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# Artefacts, Stories & Photographs

*Do they work as a tool for  
Cultural Understanding & Humanitarian Learning?*

Learning happens best when it is connected with topics people care about: essential subjects like love, friendship and death, ageing, family relationships, children and grandchildren, the transience of natural beauty and of human happiness, the essential human longing recognised as our inheritance form.



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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education (Adult Education) at Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand

Jane Taylor  
2005

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is dedicated to those who purposefully explore cultural difference and who share their stories and beliefs to make meaningful connections with other human beings thereby learning more about themselves and others in the process. Especially I acknowledge the commitment of the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO) in their collective pursuit of international understanding through fostering education in which people “learn to live together and build a sense of identity and cultural awareness” (IBO, 2002).

I appreciate the tireless encouragement of marg gilling. I am particularly indebted to those who participated in this work by generously sharing time, thought, insights and personal perspectives.

I thank Ray Taylor for his editing assistance and for supporting my decision to return to New Zealand to begin my thesis down under, in close proximity to my family, and for his editing assistance. My thanks also to Connie Mitchell, my daughter, for her support and encouragement from afar, and for helping me understand cultural transparency through her rich and varied New York lenses. Thanks to my extended family who have supported and encouraged me at every opportunity.

Thanks also to Ann Hickey and Michael Woolman, my professional gurus, and my resilient and optimistic study group – Diane, Jacque and Julia – Peter, Mary & Ken for their valuable support. Special thanks to Claire for the laughter and advice on all matters.

*The most extraordinary mysteries of this life are to be found only in another,  
and in our surrender to the strange rhythms of this humanity.”*

*(Davies, 2003)*

Cover art used with the kind permission of artist, Melissa Martyn.

Fluttering in the Heart – Hawk Moth. “The flute of the Infinite is played without ceasing and its sound is love.”  
KABIR. 2005. Mixed media collage; machine and hand stitched painted and printed paper. Brown paper, paint calico, leaf, cowrie shells, and print of moth from another painting by the artist.

## ABSTRACT

This thesis is a qualitative, ethnographic study, which examines the assumption that at the heart of worthwhile teaching and learning is our shared humanity. Artefacts, stories and photographs are explored as vehicles through which learners critically examine and share their cultural learning and perceptions of what is significant and valuable.

In this way artefacts, stories and photographs provide a conduit for learning between and among people of diverse cultures. I believe such learning celebrates our shared humanity, which is deliberately defined in positive terms as “the *best* that encompasses the collective quality and characteristics of all people including kindness, compassion, empathy, humility, caring and thoughtfulness”

Learning that celebrates our humanity may be considered a positive force and humanitarian in nature. In the context of this thesis I speak of and describe humanitarian learning as “*the development of understanding of self and others through the sharing of personal, cultural and social experiences that exemplify the attitudes and values needed for responsible citizenship and dignified relationships.*”

Rich sources of ideas, expertise and perceptions about relevant experience have been drawn from various authors and educators. Key documentation from the International Baccalaureate Organisation, (IBO), including “A Continuum of International Education” (2002) and the work of the former Director General of the IBO, Professor George Walker also provided useful resource material.

The data was generated through questionnaires and photographs focussing on cultural artefacts with personal meaning, documenting the voices, reflections, interactions, and perceptions of the participants about the significance of cultural diversity in their lives and education. The data is presented in a series of charts and graphic organisers linked with the IBO expected teaching practices. These are analysed in the context of intercultural understanding and humanitarian learning, a notion developed and examined in this thesis with a view to how it may be supported.

In analysing the data, the following key points emerged:

- Personal multicultural experiences, a sense of global awareness and a thorough appreciation of people from differing backgrounds are considered highly significant in humanitarian learning
- Stories, artefacts and photographs create an accessible, versatile and effective *human connecting instrument* enabling humanitarian learning
- Stories, artefacts and photographs can illuminate cultural conflict, tension and misunderstanding.

Suggestions and recommendations for ways that humanitarian learning can be fostered in a climate defined by tolerance, respect and responsibility include:

- The need to make more explicit the obligations of learners to develop perspectives, intuition and empathy so they know themselves and others and are able to view cultural difference as enriching
- The notion of learning as humanitarian is worthy of greater emphasis and implementation in educational organisations
- The recognition that areas of tension between people have great potential for meaningful growth of understanding across cultures.

This thesis provides a springboard for more serious consideration and action towards initiating learning that purposefully fosters people knowing each other in a spirit of global responsibility.

*“We are made for complementarity. I have gifts you do not: and you have gifts that I do not.*

*So we need each other to become fully human.”*

*Archbishop Desmond Tutu*

## GLOSSARY

*Fundamental to this research are some basic terms and expressions defined below. Some are based on those used by the International Baccalaureate Organization; others have been interpreted, synthesised and developed by me throughout the process of this thesis.*

**Artefact:** An item or an object of personal significance, perhaps but not necessarily historic significance, which can support understanding of what it is to be human

**Catalyst:** Providing a motivating burst, a reason to act, a force, which stimulates a purposeful move forward

**Culture:** The ways individuals and groups transmit their identity and human potential through understanding *who they are* individually and collectively

**Cultural artefact:** An item or object of personal or professional significance. Something that carries weight for a person, tells a story, has a past with connections to the present and perhaps possibilities for the future

**Cultural cooperation:** Developing harmonious relationships and friendships among diverse people and bringing about a better understanding of each other's way of life

**Cultural transparency:** Seeing beyond the languages, beliefs, values and attitudes of others to the essence of a person. To view critically one's own beliefs and values and see what is possible through cross-cultural collaboration

**Dialogue:** An exchange of ideas, channel of communication, striving to increase understanding

**Difference:** The notion of 'otherness.' The use of difference in this thesis promotes difference as a source of richness, interest, delight, joy, concern, caring and fascination with the human condition. It refers to an inclusive way of being. It is antithetical to the notion of familiarity and similarity being ideal

**Diversity:** Variety, a multiplicity, non-uniform. Differences among people, which enrich their lives individually and collectively

**Global Citizenship:** A sense of belonging to the world, not a country; being fascinated by what's happening in other countries and cultures; learning through travel. The acquisition of knowledge, skills and talents through intercultural encounters. Ownership of diverse reference points to help resolve local challenges ([www.mikelipkin.com/personalbest/five.htm](http://www.mikelipkin.com/personalbest/five.htm)).

**Humanity:** The *best* that encompasses the collective quality and characteristics of all people including kindness, compassion, empathy, humility, caring and thoughtfulness

**Humanitarian learning:** The development of understanding of self and others through the sharing of personal, cultural and social experiences that exemplify the attitudes and values needed for responsible citizenship and dignified relationships

**International Baccalaureate Organization:** A non-profit making educational organization based in Geneva, Switzerland, focusing on educating for international understanding worldwide

**Internationalism:** The ability of people to be “critical and compassionate thinkers, life long learners and informed participants in local and world affairs, conscious of the shared humanity that binds all people together while respecting the variety of cultures and attitudes that makes for the richness of life” (IBO mission statement IBO Council of Foundation, 1996).

**Intercultural understanding:** Being able to reconstruct what is culturally unfamiliar, consider others’ perspectives and see things through their eyes. One’s own cultural context helps make this possible. Being able to overcome the dominance of our expectations, attitudes and interests and recognise those of other cultures as valid

**Narrative / Story telling:** A way of purposefully connecting with others by bringing alive and reliving experience or sequences of events, ideas and journeys, real or imagined through the spoken or written word mime or gesture. Conveying thoughts, ideas, adventures via a storyteller to an audience

**Narrative imagination:** The ability to think what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person’s story, and to understand the emotions and wishes and desires of that person

**Memories:** What we know and understand from having experienced or understood before. Memories are the sum of stories we can recall and apply to new situations

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states:

“Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendships among all nations, racial or religious groups and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace” (UN Article 26, 1948).

This right belongs to each of us and yet the educational reality for the large majority of the earth’s population could not be further removed. In addition to the shocking socio-economic and educational inequity among the peoples of the world, it could be claimed that humanity took some giant steps backwards during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. During this time, according to Cecelia Braslavsky (2003) ‘the great majority of wars and conflicts were initiated and conducted by highly educated leaders. These were people who had, for at least 12 years, studied in a variety of educational institutions: lawyers, engineers and other university graduates.’ It is reasonable to ask what went wrong and what continues to go wrong?

Braslavsky explains one hypothesis- ‘that education forgot the complete nature of men and women and instead concentrated on particular aspects of their education; the technocratic and discipline oriented content and methods, with insufficient consideration for peace and peaceful conflict management.’ Many of the problems facing humanity are strongly connected with *our inability to live together, our inability or unwillingness to treat others humanely*. Although this statement is over simplified, not clear-cut or quantifiable, it is significant enough to be an underpinning element of this thesis.

Similarly the aspirations expressed in the UN Article 26 are an element of inspiration. Like the United Nations, many educational organisations express a strong wish to foster harmony among people as frequently reflected in mission and vision statements.

Examples and references discussed later in this thesis include those from the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO), (encompassing International Baccalaureate World Schools), Rutgers University, USA and the California State University, (in particular the work of Greta Nagel), both in the United States. Within New Zealand the recently established Waiheke Primary School provided useful points of reference also. I worked closely with the students, teachers and the community for six months during its initial establishment phase. Waiariki Polytechnic has also been part of my professional experience, for six years providing useful references for this work.

My past, present and future lives, both personally and professionally, have influenced this thesis. The mind maps shown on page 14-16 include examples of such influences. In March of 2006 I will take up a new position based in Geneva working with the IBO and teachers across Europe, the Middle East and Africa in collaborative pursuit of international understanding and humanitarian learning.

Many educators are genuinely committed to doing whatever they can to uphold and promote the ideals such as those expressed in the UN Article 26 but are unable for a range of possible reasons to do so. The necessary time, resources and skills are not used, or made available for educators to begin to do justice to their stated intentions. I agree with Braslavsky that a major contributing factor is that we have failed to move the fundamental focus of education to more appropriately accommodate the altered current pressing societal needs which requires that we recognise and understand cultural diversity of which we are all a part.

Two phrases from the UN Article 26 read:

“Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality. It shall promote understanding and friendships among all nations, racial or religious groups”

These bring to mind two related questions:

- *How is the development of the human personality (or character) and the promotion of understanding explicitly fostered and taught?*

- *How can such educational emphasis as described in UN Article 26 be achieved, improved or made more explicit?*

These initial questions provided the building blocks for the ideas behind this thesis prompt my acknowledgement of three assumptions at the outset:

- Life experience or culture, is integral to learning that is worthwhile and relevant
- Many educational organisations do not adequately invest resources to explicitly promote intercultural understanding as prescribed in the UN Article 26
- People striving to understand each other is in itself powerful and valid learning, deserving of time, and investigation

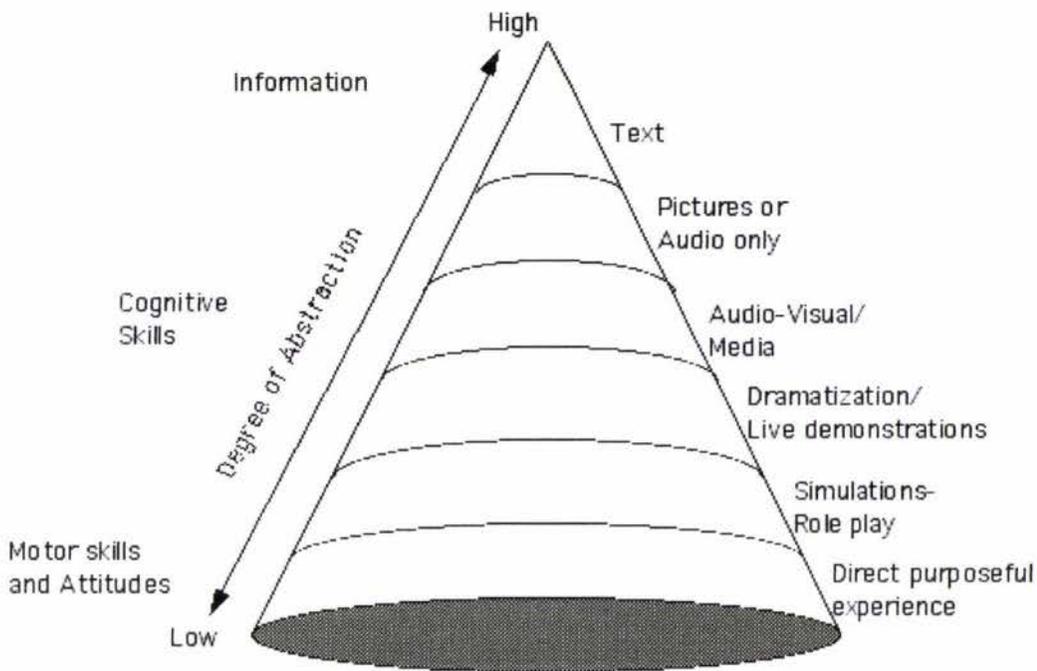
The IBO features prominently in this thesis, reflecting my close involvement with them for twenty years and their role as the primary teaching/learning centre with which I am familiar. Closely aligned with the sentiments expressed in the UN Article 26 the IBO promotes international education which includes “the celebration of diversity, understanding and respecting ones own and other cultures and sharing with others an understanding of what it is to be human” (Walker, 2002). The IBO places much emphasis on fostering “a consciousness of common concerns as a basis for a more peaceful and sustainable future for all” (IBO 2002). Learning needs to be “relevant, significant, challenging and engaging for learners on many levels: the immediate community, at a wider national level and in an international sense, while at the same time encouraging in learners a sense of their own identity” (IBO 2002).

In this thesis I deliberately focus on understanding and perception of culture in learning. Kolb’s *adult learning cycle*, (1986) suggests that it is our experience that shapes *who we are*, consolidated by our application of experience. I suggest that culture is the *application of our experience* and is inextricably linked with humanity. Education can and should promote “understanding.... friendships and the development of the human personality” (UN Article 26). We need to strive toward our collective best. Such learning that is inspired by and aspires to our collective best can be described as humanitarian. This word evokes empathy and compassion as well as excellence and understanding leading me to construct and use the term “humanitarian learning”.

I have defined humanitarian learning as *the development of understanding of self and others through the sharing of personal, cultural and social experiences that exemplify the attitudes and values needed for responsible citizenship and dignified relationships* (glossary). With this in mind, the central concern in this thesis is: **Can the stories, artefacts and photographs connected directly to the lives of learners promote intercultural understanding and humanitarian learning?**

The references to ‘stories’ in this thesis stories vary from brief cameos of a significant incident to fuller reflections. Through stories experiences are relived, memories, ideas or journeys are conveyed through the spoken or written word often with an audience to provide opportunities for the development of empathy, which is key to intercultural understanding.

To clarify my thinking, the frequently referenced adult learning models, *The Dale Cone of Experience* (Fig 1, 2005) and *Kolb’s Adult Learning Cycle*, (Fig 3, 2005) have been adapted, along with my conceptual understanding of the place of experience in learning, to create an *Integration* model, (Fig 2). This model springs from connections and congruence between culture, humanity, UN Article 26 and intercultural understanding. (Fig 1 and 3 are included for reference). The notion of humanitarian learning is a central part of the integration model (Fig 2), having emerged from the other elements shown. The definitions for the key terms are included as part of Figure 2 with learners at the centre (see page 6).



**Fig 1**

**The Dale Cone of Experience <http://www.fsu.edu/~ids/fac2002/Edgar%20Dale.htm>**

- Lower levels of the cone involve the student as a participant and encourage active learning.
- Lower levels include more stimuli and are richer with regard to natural feedback - the consequences of an action.
- Higher levels compress information and provide more data faster for those able to process it.
- Pictures are remembered (recalled) better than verbal propositions. Pictures aid in recalling information that has been associated with them
- Upper levels of the cone need more instructional support than lower levels.

In Fig 2 that follows, colour has been used simply to distinguish between various sources used as shown in the key. This model has forged connections between culture, humanity, intercultural understanding and the essence of Kolb's and Dale's models. These are punctuated with personal comments culminating in a context and definition for humanitarian learning that is closely aligned with UN Article 26.

**Fig 2 Integration Model**

**Culture:** The ways individuals and groups transmit their identity and human potential and through understanding *who they are* individually and collectively (glossary)

Often culture is taken for granted, hardly noticed – accepted as a normal way of being through experience and subconscious application.

Culture is developed and expressed through direct experience (Based on Dale)

Kolb's learning cycle suggests "processing and generalising" may inspire analysis/ reassessment

**Humanity** The best that encompasses the collective quality and characteristics of all people including kindness, compassion, empathy and understanding, humility, caring and thoughtfulness (glossary) (as in Article 26 – i.e. what we are striving to develop in people.

These characteristics could be described as enablers or motivators, similar to Article 26-and may be developed through real experience or powerful personal stories

**The Learner**

In support of Article 26 and incorporating a place of knowing and what is familiar with the expectation of moving beyond that

Requires that the learner is more than only an observer or interpreter. They need to observe, interpret and participate. Based on Dale

Through experiencing what is humane in life and by processing, discussing & analysing, generalisations may be made to inspire change. (Based on Kolb)

**UN Article 26** "Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendships among all nations, racial or religious groups and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace." (UN)

**Intercultural understanding:** Being able to reconstruct the context of the foreign, or take on the others' perspective and see things through their eyes. One's own cultural context helps furnish the understanding of others. To overcome the dominance of our expectations, categories and interests and recognise those of other cultures (glossary)

Experience, own and other voices, process thru discussion, reflection, generalise, examine rethink and apply- consider doing things differently. Kolb's model and the use stories and artefacts support this

Article 26 is a global expectation for education from the UN  
A dream, perhaps detached – we need to connect ideas with experience (Based on Dale)  
Article 26 asks people to behave in certain ways, to accept, believe and act on certain principles. There is no process here for learning ways to do so – Kolb and Dale's model – stories and artefacts can help promote and foster such understanding.

**Humanitarian learning:** The development of understanding of self and others through the sharing of personal, cultural and social experiences that exemplify the attitudes and values needed for responsible citizenship and dignified relationships (glossary) Encompasses all aspects of Kolb's model

A term used to encompass a learning process embracing cultural understanding, humanity and Article 26. Requires that the learner is more than merely an observer or interpreter. Learners need to observe, interpret and participate. (Based on Dale)

**KEY**

- Comments related to Dale's Cone of Experience
- Comments related to Kolb's learning cycle
- My comments
- Defns from glossary

# Adult Learning Cycle



## **Kolb's Theory of Learning Style**

Most people proceed through this cycle when engaged in learning. Individuals develop a preference for one particular stage of the cycle.

*Reproduced with permission from J.W. Pfeiffer & L. D. Goodstein.  
The 1986 Annual: Developing Human Resources. San Diego, CA: Pfeiffer & Co.*

**Fig 3**

## People as priorities

Peter Senge suggests that we may be losing sight of the notion of a group of people creating something positive together as a “kind of living force” (2005). His comments resonate strongly in the context of adult learning. In assuming that people are at the heart of learning and that learning is meaningful when connected to experience, we

need to make much more of the rich and relevant resource that exists within and among learners.

This thesis focuses on the insights and perceptions of adults about their own cultural learning with a view to deepening our understanding of what resources we may find in adult learners to support meaningful interaction and to nurture the 'living force' of humanity in the learning process.

A central focus of the research agenda of the International Baccalaureate Organisation is an identified need to find out more about the "effectiveness of different teaching styles and methods" to support their stated goals. The IBO is particularly interested in "the teacher-student relationship in learning and the training of teachers for international education" (Thompson, 1999). In this thesis my central concern is to investigate ways that effectively foster understanding about diverse cultures, as deemed necessary for international education and, I believe, for humanitarian learning.

People with cultural differences are an invaluable resource for humanitarian learning and for providing insights into "different teaching styles and methods," (Thompson, 1999). Thoughtful and skilful facilitation can make possible learning that is culturally relevant, significant, engaging and challenging and that fosters mutual understanding. Purposeful interaction based on stories in which learners themselves feature, and artefacts of significance to learners, can support such aspirations in important and varied ways and could be more broadly used in educational contexts. Such interaction is likely to bring into focus "the role of family and the role of community" (IBO) along with the role of relationships among us. Such a focus on *people* in learning is integral to an international education, especially when cultural differences characterise many groups of learners, as is now the case in an increasing number of educational organisations.

Understanding between people is the foundation of education and learning in the context of continuously improving humanity. This study makes a case for enhancing such understanding by deliberately and explicitly giving cultural perspectives a central place in adult education, in teacher training, and in classrooms. Concern for subjects and disciplines should not be allowed to overshadow the most vital component of

learning– in which we “see who we truly are, and develop a full and imaginative, vivid picture of what is possible in our lives” (Casey,1994).

(I am interested in Casey’s use of the word imaginative, especially in the context of story telling or narrative. I have defined narrative imagination as “the ability to think what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person’s story, and to understand the emotions and wishes and desires of that person.” In this way personal stories allow for the development of empathy).

The essence of meaningful education is encompassed in individual and collective interactions. The cultural component of these interactions may be undervalued, underused or barely recognised in teaching and learning. Despite the importance of specialist areas of academic study, the humanitarian attributes of learners need to be explicit in the process of learning.

“It would be catastrophic to become a nation of technically competent people who have lost the ability to think critically, to examine themselves, and to respect the humanity and diversity of others” (Nussbaum, 1997).

This thesis is based on the assumption that caring among people is worth fostering in teaching and learning, and is embedded in the notion of humanitarian learning that is inclusive and culturally engaging. The values and beliefs underpinning this work are:

- Learning about cultures unites people, supports problem solving and cultivates a shared sense of humanity
- Fostering understanding, acceptance and the celebration of human diversity is integral to humanitarian learning.

These values and beliefs are reflected in “Who Am I?” by Myriam Sidibe, which captures a young adult’s perception of what must be valued in the humanitarian learning process:

### Myriam's story

"I am "Metisse", a French word which to me means cultural diversity. An African culture with French influence, "Metissage," has a connotation that describes a child who is born to a white parent and a black parent who is brought up in an African environment and considered to be racially inferior.

As a person of various ethnic backgrounds, I had to grow up and live in an environment which did not always accept me as I was. The question I often faced was "Who are you?" It used to make me feel lost. It meant, "label yourself". Are you white or black? It was even harder when I was a kid, and I found out that I did not completely have either of the two race's characteristics. I believe it is important for all people to be seen first as human beings even in their desire to preserve their cultural diversity and values. Today our world seems to be menaced by the idea of uniformity. While we see ourselves as different from each other, there are similarities that should allow us to see past our diversity and appreciate each other.

The notion of race is irrelevant from a biological point of view. The notion of race makes people so preoccupied with seeing each other as different that they are blind to the similarities in each other. To hope for the elimination of the notion of race might be equivalent to wishing for utopia, but it is something that my sixteen-year-old mind allows me to do.

As time goes on I learn that as different as we seem to be, we are all very similar in what we are looking for. I don't try to categorize or label myself anymore. I value the French, Malian, Guadeloupean, Mauritian, and German blood in me. I am proud of my ethnically diverse background and how I can adapt everywhere I go as a citizen of the world. Sustaining myself and standing up to challenges were very big achievements in my life; but many people around me, including most of my family, do not know what I had to undergo. The question "who are you?" does not affect me any more. I have found my place to stand."

Myriam Assa Sidibe

(1998, United Nations International School, New York)

Myriam's reflections reinforce my assertion that engaging learners in investigations about self and others is central to humanitarian learning.

Stories, recollections and perceptions of cultural diversity, photographs and significant artefacts of selected individuals provide the range of voices in this thesis. The data provokes thinking about teaching and learning that places people before subject matter, reinforcing the premise that learning happens best when *who we are* is not overlooked in the rush to cover curriculum requirements, meet deadlines and deal with daily demands. Wiggins (1989) writes of the futility of trying to teach everything of importance. He implies that teachers in their struggle to cover curriculum content forget to "cover less but do it better" as advocated by Gardner (1992).

### Personal Background

The following bullet points summarise my life and work so far. Although I have not specifically referred to personal aspects of life, apart from work, often they cannot be separated. Many treasured personal relationships and experiences of my personal life are strongly linked with these points:

- I grew up in a small community of Wairoa. The Mahia Peninsula, and the Uruwera native bush and lakes were important childhood environments.
- I attended Teachers College and began teaching in isolated country schools in Murupara and Kawerau; rich, challenging, demanding and invigorating.
- In 1976 I taught culturally diverse high school students, officially rejected by other London schools. This was a time of frustration, joy, and transition as we tried to grapple with Science, English and Geography, returning inevitably to developing and fostering self-esteem. Collegial and student relationships were of paramount importance.
- In 1980, on my return to New Zealand, I taught at Rotorua Lakes High School and developed new senior courses, which I optimistically called 'Future Options.' Five years later at Waiariki Polytechnic I developed and taught courses in adult teaching for tutors with expertise in their specialist subjects but who wished to become more effective teachers. I worked in local communities and on Marae from Te Kaha on the East Coast, to Tokoroa and Turangi during this time. At all times my own cultural roots helped me establish meaningful

connections among those I worked with and affirmed the importance of the Treaty of Waitangi in a New Zealand context.

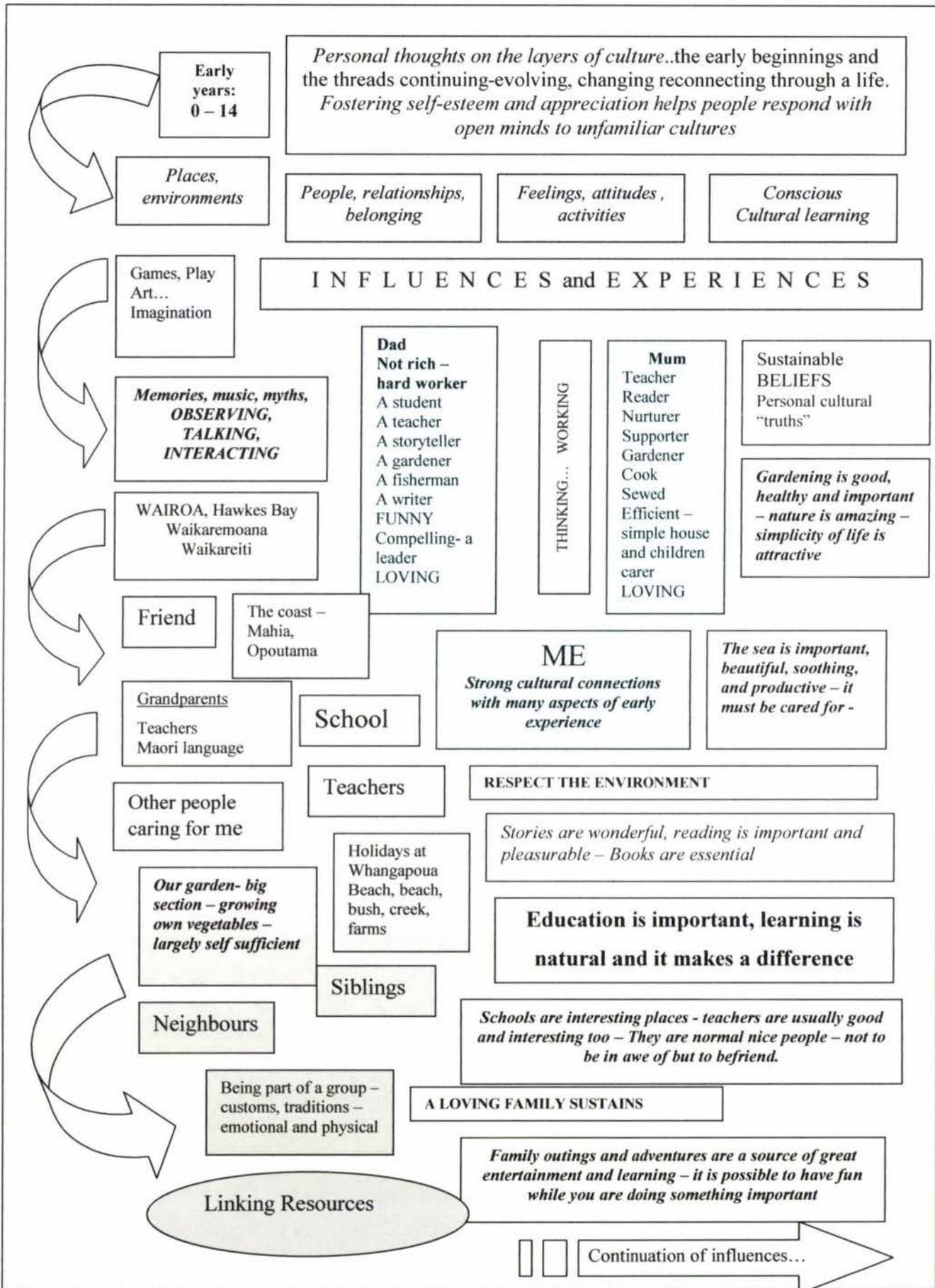
- From 1990, for eight years I taught at the United Nations International School (UNIS) in New York where unique cultural differences were woven into learning experiences.
- Upon my move to Munich in 1998 my interest and involvement in the International Baccalaureate Programme began as a teacher, an IBO trainer, teacher workshop leader and curriculum
- After living in New York and Munich for many years, in 2003, I returned to New Zealand in 2004 to work on this thesis and support Kristin School in Auckland and a newly established primary school on Waiheke Island as a curriculum (IBO) coordinator. Reconnecting with my first culture and my extended family, I experienced a powerful sense of belonging and connectedness, and what I believe is a universal experience of a shared humanity that extends across cultures, religions, nationalities and age groups.
- In March 2006 I take up a position with the IBO, based in Geneva where I will be supporting schools across the Middle East, Africa and Europe, in their efforts to foster international understanding among their school communities and beyond.

I have come into contact with teachers from vastly differing cultural backgrounds who work alongside children also from vastly differing cultures. Initial ideas for this research began in an international context defined by difference. In 2003 I was engaged in a project where I filmed children and teachers at Munich International School using personal artefacts as a catalyst for exchanging their own stories. Through these stories powerful cultural and humanitarian connections were forged, inspired by personal artefacts (see appendix 1). Despite significant cultural diversity within the groups, such as ethnic, linguistic, religious, gender, age differences, authentic and significant connections and themes emerged. The most compelling of these were globally transferable, significant and relevant across geographic or age differences, for example, death, grief, family love, loneliness, friendship, fear. It seems to me that the themes that people care most about are those concerning people. This is perhaps equalled by the

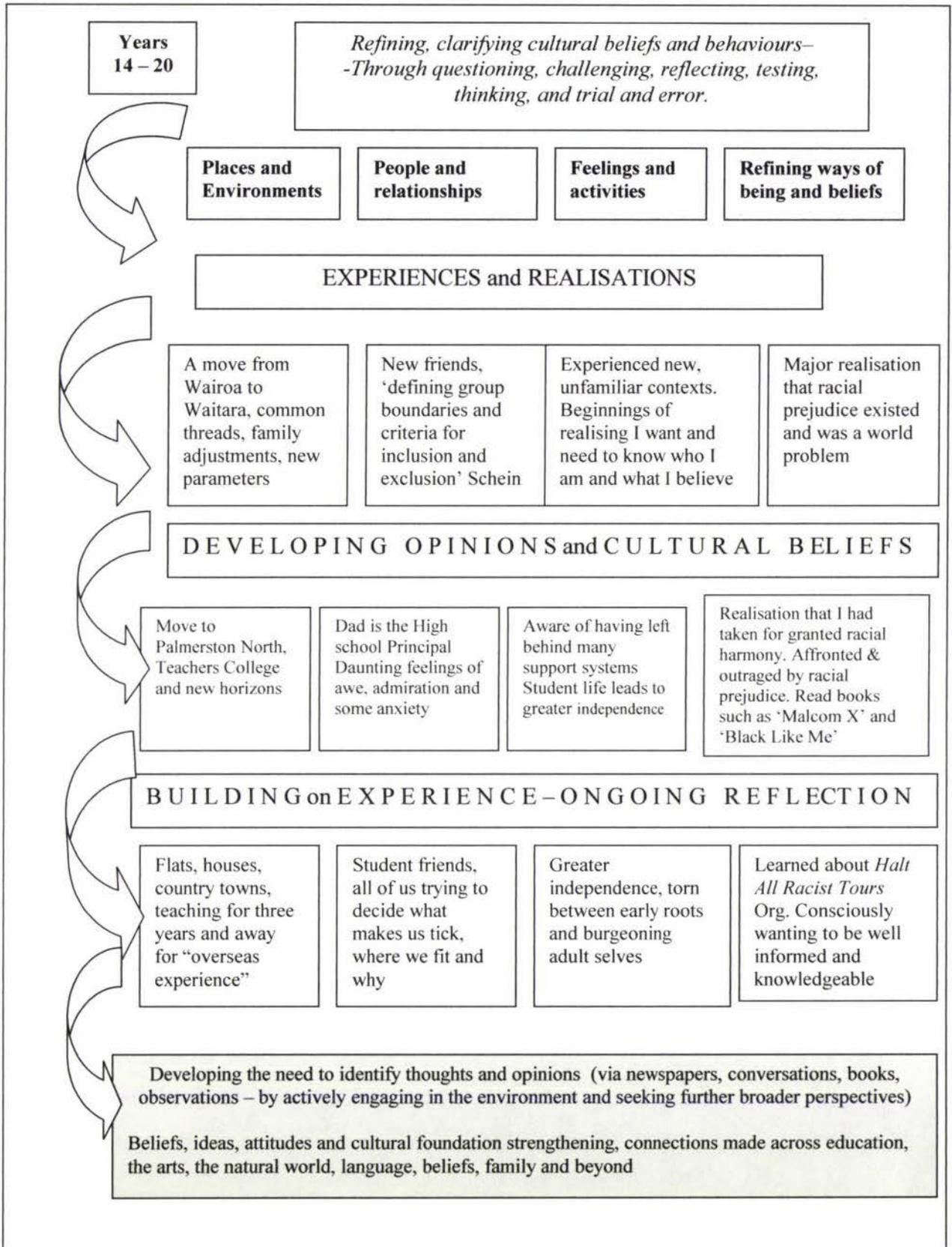
glaring need for more caring among people. My life and experience has played a significant role in the development and growth of this thesis.

