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**CULTURAL PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNING SITUATIONS:**

**Overseas Students in Their First Year Of  
Teacher Education in New Zealand**

A thesis presented in  
fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts  
in Second Language Teaching  
at Massey University

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the perceptions of four overseas student teachers, based on teaching practice observations in their first year of teacher education in a New Zealand College of Education. Data was collected by means of questionnaires, interviews, a semantic differential scale and a stimulated recall procedure. Perceptions of New Zealand learning situations were examined at three points during the year, as the subjects participated in teaching practices. Results from the study relate to the nature, focus, orientation and shifts in the students' perceptions of the target culture. It was found that perceptions were variably focussed on three broad zones of perception, notably teacher/learner roles, the nature of learning and the contextual features of the target learning culture. A number of perception indicators were generated from the data. These included positive perception indicators such as clear conceptualization, strategy formulation, surface assimilation, positive uptake and avoidance of closure, and negative perception indicators relating to partial conceptualization, self doubts, rejection and closure, overlaying, and the lack of effective models. The major outcomes of this study point to the influence of prior beliefs and expectations on perceptions of the target learning culture, as well as the developmental nature of perceptions. In addition, findings reveal the importance of perceptions in the process of acculturation. The study concludes with a number of suggestions for the development of more effective programmes for overseas student teachers.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

Within New Zealand, over the last ten years, there have been increasing numbers of international students in primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions. While overseas students have long established a presence in tertiary education, in a variety of professions such as dentistry, medicine, engineering, this has not been the case for teaching. The Colleges of Education, unlike other tertiary institutions, have been slow to join the trend and enroll overseas students. In the past, the education of overseas teachers has been limited to consultants who were sent overseas to provide on-site, in-service teacher education, particularly in the Asia and Pacific regions. To date, very few overseas students have entered the pre-service areas of the Colleges of Education, which have traditionally prepared teachers for employment in New Zealand primary and secondary schools.

More recently, the increase in Asian students at primary and tertiary levels of the New Zealand educational system, has created a demand for teachers with an understanding of these children. Furthermore, in the secondary schools, the number of New Zealand students wishing to take Japanese language courses have outstripped the supply of local teachers who can speak fluent Japanese. As a result, there is now a small but growing number of overseas students who apply for, and are accepted into pre-service courses in New Zealand Colleges of Education. Many of these students have already graduated and have found employment in New Zealand primary and secondary schools. Until now, little research has been carried out to assess the learning and acculturation processes of these overseas student teachers, although it is known that their previous educational experiences may be very different from those of the New Zealand children whom they will ultimately teach.

It seems likely that overseas student teachers will bring with them differing concepts regarding the values of their home learning setting. Garcia (1982) states:

there is no such thing as a culturally free teaching activity ... [they all] spring from unconscious assumptions one makes; they are based on one's cultural and ethnic perspectives ... What students learn and what teachers teach are ultimately filtered and strained through their cultural sieves (Garcia, 1982: 18).

Many of those who work in the ESOL setting have observed cross-cultural conflicts between the learning and teaching styles in their classes. One example of this, which may also affect overseas student teachers, is the communicative style of teaching and learning another language which has become prominent in western educational settings. Along with this, there has been an increasing interest in the development of independent learning. Cull (1993) states that there is a move to regarding autonomy as "a new measure of learner success". In contrast, in other parts of the world, some programmes still rely largely on visible teacher direction and the learners' use of rote learning strategies. Lewis (1993: 63) proposes that the mix of these two opposing systems in the ESOL classroom creates a tension "between the way they want to be taught and how I want to teach". It is likely that overseas student teachers will experience some of the conflict which Lewis describes. This may be evident in both the teaching practice setting and the College classes.

