) that rich pictures expose tacit attitudes and emotions more strongly through symbols and abstractions than would be the case through verbal explanation. The enthusiasm with which participants shared their drawings supported similar observations made by Linsch et al. (2016). Two themes are elaborated from the rich picture analysis.

4.3.1.1 Depiction of the self as visible or invisible in the learning environment supports a temporal dimension to the acculturation process

All three analytical processes revealed the theme of self in the drawings and supported Mitchell et al.'s (2011) observation that depicting the self as visible is an egocentric trait common in drawings. This was achieved through content information via images, labels, proportional size, location, thought and speech bubbles. As Surtees and Apperly (2012) found, aesthetic analysis reflected a perspective of self beyond the concrete image, through symbols and metaphors. My findings support Stuart and Ward's (2011a) research findings that the visual representation of self in identity maps reflects an integration of dimensions that are difficult to articulate in words, thus presenting a more holistic integration of self.

Thematic analysis of visibility of the self across the two drawings evidenced, in most cases, a change in egocentricity over time and a growing sense of moving from isolation towards belonging to a community, even becoming absorbed or assimilated into the learning community as evidenced in the second set of rich pictures. The acceptance of invisibility of the self suggests an unquestioned belief in assimilation as false consciousness, a message conveyed by the selection of content items in the rich pictures. Seven participants depicted a visible self in the initial environment, suggesting a personal challenge in which the self was confronted, thus bringing it centre stage in participant memory, as in the case of Jane and Miho. While four participants continued to draw a visible self in the current learning environment, it was interesting to note that for three other participants the self became invisible, although with a strong sense of presence. In the case of Fish and Miho, this invisibility suggested a positive sign of assimilation into the learning environment, with a consequent focus on the environment rather than the self, whereas Bruce's invisible

presence continued a strong egocentric perspective in a learning environment that had now become predictable and pedestrian. Only Enid appeared invisible in both learning environments. This might be read as assimilation from the start; however, the lack of personal presence in drawing is unusual and I suggest it reflects her separation within assimilation in the learning environment.

The shift from initial egocentrism towards greater inclusion of other peers and activities (often from the informal learning environment) aligns with the theory of positive sociocultural adaptation of participants over time and suggests a greater sense of belonging to a wider learning community, as expected in an integration position that includes both mainstream and multicultural elements. This pattern is supported by theory (Berry, 1997) and research findings (Ward & Kennedy, 1994; Ward et al., 1998). Without the comparison of the paired drawings over the acculturation period, these patterns would not have been visible.

4.3.1.2 Emotions are expressed through images, symbols, metaphors and words, giving insight into personal instigative characteristics as indicators of proximal processes in the context of the learning environment

The personas of the participants were further revealed and exposed through aesthetic elements related to the self in the drawings, evident in emotions expressed through concrete and abstract images, metaphors, symbols and words. Participants' interpretations of their rich pictures affirmed Berg, Bowen, Smith and Smith's (2017) observation that rich pictures capture significant emotions that might not be collected through alternative methods. The rich pictures opened a window not only to the expression of the self but also into the constructed understanding of proximal interactions. For example, a simple symbol of an upturned or downturned mouth tells of positive or negative emotions, often related to an interaction in the macrosystem. The contrast of personal emotions illustrated by Fish in her first drawing and Jane in her second drawing highlights the message conveyed by facial expressions.

Content analysis revealed 80 positive emotions across the group in contrast to 45 negative emotions. Of the positive emotions, 32 occurred in the first drawing, increasing to 48 in the second drawing, supporting Berry's (1997) theory that the acculturation experience becomes more positive over time. While true for five

participants, this was not so for Enid, Coco and Bruce. Everett (2017), too, through content counts, uncovered a mix of positive and negative emotions in her participants. Interpretation is more complex than content counts and needs to be considered in context, for a facial expression requires the representation of self in the drawing, and a stick figure face needs features to express emotion. Thus, based on content alone, little is revealed about Bruce, Fish, Miho and Enid's invisible selves or Sisifa's faceless stick figure.

Emotion is represented by symbols such as hearts, sparkles, light bulbs, connectors and vectors, as well as colour, and words such as "awesome", "harmony", "racism" and "freaking out". The comparison of positive and negative emotions across a set of paired drawings revealed something of the participants' instigative characteristics (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) and revealed personality dimensions such as those described by Kosic (2006) that serve as risk or protective factors during acculturation. Bronfenbrenner and Morris's (2006) instigative person characteristics, while a more abstract concept, were revealed through rich picture depictions of self, emotions and connectors, all of which added clarity and depth of understanding and explanation of the individual acculturation experiences.

4.3.2 *Cultural*

According to Bronfenbrenner (1995), when contexts become disrupted through the immigration process, culture may assume a larger role than it held previously. Evidence drawn from the rich pictures supports Steinberg et al.'s (1995) findings that for some immigrants, culture is a central factor in microsystem interactions. This was evidenced in participants with ethnic identity issues; however, it appears that this challenge is not always triggered by the new environment, as suggested by Phinney (1990), but may be a pre-existing factor that is carried into the new context, where it is exacerbated (Sisifa and Coco) or ameliorated (Fish). Thus, the new learning environment may further disrupt or support the exploration of ethnic identity development and the expression of cultural difference. When cultural diversity and ethnic identity issues are of significance to an immigrant, they assume a central focus in pictures

The rich pictures reflect issues of ethnic identity and cultural diversity related to cultural experiences before or during acculturation. Manuela and Anae's (2017) finding that ethnic identity can be a protective barrier against negative experiences as well as exacerbate the experience is clearly reflected in Zana's vignette of separation with her ethnic peers. There is an interesting divide between those who were conscious of culture (Sisifa, Fish, Zana, Miho and Jane) and those who had no indicators of cultural awareness in either of their pictures (Enid, Bruce and Coco). This is not to assume that culture was insignificant for them, but rather that questions of identity and diversity had not been sufficiently challenging to feature in their pictures. Assumptions should not be drawn about the role of cultural distance in this instance, because both Enid and Coco had large cultural distances whereas Bruce had a small distance between home and host culture. A further possible explanation of the lack of cultural reflection for these three participants is an indication of the success of assimilation of false consciousness whereby they have uncritically become absorbed into the mainstream learning culture.

Strong messages about ethnic identity were conveyed through Sisifa's metaphor. The value of McIntosh's (2010) comment on the limitations of the researcher's interpretation and my commitment to hearing the participants' interpretation before bringing my own interpretation was demonstrated with Sisifa's storytelling, in which she included three levels of meaning: ethnic identity, settlement experience and acculturation in the learning environment. Such an interpretation might not have been revealed had I followed the practice of other researchers: seeking confirmation after the interview (Guillemin, 2004) or after the researcher's interpretation (Cristancho et al., 2015), or restricting interpretation to that of the researcher (Everett, 2017).

Language plays a significant role during the acculturation period. Coco, Enid and Jane depicted in their rich pictures, language challenges related to comprehension, communication, high order thinking skills, academic achievement and unfamiliar pedagogies. These resulted in acculturative stress and issues of self-efficacy as noted in the literature (Badiozaman et al., 2018; Borland & Pearce, 2002). Sisifa, while

English-speaking, faced social acceptance problems with her Tongan NZ peers as she was not fluent in her heritage language.

4.3.3 *Learning environments*

The category of learning environments illustrated Cristancho's (2015) observation that rich pictures are both a tool and a space. The tool aspect was illustrated through recording of common images of the formal learning environment such as classroom design and resources, teachers and students, and teaching and learning. These were depicted as concrete images as well as abstractions through metaphor, thought and speech bubbles. The space to which Cristancho (2015) refers involved participants' interpretation and elaboration of meaning, including relationships and pedagogy. I brought a further level of meaning making by reflecting on invisibility and assimilation as false consciousness.

Analysis of content related to the learning environments revealed some interesting shifts across the two drawings, reflecting the changing focus of participants over time. Initial learning environments tended to be traditionally represented whereas the current learning environment often referenced elements of both formal and informal learning environments in more abstract ways. This was an interesting (and unexpected) interpretation by the participants of the nature of their learning environments and appears as a holistic representation of their current learning experiences. No negative messages were conveyed about AUT which was very positively depicted as a focus in half the participants' drawings through its central placement on the page, size of lettering and positive symbolic decorations. For the rest of the participants the learning environment was depicted as traditional and generic. Two themes are explored.

4.3.3.1 Relationship dimensions within the learning environment context, which might otherwise be hidden, are revealed through rich picture images, symbols and metaphors

Bell and Morse (2013b) suggest that rich pictures can be used to surface and explore hidden dimensions of a participant's experience. This was the case because participants intentionally (and unintentionally) included clues to their bidirectional

interactions in the learning environment. Bidirectional forces include the impact of the person on environmental factors and vice versa (Bronfenbrenner, 1993). An example of probing to surface and then explore such a bidirectional relationship with Jane resulted in her insight into her lecturer, whom she had drawn as observant and responsive; yet details in her picture revealed her experience as an invisible EAL student, affected by a lack of support despite her motivation to learn. It is unlikely we would have had this insightful discussion without her rich picture.

Teacher presence featured in 75% of initial learning environments, dropping to 37.5% of current learning environments. In 88% of these drawings, the teacher is standing at the front of the room, suggesting a traditional didactic sage on the stage. Bruce drew strong links with his teacher in the initial environment to the extent that he imprinted details of the teacher’s physical features, suggesting a strong and enduring teacher influence. Coco, likewise, told a powerful story in her initial picture, portraying the content, emotion and bidirectional relationship bonds through a few words, an emoticon and facial (or lack of) features.

While peers were equally represented in 88% of initial and current learning environments, the positive connections were stronger for Fish, Miho, Jane and Zana in their second pictures, where peer connections exceeded teacher influence. The neutrality expressed by Enid and Coco towards teachers and peers in the current learning environment carried a message about the lack of bidirectional forces of interaction and relationship building. This was the researcher’s interpretation because their drawings revealed little explication. Fortunately, the interview discussion confirmed this interpretation.

4.3.3.2 Curriculum and pedagogy experiences depicted in rich pictures suggest assimilationist and traditional approaches to teaching and learning in higher education, with greater multicultural experiences in informal rather than formal learning environments

The rich pictures reflected participant experiences of teaching and learning through content, aesthetic and thematic analysis. Details in both learning environments included information on academic disciplines, assessment processes and pedagogy. The traditional, didactic, instrumental and teacher-focused approach to learning in

tiered lecture theatres was dominant, and across both pictures, challenges of coping with new learning styles was identified.

In contrast, the notion of diversity in the current learning environments of Miho, Fish and Jane included abstract elements of curriculum and pedagogy indicated by interpersonal or intercultural dialogue. Apart from these specific elements, there were few indicators in the second set of pictures to suggest that participants experienced a culturally inclusive curriculum or pedagogy. The main message was one of assimilation into the mainstream curriculum and pedagogy, suggesting the success of beliefs and behaviours associated with assimilation as false consciousness. This interpretation was checked against data collected in the second part of the interview and is discussed in the next chapter.

The explicit representation of positive experiences in the informal learning environment evidences the arguments made by Mills and Craftl (2014) and Sellers and Souter (2012) that learning at the boundaries of defined learning spaces, can be spontaneous and powerful, and alludes to the holistic experience highlighted by Barnett and Coate (2005). The rich pictures suggest an appreciation for diversity, multiculturalism, social connections and in the case of Jane, a celebration of the self.

4.3.4 *Theoretical links*

Rich pictures of acculturation experiences across the initial and current learning environments evidenced theory and thus aided deeper interpretation of experiences. Three themes were identified: the first exposes the deeply embedded concept of assimilation as false consciousness; the second illustrates more obvious links to Berry's (1997) acculturation theory and Phinney's (1989) ethnic identity theory; and the third elaborates Bronfenbrenner and Morris's (2006) detail of the PPCT model within socio-ecological theory.

4.3.4.1 Paired rich pictures, considered through a temporal dimension, reveal the concept of assimilation as false consciousness

The concept of assimilation as false consciousness is invisibly threaded through the participants' drawings, although it was not articulated by participants or specifically

probed during the storytelling narrative. On close inspection, using a temporal lens, the second drawings all revealed assimilation and in some cases assimilation as false consciousness. Bruce, Coco and Enid explicitly depicted their assimilation into the learning and teaching of the mainstream. In Bruce's case, he appears confident, self-oriented and with strong self-efficacy, the successful outcome of assimilation as false consciousness. Enid and Coco, on the other hand, show greater levels of invisibility and associated stress but have accepted assimilation as false consciousness as the only way to survive in the NZ mainstream. Fish, Jane and Miho appear to have accepted the status quo of assimilation as false consciousness in the formal learning environment and instead focus on elements of diversity and multiculturalism to enhance their assimilation experience. Sisifa, too, has brought her worlds together towards assimilation, although, while she appreciates the need to assimilate into the mainstream, she has retained her cultural identity in a more integrated manner, finding a fit with Portes and Zhou's (1993) segmented assimilation theory. Sisifa is the only participant to show signs of a transnationalism mindset in her rich pictures. The insidious influence of assimilation as false consciousness can explain the shift from the highly individual responses in initial learning environments to the common experience of assimilation in the current learning environment. While the context of AUT may be a factor, the university is more likely to be representative of most formal learning environments in higher education in NZ.

4.3.4.2 Links to acculturation theory and ethnic identity theory are evidenced in and inform interpretation of pictures of learning environments.

Berry's (1997) theory was used as a lens on the rich pictures for clues to selected adaptation strategies, and tentative links were made between participants and their adaptation strategies, as well as to Phinney's (1989) ethnic identity development stages. These were confirmed by the questionnaire and interview data. The evidence for this categorisation of participant positions was detailed in the first part of this chapter and therefore is not repeated under this theme; suffice to note that the rich pictures provided data to support both these theories.

4.3.4.3 *The components of the PPCT model (process, person, context, time) reveal and explain the uniqueness of individual experiences*

The PPCT model (Bronfenbrenner, 1993) was used as a framework to highlight the bidirectional influences of the person, process, culture and context during the acculturation period in the mesosystem and revealed unique acculturation and adaptation experiences. These components can explain the difference between participants' experiences in the learning environment. While the context of one university will include complex cultural and contextual variations across the learning environment in terms of curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, teachers and peers, the unique participants' responses can be explained with reference to the instigative characteristics identified by Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006), which encourage and sustain or resist and prevent positive interactions between the person and environmental elements. The contrasting experiences of Fish and Enid or of Bruce and Jane make some sense when the PPCT model is applied.

4.3.5 *Response to research subquestion*

This chapter has focused on the research subquestion *How do immigrant students' perceptions of their initial and current learning environments reflect their acculturation experiences?* The findings suggest that all participants described an acculturation journey over a period of time. For six participants, this was a positive adaptation from a challenging initial learning environment to an assimilated or integrated (within assimilation) current learning environment, aligned with the concept of assimilation as false consciousness. Such a trajectory aligns with acculturation theory (Berry, 1997). Two exceptions were identified, where a positive initial experience led to a maladaptation through an enacted (but not preferred) strategy of separation (within assimilation).

The perceptions and voices of the participants were captured in the rich pictures and vignettes respectively. While the participants did not talk about acculturation concepts or display awareness of the process, they depicted changes in beliefs and behaviours across their paired drawings, thus reflecting aspects of Berry's (1992) acculturation process and Phinney's (1989) identity development theory triggered by

challenges in a new society. Participants did not offer any explanation as to why their experiences had taken the course they had, but just accepted this as the way it was. This supports the power of assimilation as false consciousness, which was hidden from the participants but revealed through an interpretation of the rich pictures.

4.4 Chapter summary

A contiguity-based approach to analysis of the rich picture data has strengths, such as presenting a more holistic view of the data with its focus on contextual and temporal elements. Following an analysis of individual paired rich pictures, cross-group analysis through content, aesthetic and thematic approaches, eight themes were identified. These themes have been explored and are offered as one perspective of the data as uncovered through rich picture methodology. Using rich pictures of the learning environments as contexts for acculturation provided findings that contributed to and enhanced the analysis of questionnaire and interview data on acculturation concepts covered in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Findings and Discussion: Acculturation Concepts and Internationalising the Curriculum at Home

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 told the immigrant story of acculturation experience in two contrasting learning environments through rich pictures. This chapter has two parts: the first reports and discusses the process of acculturation change between the two learning environments and the second reports and discusses participants' views and perspectives on internationalising the curriculum at home. The data were drawn from the coded interview transcripts, related questionnaire items and card sort activity, using similarity-based analysis strategies (Maxwell, 2012) to segment the data into codes, categories and themes. Interpretation involved comparisons between at least two data sources, serving the purpose of verifying participants' perspectives and the researcher's interpretation.