### Layers of culture

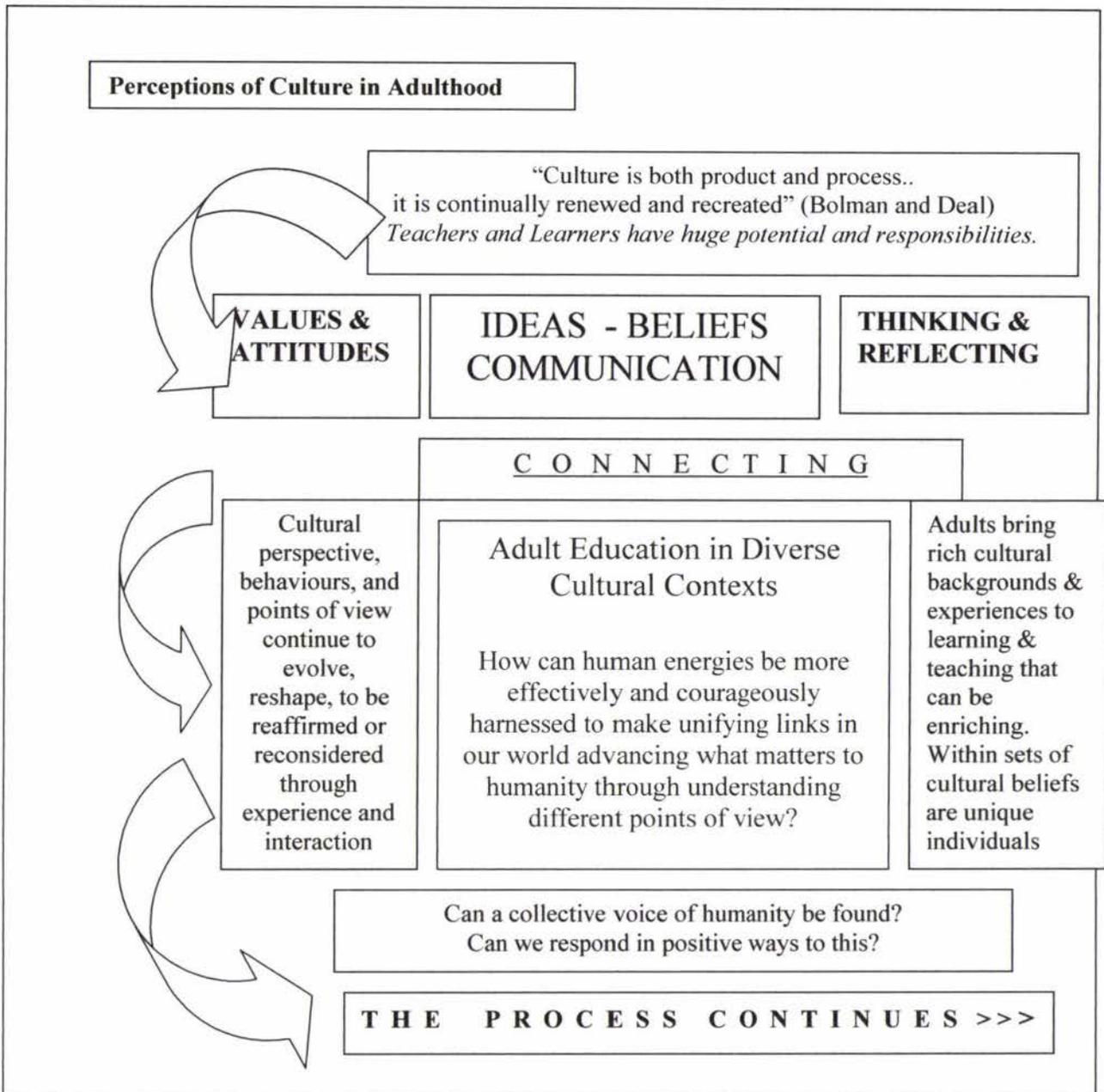
My cultural development can be traced back to my early years, my formal and informal education, interactions, relationships and experiences. These influence all aspects of my life including key values and beliefs, the way I teach, learn, interact and communicate with others. My experiences have determined the extent to which I am able to accept other perspectives, adjust my own and be open minded. Insights about humanitarian learning emerged through my exploration of the intersections between culture, diversity and teaching and learning as shown in the mind maps, (Figs 4, 5 and 6) shown on pages 14, 15 and 16. These show other aspects of my personal background that stand out in my memory as being culturally significant and which provided a method for exploring the development of my personal “layers of culture.” To understand better what these layers mean I have endeavoured to identify their roots and the influences shaping them. The random character of the mind maps is indicative of varied life experiences, self-reflection, construction and deconstruction of ideas that overlap and merge forming complex webs of personal culture (s).



**Fig 4**



**Fig 5**



**Fig 6**

Significant learning is woven into the development of one’s culture. Elements of significant cultural learning can be traced through these three mind maps, which continue to be important in my relationships, motivation and ongoing learning. It is such learning that connects us, and often encompasses fundamental human values and beliefs. It is such learning that contributes to understanding between people and that I seek to investigate through the stories and artefacts of the participants in this thesis. I believe the explicit recognition and harnessing of personal life and cultural learning is a

way that the educational human rights expressed in UN Article 26 can be nurtured and promoted.

My personal experience and familiarity with culturally diverse teaching and learning makes me an “insider.” Not surprisingly I am interested in and concerned about what is taught, teaching environments, dynamics and interdependencies. My research can appropriately be considered as ‘ethnography **in** education’ (Greene and Bloom, 2003), reflecting elements of an ‘educational, social, cultural and institutional change agenda’.

In order to develop more precisely the characteristics of humanitarian learning a thorough understanding of ‘culture’ is needed. Culture is central to lifestyles, education and the ways in which humanity changes and evolves. Culture is a complex and changing phenomenon, subject to debate about definition, interacting with and interdependent on time, place, people and events. “Culture is a fundamental phenomenon. It affects not only our daily practices: the way we live, are brought up, manage, are managed, and die; but also the theories we are able to develop to explain our practices. No part of our lives is exempt from culture’s influence” (Hofstede, 1997).

In a similar vein culture may be viewed as

“the sum total of ways built up by a group of human beings, which is transmitted from one group to another” (Macquarie Dictionary 2000).

More specifically, culture is

“the soul not only of the state but of every individual. Your culture is what makes you what you really are.”... ..people only come to understand what they believe, and what they truly are, by having a full, imaginative, and vivid picture of the course of their own lives” (Casey, 1994).

Borrowing from and blending the language of The Macquarie Dictionary, and Casey, I have described culture to be:

“the ways individuals and groups transmit their identity and human potential through understanding who they are individually and collectively” (glossary).

This definition is reinforced by the words of Gupta, (2003) when she writes that it is “through continuous interaction with difference and diversity that individuals and groups become more aware of their own cultural uniqueness and identity.” She goes on to emphasise that “any type of intercultural pedagogy, (in this case humanitarian learning) needs to strike a balance between learning about the cultural systems of others and developing an enhanced awareness of one’s own cultural systems.”

Culture was formed, writes Michael King, (2001) “when our ancestors told stories about who they were, their origins and how they related to the world around them. Pictures were painted on the cave walls to illustrate the textures of these stories for the eye and the mind.” “Our life rhythms, patterns, continuities and values are reflected in our personal artefacts and our current stories of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Words, songs, poetry and stories that describe their significance, ‘drift out of time past, mould the present and colour the shape of things to come’”(Schlesinger, 2003).

We are sustained, enriched, defined and challenged by our professional and personal stories embedded in our culture(s). These are often remembered over time and passed to the next generation. Artefacts illustrate, embellish, distinguish and enrich our stories by providing something tangible to hold, touch, feel, smell or experience. Such generational exchanges could be viewed as a method we use to “explain our practices and the way we live” (Hofstede, 1997). This is an important aspect of this thesis. Participants are asked to think deeply about cultural influences in their lives and to use personal recollections or cameo stories and significant artefacts to convey this.

### Metaphors

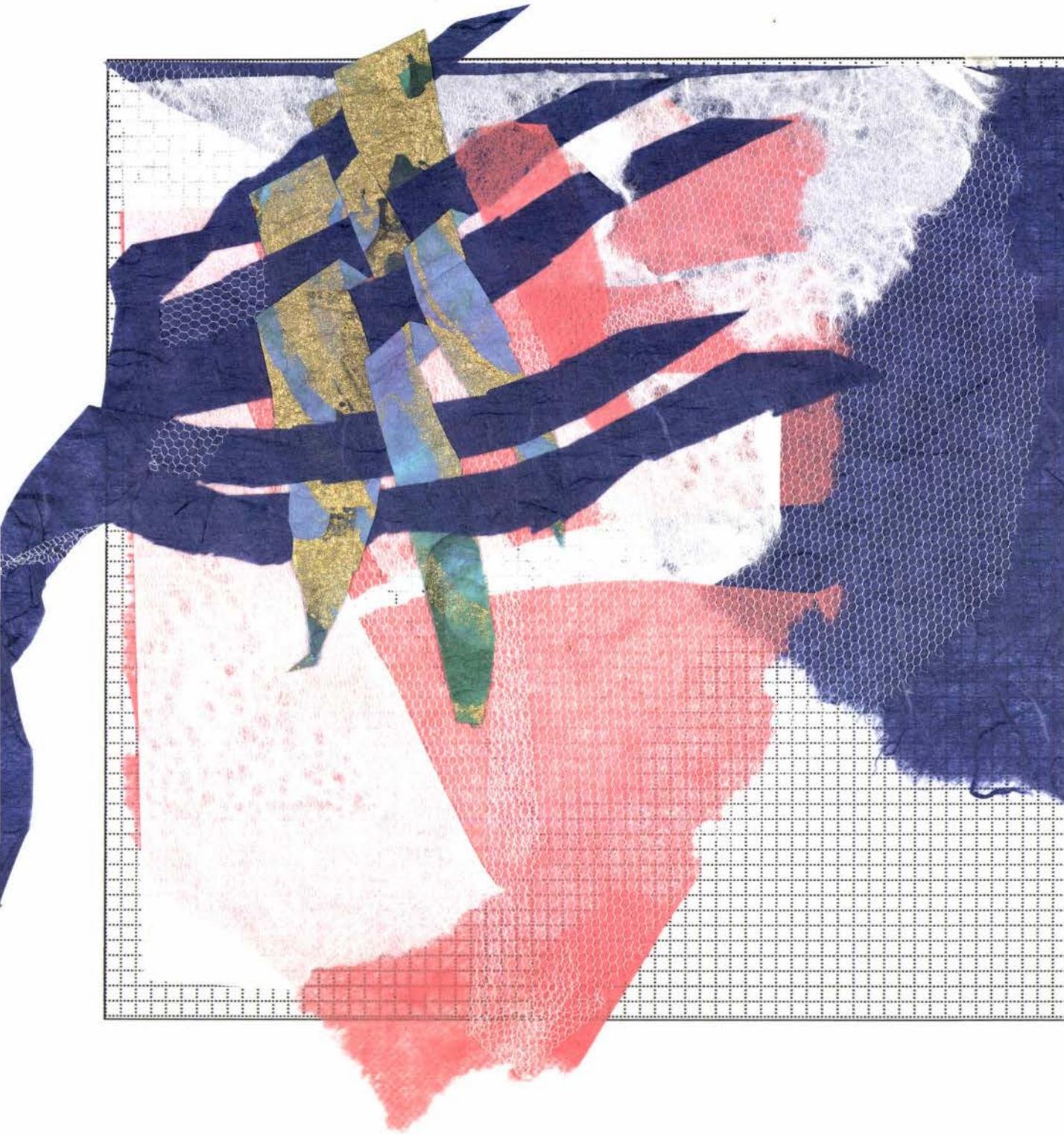
Metaphors can provide a useful way to present, enhance and clarify thinking about culture. Thinking about the data gathered from my thesis investigation prompted a review of cultural metaphors to try to establish a model of culture appropriate to this topic, one that would emphasise that “understanding of culture is critical to promoting an understanding of others and an ability to relate cooperatively across cultural difference” (Peel, 1997). In the same vein, Bredella (2003) stresses the importance of “a flexible model of intercultural understanding to help learners become aware of different cultural implications,” maximise their potential for understanding and establish their own level of compromise as they engage in cultural growth and change.

Culture has been likened to a “behavioural map, sieve, or matrix” (Kluckhohn, 1973), a leaky vessel, or an old fashioned colander. These provide some metaphoric possibility for the movement of thought and points of view through the holes and fine wire, but the ‘structure’ itself lacks essential malleability and the capacity for beauty, celebration, imagination and identity, the hallmarks of cultural experiences.

Seeing culture as ‘layers’ of an onion, which may be peeled away to reveal an essential core disregards some important considerations. The idea of peeling away to reveal new layers implies that the shed layers are no longer necessary or used. As cultures develop, grow, evolve and change, the past and present harbour significant signposts, valuable experience, motivation or springboards for new thinking. Such motivation, growth and change may result from considerable hardship or be defined by negative forces. Cultures have histories. Despite the soft, translucent centre of an onion, the metaphor does not validate the complexity of culture.

In accord with the thoughts of Peel, (1997) and Bredella, (2003) to consider culture as a metaphoric cluster of veils is sufficiently complex in form and possibility to suggest a model better suited to the intangible elements of “culture.” Veils are generally made from flexible fabric that is fine and porous, which can merge and move. In any culture ideas can permeate across and between layers. Ideas may germinate in the interstices of cultural latticing, interlock and fit together as a puzzle. Veils may take many shapes, sizes and colours with scope in their construction for the designers to plan, collaborate and imagine, add, trim and adjust. A veil may never be finished. As in any culture, there are always possibilities for further refinements.

Although some parts of the veil structure are visible, some parts are not. If the fabric is fine enough, one can make out something underneath, a lot like past experience giving shape, substance and strength to personal understanding. A cluster of veils invites multiple perspectives. The underside may provide evidence of time and history. Ancient early layers may grow tatty or worn over time. Layers may be torn and misshapen in use, just as cultures may be ravaged by events over time. The metaphor of a cluster of veils is illustrated in Fig 7, shown below.



**Fig 7 Culture as a cluster of veils:** flexible, fine and porous, breathing, moving, ideas permeating across and between layers, taking hold amongst the latticing, interlocking together as a puzzle - strands waft and connect in woven pockets: culture, the fruit of experience, a common responsibility- our common wealth

The cultural metaphor of a cluster of veils was reinforced by my 2002 inquiry, which I completed as part of an earlier study (Research Methods in Adult Education). This 2002 research focused on a diverse group of 25 international educators, from whom emerged a disconcerting and contradictory message. On one hand they clearly acknowledged the importance of “knowing each other” and the need to develop engaging interactions that foster intercultural understanding and yet many felt unable or unwilling to do so. A small number questioned whether it really mattered at all. The group collectively identified and agreed upon teaching behaviours to support such understanding including the importance of:

- Actively pursuing other perspectives
- Recognising diversity, showing acceptance
- Being reflective and risk-taking
- Encouraging purposeful interaction and learning in local communities
- Fostering a positive, joyful celebratory attitude towards diversity

A compelling aspect of this data from 2002 is the fact that a significant group of educators (see section C in the table below) were unable or unwilling to implement in practice what they strongly advocated as essential strategies designed to foster meaningful connections across cultures.

<b>A</b>	<b>The majority of the group (9) indicated</b> feelings of neutrality. Beginning but tentative, limited or restricted in some way or beginning and keen, with a sense of community developing in the school or organization
<b>B</b>	<b>The second largest subgroup (7) indicated</b> feelings of enthusiasm, but not a sense of unity in their school or organization. The expectation that they engage across cultures is seen as a hindrance or a problem
<b>C</b>	<b>The third subgroup (5) indicated</b> specific blocks and barriers: Negative feelings expressed, anti/ resentful/ Generally felt unable to implement practices
<b>D</b>	<b>The final and smallest group (4) expressed</b> great enthusiasm: Highly united and positive, a range of strategies implemented successfully across school or organization

**Fig 8** Level of Concern Table

This earlier work provided a catalyst for this thesis. It is based on the belief that for learning to have lasting significance it is essential that it allows for making a positive difference to peoples understanding of self and each other. Martha Nussbaum writes extensively of 'global citizenship' in the context of 'cultivating our humanity.'

'Education for world citizenship needs to begin early. As soon as young children can engage in storytelling, they can tell stories of other lands and of other people, beginning with children, it is an education for all citizens in whatever role they have, to be able to deal with one another with respect and understanding of differences, commonality, rights, aspirations and problems" (Nussbaum, 1997).

Likewise, and with similar intentions to transcend cultural barriers,

"The IBO works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring people who help create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect" (IBO, 2002).

The programmes encourage people across the world to become "active, compassionate and life long learners who understand that "other people, with their differences, can also be right" (IBO Monograph, 2002). The IBO cultivates education that celebrates the richness of difference and learning that is 'international.' This does not mean education about other places, or education specifically for students from other places. It refers to education that deliberately fosters an international perspective and an awareness of other ways of viewing and thinking about the world. International education should support mutual understanding between nations. It should help "overcome barriers of nationalism, which can be culturally and morally narrowing" (Tay, 1998).

If educators are to develop a repertoire of understanding and skills enabling them to facilitate humanitarian learning, within which intercultural awareness is one component, they need first to understand their own cultural perspectives. What adults experience in their roles as teachers and learners directly impacts upon what others experience in their roles as teachers and learners. Learning potential is magnified when differences across cultures create particular challenges and opportunities for further learning. Walker (2002) describes such challenges as "an ongoing tension in our lives between on the one hand unity, purity and simplicity and, on the other, diversity, mixture and complexity."

Humanitarian learning encourages the diverse, the mixed and the complex. The learners themselves and their interactions create a rich and diverse resource through which complexities can be examined and perhaps better understood, or resolved in collaborative and mutually respectful interaction and dialogue.

Humanitarian learning asserts the need to:

“grow teachers who can grow people” (Ings, 2004).

Saying we agree and saying we want to do so, is not enough. Deliberate, explicit and effective measures must be taken where cultural perspectives and *who we are* have a central place in adult education, in teacher training and in classrooms. “Certainly, if education were simply a matter of building academic competence, of getting learners to acquire and remember facts and learn to perform on tests in certain kinds of ways, we might be tempted to ignore the affective domain. What we are coming to understand better than ever in the field of education, however, is the importance of social and emotional health in allowing everything else to take place effectively” (Nagel, 2002).

The research question being tackled in this thesis is:

How can personal stories and artefacts support and promote intercultural understanding and humanitarian learning?

## CHAPTER TWO

### Review of Literature, People and Resources

In this chapter a range of resources are identified and discussed that support, challenge, shed light on or offer strategies for inter-cultural and humanitarian learning. Strategies that have possible application in fostering such learning are discussed. Several organisations are reviewed where curriculum structures, models and practices have relevant links with the issues raised in this thesis.

Relevant current research was found in the *Journal of Research in International Education* (JRIE), a monthly publication of interest. JRIE is a collaborative initiative between the University of Bath, UK and the IBO. The following JRIE research caught my attention:

- Georgina Tsolidis, (2002), argues that as educators we need to imagine the best for our students in order to prepare them for global citizenship, which requires them to move easily among different cultures. She also explores inclusive pedagogies appropriate to global citizenship.
- John Scott Lucas' (2003) article '*Intercultural communication for international programmes*' describes his study using two conceptual axes, experiential learning and cultural adaptation, to provide a teaching model for an introductory intercultural communication course, which could be adapted to support learners from different cultures learning together.
- Mark Heyward, (2003) in his article, '*From international to intercultural*' examines what intercultural literacies including participation and the sharing of identities, are necessary for effective cross-cultural engagement. He presents and describes a developmental model for intercultural literacy.
- Cecilia Braslavsky, (2003) in her riveting article, '*Teacher Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*' provides a compelling rationale supporting the urgent need for substantive changes to teacher education whereby teacher competencies focus on, "learning to live together". She gives reasons to support the notion that education based on subject disciplines alone is woefully inadequate.

*The International Schools Journal* is a further monthly publication featuring articles related to international education as the name implies. One writer, Robert Sylvester, was of particular interest for his pertinent and succinct perspectives on the need for a more global orientation and a greater sense of connectedness with human unity in learning communities. He writes about “The unintended classroom: changing the angle of vision of international education” (Sylvester, 2000).

Later in this chapter, the practice of Greta Nagel a university professor specialising in teacher training is discussed. Her account of a programme designed to build cultural understanding is relevant to this thesis. In addition, the vision, rationale and practices of Rutgers University are presented and discussed providing further insights into strategies designed to promote understanding across differences.

#### Experts in the field of adult learning

Martha Nussbaum makes one of the strongest cases for humanitarian learning in her book “Cultivating Humanity.” Nussbaum advocates wide-ranging support for efforts “aimed at producing citizens who can take charge of their own reasoning, who can see the different and the foreign not as a threat to be resisted, but as an invitation to explore and understand, expanding their own minds and their capacity for citizenship” (Nussbaum, 1997).

Her extensive writing is insightful and compelling. She is also widely quoted in articles and educational documentation in relation to her support for the compassionate, inclusive and affective side of learning.

Also in the field of tertiary education, Margaret Andersen, Professor of Sociology and Women’s Studies and Vice Provost for Academic Affairs at the University of Delaware, writing about campus diversity and curriculum content says, “Regardless of our specific identities, we want to work, live and learn in an inclusive, fair and caring institution. There is a need for more inclusion of the cultures, the history and experience of diverse peoples throughout the curriculum” (Andersen, 2005).

Andersen advocates various university initiatives to address these identified needs in which the exchange of ideas and dialogue focussing on critical issues is encouraged. Her wish to foster a culture of inclusiveness through dialogue among diverse groups is congruent with the intention of UN Article 26 and with this thesis investigation into *using stories and artefacts to support international education in which humanitarian concerns are integral*.

In a similar vein, although in a broader context, Arthur Costa, (1993) writes about the need to learn “how to behave when facing complex problems that are ambiguous, dichotomous and paradoxical.” He notes the need to replace obsolete, traditional views of education with modern, relevant and consistent perspectives such as *valuing diversity*, self-evaluation, intrinsic motivation and interdependence.

Tim Hawks, (2000) explores the idea of internationalism, which he describes as an “attitude, perspective and mission”. Internationalism can exist in any learning organisation. It requires a commitment to understanding through collaboration and cooperation. Internationalism is demonstrated in social responsibility, self-awareness, and critical reasoning. It means looking for the commonalities among our differences and defining and describing these commonalities in a discourse that elevates rather than diminishes perspectives that are outside our frames of reference.

Nussbaum’s use of the word “citizenship” and Hawk’s use of “internationalism” concur with the IBO’s stated aspirations and to what the 1991 Task Force on Teaching and Learning in the USA identified as key features characterising successful learning:

- An active process that demands full participation, choices, responsibility and self-direction
- Both an individual and a cooperative venture, with opportunities to work collaboratively in solving authentic problems
- Connected to the real world with explicit application to everyday life and communities
- Relevant, reflective, realistic, challenging and attainable
- Taking place in an atmosphere of support and respect where life experiences are affirmed and valued.

This notion is challenged by hooks, (1994) who asserts that “as differences are recognised and more voices heard, the notion that a learning setting should be a ‘safe harmonious place’ will be tested.”

These points resemble the fundamental principles on which the International Baccalaureate programme was founded almost 40 years ago. The IBO is currently redrafting a document summarising agreed and expected standards and practices. It is clear that the IBO advocates learning that is humanitarian in intent through practices in which the learning organisation:

- “expects and promotes a commitment to international understanding and responsible citizenship on the part of the adults in the school or community.
- provides opportunities for learning about issues that have local, national and global significance leading to understanding of human commonalities
- offers access to different cultures, perspectives and languages” (IBO, 2005).

#### Question

Can the sharing of personal stories, photographs and cultural artefacts contribute to the achievement of such intentions?

Ernest Boyer, (1993) made some remarkably pragmatic and accessible contributions to ongoing debates about what he identified as specific elements common to the human family, life and culture. These are:

- the life cycle \*
- symbols and expressions \*
- aesthetics \*
- recalling the past \*
- looking at the future \*
- membership in groups and institutions \*
- living on and being committed to planet Earth \*
- producing and consuming \*
- searching for a larger purpose \*

## Questions

If these were developed as a core curriculum would they support an education directed to the full development of our humanity?

Would they help foster understanding across cultural differences? UN Article 26?

\* Each one of these points emerged in some form in the data gathered, the final point only peripherally

Both the IBO expectations and Boyer's commonalities will be used as part of the data analysis in Chapter 5.

### Conversations as meaningful dialogue

Learning that fosters intercultural understanding – that is humanitarian in nature, can take place with and without planning as illustrated in the following account. In May 2003 the IBO sponsored a conference in Geneva, designed to explore the “nature and practice of international education.” Among those attending were international educators from many parts of the world, diverse in their cultural perspectives and intercultural experience.

Towards the end of the conference a spontaneous discussion began which continued well into the evening and the next morning. This interaction may have dwarfed all formal conference presentations in its significance by drawing powerful parallels between international education and human understanding across difference. Here is a synopsis of this conversation.

The conversation began as two Islamic women discussed their different interpretations of Islam. They had each spent significant periods of time living in different parts of the world and variations in their interpretations of the Koran seemed to be linked to different geographical locations. One woman was more affiliated with her western influence, the other, her traditional upbringing and experiences in Jordan. They discussed the ways and extent to which Islamic women are affected by their environment and their respective interpretations of Islamic teachings. They shared

thoughts and perspectives openly and candidly, with some references to passages from the Koran.

This comparatively “safe” exchange led to far more poignant discourse. They discussed their fathers and the role of men in their cultures and societies. They compared many aspects of their lives and experiences. (Pseudonyms have been used in all references to this interaction and conversation between “Najwa” and “Paul”). Najwa, a Moslem Palestinian educator/administrator explained how war and fighting had been a constant part of her life experience. She talked about those who had been killed – about the devastation she had always known, her family, the love they shared and the agonies of living daily in a climate of conflict. Others in the group listened, becoming increasingly attentive.

After almost an hour of interchange mainly between the women but closely followed by the others present, Paul, a Jewish American educator, highly respected in international education, leaned forward to speak with Najwa particularly, but also others in the group. He asked a compelling question: **“Why don’t I know these things?”**

In this particular group the significance and the implications of what he asked did not go unnoticed. Paul and Najwa continued their conversation:

**Najwa:** “Just as certain as I am that we don’t want to see our children die - I am sure you don’t want to see yours die either”

**Paul:** “Of course! – And what can we do about this? And let’s remember that we are all descendants of the same ancestry”

**Najwa:** “Exactly - We could find our common origins in no time”

The intense and introspective dialogue that followed concerned: - families, children, experiences, differences, similarities, hopes, beliefs and perspectives. It was both moving and educational. The conversation forged new understanding and brought sharply into focus the common denominators of universal values that through experience had shaped each of them. Previously held beliefs were reassessed, blended and discussed in a climate of mutual respect. Each wanted to understand the other and each helped this happen.

The conversation lasted until the early hours of the morning, resuming at breakfast. The effect on all involved was palpable, especially the two stereotypically regarded as enemies. Paul and Naiwa departed with a fond embrace and an unprecedented level of understanding and mutual respect.

A compelling question remains however **What needs to be happening in places of education to encourage, support and embrace such conversations and interactions between people with different perspectives?** Can learning environments be created that foster such conversations leading to intercultural understanding?

“We need to cherish and not just tolerate personal and cultural difference” (Munich International School (MIS) staff member, October 2002). What must teachers do to ensure that differences are respected, valued and recognised, and ensure learning environments conducive to this understanding are created? “Dialogue can occur only when a group of people see each other as colleagues in a mutual quest for insight and clarity (Senge, 1990). We need to become better at “growing teachers who care about people” (Ings, 2004). (I acknowledge this repeated reference to Ing’s quote.)

George Walker, the former Director General of the IBO addressed international educators in Singapore in a speech entitled “Terrorism, tolerance and the human spirit – the challenges for international education.” He examined the importance of education that helps us move beyond our own personal truth to accept that “other people, with their differences can also be right” (2002). He gave examples of varying complexity including different cultural responses to the same situation, and different perceptions of the same event. His words presented significant challenges with pertinent implications for teaching, learning, interacting, communicating and being together in diverse contexts

Continuing the theme of global responsibility, the United Nations advocates that we move beyond mere tolerance of each other. The second world conference to Combat and End Racism and Racial Discrimination (CERD) held in Geneva on the 12<sup>th</sup> of August 1983 provided a platform for the United Nations Declaration for the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination. The essentials of this declaration are in Article 7 of the convention that requires that “parties undertake to adopt immediate and effective

measures particularly, in the fields of teaching, education, culture and information, with a view to combating prejudices which lead to racial discrimination and to promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations and racial or ethnic groups” (Tenekides, 1983).

This section of the United Nations obliges educators to identify and practice techniques, approaches and strategies that support these ideals. Humanitarian teaching and learning encompasses such ideals and provides an accessible framework of beliefs and behaviours to support willing and available educators.

“Education, culture and teaching are linked in the sense that teaching syllabuses designed to eradicate discrimination must be geared to developing the human personality as a whole and, to that end, must include the systematic study of other cultures” (Tenekides, 1983).

An awareness of such humanitarian responsibility for educators is a feature in Nugent’s (2001) editorial comment, in which he observes that we have reached a time when we must “learn new ways” to do things locally and globally. He refers to the crises facing humanity as our “fundamental life support systems of water, air and food are at risk.” He claims that our basic organising systems including education, are quite inadequate and perhaps “hopelessly antiquated.”

Both Broers, (2005) and Geertz, (1973) claim that “new ways” emerge through combining cultural perspectives and ideas. Broers is a distinguished engineer, and among other things President of the Royal Academy of Engineering and Chairman of the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee. He featured as the 2005 Reith Lecturer in the UK and his series of five speeches were played on New Zealand National Radio. In the second in the series, on May 8<sup>th</sup> 2005 he made a clear case for “broadening our social base in education” and increasing scope for collaboration and problem solving, especially when it took place across lines of cultural and educational difference. He suggested that in diverse contexts creativity and problem solving are less likely to be constrained by a single cultural mindset. He said:

“it is essential for success because it brings both global awareness and the ability to gather together diverse capabilities. It is rare that individuals or groups working in isolation possess all that is needed. I

concentrate on extending the bridges that provide global awareness and enable collaboration with industry, universities, and governments. Without joining with others, complacency and smugness easily set in.”

Broers, 2005

(Geertz, 1973), urges educators to “enlarge the possibility of intelligible discourse between people quite different from one another in interests, outlook, wealth and power and yet tumbled together as they are in endless connection in such a gradual spectrum of mixed up difference.” He implies that we need to be doing something different in the fundamental ways we approach teaching and learning and that diversity offers rich and necessary opportunities for learning across humanity.