Given the potential for the type of conflict described above, how will formalized teacher education in a new culture impact on the perceptions which these students hold? There are two possible answers to this question. On one hand, Kamla (1992: 47) states that "adults cling to certain intellectual habits they have already established". One study even suggests that cultural ties may increase when the individual is away from home (Jin and Cortazzi, 1993). On the other hand, however, there are several factors which may give in-service teacher education of overseas students in New Zealand, an edge to succeed. In the first place, these student teachers probably come to a New Zealand College of Education with the explicit intention of learning a "new" way. They will also participate in a mainstream setting of the target culture where there is likely to be a strong influence from other students whose educational experiences represent those of the majority culture. Furthermore, Colleges of Education work from the premise that it *is* possible to alter beliefs which native speaking teachers have concerning "good" learning and teaching. To this end, teacher education today is largely designed to allow a priori

perceptions to be consciously examined and re-evaluated, although ways to do this are still being explored.

Past research into cross-cultural perceptions has not paid much attention to the process of shifts in perception, but has concentrated mainly on perceptions at a single moment in time. For research into perceptions to be useful to practitioners concerned with teacher education, the process of *shifts* in perception needs to be examined over a period of time. In addition, although previous research to examine the effectiveness of short in-service courses is in evidence (eg Bailey, 1992; Lamb, 1995), there has been little longitudinal research into the perceptions of pre-service student teachers, and a total absence of such research on overseas student teachers wishing to teach in the second language setting. Spada and Massey (1992) comment on the paucity of longitudinal research in the area of second language teaching:

little research ... (to trace the evolution of 'professional knowledge') ... has been undertaken within the context of second language teacher education programs, despite an increasing awareness in the literature of the need ... to investigate how teachers learn to teach, how they change in order to become more effective teachers and what the relationship is between teacher preparation and the demands of professional practice (Spada and Massey, 1992: 23)

This dearth of longitudinal research into perceptions and how they change in the process of teacher education is possibly attributable to the difficulty of investigating cognitive processes which are not directly observable. Pajares (1992: 308) suggests that little attention has been directed at these issues in the past since "belief does not lend itself easily to empirical investigation". Despite the apparent lack of research activity into the cognitive processes involved during teacher education, it is undeniably a potentially rich field. This may be particularly so in a cross-cultural setting. Johnson (1994) notes that the value of such investigations in the cross-cultural setting has only just begun to be acknowledged:

Only recently has the field begun to recognize the importance of exploring the cognitive dimensions of how second language teachers' thoughts, judgements and decisions influence the nature of second language instruction (Johnson, 1994: 440).

The outcomes of a qualitative, exploratory study in the area of cross-cultural perceptions in the field of teacher education are likely to be of particular value in guiding later, more

intensive, studies, and in informing future practice in teacher education programmes.

The present study, which is the subject of this report, aims to explore the nature of perceptions held by overseas student teachers, particularly as they relate to target learning situations, and to define and describe any shifts in these perceptions. The investigation utilizes a case study approach to track the perceptions of four overseas student teachers during their first year in teacher education in New Zealand, with a central emphasis on the teaching practice setting. Moreover, since this is essentially a cross-cultural field of study, a special concern has been to devise a research design which will be appropriate and effective with the subjects involved, who are from an Asian cultural background.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE NATURE OF PERCEPTION

This chapter aims to develop and clarify the key concepts and issues related to the current study. In addition, relevant research which has been carried out in New Zealand and overseas is surveyed. The chapter begins by defining the nature of perception, then moves on to examine cultural perceptions in the educational setting, and concludes by summarising the research literature relating to shifts in perception.

#### 2.1 KEY THEMES

There are several major themes which intertwine throughout this study and influence the process of teacher education. These themes include perception, cultural perception, and the development of role expectations and beliefs in the processes of socialization and acculturation. The principal term which links these ideas is perception. This will now be defined in detail.