The concepts on acculturation and an internationalised curriculum were unfamiliar to the participants and were previously unconsidered by them. Unlike the free-flowing and fluent discussion concerning the two rich pictures, responses in the second part of the interview were slow and required thinking time as participants drew on tacit knowledge and unexamined experience. While the questionnaire was completed prior to the interview and offered time for consideration of response, it is unlikely that participants connected questionnaire items with specific acculturation concepts. Knowledge was thus co-constructed or shared following Gubrium and Holstein's (2014) active interviewing process. Inconsistencies between questionnaire responses and interview responses were noted and discussed. In many instances, once concepts had been explained as part of the meaning-making process, participants confirmed their position and contradictions were addressed. I interpreted this pattern of interaction as a positive development for the participants' conceptual knowledge and justified the use of probing or leading questions for meaning making towards transformative insights into personal experiences, thus shifting participants' realities through a raised self-awareness in line with Maeve's (1997) argument that human beings can self-reflect and critique their reality.

5.2 Acculturation concepts

Bronfenbrenner's (1995) argument that a disrupted environment will trigger renewed development of the individual through the proximal processes of the microsystem aligns with Berry's (1997) theory that on contact with the new host society, an immigrant will begin to acculturate and adapt, and Phinney's (1989) ethnic identity development theory of an identity search as part of acculturation. For each participant, the acculturation experience was different, influenced by his or her personal instigative characteristics (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), their personality traits (Kosic, 2006) and the nature of their cultural distance or dissonance (Phelan et al., 1991). Nevertheless, the process of acculturation was inevitable to a greater or lesser extent.

The first part of the chapter is structured around the research subquestion: *How do participants' views on acculturation concepts signal their expectations of cultural inclusion in the higher education formal learning environment?* Five acculturation concepts are addressed: assimilation as false consciousness, adaptation strategies, ethnic identity, behavioural shifts and immigrant invisibility.

5.2.1 *Assimilation as false consciousness*

Freire's (1993) concept of false consciousness translated into the immigration context involves a belief held by the immigrant group that they should assimilate into the mainstream culture. Such false consciousness evidences the hegemonic discourse that immigrants are welcome in NZ but need to become like NZers and is particularly effective when enacted through the socialisation processes of education, as argued by Sleeter and Grant (2007). This normalising of assimilation beliefs and practices supports the view that false consciousness is not an indication of delusion or false/inaccurate belief, but rather as Freire (1993) suggests it is consciousness impaired through submersion in the reality of the mainstream. As already noted, the view of assimilation in education is supported by Berry (1997), who states that education is part of the public domain, and therefore by extension it involves assimilationist intentions.

Questionnaire data on this concept are reported in Figures 5.1 (Item 33: participants' beliefs about assimilation as false consciousness) and 5.2 (Items 31 and 32: beliefs that ethnic cultures should be recognised and utilised by lecturers). Comparisons of the data showed a consistency of beliefs across the group because seven participants disagreed with assimilation as false consciousness and agreed with recognition of cultural background. This consistency of understanding and positioning suggests a preference for *integration*, both in general settlement terms and in the learning environment, at odds with Berry's (1997) theory of assimilation into mainstream education culture as part of an *integration* strategy.

During the interviews, the concept of assimilation as false consciousness was explored and exposed participants' positioning as held in principle yet not experienced in practice. All participants had heard the assimilationist view expressed but were unaware of the concept of false consciousness itself, and none had thought through the implications for study in the learning environment, where assimilation as false consciousness might be reflected. This is a complex concept and responses tended to display contradictions and confusion as participants offered their initial response to the concept prior to further clarifying discussion.

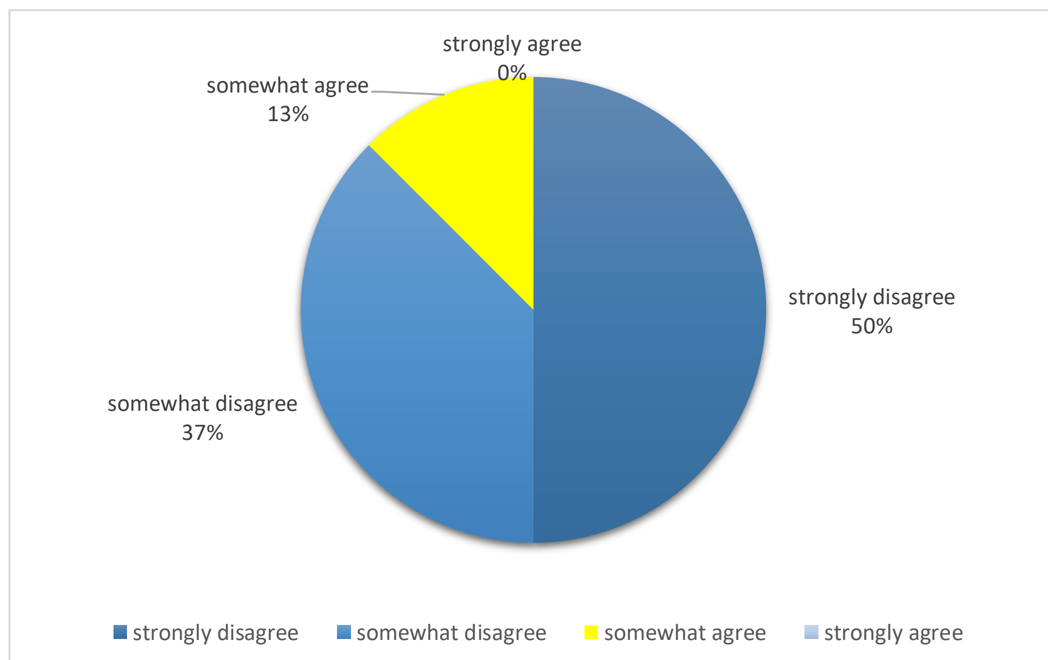


Figure 5.1: Belief in assimilation as false consciousness

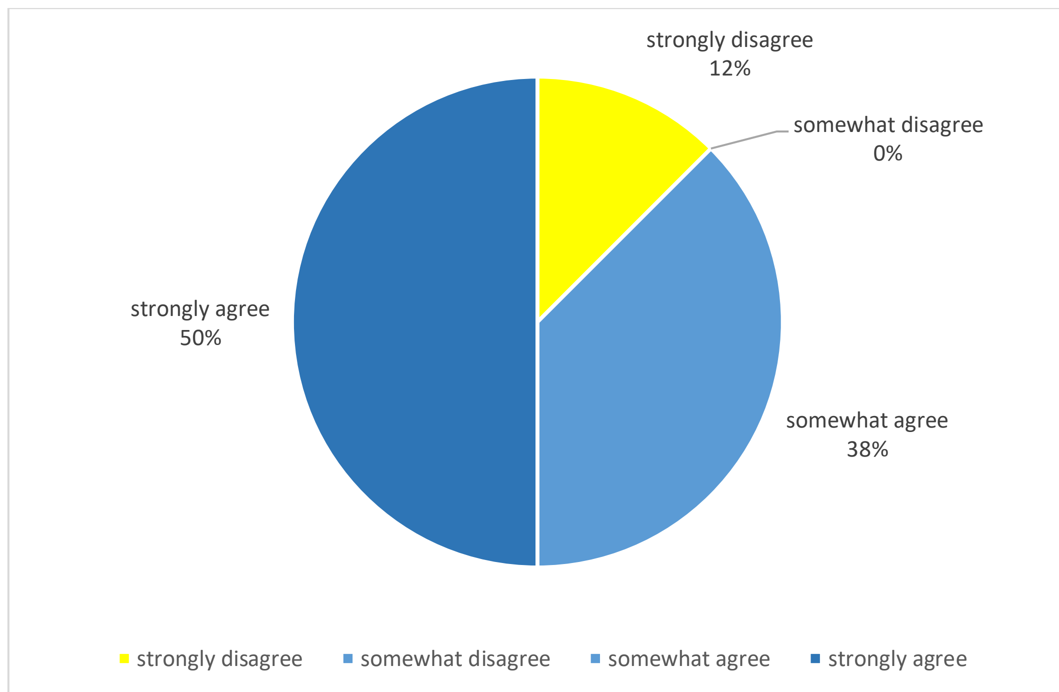


Figure 5.2: Belief that ethnic cultures should be recognised and utilised by lecturers

The following exchange illustrates Fish's thinking about the concept, as we co-constructed meaning about assimilation as false consciousness and its implications.

> *Lyn: In NZ I have heard that "if you want to come and live here then you need to be like us"—have you ever heard that?*
>
> Fish: Right, yes, I've heard that, and it's a topic in the news and you hear it a lot, yeah!
>
> *Lyn: How do you respond to that?*
>
> Fish: There is an argument like "when in Rome do as the Romans do". But at the same time, culture is really important to me and I feel like every culture is unique and you should keep that uniqueness and you can adapt different things to culture. So, I don't disagree or agree with that.
>
> *Lyn: Do you think there is a case for immigrants to leave their culture at the door when they come to university and become part of the Kiwi way of learning, of understanding the world? Or should AUT be accommodating students who come, with different ways of being and knowing?*
>
> Fish: I think it's important for institutions to cater for the students and their different diverse backgrounds
>
> *Lyn: How would they do that?*
>
> Fish: [*thinking*] Actually I think I was talking to someone about this earlier. I mean we get a lot of international students here at AUT and I was thinking it would be good to have maybe like flags of different countries, or an international student day, to celebrate the diversity at AUT. I know we

have the diversity department [*not correct*] and a diversity manager. I think it would be good to have an international day and everyone loves food, so you could make it different kinds of food from different countries, maybe a parade in different traditional dress, that would be inclusive of everybody.

Lyn: Yes, but that's in the informal learning environment, isn't it?

Fish: Yes

Lyn: So, what happens in the classroom—how do you experience it at AUT?

Fish: I think in the classroom … I think they assume that people are already immigrants, so they don't need to ask the question. I've never been approached and asked, "Are you an immigrant?" It's only when I speak or when I talk about Britain, they would know.

Lyn: Would you like them to recognise that you do come from somewhere else, that you bring resources with you, which could be very useful for peoples' learning?

Fish: I think so, maybe if I had the opportunity and someone asked me if I was an immigrant, then definitely!

In her questionnaire, Fish strongly disagreed with the concept of assimilation as false consciousness, yet her initial interview response appeared to support the concept. However, with her evolving thoughts and in response to my leading questions related to the implications of the concept, she appeared to shift her position, or more accurately, she confirmed her strong valuing of diversity and cultural inclusion, consistent with her rich pictures and questionnaire response. Fish demonstrated a common assumption when equating cultural diversity with international students, failing to include immigrant students who remain invisible even to immigrant students. Her ideas on increasing visibility of cultural background (of international students) refer to the informal rather than the formal learning environments, and involve practices aligned with May's (2002) benevolent multiculturalism rather than expecting more substantial cultural recognition through critical multiculturalism or interculturalism. Fish made a further assumption about lecturer assumptions of immigrant presence in class and revealed that she had no expectation of being visible, but she was pleasantly surprised at the idea and open to the possibility. The discussion suggested that assimilation as false consciousness was a new idea for Fish, and that while she preferred integration, she had unconsciously accepted assimilation into the formal learning environment.

Enid during the interview reflected similar contradictory positions on the concept in principle and practice. She selected 'somewhat disagree' for the concept of assimilation as false consciousness in the questionnaire but her interview discussion suggested the opposite:

> *Lyn: If you talk to Kiwi students, they will tell you that if you come to New Zealand you must become an New Zealander.*
>
> Enid: Ah, um, well, I've heard this, but nobody has said this to me.
>
> *Lyn: If you look at an AUT classroom, is there any recognition of the cultural differences in the class or is it just one way of doing everything?*
>
> Enid: Well, I don't think that's true, if you live here you don't have to be exactly like a Kiwi, and in my class, I don't think there is any recognition of difference.
>
> *Lyn: So, the university is expecting you to be assimilated into the way in which it does learning and teaching?*
>
> Enid: Is that what it is? I'm not sure if this is assimilation, but I feel it's OK; it's normal because you can't expect them to teach a full class of students with different ways.
>
> *Lyn: Why not?*
>
> Enid: I mean, how can you? There's one lecturer and everyone is listening to the same lecturer; there's no way that they can give you a lecture and give the rest of them a different lecture.
>
> *Lyn: But in one lecture they could use ways that they know Chinese students like learning?*
>
> Enid: Well, I disagree with you a little bit.
>
> *Lyn: OK, tell me why?*
>
> Enid: Because I hated group work at first, and now I still hate it, but I do feel like it's a way to push you out of your comfort zone, to talk to different people. Otherwise, if I could work on my own, I would never talk to other people because why should I? Because if you're an introverted person group work can actually help you to talk to other people, so if you don't push them, they won't push themselves.

While she assumed a position against assimilation in her questionnaire response, Enid's interview discussion clarified that she accepts assimilation in the learning environment for pragmatic reasons and has seen value in learning through new

pedagogies such as group work. She had a strong response to my suggestion of integration in the learning environment, which pleased me because it showed she felt confident enough to disagree. Her rich pictures confirm her assimilationist position and align with her acceptance of invisibility in the learning environment. Enid had no expectation of a culturally inclusive learning environment, yet contradicting this position was her expressed belief in her questionnaire response that ethnic cultures should be recognised and utilised by lecturers.

These contradictory positions between questionnaire response and interview discussion are difficult to explain except to suggest that the practice of assimilation has become the accepted reality for participants. It appears that the concept of assimilation as false consciousness is an unconscious construct that participants have internalised as an expectation of studying in higher education, and not one that participants questioned in practice. I contend that this belief is false consciousness as participants have an expressed preference for integration, a belief in participation in host society culture as well as maintaining heritage culture, the practice of multicultural or intercultural education.

5.2.2 *Adaptation strategies*

According to Berry (1997, 2003), the immigrant, on *contact* with the majority culture, will consider the questions: (1) How important is it to fit in with the dominant group and their culture? and (2) How important is it to retain my cultural traditions? This results in the selection of one of the four acculturation strategies—assimilation, integration, separation or marginalisation—setting the immigrant on a path towards sociocultural and psychological adaptation. The analysis of the participants' rich pictures identified the participants' adaptation strategies in the learning environment, which are now positioned alongside the questionnaire and interview data for confirmation through triangulation of data.

Items 1–14 in the questionnaire were designed to assess the general acculturation strategy preferred by each participant. Figure 5.3 reflects the group's adaptation preferences (presenting the collation of 'somewhat agree' and 'strongly agree' responses to the four statements in each group of items). Items 1–4 show a clear

preference for integration (100%) with one participant (Miho) also 'somewhat supporting' assimilation, possibly because she has an NZ partner. Items 5–8 indicate a clear preference for an integration approach with a social group of friends. These items demonstrate an example of overlapping indicators measuring both adaptation strategy and ethnic or national identity. Phinney (1990) states that such a relationship should not be assumed and close scrutiny of two data sources confirms this concern.