Joris De Bres, New Zealand’s Race Relations Conciliator also advocates change. He sees a greater need for inclusion and acceptance of difference in our society preferring the concept of ‘togetherness’ rather than ‘oneness.’ Togetherness implies greater scope for individual difference to be accepted and valued in the context of ‘belonging’ (De Bres, Radio New Zealand Sept 2004).

Togetherness is integral to Vygotsky’s (1986) claim that effective learning is a socially constructed, interactive process, not just a mere cognitive event. The significance of socially and culturally constructed learning is well reinforced by Nisbett, (2003) when he records the following:

“Diversity has been acclaimed for all sorts of reasons, among them educational and work environments are enriched by people of different backgrounds. Our work does strongly support the contention that diverse views should be helpful for problem solving. The cognitive orientations and skills of East Asians and people of European cultures are sufficiently different that it seems highly likely they would complement and enrich one another in any given setting. We would expect that for most problems one would be better off having a mix of people from different cultures than having people who are all from one culture.”

Ackerman (1989) identifies as unusual and “extraordinary, the interplay among disciplines or subjects and that viewing, for example, the story of civilization through

multiple lenses helps learners develop a sensibility towards history that transcends specific subject matter and a correspondingly sophisticated attitude towards knowledge in general.” I suggest sharing significant stories of different lives can help transcend cultural barriers, foster better understanding and celebration of cultures and the people who shape them. Ackerman strongly supports the idea that understanding is deepened when multiple perspectives are examined and considered. One could assume from Ackerman’s comments that he might regard understanding of larger universal concepts with multiple applications of greater significance than more specific prescribed subject areas. Such concepts can be tapped and examined by using daily life as a starting point.

New ways of learning for understanding require that far greater attention is paid to the learners themselves in varied contexts and for whatever purpose they have been brought together. Commonalities connect us and can lead to the development of understanding through varied perspectives of personal and cultural experiences. Connections based on deep personal inquiry among groups of learners have the potential to help address some of the humanitarian crises we face. Such connections help us take what we learn and what we understand from a local to global perspective— or better enable us to “learn our way out” (Nugent 2001).

The notion of connectedness is relatively intangible. Neutze. (2001) emphatically challenges the ethereal nature of connectedness by exposing the huge array of possible meanings that may emerge and the difficulty in confirming evidence that communication has in fact taken place, asking “and if so how and to what end?” Similarly finding connections with other human beings may be a very personal thing - something impossible to identify clearly, let alone assess. In response to his own challenge, Neutze in a delightfully unsettling and deliberately provocative tone presents a compelling case for improvised learning. Neutze claims that the exchange of ideas in improvised learning is so wide and colourful that boredom cannot survive. Of particular interest is his description of the role of the teacher in facilitating improvised learning that includes the following “special functions”

- To be spontaneous, resourceful and willing to share thinking, to be curious, foster curiosity, encourage questions and provide wide-ranging resources

- To skilfully facilitate connectedness between learning themes as they emerge as well as continuity to ensure forward movement
- To purposefully foster meaning making with a focus on the group rather than individual
- To help learners develop skills and attitudes enabling them to explore widely, deeply and without restraint

In a similar vein to Neutze, Dr Allan Luke (2005) speaking at an international education conference in Perth, Australia, vigorously challenged traditional and didactic approaches to teaching and learning. He described necessary skills required for teachers to meet the diverse and changing educational needs they face. He likened the skills of a good teacher to those of a versatile dancer. He spoke of the “need for intuitive responses, spontaneity, flexibility and creativity and the need for teachers to constantly expand their repertoire of moves, responses, tools and vehicles to be used to inspire, motivate and catalyse.”

Teachers are obliged to provide the best possible conditions for the learner’s voices to be heard and to facilitate the meaningful mingling of these voices. In the dynamic stages that follow, when responses to the mingling of diverse voices result in *purposeful action*, the extensive repertoire of effective teaching tools is critical. These tools cannot be scripted and taught as a series of predetermined lessons. They do not fit neatly into a textbook or a teachers training manual. Such expertise develops gradually and stems from a deep commitment to humanity; to celebrating difference, to embracing the unfamiliar, and the skills and the insights required to foster and facilitate meaningful discourse.

Invariably such processes require skilled leadership. Educators must be willing to follow the *lead of the learners* and to engage in active and purposeful learning alongside their “students.” Neutze describes improvised learning as spontaneous, unpredictable, inventive and reflective. He writes that the broader and deeper it is, the greater the expansion of awareness and integrity of the learning.

In humanitarian learning the teacher/dancer needs the confidence to explore learning dimensions and possibilities as they evolve, alongside the learners. The teacher/dancer

needs also to be willing to appreciate what may be unfamiliar steps and moves of individuals.

Referring back to the conversation about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict between Najwa and Paul, their learning was certainly improvised and took place outside the official planned learning arena. I wonder how Neutze would advocate setting up an environment where spontaneous learning, that is primarily flexible and intuitive, can happen regularly and repeatedly. The environment is a contributing element of what is a complex set of circumstances needed to inspire such learning. Meaningful conversations, experiences and learning take place often irrespective of planning or when circumstances are “ideal”. As explained by Alison Viskovic and Jocelyn Robertson, (2000) “the aim of learning is to produce meaning and to experience our life and the world as meaningful” This implies an integral overlapping connection between living experiences and learning experiences and a significant element of spontaneity.

In summary, the literature quoted here makes a compelling case for the need for learning that focuses on intercultural understanding. Many experts mention in general terms what might support such learning. Rarely are specific practical examples given for how best it might be achieved. Story telling may be used as a tangible, practical strategy.

#### Connecting through story telling

‘Education for world citizenship needs to begin early, in fact as soon as young children can engage in storytelling of home, of places and of other people. The development of world citizenship must take place at every age’  
(Nussbaum, 1997).

The account of Najwa and Paul related at the start of this chapter is a true story, illustrating the fact that woven into daily lives are interactions and conversations, both simple and remarkable worthy of further attention. Story telling is a powerful and widely used tool for humanitarian learning inclusive of all peoples of all ages. Examples of the potential for humanitarian learning through story telling are explored in the work of Vella, (2002); Fox and Short, (2003); King (2003); and Ings (2004).

In “Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach-The Power of Dialogue in Educating Adults” Vella explores the path to learning as a holistic, integrated, and energetic process. She uses engaging personal stories of adult learners in different cultures to describe this path. In different contexts in her book she demonstrates the importance of making real connections with the learners – in highly respectful ways, especially inclusive of diverse cultural perspectives, attitudes and values.

“We visited clinics, schools, farms. We chatted with village leaders, priests, teachers and wives. We played with endless numbers of beautiful brown-eyed babies, their mothers’ eyes shining with pride as I praised the beauty of each one. Again I saw how basic human courtesy, expressed in respect for each individual and for cultural practices, is such a profound instrument for learning. I was learning because they respected me. They were learning through my respect. Under the umbrella of respect, learning is always mutual and immediate.”

(Vella, 2002)

Dana Fox and Kathy Short, (2003) have edited a comprehensive compilation of writing titled “Stories Matter” contributed by authors, publishers, educators, librarians, scholars and editors, who examine the issue of cultural authenticity in children’s literature. The primary theme of this book is *children’s need for stories in their lives that authentically convey their own and others’ cultures*. Each contributing piece strongly supports the idea that “stories *do* matter to children and influence the ways in which children think about themselves and their place in the world as well as the ways in which they think about other cultural perspectives and peoples.” Stories may provide a connecting window for adults to share perspectives and deepen understanding of self and others.

Jacqueline Woodson completed her section of the book *Stories Matter*, with these words:

“My belief is that there is room in the world for all stories, and that everyone has one, My hope is that those who write about the tears and laughter and the language in my grandmother’s house have first sat down at the table with us and dipped the bread of their own experiences into our stew”

(Woodson, 2003).

In a similar sentiment Terry O'Connor. (2000. in Senge,) talks about "the aesthetics of learning and personal cultural histories." "Sensitising oneself to the emotional tone of learners builds respect dignity and confidence. Like John Dewey, we recognise that the diversity of ideas that comes with diversity of people is one of the best ways to create a necessary condition of learning. We resolved to foster the diversity of ideas, and to engage people who brought with them diverse personal and cultural histories." The participants who generated the data for this thesis were invited to explain and reflect upon their personal cultural histories. In the process they revealed much about themselves with dignity and deference.

Michael King's (2004) "Penguin History of New Zealand" affirms that understanding sheds light on, and diminishes, prejudice, and that the more we can learn about each other the more we will understand each other. King also affirms the idea that it is through narrative, story telling, story listening and story exchanges that we stand to *gain* such understanding. The trust that comes from giving and receiving – from being vulnerable and from making the effort to learn from ones personal experience enhances understanding across difference. This last sentence expresses simply and clearly what humanitarian learning involves.

Stories and artefacts, which define our perceptions and cultural realities, have broader significance than in our continuous learning. Zepke. (2001) suggests that participatory democracy, connectedness and the interaction of diverse groups will require social construction and interpretation of meaning and therefore an autonomy shaped by awareness and needs of others. Personal stories, sharing of relevant artefacts and skilful facilitation can enrich and focus such social construction which is likely to lead to a greater awareness of others and may or may not lead to increased individual autonomy. The notion of connectedness and skilful facilitation are extremely important in humanitarian learning and in the context of sharing stories.

Gallas (1994) invokes the need for education for social responsibility in teaching and learning, while recognising the challenges imposed in culturally diverse learning environments.

"How can a teacher make room for the many voices a classroom must assimilate when some of the voices are not even speaking the same

language? The process of assimilation begins with the interaction of teacher and child, and then teacher, child, and classmates as they search for common ground from which to build a shared language and a new history ... building a frame work for inclusion in simple interactions and forays into the life of the classroom” (Gallas 1994).

I see the extraction, sharing and reflecting upon stories of our lives as one way to support and inclusive learning environment.

### Meaning making through artefacts

“As a teacher–researcher thinking about the needs of learners from other cultures, my use of data has to expand to include a more semiotic orientation. In other words any artefact I can gather, most especially those signs and symbols that have meanings independent of spoken language might help in the construction of planks from a bridge of one culture to another that will further expand our social community”

(Gallas, 1994).

It is significant that *signs and symbols* emerging from the Rutgers model (examined later in this chapter) were also clearly evident in the data and recognised by the participants as an important learning vehicle.

Gallas writes, “all effective teachers are incipient researchers who use research perspectives in intuitive ways.” She emphasises the significance of this intuition. “when the voice of a teacher is embedded in an attitude of inquiry and wonder and making sense of the classroom, a new culture is created: one in which ‘not knowing’ is equally valuable as knowing, where the questions to be asked are not always clear, a culture where the teachers rely on one another to make sense of the sense the children are making.”

Gallas concurs here with Neutze’s notion of ‘spontaneity’ and Luke’s of the necessary ‘versatile repertoire.’

Likewise, Professor Welby Ings refers to the importance of intuition. He is described by his students as 'inspirational'. In a recent interview on Radio New Zealand (2004) Ings suggested that effective learning can be turned on through "listening **into** a student", by getting alongside them and enabling people to "learn emotionally with the inside of themselves." Ing's own educational path has been fraught with challenges giving his reflections and perceptions a certain poignancy. He speaks of a fine line between fear and hope that characterises learning; fear of exposure to failure and the hope that the individual can achieve through learning. He challenges as unrealistic the notion that learning can or should always be in a safe environment. He describes an ideal learning environment as one that is rich and challenging.

#### Related Research - *current practices and models*

Greta Nagel, an associate professor in the Department of Teacher Education at California State University, Long Beach, USA, coordinates teacher-training programs and teaches courses related to literacy, historical, philosophical, and social foundations of education. She has been a classroom teacher, reading specialist, and school administrator.

She describes a teaching strategy: the "ABC's model of *Building Cultural Understanding and Communication: A Model in Seven Situations*." Nagel describes and analyses the implementation of the technique and strategies connecting practices with relevant theoretical and research literature.

Although the scale of this model is far broader than what I undertook, there are some useful connections between the aspects of the model Nagel describes and my research, especially in acknowledging the value of story telling in learning. The model she describes involves the learners across a wide range of age groups, in the following process:

- **Autobiography** -- Participants write their autobiographies, providing details of important life events, cultural traditions and values, family stories and roots.

(Similarly, my questionnaire asked participants to think about their own lives, families and cultural traditions and share important learning events)

- **Biography** -- Each participant pairs up with another one from a different cultural background, to conduct unstructured interviews and then to write biographies of each other, based on the information gathered.

(I did not engage the participants in partnerships, but it is likely that this could have been a worthwhile learning exchange. This thesis includes a purposeful response and analysis from me. However it is clear that for the participants to share their stories with each other would have been meaningful for them. In Chapter 6 I recommend that such exchanges would enrich the process)

- **Cross-cultural analysis** -- Participants comparing and contrasting life stories. They discuss and list or chart similarities and differences that emerge in their respective writings. Themes emerge and interesting points of comparison and contrast become apparent as they analyse areas of cultural difference, and design ways to connect with cultures.

(The data gathered in this thesis certainly indicated patterns and themes. Nagel's account confirms that this also takes place with the work she describes. The collaboration described by Nagel is a valuable attribute in intercultural learning)

- **Analysis of cultural differences** -- This stage is the reactive, reflective part. It often occurs spontaneously as participants are engaged in cross-cultural analysis, but should not be overlooked as an important analytical step that can bring the whole group together. It is also a stage that must be handled with care, usually by the teacher, in a classroom context where there are high expectations for acceptance, and honours goals of intercultural understanding. The teacher definitely makes a positive difference through his or her concerned leadership.
- **Designing ways to connect with home** -- Based upon their learning, the teacher and students think of modifications for classroom activities and home-school communication to enhance understandings.

What Nagel describes here has significant elements in common with my data collection questionnaire and interactions inspired by stories and artefacts. Both approaches are designed to encourage collaboration, purposeful engagement in critical inquiry, and to foster respect and understanding of varied cultural perspectives. The stories represent

“who we are and they help bind us as we continue to learn to be teachers together. It can bring about enhanced interpersonal understandings, provide meaningful opportunities for authentic and integrated practice and add to the process of building community within the larger group. I can assure fellow teachers that when we take a broad view of meaningful educational practice. It will promote growth in both academic and social-emotional domains” (Nagel, 2002).

Interestingly this method to foster better understanding between people of different backgrounds has been used in a wide range of contexts including for example, primary school children, university lecturers, and workshop of professional educators attending a conference.

Of particular interest were the categories (seven situations) selected to organise and illustrate the points arising during the process. (outlined above) “illustrating some of the different contexts in which the process has been very effective, as well as demonstrating key qualities of the ABC’s model in action” (Nagel). Some of these categories reflect the issues that emerged in the data generated by the participants in this thesis.

I have adapted the asterisked categories for use in my analysis in chapter 5.

They include:

- Self disclosure
- Building connections
- Enhancing working relations
- Overcoming divisiveness of status and hierarchies
- Developing understanding across racial or gender lines
- Extending relationship building to other contexts
- Enhancing the support system within a new group

Some of the stories included in Nagel’s account demonstrate a wide range of self-disclosure, sharing and potential for forging understanding across cultures. Some examples are shown below.

### Building Connections

University students engaged in a teacher-training course participated in the ABC's process (Nagel, 2002) after which a student pointed out a significant realisation.

"I've been sitting near Martha in classes for over a year, but I never really knew her until tonight."

"Students were astonished, not just by the intriguing things they learned about one another, *but by the many things they discovered they had in common.*

Beyond the student-to-student relationship building that happened, the writing and sharing process allowed the instructor to become far better acquainted with students' knowledge" (Nagel, 2002).

Connections may be made as a result of sharing the autobiographical writing as indicated in the two following examples.

#### Olga

I was born in Inglewood, CA, on December 22, 1961. I'm the fifth of nine children, and all my memories include family. I was educated in the catholic school system; from 1st-12th grade, I was fortunate that my mom was home all day, and dad was some how able to support a family of 11. I know my parents made many sacrifices to provide for us. I can remember trips to JC Penny for new school shoes.

My fondest memories are of nightly family dinners. Even now I can count on dinner w/ mom and dad whenever I'm home by 5:30. Our family dinners were always very high-energy affairs. With such a large family, I could always count on 2 or 3 different conversations taking place at the same time. I have different and varied relationships with each of my siblings and get along well with all of them.

I have 8 nieces and nephews, all of whom I consider included members of my immediate family. I love coming from a big family and feel sorry for people who don't.

#### Rafael

Family and religion are two very important aspects of my life, along with education. Because of coming from a large family (I am no. 5 of 9 children) my earliest memories include lots of people at all gatherings. My mother has always had an ability to recognize and bring out the best and unique qualities of each of her children. I can remember as far back as my first day of school, my mother asking questions of each child about their day, the standard

questions included, "How was school today? What did you learn?, Do you have any homework. What? Did you eat all your lunch?" We each got our time to converse one-on-one with mom. She is genuinely interested in our achievements and mishaps, applauding and comforting us always, as situations require.

I got along very well with all members of my immediate family. We've had our minor family quarrels but rarely remember even the next day who was angry or why. I have a strong Catholic faith. I was educated in the Catholic School system and both religion and education have always been stressed in my house

From the time I was about 8, I can remember weekends at Seal Beach with my maternal grandparents, enjoying family, surf, and sand.

Nagel describes how important friendships were forged through the process of autobiographical writing. She refers to key research by Waxman, Gray, & Padron, (2002) which confirms the importance of caring personal relationships within an educational organization. Nagel says simply, "Such friendship building is more than just a nice thing."

I would suggest that there is unlimited potential through such writing for the development of respect (Vella, 2002), authentic connections (Fox and Short, 2003) and trust building (King 2004).

#### Enhancing Working Relationships

Nagel describes a professional development meeting during which 120 university staff engaged in ABC activities in order to learn more about it. Their interaction, Nagel asserts, led to *enhanced working relationships* among participants

"Many found themselves communicating about topics that went far beyond their usual hallway greetings (Hello!) and pleasantries (Nice day!) for the first time. Past meetings and social events within the college had allowed for conversations with members of other departments who taught in different disciplines, but the rich, personalized talk and insight that occurs in ABCs events seldom happens, even between friends" (Nagel).

Two women, from different cultural backgrounds, each described a couch they had sat on as children. This led them to discussions about similarities and differences in their

experience. One of the women, recalled time in her childhood spent on an “upholstered couch watching television and listening to records”. The other described a “wooden couch that always held a changing cast of several family members, crowded together, laughing and talking”. Neither a television nor telephone had been part of her life until her family had moved to the United States.

This exchange is an example of how artefacts can trigger connections, support personal stories and help foster understanding across differences. (A further similar example featuring desks as artefacts is included in the appendices)

### Extending relationship building to other contexts

Nagel mentions a group of adult students who agreed take a member of their family through the ABC process. The discussions that took place with neighbours, husbands, wives, and parents revealed events, thoughts and ideas that had not been brought forward before.

“Students came to class with biographies that sometimes brought tears to their eyes when they shared them with classmates. The phrase “I never knew” was heard frequently. Of particular interest were the stories of how new immigrants dealt with learning a new language and how puzzling it was to encounter the different ways people speak English.”  
(Nagel)

Similarly a critical moment in the conversation between Najwa and Paul (described on page 26) also took place with the words. “Why didn’t I know?” These punctuate examples of enlightenment and learning about each other.

### Finding Connections with Unfamiliar People

Students in a teacher-training course engaged in the ABC programme aimed at deepening their understandings of one another and creating an empathetic support group for these trainee teachers. The following are reflections expressed by a student who has exchanged personal stories with a partner during a teacher-training workshop:

“The second part of the project was to tell your story to a partner and to listen to their story, making necessary notes. As we began to tell each other our stories/memories one thing became very evident...

One part of common ground that we found was our sibling relationships.

Another common ground we found was in feeling like we had a safe childhood. My protection was found in the suburbs; however, hers was from a wall that was erected years before she was born and for reasons that had little to do with childhood comfort. It was interesting to put these two issues together. Because of the Berlin Wall she and her sister could freely roam the city of Berlin. She and her sister used the transit system and walked all over the city. I lived in a post-WWII suburb and could do the same. *With such seemingly different backgrounds we came across more similarities than differences.*”

The project described here provided a catalyst for participants to get to know each other more deeply, develop greater understanding of where each other had come from, and provided a safe and positive framework for people to share their own stories reflecting important memories and those that illuminate **who we are**.

Incidentally, the IBO programme includes a component requiring significant six-week investigation into “Who We Are.” This part of the programme is described as “an exploration of the nature of self; our beliefs and values; of personal health; physical, mental, social and spiritual health; of our families, friends, communities and cultures; of our rights and responsibilities; of what it means to be human” (IBO 2002).

Waiheke Primary School has made explicit a similar focus as part of their curriculum which has been blended with their obligations to meet the requirements of the New Zealand National Curriculum.

### The Effectiveness of the ABC Model

Nagel points out “teacher’s behaviours and instructional activities, along with the general classroom climate, can serve separately or together to enhance or preclude reaching goals for positive interrelationships.”

She mentions two sociopsychological principles, which feature in the process:

- Firstly, the power of disclosure of thoughts and feelings. We tend to divulge secrets with friends and we tell more about ourselves to others in settings where we feel safe.
- Secondly, because we seek out friendship with individuals who are like us in some way, the process of looking for similarities is part of confirming that two people can get along because they share certain key attributes, across differences in cultural background.

This impulse is known as communal sharing; people follow the impulse to be warm to people who are of their “own kind” (Fiske & Haslam, 1998). I have further questions related to this assertion. In my experience it is quite possible for people to be drawn to those who seem different from themselves. The raw data presented in chapter 4 includes verification of this. Many participants have described feelings of ‘fascination, intrigue, curiosity and wanting to know more.’ To this extent I challenge Fiske and Haslam on this point and accordingly, the second of Nagel’s points.

I was especially interested in Nagel’s assertion that the interacting components of *knowledge, power, and affection*, are evident in the ABCs model. Its activities acknowledge participants at their individualised levels of *knowledge*. Each person knows his or her life well, and although early remembrances may always be strong, other recollections can always come forth. A study of self is always quite engaging. Participants in the ABCs process also have individualized *power* to decide whether to share (or not) the details of their lives and to frame the formats by which they will be shared. The third component, *affection*, is promoted by the process because of the ways in which participants listen to one another signify caring. The ways in which partners involve themselves with each other registers as something beyond mere tolerance.

The model encourages dialogue, collaboration, inquiry, perspective building, and higher order analytical critique, elements which are congruent with those identified as elements of successful learning, by the IBO, the Taskforce referred to in Chapter 1.

## Rutgers College

The curricular modules of Rutgers State University are designed to foster global understanding, specifically to “increase the quantity and quality of teaching about the Middle East, Asia, Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe, and globalisation itself.”

One of their stated intentions is to help people develop the global understanding needed to help “shape the relationships the United States has with all the regions of the world in the next generation.” This seems especially relevant in the current world climate. The research in this thesis did not have such sweeping goals, but of interest is the curriculum content.

The curriculum modules are based on the following statements: (those points \*asterisked are what I consider to be of special relevance to this thesis)

- Global citizenship values peaceful resolution of conflict.
- There cannot be a global society without social justice.
- We share a global environment. \*
- Humanity's survival depends on cooperation. \*
- The world's resources are limited.
- Careers are increasingly global. \*
- Global awareness promotes productivity and economic growth.
- Global literacy facilitates negotiating diverse cultures. \*
- Global literacy expands our collective knowledge base.\*
- Global citizenship results in enlightenment, self-actualisation, & enhanced creativity \*

The artefacts and stories selected and presented by the participants in this thesis indicate significant overlap with the points presented in the Rutgers curriculum rationale. A table indicating some of the correlations is included in Chapter 5 dealing with the analysis of data.

The Rutgers web page describing this curricula initiative explained in some detail how the “lessons’ are developed. I wondered to what extent they described the importance of using the rich resources of their own students in such lessons. In reading the information, it is not clear that the students and staff themselves are considered a valued

resource. However they do make a point of mentioning “selections from primary sources’ as forming part of the course materials.

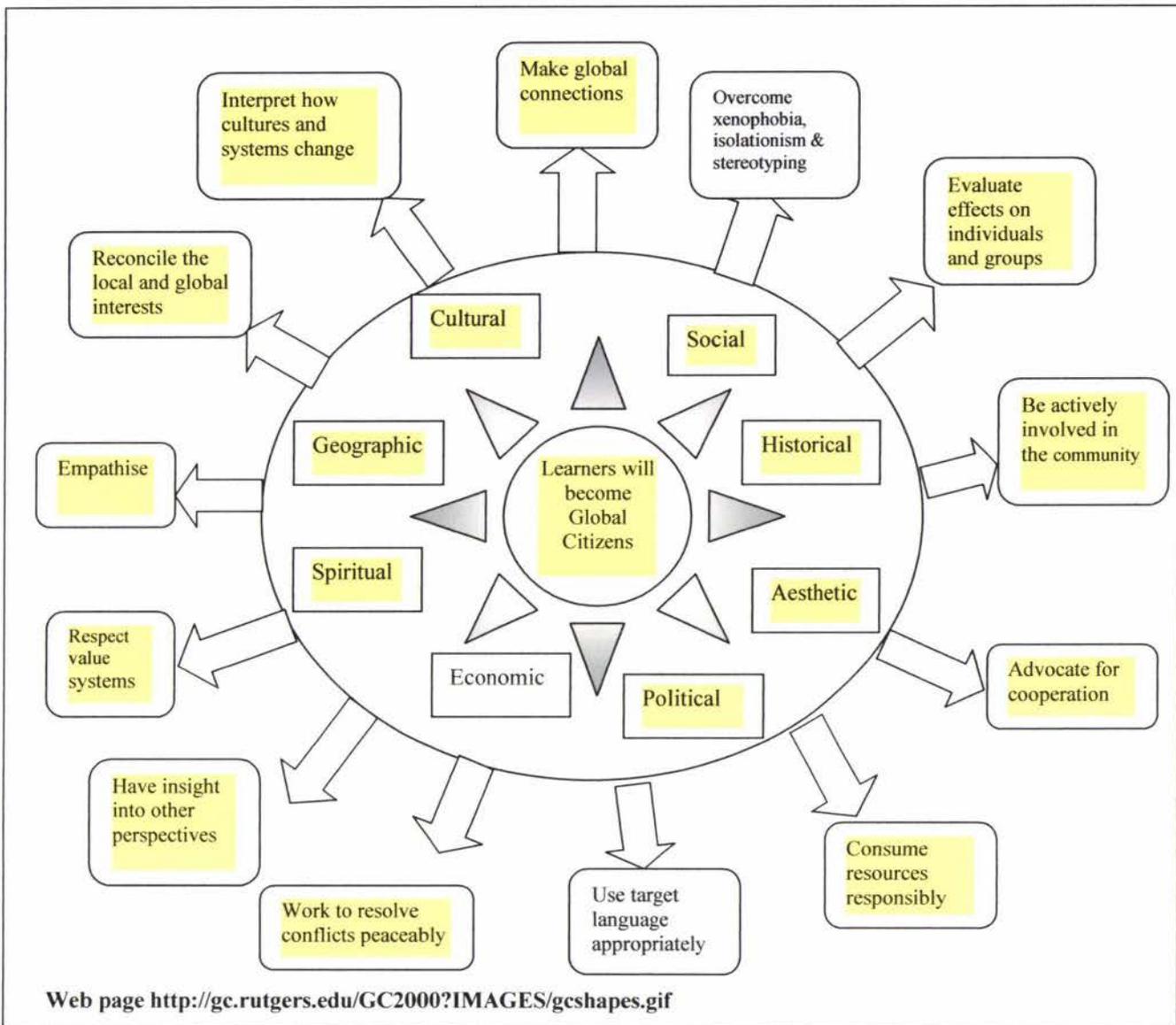
The project description includes considerable investment in the teachers and students whereby they receive funding to travel as interns to Poland, Israel and the Palestine Authority, and South Africa, to study conflict resolution, after which time they will assist other New Jersey teachers to improve their skills at teaching cross-cultural understanding. This is seen as ‘especially relevant now as the world becomes more globally interdependent, and as opportunities for American citizens to participate in their domestic society become increasingly tied to their knowledge of, and access to, relevant information about global society’ (2000, Rutgers website).

From this example it seems that this programme values, and is willing to create and invest in, meaningful experience and the perspectives of those in the classes and those from different places with differing views.



I was interested and gratified to see the strong links, indicated in yellow shading between the global citizenship components of Rutgers curriculum model (Fig 9) shown below with:

- The curriculum framework of the primary years programme of the International Baccalaureate
- The elements of cultural and personal significance to the participants that emerged in the research data for this thesis that are further discussed and analysed in Chapter 5.
- Factors identified in UN Article 26: promoting **understanding among peoples** and working towards **maintaining peace**



**Fig 9** Rutgers Curriculum Model

Questions about related research for further inquiry

Recently I learned of a research project involving a team of teacher-researchers who are members of a study group they describe as the *PhOLKS (Photographs Of Local Knowledge Sources)*. They have been involved in a research project exploring “what a diverse group of teachers, children, and families learn together when children photograph and narrate their out-of-school lives, and teachers build curriculum on these “funds of knowledge”. The *Language Arts Magazine* has included a detailed description this project and I am interested in finding out more.

One idea behind this project is likely to be that photography provides a powerful and insightful conduit between what is important to people in their lives and relationships and learning which uses these insights as a launching pad.

Initially it seemed that most of the research examples I found were strongly connected with USA. Through the *Journal of Research in International Education* (JRIE) and *International Schools Journal* I identified other examples based in other parts of the world or more significantly with deliberate implications for global application. JRIE researchers tend to approach topics not necessarily connected with schools, whereas the *International Schools Journal* affiliated with the European Council of International schools is understandably focusing on international issues within a school context.

I read about an organisation, *Network on Intercultural Learning in Europe* (NILE) comprising adult-education organizations from 13 European countries. For the first two years of its formation, the NILE Network focused on building up a knowledge base of definitions and *good practice in intercultural learning and developing a model for mainstreaming intercultural learning*. The final year of NILE will focus on formulating strategies for aligning intercultural learning with lifelong learning and concrete policy proposals. It is the practices and model that I am interested in finding out more about.

A participant, wrote to me during my work on this thesis to share information about a potentially useful resources in this field as explained in this excerpt from her letter:

“Your thesis ideas sound so interesting. I have been looking at a book, which you probably know, called *Understanding Global Cultures by Martin Gannon*. The Subtitle, *Metaphorical Journeys Through 28 Nations. Clusters of Nations and Continents*, seems apt to your thoughts. I have only browsed so far, but I find his interpretations of the meaning of the metaphors he has distilled out for the countries I have some knowledge of, very enlightening.”

The review of cited literature and resources support the need for learning to shed light on humanitarian attitudes and values. Such connections are forged and communication

occurs when those involved listen thoughtfully and respectfully with an open and willing mind.

“We often don’t see that how we relate to another inevitably follows from how we relate to ourselves, that our outer relationships are but an extension of our inner lives, that we can only be as open and present with another as we are with ourselves.” (Wellwood, J 2002)

We need to do in learning what bell hooks (2002) describes as the “original work of love – that is the cultivation of care, knowledge, respect and responsibility in relation to the self.” Individuals may then be better equipped to reach beyond themselves and engage fully in the cultivation of; care, knowledge, respect and responsibility in relation to others. Humanitarian learning obliges personal and social understanding, thereby enriching the learner and fellow learners in the process.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Design and Methodology of the Research

This chapter includes:

- A description of the research question: *what* it is, *who* was involved and the selection of participants
- The reasons *why* this study was undertaken
- *When and where* it took place
- *How* this research was tackled i.e. the *process and tools* used
  - Rationale for the use of stories, narrative, photographs, artefacts
  - Rationale for the use of questionnaires and a range of qualitative approaches
  - Ethical considerations
  - The data gathering process
  - Analysing, interpreting and presenting the data
  - Coherence and credibility

The research question: *What* is it? and *Who* was involved?

This thesis examines **how stories and artefacts connected directly to the lives of learners promote intercultural understanding and humanitarian learning.**

This thesis focuses on adults who teach and learn in culturally diverse contexts. It might be assumed that intercultural understanding will be fostered automatically in culturally diverse contexts, particularly in educational environments. I suggest this is not so. Any such understanding would be incidental, left to chance, or reliant upon individual learner initiative. Such individual initiative is to be admired, but educators have the responsibility and opportunity to deliberately foster intercultural understanding.