##### 2.1.1 *Perception*

The significance of perception in human experience was noted early this century in the work of theorists such as example, Titchener (1915). Most of the early research into perception was limited to quantitative studies which de Bono (1976: 9) notes were "too concerned with visual and other sensory perception". Nonetheless, these initial works were of value in establishing that individuals seem to process and make sense of incoming information in a predictable and consistent manner. In recent years, and in particular, the 1990s, research involving perception has emerged within qualitative and applied fields of investigation. This has broadened understanding of how perception operates, in areas other than pure psychology.

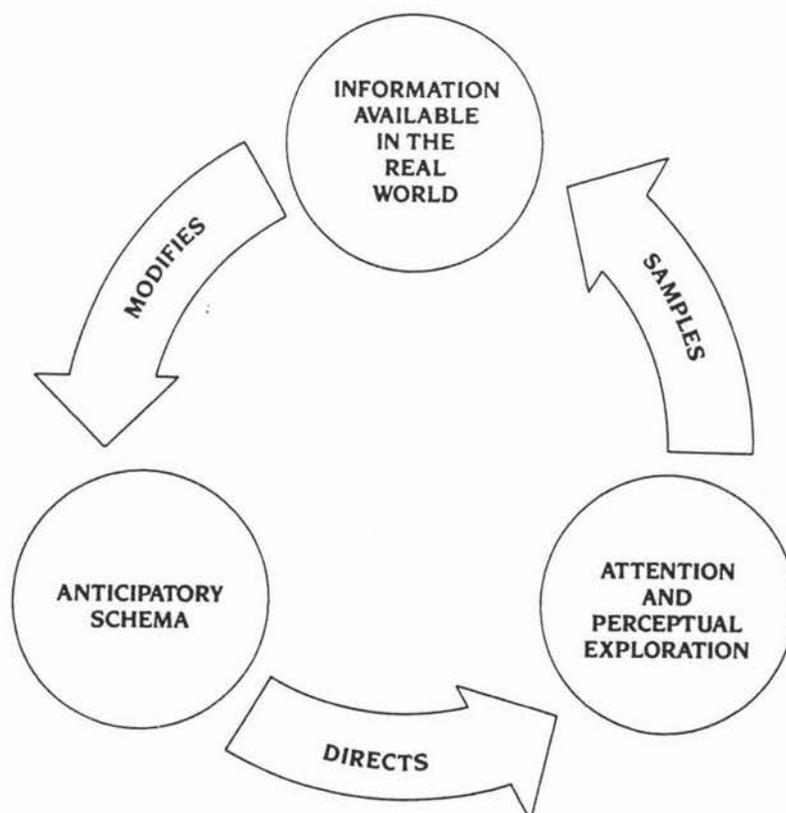
In this study, the key definition of perception is conceptualized according to Hayes (1991). In addition, the notion of perception is expanded with consideration of the theories of Brown (1994), Fox (1993) and others. Firstly, Hayes (1991) defines perception as an active, ongoing cognitive process:

The processes of perception involve the brain decoding and making sense of the information that it is receiving, in such a way that the information can be acted upon, or stored (Hayes, 1991: 3).

In Hayes' model of the perceptual cycle (adapted from Neiser, 1976; see figure 2.1) "anticipatory schema" provide a guide for choosing which information is received. Hayes argues that information is actively and selectively searched for, on the basis of prior knowledge which is stored in long term memory. Furthermore, Hayes suggests that although prior knowledge guides the individual's focus, attention is also attracted by information that contradicts or challenges existing anticipatory schema. Thus, new understandings modify existing schemata and redirect subsequent attention.

**Figure 2.1**

*Hayes' (1991) model of the perceptual cycle, as adapted from Neiser (1976)*



There are a number of further views which add to the model of perception put forward by Hayes. Firstly, Fox (1993: 35) notes that perception is “generally automatic”. Moreover, Scollon and Scollon (1995: 10) claim that inferences in meaning move quickly, from tentative to fixed, since “uncertainty would lead to complete communicative immobilization”. The notion that the perceptual process occurs quickly, and often automatically, indicates that there may be little time for considered and conscious reflection on perceived reality. There may also be little awareness of how, or why, information is selected during perception.