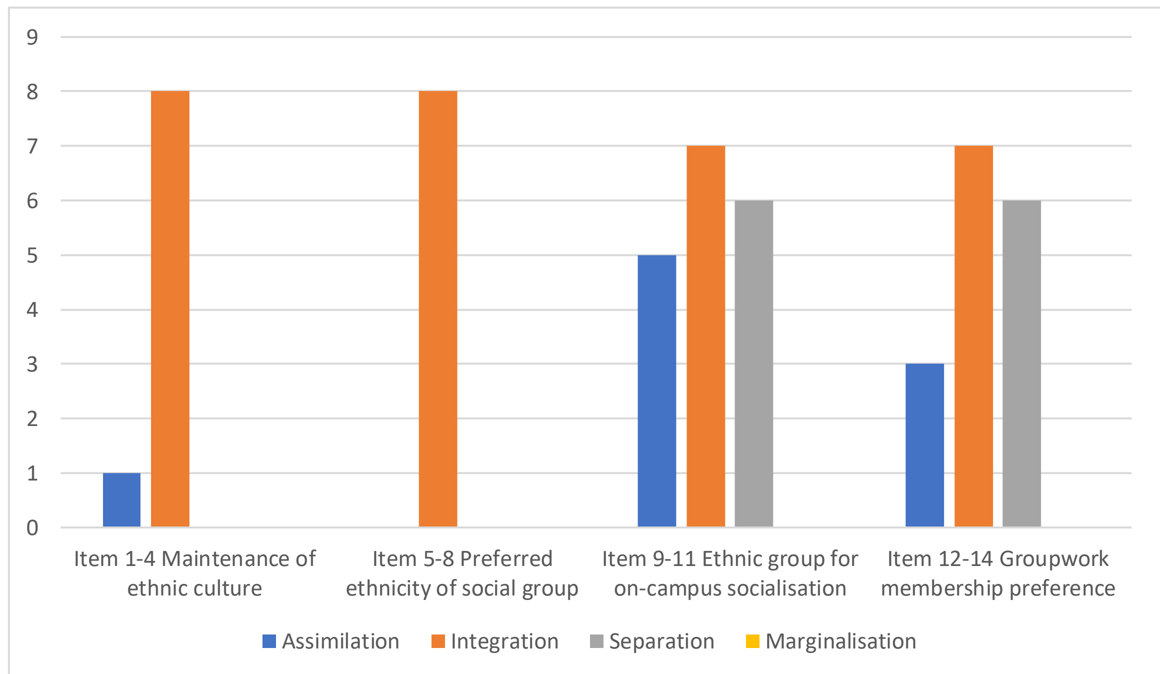


Figure 5.3: Adaptation preferences

The spread and multiple preferences for integration, separation and, to a lesser extent, assimilation expressed across items 9–14 reflect on-campus socialisation choices (items 9–11) and group work preferences (items 12–14). Integration continues as the strongest for all bar Bruce who would prefer to work with his own ethnicity in group work but acknowledges the reality of integrated groups. Sisifa strongly agrees with integration but also likes to socialise on-campus with her own ethnic group. Neither of these two positions are surprising because they align with the emerging profile of the participant. What is noteworthy is Enid and Coco's strong integration preference when the data are suggesting that neither is integrated in social or academic spaces.

At the start of the interview, all participants confirmed their preference for a general *integration* strategy into NZ society; however, during discussion it became clear that participants were positioned along the continuum within the integration position, spread from close to *assimilation*, through *integration*, to the fringes of *separation* and even *marginalisation*. Bruce appeared as close to assimilation as an immigrant could be. On several occasions during the interview he affirmed his belief in integration and cultural inclusion and disagreed with assimilation; however, he demonstrated a close fit with assimilation through the examples he shared in the following interaction:

> *Lyn: Would you be close to assimilation?*
>
> Bruce: Yeah, I'm sure if you had a group of Kiwi men, white Pākehā [NZ European] men, and I stood next to them you wouldn't be able to tell us apart.
>
> *Lyn: Until you started speaking and maybe if you looked at some of your interests, they might be slightly different?*
>
> Bruce: Yeah, I have no interest in fishing.
>
> *Lyn: What about rugby?*
>
> Bruce: Oh no, I like rugby; in fact, I used to enjoy watching football—'soccer' a lot of nations call it. I used to watch soccer every day, week in and week out and over here … yeah, I haven't seen one football game in three years, not one!
>
> *Lyn: So, you actually have assimilated to quite a strong degree?*
>
> Bruce: Mmm, probably, yeah! I like going to the speedway *[laughing].*
>
> *Lyn: And yet you're saying here [*questionnaire*] that the "British should maintain their own cultural traditions, and also adapt to those of New Zealand".*
>
> Bruce: Yes, no reason why they can't.

This dialogue confirms Bruce's position at the assimilation–integration interface due to his small cultural distance and identification with the NZ European mainstream, reinforced through his othering reference to British as 'they'. Coco, on the other hand, experiences what Lee and Sheared (2002) describe as cultural discontinuity: the size of the gap or distance from the mainstream culture. Coco presented in her

rich pictures as being closer to separation than integration; however, her interview discussion revealed her positioning nearer marginalisation.

> Coco: … It's not that I don't want to fit in, but I don't want to do it your way. I want to do it my way; they must accept me as I am.
>
> *Lyn: Could it be that you are referring to your identity issues in Sudan and they continue here?*
>
> Coco: I'm losing this family culture right now as everyone is in a different place, in Sudan at least people around you were talking the same language you talk, it's different from here … with my brother we speak Arabic, and he is starting to use English words with me and now the way he's dressing, he wants to be a Kiwi!

Having an integration preference suggests that participants would have an expectation of cultural inclusion in their higher education institution. The reality has been revealed in the rich pictures and in the discussion of assimilation as false consciousness that there is a disconnect between belief or preference and experience or practice, yet no participant at any point made an argument or expressed a need for integration or multicultural inclusion in the formal learning environment. This suggests that their preference for integration in the host society is not translated nor expected in the formal learning environment.

This tension may be exacerbated by those who face ethnic identity challenges as part of their acculturation process.

5.2.1 *Ethnic identity*

At the start of the interview, participants were asked to self-identify and all chose the label of their home country; none at this early stage of acculturation identified as hyphenated NZers, supporting Rumbaut's (1994) view that hyphenated self-identification only occurred in the second-generation immigrant. When asked whether she could imagine herself as a Malay-NZer, Zana replied, "I think eventually, but I don't want to lose my mother tongue, so I'll still be Malay at home or with other Malay students at AUT". Such is the resilience of ethnic culture even in the face of assimilation experiences. Even Bruce, with his small cultural distance declared:

> I don't think I'll ever be a Kiwi, because it's not ingrained in me totally, been bred into me exactly the Kiwi way of life. While I could mirror or ape it to some degree and probably with some success, I could never quite get there.

Phinney's (1989) three-stage ethnic identity development for acculturating immigrants was explored during interview discussions, and ethnic identity was revealed as more complex than initial self-identification. The *initial or unexamined* stage was most clearly demonstrated by those who came from a homogeneous culture, such as Jane, who spoke of being so assimilated as Vietnamese that she was unaware of her ethnicity until she arrived in NZ. This aligns with Rouse's (1995) research that one's own culture is 'reflected' by contact with the majority culture. Only Bruce, with his small cultural gap, evidenced an identification with the majority culture, in line with Phinney's (1989) theoretical prediction. His self-selected label of *Pākehā*, a term that is usually reserved for generational NZers who wish to express their alignment with Māori, was surprising, and despite probing his understanding of the term, he did not change his position. The second stage involves an ethnic identity search with a purpose to learn more about one's own group membership. Sisifa represented the second stage of *ethnic identity search* in Phinney's (1989) theory, describing herself as a "walking contradiction", referring to the label she carried back in Tonga of *feapalangi* (white plastic) a slang term for those who cannot speak the Tongan language. In NZ, while she brought English as her mother tongue, she was challenged by NZ-born Tongans and motivated to learn the Tongan language. After seven years, Sisifa has reached the final stage of Phinney's (1989) *achieved ethnic identity* stage. She described herself:

> I am my own person no matter what language I speak… I always thought that you had to speak the language to feel Tongan, but I feel that if in your heart you love your country, and you want to do something that is worthwhile as well as celebrate your culture, then you're Tongan.

The indicators of ethnic preferences in social contacts, on-campus social groups and group work membership (questionnaire items 5–14) have already been used to identify adaptation strategies (see Section 5.2.2) and are also used to assess ethnic or national cultural identities, as identified by Sam et al. (2006). Figure 5.4 presents the results of the positive preferences recorded by participants for these indicators.

Based on the questionnaire data, one could draw the conclusion of a close relationship between *integration* as an adaptation strategy based on Berry's (1997) theory and Sam et al.'s (2006) cultural identity *integrated or bicultural* profile in which ethnic identity and national identity are equally strong. Phinney (1990) cautions against reading an automatic relationship between such overlapping indicators, and based on interview discussions, only three participants (Fish, Miho and Sisifa) clearly evidenced an *integrated or bicultural* profile aligned with their acculturation *integration* preference. Jane and Enid exhibited *ethnic* profiles, preferring ethnic peers and evidencing ethnic language proficiency, while Coco demonstrated a *diffuse* profile with her use of ethnic language but not a strong commitment to her ethnic culture or peer group. Bruce, on the other hand, exhibited characteristics of a *national profile* close to his assimilation status.

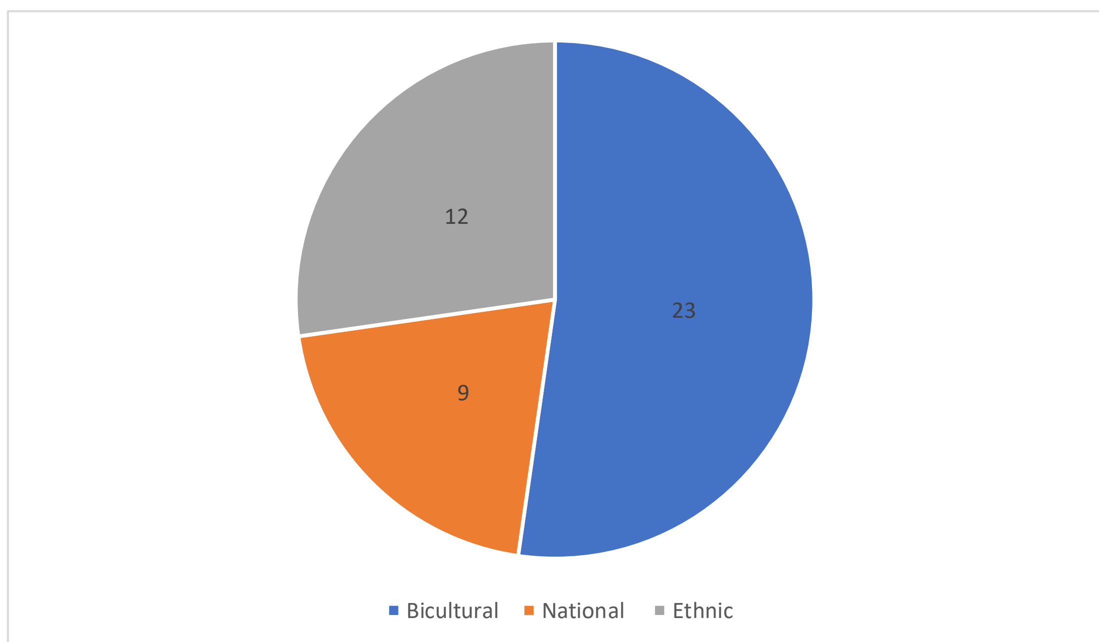


Figure 5.4: Cultural identity

(figures indicate number of positive group preferences)

While an integrated or bicultural position is recognised as the most adaptive identity for immigrants (Berry, 2005; Meca et al., 2017; Nekby et al., 2009; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013), in the university context assimilation is more of a reality whereas integration or ethnic separation might be a preference but not an expectation.

During the acculturation process, ethnic identity usually weakens as assimilation strengthens, enhanced by the false consciousness belief. This was observed by Gans (1992) and is evidenced in Miho's statement that after eight years, while she is still Japanese, "I think it's diluted in some ways". The process of behavioural shifts is the mechanism for such shifts during acculturation.

5.2.2 *Behavioural shifts*

Berry's (1992) *acculturation framework* (see Figure 3) presents the main elements of the acculturation process towards the long-term outcome of sociocultural and psychological adaptation. Behavioural shifts are an integral aspect of the process, characterised by culture learning and culture shedding, driven by a desire to belong and a manifestation of assimilation as false consciousness in practice.

The extent of behavioural shifts depends on the adaptation strategy selected and the cultural distance between home and host cultures. Language provides the most obvious examples of *culture learning*. Five participants with large cultural gaps have in common their ESL status and reported (questionnaire items 21–24) comprehension, writing and articulation difficulties, which during interview discussions were further articulated as issues of pace, accent and volume of the lecturer's voice. Despite their self-acknowledged challenges with English, Coco, Jane and Enid had not approached student services for learning support, whereas Sisifa and Miho had sought assistance. Language proficiency is a challenge and accompanied by beliefs of assimilation as false consciousness, these participants had little expectation that lecturers would adapt their pedagogy to support them in class. Jane described how she coped with her ESL challenges in her initial class:

> I read the textbook, I also emailed the lecturer to book an appointment so that they can help me, and then I also started talking with my friends and asked them what the lecturer said, so they can explain to me.

The adoption of vocabulary, and particularly colloquial expressions, is a sign of culture learning and culture shedding. Most of the participants have adopted the Kiwi expression of 'I'm good', as a response to the question 'How are you?' Miho surprised herself as she reflected, "No, I don't. Oh! I might say that, no? 'I'm OK?' or maybe I

do say it! [*laughs*] maybe I don't even think about it anymore!" This illustrates the often unconscious adoption of behaviours. Other Kiwi slang identified by participants included "aye … they say it after every sentence, just like a sound" (Coco) and "adding 'as' to anything … cool as, sweet as …" (Fish). Learning and shedding behaviours can create a dissonance and a distancing or othering as learning or shedding occurs. This was noted in Sisifa's comment:

> It sort of sounded funny when you started … they say 'jandals', I think those are 'slippers'. Or even like the 'rubber', we call them 'erasers', here they say 'rubber' and I say 'OK' … there are a lot of things in their vocabulary that you just have to adapt to. But I don't think it's that harmful in a way.

Accent differences were mentioned by participants as a reason for *cultural shedding* because they set immigrants apart. Enid referred to the American accent she learned in China, and she stated that after receiving a sarcastic comment from her lecturer when she said "I can't" in an American accent, "I feel a little awkward, so I never say 'I can't' after that". Coco also had issues with accent: "At first I struggled as my hearing wasn't as good as it is now. The Kiwi accent is very hard. It's not like the normal English or American accent, which is clearer." Language learning and shedding is a relatively easy way to socialise into the mainstream, but accents are not as easy to lose and can result in discriminatory other-labelling rather than ethnic self-labelling (Phinney, 2003).

Cultural values exhibited may or may not add to cultural conflict, depending on a personal sense of self and societal attitudes. Zana's Muslim beliefs were visible in her hijab, which raised questions from others, although being secure in her ethnic identity she experiences little conflict about the alignment of her beliefs and behaviours. Coco, on the other hand, experiences serious cultural conflict because, although her Muslim culture is invisible in dress, it constrains her behaviours. Coco perceived that to fit in she would need to make some changes:

> If you didn't start doing things like them, for example, all Kiwis wear black, the girls have style, all go to the gym, have the top ponytail and the jumper—if you don't start doing this stuff, they never will accept you. Other nationalities here, like a lot of Indians, are doing the same thing, so now they are getting in.

Her use of third person indicates her lack of belonging and identification with the norms of the mainstream, whom she observes as ‘others’. Other cultural-values challenges were identified: Sisifa reflected on her two worlds, which Hofstede et al. (2010) would classify as collectivist and individualist, describing her state of being as “it’s a tension that we all have to live with”. Miho referred to her Japanese values of respect, punctuality and work ethic and stated “I didn’t want to change myself because I think those values that my parents taught are very important”, even though they presented challenges for her working with other ethnicities in group work.

Moderating factors prior to and after immigration can increase or reduce cultural conflict and subsequent behavioural shifts. Prior experience in NZ before immigration offers a familiarity on return that reduces acculturative stress. Thus, Fish, who had been in NZ on holiday, described her excitement at the prospect of returning. Jane’s time in Australia as a young student had prepared her for a western-style education in NZ, although her experience as an EAL student superseded the benefits at the time, but may have provided the resilience to persevere towards a successful acculturation. The host society influences at the group level reflected NZ mainstream attitudes towards different groups. Ward and Masgoret (2004), in their attitudinal survey, found that Asians were the least welcomed group while those from the UK were made most welcome. This was evidenced through stories told during the interviews, such as Jane’s experience of prejudice and discrimination:

> When I’d been here for one year and I went to register for my driving licence and when I said my real name, the lady at the registration disagreed with my name because it only has one letter. She said my last name and my middle name have to go together as it makes more sense. Because I wanted to get the paper work done, I said, “Yes, OK, just put it there” [*laughing*].
>
> *Lyn: How did that make you feel?*
>
> Jane: Annoyed, I was angry when she said that!

Miho’s initial learning experience needs no further comment regarding the racism and discrimination exhibited against a Japanese student, a negative reflection of NZ’s record that has been noted by others writing on immigration in NZ (Liu, McCreanor, McIntosh, & Teaiwa, 2005; Singham, 2006).