Many educational environments are understandably preoccupied with particular subject matter. Many teachers may consider a curriculum focusing on intercultural understanding to be unnecessary, even irrelevant. Such a focus may seem quite removed from the subject driven role for which they were employed. In these

circumstances, the skills through which cultural understanding may be fostered are unlikely to be a priority. In order to effectively integrate the lives and perspectives of learners, together with a content-based curriculum, a “wide repertoire of teaching skills” (Luke, 2005) is needed, along with attitude of mind conducive to such a challenge. In many cases “teachers do what they know how to do because that is what they learned when they were pupils at school and when they were trained. .... The basic challenge for current teacher education is to broaden the cultural horizon of teachers” (Braslavsky, 2003).

This thesis advocates the broadening of cultural horizons through the development of the skills needed to **use and apply learners’ stories and artefacts as an integral part of learning that embraces cultural understanding** alongside/and in the context of other learning. Specifically, this study explores ways adult teachers and learners, working in different contexts, describe and explain their cultural learning through the use of written accounts, personal stories and artefacts. It is based on the premise that people with cultural differences provide an important vehicle for learning that is relevant, significant, engaging and challenging. I have discussed the characteristics of such learning in chapter 1 and described it as that which is *humanitarian* in nature and intent. (glossary)

Through this thesis I am endeavouring to deepen my own and others, understanding of people, cultural stories and artefacts as means to enhance, empower, extend and enrich learning. I hope that the tools I have used and discussed may be adapted, extended and applied to other learning contexts beyond this work.

#### The selection of participants

The participants were selected through a process of “purposive and snowball sampling” as described by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2001) with elements of what Freebody describes as “expedient selection of people who were available, interested and engaged in relevant activities” (2003). It was intended that the participant group included a range of people from diverse backgrounds with some degree of cultural complexity who were representative of a cross section of society. Such a sample was considered likely to shed light on the concept of humanitarian learning. This form of selection does not claim to

be a random representation of a wider population, however it did allow for the voices of interested and engaged participants to be amplified and interpreted.

To some extent I trusted my intuition in gauging an appropriate number of participants to provide significant data without the number becoming unmanageable. Engaging participants and gathering data took place over several months until repetition in response was at “saturation point” (Glazer and Strauss, 1967).

The group of fourteen participants were people of different ages, ethnicity, gender, religion, family circumstances and perspectives who were willing to consider and describe their experience and perceptions of cultural diversity. They were asked to reflect deeply on what had been significant in shaping their cultural perspectives. The selected participants appeared to:

- be interested in the issues being examined
- include elements of cultural complexity from their life and experience
- have chosen vocations and vicarious experiences representative of individuals who are open to differences and diverse perspectives. Refer to Chapter 4 for evidence of this.

Although this research took place in New Zealand, six of the fourteen participants, have strong connections to cultures out of New Zealand and three of the group are either living in or affiliated with Europe, Africa or the Middle East. Two prospective participants agreed to participate, but their questionnaires were not completed. During the period when participants were actively being sought especially during conversations with friends and colleagues and general exchanges of ideas about my thesis topic, interest and empathy were evident resulting in willing participation. The final group of participants had ages spanning from 29 – 78. Each participant was unique and diverse, with life paths quite unlike one another’s. Beneath the data provided by each participant emerged noteworthy cultural and humanitarian connections across the group of participants.

In the early stages of this study, it became clear, that this work would be enriched if I too, explored significant events in my life, thereby gaining deeper understanding of my

own cultural development and humanitarian learning. This process of self-reflection gave me a personal contextual framework and enhanced my understanding of the contributions of the participants.

#### The reasons for this study

“We (educators) cannot change the world alone,  
but we can indeed contribute to changing it”

(Braslavsky, 2003).

Braslavsky’s words issue a simple and compelling challenge to educators with direct implications for teachers who, she suggests, must help foster “the knowledge, practices and values that reinforce the need, will and capacity of everybody to live together should be guaranteed” (Braslavsky, 2003). Such a challenge becomes more complex in a world where the mobility of citizens around the globe is increasing resulting in a growing number of people living and working in different countries. The need to respect cultural diversity has added new relevance to the concept of intercultural understanding as an essential element of lifelong learning.

The UN Article 26 suggests that a key role of teachers and education is to strengthen mutual understanding among peoples. Are teachers trained to do this? At the very least, teachers need to be able to adapt education more closely to the special characteristics of learners. They need to know their learners. In culturally diverse contexts this is both challenging and potentially rewarding.

As outlined in the literature review, many educators support the notion that *cultural understanding be given a position of importance in learning*. Research that deepens the collective understanding of ways to best implement humanitarian learning in multicultural environments needs to be encouraged and supported in an age where globalisation and interdependency are at unprecedented scale.

Inherent in cultural understanding is the need for open-mindedness and a willingness to see other ways of looking at the world. I would suggest that in every domain of human endeavour other perspectives matter. Understanding each other leads to better relationships, even when points of view are profoundly opposed. Culture is a broad and complex design for living, and understanding different approaches to living is one of

the most urgent challenges facing humanity. It is for this reason that I choose to use the word *humanitarian* in the context of this thesis. The need for learning that fosters human understanding is, I believe, humanitarian in character.

This research is designed to encourage some changes in ways to learning is approached that enable close connections with real experience, real lives and real people.

To that end it was important that the participants in this ethnographic, qualitative research should have benefited in some way through their involvement. Cohen et al described this as having “tactical authenticity” (2001). The data presented in Chapter 4 demonstrates that the participants gained a new awareness of their own cultural perspectives and a new sense of the possibilities artefacts and stories present in supporting cultural understanding. Some participants noted the intrinsic satisfaction of contributing towards this thesis:

“Thank you for giving me the opportunity to think about some of my life experiences from a different perspective. It has been very interesting and thought provoking.”  
Melissa

The participants used stories, written explanations and their photograph to demonstrate some possibilities of their use as teaching strategies, likely to be successful in fostering intercultural understanding and humanitarian learning.

In summary, the reason for this research is to explore some ways cultural connections can be fostered through artefacts, stories and photographs. Connections are examined in the context of people centred learning and learning that is accessible and engaging. It is designed to enrich and extend learning by broadening personal understanding and empowering educators to focus on what is personally relevant, and significant to the learner.

#### When and where this research took place

The mind maps in Chapter 1 pgs 14,15,16, trace, from their early roots, some of the ideas behind this thesis. Beginning with a childhood spent as a member of an ethnic minority in a small New Zealand town, eventually spending significant time at the United Nations International School in Manhattan and working among culturally

diverse teachers, many of the ideas encompassed in this thesis have incubated over time in diverse environments. Such ideas include:

**Early childhood-** valuing storytelling- education is important – friends from varied cultural and socio-economic, religious backgrounds being part of customs and traditions

**Teenage years** – Racial prejudice exists and is outrageously immoral – people can make a difference, education matters, unfamiliar places and people can be invigorating

**Adulthood** – Human energies can be more effectively and courageously harnessed to support intercultural understanding - cultures change and evolve

**More recently** my teacher training work with teachers in places such as Syria, Germany, New Zealand, Turkey, and Athens with teachers committed to helping foster intercultural understanding, has led to the development of this thesis. This was made more purposeful by the fact that many seemed to be struggling to find effective ways to help make meaningful connections with learners and colleagues different from themselves. In summary, this thesis has gradually evolved over the last 5 years both in my personal and professional life.

Although the ideas for this thesis began in many different places, and the initial outline was launched from Germany, I moved to New Zealand as a deliberate move to reconnect with my first culture as part of the learning process and to provide more of a possibility to see the issues through a New Zealand lens confirming my belief that the need for deepened intercultural understanding is universal.

The data gathering process took place in a range of locations, primarily the homes of participants, preceded by initial discussions in a range of places such as libraries, restaurants or work places. The participants completed their questionnaire independently, in a place and time of their own choosing. On several occasions informal discussions took place several times during the process. These discussions allowed me to encourage, support, and clarify as needed, while gaining further informal understanding of the participants.

### How this research has been tackled: the process and tools used

This thesis examines one way this may take place by focussing on: **how stories and artefacts connected directly to the lives of learners promote intercultural understanding and humanitarian learning.**

The research approaches used in this study were qualitative and included:

- A *semi-structured questionnaire* seeking written personal perceptions and memories of cultural learning
- The *selection of an artefact* of cultural significance and a written explanation of the story behind it.
- The *planning, composition and eliciting a photograph* of the participant with the chosen artefact and a written explanation of its significance

### *The rationale for the use of stories*

In a recent speech, Professor George Walker spoke of the importance of a good CSO, Chief Storytelling Officer, in every educational organisation saying, “They provide the focus, inspiration and meaning that the organisation has been crying out for” (Walker, October 2005). In his case he was speaking to Heads of International Schools about leadership. However, opportunities to tell, listen to, respond to and reflect on stories from fellow human beings across ages and cultures provides focus, inspiration and meaning of enormous importance in learning. “Using language connected with what we know and care about in constructivist pedagogy is a vehicle for thinking and communicating in ways that make a difference in the world” (Freire, (1993) and Wink (2002). Story telling provides opportunities for exactly this and can be motivated and further enhanced by the use of personal artefacts. The significance of such communication is compounded by the fact that “we are living in a time when the need for interpersonal understanding and cross-cultural competence has never been greater” (Nagel, 2002).

In the glossary I have described **storytelling** alongside **narration** as a way of purposefully connecting with others by bringing alive and reliving experience or sequences of events, ideas and journeys, real or imagined through the spoken, written word, mime or gesture. Conveying thoughts, ideas, adventures via a storyteller to an

audience. Story telling also can include elements of **narrative imagination**: (glossary) “the ability to think what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person’s story, and to understand the emotions and wishes and desires of that person” **Recollection and memory** are strongly connected with story telling, described as “what we know and understand from having experienced or understood before. Memories are the sum of stories we can recall and apply to new situations (glossary). **Dialogue** can play an important role in the story telling process in which an exchange of ideas takes place and the participants strive to increase understanding.

These complexities and possibilities encompassed in story telling make it a potentially powerful and effective tool for learning. Further points to support the use of story telling as a relevant and worthwhile tool for learning include: *accessibility, cost, authenticity, interaction, collaboration, reflection, and scope for confidence building.*

**Accessibility and cost:** Learning often involves interaction among people and it is likely that they share a learning focus with common elements. Inherent in these simple conditions is an ideal opportunity for sharing experiences that go beyond initial responses, invite deeper disclosure, interactive meaning sharing and meaning making. Such conditions could be regarded as a potentially productive and cost effective resource. With skilful facilitation there is scope for useful interaction and collaboration between the teller and the listener(s) to engage in clarification, and to respond in a variety of ways. Story telling provides useful opportunities for reflection, thinking back over events, thinking about them in different contexts and in new ways by both the teller and the listener. When human beings are face-to-face sharing genuine experiential accounts, the closeness and the immediacy of the exchange enhances levels of engagement and authenticity. The chance to be listened to, responded to, taken seriously and given time through telling personal stories, may boost and build confidence.

Story telling has great potential as a vehicle for learning. This research gave the participants an opportunity to recall, reflect and tell stories and in my role as researcher I had the chance to respond (in the form of this thesis) reflect, consider and use the findings in specific ways such as advance further and more specific use of such a teaching and learning strategy.

The participants in this thesis were asked to provide a 'self-photograph' with a selected artefact of cultural significance. This was accompanied by a written explanation of its significance and added some expected and unexpected dimensions to the data.

#### *The rationale for the use of photographs*

Rosalind Hurworth, (1995) the Director of the Centre for Program Evaluation at the University of Melbourne, Australia, has particular expertise in the use of qualitative research methods including the use of photographs. As a former President of the Association of Qualitative Research, she has written extensively about the use of Photo-Interviewing for research. Examples of Hurworth's work include her review of the use of "photo interviewing or photo elicitation" in which photos are used to "get participants talking about specific rituals," and the creation of "photo novella or picture stories to encourage participants to talk about day-to-day routines and events" and the creation of "photo voice" where "people create and discuss photos as a means of enabling community change" (1995, Hurworth). Her work provided a useful reference to guide and inform my use of photographs in this thesis.

The photographs used in this thesis enriched the data by:

- "adding another dimension to connections and understanding across cultures. and behaviours" (Entin, 1979, Wessels 1985).
- supporting participants in their written descriptions and "enhancing memory retrieval for the participants" (Aschermann et al. 1998).
- "making abstract concepts more easily understood" (Curry and Strauss 1994, Bender et al. 2001).
- promoting deeper levels of reflective thinking and as a means of seeing familiar data in unfamiliar ways, with greater effect than written responses alone may have done
- providing a meaningful perspective to an outsider/researcher.

Evidence can be seen in Chapter 4 of how the photographs worked with the written explanations creating a clear the message from the participants. The combination of visual and verbal language provided a means of 'getting inside' the issues and ideas conveyed by the participants. (Ings, 2004 describes this as "listening into" a person)

Photographs often inspire further communication (written or spoken) where the significance and meaning is further explained or clarified. This grounds the photographs in real experience enhancing their value. In the case of this thesis the participants wrote about their photographs. The use of the photographs challenged participants, triggered memories, and provided a catalyst for new perspectives and explanations.

#### *The rationale for the use of artefacts*

The participants were asked to think and write about the significance of cultural artefacts. These featured in the data only through the writing and the photograph. Therefore there is a strong correlation between the points made to support the use of photographs in this research with the use of artefacts. A personal artefact is described in the glossary as “an item or an object of personal significance, perhaps but not necessarily of historic significance, which can support understanding of what it is to be human.” Similarly, a photograph can act as a catalyst or a motivator for greater detail, perhaps in the form of a story. In this thesis the artefacts worked in conjunction with the photograph and the stories – all central to the data. The photographs suggest, confirm or create a particular relationship or connection between the participants and their selected artefact.

#### *The rationale for using a questionnaire and a range of qualitative approaches:*

The qualitative approaches of story telling, artefact sharing, and photography presentation and explanation were considered appropriate to this thesis for the following reasons.

- Woven into the data gathering methods was scope for some choice and flexibility of presentation and scope for personal interpretation by participants. (e.g. choice of artefact, composition of photograph, explanation of photograph). This is in keeping with Hauser’s (1983) suggestion that research instruments with a broad focus are more likely to accommodate the subjective nature of personal experience. The resulting data is rich, varied and differentiated in ways that may not have been possible through the use of quantitative approaches.
- The range of approaches used provided scope for the triangulation of data for individual participants and across the larger group. The questionnaire asked the

participants to respond to similar events in different ways and in different contexts of their lives. There was an element of deliberate overlap in the information being sought, providing scope for cross-referencing, reaffirming, puzzling over or consolidating the participant's voice. The photographs and the narrative descriptions added another means to do this.

- By writing about and organising the photographs of themselves, the participants were able to view themselves in several ways and perhaps clarify elements of their self-reflection.
- One intention was that the data would highlight patterns of behaviour and changes in perception across time making the choice of qualitative approaches appropriate (Wohlwill 1973).
- It seemed right and appropriate to have some degree of sincere, spontaneous and natural interaction with the participants as during the various stages of the research process. Such flexibility may not have been possible if a quantitative model had been used (Ings and Neutze).
- Despite the photographs providing a rich and interesting perspective, it must be noted that it is possible to read too much into a single photograph and there is a need to be cautious in this regard.

The combination of qualitative methods used in this case provided interesting, rich and appropriate research data.

#### *Why a questionnaire?*

Although I used a questionnaire as a straightforward data-gathering device, it also provided a semi-structured opportunity for the participants to write, to reflect and to think carefully about their cultural perceptions and life experiences. "Writing is one way for participants to tell their stories" (Gilbert, 1993; Oskowitz & Meulenberg-Buskens, 1997).

An advantage of written responses, such as those gathered in this thesis, is that participants provide the researcher their stories and words in an exact form, direct from the participants reflecting their stories. This requires the participants to be willing and able to write down their responses and take the time to develop them. In this case

participants were under no time pressure to complete their writing. This method provided rich data in an interesting and manageable form.

### *Ethical considerations*

Because the data gathering process involved photographs, making personal identification simple, it was particularly important to manage the consent issue sensitively, thoroughly and clearly. All participants agreed without hesitation to having their identity included. They all gave verbal and written agreement, formalised in the MUHEC consent form (see appendix 2) confirming that their questionnaires and photographs could be used without restriction in this thesis.

The people who became involved in this research were sufficiently familiar with me, with what the research entailed, and its purpose to have a high level of trust in the process and me. At the outset, critical issues were discussed with the participants in general terms. In all cases these were of interest and significance to them quite independently of their participation possibility. The issues were not hugely contentious to any one of them personally. They realised that the intention of the research was simply to deepen understanding and suggestions, which may improve practice for those working in culturally diverse contexts. The participants were interested in the ideas behind this thesis and generally wanted to support my endeavours to help deepen understanding of humanitarian learning.

In the data-gathering phase, the extent to which the participants divulged sensitive information was up to them. Had I considered the data to include even slight possibility of an indirectly hurtful or embarrassing recollection involving others, my intention was to have changed names and/or locations and noted the change alongside. In any case where I may have been unsure, my intention was to recheck the participant concerned and either alter or avoid using that particular piece of data. This need did not arise.

The only changes made were in the cases of Najwa and Paul whose conversation was recalled. In this case pseudonyms were used and this was noted. Neither of them were official participants.

I feel confident that respectful courtesy and cultural sensitivity characterised all interactions between the participants and myself.

I want to acknowledge my own inevitable and unavoidable “participation” by virtue of my interaction with the participants as researcher, which “takes place when the researcher and participants engage in processes together. This interaction is significant and it is important that the researcher's perceptions and experiences are recorded as data which, to some extent has influenced and co-created the results” (Deacon 2000).

My own voice, interpretation, understanding and personal reactions and biases to participant's data is noted in my responses and distinguished from that of the participants. Likewise, it is acknowledged that the research process undertaken provided merely a snap-shot of the lives, experiences and attitudes of the participants, inevitably altered to some extent by the act of intervention and cannot be considered anything grander or more profound than exactly what it is. The act of undertaking research is not a natural state. The brief glimpse through the window of research is only a moment in history, a “built environment of materials, interaction and ideas which continue to evolve quite independently after the completion of the orchestrated interaction” (Freebody 2003).

In humanitarian learning those involved are actively engaged in cultural reflection, showing one another why and how they are learning the way they are learning through descriptions, explanations and shared wonderings. This is reflected in the research methods used to gather data, the specific data sought and the climate of collection. The engagements integral to the research process used may be considered as modelling of humanitarian teaching strategies. There were no hidden agendas in this work. The participants knew I was investigating cultural diversity in learning and that I sought to better understand what they considered to be significant and memorable in their personal learning, especially in culturally diverse contexts.

#### *The data gathering process*

The participants were asked to recall and reflect upon significant learning in their lives. As noted by Schein, by “trying to understand the perceptions and feelings that arise in

critical situations” we develop the “ability to perceive the limitations of our own culture” (Schein, 1992).

The data was gathered according to the following sequence:

- Potential participants were approached by the researcher, either in person or by telephone depending upon location
- The research project was discussed using the information letter as a guide (see appendix 3)
- Prospective participant interest and willingness was ascertained
- The prepared consent form, information letter and questionnaire were distributed to willing participants, by hand, by mail or electronically (see appendix 2)
- Opportunities for clarification and discussion were provided as needed
- Participants were asked to provide culturally significant stories, recollections, a photograph of themselves with a selected artefact
- Cameras were provided as needed to enable participants to take their photograph.

**Question 1** asked the participants to briefly describe themselves in terms of personal characteristics and culture. This initial question was partly designed to put participants at ease – by ‘talking about their world’ (Davidson and Tolich 1999). It also provided a range of what is considered to be personally significant culturally, elicited by the words: “*Who are you?*”

**Questions 2 - 5** used broad parameters to give the participants an opportunity to apply their understanding of the term ‘cultural diversity’. They were asked to indicate the extent to which they had experienced cultural diversity in their childhood and how early experience was considered, e.g., positive or negative, significant, insignificant, or as learning experiences. These questions were designed to provide scope for making possible connections between early experience with diversity and comfort levels and trends later in life.

**Questions 6 and 7** were designed to indicate the extent of conscious, deliberate interaction with or avoidance of diverse cultures and to gain insights into the type and quality of cross-cultural interaction that is considered significant.

**Question 8** involved the selection of a significant cultural artefact, a photograph and the telling of the story behind to establish each participant's perspective regarding the potential of such activity for facilitating humanitarian learning.

**Questions 9 and 10** were designed to establish participant's future intentions and interest levels in ongoing cross-cultural interaction.

**Questions 11 and 12** were designed to indicate the perceived influence of parental, family, school and community roles and attitudes and their possible impact on the cultural development of the participants.

**The photographs and the explanatory 'stories'** resulting from question 8 formed an important part of the data gathered and provided "different mediating tools" (Vygotsky, 1978), adding an enriching visual dimension to the data. Cameras can be powerful research tools enabling participants to use themselves and photographs to represent perceptions and reflection conveying personal data through a new lens. Participants had agreed to have their photographs, identity and real names used in the research. (see *ethical considerations* on pg 64)

The most convenient time to take the photo with the selected artefact was discussed in the early stages of data gathering when I was with each of the participants. In some cases I took the photo at their request and under their instruction. This is a reminder that it is not possible to be completely unobtrusive – and that there is an inevitable interventionist role inherent in that of researcher. I was aware of this, especially when I was the photographer, although I was very careful not to advise participants about what they might select or apply any pressure on them in decision-making. In most I made myself available when it was a convenient time for the participants.

The deliberate choice to generate data through written questionnaires assured the participants the necessary time to consider their answers and reflect on their lives and

learning. They did not have to respond under pressure. The questions were devised so that layers of my research focus were revisited in slightly differing forms resulting in shades of responses and rich data. The questions provided the ‘shape or footing on which participants responded’ (Baker, 2003). They formed a guiding framework upon which each participant built their own cultural tapestry of reflections, thoughts and opinions.

The questionnaire provided rich “accounts of events” (Baker, 2003) rather than a straightforward report of perceptions. The participants generally took it very seriously and some described the self-reflective experience as challenging and personally enlightening, as noted in the following comment from a participant:

“Our cultural artefacts and stories are metaphors for who we are and who we have become through our culture intertwining with ourselves. Our personal choices are significant, within a bigger cultural context. The metaphors created by combining artefacts with our stories are indeed a vehicle for humanitarian learning across cultures. They are also very powerful for understanding the “other” as well as oneself. That is perhaps why it was so hard to choose, because it seemed so important to get it right and that is hard when you only have one choice” (Irene, 2004).

#### *Analysing, interpreting, & presenting the data*

The methods of an anthropologist analysing culture can be likened to those of a literary critic analysing a text: "sorting out the structures of signification and determining their social ground and importance" (Geertz, 1973). He suggests, “doing ethnography is like trying to read (in the sense of ‘construct a reading of’) a manuscript” (Geertz, 1973). The data was explored or ‘read’ for links and connections between the participant’s writing, their stories, their photographs and related written explanations. In chapter two, (pg 39) I refer to *related research, current practice and models* where I have noted relevant themes that provide useful categories for sorting and understanding data that have been used in my data analysis.

The participants' perceptions, reflections, and reactions were “sorted,” interpreted, and scrutinised for themes, categories and significant quotes. I sought to identify and categorise findings according to what emerged as important commonalities, distinctions,

common interactions or events. Categories were formed, guided by the voices in the data as well as those that emerged in other research and were applicable to this study.

In summary, I have attempted to make this qualitative research systematic and rigorous as well as innovative, creative, and dynamic. The blend of written answers, participant narrative and photograph selection and some informal discussion, has allowed the research to be engaging for those involved. It features multidimensional aspects of life, real experiences, significant relationships and a variety of authentic learning contexts.

### *Coherence and credibility*

The reliability and dependability of ethnographic, qualitative research such as this can be enhanced through the use of “multiple data – collection procedures or triangulation. Wiersma describes this as a “search for convergence of information” (in Freebody, 1995). The depth and breadth of the questions, the photographs, artefacts and stories provided rich data and “thick descriptions” (Geertz, 1973).

Work cited in Freebody (2003) provided the following reference points, which were useful in considering the validity and credibility of this study:

**The statement of the problem to be investigated** was discussed with each participant initially and described using identical wording on an information sheet/letter of invitation. The project intended to “explore ways people perceive and reflect on cultural diversity in their own experience, and their significance to teaching and learning”

**The ways in which I gained access to the data** depended on each participant completing an identical questionnaire preceded by an identical letter including instructions and an explanation of the purpose. (see appendix 3)

**The assumptions of the participants** were similar. The content of my responses to any queries were consistent. All interactions were open and transparent. Participants were free to withdraw at any time, until the data analysis was well underway. This was clearly explained in the letter.

**Understandings about the researcher’s role** - My role was explained in the initial information letter, as far as it was possible to predict at that stage. I explained how I would gather the data and that I would attempt to learn from it in ways that may result in improved practice and/or a deeper understanding of cultural diversity in teaching and learning. This may be described as “catalytic authenticity”(Le Compte & Preissle,

2003). The data provided an authentic connection to a possible change in practice of understanding.

From its inception, this thesis has been a constant source of professional and personal discussion and interaction. I have sought formal and informal feedback from people whose opinion I value, many who are engaged in education in culturally diverse settings. They have provided me with ongoing critique and review and I have been immersed in constant self-reflection and analysis as I wrestled with issues surrounding this complex and fascinating topic.

Paulo Freire's work, "Cultural Action for Freedom," (1972) included useful points of reference in which I have adapted and explained below in relation to this work.

**Design flexibility** – I avoided being locked into rigid designs that may have lessened responsiveness. There were very few occasions when I made small adjustments to the design of the inquiry as understanding deepened or the situation changed. In almost all cases this was to accommodate the particular needs of participants. For example, one participant completed her questionnaire and wanted to explain her artefact to me using a tape recording. Another felt that questions 3 and 7 were similar and wanted to submit an answer to only one of these. One participant was unable to provide a photograph because the artefact she referred to was in another country at the time. In each of these cases the requested accommodation was made

**Inductive analysis** – I became deeply engrossed in the issues raised as I immersed myself in the details of the data to identify important categories, dimensions and interrelationships. The open and overlapping questions as well as the range of qualitative approaches contributed to the data being rich and insightful. I am aware of the fact that at no time was I able to be fully neutral to the issues raised. (Described in Freire's work as **empathetic neutrality**, see below) I unabashedly care about the issues raised, I am interested in them and cannot help but respond whether it is subconsciously or in ways intended to maximise my impartiality.

**Qualitative Data** – the data gathered captured people's personal perspectives and experiences of critical learning events. Each participant included a personal story of cultural significance, selected an artefact and provided deep and full responses to

questions asked. (Further reference to the qualitative nature of this research can be found on pages 59 -64)

**Personal contact and insight** was established and maintained through direct contact with participants. A relationship based on trust and respect allowed for candid responses and prompted participants in sharing personal perceptions of cultural diversity from some significant life experiences. Insights drawn from my personal and professional experience were helpful in the analysis of data for interpreting the data and for gleaning the potential for and evidence of authentic intercultural understanding or humanitarian learning embedded within it.

**Empathetic neutrality** I endeavoured, as far as possible, to set aside my own cultural and educational knowledge and values to ensure a clear focus on how participants showed **their** understanding in their responses. I sought to articulate what connects participant's responses and actions with their knowledge. Green and Bloom, (2003) described this process as writing the "cultural grammar" of the data collected. Personal experiences and empathetic insight were expressed, but as far as possible a neutral stance was maintained towards the findings that emerged. The focus was on the interplay between the issues raised in the questions and the personal responses of the respondents. That said, I am sure I have undergone significant change during the process of this study. This must have had some bearing on some aspects of the work. For example, during the research process the use of the word "culture" became more clearly defined and used more appropriately for the purpose of this work. Use of the concept "humanitarian learning" emerged as appropriate, relevant and helpful as the research evolved. In this way "I pursued new paths of discovery as new understandings emerged" (Freire, 1972).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Presentation of Data

In the gathering of this data I was hoping to gain insights into what stands out in the experiential memories of the participants that represents powerful learning that is humanitarian in nature. I wanted to see whether any common themes emerged with some degree of global relevance.

The raw data from each participant included:

- personal responses to each of the 12 questions which include memories of significant experiences
- a photograph of themselves accompanying an artefact selected for its personal or cultural significance.

The participants were asked to convey what *they considered to be significant and worth sharing*. The data is presented in the form of direct quotes from the participants. Each participant has been allocated a number so that in Chapter 5 easy reference can be made to the person and the question numerically e.g. 1:4 refers to *Question one and Participant 4*.

Following each question and its set of data I have written a brief response in which I note common themes or significant points especially as they relate to humanitarian learning and the role of artefacts and stories in this process.

### QUESTION 1

Briefly describe 'who you are.' Consider personal characteristics, how others may see you, and how you see yourself – provide a brief glimpse of the essence of yourself, include ethnicity or any special aspect of your culture(s) as you wish.

Name	Responses
1. Esther	"I am a wife and mother. I am Samoan, bi-lingual and bi-cultural. I am a manager, a researcher and a Quaker. I have a very strong social conscience, which drives my work in the community around social justice for women and children's, peace and the environment. I have a great sense of humour. I am forthright but sensitive and have a 'can do' attitude. I am a family 'devotee'."
2. Trish	"I am a writer, a skier, a traveller a wife, a mother, daughter, a sister, a yoga-person, a friend, a yachting, a person greedy for life and loving events. I am a 62-year-old blonde (with a little expensive help) Pakeha New Zealander. I am blessed with good health and energy and a very positive role model for aging in the form of my 96-year-old mother. I love my husband and my 3 sons and now I feel my life expanding with new beginnings, with two daughters-in-law from Japan and Australia and a new book publishing project"
3. Rebecca	"I'm outgoing, good-natured, the eldest of 5 children and approximately 40 grandchildren, part Maori and a combination of other ethnicities. I'm responsible, sensitive, and considerate, creative, talkative and can laugh at myself."
4. Melissa	" I am of English, Scottish and Maori (Tu Whare Toa) descent, a wife, mother of 4 boys, an artist, a teacher; with a strong interest in creativity especially the visual arts, history and story-telling. I have an interest in architecture. I am very interested in people, communication and ideas. Bookish!"
5. Timi	"I am Hungarian, brought up in Romania. I developed a great desire for freedom, which led me to leave my home country and embrace New Zealand. I am a pharmacist but find my balance in dancing. I am always open for people and other cultures. My goal is to speak more languages and travel. I am energetic, optimistic and an idealist who thinks that each of us can make a difference wherever we are and whatever we do"
6 Adrienne	"I am a New Zealand European. I believe I have strong values and principles and work hard to maintain them. I love people and strongly believe in the importance of developing good tangible relationships with people of all races and creeds. I love to work with those who struggle with difficulties in their own lives. I love the diversity of people and what they can bring to each other's lives. I love the pride they hold for their own culture and feel saddened when that pride becomes clouded through actions beyond their control. I would love to see more of the world and work in places where I could make a difference. My family is the most important aspect of my life. I embrace the joys, the exasperation and the challenges"

**QUESTION 1 continued**

7 Andrea	<p>“I need to be cared for and care for others. I am sensitive, assertive and self-assured. I am passionate about my beliefs but that passion also opens up to thinking about how my beliefs can be and I want them to be challenged. I love to laugh and love to cry. People enjoy my energy but can be overwhelmed by it. I have a deep connection to the earth and natural aesthetics. My view of education is in the broadest sense, encompassed by my need to share with and keep motivating teachers, to provide real life learning experiences for children in environments beyond the classroom. My family and friends are crucial to my feeling needed, loved and respected. The diversity of those dear to me is the essence of where I am now”</p>
8 Denice	<p>“I am a New Zealander of mixed cultural background – Scottish, Irish, Maori, and Italian. I am in the mature aspect of my life with a grown family of sons. I see myself as an enthusiast, with a wide range of interests with skills in the visual arts. Travel awakened my interest in the pattern-based art I now make. I have no idea how I appear to others. As a teacher it’s anybody’s guess! I feel reserved myself and have had to ensure that I have built a base of self-confidence from which I can function.”</p>
9 Ray	<p>“I am a white Caucasian, New Zealand male baby boomer, global nomad, who at the age of 53 sees himself as someone working until he dies. I am introspective, somewhat pessimistic and sensitive. I have chosen to live and work in international settings, involving education, for the last 25 years. I have a special affinity to the Greek culture.”</p>
10 JoAn	<p>I am a mixture of Irish, German, Spanish, Chinese ethnicity. I was born in Japan where I lived for 12 years before coming to New Zealand where I live now as a New Zealand citizen. I have a New Zealand husband and children. It is very hard to comment on how others see me. I regard my upbringing as an excellent foundation, equipping me to relate to other individuals from differing backgrounds. I think I deliberately seek diversity in life.”</p>
11 Tom	<p>“I am 100% Pakeha, raised in Christchurch and never even saw a Maori (except once) until I was a teenager.”</p>
12 Maggie	<p>“I am a Primary School Principal. I am a passionate educator specialising in Pre-school and primary education. I love creating unique and special school environments, putting together dynamic teaching teams to create the very best for children. Friends and colleagues see me as successful. I enjoy new challenges and have taken on challenging schools across a variety of deciles. I feel very fortunate and happy. I see myself as an educational leader.”</p>
13 Laura	<p>“I am a traveller but not a tourist. As a Canadian expatriate I am able to travel throughout the world with few visa/border limitations and I have acquired through hard work the means to do so. I am multilingual and make the effort to use my languages when I can to communicate with many different people. I am a teacher and learner. I am a thinker. I think others see me as competent, intelligent and serious. I have high standards for myself and for others. I am Caucasian, which doesn’t really figure in how I see myself, but certainly impacts on how I am seen by and treated by others. I am a sister, a daughter, and a wife. I am also a friend.”</p>

**QUESTION 1 continued**

14 Irene

"I am a mother, wife, daughter, sister and friend. I have become older but the world still looks the same, looking out from inside. I am more just a person in the world than a citizen in a place. Sometimes I am overwhelmed by the cruelty in our world and confused by the complexity of it all. Mostly I am content, and I enjoy my moments of wonder."