Finally, it is significant to note the stage at which selection of information takes place in the process of perception. Hayes (1991) holds that, through the perceptual process, an individual receives an initial view of reality which is selective, rather than complete. Brown (1994) also indicates that filtering of information takes place very early in the perceptual process:

Perception involves the filtering of information even before it is stored in memory (Brown, 1994: 123).

It may be inferred, therefore, that since some information is not received, it does not undergo subsequent cognitive processing and/or storage in long term memory. The implication is that new information, which is not selected for input, is unable to be learned.

Which factors then influence the selection process in perception? Chaplin (1968) claims that perceptual attention is focussed by a range of individual and situational factors:

The perceptual process begins with attention, which is the process of selectively observing. The important stimulus factors in attending are change, intensity, repetition, contrast and movement. Important organism factors are interests and learned habits of attention (Chaplin, 1968: 352).

It is not certain which of the factors mentioned above, create the most powerful influence on perception. Such situational features as “change”, “intensity” and “contrast”, mentioned by Chaplin, are likely to be important influences on perception when moving to a different cultural context. On the other hand, however, it is possible that the individual’s “learned habits of attention”, also mentioned by Chaplin, may deflect vital

perceptual attention from some areas of the new situation, making learning difficult. Hayes' model is equally ambivalent. On one hand, it is argued that anticipatory schemata may influence the individual to search for familiar perceptions in a new environment. Yet, on the other hand, it is held that new or contrasting stimuli may attract attention. The outcomes of the present study will offer some insights into this issue of competing influences on the focus of perceptions.

### **2.1.2 Cultural Perception**

The term *cultural perception* suggests that perceptions, or inferences about meaning, besides being an individual view of reality, are also a collective or a shared view. Cortazzi (1990) asserts that perceptions are culturally based and are constructed in the course of social interaction. Members of a particular culture have been found to share perceptions which are distinct from other cultures (eg McCargar, 1993). Gudykunst and Kim (1984: 121) present an interesting paradigm of perceptual variation across cultures. They differentiate high context cultures, such as Japan and other Asian societies - where cues are likely to be subtle and implicit - from low context cultures, such as Britain and the USA. They argue that, as a consequence, it may be difficult for a member of a high context culture, to perceive context cues in a low context culture, while the rituals of the high context culture may seem superfluous to members of a low context culture.

Cultural perception, besides influencing the way reality is perceived and conceived, also reinforces expectations of reality. This in turn influences an individual's ability to perceive new phenomenon. Robinson (1985: 17) argues that "stimuli that are incongruent with our anticipations may not be initially perceived and may take longer to perceive". This may influence the effectiveness of the acculturation process for individuals who have moved to a new cultural situation.

### **2.1.3 Socialization, Beliefs and Role Expectations**

The main influences on the filtering aspect of perception are culture, socialization and individual experiences. On entering a new culture, individual experiences may add to, or modify, existing knowledge or understanding of that culture. However, early socialization

is unable to be altered. It therefore remains a strong influence on world view. This section explores the interrelationship between cultural perception and socialization; and the subsequent influence of these factors on beliefs and role expectations.

Cortazzi (1990) defines socialization in educational settings as:

the process of acquiring adult roles, internalizing the beliefs and values of society ... learners are socialized into such patterns and roles in classroom interaction at a very early age. They are a deeply embedded part of learners' expectations about what should happen in 'normal' classrooms (Cortazzi, 1990: 57-58).

Through the process of socialization, the importance of particular cultural perceptions is reinforced. For example, Western society puts emphasis on individual development and personal experience, while other cultures stress continuity, stability and group identity (Cortazzi, 1990: 58). These perceptions become part of the individual's automatic responses to the environment. Hall (1976) refers to this as 'programming':

different cultures 'program' their members to pay attention to different aspects of the environment with a greater or lesser attachment of significance (Hall, 1976, in Gudykunst and Kim, 1984: 120).