5.2.3 *Invisibility*

Invisibility may be sought by immigrant students or may be imposed upon them by lecturers, peers or an organisation through assimilation as false consciousness in monocultural curricula and pedagogy. Four items (25–28) in the questionnaire were designed to explore aspects of immigrant invisibility from the participants' perspective: three items on lecturers and one on peer awareness of immigrant status. The results were contradictory. While half the participants felt that the lecturer knew of their immigrant status, none had lecturers check their understanding based on this perceived knowledge, and only three had been asked to share their culture with the class. This is set against responses to item 25, which indicated that in five instances student peers showed interest in the participant's culture. The apparent contradictory responses were explored during interviews, and based on a clearer understanding of the concept of immigrant invisibility, participants reached the conclusion that immigrants were invisible in the learning environment. However, the process of arriving at that decision was filled with assumptions and contradictions, revealing the difficulty of thinking through a new concept on the spot while also drawing links to the previously examined concept of assimilation as false consciousness

Sisifa was the only participant who responded to immigrant invisibility with a clear and definitive "Yes, very much!—visual no, but learning-wise, yes, from my experience". Coco and Enid too assumed that because they looked different, they were visible to the lecturer, while Miho assumed her accent set her apart as an immigrant. None of the latter three had considered that the lecturer might assume they were international students. Bruce's response was interesting because he was the only participant who did not apply the concept to himself but directed it to other immigrants—"You can see them"—thus evidencing his lack of awareness of the range of immigrant ethnicity to include white-skinned and English-speaking immigrants (including himself). When probed about the visibility of such immigrants, he said, "I've not noticed them being passed over". This could be read as an acknowledgement of invisibility. Enid reinforced this interpretation: "I think for immigrants who have English as their first language, I feel it makes no difference".

There was a mix of opinion as to whether participants wished their immigrant status to be visible, often related to confidence in being singled out. While Fish was open to the idea, Enid felt strongly:

> probably for someone like me, I'm not sure if I would like to be recognised as an immigrant because it'll make me feel different, so I don't think it is a good idea, sorry! … it's your own choice to talk in front of the class. But it's really hard to get out of your comfort zone and talk to a bunch of Kiwi people, because English is not your first language, it's terrifying.

The concept of invisibility for all participants was a new idea and proved to be challenging to articulate and relate to experience.

5.2.4 *Findings related to acculturation concepts*

A pattern emerged of difference between preferences (based on values and beliefs) and practices (based on experiences and behaviours). The questionnaire data emphasised this difference, which may not have been as noticeable in the interview data alone.

Acculturation concepts had a lived reality for the participants; however, their knowledge and understanding of the concepts was largely tacit and uncritical. None of the participants had prior knowledge of acculturation theory and all drew on tacit knowledge as they attempted to relate the theoretical concepts to their experiences. This explained the number of assumptions, contradictions and uncritical responses noted in the data. The nature of co-constructed dialogue as the participants and researcher shared views illustrated challenges of exploring high-level concepts considered for the first time. Three themes were identified in the analysis of the acculturation concepts.

5.2.4.1 Assimilation as false consciousness is a social construct that has been internalised as an expectation in study

The concept of assimilation as false consciousness is a social construct that participants had unconsciously internalised as an expectation of studying in higher education. This false consciousness exhibited in participant assimilation beliefs in the learning environment resulted in an uncritical approach to the dominant western European discourse in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment and there was little

expectation of cultural inclusivity in the formal learning environment. The value of the questionnaire items juxtaposed with the interview discussion served to expose conflicting beliefs and behaviours for participants, as well as related assumptions as they confronted their lived reality in the informal and formal learning environments.

Assimilation in the formal learning environment is a given, integration is a preference

The close relationship between identity and acculturation identified in the literature (Phinney, 1990) is supported by the participants' experiences. Integration was an expressed preference for all participants, held in principle but seldom realised in practice. Berry (2006) notes that immigrants who find their preferences at odds with the national or mainstream ideology have little choice but to assimilate. This was true for the participants in the university with its mainstream context, and was evidenced not only in adaptation preferences, but also in ethnic identity profiles related to their university experience. Thus, while they might have preferred Sam et al.'s (2006) bicultural or ethnic identity profile, the reality in practice was closer to a national profile in which their ethnic or cultural preferences were not recognised, thus signalling the success of assimilation as false consciousness.

5.2.4.2 Invisibility in the formal learning environment is an expectation related to assimilation as false consciousness

Participants were unaware of their invisible status as immigrants, assuming that they were visible based on accent, language and appearance. They had not considered either the assumption that they might be identified as international students or that white, English-speaking immigrants are also part of the foreign-born domestic demographic, thus reinforcing the stereotype of selective difference for visibility. The conclusion reached by all of the participants that immigrants are invisible came as a surprise to most of them, yet this did not shift their beliefs on assimilation as false consciousness. Invisibility was unquestioned in expectations of a culturally inclusive learning environment, but it does raise the question why, despite a commitment to diversity, and a student demographic of 20.5% being foreign born (AUT, 2019b), the immigrant students are not more visible in the formal learning environment, suggesting official endorsement of the belief of assimilation as false consciousness.

The next section questions the assumption of invisibility in curriculum and pedagogy and considers the participants' views on internationalising the curriculum at home.

5.3 Perspectives on internationalising the curriculum at home

Building an argument that assimilation as false consciousness results in immigrant student invisibility raises the question of what can be done to harness the value and potential resource ethnic diversity presents in the formal learning environment. Intention to propose curriculum reform is suggested in the research subquestion: *What are the views of immigrant students on the value and nature of an internationalised curriculum at home?*

To respond to this question, data were drawn from the coded interview transcript, the questionnaire and the card sort activity. The interview discussions provided unexpected surprises related to views on internationalising the curriculum, suggested limited experiences of multicultural education and revealed some interesting misconceptions held by the group concerning the meaning of biculturalism.

5.3.1 *Views on the nature and value of an internationalised curriculum*

The card sort activity aimed to collect the participants' preferences of internationalised elements expressed through card rankings. Only three participants ranked the cards sequentially from highest preference to lowest; the rest chose to cluster cards at the same rank. For analysis purposes, cards ranked at the same level were given the median score across the range of levels covered by those cards. After entering the participants' card rankings into a table, the final calculation of one card's rank across the group was obtained by calculating its total score. The card with the lowest total scores was awarded the highest rank. The results are presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Card sort rankings

Element	Rank	Category
Lecturers using examples from other countries	1	Pedagogy
Learning how different cultures make meaning of the world (how they construct knowledge)	2	Curriculum
Intentionally engaging students from other parts of the world in class discussions, group work and assignments	3	Pedagogy
Allowing students to draw on their cultural backgrounds in assignment work	4	Assessment
Papers with international content	5	Curriculum
Learning about and practising intercultural communication in class	6	Curriculum & Pedagogy
Papers with a strong multicultural focus	7	Curriculum
Having a component of the programme as an overseas experience	8	Curriculum
Encouraging immigrants and international students to share their cultural knowledge with the class	9	Pedagogy
Learning a foreign language	10	Curriculum

Participants experienced several challenges in this activity. Most requested clarification on the meaning of *intercultural communication*, and *intentionally engaging students from other parts of the world*. The request to rank statements while reflecting on their meaning required two different thinking skills to be used simultaneously. This was evidenced in a slower and sometimes laboured pace. Two participants changed card rank positions once they understood the concept more fully. For ease of discussion, the ranked cards have been grouped under the categories of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment perspectives in an internationalised curriculum. Each category will be discussed, and the views of the participants reported.

5.3.1.1 Perspectives on curriculum

The common route to internationalising the curriculum was identified by Ardakani et al. (2011), who compared the content of internationalised curricula in the US, Canada, Australia and Japan, and found that supplementing existing curricula with international content, promoting intercultural understanding and employing international academics was a common approach. Leask might not agree because she has worked extensively with staff across disciplines re-visioning and reimagining curriculum to include internationalised elements (Leask, 2013), identifying

curriculum content with related pedagogical practice and links to graduate profiles (Leask, 2001) and offering a conceptual framework (Leask & Bridge, 2013) for a field that she assesses as having few studies. Her Australian contribution will be useful to inform emerging developments in NZ, which are currently limited to specialised interest areas such as intercultural communication and interculturalism (Besley, 2012; Besley & Peters, 2012; Harvey, 2018).

Five cards referenced content common to an internationalised curriculum (intercultural communication, international content, foreign language, overseas experience, cultural construction of knowledge) and another card identified a multicultural focus. The cards were ranked across the range, with one card in second rank, four cards in middle to upper ranks and one card in the lowest rank. Equally within the participant group, individuals ranked the cards variously, with two placing *international content* in their top rank and two placing *an overseas experience* in their top rank. The participants' responses to three card elements surprised me.

First, *learning about and practising intercultural communication in class* is comprehensively covered and strongly supported in the literature for development of cross-cultural competencies and skills (Stier, 2003; Stone, 2006); for intercultural dialogue (De Vita, 2007; Stokke & Lybaek, 2018), which draws on social and emotional intelligence (Dulabaum, 2012); and for transforming the being of the student (Barnett & Coate, 2005) as a global graduate (de Wit, 2010). The School of Language and Culture at AUT currently offers papers in intercultural communication; however, I consider this a keystone of any internationalised curriculum for all students. In contrast, the participants exhibited a surprising lack of awareness and understanding of the concept, and found it challenging to suggest how it might be integrated into programmes. Miho, for example, assumed that the element was only knowledge about culture, and even after explanation she questioned how it would fit with business, accounting and finance. Bruce saw no reason to learn intercultural skills, holding his position even after discussion, revealing a lack of awareness of his own attitudes towards ethnic diversity in his classes. Coco, on the other hand, quickly responded "Some people need to know this" and assumed she was not one of those. Jones and Killick (2007) acknowledge that those with international experience have

already functioned across cultures. This might be the reason for the general lack of response, lack of interest and obvious lack of experience in intercultural communication as part of their study or it might be an indicator of the uncritical acceptance of assimilation as false consciousness.

The second surprise I experienced was in the lack of response to the card *papers with a strong multicultural focus*. This is a central premise of the thesis and is based on a broad literature field of multicultural education theory and practice (Banks, 2001; Kymlicka, 1995; Sleeter & Grant, 2007). The inclusion of critical pedagogies as elaborated by Nieto (2010) and May and Sleeter (2010) has the potential to transform an internationalised curriculum. Very little explicit comment was made about this element, and its rank at seven raises questions of genuine participant commitment to an integration strategy that was professed in principle, or it indicates the success of assimilation as false consciousness in practice. In a sense, the lack of interest and appreciation of multicultural education as expressed by these participants supports the message in the literature that this education approach has failed to deliver results for minority students (Goldberg, 1994; May, 1999).

One of the most valuable components of an internationalised curriculum in my opinion is *learning how different cultures make meaning of the world.* The ranking of this card in second place was my third surprise because I assumed participants would not appreciate the value of this focus. Two contrasting perspectives were shared, revealing the different meaning made by Bruce and Fish. Bruce revealed his self-orientation and ranked this top "because that is telling me how people tick and that's quite important, because that gives you leverage on how to teach them, train them and how to control them". As Bruce himself is strongly assimilated, his response could also be read as an endorsement of the product of assimilation as false consciousness. Fish demonstrated her others orientation and ranked this top, sharing her study-abroad insight in Japan: "They do things completely different to how we do in the west, so learning about these countries and how they do stuff, we could learn how to do it, and maybe take it and adapt it", a refreshing statement challenging assimilation as false consciousness in mainstream practices. Sisifa and Enid expressed the perspective of those who learn about how the European culture makes meaning.

Sisifa observed that her university study was “western European … I still somewhat feel that I am a Tongan in a European world”—a sentiment echoed by Enid: “I feel a little left out because there are some things that only people with western culture know and we don’t really know”. These statements are indicative of the need for greater cultural responsiveness in the design of higher education curricula for a diverse student population, and the need for lecturers to understand and accommodate different cultural constructions of knowledge. Banks (2001) includes knowledge construction as one of his five dimensions of multicultural education.

AUT already offers three of the internationalised card elements in specific programmes: *papers with international content, learning a foreign language* and *having a component of the programme as an overseas experience.* Participant responses on these elements were varied, depending on their experiences or career expectations of study. For example, for EAL speakers, a foreign language held no appeal because they were engaged in exactly that at the university. Fish was learning Japanese and spoke of its benefits—“gives opportunity to speak to more people and not just be complacent in what we know and what we think, just being open to everyone else and their ideas”—while Sisifa saw it as an exciting opportunity. Not unexpectedly, Bruce dismissed the idea: “not important to me—English is the language of business; English is the language of New Zealand”. Those involved in language education in higher education would disagree with the lowest ranking of this card, arguing it is an essential component of an internationalised curriculum because it is through language that one learns about culture (Cooper, 2007; Roskvist et al., 2014).

International content in papers, NZ content or an integration of both was the subject of questionnaire items 15–17. Seven participants strongly supported an integration of NZ and international content, and when the subject was discussed, the value of an international focus meant something different to Miho (who would have appreciated Chinese financial content in her accounting and finance degree to acknowledge its global significance) and Enid (who felt she would be safe, invisible, but recognised in international content).

Having an overseas experience is currently available in several AUT programmes. The element received a range of responses, from positive through neutral to negative. Sisifa and Zana placed this element in the top rank, and Fish, the only participant to have engaged in overseas study, ranked it at level five. It is interesting that this element has been specifically identified as an indicator in *AUT Directions to 2025* (AUT, 2018a), yet it received, at best, neutral support from the participants. These are the internal internationals that Jiang (2010) describes who do not necessarily need another overseas experience. I would argue that all elements of an internationalised curriculum would qualify as 'an overseas experience' at home.

5.3.1.2 Perspectives on pedagogy

The literature supports the idea of using immigrants as potential resources in learning and teaching (De Vita, 2007; Harman, 2005; Leask, 2001), although this would require sensitivity in identifying those who wish to remain invisible and those willing to share their cultural backgrounds. I was therefore not surprised to find participants' response to *sharing their cultural knowledge with the class* ranked at ninth place, because this was resisted by some but seen by others as an opportunity. It seems that the more secure immigrants are in their ethnic identity and their acculturative progress towards sociocultural and psychological adaptation, the more willing they will be to share.

The card *Intentionally engaging students from other parts of the world in class discussion, group work and assignments* is linked to the internationalised elements of sharing, intercultural communication and understanding knowledge construction. Its purpose is to shatter the concept of assimilation as false consciousness and draw together students of diverse ethnicities, supporting them towards intercultural dialogue, and growing behaviours described by Besley and Peters (2012) such as respect, acceptance and openness. This would require lecturers to hold positive attitudes towards multiculturalism rather than a deficit mindset towards diversity, as discussed in the literature by Biggs (2003), Bishop et al. (2009) and De Vita (2007), and the complexity of effectively managing such learning would require professional development of the type practised by Leask and Carroll (2011) and what Danylchuk

(2011) calls internationalising your self. Once again, this card raised strong views: Fish felt it would be "intimidating for students who are intentionally put together" because she would prefer the practice to emerge more naturally. Enid agreed: "It would make a lot of people feel a little uncomfortable when put with a whole bunch of Kiwis or Islander students". However, Sisifa was more attuned to the idea, responding, "you learn from each other", and Jane was similarly aligned: "to encourage them to talk to each other". In my opinion, this element is at the heart of pedagogy aligned with an internationalised curriculum and would effectively challenge the current assimilationist forces in higher education. This too, supports the argument for a greater ethic of care and responsibility by organisations for international (and immigrant) students (Madge et al., 2009; Waters, 2018; Yang, 2019).

The top-ranked card, *Lecturers using examples from other countries*, was interesting because it appeared to speak of the participants' own preference in learning and teaching. Six participants ranked it either first or second; only Fish ranked it ninth, and she sounded a cautious note regarding authenticity—"they might pull it out of a textbook"—because she would prefer for lecturers to draw examples from their own or students' lived experiences. Zana's observation of this pedagogy, "but I feel that if they do that, other cultures like New Zealanders would feel left out", illustrates the power of privileging the mainstream discourse and her expectation of assimilation.

5.3.1.3 Perspectives on assessment

Surprisingly, this element was not ranked as high as I expected and the reason might be that over half the participants already experienced and appreciated this practice. Miho raised an interesting concern about student advantage or disadvantage in fair grading of such work. She felt those in the mainstream would be advantaged because the lecturer would have strong generic knowledge, but not necessarily be competent to assess references to other cultures. In fact, the opposite is more likely because immigrant (and international) students usually have a secure fund of knowledge from which to draw, in contrast to NZers, who often grapple with questions of heritage and identity (Liu et al., 2005). To make this element a strength of curriculum and

pedagogy would require in-depth planning of relevant and authentic tasks as well as support for students towards greater independence and individual submissions, again the work of staff professional development.