My thoughts and responses/ Common themes

At the heart of this question was "who are you?"

The participants generally seemed to have a very positive outlook on life with a clear sense of self. Many references were made to their families, ethnicities and nationalities. What was striking to me was the wide range of additional defining characteristics. Among these were social concerns, environmental anxieties, humour, peace and conflict, sport and health, learning, the arts, travel, levels of confidence, love and respect, interest and awareness of cultural diversity and the desire for freedom.

Most of these are of global significance and would matter to people of the world irrespective of age or nationality. They have the potential to provide catalysts for learning about people through people.

## QUESTION 2

To what extent, as a child, did you experience cultural diversity? Comments:

Name	Responses
The responses were widely spread across the options: <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; font-size: small;"> <span>Never (2)</span> <span>Rarely (3)</span> <span>Sometimes (5)</span> <span>Often (2)</span> <span>Constantly (2)</span> </div>	
1 Esther	“Constantly I was brought up in a small town and attended a church that was made up of mostly Samoan and Cook Island people. Many of my friends were Palagi and Maori”
2 Trish	“Rarely” (no further response)
3 Rebecca	“Often My mother is of Maori, English /Irish descent, my father of Irish, Tongan and German descent. We have always spent a lot of time on the Marae, so learned Maoritanga early in life.”
4 Melissa	“Sometimes In childhood our European and Maori heritage was equally celebrated and valued. Other cultures were introduced through myths, legends and stories and visual books, and art works, museums and friends of the family.”
5 Tami	“Constantly Living in Romania as a Hungarian I had the opportunity to meet people with completely different cultures.”
6 Adrienne	“Never – Rarely I don’t recall anything of significance. We were brought up in a state housing area which was a new estate built in the 50’s. People were of the same poor background, not multi-cultural, working class. We didn’t socialize outside the family because of transport difficulties among others. Our world was quite insular but ‘normal’ to us.”
7 Andrea	“Sometimes I lived in rural NZ and remember very distinctly from a young age the cultural diversity in my life: the shearers that came twice a year (not the black singlets!), we had a beautiful northern Maori W.T., who lived with us for 5 years (she and her family are always part of our family celebrations) the Dutch and Swiss community who were part of the school community and their cultural diversity within our New Zealand community. I remember distinctly how families I shared time with seemed so different to mine. Another memory is not being allowed to attend bible class at school because we were Catholic. The repercussions by other children towards us made me wonder about beliefs from quite an early age.”
8 Denice	“Sometimes As a middle-class European, growing up in Hawkes Bay, few other cultures were referenced. My 1/8 <sup>th</sup> Maori heritage was kept from me until I was an adult. Memories of my paternal grandmother reinforced that background and as an adult the culture fascinated me.”

QUESTION 2 continued	
9 Ray	<p>“Sometimes As a child I spent very little time in culturally diverse settings. Since leaving New Zealand in 1977 my life has been enriched by living, working and travelling in culturally diverse regions, cities and towns.”</p>
10 JoAn	<p>“Often I attended an international school in a multicultural, pluralistic setting. My childhood was rich in a variety of cultural experiences.”</p>
<p>“Never” 11. Tom (no further response)</p>	
12 Maggie	<p>“Never I have circled never because my only contact was so minimal. There was one Maori girl at my primary school. All other family contacts were New Zealand European.”</p>
13 Laura	<p>“Rarely Although in the next question I discuss moving to a new town as encountering a new culture, besides this exposure, I can count on my hands the number of students in my elementary school who came from a different cultural backgrounds and I remember them all vividly. The Greek son of one restaurateur, the Lebanese son of the other. The three Laotian adoptees down the street, the Bangladeshi adoptees across town and the Caucasian – Anglo girl whose parents were divorced and who lived with her dad. Not all of these children were my friends but I was fascinated by them.”</p>
14 Irene	<p>“Sometimes My parents were immigrants who tried desperately to assimilate quickly. My rare encounters with their home and families were my most important culturally diverse experiences. A trip to Mexico with my grandmother was my first introduction to poverty, her insensitivity was an almost greater shock.”</p>

### My thoughts and responses/ Summary of common themes

I hoped to find out what the participants understood by the term cultural diversity and what, if anything stood out in their memory as significant.

The main recollections concerned people, interactions or institutions that in hindsight seemed different, unfamiliar, exciting, interesting or contentious. Generally these comments about cultural diversity were recalled in a neutral matter-of-fact tone. Most respondents selected “sometimes” to indicate the *extent* of cultural diversity in their childhood experiences. This may suggest children’s ability to adapt easily to cultural differences. The examples remembered were connected with school friends of different cultural backgrounds (religious, ethnic, nationality) church and bible-class, ancestry, heritage, cross-generational learning, family, travel and immigration, work, friends, visitors, personal circumstances and social class structures.

### QUESTION 3

Does a particular event in your early life stand out in your memory when you were in a culturally unfamiliar situation? Please think about such a time and describe or depict the event or situation. Include significant associated feelings, values or attitudes.

Names	Responses
1 Esther	<p>“My very first memory of school was sitting on the mat being called a “black nigger.” I had no understanding of what that meant but I knew it was negative by the actions of the children in my class. My memories of those early years were unhappy. The whole school environment felt to me like a place I did not want to be. However, they were my earliest memories. I also have memories of a teacher who was just wonderful, very caring and in many ways I felt he favoured me. I was an excellent reader – good at language and he would send me off to the new-entrants class to read to them – I guess that planted a seed for me as I later trained as a teacher and loved it.”</p>
2. Trish – chose not to include an especially sensitive response –	
3 Rebecca	<p>“Strange, but the particular incident I recall is my great aunts funeral. It was the first time I remember a ‘Pakeha’ funeral. (Every other funeral was on my Mum’s side – at the Marae. It was strange and unsettling and sad to go and visit the body in a funeral director’s room – the coffin in the corner. Not the same warmth and closeness associated with a Tangi. That aunt was like my Dad’s grandmother ‘til she died – then it was quite different. It’s showed me the difference in cultural views on death”</p>
4 Melissa	<p>“When I was 13, I was taken to Hawaii, then San Francisco, then Los Angeles. The contrast of the high rise on the beaches of Hawaii, and then the sprawl of L.A / Disneyland, consumer culture) was a shock to a child raised in 60’s NZ with an almost country childhood. (We lived on the edge of a farm in Auckland and had holidays in the Coromandel coast and a Raglan Hill country sheep farm). I felt overwhelmed, lost and confused. Less so in San Francisco as there was a harbour like Auckland. Now in 2000’s the consumer shopping, plastic culture is engulfing NZ and it is very sad to see.”</p>
5. Timi	<p>“The first time I went to visit a Romanian family what was particularly striking was the atmosphere in that family comparing it to my home: the music was different – the rapport between them, the house, the pictures, rugs and other specific Romanian artworks.”</p>
6. Adrienne	<p><i>(Adrienne recalled an adult experience, not one from childhood.)</i></p> <p>“At the school where I was teaching, I took a team of children and teachers to visit a school of mainly Pacific Island students and where the language and Whanau tradition was immersed within the culture of the school. As the leader of this group I was expected to be involved with the special welcome ceremony. I sat with the ‘important people’ watching with interest as the kava ceremony unfolded. I sampled the offerings and realised to my alarm that I was expected to respond, a task I was completely ill prepared for. I bumbled my way through, quite inappropriately and yet the hosts never showed the slightest hint of negative judgement of my efforts.</p> <p>I was impressed by the pride of the student hosts as they presented the Kava ceremony so expertly. I felt privileged and honoured to drink the Kava. I remember this occasion often especially the communal spirit that is so much part of the Pacific Island cultures.”</p>

**QUESTION 3 continued**

7 Andrea	<p>“No not really! But I would like to describe an event where a cultural attitude impacted on me. For my 10<sup>th</sup> birthday my mother decided that I was to invite all the girls in my class. I was really happy with that too. So all arrived including two Maori friends, What I remember was the reaction of some of the other girls, the sniggering, and the amazement and to some degree confusion. What is significant is that the <i>only</i> present I can remember is one that Diane H. gave me, a brown paper bag with a packet of lovely embroidered cotton handkerchiefs. Somehow this touched a chord and I am sure this has an impact on the guidance and love I give my own children about respect and appreciation for diversity”</p>
8 Denice	<p>“Growing up in an orchard we dealt with a Chinese greengrocer and I would love to sit in the back of his shop, taking in all the diversity of languages, food and objects. I felt like an outsider, and was but the Chinese would show me objects and give me food in a most polite and respectful way. I was welcomed but kept at a distance. As an older girl I befriended a Maori girl in my class who lived across the road from my grandmother. Their standard of living was poor. They worked at the sawmill next door and would always welcome me. I had a lot of fun there. My mother banned me from ever going there so I had to sneak. However I spent a lot of time with my Scottish Nana. She had piles of National Geographic – which were a huge influence visually and photos on the wall reinforcing my desire to travel and baiting my curiosity.”</p>
9 Ray	<p>“Landing in Singapore, after my first ever plane ride in 1977 was unforgettable. My senses were confronted by an array of sights, smells and visions I found exhilarating. It was my first realisation that in New Zealand I had been deprived of global citizenship.”</p>
10 JoAn	<p>“I remember being asked by my teacher when I was about 6 or 7 years old, “what are you?” I replied, “I am a girl.” Her response was something like “No, what are you?” I was totally confused and desperate to give a right answer! She, the teacher, must have seen that and asked, “What is your mother? What is your father?” I remember clearly replying: “My mother is a girl and my father is a boy. And I am a girl.” The expression and gesture of the teacher left me in doubt of the validity of my answer. I remember describing what had happened to my father. He explained the concept of ethnicity to me. I remember feeling different from that time forward.”</p>
11. Tom	<p>“As a teenager I was very shy. I remember a Father from church would visit our house and I felt totally removed from him.”</p>
12 Maggie	<p>“Marrying into a Maori family. My mother did not cope with me marrying into a Maori family. This was a huge sadness for me. My mother had not been part of things Maori.”</p>
13 Laura	<p>“When I was 7 my family moved from a town in South Ontario to another. Although the ‘culture’ in the traditional, racially or nationally linked way it was the same, I didn’t know how to negotiate in this town. My first memory is of being introduced to the class by the principal, everyone staring at me and no-one smiling. The next memory is of being in the playground a few months later and hearing a playmate speaking unkindly about my homemade dress. This is when I started noticing that my classmates all had store-bought clothes and that it was important in this town. Looking back, the socio-economic profile of my new town was higher. I remember trying to fit in but being excluded because my history wasn’t there. I felt like an outsider. My family couldn’t afford what others could.”</p>

14 Irene	<p>“When our housekeeper, (Jamaican) got married I went with my brother – I was perhaps 15. Aside from the minister we were the only white people there. It was a powerful moment. I was thrilled by the easygoing nature and welcoming attitude of everybody. The cook from our school and her husband were there and he taught me the cha cha. Peter and I danced all night. It was quite wonderful.”</p>
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My thoughts and responses/ Summary of common themes

What struck me about these recollections was the evocative nature of the writing. The tactile, sensory language used conjured up a remarkable depth of feeling and atmospheric awareness for me, despite these being mere cameo glimpses into the lives and experiences of the participants.

The participants were asked to focus on associated feelings, values and attitudes. I was moved at their honesty and candour. From these accounts the importance of sensory experience in learning and of engagement on an emotional and affective level is underscored. Such learning in this domain adds a depth and dimension that elevates what is learned to what is remembered as significant.

I am aware of the potential within these cameo recollections for greater exploration and for the development of poignant learning engagements across cultures.

#### QUESTION 4

These days, to what extent do you come into contact with cultural diversity in your regular life?

Names	Responses
The responses varied considerably from: <b>sometimes or often</b> (5) to <b>constantly</b> (9) No response (1)	
1 Esther	<p>“Constantly I work with Pacific and Palagi people mostly but the work environment ‘on the whole’ is mostly mono-cultural in terms of the power structures and institutional culture</p>
2 Trish	<p>“Constantly /We have a Japanese daughter-in-law. Our eldest son, Hugh, has lived in Japan for 12 years and is advanced in the martial art Ai-ki-do. I have visited Hiromi’s family by myself, the first western woman to be in their home. Recently Hiromi’s father stayed with us in Auckland, the first time he has ever left Japan. One learns many things about oneself and values, as well as new ways of viewing the world, by these exchanges. For example, although we are both island nations, our attitude to the sea is completely different. I embrace the wide horizons of my life and the joy of sun sparkling on organza waters. In Japan, beauty is found more within a quiet garden or temple courtyard. (Of course this is a terrible generalisation)</p> <p>When everything in an environment is totally ‘strange,’ different it teaches you a lot about what you value, where your own cultural conditioning and life experience has maybe led to barriers /boundaries that you find a struggle to relinquish. For example, freedom to explore, travel, have a degree of independence. On a minor comic level acceptance of eating habits can take some coming to terms with. My son is a loud and proficient ‘slurper’, everything from soup to noodles. This is trivial. But in family life little irritations can cause ridiculous rifts. Fortunately our family has a well-developed sense of humour and acceptance of difference.</p> <p>I know as another example, that my daughter-in-law finds it really hard at a deep level of personal affront, to see outdoor shoes worn inside. There was a time when we were building our home that she and Hugh slept on a mattress on the living room floor. I couldn’t understand why she washed their sheets so often, but the thought of our shoes on the floor was anathema to her.”</p>
3 Rebecca	<p>“Often/ I still have a lot of involvement in Maori culture. I also work with people of different ethnicities: Chinese, Malaysian, Pakistani, Indian, Sri Lankan – in a factory and office environment. We need to be aware of cultural sensitivities from time to time – and it makes shared lunches interesting and yummy!”</p>
4 Melissa	<p>“Sometimes Usually as a result of families of friends of my children. Special events i.e. Chinese New Year and Hindu festivals – also through friends.”</p>
5. Timi	<p>“Constantly Working In New Zealand in a pharmacy I am in contact with different cultures all the time. It is a challenge to understand my patients and make myself understood overcoming the language and other cultural barriers.”</p>

**QUESTION 4 continued**

6. Adrienne	“Often / In my job – teaching and consultancy and where we live we have many cultures within our community. Socialising – as we meet more and more people the dynamics of our social group has changed. I have noticed is that within some groups are people I can invite to join a particular group who may not be as well accepted by another group, simply because of the beliefs and values of that second group – sad really.”
7.	“Constantly/ I feel absolutely blessed to be able to have contact in a multi-diverse community. This is in terms of beliefs, practices, interests, family, and media. I am in a wonderful community that fosters and celebrates this diversity.”
8. Denice	“Constantly / As a teacher in North Shore Auckland Secondary school I experience cultural diversity all day. There are 32 Nationalities with a large Asian population. My suburb is full of South Africans and we exchange students from Brazil, Germany, Italy and Indonesia. They all seem to mix without obvious disrespect or strife. Restaurants in our suburb cover a wide range of ethnicities.”
9. Ray	“Constantly/ I have chosen a career pathway in international education, which provides me with daily intercultural experiences and riches. At the United Nations School in New York there were 110 nationalities among students and 60 among staff”
10. JoAn	“Sometimes Mainly through teaching at school where I spend a great deal of time. Contact with cultural diversity depends on who I have the opportunity to rub shoulders with.”
11. Tom	“Constantly I very regularly seek out culturally diverse situations. (Chinese – English)”
12 Maggie	“Constantly Increasing cultural diversity now enriches my life. My new community on Waiheke Island has a wide cross section of cultures – English, German French, American and others.”
13 Laura	“Constantly Living and working in Beijing I am situated in a Chinese urban culture. At school, I am surrounded by people (students and colleagues) from a variety of cultures.”
14 Irene	“Sometimes Toronto is a very multi-cultural city. I attended a Muslim funeral recently. Jewish, Christian and other ceremonies are quite frequent. My travels offer some opportunities. Mainly, our city is great source of such experiences”

My thoughts and responses/ Summary of common themes

What interested me in these responses was the great range and variety of culturally diverse opportunities that are woven into the everyday lives of the participants. The implications for humanitarian learning are significant. I am reminded that close examination of our own environment and lives is an appropriate and worthwhile vehicle through which we might learn how better to live together.

### QUESTION 5

Is the culturally diverse experience (you referred to in question 4) one purposely chosen or did it just take place incidentally? (Explain if needed)

Name	Responses
1 Esther	“The purpose of my work is research on specific groups of people who are “non-mainstream.” Therefore the experience is purposely chosen.”
2. Trish	“The example I chose in Question 3 has, of course, been chosen not by me, but by our son. My choices lie in my response to this situation, whether I accept and embrace and value it, weaving new patterns into my life, or reject any change. I acknowledge that the difference I embrace and want to expand in the years ahead is not difficult for me. There is nothing I detest, or cannot accept.”
3 Rebecca	“A little bit of both. I’ve always loved travelling and am intrigued by different cultures, languages, ways of life, arts, perspectives on life and people. I often go out of my way to seek difference in holiday destinations, restaurants, cuisine, friends.”
4 Melissa	“As a result of working with and socialising with families in school communities. Friends and friends of friends and relatives.”
5. Timi	“My husband and I purposely choose New Zealand as our future country to fulfil our dreams and live freely in a developed country.”
6 Adrienne	“A combination of my job which I chose to do – (see question 6) and this involves some incidental exchanges as well.”
7 Andrea	“I am not sure- at the beginning it was purposely chosen. I would say while living in New Zealand before going abroad, we definitely chose to seek out opportunities to share cultural diversity. We had contact with Europeans travelling through New Zealand and these contacts were made on our initial overseas sojourn in late 70’s. Within the local community we made a conscious decision to recognise and celebrate New Zealanders and all that this brings. In later years, we (the family) decided to move to other climes and headed to Europe to explore the cultural background of my husband and give our children connection to this part of their heritage. This was a conscious decision. As a result I could never have imagined the doors that opened for me to experience cultural diversity. My work with the IBO has been one that I have chosen to continue more intensely for a short while to gain further understanding of cultural diversity which I feel will impact on the place I decide to rest my shoes!”
8 Denice	“Just happens. I find people of other races do keep separate and it is difficult to enter their circle. I try to communicate with my Korean neighbours but it is hard.”

**QUESTION 5 continued**

9 Ray	"I most determinedly set out to be an international educator."
10 JoAn	"Both. Sometimes people approach me (incidental to me). Other times I approach others (purposely chosen by me)"
11 Tom	"Purposely- I have experienced a life time of New Zealand - China contacts"
12 Maggie	"Because I am setting up a new school I am working at meeting people in the community. This was a deliberate choice."
13 Laura	"The exact composition of diversity around me was not chosen (it would be very difficult to control) but I purposely chose to live and work with a variety of different cultures."
14 Irene	"Mainly incidental -- Toronto is amazing that way. My daughters (one born in Vienna, one in Toronto-and each with Austrian heritage) marched in the Canada Day Parade -- for Finland, preceded by China, followed by the Ukraine."

My thoughts and responses/ Summary of common themes

I was moved by the straightforward and pragmatic honesty in these answers. The participants gave thoughtful and reflective responses although it seemed that the question did not command strong responses either way.

The answers suggest that culturally diverse experiences take place both intentionally and unintentionally, by accident and by design.

The process of thinking and writing about such experiences is useful and serves to raise levels of awareness and appreciation of cultural complexity and richness that should not be avoided in learning.

**QUESTION 6**

Can you think of a time when you deliberately embraced, or avoided, an aspect of a culture different from your own? -Explain

Name	Responses
1 Esther	<p>“Many times- During meetings. Mostly I detest instructional meetings because they are often not conducted in a manner I would consider respectful i.e. the people interjecting, speaking over one another, disrespectful and very individualistic. When I was elected Chair of the Board of Trustees of my son’s primary school I made a point of always working towards consensus on every decision and not voting. I am happy to say during my term as Chair, we never once voted on a decision, rather every decision we made was on consensus and had a commitment to ensure everyone had a buy-in to this sort of decision making and once they had made a commitment- the process was easy. I think this desire came not only from my Samoan side as that they way we made decisions, but also the ‘Quaker’ way. Board members saw it as a way, which built better relationships, rather than polarising people, which voting can do.</p> <p>The other aspect of Palagi culture that I avoid is their lack of ‘sharing and collectivity’ I certainly don’t buy into their notions of corporate success – meaning ‘profit’ before people. I certainly embrace the Pacific notion of hospitality and ‘aiga’ - close and extended. I still participate in traditional gift giving but with certain changes.”</p>
2 Trish	<p>“For 25 years (at least) I have had a love affair with France. I have a French conversation lesson once a week and have visited France many times. Our 3 sons have been on private exchanges to two French families. In 1990 I enrolled in a 3-week Maori immersion course. (I wish I had done it sooner). In my work for TV3’s ‘You and Me’ project at that time I sought out as many culturally diverse groups as possible, especially Pacific Island and Maori.</p> <p>Our Japanese daughter in law has enlarged our world. I have been alone and with my husband to Japan four times in the last decade. I have begun Japanese language lessons. I am the only western woman who has visited my son’s in-laws home in Japan.”</p>
3 Rebecca	<p>“Mainly when I was travelling – being aware of keeping covered, wearing sarongs in Turkey, Thailand and Malaysia: immersing myself in French culture (food, wine, long lunches, history, language, while living there four and a half months – it was fantastic! And of course sunbathing topless in Italy – when in Rome as they say!”</p>
4 Melissa	<p>“I had a great childhood, although in the city, we lived on the edge of a farm, had beach camping holidays and farm holidays. Travelled a lot in ‘wild’ New Zealand natural environment and a love of education and design and positive creative ideas and positive values were instilled in us as kids. So whenever I meet ideas and cultures based on profit, selfishness, aggression and greed I have deliberately tried to avoid them. Usually I have chosen a path of positive creativity and production and support. The world is often a place of suffering for many and you have to choose to stay actively positive.”</p>

**QUESTION 6 continued**

5. Timi	<p>“Being at the university at the moment I have a chance to meet people from China, Japan, South Africa, Middle East and New Zealand. I am happy to chat with them and I especially enjoy the workshops on different topics when the cultural background really has an impact on our thinking.”</p>
6. Adrienne	<p>“Working in Qatar in education reform, I learned a lot about such a diverse culture. I would often engage in discussion with a woman who was the principal of the school I was helping to reform. She was very quiet but on some days she would openly discuss life and customs for women in Qatar, so long as there were no men within hearing distance. We would compare notes about our different cultures and would both become quite involved when discussing the complexities of each other practices. We discussed the tradition of marriage and she discussed her experiences from betrothal to now, 15 or more years later. I struggled as I listened to her talk of things we, in our culture, would never tolerate, yet she had no choice. I found it difficult not to show my amazement when she spoke of how as a young woman (in fact, as a teenager she was betrothed to an older man, how she could not pursue her dreams, how she cried, and how sick she became and yet how she is passing this culture down to her own daughters. Until I lived with these people for a few months, I would have passed judgement over the fact that the traditions continue to be handed down from generation to generation. Now I realise that small changes, which we don't get to hear of, are being made and that to understand the significance of the small changes is enormous for a society such as this. I have enormous respect and immense sadness when I left Qatar. I could no longer listen to her stories or work and learn within her culture. - I realised I was becoming someone whom she could share confidences with, without judgement and it seemed to help her on some days when she was burdened with upsets.”</p>
7. Andrea	<p>“Yes! There are certain foods that are particular to cultural celebrations and everyday life that cannot partake of. I am always so aware that a refusal could offend and this is a deep dilemma for me for I know the alternative may offend more! And I think an appreciation and respect for the culture that I own is another factor, - that is tolerance.”</p>
8. Denice	<p>“I aim to include Maori culture when I can. Maori patterns and Maori artists feature in my teaching and my artwork. Living in South Africa in Johannesburg meant a lot of interesting cultural occasions. I worked for a Jewish dentist, lived in an African suburb and generally tried to fit in. Afrikaana's are not an easy group to affiliate with. I had African maids. (Yes, its true) and learned what I could of their home situations. I gleaned this: ‘The more I learn, the less I know.’”</p>
9. Ray	<p>“In my first year in Cairo, I spent most spare time visiting new places, enjoying new and at times positively dangerous experiences such as horse riding at dawn in the desert, entering ancient tombs not open to the public, riding the local subway system, eating at obscure restaurants, photographing the lives of people still embodying an ancient civilization in their daily lives in remote villages”</p>
10. JoAn	<p>“Not ever avoided. Definitely embraced. I think this has largely been dependent on other people's reactions to either my mother or my brother. If I perceived a person to be negative towards them, I aligned myself openly and proactively to counter the reaction.”</p>

**QUESTION 6 continued**

11. Tom	“Never avoided. Very frequently and deliberately I have embraced from the age of 25 years onwards connections with Hong Kong”
12 Maggie	“When I moved to live in Gisborne at 20 year of age I met my future husband who was part Maori and started teaching in a school which was 85% Maori”
13 Laura	“I deliberately embraced cultural difference: Upon graduating with my degree, I had to decide whether to go to teachers college right away, go to law school or on to a teaching exchange in Japan. I chose to head to Japan and boarded a plane for the first time on my own, to head to my posting. I had requested a rural location and arrived at my town to discover that it was VERY rural and that there was no apparent Western influence at all. There was no food in the markets I recognised and no English even Romanised Japanese anywhere. I soon realised that even in an area like that, all I would need to do would be to take a train (and a bus, and....) to access an ex-pat circle where English was spoken and people shared a similar culture to me. I did that on the weekends until I realised that I would be missing out on all the benefits of living in Japan were I to do so. So I started joining different cultural activities like flower arranging and Taiko drumming (it took some inquiring to find them_ and I am enriched as a result. The enrichment comes from the people I met as a result. I embraced the peoples of my little Japanese town. Ability to speak the language is central to the ability to do that.”
14 Irene	“Does going to hear the Dalai Lama count?”

My thoughts and responses/ Summary of common themes

What I noticed about these responses was the juxtaposition between personal culture, that which is celebrated in other cultures, and that creating tension. This reminded me of Ghandi’s words in which he described joy at the winds of other cultures wafting through the open windows of his house, as long as none of them blew him off his feet.

Generally the participants described times when they deliberately and purposely embraced cultural difference but often with further explanation of circumstances and conditions.

Again, I was aware of the potential for deep learning that could spring from sharing such perspectives. Woven into the comments are fascinating insights into different lives, different attitudinal blends, interests, hopes and fears reflecting a varied slice of humanity.

**QUESTION 7 Personal story section:**

Please take a few moments to think about a memorable experience involving cultural diversity – perhaps when you learned something compelling about someone else’s life or a time when you consciously embraced or rejected an aspect of someone else’s culture, or vice versa.”

Name	Stories
1 Esther	<p>“ I worked in a kibbutz in Israel in the late 70’s and refused to believe the Israelis I mixed with that the Palestinians had no right to be in Israel. I reject the views of some of my Palagi colleagues when they say “the treaty of Waitangi has no place in modern New Zealand.’ I reject the views of some of my colleagues who say ‘Pacific people are violent.’ I embrace my husbands family who are Irish and Scottish because they have such similar thinking around hospitality as my people”</p>
2	<i>Trish felt her stories were well represented in other questions</i>
3	<i>Rebecca felt that her other responses had included such stories</i>
4 Melissa	<p>“Hazrat Imyat said: ‘People surrender to beauty willingly, and to tyranny unwillingly.’ I have been lucky enough to have been shown and had access to many beautiful creations, various civilisations have made. Through studying art history and biology I find it awe inspiring the way nature is reflected in human creativity and in aspiring to greater things mankind has produced such beautiful and harmonious objects, buildings, (and some societies). Personally I have been very fortunate in my life to have had access to an education and inspiring teachers to guide me.”</p>
5. Timi	<p>“ I would like to share one of my experiences from one night dancing. I took some dancing courses just lately just to keep up with my dancing skills and one night it just struck me how harmoniously every body danced together changing partners on different music. We were more than 20 there and at least 5 different cultures despite that we all found a common language of music and dancing. For me that atmosphere was special and will remain a pleasant memory.”</p>
6 Adrienne	<p>“To understand what is important to others within their own culture and in particular when in another’s own environment is critical. I had been working in Malawi and had been invited by the people I was working for to see some of the local area. I was delighted to take up on their offer and felt that I was aware of what it meant to be sensitive to the fact that I was a visitor within a very different society. My hosts wanted to landscape their garden so we drove about 25 minutes out of Lilongwe to a place along the side of the road where men and women were breaking rocks. I was fascinated by the way in which the women sat on rock piles and used little tools to smash rocks into small stones and since I had never seen or known that this happened in such a way I wanted to take a photo. As I lined up my cameras women scattered very quickly and just as quickly many men surrounded me. My host explained to me that I should have sought permission to do this because what I was doing was frightening for them. To point a camera was intrusive; it was also likened to pointing a gun. Once we had shown the villagers the digital photo on the cameras, the men were only too happy for us to take more photos. I learned such a lot about respect and sensitivity from that experience.”</p>

**QUESTION 7 contd.**

7 Andrea	<p>“I arrived on a sandy airport, Cairo, 2002. This meeting has had a deep impact on my views of understanding culture. I made a connection with a French woman who shared her life with me and this story has made me address my personal strengths and weaknesses as a woman and also my personal culture. Her love of Egypt, the history, people, her immediate and extended family and her community is immense. Her shift to challenge her inherited belief system has been immense. Raised a Catholic, in France, she had a strict upbringing with high expectations. She studied Greek, Latin and literature. She met her husband, an Egyptian Muslim, at 18 years of age as a pen pal! The love and respect between these two such divergent belief systems is a powerful message. F’s personal journey began – she arrived in Cairo and lived there to get to know Egypt and Islam and see if this was for her. The rest is history. She is a devout Muslim, French, Egyptian and her heart is in the cultural environment. It is not that I embrace her culture but rather it gave me insights into how powerfully our beliefs from a young age impact on the decisions we make. In this journey one needs to make that stem from what we believe. One needs the inner strength to see what makes us who we are. This friendship has taken me on a deeply reflective path.”</p>
8 Denise	<p>“While in Namibia staying with a German friend and family who lived on the edge of the Namib Desert, we one day trekked into the remote mountainous region so that Gertrude and her Namibian friend could show us how a special talcum powder was made by grinding soft rocks together. We made the talc at the site. It had a gentle musk like perfume, was finely ground and was a taupe colour. I was carrying an 18 month old on my hip. We lagged behind the others on our return trip. It took a lot of savvy to find my way back and was a bit scary.</p> <p>The visit was to Gertrude’s parents farm where they farmed black Karrabul sheep. (Persian Lamb). This slaughter was a shock to me. They also lived beside the highly guarded Spagabiet area containing alluvial gold and patrolled by South Africa. We visited Windhoek, a colonial whaling station on the Atlantic coast. This whole journey emphasised the remoteness of the region, the result of political decisions annexing of territory and above all the struggle to survive”.</p>
9 Ray	<p>“In Tiznit, Morocco two university students invited me to travel across the desert to meet the leader and owner of a Nomadic camel caravan. I spent an engaging 4 hours with Badri in his cloth tent, drinking mint tea and exchanging idea and perspectives (by translation) about the Tuareg (Blue Men), his life as a nomad and his encounter with the first white people had seen. His preoccupation with the woman on a ‘lux’ soap packet defined the commonality of our gender.”</p>
10. JoAn	<p>“ There are quite a few – but perhaps a personal one is a man I met briefly from Africa. I am uncertain as to what part of Africa he came from. However brief the encounter was, it left a lasting impression. When he spoke about the grass he saw growing in the yard, he asked, “what crop is that?” When it was explained to him he commented, “Do you eat it?” When he was told no – he replied, “I do not understand why you would waste effort in that.” This perception (perspective) of our life in NZ was one of waste. He cried particularly when he saw a child of the house brushing their teeth with the tap on – fresh water flowing away, down the drain. In his country people are designated water carriers and walk miles before the sun rises and after the sun sets to fetch water for the community’s survival.”</p>

**QUESTION 7 contd.**

11. Tom	“I was introduced to Hong Kong at the ‘Boys and Girls Club association,’ as an officer and take every opportunity to learn about Hong Kong and Chinese life and to make close friendships.”
12 Maggie	“ A most memorable personal event was as an adult when I had a relationship with a man who was part Maori and became aware of how being taken out of a Maori family as a young child had affected him. He was taken by his Scottish grandparents and brought up by them. As a teenager he found he wanted to embrace Maori friends and the culture. As a young adult, he returned to Tolaga Bay on the East Coast of New Zealand’s North Island, near where he was born. He has become a passionate advocate for young Maori, supervising Periodic detention, fostering Maori Arts and is now very happy to be in Gisborne again with his Whanau.”
13 Laura	“There have been so many people I have met and stories I’ve shared that no <u>one</u> stands out. But I will share “an epiphany,” or perhaps a synthesis of all these stories I had one day while reading the newspaper. The story was one I had seen on American TV, but was reported in a different way in the Japanese paper. That’s when I really started thinking about perspective and different ways of looking at the same issue and how one way had pros with related cons and how in looking at it the other way, the pros and cons were flipped. And I began relating it to the Japanese focus on the collective versus the Western focus on the individual. Although I couldn’t always speak my mind and get what I wanted in Japanese society, there was so much more harmony in my life there. The situation was reversed in North America. This idea of different benefits, begetting different negative and vice versa sticks with me and continues to guide the way I see the world.”
14 Irene	“ I remember being in a London Tube and the ticket collector was a very black African with initiation scars on his cheeks and a London accent. It was such an unexpected juxtaposition, it left me pondering and I have never forgotten him. There was no opportunity to respond beyond my own private thoughts, but I was quite taken by the experience.”