Beliefs are formed as part of the socialization process and are, as Johnson (1994: 43) indicates, extremely complex, comprising cognitive, affective and behavioural components. The behavioural component links to that aspect of beliefs which Pajares refers to as "predispositions to action" (Pajares, 1992: 307). That implies that beliefs influence actions and therefore role enactment.

Gudykunst and Kim (1984: 67) define a role as "a set of behavioural expectations associated with a particular position in a group", hence the term *role expectations*. McCargar (1993:193) similarly describes role expectations as "sets of interrelated schemata" which are linked to "stereotyped" perceptions. Perceptions of role expectations have been found to vary across cultures. Gudykunst and Kim (1984: 68-74) include in this variation, such factors as the degree of personalness, the degree of formality expected, the degree of hierarchy and the degree of deviation allowed from the ideal role enactment. They note that Japanese culture has a tight role structure, making it more difficult to accept any deviation from the ideal.

When someone changes cultural settings, stereotyped role expectations may not be met, causing not only misunderstanding but also misjudgements of the person/people occupying that role. Robinson (1985) states that “cultural misunderstandings are a function of perceptual mismatches between people of different cultures: mismatches in schemas, cues, values and interpretations”(Robinson, 1985: 49).

#### ***2.1.4 Acculturation***

During socialization, enculturation, or the acquisition of cultural patterns, occurs (Kim, 1982: 360). In acculturation, or adapting to a new culture, new patterns need to be learned. Gudykunst and Kim (1984: 208) state that in the process of adapting to a new culture, some of the first socialization processes are revoked in a process of “deculturation”. The degree of both deculturation and acculturation may differ for any one individual:

Acculturation is described as the continuous process by which strangers are resocialized into a host culture, so as to be directed toward a greater compatibility with or ‘fitness’ into the host culture, and ultimately, toward assimilation (ie the highest degree of acculturation theoretically possible)... Thus acculturation of strangers should properly be thought of as falling along a continuum from minimally acculturated to highly acculturated (Gudykunst and Kim, 1984: 209).

It is questionable whether it is desirable or possible to completely change a person’s culture through the acculturation process. Adult beliefs, in particular, are known to be difficult to change (Gudykunst and Kim, 1984, Pajares, 1992). Pajares (1992: 307) states that “beliefs are unlikely to be replaced unless they prove unsatisfactory”, and even then, belief change is seen as the “last alternative”. Belief change, however, is very much an accepted part of the process of teacher education.

#### ***2.1.5 Teacher Education***

Updating, or changing of established beliefs is a key part of on-going teacher education. Popewitz, Tabachnich and Zeichner (1979, in Zeichner, 1993: 51) state that “a paradigm in teacher education can be thought of as a matrix of beliefs and assumptions about the nature and purposes of schooling, teaching, teachers and their education”. Although teacher education is often thought of as either skills training or theoretical/cognitive

expansion, what is brought *to* the experience by individuals may be at least as powerful as what is provided *during* the experience. Pajares (1992: 307) states that beliefs teachers hold will influence their perceptions and judgements, which in turn will influence their behaviour in the classroom.

When new beliefs are presented to teachers from foreign cultures during pre-service or in-service education, these beliefs may be in direct conflict with those which have been developed in the earlier socialization process of these students. Snook (1993: 28) maintains that teacher education, even at the level of learning practical skills is “not a low level replicative task ... but quite a high level rational and analytic task”. Therefore, new beliefs may encompass not only a view of learning and teaching roles at surface behavioural level, but also at a deeper cognitive level. Beliefs about how these roles are best accomplished, in what contexts, and the very nature and value of the learning itself may be strongly challenged in cross-cultural teacher education. This may affect the extent to which this knowledge is taken up and may also result in altering perceptions of the knowledge being presented. Research into attempts to change beliefs through teacher education will be examined in more detail in section 2.3.3.