5.3.1.4 Who would benefit from an internationalised curriculum?

The participants were asked about the value of an internationalised curriculum for immigrants and NZers. There was surprising consensus among six of the eight participants that such a curriculum was not of great interest or value to immigrants. Sisifa demonstrated the strongest reaction when I asked her how things would change for her if every paper had these elements. She replied in a hushed and excited tone:

> Oh wow! I can tell you now I would really be doing well in my papers then, because I'd be passionate, very interested and I'd put a lot more focus on it because it gives sort of a drive for immigrants.

This was the response I had assumed the whole group would give as it recognises their status as part of international student mobility. Again, the consensus about the positive value of such a curriculum for NZers was unexpected. Strong views were expressed, such as the following from Coco: "No, they wouldn't like it … definitely they need it because not all of them are showing this kind of welcoming and engaging behaviour". Sisifa, again, was articulate in her support:

> it gives more of a learning adaptation for them, they get to learn from the other cultures, they get to learn a foreign language because it isn't so much for us to do all the work to learn their culture, their language, and study their work and their papers. They should make an effort to learn from us as well.

The participant perspectives support Jones and Killick's (2007) argument that immigrant students would not necessarily benefit from an internationalised curriculum to the same extent as domestic students. The participants were engaged in adapting to the mainstream assimilationist practices, which represented for them an internationalised experience in NZ.

5.3.2 *Beliefs and experiences of bicultural and multicultural education practice*

Participants were asked in the questionnaire (items 34 and 35) to respond to the following statements: *New Zealand is a bicultural country and AUT should reflect bicultural practices* and *New Zealand is a multicultural country and all cultures should be recognised in AUT practices.* The responses were explored further during the interviews because I wanted to understand the reasons for the range of responses and positioning evidenced in the questionnaire data.

The bicultural responses were spread across the range of agree or strongly agree (five participants) and disagree or strongly disagree (three participants), which was unexpected in a country with a clear bicultural commitment. On probing, I discovered that participants held different understandings of the term 'bicultural'. Coco, Sisifa and Bruce identified the Māori and European Treaty partners; Miho and Jane assumed that bicultural included their own culture and the NZ culture; Fish thought it included European NZ and Māori/Pacific groups, and Zana revealed her lack of bicultural understanding and classroom experience in the following exchange:

> Zana: Yeah, I got mixed up here; I didn't really know the difference between multiculturalism and biculturalism.
>
> *Lyn: Biculturalism is two cultures; multiculturalism is many cultures. What does biculturalism mean to you when you think of two cultures?*
>
> Zana: Maybe one is NZ like Māori and I don't know the other one.
>
> *Lyn: So, do you get a sense at AUT that Māori and European are the groups that are prioritised?*
>
> Zana: Not really! [*thinking]*
>
> *Lyn: You don't get a sense of that being in the university, in the classroom?*
>
> Zana: Maybe Māori?
>
> *Lyn: Do you learn about Māori ways of hospitality events?*
>
> Zana: No, but I learned how they welcome people—back in high school they will have a formal welcome and they always sing and then when they walk the teachers are behind.
>
> *Lyn: Have you seen that at the university?*
>
> Zana: No.

Lyn: Have you ever had Māori students share their way of doing things?

Zana: No, unless you join their club.

Zana's narrative is concerning because it reveals her lack of understanding, not only of the concept of biculturalism in NZ, but what it might look like in practice. No Māori clubs exist at the university and her reference suggests that they are one group among many ethnic minorities who have ethnic clubs.

Fish strongly supported biculturalism and related her authentic experience in practice: "most papers have a Māori component to them … the Treaty of Waitangi especially … I love the respect that New Zealand has for the Māori and the Māori traditions". If this range of perspectives across the small sample group is representative across the university, there is much work to be done in curriculum and pedagogy to achieve an awareness and practice of biculturalism as suggested in strategic documents (AUT, 2014, 2018a, 2019c).

In contrast, the responses to the multicultural statement brought few surprises. Seven participants (87.5%) agreed or strongly agreed and one participant somewhat disagreed because of a caution about the use of the word 'all' cultures. Such strong support for multiculturalism was expected because it aligns with previous preferences expressed for integration. Experiences in practice were also less polarised than those on biculturalism. Item 30 in the questionnaire revealed that six participants had had lecturers who recognised ethnicity in their teaching. Zana gave an example of a hospitality lecturer who was aware of her Muslim beliefs and ensured that she cooked with appropriate ingredients, such as chicken while the rest of the class cooked pork. Enid showed some confusion between Māori and biculturalism in contrast to Pacific students and multiculturalism when referring to her social science major:

Lyn: So, are you getting quite a strong multicultural focus then in social sciences?

Enid: Yeah, well, I definitely learn a lot about Pacific Island cultures, a lot about Treaty of Waitangi and I have lots of classmates from those places because I think they want to know more about themselves … actually I

> think those Pacific Island students are immigrants themselves? They want to know more about their culture.
>
> *Lyn: They are catered for, they are not invisible?*
>
> Enid: Yeah, they are not invisible, we know that they exist!

Her insight into the visibility of Pacific students in class aligns with their visibility in AUT strategic documents (AUT, 2014, 2019c) and in their positioning in strategic priorities of the national level TES 2014–2019 (MOE, 2014).

It appears that the general experience across the group was of limited multicultural practice in the formal learning environment. However, mention was made of stronger multicultural awareness and enactment in the informal environment, some of which shows an authentic commitment (such as the space dedicated for Muslim worship mentioned by Zana, or the Japanese tea club that Fish enjoys) and some in the realm of benevolent multicultural practice (such as diversity week, mentioned by Enid).

An interesting and unexpected relationship was drawn between the concepts of bicultural and multicultural as they applied to AUT. Three participants felt that biculturalism should be viewed as part of multiculturalism, a view unlikely to be acceptable to Māori, although some NZers such as Ward (2013a) see no tension between the two coexisting. Fish argued for bicultural practices at the same time "pushing everybody's culture" through multiculturalism. Bruce summed up his dilemma of confronting each statement on its own, or combining the concepts:

> I kind of thought the bicultural question is like YES, but if you just look at it, as a bicultural thing, then NO, don't just go with two, not when you've got Asian, Indian and South Africa and the rest of them. Draw them all.

It appears from the participants' questionnaire responses and culturally inclusive experiences that AUT does well to support diversity in the informal environment but has a way to go to provide a consistent bicultural and multicultural experience in the formal learning environment. Curriculum reform to include multicultural elements in an internationalised curriculum at home would meet this need, while being

responsive to AUT's strategic aim for all students to have an international experience (AUT, 2018a).

5.3.3 *Findings related to internationalising the curriculum*

Two themes were identified based on participant experiences and views related to internationalising the curriculum at home.

5.3.3.1 Most participants see greater value for Kiwi students to experience an internationalised curriculum at home than for immigrant students

This theme was a surprising outcome of the research because my assumption was that while an internationalised curriculum would benefit all students, it would be very attractive to immigrant students since they would become more visible in curriculum and pedagogy. At the outset of the research, I was aware that I might not find that the participants held the same view as I do on aspects such as invisibility and assimilation as false consciousness; however, I did not anticipate that that they might not strongly support an internationalised curriculum. The argument could be made that this lack of expectation by participants is an indicator of the success of assimilation as false consciousness in their higher education experience. The strong view of participants that an internationalised curriculum was needed to educate domestic NZ students in intercultural competencies is supported by research findings from Australia (Guillen & Ji, 2011; Sawir, 2013) and New Zealand (Brunton & Jeffrey, 2014). Several participants commented on the reputational advantage an internationalised curriculum would give AUT in the domestic and international market, echoing the views of Knight (2008) and Leask and Carroll (2011), who believe such a curriculum can take the university to another level.

5.3.3.2 Neither bicultural nor multicultural education practices are consistently understood nor enacted in the university and both could become part of an internationalised curriculum at home

The participants' experience of curriculum and pedagogy appeared to be focused on the dominant discourse, a western European-oriented education. Bicultural experiences were limited and understanding of the Treaty of Waitangi and *te reo Māori* (language) was evidenced by only three participants. This was surprising in

light of university policy that makes Māori perspectives explicit (AUT, 2018a). Multicultural education was also distributed sporadically across the participants' experience. While the varied responses of participants to questions about these two forms of education may have been due to lack of knowledge, awareness and experience, they were also linked with assimilation as false consciousness and their associated lack of expectation of them being visible in curriculum and pedagogy.

5.3.4 *Response to research subquestions*

The second research subquestion, *How do participants' views on acculturation concepts signal their expectations of cultural inclusion in the higher education formal learning environment?*, which draws on analysis of five acculturation concepts and related themes, suggests that acculturation concepts are experienced through a lens of assimilation as false consciousness. This strong belief implies no expectation of immigrant cultural inclusion in curriculum and pedagogy as part of the acculturation process, and thus supports Berry's (1997) view that assimilation in education contexts is expected as part of the public domain component of the integration strategy.

The third research subquestion, *What are the views of immigrant students on the value and nature of an internationalised curriculum at home?*, revealed only one participant excited at the prospect of an internationalised curriculum to motivate learning. Another saw possibilities of using immigrants as resources in class, and the rest ranged from neutral to negative, with some preferring invisibility in the mainstream. However, there was strong consensus on the value of such a curriculum for NZ students to reduce ignorance of the widely held mainstream belief of assimilation as false consciousness and to build skills for intercultural dialogue.

5.4 Chapter summary

The analysis and discussion of acculturation concepts was covered in the first part of the chapter and resulted in three themes. These indicated that despite their strong support for integration as a strategy, and their equally strong lack of support for assimilation as false consciousness, the expectation of the immigrant students was

to assimilate into the mainstream. Consequently, participants had no expectation of being culturally ‘recognised’ in the learning environment.

The second part of the chapter focused on participant perspectives of culturally inclusive learning and teaching and internationalising the curriculum. Two themes were identified that suggest that, based on current experience, the elements of an internationalised curriculum would be of benefit not necessarily for immigrants but that the university would be ‘adding value’ in providing such for NZ-born students.

Chapter 6 syntheses the research questions while considering the contribution of the research to knowledge and theory, methodology and practice.

Chapter 6: Contribution to Knowledge and Theory, Methodology and Practice

6.1 Introduction

This chapter articulates my contribution to the field and is focused on discussion of three research questions. The first section has a focus on contribution to knowledge and theory. The main research question, *How does the concept of assimilation as false consciousness explain the immigrant students' acculturation experiences in the higher education learning environment?*, articulates my contribution to knowledge as it synthesises the findings of Chapters 4 and 5. Consideration of the fourth research subquestion, W*hat is the theoretical underpinning that links immigrant students' acculturation experience with wider policy and ideology, and how does this apply to the New Zealand context?*, is presented as a theoretical framework of contextual influences on acculturation in higher education. This is followed by an evaluation of Bronfenbrenner's (1993) socio-ecological theory and Berry's (1997) acculturation theory, with suggested refinements to aspects of the latter theory based on the study's findings.

The second section articulates a contribution to methodology: first, evaluating rich pictures for individual narrative, rather than their traditional use for group problem-solving (Berg et al., 2017) and, second, evaluating the decision to use a bricolage of four methods in a qualitative study.

The third section focuses on my contribution to the field of practice and addresses the fifth research subquestion, *How might a higher education institution be responsive to immigrant invisibility if it values diversity and student voice?* While detail is provided at an institutional level and specific to my university, the section concludes by considering the contribution at an NZ national level, and an extension into the field more generally through international presentation and publication.

6.2 Contribution to knowledge and theory

6.2.1 *Assimilation as false consciousness in formal learning environments*

The main research question, *How does the concept of assimilation as false consciousness explain the immigrant students' acculturation experiences in the higher education learning environment?*, subsumes the first three research subquestions, which have been considered as part of each data set in Chapters 4 and 5. Before detailing a response to the main research question, I draw attention to the distinction between acculturation to a wider host society as experienced by all immigrants and acculturation to a learning environment as a specific context that confronts the immigrant higher education student. A plethora of research has contributed to the former field, whereas my research contributes to the gap in the literature on immigrant students in higher education learning environments. According to Berry (1992, 1997, 2003), immigrants acculturating into a host society have the choice of four acculturation preferences—assimilation, integration, separation and marginalisation—while those acculturating into education contexts have no choice but assimilation into the ideology of the state education approach. This view is supported by Bourhis et al. (1997), and my research findings endorse the assertion that students in NZ have no choice but to assimilate into the formal learning environment.

The 13 themes identified in Chapters 4 and 5 have been synthesised into two themes to inform the response to the main research question.

1. *Assimilation as false consciousness in the formal learning environment is revealed through the content, aesthetics and message of rich pictures, through tacit and uncritical understanding of acculturation concepts and through neutral perceptions of the value of an internationalised curriculum at home.*

Assimilation as false consciousness was reflected in the experiences and beliefs of the immigrant participants and evidenced in the four data sets collected through rich pictures, questionnaire, interview and card sort. The paired rich pictures illustrated adaptation over a period of years *towards* assimilation in the learning environment,

in line with Berry's (1997) model, which asserts that education is a component of the public domain and thus assumes assimilation as the only option for immigrant students. The research findings suggested that the expression of assimilation ranged from a positive assimilation into the culture of the learning environment to a marginalised or separated position within assimilation. The rich pictures reflected assimilation through acculturation processes evidenced by increasing invisibility of self in the learning environment in the reality of assimilation as false consciousness and, for many, a shift away from the dominance of structured learning and teaching towards abstract representations of diversity, relationships and informal activities. The rich pictures visually depicted and conveyed messages of assimilation outcomes through symbols, metaphors, images and words expressing positions of isolation, stress, acceptance, compromise, invisibility and separation. The shift in focus from academic and cultural challenges in initial learning environments to elements highlighting diversity and activities in the informal environment in the current learning environment could be interpreted in two different ways. It could be read as the successful enactment of assimilation as false consciousness and an unconscious expectation of this as the norm in the current learning environment, with little need to challenge or raise issues. Alternatively, the focus on diversity elements (albeit in the informal learning environment) could be read as the resilience of cultural difference with increased levels of awareness of its expression and an appreciation of diversity. The participants' narratives elaborated during the interviews expressed the uniqueness of individual acculturation experiences in the learning environment and presented evidence to support both these interpretations.

The contradictions in participants' positioning on acculturation concepts in the questionnaire and in interview discussions suggested a lack of knowledge of acculturation concepts and processes. Likewise, difficulty in articulating consistent and critical arguments to support a position on assimilation as false consciousness revealed a level of unawareness of the lived reality of the concept in the learning environment. A clear contrast between preferences in principle and enacted practices was uncovered through these two data sets, because participants expressed integration beliefs yet described assimilation practices. On examination of

both these positions, some participants remained convinced of their belief in assimilation into the mainstream, thus revealing the depth of false consciousness, while others began to show insight into the falsity of their belief position. None, however, moved to a social justice stance or showed any inclination towards social action. This was reinforced by the participants' response to the opportunities offered in an internationalised curriculum to recognise and respond to ethnic diversity in the learning environment.

On the whole, participants were neutral or negative regarding the value of an internationalised curriculum for immigrant students. Only one participant was moved by the possibilities of such a curriculum to engage learners. There are two possible interpretations of this positioning. It could be argued, in line with Jones and Killick (2007), that immigrant students are already engaged on a daily basis with many of the elements of an internationalised curriculum as they grapple with their NZ (international) experience, immersion as non-English speakers, engage with intercultural communication, and master foreign content and new knowledge construction. On the other hand, the participants' response could be interpreted as the successful enactment of assimilation as false consciousness to the extent that the belief about mainstream curriculum and pedagogy is of greater value than that associated with ethnocultural minority cultures.

2. *Assimilation as false consciousness is a social construct that has been internalised as an expectation in study, even though integration is a preference, resulting in an unquestioned invisibility in the formal learning environment.*

The social construct of assimilation as false consciousness is part of the immigration narrative associated with assimilation into a mainstream culture, particularly in an education context, as has been hinted at by Vedder et al. (2006). Thus, the strong integration preferences in the questionnaire data held no substance in interview discussions or in the card sort activity. Assimilation was revealed in deeply held beliefs, internalised and expressed as expectations for study in higher education without critique. The consequent invisibility was equally accepted and expected, and

little enthusiasm was mustered for cultural inclusion of immigrant students as resources to enhance the formal learning environment. Even when these positions were challenged during interviews, and discussion on the meaning and implications of the concepts were explored, few participants showed awareness of the misalignment of their beliefs and practice. The expectation of invisibility by participants was welcomed by those with low self-efficacy in the mainstream classroom, and unquestioned by those who had the agency to challenge the assimilationist practices, because awareness lies hidden in tacit understanding of acculturation experiences and expectations. False consciousness as an imposed belief is so strongly internalised that it is owned and enacted in behaviour. Rather than an intentional enactment by the university, the imposition of such beliefs on immigrants is a product of a resilient assimilationist education policy, associated with a western European hegemonic approach in higher education.