My thoughts and responses/ Summary of common themes

These answers confirmed that questions 6 and 7 asked participants to draw upon similar experiences. Their responses illustrated diverse wells of experience of human interaction. The participants described their own learning processes in the form of experiences that changed their thinking. Such experiences can be channelled into rich humanitarian learning.

### QUESTION 8

Please select a personal possession or artefact that is culturally significant to you, and ask someone to photograph you with this item. Please write down what makes this so important to you- and the story behind it.

### Photographs and Stories



Esther with her Tapa Cloth

#### Question 8: Artefact photograph and story

“I grew up in Samoa and for many years I have lived and worked in Auckland. My husband is Palagi and when we were married the Pacific island community gave us gifts. When I return to the island I saw the women sitting together in the community making the Tapa cloth. They talk and talk. It is the hub of the community and so much is shared and discussed. Important decisions are made but most of all a sense of well-being is cultivated among the people.

This Tapa cloth reminds me of my other home. It reminds me that learning can happen anywhere and it tells stories that are significant for me and my husband.”

1 Esther



**Trish with her Japanese Tanka**

**Question 8: Artefact photograph and story**

“This is a gift for my recent birthday.

This framed calligraphy is by Toshiyuki Horikoshi. (Hiromi's father) It is two tanka - traditional seven-line Japanese poems, written by Toshiyuki, when he stayed in our home in Auckland. It was the first time he had ever had a passport or travelled outside of Japan. In it he describes the beautiful scenery, mountains, sea and rivers he saw in New Zealand, “a very strange foreign place.” But nothing he wrote, is more beautiful than to see his daughter surrounded by warmth of family and friends who love her.

I was deeply moved at his intense expression and ability to communicate intimate thoughts across total language and culture barriers.”

2 Trish

*A poem written by Trish to Toshiyuki is included in the appendices.*



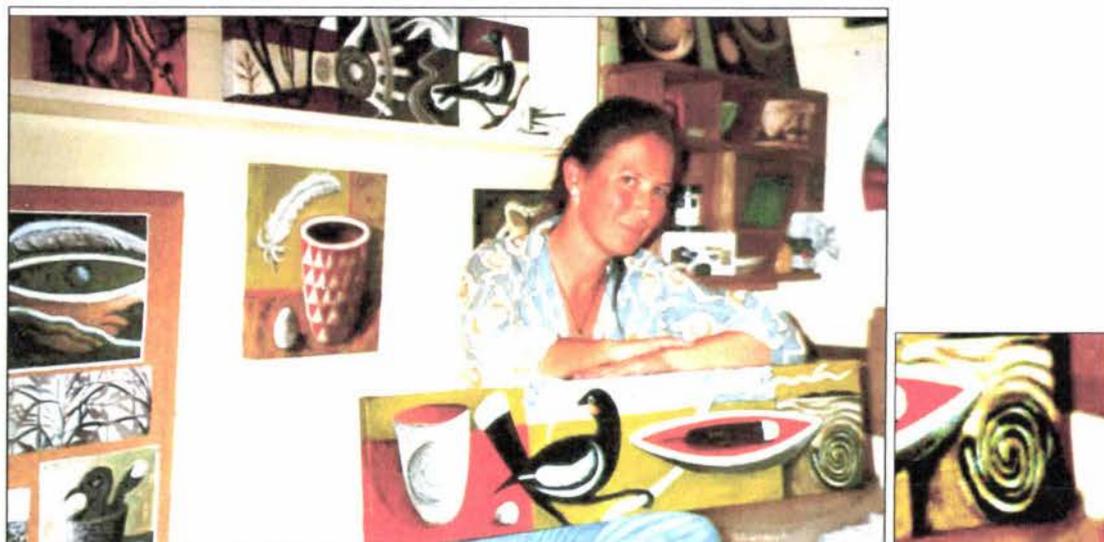
**Rebecca and her ring**

**Question 8: Artefact photograph and story**

“I have a lot of things such as mementos from travelling. They all provide a connection to the culture from which they came. I like things that remind me of Matata and my Maori background.

I live in Auckland and love the city but I will never forget where I come from. I have a silver ring of Maori design. It is simple and I wear it most days. It is a modern piece for the city and my “world” but its design reminds me of my heritage. I have had it for about 10 years. It was a gift for my success in the Benson and Hedges Fashion design award. It also reminds me of my creative side and the theme I based that garment on.”

3 Rebecca



**Melissa, her paintings and her spiral motive**

**Question 8: Artefact photograph and story**

4 Melissa

I've had a bit of a fascination for spirals. I had a pair of spiral earrings (only one now!) and a collection of slides of different spirals, in nature and manmade through different cultures. It is an interesting and symbolic form. Growing out, or spiralling in, or up, or down. The growth of a shell or frond, the Koru, the Celtic whorl, a galaxy; an electron's path, the Fibonacci series of numbers. A sign of potential and possibilities- Generation and decay. Breathing in and out. I use the spiral in my paintings.

*A poem written by Melissa's Uncle, Harry Dansey, a former New Zealand Race Relations Conciliator, is included as appendix 5.*



**Timi and her Hungarian novel**

**Question 8: Artefact photograph and story**

5. Timi

“I would choose my favourite Hungarian music (*\* see notes below*) but because I cannot make a picture of it I will choose my lovely Hungarian book called ‘Ida’s Story’ and it is about a young girl who gets married on her fathers wish and choice. With her goodness and humbleness she reaches to her husband and wins his heart. This story marked my life because with this inspiration I had the courage to say ‘yes’ to my husband’s proposal after 1 month of knowing each other. After 5 years of marriage we are still happy and together.”

*\* A further story developed about Timi and her music, which is included as appendix 7.*



**Adrienne and her wire people**

**Question 8: Artefact photograph and story**

“The items are ‘wire people’ made by some of the local villager who lived near our compound in Malawi. The wire people are made from bits of fence wire, which the people weld together, to sell to tourists.

6 Adrienne

The Malawian people are particularly poor but appeared to have very happy dispositions. Their poverty leads them to resourcefulness as they strive to feed their families. I couldn’t help but admire their attitude and think about what I could learn from this to take into my own life. It reminded me of the New Zealand ‘number 8 wire’ mentality of resourcefulness: the challenges that we take up because of the importance and relevance to where we each are in our own lives.”



**Andrea with wooden shell**

**Question 8: Artefact photograph and story**

“This is a wooden hand-carved shell made by a local artist in Whangamata, New Zealand. I saw this shell in a box he brought to school and I could not take my eyes off it. For me it brought together two powerful forms that influence my well-being and emotions, plants and sea. The combination of the wood and the symbol of the shell, in a spiral design, provide this significance. The other powerful significance is that of the spiral. I see this as a representation of the living cycle rather than a life cycle. The spiral is the continuity of time events of my life that influence the direction I take. And now it sits on my coffee table in my apartment in Singapore, along with photos I brought in hand luggage, the shell was the only thing I took with me, and one of the first things I unpacked. I never realised how powerful this object was/is as I had packed it quite subconsciously”

7 Andrea



**Denice and her pattern-based art work**

**Question 8: Artefact photograph and story**

“I have many possessions of significance to me but no special one. I most treasure items found by me in open spaces, feathers, rocks, shells, or purchased nearby. For instance my favourite is a large nautilus shell, cut through in a slice to expose its chambers. These conform to the golden section, which speaks to me of how incredible nature’s proportions are.

8 Denice

It amazes me how many peoples of the world respond to this divine proportion and honour the spiral as a symbol of life. In particular our own Koru. (also that of the ancient Greeks and Romans.) It interests me how symbols are similar, and often quite different from culture to culture.”



**Ray with Olive trees**

**Question 8: Artefact photograph and story**

“The two olive trees I planted on the island of Naxos remind me of my parent’s and their joy of life. They symbolise the olive branches of peace, the fruit of the soil and the simplicity of life in Greece, which is at the core of its appeal for me.

They are a reminder that even in tough conditions life can be abundant. They represent the love in this world needing to be tended, nurtured and held aloft. These trees will probably mark my resting place.”

9 Ray



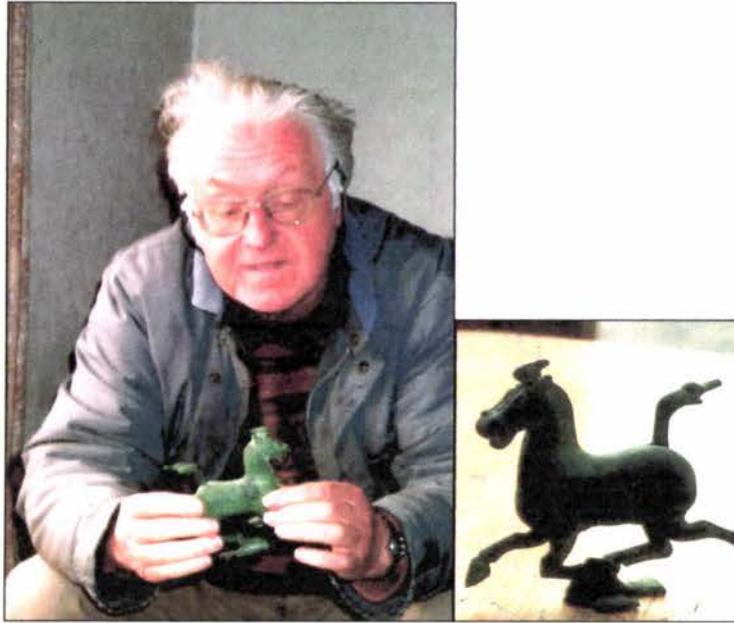
**JoAn in her footlocker**

**Question 8: Artefact photograph and story**

10. JoAn

“This is my footlocker. It was my father’s when he was in the Navy. Everything he owned, all his personal possessions were kept in this footlocker. When my parents married all of their personal possessions were kept in this very footlocker.

To me, it represents new life, change and risk. As a child I often played in it. When I left home Dad gave it to me. I have kept it and will pass it on to my children – if they want it, that is.”



**Tom with his Flying Horse**

**Question 8: Artefact photograph and story**

“I was introduced to Hong Kong at the Boys and Girls Club Association as an officer and have taken every opportunity to learn about Hong Kong, Chinese life and to make close friendships. When I was young, at the age of 25, I moved to Hong Kong for many years and have had a lifetime of contact with China, both in China and New Zealand. I developed an enduring fascination with China, the people, the history and the language.

11. Tom

I was for a year in Gansu province in China. The flying horse is the 3000-year-old symbol of the province. There is a large statue of it in the big central city of Wuwei. There is a great horse farm, of 2000 horses, the oldest in the world. This model is a flying horse on a falcon and tells the story of the remarkable communication system across a great empire dating back almost 3000 years ago. Each horse would run for 100 miles and the message would be transferred to the next horse for the next 100 miles. I was fascinated by this story of ancient history and I wanted to have a model of it.”



**Maggie with Flax skirt wall hanging**  
(Photo: *Gulf News*)

**Question 8: Artefact photograph and story**

“This possession is new to me. As I left my position as Principal of Kristin Junior School they asked what gift I would like. I selected a piece of Maori art.

This piece is unique, it came from the earth in the form of flax – I have a passion for nature. It is Maori art and my children are Maori. It is two grass skirts, which embrace my other love – dance. It is made on Waiheke Island.

Embracing all of that it was a perfect gift to take with me for my new office on Waiheke, in my new school.”

12 Maggie



**Laura with her Passport**

**Question 8: Artefact photograph and story**

“My Passport is culturally significant to me. You can see by the cover that I’m Canadian which influences who I am, the economic and educational benefits I received growing up and the way I have been socialized to see the world.

But Canada is not the only nation there – I have visas and stamps in my passports from different countries I have lived in and visited. All of these nations form part of the tapestry of my culture. Canada is the key, giving me access to the world. Very few hurdles are put before a Canadian who wishes to go abroad.

But my passport sets me apart too. You don’t just get one – you have to seek it out. I not only had the desire for a passport, but the means to obtain one and use it. My passport is a symbol of how hard my parents had to work to give me access to education and how hard I had to work for the money to travel. But it also means I started off in a position where it was financially probable that I would get there.

I am the first person in my family to get a passport, to leave North America, to get a university education and a job that required this. I was lucky enough to be born Canadian, to parents who value and support me in education. It symbolises all of this and my desire to explore and break out of the mould created for me to fit in.”

13 Laura



**Irene with her Apothecary Jar**

**Question 8: Artefact photograph and story**

“This is an apothecary jar which held pharmaceutical ingredients in the Grosse Mohren Apotheke in Vienna.

**14 Irene**

My grandmother was the first woman to graduate from the University of Vienna in Pharmacy where she worked during the First World War. Later she was given this container as a memento. Dozens of them would have lined the shelves in rows, labelled with the ingredients for making pills, salves and medicines from scratch. It is ceramic, with a snugly fitting lid and black and gold lettering.

It gives me a connection with my grandmother and her history.”

### My thoughts and responses/ Summary of common themes

The responses to question 8 involved a wide variety of dramatic, fascinating and at times deeply moving cultural insights. The artefacts selected ranged from items relating to their personal life and culture such as Rebecca's ring, Esther's Tapa cloth and Laura's passport; to others where something originating from a culture outside of their own had developed a personal significance as in the case of Trish's Japanese poetry and Tom's Chinese horse. In almost every case the interpretation of the artefact, the story behind it was of great importance. For example, Timi's Hungarian novel was doubly significant when she related the content of the book to her own life and marriage.

For me, Melissa's description of the spiral was at both powerfully personal and at the same time globally significant. She seemed to embrace life itself in her brief and compelling description. I was moved by this symbol is an important feature of her remarkable paintings which celebrate New Zealand, and call for our collective protection of our shared treasures found in the natural environment.

Many such thought provoking insights were embedded in the responses to question 8 confirming for me the importance of such possibilities in learning that is humanitarian.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Analysis of Data

The rational and range of approaches used in the data analysis was discussed at length in chapter 4. Sifting through the data enabled the formation of various graphic organisers to show the themes, categories, commonalties and distinctions. I drew heavily on a range of people and their models together with the data and literature including Paulo Freire (1972), Geertz (1973), Bover (1993), Freebody (1995), Rutgers University (2000), Nagel (2002) Freebody (2003), Le Compte & Preissle (2003), and Green and Bloom (2003).

Themes and concepts emerging through the artefact photographs and their explanatory stories have been teased out, summarised, and analysed. Comments and observations are made throughout particularly related to authentic intercultural understanding and humanitarian learning.

In this chapter, the data will be compared, contrasted and organised in:

- Four *Thematic Charts* (pgs 108-114)
- *A Table of attitudes and dispositions* emerging from the data (pg 121)
- Four *IBO Charts* related to IBO practices (pgs 122, 124)

The following themes emerged and are grouped as follows:

Theme One see pages 108, 109

#### **Self disclosure**

- Family, attitudes, personal characteristics
- Self-actualisation
- Aesthetics
- Enhanced creativity
- Symbols and expressions
- Global citizenship results in enlightenment

Theme Two see pages 110, 111

**Building connections**

- Enhancing working relations
- Developing understanding across racial, religious, cultural or gender lines
- Enhancing support systems within new groups
- Membership in groups and institutions

Theme Three see page 112

**Sharing a global environment.**

- Being committed to planet Earth
- The world's resources are limited.
- Producing and consuming
- The life cycle
- Careers are increasingly global.
- Searching for a larger purpose
- Looking at the future
- Looking back, learning from the past

Theme Four see pages 113, 114

**Equity and Tools**

- Valuing peaceful resolution of conflict
- Fostering social justice.
- Humanity's survival depends on cooperation.
- Global literacy expands our collective knowledge base.
- Global literacy facilitates negotiating diverse cultures
- Extending relationship building to other contexts
- Overcoming divisiveness of status and hierarchies
- Global awareness promotes productivity & economic growth

## Explanatory notes for reading the four Thematic Charts

The Charts reflect data that:

- Supports, embellishes or demonstrates each theme (indicated in black type)
- Counters a thematic concept (indicated in red type)
- Invites further inquiry (indicated by a blue X)
- To facilitate easy reference to data presented in chapter 4 each quotation from the data is coded as shown: **Question number: participant's coded reference number**  
(eg 2:10, see code table below)

Some participant responses related to more than one theme. As the researcher I decided where I felt they were best represented using the broad context of the data as a guide. In some cases the response has been included in more than one group on the chart.

### **Reference codes used in the Thematic Charts**

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Names /Ref code</b>
<b>1</b>	Esther <b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	Trish <b>2</b>
<b>3</b>	Rebecca <b>3</b>
<b>4</b>	Melissa <b>4</b>
<b>5</b>	Timi <b>5</b>
<b>6</b>	Adrienne <b>6</b>
<b>7</b>	Andrea <b>7</b>
<b>8</b>	Denice <b>8</b>
<b>9</b>	Ray <b>9</b>
<b>10</b>	JoAn <b>10</b>
<b>11</b>	Tom <b>11</b>
<b>12</b>	Maggie <b>12</b>
<b>13</b>	Laura <b>13</b>
	Irene <b>14</b>

**Example 1:7 refers to question 1 : Andrea's response**

## Thematic Chart *Self Disclosure*

### AESTHETICS, Spirituality

I see myself as an enthusiast with skills in the visual arts. Travel awakened my interest in pattern-based art I make. 1:8

She had piles of 'National Geographics,' which were a **huge influence visually** reinforcing my desire to travel 3:8 X

I find it awe-inspiring the way nature is reflected in human creativity 7:4

We have always looked to **the arts and literature as a great opportunity to explore diversity** – so we do not have to actually be in a culturally different environment 11:7 X

**SELF-DISCLOSURE**  
I will never forget where I come from 8:3X

*all comments included elements of self disclosure*

### SELF-ACTUALISATION

The world is often a place of suffering -**you have to choose** to stay actively positive 6:4

I especially enjoy workshops where different cultural backgrounds really have an **impact on our thinking** 6:5 X

Her shift to **challenge her inherited belief system** was immense 7:7 X

There was no opportunity to respond beyond **my own private thoughts**, but I was quite taken by the experience. 7:14 X

I'm not looking for anything to replace my personal culture, just enrich it 10:13 X

### ENHANCED CREATIVITY

I find it awe-inspiring the way nature is reflected in human creativity 7:4

I use the spiral in my paintings 8:4

More than 20 of us from at least 5 cultures found a common language of music and dance 7: 5 X

I was deeply moved at his intense expression and ability to communicate intimate thoughts across total language and culture barriers 8:2 X

### THEME ONE

#### *Self-disclosure*

Family attitudes, recalling the past  
personal characteristics  
Self-actualisation  
Aesthetics, Spirituality  
Enhanced creativity  
Symbols and expressions  
Global citizenship results in enlightenment (*see next page*)

### SYMBOLS & EXPRESSIONS

*My early memory of sitting on the mat and being called "black nigger." I had no understanding of what it meant but knew it was negative by the actions of the class 3:1 X*

I experience cultural diversity through special events, Chinese New Year and Hindu Festivals 4:4 X

I attended a Muslim funeral recently. Jewish, Christian and other ceremonies are frequent, 4:14

To point the camera was intrusive: it was likened to a gun 7:6

My silver ring is a modern piece of Maori design for the city and my 'world; but it reminds me of my heritage 8:3

Spirals are an interesting symbolic form- growing out or in, the growth of a shell or frond, a galaxy, an electrons path, a sign of potential and possibilities, generation and decay, breathing out and in- I use the spiral in my paintings 8:4

It interests me how symbols are similar, and often quite different from culture to culture 8:8 I planned to explore the symbols and patterns of the Pacific 9:8 X

Many participants' expressed personal joy and satisfaction connected with meaningful cross-cultural learning and experience:

## Global citizenship results in enlightenment

*I feel my life expanding with new beginnings 1:2.*

A beautiful Northern Maori, W, she and her family are always part of our family celebrations 1:7

*Mostly I am content and I enjoy my moments of wonder 1:14X*

I remember distinctly, families I shared time with seemed so different from mine 1:7

**My childhood was rich in a variety of cultural experiences.** 2:10

*I was thrilled by the easygoing nature and welcoming attitude of everybody 3:14 X*

*One learns many things about oneself and new ways to view the world – I embrace wide horizons of sparkling waters and in Japan beauty is found more within a quiet garden or temple. 4:2 X*

*I feel absolutely blessed to be in a wonderful community that fosters and celebrates diversity 4:7*

I chose a career in international education, which is enriching 4:9 & 4:12

My choices lie in my responses to diversity-whether I accept, embrace and value it, **weaving new patterns into my life**, or reject any change 5:2 X

*I am intrigued by different ways of life, cultures and perspectives 5:3*

I seek out as many culturally diverse groups as I can 6:2

*Our Japanese daughter-in-law has enlarged our world 6:2*

We both were engaged by the complexities of each other's practices 6:6

**The enrichment comes from the people 6:13**

**More than 20 of us from at least 5 cultures found a common language of music and dance 7: 5 X**

*This friendship has taken me on a deeply reflective path 7:7 X*

*Although I couldn't always speak my mind and get what I wanted in Japanese society, there was so much more harmony in my life there 7:15 X*

*I was deeply moved at his intense expression and ability to communicate intimate thoughts across total language and culture barriers 8:2 X*

*Food, music and dance enrich my life providing an enticing point of difference 13:8*

## Thematic Chart

### *Building Connections*

#### **Enhancing working relations**

My view of education is in the broadest sense, encompassed by my need to share with and keep motivating teachers, to provide real life learning experiences for children in environments beyond the classroom. 1:7 X

To take some of my knowledge and expertise into a culture where I could make a difference would be a dream 9: 6 X

#### **Enhancing the support system within a new group**

I had a relationship with a man who was part Maori and became aware of how being taken out of a Maori family as a young child had affected him. He was taken by his Scottish grandparents and brought up by them 7:12

#### **Membership in groups and institutions**

My parents were immigrants who tried desperately to assimilate quickly 2:14

I remember trying to fit in but constantly being excluded because my history wasn't there, making me an outsider and my family couldn't afford what others could. 3:13

I work with Pacific and Palagi people mostly but the work environment 'on the whole' is mostly mono-cultural in terms of the power structures and institutional culture. 4:1

Chinese, Malaysian, Pakistani, Indian, Sri Lankan – in a factory and office environment. We need to be aware of cultural sensitivities from time to time – and it makes shared lunches interesting and yummy!4:3

## Building Connections

I am very interested in people, communication and ideas. 1:4

I am always open for people and other cultures. I am energetic, optimistic and an idealist who thinks that each of us can make a difference wherever we are and whatever we do 1:5

I love people and strongly believe in the importance of developing good tangible relationships with people of all races and creeds 1:6

The teachers I remember and value most were those who had an enthusiasm for their subject and an ability to impart that interest of the subject. They seemed to care. Many had a good sense of humour. 12:4

This art is from the flax of the earth, it is Maori and they embrace my other love – dance 8:12

This jar gives me a connection with my grandmother and her history 8:14

My school experience was mono-cultural and this is regrettable. My teachers, with two exceptions, cooking and English, were dreadful 12:2 X

School didn't figure largely for me in this area, teachers had no memorable impact. My high school was racially diverse and that was significant. 12:14 X

### THEME TWO

#### **Building Connections**

Enhancing working relations  
Developing understanding across racial, ethnic, religious & gender lines A see following page

Enhancing the support system within a new group  
Membership in groups and institutions

Developing understanding across racial, ethnic, religious & gender lines

I have a very strong social conscience, which drives my work in the community around social justice for women and children, peace and the environment. 1:1

I regard my upbringing as an excellent foundation, equipping me to relate to other individuals from differing backgrounds. I think *I deliberately seek diversity in life*. 1:10

I have high standards for myself and for others. I am Caucasian, which doesn't really figure in how I see myself, but certainly impacts on how I am seen by and treated by others. 1:13

In childhood our European and Maori heritage was equally celebrated and valued. 2:4

*I remember not being allowed to attend bible class at school because we were Catholic. 2:7*

*My 1/8<sup>th</sup> Maori heritage was kept from me until I was an adult. / Memories of my paternal grandmother reinforced that background and as an adult the culture fascinated me. 2:8*

*They worked at the sawmill next door and would always welcome me. I had a lot of fun there. My mother banned me from ever going there so I had to sneak. 3:8*

*Marrying into a Maori family. My mother did not cope with me marrying into a Maori family. This was a huge sadness for me. 3:12*

We were the only white people there. It was a powerful moment. I was thrilled by the easygoing nature and welcoming attitude of everybody 3:14

*I find people of other races do keep separate and it is difficult to enter their circle. I try to communicate with my Korean neighbours but it is hard. 5:8 X*

I especially enjoy workshops on different topics when the cultural background really has an impact on our thinking. 6:5

Until I lived with these people for a few months, I would have passed judgement over the fact that the traditions continue to be handed down from generation to generation 6:6

I embraced the peoples of my little Japanese town, Ability to speak the language is central to the ability to do that. 6:13 X

As I lined up my camera women scattered very quickly and just as quickly many men surrounded me. 7:6

I spent an engaging 4 hours with Badri in his cloth tent, drinking mint tea and exchanging idea and perspectives (by translation) about the Tuareg (Blue Men), his life as a nomad and his encounter with the first white people he had seen 7:9

Whether Jew or Arab, Pakeha or Maori I will eat and dialogue with anyone. To do so makes my life more interesting and the journey much more exciting. 9:1

## Thematic Chart

### *Sharing a global environment.*

#### The world's resources are limited.

I felt overwhelmed, lost and confused. Less so in San Francisco as there was a harbour like Auckland. Now in 2000's the consumer shopping, plastic culture is engulfing NZ and it is very sad to see. 3:4

My parents had difficult childhoods, children of the 30's depression and WW1 – so strove to make ours, stable and strong. Education and pacifist, conservationist values were encouraged. 3:4

#### Living on and being committed to planet Earth B

I have a deep connection to the earth and natural aesthetics 1:7

I am more just a person in the world that a citizen in a place. 1:14 X

I am reminded of the joy of life, branches of peace, the fruit of the soil. 8:9

#### Looking back learning from the past

In later years, we (the family) decided to move to other climes and headed to Europe to explore the cultural background of my husband and give our children connection to this part of their heritage. 5:7

As I lined up my cameras women scattered very quickly and just as quickly many men surrounded me. My host explained to me that I should have sought permission to do this because what I was doing was frightening for them. To point a camera was intrusive; it was also likened to pointing a gun. 7:6

I had the chance to study in my own language, in Hungarian and that I would never change, because it gave me knowledge about my origins and a sense of belonging 12:5 X

#### Producing and consuming

I felt overwhelmed, lost and confused. Less so in San Francisco as there was a harbour like Auckland. Now in 2000's the consumer shopping, plastic culture is engulfing NZ. It is very sad to see. 3:4 X

Another aspect of Palagi culture I avoid is the lack of 'sharing & collectivity.' I don't buy into notions of corporate success – meaning 'profit' before people. 6:1 X

I travelled a lot in 'wild' New Zealand natural environment and a love of education and design and positive creative ideas and positive values were instilled in us as kids. So whenever I meet ideas and cultures based on profit, selfishness, aggression and greed I have deliberately tried to avoid them. 6:4 X

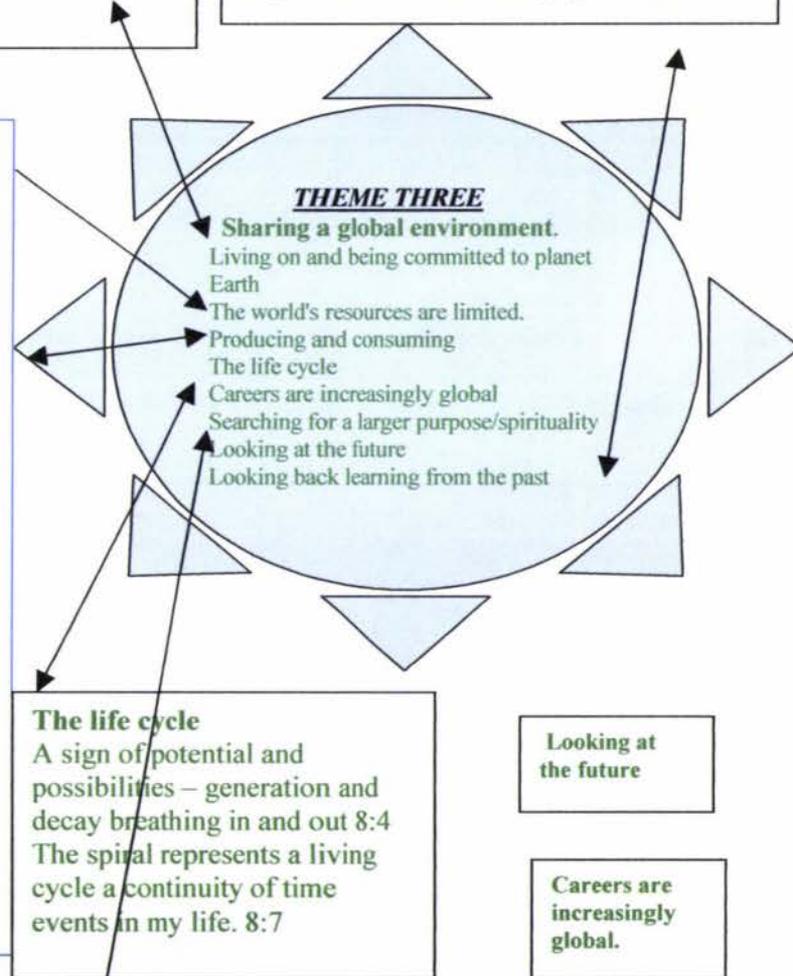
The Malawian people are particularly poor. This poverty leads them to resourcefulness as they strive to feed their families. 8:6 X

#### Searching for a larger purpose

Other cultures were introduced through myths, legends and stories and visual books, and art works, museums and friends of the family. 1:4 X

Her shift to challenge her inherited belief system has been immense. 7:7 X

As a Quaker 'I seek to see that of God in everyone!' Sometimes that can be extremely difficult! 9:1



**Fostering social justice.**

I have a very strong social conscience concerning justice for women and children's, peace and the environment 1:1

My husband and I purposely chose New Zealand as our future country to fulfil our dreams and live freely in a developed country. 5:5

Until I lived with these people in Qatar, I would have criticised the fact that restrictive traditions continue to be handed down from generation to generation. Now I realise that small changes, we don't hear of, indicate enormous change for a society such as this. 6:6