In summary, the triangulation of data sets supports the view that assimilation as false consciousness powerfully affects the immigrant student acculturation experience, and while an unconscious construct, it dominates attitudes and behaviours in the formal learning environment. Applying a social justice lens to the concept of assimilation as false consciousness with immigrant students in the higher education learning environment raises questions of power positioning and socialisation through education for social reproduction reasons, rather than the empowerment of a minority group for social transformation through education as advanced by Freire (1993) and May and Sleeter (2010). I do not believe that in the case of my university this dominant hegemonic discourse is intentionally applied, but rather that assimilation as false consciousness has been insidious and resistant, claiming a normalised position in education provision in higher education, with a contextual reach through all levels of the system. The gap between the political commitment in NZ to biculturalism (evidenced in strong national and organisational higher education policies) and the social reality of multiculturalism (evidenced in demographics and weak higher education policy) continues to be filled by a historical assimilationist approach to education. This raises the question of the influence of these three

approaches on the NZ immigrant student in the higher education learning environment and leads into a theoretical contribution of the research.

6.2.2 *A theoretical framework of contextual influences on acculturation*

Bronfenbrenner's (1993) socio-ecological systems theory effectively reflects the macro-level influences of ideology, immigration and education policy on the organisation's education policy in the exosystem, which in turn influences and affects the education experience provided for students. While I was structuring the literature review to reflect Bronfenbrenner's (1993) model of four nested socio-ecological systems, it became apparent to me that a new and refined theoretical model related specifically to contextual influences on acculturation was emerging from the literature, to reflect the relationship between state ideology, immigration theory and policy, and education policy and practice reflected on the immigrant student's experience in the learning environment. The relationship between some of these elements was noted in the acculturation literature. For example, Bourhis et al. (1997) advance a relationship between ideology and immigration theory, and Berry (2005) and Igoa (1995) note the potential impact on acculturating students of misaligned national education policy and enacted school practice. Nobody has completed the links through the different elements. I present a theoretical model (see Figure 6.1) that assumes coherence from one element to the next and identifies relationships between the elements through lines of differing thickness to indicate the strength of direct or indirect influence. The elements and relationships are elaborated using a multicultural exemplar.

Thus, in a liberal democracy of the type advanced by Kymlicka (1995) with a state ideology of pluralism, immigration theory and policy at a national level would be reflected as multicultural. The national level ideology also reflects, albeit from a greater distance, as a positive multicultural attitude and response to immigrant student acculturation experiences in the higher education learning environment. In a similar fashion, state ideology influences education policy at the national level enacted as multicultural education at the higher education organisational level. The closer the element to the immigrant student, the stronger its influence, as in the

Bronfenbrenner (1993) model. Therefore, the institutional multicultural education policy is likely to be strongly reflected in multicultural education practice in the immigrant student's formal learning environment.

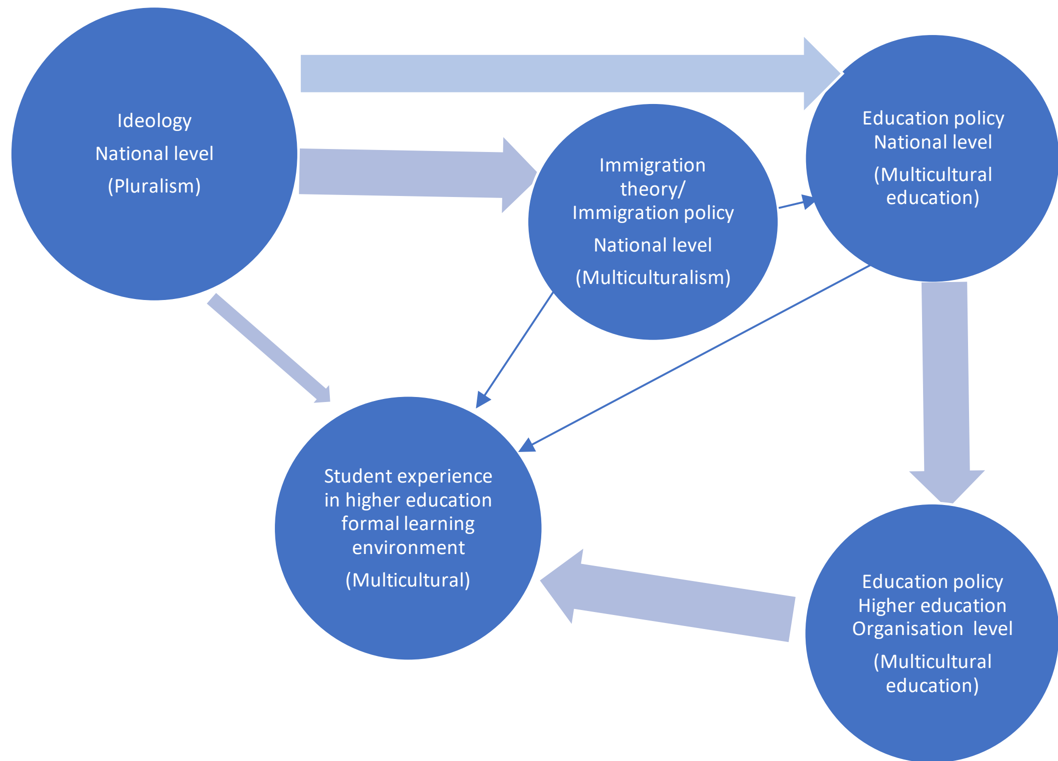


Figure 6.1: A theoretical framework of contextual influences on acculturation in higher education

This model differs from the distal relationships of Bronfenbrenner's (1993) outer circles with the student at the centre, because I am suggesting a direct impact of state ideology on the student acculturation experience, while it is also influenced simultaneously by all other related elements. The main message of the set of contextual influences on the student is aligned with Bronfenbrenner's (1993) socio-ecological model; however, in this framework they are not nested, or hierarchical, but simultaneously influential.

The literature reports that while immigration theory and practice are related, they can be far from linear or coherent. Although classic assimilation theory is largely outdated and has been replaced by pluralism, assimilation persists and pervades societies and their institutions (Glazer, 2005; Scholten, Entzinger, Penninx, & Verbeek, 2015). Multiculturalism as a philosophy has value, but it has been weak in

replacing assimilation or in enacting substantial education change (Crowder, 2013; May, 1999). A lack of coherency between the elements of the model can lead to complexity within the system, triggering cultural conflict for acculturating individuals. This view is supported by Bourhis et al. (1997), who note the distinction between "actual integration practices" and "officially declared integration policies adopted by the state" (p. 373).

Based on the research findings, the framework when applied to NZ (see Figure 6.2) reveals a lack of coherence across the model and disconnection rather than connection between most of the elements. The ideological driver in NZ is pluralism, but pluralism of a specific nature, grounded in the political commitment to biculturalism.

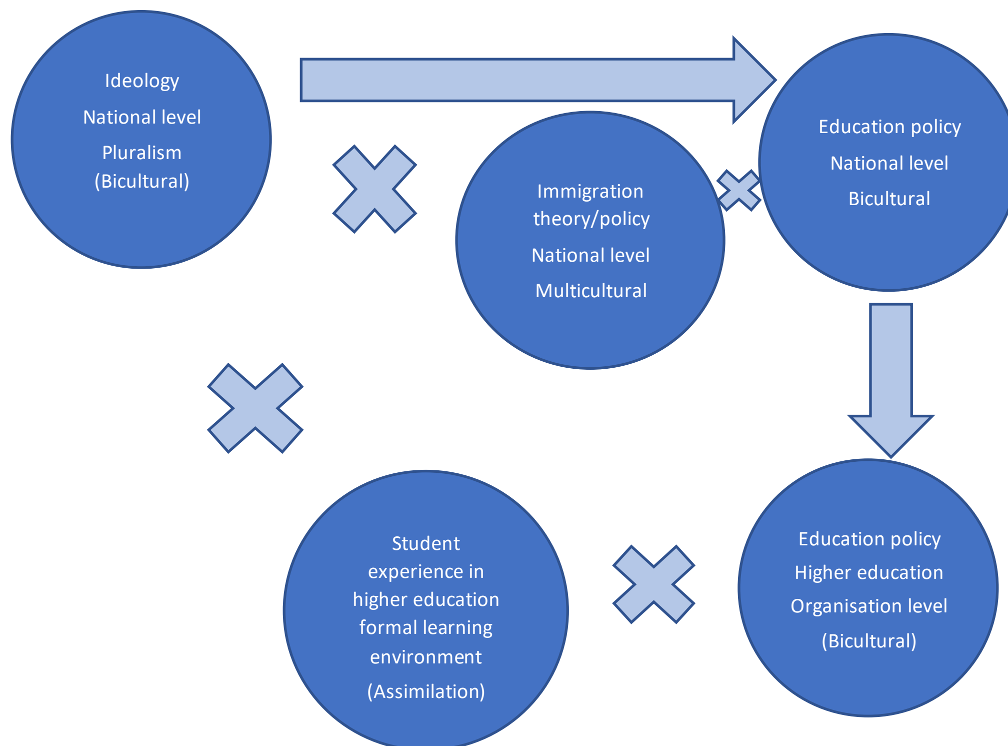


Figure 6.2: Application of the theoretical framework for contextual influences on acculturation in higher education in New Zealand

The first disconnect occurs in the relationship between ideology and immigration theory and policy between the state bicultural commitment and the state multicultural immigration policy. Discerning immigrants who research life in NZ on the official immigration website (New Zealand Immigration, 2019a) will read of a bicultural country that welcomes immigrants, not a multicultural country. Most

immigrants with a belief in assimilation as false consciousness will be seeking to acculturate to the mainstream of European NZ. The relationship between state ideology and the immigrant student in the learning environment reveals the largest disconnect between pluralism in principle and assimilation in practice.

The next disconnect occurs between the multicultural immigration policy and bicultural higher education policy at the national level, articulated in the TES 2014–2019 (MOE, 2014). Unsurprisingly, based on state funding for institutions delivering on TES priorities, there is strong coherence between state and organisation bicultural education policy, as reflected in institutional strategic documents (AUT, 2018a, 2014).

A disconnect occurs between the university's bicultural policy and its enactment in practice in the learning environment. This research reports participants' experiences of assimilation in the dominant NZ European mainstream learning environments. The participants reported few bicultural experiences, and inconsistent multicultural practice at the paper and lecturer level. As already noted, the final disconnect can be seen in the lack of coherence between the state ideology of pluralism and the student acculturation experience of assimilation.

While Bronfenbrenner's (1993) theory offered an effective lens to structure the literature review and emphasised the contextual nested systems that affect the student at the centre, this contextual framework has offered insights into a similar, yet different contextual perspective on student acculturation in NZ higher education. It visually depicts the impact of the complex bicultural and multicultural landscape along with a continued enactment of assimilation through mainstream forces on the practice in learning environments, explaining why immigrant students are invisible. The disconnections in the NZ framework are dramatic and unique, yet similar patterns may exist in other national contexts where state ideologies are not enacted in acculturating immigrant student learning environments. Notwithstanding the proposal of an alternative framework, Bronfenbrenner's (1993) socio-ecological model has been useful in the research.

6.2.3 *An evaluation of Bronfenbrenner's (1993) socio-ecological theory*

In line with other researchers (Ceci & Hembrooke, 1995; Serdarevic & Chronister, 2005), I have found Bronfenbrenner's nested socio-ecological systems theory a useful conceptual and structuring framework for my research, providing insight through the threading of literature from macro level through meso level to micro level. Had I heeded Onwuegbuzie et al.'s (2013) directive to restrict my micro research study to the microsystem, the lack of coherence in the theory of contextual influences on acculturation in higher education contexts in NZ might not have been so apparent.

My findings support those of Serdarevic and Chronister (2005) that Bronfenbrenner's (1993) model accommodates the bidirectional interactions of immigrants and the environment. Furthermore, its effective use as a socio-ecological conceptual framework confirms Kim and Díaz's (2013) recommendation to use this approach when researching immigrants in higher education. Application of the PPCT model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) and particularly the components of *person* and *process* provided useful keys to unlock and understand the unique individual acculturation experiences in the proximal bidirectional processes of the microsystem. Bronfenbrenner's (1993) argument that the phenomenological perceptions of the person in his/her environment interactions is an inner reality, inaccessible to the researcher and thus requiring interpretation by the participant, has been respected and applied in the research. By privileging the participants' expression through rich pictures, followed by the participants' explanation and interpretation of their drawings during the interviews, the inner world and 'personhood' of the participants has been prioritised in making meaning of acculturation experiences in learning environments.

Bronfenbrenner and Morris's (2006) PPCT model is strongly supported by my research finding that participants' experience of the learning environment was uniquely affected by their *person*, influenced by their unique interaction *processes*, affected by their unique *culture* and *context* within a specific *temporal* dimension. Applying this theory has revealed complexities in the data that may not otherwise have been easily explained and has raised questions about the accommodation of

fine-grained variations in Berry's (1997) theory, beyond a general classification of the adaptation strategies of assimilation, integration, separation or marginalisation.

6.2.4 *A critique of Berry's (1997) acculturation theory*

While I acknowledge the 20-year development, refinement and critique of Berry's (1997) model by many researchers (Güngör & Perdu, 2017; Schiefer et al., 2012; Titzmann & Fuligni, 2015; Ward, 2008), my study aimed to apply Berry's (1997) acculturation theory in its original form with a particular interest in the strategies of adaptation for acculturation to learning environments. The elements of his model (adaptation strategies, behavioural shifts, acculturative stress) were applied during the data collection and used as codes for analysis. In general, the concepts and process of acculturation were confirmed. As in many other research studies, participants selected integration as their preferred adaptation strategy. What has been missing from Berry's (1997) theory and the subsequent literature is a closer examination of the integration strategy in education practice.

I make two critiques of his theory, both focused on the integration strategy. First, I critique the lack of definition within the integration strategy to accommodate individual acculturation patterns, which I believe can be differentiated. Quantitative researchers, such as Demes and Geeraert (2014), Rudmin (2003), Ward and Rana-Deuba (1999) and even Berry and Sabatier (2011), have noted the difficulty of concise statistical delineation of the four adaptation strategies. Qualitative studies appear not to have ventured into the issue of distinction between strategies or nuances within a strategy. It appears, from my findings, that a continuum exists within the integration strategy itself. While all participants favoured integration, I found they demonstrated positions within integration relative to assimilation, separation or marginalisation. The creation and definition of subcategories within the typologies of adaptation strategies would be helpful. While I am not suggesting a linear continuum, a description of subcategories within integration in an education context (see Table 6.1) could read as follows:

Table 6.1: Subcategories within the integration strategy

Integration position	**Description and participant exemplar**
Integration/assimilation	A merging of an integration preference in principle with behaviours, values and attitudes similar to the mainstream in education contexts. This was evidenced by Bruce with his small cultural distance, English language and alignment with Pākehā identity. Sisifa exhibited an integration that was closer to segmented assimilation, with values and attitudes aligned with the Māori culture rather than the mainstream.
Integration	A clear preference for cultural maintenance and multicultural values, attitudes and behaviours while operating comfortably within mainstream contexts. This was evidenced by Fish with her strong valuing of diversity, small cultural distance and English language, and Miho and Jane, who had larger cultural distances, were EAL speakers and had assimilated successfully into social groups and mainstream pedagogies.
Integration/separation	A preference expressed for the values and attitudes of integration, but behaviours are closer to separation, not from choice but owing to challenges to assimilate into mainstream social groups or mainstream pedagogies. This was evidenced by Zana's cultural-values conflict and Enid's cultural distance.
Integration/marginalisation	Holding values and attitudes associated with an integration strategy and aspiring to belong in the mainstream, behaviours exhibit identity challenges with their own culture and mainstream culture. This was evidenced by Coco with her large cultural distance, ethnic identity issues, acculturative stress and social relationship challenges.

I argue that the value of differentiation within the integration strategy indicates the degree of assimilation, the success of assimilation as false consciousness, and associated sociocultural and psychological adaptation. This supports the view that not all immigrant individuals, even within the integration strategy, have a similar acculturation experience. The information could usefully indicate those who would appreciate greater cultural inclusion through multicultural classroom practice.

Second, I take issue with Berry's (1992) definition of integration to mean assimilation within the public domain of education, with cultural maintenance confined to the private domain. Taking this statement to its logical conclusion, Berry (1997) supports assimilation of immigrants into the education mainstream, while the essence of integration (cultural diversity) is excluded from education contexts. Although he does acknowledge the need for education organisations to be responsive to the needs of immigrants in education contexts (Berry et al., 2006), this aspect is not elaborated or

further explored in the literature beyond the research by Stuart and Ward (2011a) and Benet-Martínez and Haritatos (2005), who focus on the psychological stability of an integrated or blended acculturation identity. I argue that the integration position needs to include multicultural recognition of ethnocultural variation in curriculum and pedagogy within the public domain, thus making the culture of immigrant students visible in learning environments as an acknowledgement of ethnic diversity. Unless there is an intentional reworking of the integration strategy as a bicultural orientation to culture in all aspects of the immigrant experience in the public domain, the assimilationist experiences related by my research participants will continue, reinforced by the false consciousness belief, and opportunities for multicultural and intercultural education will be lost. I contend that the integration strategy should mean integration (the recognition of cultural difference) in the education sector and that this requires intentional moves towards curriculum reform for multicultural education with critical pedagogical elements and intercultural dialogue within an internationalised curriculum.

Finally, I note the critique by Nayar (2015), an NZ researcher who argues that Berry's (1997) model cannot be applied to acculturating immigrants in NZ. Drawing this conclusion from her research findings with Indian adults who, depending on the nature of their activity, related to three groups—NZ European, the Māori group or their own ethnic group—she rejects Berry's (1997) model for NZ immigrants as it was designed for a homogeneous mainstream. I disagree with Nayar's (2015) position, and based on my research findings, argue that Berry's (1997) model does apply in the NZ context, because currently a dominant NZ European mainstream group can be identified, as was assumed by my research participants during the interviews. However, with the renewed commitment in NZ to bicultural practice since the 1970s, it is possible that the model will not be as easily applied in future years.

6.3 Contribution to methodology

6.3.1 *Rich pictures for individual narratives*

Rich pictures are a relatively new visual research methodology and have predominantly been used for group problem-solving activities in professional

development activities (Bell et al., 2016; Bell & Morse, 2013a, 2013b) but far less for individual narratives (Cristancho, 2015; Cristancho et al., 2015). I chose to use a set of rich pictures for individual narratives depicting change across time, and while similar drawings have been used for this purpose (Everett, 2017; McLean et al., 2003), this is the first time that rich pictures have been used for immigrant acculturation narratives in learning environments. Furthermore, the inclusion of participants' voice to explain and interpret the rich pictures during interviews and prior to researcher analysis is also a new approach.

The participants' rich pictures have shown how this methodology can reveal hidden or tacit information, which is not easy to detect or often available for expression in interviews and questionnaires. This was particularly the case in the expression of message and emotion through aesthetics such as vectors, connectors, symbols and images. Metaphor, too, was effectively used as a non-literal description of the learning environment. For the 5 ESL speakers, rich pictures proved an effective medium to translate experience into meaning without the limitation of translation into words. The value of including the participants' interpretations of the rich pictures during interviews reduced the possibilities of misinterpreting metaphor (McIntosh, 2010), exhibited an ethic of 'faithfulness' (Galman, 2009) and provided trustworthiness of data through accompanying vignettes (Seidman, 2013).

While the data were enriched and enhanced through using a rich picture methodology, the value of content analysis was limited, in my view, because it involved a large investment of time for relatively little return in insight and depth of understanding related to the research question. The analysis provided a superficial description of the drawings, and the best use of frequency counts was to support evidence drawn from the richer aesthetic and thematic analysis. A strength of the rich picture methodology was not only the pictures themselves but the gap or time between them, which exposed acculturation processes over time. One drawing on its own could not have achieved this temporal dimension, and an interview discussion may not have painted as clear or vivid a picture of the acculturation process. Furthermore, the drawings gave expression to Berry's (1997) acculturation theory and Phinney's (1989) ethnic identity theory, while also indicating influences from the

broader sociocultural and historico-political context of higher education in NZ. This easy-to-use methodology yielded unexpectedly rich returns, which I believe added a dimension to the data that brought it to life.

6.3.2 *Using a bricolage of methods in qualitative research*

'Bricolage', as described by Kincheloe et al. (2011), is a selection of the best suited methods for an intended purpose. The strengths of rich pictures have been discussed; however, using them on their own may not have revealed the number or depth of insights into immigrant acculturation in learning environments that came through the bricolage of four methods. The contribution of each method was unique and served to build the depth of the data as well as act as a mirror to reflect assumptions and contradictions. For example, the questionnaire and its quantitative descriptive statistics provided evidence to support acculturation concepts, but most importantly, they revealed contradictions between principles and practices, such as understandings of assimilation as false consciousness. The consequent insights through exploration of ideas during interviews might not have occurred without the questionnaire as a method. The interview fell into two parts, each focused on an accompanying method: a free-flowing participant narrative about the rich pictures, following Rubin and Rubin's (2005) responsive interview approach, was appropriate for active listening; however, the shift to Holstein and Gubrium's (1995) active interview approach was necessary to co-construct meaning about acculturation concepts that were unfamiliar to the participants. Possibly the weakest of the methods was the card sort, which proved challenging for participants owing to the demand on a range of thinking skills associated with ranking cards, when the concepts of an internationalised curriculum were foreign. While I believe such an activity has potential for deep discussion, its contribution to the research data was not as rich as expected.

6.4 Contribution to practice

6.4.1 *Auckland University of Technology*

I see my main contribution to practice being in my own university, in which the research was contextualised and which is the subject of the research subquestion

How might a higher education institution be responsive to immigrants' invisibility if it values diversity and student voice?

Since the start of my doctoral study, I have noted three positive signs that the university is moving towards acknowledging its diverse student demographic. First, the strategic directions outlined in *AUT Directions to 2025* (AUT, 2018a) are sufficiently encompassing to embrace the recommendations from my research findings. AUT's strong commitment to the student voice (AUT, 2018a) hints at responsiveness to those who previously have been invisible. Second, the recently updated "Why Study at AUT?" on the AUT website (AUT, 2019b) includes the statements "you'll join a diverse and collaborative community", "our students come from 140 different countries" and ranked "#1 in Australasia for international outlook". This acknowledgement of the diverse student demographic forms a solid foundation upon which to make immigrant students more visible and grow an internationalised curriculum. Finally, the recent *Learning and Teaching Roadmap* initiative includes opportunities to debate achievement of the strategic indicator "100% of our students having an international experience as part of their studies" (AUT, 2018a, p. 4) and opens the way for my contribution to internationalising the curriculum at home.

While I acknowledge that the participant sample was too small to draw generalisations for the university, and that there will be examples of culturally inclusive bicultural and multicultural practice across the university, nevertheless, based on the research findings with this group of immigrant students, I conclude that their invisibility at AUT is a product of assimilation as false consciousness. Participants provided evidence in their rich pictures and interview discussions that AUT is a good place to study and caters to diversity in the informal environment. Miho concluded that "it's already harmonious, but it could be even better". Based on the assimilationist student experience in the learning environment, together with the pattern of disconnection between multicultural NZ immigration policy and the bicultural education policy environment, I believe immigrant students should be made visible in AUT statistics, policy, curriculum and pedagogy, as acknowledgement of their presence and value to the university. This aligns with Kim and Díaz's (2013)

observation that the growing immigrant student demographic in higher education is a trend that universities not only need to heed but also acknowledge and build upon for reputational purposes. The more visible this group, the stronger the university's message to its stakeholders, both domestically and internationally, of its intention to "welcome people of all ethnicities … and creat[e] a sense of shared community and belonging where everyone is valued" (AUT, 2018a, p. 3).

6.4.1.1 Internationalising the curriculum at home

In my leadership roles as Head of School of Education, Associate Dean Learning and Teaching in the Faculty of Culture and Society, and my membership on the university's Learning and Teaching committee, I believe I am in a position to make an authentic contribution to practice through internationalising the curriculum at home. Its purpose beyond curriculum enrichment for all students includes adding value to the graduate profile, not only through 21st-century intercultural skills and competencies, but also by growing global graduates with the dispositions Barnett and Coate (2005) identify for 'being in the world'.

At AUT the commitment has been made for 100% of students to have an international experience by 2025 (AUT, 2018a). While international study abroad serves as an immersion cultural experience as well as a mirror experience of being an NZer, it is not realistic for all students to physically travel overseas, and many may not wish to take up this option (as evidenced in the card sort activity, in which this option was ranked eighth). I argue that it is possible to create international experiences through internationalising the curriculum at home by involving the range of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment elements identified in the card sort activity. Such curriculum reform could be the catalyst to draw together the organisation's espoused and enacted values and practices concerning diversity and internationalisation As part of this curriculum development, the type of support for ESL learners particularly in academic and discipline fluency, as described by Borland and Pearce (2002), Humphreys (2017) and Roach and Roskvist (2007) would acknowledge the value of such learners and go some way to create equality of opportunity for ESL learners (Harris & Chonaill, 2016).Developing an internationalised curriculum needs to start in

small projects with open-minded staff willing to engage with curriculum reform. I envisage this happening through initiatives such as those listed below:

- Market papers in the School of Education's Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education (PGDipHE) in which staff will be provoked to consider curriculum and assessment design through strengthened internationalisation lenses that incorporate bicultural, multicultural and critical pedagogy approaches to learning and teaching.
- Initiate development of a set of papers in the Master of Education Practice in the School of Education, with internationalised curriculum and pedagogy, and modelling intercultural dialogue, to attract domestic and international students.
- Present my research findings at the AUT Learning and Teaching Festival, where I will raise awareness of immigrant students in the formal learning environment as well as promote the concept of internationalising the curriculum at home.
- Volunteer my membership on the university Learning and Teaching working party on international experiences to achieve the strategic indicator (AUT, 2018a) and argue a case for internationalising the curriculum at home.
- Initiate a faculty-wide action research project introducing intercultural competencies into existing papers. I anticipate collegial discussion and the collaborative research process providing staff with professional learning through engagement with the process of doing, to influence the being of the practitioner researcher (Hartog, 2002) and thus to challenge existing attitudes and expose ignorance and underlying assumptions.
- Initiate just-in-time staff professional development in the faculty to support internationalising the curriculum in authentic programme contexts.

Anticipated challenges for this envisaged change are numerous. Arguing for multicultural curriculum development at a time when bicultural perspectives are emergent in curriculum and pedagogy at the university will be met with resistance from many academics, including those who are Māori. The argument that an

internationalised curriculum is relevant for all and should include bicultural, multicultural and intercultural dimensions will be equally difficult to make. The challenge of staff professional development is significant, as identified by those working in the field of internationalisation (Leask, 2013) in relation to deficit attitudes (Bishop et al., 2009), stereotypical assumptions (De Vita, 2007) and general resistance to change. This aligns with Goldberg's (1994) view that teachers are so well socialised into the hegemonic view that they find it difficult to introduce critical pedagogical perspectives into their practice. I believe the best way to convince staff of change is to engage them either through further scholarly professional study (PGDipHE) or in small-scale curriculum and research projects. Not all students will be open to an international focus, particularly those who are strategic learners, intent on achieving a qualification to equip them for work in NZ. It will be through staff integrating authentic internationalised experiences into curriculum that students will be convinced of the value of such education for their future success. I take on board the challenges that Moon (2016) and Abdul-Mumin (2016) describe when initiating change towards internationalising the curriculum, the former at a national level with competing ideological forces and the latter at a local level with curriculum developers arguing for a fit with local culture. In NZ, bicultural forces would be resistant at both levels unless Ward's (2013a) comment about the compatibility of the Treaty principles with the principles of multiculturalism becomes a more widespread view.

Taking a critical multicultural approach through the lens of social justice lifts internationalising the curriculum to another level. The literature on assimilation as false consciousness is associated with oppression of ethnocultural minorities by a dominant hegemonic group seeking social reproduction (Freire, 1993; McLaren, 1994). I claim that assimilation as false consciousness has been shown to be a force in the acculturation experience of my immigrant participants and has associated impacts on their education as social reproduction towards the hegemonic NZ European construction of being in the world. As far as the invisibility of immigrant students in the university is concerned, my research is a call for social justice. However, I do not believe that words such as 'oppression', 'power' or 'dominant hegemonic group' apply in the AUT context; rather, assimilation is an unintentional

relic of an earlier education policy that has not been effectively replaced by biculturalism or multiculturalism. AUT values diversity and has demonstrated its commitment to grow the international experiences for all students and to develop attributes for global citizenship. Taking the step towards internationalising the curriculum will contribute towards its brand of "the university for the changing world" (AUT, 2018a).

6.4.2 *New Zealand higher education context and beyond*

Not only does my research have the potential to make a difference at the individual, group and organisational level of my university, but an understanding of acculturation of immigrant learners in the learning environment might also resonate at a national and international level with those who have had similar concerns of assimilation as false consciousness and immigrant invisibility. I believe I can add to the debate on multiculturalism in NZ through the consideration of an internationalised curriculum that can accommodate both bicultural and multicultural elements, thus reducing the current polarity of an either/or stance. The research findings will be shared widely through national and international conference presentations and journal publications in the fields of acculturation and internationalisation.

I anticipate three related journal articles as outcomes of the research. First, my original contribution to knowledge of acculturating immigrant students in higher education learning environments experiencing assimilation as false consciousness to the extent that they expect to be invisible in curriculum and pedagogy will be the focus of an international conference presentation and international journal article.

Second, I plan to write on acculturating immigrant students in the higher education learning environment, drawing on Berry's (1997) theory and developing an argument for a finer granulated integration strategy to reflect the variation of individual experiences within this position. I also intend to present my argument that the integration component of acculturation should focus on multicultural education rather than assimilationist education approaches. I see these as both contributing towards the critique and refinement of Berry's (1997) theory.

Linked to the two approaches above, I will develop a third article to call for internationalising the curriculum as a way to make immigrant students more visible and to recognise their potential contribution and enhancement of such a curriculum to develop multicultural and intercultural education approaches for all students.

In addition to referencing rich pictures as a method to uncover immigrant experiences, I anticipate writing about the use of rich pictures as a visual participatory research methodology with an application to individual experiences over time through paired drawings. I will also strongly recommend the incorporation of participants' interpretation prior to the researcher's interpretation.

To add to the literature on the application of Bronfenbrenner's (1993) theory, I will write and critique the model to explore the PPCT components with acculturating immigrant students, and particularly to focus on the person and process components in their bidirectional interactions in the microsystem.

I anticipate conference presentations associated with the proposed journal articles. A conference presentation to an NZ audience will be an effective way to test the proposed contextual model and its implications for NZ higher education contexts, before putting the idea into a wider arena for critique.

6.5 Chapter summary

My contribution to knowledge and refinement of theory in the field of immigrant acculturation experiences in higher education learning environments, the refinement of rich pictures as a methodology, and the proposed theoretical framework of contextual influences on acculturation has been outlined in this chapter. I have also detailed my intended practice-based contribution at my own university and have extended this to the broader field of conference and journal outputs at national and international levels. The final chapter concludes by summarising the research questions, considers limitations of the study and suggests further research.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

7.1 Introduction

While each of the research questions has been answered in the body of the text, in this chapter I present a summarised statement for each, highlighting the contradictions and conundrums that have emerged from the research. This is followed by limitations of the study and recommendations for further research. I conclude the chapter by reflecting on the initial triggers and assumptions that informed the direction of the research against my current understanding of assimilation as false consciousness and the consequent invisibility of immigrant students in higher education.

7.2 Revisiting the research questions

The main research question, *How does the concept of assimilation as false consciousness explain the immigrant students' acculturation experiences in the higher education formal learning environment?,* has been a thread through the thesis. The concept was first mentioned in connection with the unofficial whites-only NZ immigration policy and practice, and its legacy continues into current education practice in higher education. The concept, invisible in the literature review on assimilation and multicultural theory, was visible for the first time in the field of critical multicultural studies. The research design aligned the concept with epistemology and included it explicitly in data collection and analysis methods. The rich pictures, questionnaire, interviews and card sort evidenced participants' experiences and views on assimilation as false consciousness, and showed this to be a construction, held as tacit or unconscious belief, unexamined and resistant to challenge. The theory of acculturation and the context of the learning environment provided the means to trace the hidden dimensions and impacts of this concept on the acculturation of immigrant students. The argument, built through these different parts of the thesis, has uncovered assimilation as false consciousness as an invisible, yet powerful construct that can explain immigrant student acculturation experiences in the learning environment.