The love and respect between these two such divergent belief systems is a powerful message. 7:7

I hope to be able to live and work within another culture, especially one with vast social and economic needs would be awesome. To take some of my knowledge and expertise into a culture where I could make a difference would be a dream. 9:6 X

**Valuing peaceful resolution of conflict**

I have a very deep abiding hope for all peoples to live together in peace. 9:1

**Our survival depends on cooperation**

As we meet more and more people the dynamics of our social group has changed. I have noticed within groups people I can invite to join a particular group who would not be well accepted by another group, simply because of the beliefs and values of that second group, sad really. 4:6 X

To live and work within another culture, particularly in one with vast social and economic needs would be awesome. To take my knowledge and expertise into a culture where I could make a difference would be a dream. 9:6

**Global literacy expands our collective knowledge base**

We have a Japanese daughter-in-law, H. Recently H's father stayed with us in Auckland, the first time he has ever left Japan. One learns many things about oneself and values, as well as new ways of viewing the world, by these exchanges. For example, although we are both island nations, our attitude to the sea is completely different. I embrace the wide horizons of my life and the joy of sun sparkling on organza waters. In Japan, beauty is found more within a quiet garden or temple courtyard. 4:2

My suburb is full of South Africans and we exchange students from Brazil, Germany, Italy and Indonesia. They all seem to mix without obvious disrespect or strife. 4:8 X

Food, music, art, dance enrich my adult life. They provide an enticing point of difference and a common bond between peoples. I have continued curiosity regarding different cultures, their rituals, customs and foods. 9:8

**THEME FOUR****Equity and Tools**

Valuing peaceful resolution of conflict

Fostering social justice

Our survival depends on cooperation

Global literacy expands our collective knowledge base

Global literacy facilitates negotiating diverse cultures (next page)

Extending relationship building to other contexts

Overcoming divisiveness of status and hierarchies

Global awareness promotes productivity & economic growth

### Global literacy facilitates negotiating diverse cultures

“The first time visited a Romanian family what was particularly striking was the atmosphere in that family compared to my home: the music was different – the rapport between them, the house, the pictures, rugs and other specific Romanian artworks. 1:5

So all arrived including two Maori friends. What I remember was the reaction of some of the other girls, the sniggering, and the amazement and to some degree confusion. Significantly the ONLY present I can remember is one that Diane H. gave me – a brown paper bag with a packet of lovely cotton embroidered handkerchiefs. Somehow this touched a chord and I am absolutely sure this has an impact on the guidance and love I have given my own children about respect and appreciation of the diversity around them. 3:7

As I lined up my camera, women scattered very quickly and just as quickly many men surrounded me. My host explained that I should have sought permission and what I was doing was frightening for them. To point a camera was intrusive; it was also likened to pointing a gun. Once we had shown the villagers the digital photo on the cameras, the men were only too happy for us to take more photos. I learned such a lot about respect and sensitivity from that experience 7:6

### Global awareness promotes productivity & economic growth

So whenever I meet ideas and cultures based on profit, selfishness, aggression and greed I have deliberately tried to avoid them. 6:4

### Overcoming divisiveness of status & hierarchies

We were brought up in a state housing area, a new estate built in the 50's. People were of the same poor background, not multi-cultural, all working class. We didn't socialize outside the family because of transport difficulties among others. Our world was quite insular but 'normal' to us." 2:6

She was very quiet but on some days she would openly discuss life and customs for women in Qatar, so long as there were no men within hearing distance. 6:6

I lived in an African suburb and generally tried to fit in. Afrikaana's are not an easy group to affiliate with. I had African maids. (Yes, its true) and learned what I could of their home situations. I gleaned this: 'The more I learn, the less I know. 6:8

One negative. At intermediate in the early 70's Maori culture in our school was encouraged through language and kapa haka teaching. When I got to high school I couldn't continue Maori because I was put in the Latin stream. I didn't do Latin in the end I did Art instead. But I had to choose between being in the top stream learning more about part of my heritage or art. I did associate this at the time with an undervaluing of that subject, and possibly an undervaluing of Maori 'culture' but I can't be sure. 12:4

### Extending relationship building to other contexts

In childhood our European and Maori heritage was equally celebrated and valued. 1:6

We made a conscious decision to recognise and celebrate New Zealanders and all that brings. In later years, we decided to move to Europe to explore the cultural background of my husband and give our children connection to this part of their heritage. 5:7

I took some dancing courses just lately just to keep up with my dancing skills and one night it just struck me how harmoniously every body danced together changing partners on different music. More than 20 of us and at least 5 different cultures, we all found a common language of music and dancing. For me that atmosphere was special. 7:5 X

My mother struggled with other cultures – particularly Maori. My father embraced it. 11:12

I come from a long line of bigots on my father's side – especially towards French-Canadians. It seems that they refused to conscript in WW1. 11:13

I grew up with an animosity towards Germans – more about recent personal history than culture. My grandmother was afraid of the 'yellow hordes' (her grandson married a Chinese woman) 11:14 X

### Self-Disclosure (pgs 108,109)

Elements of self-disclosure were evident in almost all of the responses given in varying degrees. The majority of comments within this table were strongly connected with the notion that “global citizenship results in enlightenment.” Many of the participants involved with this research have had extremely positive, memorable and at times deeply moving experiences in culturally diverse contexts. They describe their intercultural understanding as enriching.

A wide range of personal information was shared and as the researcher I was impressed and humbled by what was revealed. It is likely that in an environment based on respectful interaction and high trust levels, which support communication, learning can be enhanced through such self-disclosure. Taking the lead from learners through the use of self-disclosure in this way requires skilful facilitation.

### Building Connections (pgs 110, 111)

By far the most compelling and deeply explored factor to emerge from the data fell naturally under the subheading “*developing understanding across racial, ethnic, religious and gender lines.*” Generally the comments reflected positive intentions to embrace cultural diversity, a personal commitment to demonstrating open-mindedness, and the intrinsic satisfaction experienced in interactions in culturally diverse contexts. Sharing such experiences can be a source of motivation and confidence building, encouraging others to emulate behaviours and attitudes.

Several comments are notable by the implied or stated tension or suggested disharmony (Typed in red on the chart). Statements such as these provide significant potential as learning catalysts. They open the door for important exchanges, dialogue, debate, and learning with a view to reducing religious and racial prejudice, which feature in these particular responses.

A further somewhat disconcerting factor to emerge in the table on page 110 was the perception that the school experiences described by two participants were perceived to be devoid of any significant positive input towards cultural understanding. This accentuated the importance of the opportunities available in schools and serves as a

reminder that in some cases very little meaningful or memorable “humanitarian” learning takes place.

#### Sharing a global environment (pg 112)

Rutgers University and Boyer each suggested that ‘limited world resources’ and the notion of ‘producing and consuming’ respectively warranted serious attention in education. I had assumed that Rutgers was advocating that through intercultural understanding business deals would more frequently be successful. The few references made to these concepts were strongly critical of the consumer culture engulfing NZ, corporate success, and the profit motive.

I had expected other issues under this theme, “Sharing a global environment,” to be strongly acknowledged through the data. I was very surprised at how few references were made to environmental issues in the context of cultural understanding. Perhaps it is partly that we tend to think of culture primarily in terms of ethnicity, religion, and patterns of living.

Indirect references were made to the increasingly global nature of careers through the frequent references to work as a means for intercultural interaction and as a context in which cultural learning took place.

#### Equity and Tools (pgs 113, 114)

The concepts connected with this theme resonated strongly in the data. Implicit in this is acknowledgement that if a person is international they are more able to negotiate among diverse cultures and understand the need to overcome divisive status and hierarchies in building relationships. There was evidence of strong agreement that our survival depends on cooperation and peaceful conflict resolution.

#### Personal observations and comments related to the Thematic Charts

It is interesting to notice that both Adrienne, and Tom despite having had extremely limited access to diverse cultures growing up, still developed great empathy towards others. (Refer Qu1:6 and Qu1:11) as demonstrated in their intense and empathetic involvement with people from Qatar and China respectively, and their purposeful celebration of cultural diversity.

It is noted that in responding to Question 2, two of the participants, when asked about cultural diversity gave their answers in the context of race. This did not remain the case in later questions where multiple cultural references were made.

In her response to question 2, Laura demonstrates a trait shared by many participants that as a child she was “fascinated” by children from backgrounds different from her own. From a learning perspective this fascination is a healthy precursor to authentic inquiry. Often in their responses participants described feeling intrigued, confused or filled with wonder when facing culturally unfamiliar situations. In some instances they suggested that their curiosity had not been satisfied, e.g., Irene on the London bus (ref 7:14).

Denice’s response to question 4 interested me because she provided an example of common use of language in matters of diversity. She has referred to the different ethnic groups in her neighbourhood as ‘they.’ Her specific comment is that “*they all seem to mix without obvious disrespect.*” I was interested that she did not include herself in the group. I wonder if this was subconscious or deliberate. I wonder if she feels part of her neighbourhood or to some extent an outside observer. This is a common tendency in conversations and is worthy of further discussion and inquiry.

In Question 6 Denice mentions that she did not find it easy to affiliate with Africaans. She also, perhaps reluctantly, shared the fact that while living in Africa she had African maids for some of the time. The way she presented this information leaves me wanting to know much more. In a broad sense it motivates me to wonder how people (all of us) can negotiate hurdles such as not feeling able to associate with a particular group. Denice has identified an issue at the heart of this thesis. Because it carries with it some tension I have identified it as warranting further discussion later in this chapter. This tension is one, which is well represented in thematic charts 2 and 5. The issue about her maids in Africa raises many complex questions related to equity, power, the economy and the social strata to name a few. Denice explained that she had tried to find out about her maid’s homes. I am sure the situation was complex. However, in her simple statement the possibilities for further important discussion and learning are clear.

A key point here is that the lives of ordinary people provide tremendous scope for guiding learning about complex issues of intercultural understanding and humanity.

In question 11, Timi described the subtle pressure she felt to marry someone from her own country. Although she affirmed, seemingly lightly, that she had done so, her comment invites further inquiry. At the heart of this statement are highly contentious issues such as those dealing with intermarriage across a multitude of diversities, perceived advantages and disadvantages and many other factors.

Ray's comments in question 12 paints a grim picture of his perceived lack of any chance for the cultural enrichment he craved during his school and university days in New Zealand. Admittedly his school days were during the 60's and 70's when New Zealand was nowhere near as culturally diverse as it is now. Other participants implied that it is mainly through travel that they are able to truly embrace culturally enriching experiences. Other comments suggest however, that it is possible to enrich lives culturally and learn about diversity by numerous other means: e.g., through the arts, film and literature. This thesis supports such approaches. For those people who are not able to travel it is just as important that they wrestle with and learn about ideas and perspectives different from their own. Perhaps New Zealand in the 60's and 70's had real possibilities to explore difference but they may not have been as heady or intoxicating as those Ray discovered in Singapore and the Middle East.

There are many ways that intercultural understanding can be incorporated into learning and they should be. Many embody intriguing and fascinating human interaction, people stepping outside personal comfort zones to experience what is new and different. Often such experience takes place as part of highly privileged lives as travelling tourists. Those people who do not have such travel options available are entitled to have available opportunities to learn across and about cultural differences.

Maggie states simply in Question 12 that she considers her childhood teachers and her school experiences left her "totally ill prepared" for what I guess were the cultural diversity and inherent challenges that she would face later in life. Maggie has however, embraced the enriching effects of cultural difference fully in her adult life.

In Question 13 Ray again implies that without actually being in a culturally diverse environment his life seemed unfulfilled. Two thoughts come to mind. Firstly any life closely examined increases in interest and has the potential to facilitate understanding of humanity. Ray refers to 'parochial environments' meaning narrow and provincial. He raises an interesting question: How can communities embrace difference when most people, on the surface, seem to live very similar lives? Is it enough to claim that people simply need to look more closely, examine lives more thoroughly? Can cultural understanding be gleaned through literature, music and the arts, or does a person need to go to a place to know its people? In question 11, (11:7) Andrea mentions the rich opportunities to explore diversity afforded by the arts and literature.

Question 12 asked participants to describe the effect their teachers and school experiences had on the development of their own cultural beliefs and values. In hindsight, I wish I had re-worded question 12 to ask to what extent they felt their schools were inclusive of *cultures in general*. This may have elicited responses covering a wider spectrum of awareness and a deeper level of analysis.

I was interested to notice the potential for learning connections to be made between and among the participants had they be given the opportunity. Such an example is the fact that both Denice and Adrienne had memorable experiences in Africa, each involving rocks. I am sure that their shared perspectives would be of value. This phase of the research is focused on only what each individual gave in terms of their own individual experience separate from the full participant group. There is ample scope for further future study in this domain.

Denice in question 7 described her visit to parts of Namibia as "emphasising the remoteness of the region, the result of political decisions, annexing of territory and above all the *struggle to survive*." It is clear that Denice had a very disturbing and personally challenging experience in a complex part of the world. Questions prompted from her experience and further inquiries would provide a potential catalyst for important learning.

Adrienne, in question 11, describes a country as "their own" in the sense of 'belonging to' and perhaps having some claim to it over and above others. At the heart of most

conflicts are issues of ethnicity, poverty or land ownership. In her comments lie an important window to debate and discussion and exploration of such issues. Irene said in Question 1 she felt 'more a citizen of the world rather than of any one place'. This presents quite a different mindset to the idea of land or country ownership or even patriotism. Such subjects are clearly linked with the data and could lead to further inquiry and learning of global and humanitarian significance.

Many educators have an understandable bias towards a particular subject of discipline, such as history, mathematics, geography or science. If one was to examine the scope for the teaching and learning of such disciplines within the context of this data natural connection with disciplines emerge.

In Question 8 the *selected artefacts and their stories* reflected concepts of global significance for the peoples of the world, across cultures, socio economic status and age groups. Important commonalities included: literature, symbols in art and nature, creativity, life cycles, nature and growth, family love, interconnectedness, relationships and generational awareness, the importance of languages, travel and cultural exploration, friendship and the importance of community, historic differences and similarities, poverty, blended heritage, innovation, cultural pride, creativity, languages, poetry across cultures, communication, social status, jewellery, exploration and inquiry, wondering and pondering, rituals, dance, symbols across cultures and textiles. Such a list could easily describe a rich, relevant curriculum linked to real experience.

Incidental stories that featured in the questionnaire touched on other topics of global significance: travel, moving to foreign places to live and work, interactions at school, and work, art, education, artefacts, music, literature, storytelling, and friendships as vehicles for significant learning.

Experts, including Nussbaum, Costa, Walker, Broers, Ackerman, Ings and Luke, whose earlier work was explored in chapter 2, provided a platform of knowledge and understanding helpful to this investigation and in the development of the following table of attitudes and dispositions. It identifies characteristics significant to humanitarian learning extrapolated from:

- The collective work of the experts listed above
- Key points synthesised from definitions of humanitarian learning, cultural understanding and global citizenship
- The collective voice of the participants

Through my repeated readings of the data it became clear that particular attitudes and dispositions were seen as significant, valued and appreciated by the participants in various aspects of their lives and learning. For example:

“I need to be cared for and care for others.”

“the arts and literature provide great opportunities to explore diversity.”

“this friendship has taken me down a deeply reflective path.” Andrea

These attitudes and dispositions gained greater significance when they were confirmed in the literature and in the key definitions in this thesis. Each asterisk indicates significant references in the data expressing value of these attributes.

*Table of Attitudes and Dispositions supporting humanitarian learning*

<b>Personal Characteristics</b>	<b>Frequency of responses of participants found in data</b>
Enthusiastic, optimistic, confident, intrinsically motivated	***** (12)
Open-minded, appreciating diversity, having humility.	***** ** (14)
Sensitive, showing empathy, reflective, aesthetically aware.	***** (17)
Responsible self-aware, caring, hopeful positive aspirations.	***** (19)
<b>Primary Interests and experience</b>	
Enjoyment of people and conversation across many cultures.	***** (21)
Multicultural experiences linked to travel, moving, school, work, education, art, artefacts, music, literature, storytelling, friendships	***** ***** ***** (57)
Multiple languages spoken/ learning language (s).	***** ** (8)
Multiple connections with family and heritage.	***** ** (16)
<b>Significant emotional responses</b>	
Aware of belonging and not belonging to a group	***** (10)
Aware of and responsive to environments	***** (7)
Determined to persevere through struggle or tension	***** (11)

The highlighted section indicates the ways participants indicated they have gleaned aspects of intercultural understanding. Fostering these attributes in a learning context is likely to be essential for enabling greater intercultural awareness.

The data was compared to the standards and practices of International Baccalaureate Organisation since ‘developing international understanding’ is the fundamental purpose of the organisation. Using the revised IBO ‘Standards and Practices’ (2005 draft) referred to in Chapter 2, for educational organisations offering IBO programmes I was able to gauge the extent significant learning experiences described by the participants correlated with those advocated in the IBO practices. Each of the four revised IBO standards and practices have been used to provide a meaningful reference point for the data in the following table. Beneath each are four *IBO Charts* showing the responses of the participants indicating that such a practice is one that they support or valued in their learning followed by my summary comments in blue italics in order to separate my comments from those of the participants.

<p>Revised IBO Standards and Practices for educational organisations. (2005 draft) Followed by links with Data-</p>
<p>The IBO: <b>Expects and promotes a commitment to international understanding and responsible citizenship on the part of the adults in the organization</b></p>
<p><i>Significant correlation / links found in data</i></p>
<p>“The diversity of those dear to me is the essence of where I am now.” Andrea</p> <p>“Sometimes I am overwhelmed by the cruelty in our world and confused by the complexity of it all.” Irene</p> <p>“I am optimistic and an idealist who thinks that each of us can make a difference in the world” Timi</p> <p>“A trip to Mexico with my grandmother was my first introduction to poverty. Her insensitivity was an almost greater shock.” Irene</p> <p>“ I feel absolutely blessed to be able to interact with a multi-diverse community, in terms of beliefs, practices, interest, family, media. I am in a wonderful community that fosters and celebrates this diversity” Andrea</p> <p>“ We discussed the tradition of marriage and she discussed her experiences from betrothal till now, 15 or more years later. I struggled as I listened to her talk of things we I our culture would never tolerate, yet, she had no choice.” Adrienne</p> <p><i>These participants recognise the value of cultural diversity and have engaged in meaningful ways with people different from themselves. This experience is perceived to have had a positive impact on the awareness, empathy and understanding across cultures.</i></p>

The IBO

**Offers access to different cultures, perspectives and languages**

*Significant correlation / links found in data*

“I deliberately seek diversity in life.” JoAn

“I am multilingual and make an effort to use my languages.” Laura

“ I am always open to people and other cultures. My goal is to speak more languages and travel.” Timi

“ I embraced the people of my little Japanese town. My ability to speak the language is central to being able to do that.” Laura

“I meet the Chinese group in Auckland each weekend and we talk. We have conversations so they can improve their spoken English.” Tom

“ I had enormous respect and immense sadness when I left Qatar as I could no longer listen to her stories or work and learn within her culture. I realised I was becoming someone with whom she could share confidences without judgement and it seemed to help her on some days when she was burdened with upsets.” Adrienne

“ The story was one I had seen on American TV but it was reported differently in the Japanese paper. That’s when I really started thinking about perspective and different ways of looking at the same issue” Laura

*The participants here write of access they have had to different cultures. Stories and artefacts provide opportunities through which other perspectives can be explored in manageable and engaging ways*

The stated Standards and Practices of the IBO are statements of what the IBO expect to see taking place in organisations that foster understanding between peoples- i.e. those educational organisations whose mission reflects that of the IBO. (see pg 3) Implicit in these statements are attitudes, actions and the behaviours of groups and individuals that foster and develop such expectations. It is these attitudes, actions and behaviours that potentially make a difference and that are reflected in the data.

The positive learning experiences described by participants reinforced the factors identified by selected experts about learning that is humanitarian in nature.

The characteristics and attitudes identified from the data and my review of literature and resources, as being central to humanitarian learning, may be summarised as follows:

- Multicultural experiences, including travel, moving location, school, work, education, art, artefacts, music, literature, storytelling and friendships.

- Curiosity, interest and profound enjoyment in contact and conversation with people across varying cultures.
- A global sense of responsibility, social responsibility, self-awareness incorporating caring, hope and aspirations.
- Attitudes and behaviours that show sensitivity, empathy, reflection, an appreciation of natural aesthetics, energy, positive enthusiasm, optimism, confidence and intrinsic motivation.
- Seeing difference as an invitation to explore and understand, appreciating diversity, valuing multiple mindsets, and being open-minded
- Being interested in nationality, place of origin, family, ethnicity and heritage
- Being interested in family position and role, family love, support and authentic multicultural connections
- Individual and social responsibility, self-awareness, and critical reasoning were frequently mentioned by the participants as factors critical to the development of, and learning about, self and others.

Through comparing and contrasting theory and responses, it is clear there is a high correlation between identified theories of humanitarian learning and the key characteristics, attitudes and experiences identified by the participants. This high level of congruence reinforces the value and dimensions of humanitarian learning. The photographs and stories relating to personal artefacts provided further rich and cogent evidence of the value of sharing cultural perspectives in highly engaging ways, as a vehicle for humanitarian learning.

In my “search for convergence of information,” as described by Wiersma (in Freebody, 2003) I see evidence of considerable overlap and broad areas of intersection and congruence. The participant’s stories have been conveyed in a range of ways. They have demonstrated the potential for fostering harmony and global understanding through the exploration of objects of significance and different perspectives.

In humanitarian learning the teacher and learner share aspects of themselves in a context of trust, openness and cultural transparency. This is where “true culture is sufficiently free in itself to be open to continual renewal, and find its goal outside itself.

It is in this universalist context that each nation will be judged according to what it contributes to the common heritage of mankind.” (1983, Tenekides)

On a more modest and accessible level we have the potential to contribute to our common heritage in our learning organisations and communities.

“Who are the barbarians to young Soolong from Shanghai and who are they to young Sarah from Seattle sitting alongside? Who are the infidels to Albert from Abingdon, England, brought up in the traditions of the chapel, and who are they to his neighbour Ali from Ankara, raised in the shadow of the mosque?” (1989, Mattern)

Mattern implies that we need to find ways to free ourselves from cultural confines to connect in positive ways across cultural differences. Soolong, Sarah, Albert and Ali could be any one of us with a need and a right to learn from each other and understand each other. We need to find common ground and a common voice by creating conditions for humanitarian learning. This is imperative in today’s globalised society.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Summary and Conclusions

This final chapter includes a look at where this thesis began, a review of my research question, and a summary of findings from which conclusions and suggestions are drawn.

This thesis began with a simple weaving of fine flax, created by the artist and storyteller Toi Te Rito Maihi. This weaving is a personal artefact, which embodies poignant cultural meaning for me.



**Weaving by Toi Te Rito Maihi**

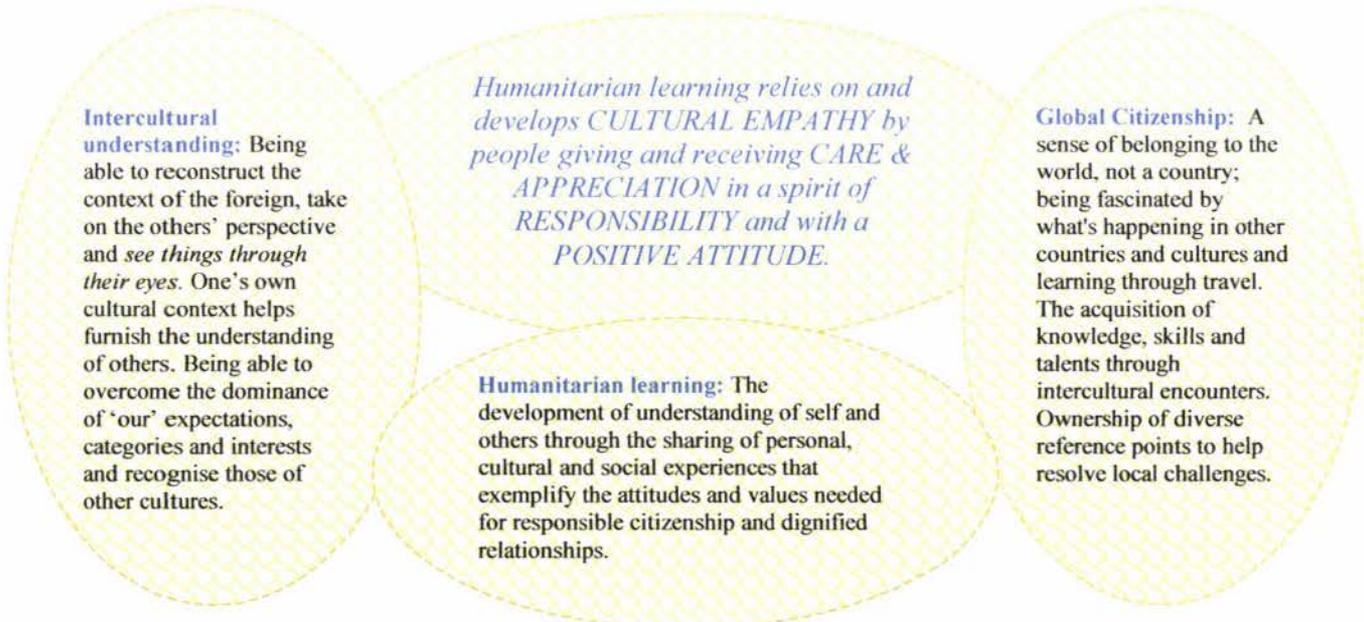
The flax base is woven into delicate strands of plaited grass forming a single thread. From that strong thread the flax divides and spreads out across the Harekeke (woven flax) base. This woven pattern symbolises my deeply rooted connections with New Zealand, even when I am geographically separate.



**My attempt, inspired by Toi's work**

Prising the wire supports away from the wooden frame and releasing the weaving from its protective backing, reveals important structural techniques and strategies used “behind the scenes.” The flax strands have been pulled through from the front to the back and frayed ends secured in place. Looking closely behind the weaving enhances understanding of what holds it together, how it works, its structure and support. In a similar way, this process of looking behind the scenes through the eyes of the participants has facilitated deeper understanding of cultural learning and its structures and supports.

During my work on this thesis I wrestled with key definitions of culture, humanity, international education and global citizenship by creating mind maps and models including a cluster of cultural veils. These processes helped me identify and build significant connections among them and clarify my thinking. Throughout this thesis the idea that *learning might be viewed as 'humanitarian'* has been explored. I have wrestled with this notion and in so doing have challenged and expanded my perspectives on what is relevant and urgent in general education. I believe that this thesis makes a strong and compelling case that *humanitarian learning* has an important role in enabling cultural understanding. See synthesised definition below:



The term *humanitarian learning* implies an *element of urgency and serious obligation* which is appropriate since so many people look to learning as ‘a way out’ (Neutze,

2001) of crises and because cultural diversity in education is increasing rapidly. Such diversity presents educators with the challenge: of *opportunity, need and obligation*. At no time have people had more access to people different from themselves and the need for humanitarian learning is equalled only by an obligation for educators to plan for such learning.

“There is a critical difference between global knowledge and global perspective, between having information, even a great deal of information, about cultures and beliefs dissimilar to one’s own, and having an understanding and appreciation of them.” (Mattern, 1989)

Such sentiments are supported and advocated by the International Baccalaureate Organisation and the United Nations, Rutgers University, some National Schools and Tertiary organisations within New Zealand, educators and writers such as, Nussbaum, Ings, Walker and Braslavsky and theorists Dale and Kolb. Despite this broad advocacy, practical recommendations and strategies to achieve this goal are not so widespread. In fact some teachers seeking to foster meaningful exchanges across cultures with their students explained their frustration at facing a range of barriers. For example feeling afraid of unintentionally showing disrespect for an unfamiliar culture or feeling overwhelmed by the mindset of local norms especially gender related cultural customs. In some cases they simply did not know what to do or where to start. The need is not so much to convince people that humanitarian learning matters, the greater need is it to support and encourage practices, which can help bridge cultural differences and foster understanding. In this way the use of artefacts, photographs and life stories have considerable practical potential.

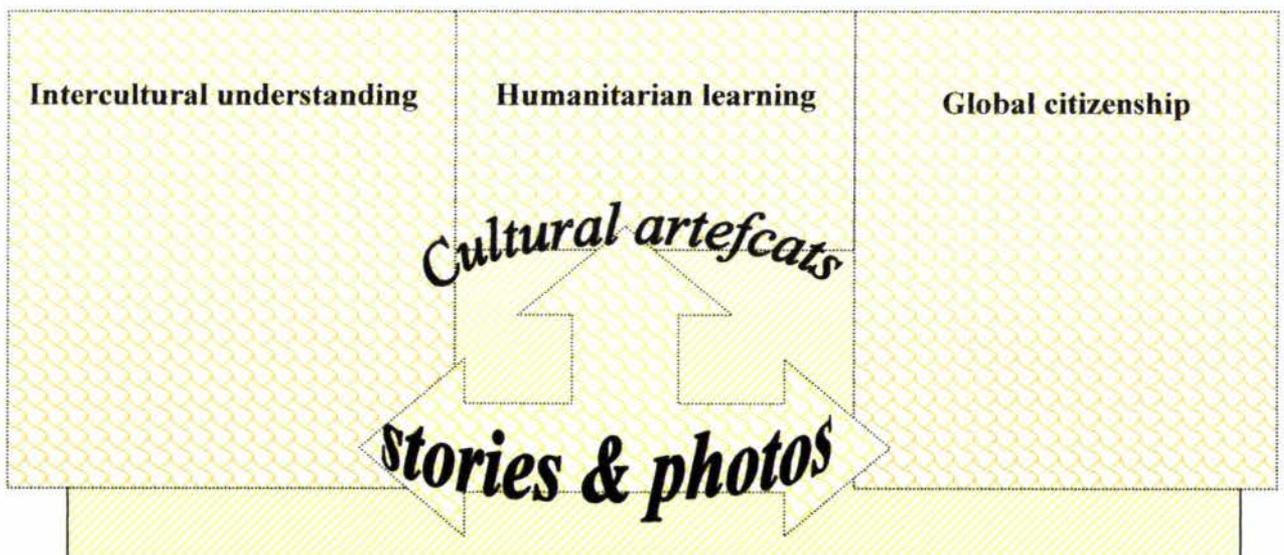
### Summary of findings

At the heart of worthwhile teaching and learning is our shared humanity that focuses on our collective best that is purposefully inclusive of learning between and among people of diverse cultures which can be described as humanitarian learning, *the development of understanding of self and others through the sharing of personal, cultural and social experiences that exemplify the attitudes and values needed for responsible citizenship and dignified relationships*. Artefacts, stories and photographs provide a conduit for such learning. In analysing the data, the following key points emerged:

- Personal multicultural experiences, a sense of global awareness and a thorough appreciation of people from differing backgrounds are considered highly significant in humanitarian learning
- Stories, artefacts and photographs create an accessible, versatile and effective *human connecting instrument* enabling humanitarian learning
- Stories, artefacts and photographs, skilfully used can illuminate cultural conflict, tension and misunderstanding.

This research has exemplified the relationship between two key elements, (intercultural understanding and global citizenship). This work demonstrated ways in which they are inextricably bound together with the potential to bring life to humanitarian learning when integrated with the skilful and flexible use of cultural artefacts, stories and photographs focussing on peoples lives. As with a cluster of cultural veils, the model below has spaces for ideas to move and stories, artefacts and photographs link each component.

Together, the people, the learners and teachers form the learning fabric



Those who participated in this study contributed to a professional and personal dialogue about cultural issues and the importance of cultivating learning that is humanitarian. The stories, artefacts and photographs made accessible a wide range of diverse views

and formed an accessible, flexible and effective human connecting device across generations and between peoples.

### Conclusions and suggestions

Suggestions and recommendations for ways that humanitarian learning can be fostered in a climate defined by tolerance, respect and responsibility include:

- The need to make more explicit the obligations of learners to develop perspectives, intuition and empathy so they know themselves and others and are able to view cultural difference as enriching
- The notion of learning as humanitarian is worthy of greater emphasis and implementation in educational organisations
- The recognition that areas of tension between people have great potential for meaningful growth of understanding across cultures
- Our collective need to revisit, reshape and reorient education, to humanise ourselves through education.

As a result of this study I will make the following recommendations to the IBO and elsewhere as possibilities arise.

- That strategies for the use of artefacts, stories and photographs are given a central place in teacher training workshops
- That IBO teacher training workshop leaders are encouraged to consider ways that areas of cultural tension might be used to provide meaningful and positive cultural exchanges through skilful facilitation
- I will write about possible uses of artefacts, stories and photographs and submit an article to the magazine *IB World*, which is widely circulated among international schools worldwide.

Humanitarian learning is embodied in the words of Bouhidiba:

“a fundamental unity of people which every type of education should assume, adopt and work for without pause. The unity of humanity is the first goal of education of any kind”(1980).

The provocative and at times disturbing perceptions and experiences described by participants confirms what many educators already know, but which we are still largely failing to address in education: that very often we do not manage successfully to live together. This thesis supports the assertion of there being no justifiable place for education that does not in some integral way make learning for human unity, its “first goal.”

A counter argument to this may suggest that specialisation is imperative to take humanity forward into new eras of “progress” such as space exploration or finding a cure for aids and cancer. Although these are necessary and worthwhile and may be expressly designed to serve humanity- without people developing a fundamental ability to live together, the value of all else is significantly diminished.

Laszlo’s (1993) words are thought provoking and optimistic.

“On a crowded planet, there is one future for all, or no future for any. The common future in humanity cannot be diverse without co-ordination, nor can it be united without diversity. To achieve such a world is a challenge to contemporary humanity, first and foremost, to the cultures that inspire people’s world views and shape their values.”

It is essential that “the incalculable power of humanity should transcend boundaries of religious dogma, skin colour, cultural upbringing, geographical borders or political beliefs.” (Macomb, 2003) Our most compelling challenge is to learn from each other, nurture and cultivate our collective humanity that it may become a treasured inheritance for future generations. The possibilities that are offered through the skilful use of artefacts, stories and photographs support such a challenge and deserve an integral place in learning.

This thesis provides a springboard for more serious consideration and action towards initiating learning that purposefully fosters people knowing each other in a spirit of global responsibility.

It is in this spirit that I have illustrated the need to strengthen and expand opportunities for education to be directed toward “the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall

promote understanding, tolerance and friendships among all nations, racial or religious groups and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace” (The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UN Article 26, 1948).

I have made a case for the use of artefacts, stories and photographs as an effective tool for cultural understanding and humanitarian learning. It is my hope that education enabling us to live together can become not only a right, but also a reality for more of us.

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## APPENDICES

Additional explanatory notes about APPENDICES 1, 5 and 7 – see italics below.

**Appendix 1**            Film / DVD

*I have included this film as an appendix because the process of planning and filming it formed a major part of my early thinking towards this thesis. It provides an example of some of the ways artefacts might be used with children and teachers.*

**Appendix 2**            Consent form

**Appendix 3**            Information letter

**Appendix 4**            Questionnaire

**Appendix 5**            Two Poems    'Toshiyuki' by Trish, 2004

*'The Divided Heart' by Harry Dansey via Melissa*

*I have included these two poems because they are examples of spontaneous connecting and sharing by participants. Unsolicited gestures such as these extended and enriched to our shared learning experience.*

**Appendix 6**            Examples of artefact writing

*'Reflections from Homeplaces' Keri Hulme, 1989*

*'The Desk' by Denis Rowe, 1992*

*I was interested to compare two pieces of writing both giving insights into lives and cultures via the same item of furniture. Denis Rowe's poem has special poignancy for me because the woman he writing about to whom the desk belongs is my mother.*

*Keri Hulme manages to capture an essentially New Zealand flavour alongside a sense of great personal intimacy.*

**Appendix 7**            Music as a cultural artefact: One encounter. Timi's Music

*I was delighted by the way this musical encounter unfolded and although it stands alone as an exception, it is worthy of sharing simply because again, it is an example of spontaneous learning driven by natural curiosity where cultural differences were overcome and celebrated in the pursuit of understanding.*



Cultural Insights and Implications through Artefacts and Stories  
Jane Taylor ID 01051925 Massey University, 2004 Thesis Masters in Adult Education

## Thesis -Cultural Insights and Implications through Artefacts and Stories

### CONSENT FORM

**THIS CONSENT FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF FIVE (5) YEARS**

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me.

My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree/do not agree to my explanations and recollections being published as part of this thesis.

I agree/do not agree to my photograph with an artefact being included in this thesis.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

I do/do not grant permission for my name to be included in the Thesis described.

**Signature:**

.....

**Date:**

.....

**Full Name - printed**

**Your contact email or  
postal address**

.....



Information sheet – and letter of introduction  
June, 2004  
Massey University,

Dear prospective participants,

I would like to request your participation in a research project I am undertaking as part of my thesis towards a Masters in Adult Education. This project will explore ways people perceive and reflect on cultural diversity in their own experience. I hope this research will add to what is known about the significance of cultural diversity in life experience and lead to improved teaching and learning strategies, especially in culturally diverse contexts.

If you are willing to participate you will be asked to:

- Complete a questionnaire about your cultural experience and perceptions
- Use a supplied disposable camera and arrange to be photographed with an artefact of your choosing, which is culturally significant to you
- Write explanatory notes about your artefact selection and significance
- Write a short account of a culturally significant event in your life
- Allow your perceptions, recollections and photographs to be included in this thesis.

Unless otherwise requested all contributions will be fully acknowledged with your name in the completed thesis. These activities can be completed anytime before the end of August 2004 by which time I will need to have the questionnaire and the camera containing up to three photographs, returned to me. I will collect these where possible or they can be mailed to me using the stamped and addressed package provided.

Data and consent forms will be stored in a filing cabinet or a secure place in Massey custody and disposed of after a five-year period. The photographic images and negatives will be stored in a secure location at Massey University and destroyed after the required five year period, with the guidance of a professional photographer if appropriate.

You are free to withdraw consent and discontinue participation at any time before the thesis enters a period of analysis in which I expect to be October 2004. (See consent form attached)

If you have any additional questions, please contact Dr. marg gilling, my supervising lecturer, or me.

Details are:

Email [rjkiwi@aol.com](mailto:rjkiwi@aol.com)

or

[m.gilling@massey.nz.ac](mailto:m.gilling@massey.nz.ac)

Phone: 09 636 0316 (home)

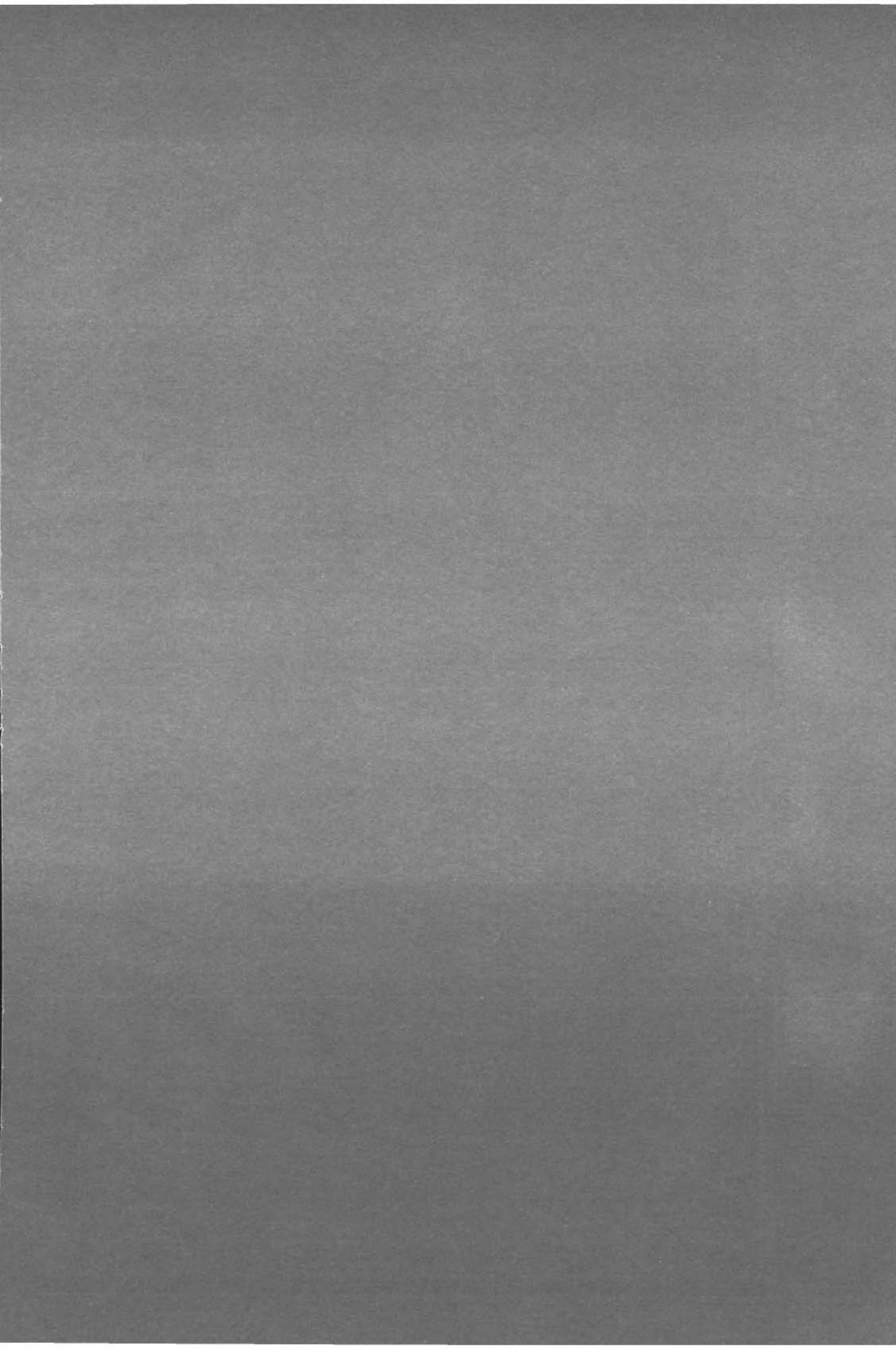
This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee, WGTN Protocol 04/21. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Mr Jeremy Hubbard, Acting Chair, Massey University Campus Human Ethics Committee: Wellington, telephone 04 801 5799 ext 6358, email [J.J.Hubbard@massey.ac.nz](mailto:J.J.Hubbard@massey.ac.nz).

Your signature on the attached consent form indicates that you have decided to participate in this study and that you have read and understood the information in this information letter.

I hope the experience of participating will be enjoyable and interesting for you.

With warm and sincere appreciation,

Jane Taylor





# Cultural Diversity – personal reflections

Broadly “Culture” refers to ways we live in groups- our values and attitudes - which may be passed down to generations  
you for your willingness to participate in this research study. Please respond to any of the following questions that have  
ance for you. Use words and/ or pictures as you wish. Use the reverse of the paper as needed.

Approx. Age

Under 20 _____	Between 20 –30 _____
Between 30 –40 _____	Between 40-50 _____
Between 50- 75 _____	Over 75 _____

Briefly describe, “Who you are.” Consider personal characteristics, how others may see you, and how  
you see yourself – this is just a brief glimpse of the essence of you - include ethnicity, or any special  
aspect of your culture(s) as you wish. (use reverse if needed)

To what extent, in your childhood, did you experience cultural diversity? (Circle)

\_\_\_\_\_ rarely \_\_\_\_\_ sometimes \_\_\_\_\_ often \_\_\_\_\_ constantly

Comments : \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Does a particular event in your early life stand out in your memory when you were in a culturally  
unfamiliar situation? Please think about such a time and describe or depict the event or situation.  
Include significant associated feelings, values or attitudes. (use reverse of page if needed).

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Cultural Diversity – personal reflections

Broadly “Culture” refers to ways we live in groups- our values and attitudes - which may be passed down to generations

these days, to what extent, do you come into contact with cultural diversity in your regular life?

rarely

sometimes

often

constantly

Comments : *(use reverse if needed)*

Applicable-  
Is this culturally diverse experience purposely chosen or does it just take place incidentally?

Explain: *(use reverse if needed)*

Can you think of a time when you deliberately embraced – or avoided - an aspect of a culture different from your own? *(use reverse if needed)*

Explain:



# Cultural Diversity – personal reflections

Broadly “Culture” refers to ways we live in groups- our values and attitudes - which may be passed down to generations

Do you have in your mind any hope or plan or intention for the future involving an unfamiliar specific cross-cultural experience? If so, explain this briefly: *(use reverse if needed)*

---

---

Generally speaking what is your level of interest in interaction with “other” cultures?

ative      very little      moderate      considerable      high      extreme

ment? *(use reverse if needed)*

---

How would you describe that attitudes and values within your family towards cultural diversity?  
*(use reverse if needed)*

---

---

---

Briefly describe the nature of the effect your teachers and your school experience has had on the development of your own cultural beliefs and values. *(use reverse if needed)*

---

---

---

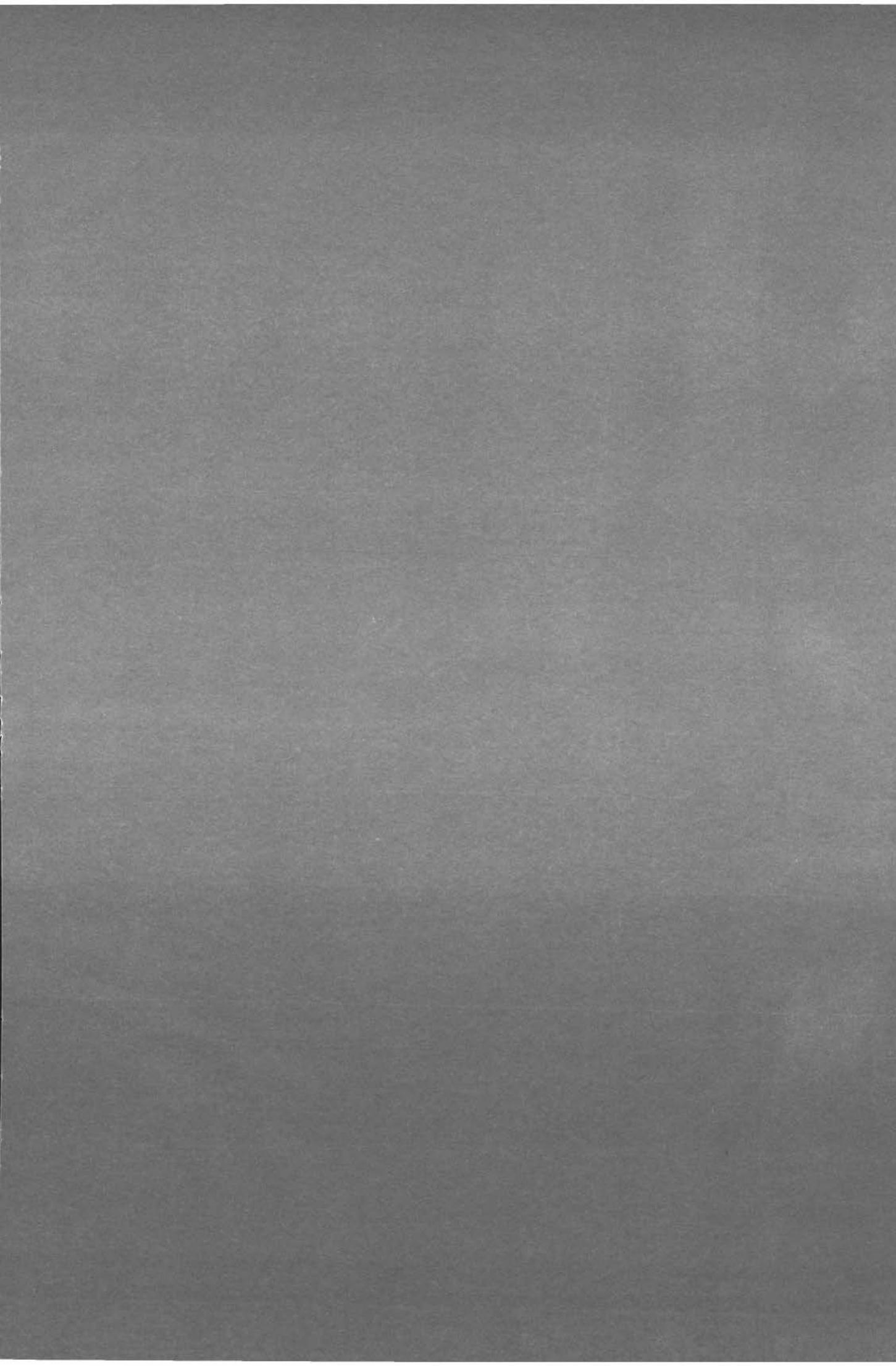
Read over and reflect on your responses. Comment on any observations you see or connections you might notice between your responses. *(use reverse if needed)*

---

---

---

THANK YOU VERY MUCH for your time and personal insights –



## The Divided Heart

Harry Dansey (Date unknown to me)

Look well about and look within  
The heart that knows a twofold stream,  
Of life that's drawn from brown and white  
And ask of it how does it seem?  
How do you judge your heritage  
Past from lands a world apart?  
What cherish you?  
What cast aside?  
Look well within divided heart

Relied brown:  
Full well I love bird haunted glade, ancestral hill,  
How strange it seems to cherish then, a golden throated daffodil.

Replied the white:  
Green hills and sheep and hamlets quiet and fair to see;  
Yet breath will catch when I behold, a tui in a kowhai tree.

And now two voices speak as one:  
We would not choose to tell apart  
The things we love by race or clime  
For they are one within the heart  
And equal joy in them we take  
That in this place by chance are set  
Tell kauri of Waitakere  
Or oak or elm of Somerset

(I don't know if the phrasing and layout are as was written, as it was quoted to me over the phone. But you get the jist. A little "old fashioned" in tone, if that is the word, but the meaning is just as relevant. Those of us from mixed heritage don't categorise internally, as they are one within us. It is external classifications that do this.)

TOSHIYUKI

A man my son calls Father  
Has come from another land  
He brings us new ways of  
Seeing our old life,  
our ways of being together,  
our smiles , our worries, our fears,  
our easy open friendships.  
our funny table manners.

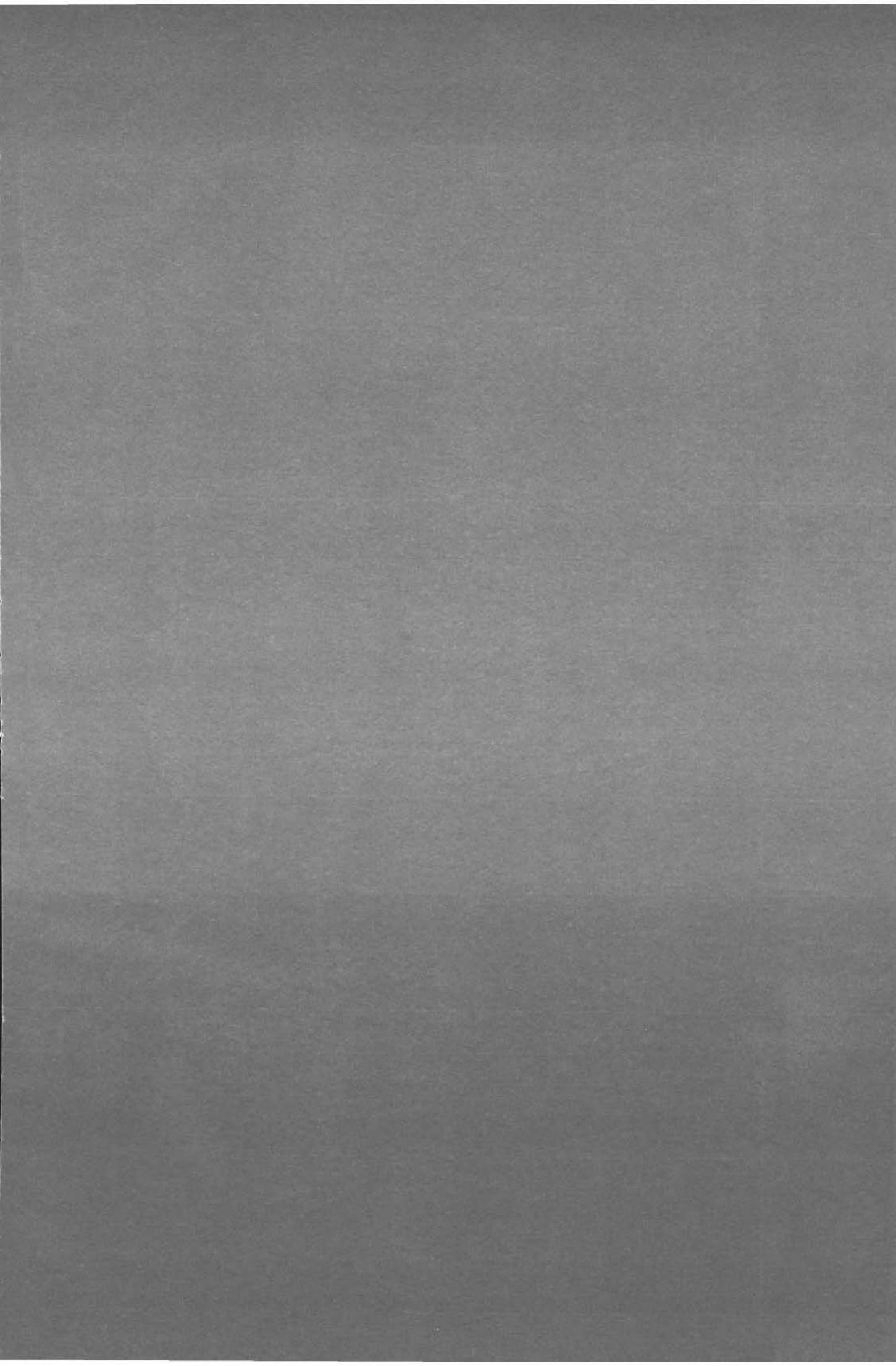
This man my son calls Father  
Makes bamboo baskets in our bedroom  
No-one has ever done that before!  
He writes with brush and ink ---  
A tanka that tells  
What he sees in our land:

Peaceful people, a hot water beach,  
Clear blue skies, a wild sea coast,  
But, best of all, his lovely daughter  
(Clever, wise, beautiful) shining  
In the hearts of new family and friends.

How they love her!  
He is happy.

With love from Trish  
13/5/04

*Trish Gribben*



## Examples of artefact writing

The desks belonging to Keri Hulme and Lindsay Rowe are described below. These descriptions provide more than mere facts. In this way these items of furniture can be considered cultural artefacts, “An item of personal or professional significance that carries weight for a person, tells a story, has a past with connections to the present and perhaps possibilities for the future” (see glossary) The desks (and the ledge) provide a tangible framework for subtle details and wonderings of personal and cultural significance. They invite further inquiry.

What do we learn of Keri and Lindsay? What questions, exchanges of ideas and cultural understanding might be inspired by this artefact writing? In what ways is this learning something others might relate to? How could such writing be extended or developed or used? What item might you share to enrich the exchange and deepen the understanding?

There are a great many applications in the context of teaching and learning for cultural understanding. The important point is that personal artefacts provide a powerful and versatile catalyst, where the owner is perhaps an expert, where multiple perspectives are likely and where cultural understanding can be nurtured.

If the reader were able to view the desk alongside the owner, the horizons for cultural learning would expand even further. It is such exchanges that I advocate as a means to foster humanitarian learning.

Keri Hulme's reflections from Homeplaces, 1989

The heart of the octagon is my desk. It has eight drawers and three cupboards and three shelves in it, and I spend a good deal of my life working on it or about it. I suppose my desk has three hearts; one is me, mine. One is the manuscript case that is locked in it,.... And one is the ledge.

The ledge has things on it: they have been gifts mainly.

A pewter dolphin the size of my middle finger, and a small kauri bowl full of Northland stones; a Venus sea comb, still spiky as ever, but gone limey with years; a tiny box containing even tinier "problem" people from South America (they have minute eyes, brilliant cotton clothes, and if you tuck one under your pillow at night, and whisper your most pressing problem, she or he will go away and solve it; they are then spent, and must be disposed of in a dignified way, buried with reverence or cast to the elements with blessing and thanks); an ammonite a critic friend sent from Nepal; a porcelain cup so fragile I have never dared drink from it; some hand carved type from a defunct Taranaki press; a brass lock-cover from the firm of Chubb; a fit gift for a fish with secrets, which my next-door neighbour Maloney gave me one birthday; a little brassbound wooden box from Tibet, full of amber and ambergris, a serendipitous present from that magnificent human being and writer Joy Cowley; a sharp ivory cetacean tooth, all the way from New York, reminding me of a miserable time I spent there, enlightened and enlivened by Leni and Henry Spencer...o the people start creeping in again, with their koha and kind hearts. There is more much more.

There is a walnut shell, an ordinary walnut shell, except a skilled silversmith has rimmed the half-shells with silver, and made a cunning hinge and catch. I bought that for myself, a tiny Kist to take on travels, and was unprepared for the gift that followed, an ivory Kuan Yin, less that the size of any of my phalanxes, who fitted perfectly inside. She is held one side by an Okarito quartz pebble and on the other by a splinter of Moeraki prase. I think that contains most of my idea of goodness, at the moment.

Almost nobody except family get to see that ledge.

'The Desk' Denis Rowe, "Family Matters" 1992

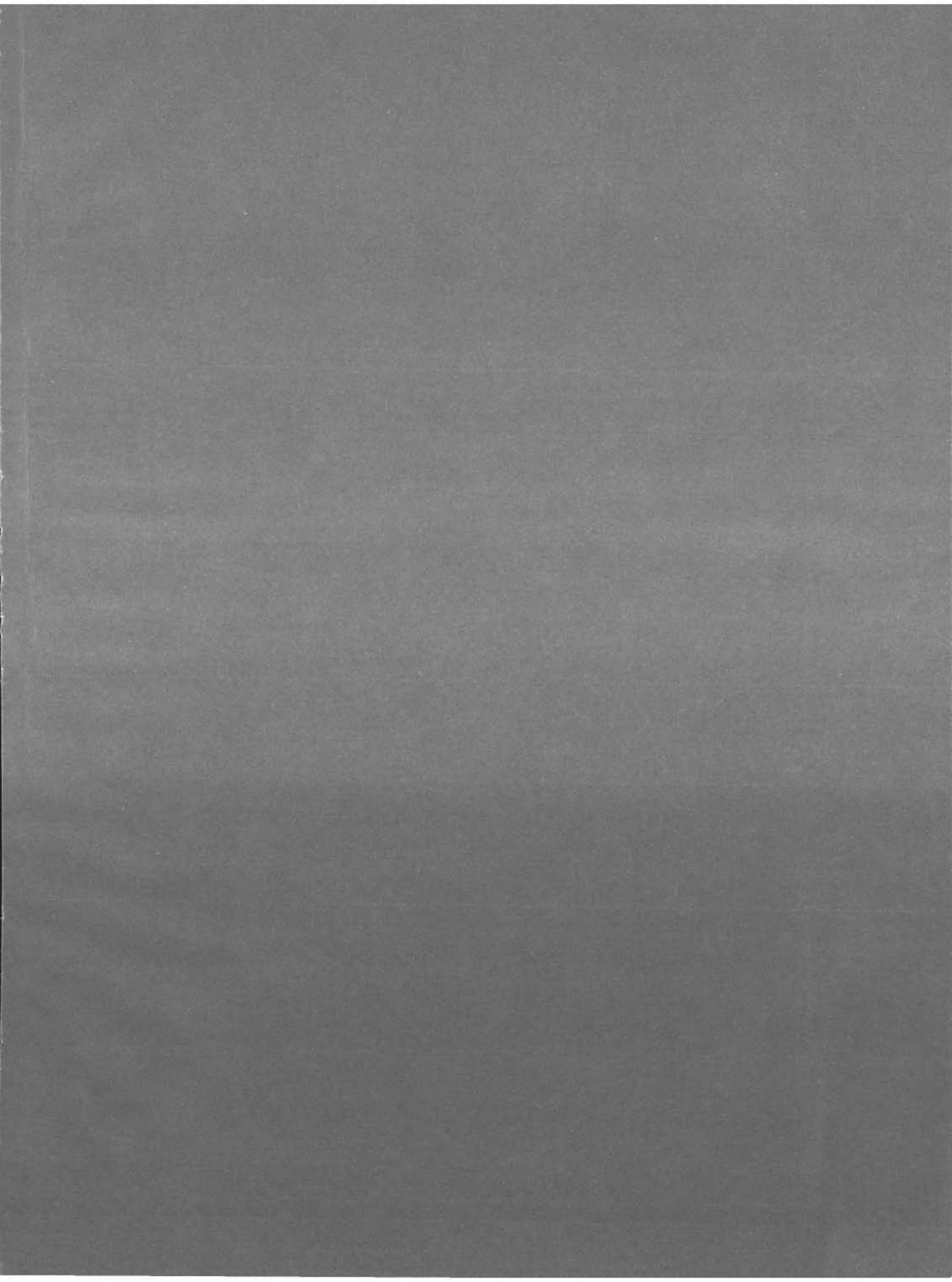
This woman of mine has a desk  
It's a small desk  
In the bedroom  
Made of oak  
Polished  
Not too polished  
If anything the shine is played down  
Suitably as it belonged you know to her mother  
Fanny daughter of Eliza

Often now my woman sits at it  
Shuffles but rarely discards the simple contents  
Because in a sense they are her  
And tell her life story  
Births deaths marriages  
Teaching swimming abilities  
And so on  
All set out and certified

Yet though the desk overflows  
Most of the pieces tell of others  
Tell of her attendance on others  
And tell of unselfishness  
We joke hugely about the dowry  
But the real gift was herself  
Along the desk

If we use a range of vehicles in our communication, learning and investigations – we increase the chances of understanding. In this work what vehicles did the participants select to communicate their experience? Where are the commonalities – where are the differences?

Living is learning. Some events remain clear in the mind over time. They do so because they are significant. The mind may embellish the memory somewhat and this is a significant part of the process of tapping into our humanity and shaping culture and playing a role in creating what we believe and value.



### Music as a cultural artefact – One Encounter

Timi agreed to participate in my research and completed the questionnaire sharing her personal cultural perceptions and significant cultural learning.

One of her dilemmas was deciding what she would select as an artefact of particular cultural significance to her. She had various possibilities:

- Some paintings of her “European home town”
- A Hungarian novel of significance, which is included in her data in Chapter 4
- She considered using a piece of music

With a slight sense of frustration Timi explained that she was unable to use the music because “I can’t hold this – or photograph this.” We engaged in a spontaneous exploration of shared understandings and responses to ‘her’ music as are described here.

I listened to the music and told her how it made me feel, what I guessed the words were about, the mood, the spirit and what I heard musically and instrumentally. I wrote down my initial responses and showed her: *The music depicts a joyous, stirring story –an Operetta –not unlike Des Fliedermaus, Strauss-like in mood. Male and female voices harmonise well- a strong alto voice – various men’s voices singing together – not strictly in unison – but for a pleasing total effect. Subtleties of tempo - upbeat – telling many stories. Jovial orchestration -repetitive with some melancholic sections.*

Timi explained that this music conveyed to her many happy childhood memories and melodic familiarity.

“There are happy memories of times when we sang those songs. The title ‘Brondos elet’ means ‘Silly Little Life filled with subtleties.’ ‘Silly’ in this sense means crazy, irresistible, frivolous. The music tells of romantic stories, some happy, some nostalgic involving laughing, crying, drinking, anger. One story says that love doesn’t mean you are going to be happy”

*Timi confirmed, clarified and extended my understanding* which was limited. Timi unlocked it further with her authentic knowledge of the story, her reasons for loving it,

her interpretation and responses. We discussed the instruments; the Gypsy character of the cello, piano and violins, which, she explained, are major instruments in Hungary.

My brother, an accomplished player of a range of classical instruments listened to the music and wrote on manuscript paper a short score of one of the melodies. (See below) His responses to the music indicated his sophistication in level of musical knowledge:

“This is an opera written by one at home with the Hungarian language and music. The singer’s revel in the music made for their own language; a delight to the ear. There are spirited dances, syncopated rhythms, accelerating to wild finishes. What a feast for anyone who could understand the words! What a spectacle for someone who could watch the action! For one isolated from their language, this work of art could be a favourite friend. Track 7 and 8 are spoken and very clear. In the family of European romantic style it features Glissando and rolled R’s, agile clarinets, violins, accordions are there in the background. It is a quality recording and includes a full orchestra. I wonder if this composition may convey the sense that those in power are persuaded to adopt a generous spirit to common delight.”

The music was the catalyst for a shared exploration of a precious piece of Timi’s culture. We learned about each other while simultaneously gaining cultural and personal insights. Timi’s music connected us in our learning. Although these interactions were not typical of what took place with most participants. The potential for other in-depth inquiries and cultural learning was present.