A paired set of rich pictures was an effective way to examine the first research subquestion, *How do immigrant students' perceptions of their initial and current learning environments reflect their acculturation experiences?* The narratives and rich pictures tell the immigrant story of acculturation at different levels, ranging from a simple narrative and message to deep insights into the inner world of the participant through the interpretation of images, symbols, metaphor and words. Involving the participants in interpretation prioritised and honoured their voices, respecting them as the authors of their experiences. A theoretical lens on the rich pictures revealed a range of individual experiences that suggested that all four of Berry's (1997) adaptation strategies were evident across the participant group. Bronfenbrenner and Morris's (2006) instigative characteristics were a key to explaining differences across the group.

The second research subquestion, *How do participants' views on acculturation concepts signal their expectations of cultural inclusion in the higher education formal learning environment?*, was examined through questionnaire responses and interview discussions related to a number of Berry's (1992, 1997) acculturation concepts and Phinney's (1989) ethnic identity development stages. An interesting set of contradictions between preferences and practices revealed the effectiveness of assimilation as false consciousness and the consequent invisibility of participants because they held no expectation of being recognised in curriculum or pedagogy. The value of using more than one data source not only uncovered the contradictions between preference and practice but revealed the challenge the acculturation concepts presented to the participants as new and complex ideas, which had not previously informed their views of their acculturation experiences. This presents a conundrum to me because it was clear that few of the participants understood the concept of assimilation as false consciousness and did not agree with the concept at work in their own experience. I draw on the wisdom of Grant and Giddings (2002), who describe the interpretive approach as one that understands the subjective truth of the participant while acknowledging that the researcher may perceive the participant's self-understandings in ways that might not be apparent to the

participant. I therefore have first reported their views and then brought my theoretically informed and empirically based interpretation to the data.

What are the views of immigrant students on the value and nature of an internationalised curriculum at home? was the third research subquestion and the subject revealed some unexpected responses. Participants did not exhibit strongly positive views about the benefits of an internationalised curriculum, except as it would apply to NZ-born students. The card sort activity failed to trigger deep discussion of internationalised curriculum elements, perhaps because these students are already engaged in an internationalised experience in NZ. Only one participant felt as strongly as I do about such a curriculum, revealing my assumption of a positive response to be misplaced. This presents a conundrum for me because I have pledged to faithfully (Galman, 2009) report the student voice and am aware that my university has committed to responding to the student voice (AUT, 2018a), yet I draw on a strong literature base, the university's intention for all students to have an international experience and my own conviction that an internationalised curriculum is the way forward for all students. In this case, I acknowledge the focus of such a curriculum may not be immigrant students as I had assumed, but all students.

A curriculum that does more than include the internationalised elements identified in the card sort and the literature is an appealing idea, particularly if it achieves an education approach, as described by Stokke and Lybaek (2018), of critical multiculturalism teaming with interculturalism to achieve social justice outcomes. At an aspirational level, these would include democratic respect and human rights as described by Besley and Peters (2012), the equitable acceptance of cultural difference described by Jiang (2008) and the most tantalising outcome, Zapata-Barrero's (2017) notion of bringing 'diversity inside unity' rather ethno-minorities being viewed as 'inside diversity'. The challenges of such a venture into the unknown are many, one of which is noted by Murphy (2012), who talks of the danger of perceptions of ethnocentrism and the need to build trust; undoubtedly, another would be the challenge of persuading staff towards transformational change. Such is the broad aspirational view.

Moving to a broad contextual view, the fourth research subquestion, *What is the theoretical underpinning that links immigrant students' acculturation experiences with wider policy and ideology, and how does this apply to the New Zealand context?*, drew on the literature review, which ranged widely across the assimilation–pluralism nexus and its variants, using Bronfenbrenner's (1993) socio-ecological theory as a structuring framework. This not only provided a background to the acculturation of immigrants, but very usefully revealed an emerging theoretical framework, which has been developed to show contextual influences on the acculturating education student. The interconnections that appear coherent in the theoretical framework show interesting disconnections when applied to the NZ context, revealing the tensions between biculturalism, multiculturalism and assimilation.

The final research subquestion, *How might a higher education institution be responsive to immigrant invisibility, if it values diversity and student voice?*, focused on the argument to internationalise the curriculum at home and has been aligned with the university's commitment for all students to have an international experience by 2025. It is linked to AUT's espoused value of diversity and its commitment of responsiveness to the student voice (AUT, 2018a). My practice-based contribution has a strong focus on enabling and developing an internationalised curriculum at AUT.

7.3 Limitations of the study

I acknowledge the limitation of contextualising the study in one university and to a small number of participants. The size of the participant sample is too small to draw anything more than tentative conclusions from the data, and this is acknowledged in the response to the main research question. It is possible that despite the small sample, their acculturation experiences and the findings associated with assimilation as false consciousness and invisibility will resonate with others who have similar thoughts and concerns about immigrant students in higher education.

One of the limitations associated with acculturation research is the difficulty of introducing a longitudinal design that reflects changes over time. As Berry (2006) notes, this involves issues of data collection at different time periods from the same

people, a process fraught with challenges. The use of the paired rich pictures over a period of years has incorporated the temporal dimension. I acknowledge that the first picture draws on memory that is not entirely reliable, yet it was a way to capture the acculturation period. The interpretation by the participants of their own drawings and acculturation experiences could be judged as a limitation, particularly if viewed through a quantitative and positivist lens.

Other possible limitations associated with the participant group are the gender imbalance, the concentration of ethnicities from Asia and the dominance of non-English speakers. The sample was largely representative of the immigrant student ethnicity demographic at the university. Critique may be levelled at a research focus entirely on immigrant student participants and their perspectives. Other perspectives such as those from Māori or NZ European students, international students, lecturers or curriculum developers and those in strategic leadership would have brought different dimensions to the research. In a study of this size, the inclusion of these other perspectives was not feasible, but the point is made that other perspectives exist and could be the subject of further research.

7.4 Recommendations for further research

Considering the gap identified in the literature review, further research on the topic of immigrant student acculturation in higher education is needed, particularly in the context of the learning environment. The concepts of assimilation as false consciousness and invisibility as explored in this study need to be re-examined with other immigrant groups in other higher education contexts in NZ and in other countries.

Further research into immigrant students as part of international student mobility, drawing on the work of Madge et al. (2009), Waters (2018) and Yang (2019) on issues of ethics and politics of care and responsibility, could add support to the concern of assimilation as false consciousness highlighted in this thesis.

The framework of contextual influences on acculturation presented as a coherent connection between elements, as well as the disconnections noted in NZ, needs to be applied in other studies to critique not only the broad sociocultural and political influences on acculturating students but also the relationships between the elements.

An obvious next step for research in my institution is to examine the views of staff on the invisibility (or visibility) of immigrant students in curriculum and pedagogy, and to collect their views on internationalising the curriculum. This latter subject could be the focus of an interdisciplinary action research project to introduce internationalised elements into curricula. Similarly, seeking views of Māori, Pacific and mainstream European student groups about internationalising the curriculum would further inform curriculum development. Taking the research into a different forum, the lack of bicultural knowledge and experience evidenced by participants in this study could be a research focus on Māori students and the mainstream group. Such research would be the domain of Māori researchers because it is not politic for Māori-related research to be undertaken by European researchers alone.

7.5 Professional growth as a researcher

The doctoral journey has been one of transformational growth as my research skill and confidence has developed from start to finish. I feel immense satisfaction to have been able to investigate a topic about which I am passionate and from which I seek social change for immigrant students and indeed for all students through internationalising the curriculum at home. I believe I have the practitioner-based research credibility to offer a contribution in this field. In short, I have become an academic scholar through the rigour of this research process.

7.6 Concluding remarks

The thesis set out to challenge my assumption of immigrant invisibility and to understand immigrant participant experiences and views on the concept of false consciousness. Reflecting on the questions triggered by the course Teaching Children from Diverse Ethnicities, which alerted me to the concept of assimilation as false consciousness, I feel I have answered the questions and have a deeper understanding

of the concept and its impact on immigrant students in my context. I better understand the lack of immigrant students' critique or their demand for recognition, and their consequent invisibility in the learning environment. On my part, the internalisation of assimilation as false consciousness as an expectation of higher education study has emerged as an evidenced rather than assumed belief. I feel encouraged by the signs I see that AUT is actively engaged in creating powerful learning environments that could include internationalising the curriculum. I believe if this were the case, AUT could become a leader and indeed a model for other higher education organisations, not only in NZ but internationally. I hope, in a small way, to contribute to this development.

Appendices

Appendix A: Questionnaire

Student Participant Questionnaire

Project title: ***Immigrant students in a higher education learning environment***

Project Supervisor: ***Dr Ian Willis***

Researcher: ***Lyn Lewis***

Your name or the pseudonym you have selected: ………………………………………………………

Please complete this questionnaire[1] (it should take no more than 10 minutes). Answer the questions by placing a tick (√) in the box beside the answer that applies best. Try to answer each question quickly without stopping to think too long. If you wish, you may also write your own comments in the questionnaire.

The term '**ethnic group'** refers to the cultural or heritage group to which you belonged when you immigrated to NZ. For example, it might be Chinese, Korean, South African, Australian or another group. To assist you in answering the questions, if you identify with more than one ethnicity, please choose your main ethnicity in order to answer questions on ethnic group**.**

[1] Based on the ICSEY (International Comparative Study of Ethnocultural Youth) Project (Berry et al., 2006)

1. Statements about cultural tradition, friends and education.

	Question	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
1	I feel that my ethnic group should adapt to New Zealand cultural traditions and not maintain their own traditions.				
2	I feel that my ethnic group should maintain their own cultural traditions but also adapt to those of New Zealand.				
3	I feel that it is not important for my ethnic group to maintain their own cultural traditions or to adapt to those of New Zealand.				
4	I feel that my ethnic group should maintain their own cultural traditions and not adapt to those of New Zealand.				
5	I prefer to have only New Zealand friends.				
6	I prefer to only have friends from my own ethnic group.				
7	I prefer to have friends from my ethnic group and New Zealand friends, including those from other immigrant groups.				
8	I don't want to have friends from either my ethnic group or New Zealand.				
9	At university I choose to spend time outside of classes with students who are from the same ethnic group as me.				
10	At university I choose to spend time outside of classes with New Zealand students.				

	Question	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
11	At university I choose to spend time outside of classes with students of my ethnic group and also with New Zealand students and other immigrant students.				
12	When doing groupwork at university, I prefer to work with students from my ethnic group as well as New Zealand students.				
13	When doing groupwork at university, I prefer to work with students from my own ethnic group.				
14	When doing groupwork at university, I prefer to work with New Zealand students.				
15	I would prefer for the papers I take at university to focus on content about New Zealand.				
16	I would prefer for the papers I take at university to include New Zealand content and international content.				
17	I would prefer papers I take at university to include some content specific to my ethnicity				
18	I prefer to learn ways to communicate like a New Zealander so I can become more like a New Zealander.				
19	I prefer to learn ways to communicate with other immigrant groups as well as with the New Zealand group.				
20	I prefer to communicate with my own ethnic group.				

The following statements are about university. Tick the box that most applies to you.

		Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
21	My first language (mother tongue) is English				
22	Sometimes I have problems understanding the English used in class.				
23	Sometimes I have difficulty explaining in English.				
24	I have approached the student support services for support with my writing in English.				
25	Students in my classes ask me about my culture and the country I come from.				
26	I feel that my lecturers know that I am an immigrant.				
27	Lecturers have asked me to share with the class about my culture.				
28	I have experienced lecturers who check to see whether I have any problems in learning, because I am an immigrant.				
29	I have had experience of assignments which encourage me to draw on my cultural background and experiences.				
30	I have had lecturers who recognise the diverse ethnicities in the class, through their teaching.				
31	I believe the cultural background that immigrants bring to class should be recognised and utilized by lecturers.				

		Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
32	I believe the cultural background that immigrants bring to class should be recognised and utilized **more**.				
33	I believe that immigrant students have chosen to live in New Zealand and so they should not expect their ethnicity to be recognised by lecturers.				
34	As an immigrant student, I believe that New Zealand is a bicultural country and the university should reflect bicultural practices.				
35	As an immigrant student, I believe that New Zealand is a multicultural country and all cultures should be recognised in university practices.				

Any additional comments you would like to make ?

Approved by the University of Liverpool Ethics Committee on 9 April 2018

Appendix B: Interview questions

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Introductions:

- Welcome:
- Reminder of audio-recording

Interview:

Thematic (what)	**Dynamic (How)**
Learning environments	Tell me about your drawing … - Tell me about your 'self' in this drawing? - What are you feeling?
Acculturation	What did you have to do to fit into the learning environment? - give an example of how you changed a behaviour … language & vocabulary … made friends …
Current learning experience at AUT	Tell me about what you have drawn in this picture … - How is this picture different from the first picture?
Assimilation as 'false consciousness'	Explain concept - Do you believe that immigrant students should be assimilated in the learning environment? How do you respond to the view that NZ society allows you to be bicultural, but the university expects you to assimilate?
Invisibility	What would you say to the view that immigrants are invisible in the learning environment at AUT?
Ethnic identity	What kind of questions did you ask yourself when you became aware that as (*your ethnicity*) you were different from Kiwi students? How strongly do you identify with your ethnic group now? How do others see you?
Diversity	How do you experience diversity at the university?

a) With other students?

b) In the learning environment?

Refer to questionnaire re lecturers knowing immigrant status

- Do your lecturers treat you any differently from other students in the class?

Internationalizing the curriculum	Take a look at these cards. • Rank them - Tell me why you have this order? - How might this benefit immigrant learners? - What about NZ-born students? • What would it mean for AUT as a university to have these aspects in our programmes?
Biculturalism and Multiculturalism	Explore understanding of concept and views on their value and experience.

Conclusion and debrief

- Check before switching off the recorder if they want to add or delete anything from the record.
- Notice of checking the transcription of the interview into text for its accuracy.

Appendix C: Ethics approval Auckland University of Technology

15 March 2018

Lyn Lewis
Faculty of Culture and Society

Dear Lyn

Ethics Application: 18/108 **Immigrant students in a higher education learning environment**

I wish to advise you that a subcommittee of the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) has **approved** your ethics application.

This approval is for three years, expiring 14 March 2021.

Non-Standard Conditions of Approval

1. The committee advises the researcher to exclude recruiting students from own School.

Non-standard conditions must be completed before commencing your study. Non-standard conditions do not need to be submitted to or reviewed by AUTEC before commencing your study.

Standard Conditions of Approval

1. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date, using form EA2, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics.
2. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project, using form EA3, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics.
3. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEC prior to being implemented. Amendments can be requested using the EA2 form: http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics.
4. Any serious or unexpected adverse events must be reported to AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
5. Any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should also be reported to the AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.

Please quote the application number and title on all future correspondence related to this project.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval for access for your research from another institution or organisation then you are responsible for obtaining it. If the research is undertaken outside New Zealand, you need to meet all locality legal and ethical obligations and requirements. You are reminded that it is your responsibility to ensure that the spelling and grammar of documents being provided to participants or external organisations is of a high standard.

For any enquiries please contact ethics@aut.ac.nz

Yours sincerely,

Kate O’Connor
Executive Manager
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Appendix D: Ethics approval University of Liverpool

UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL | ONLINE PROGRAMMES

Dear Lyn Lewis

I am pleased to inform you that the EdD. Virtual Programme Research Ethics Committee (VPREC) has approved your application for ethical approval for your study. Details and conditions of the approval can be found below.

Sub-Committee:	EdD. Virtual Programme Research Ethics Committee (VPREC)
Review type:	Expedited
PI:	
School:	HLC
Title:	Immigrant students in a higher education learning environment
First Reviewer:	Dr. Julie-Anne Regan
Second Reviewer:	Dr. Janet Hanson
Other members of the Committee	Dr. Kalman Winston Dr Lucilla Crosta
Date of Approval:	9.4.2018

The application was APPROVED subject to the following conditions:

Conditions		
1	Mandatory	M: All serious adverse events must be reported to the VPREC within 24 hours of their occurrence, via the EdD Thesis Primary Supervisor.

UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL | ONLINE PROGRAMMES

This approval applies for the duration of the research. If it is proposed to extend the duration of the study as specified in the application form, the Sub-Committee should be notified. If it is proposed to make an amendment to the research, you should notify the Sub-Committee by following the Notice of Amendment procedure outlined at http://www.liv.ac.uk/media/livacuk/researchethics/notice%20of%20amendment.doc.

Please note that the approval to proceed depends also on research proposal approval.

Kind regards,

Lucilla Crosta

Chair, EdD. VPREC

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