## **2.2 CULTURAL PERCEPTIONS IN THE EDUCATIONAL SETTING**

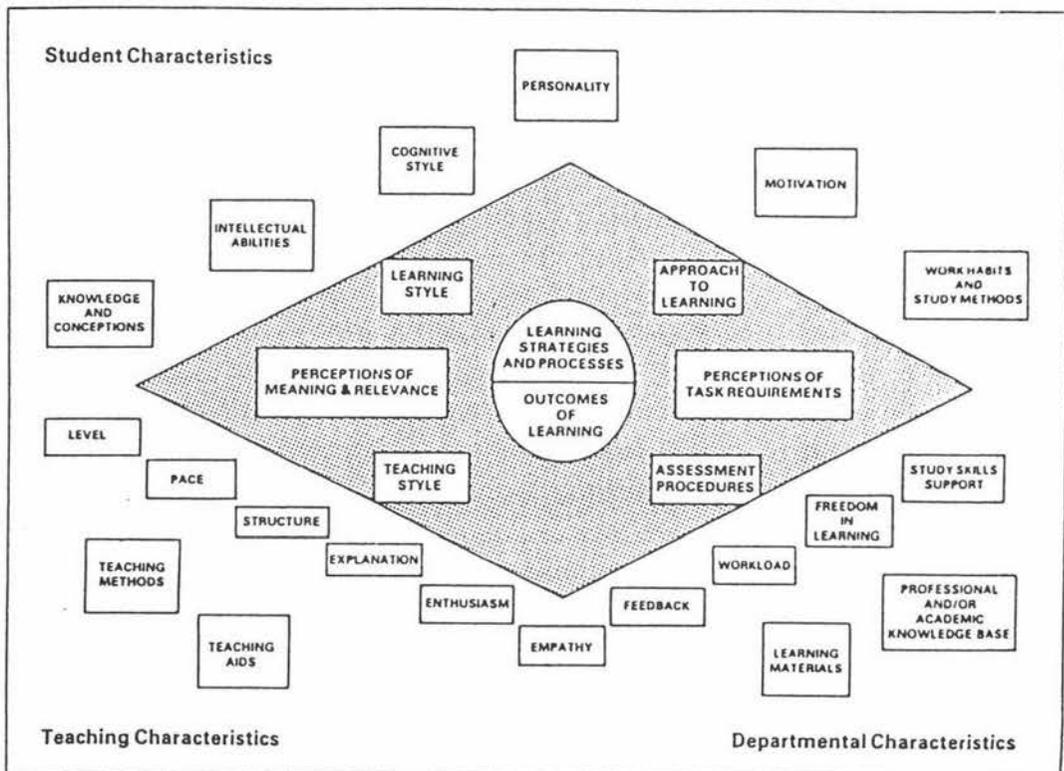
The centrality of cultural perception to the educational setting will be further explored in this section which begins by reviewing the literature regarding the interrelationship between perception, teaching and learning. This is followed by an overview of previous research regarding the relationship of cultural perception to learning/ teaching styles. The section concludes with an examination of Asian perceptions of teaching and learning roles.

### ***2.2.1 Perception, Learning and Teaching***

Martinez (1994: 161) argues that perceptions are at the heart of education, stating that “teaching is deeply embedded in its institutional and social contexts and can make no pretence at neutrality”. The importance of perceptions in the teaching learning process is

reflected in an heuristic model developed by Entwistle and Tait (1990: 172), shown in figure 2.2. Perceptions are shown as central in this process.

**Figure 2.2**  
*Entwistle and Tait's (1990) heuristic model of the teaching-learning process*



The first theme from the literature regarding learning and perception concerns the area of *self* perception and learning. How learners perceive themselves, or self esteem, has been found to affect whether or not learners are successful (Baker, 1992: 123). Equally importantly is the effect of teacher perception of learners. As Cortazzi (1990: 54) notes, "as you think of others, so they will become".

A second area of particular importance to the current investigation, includes several studies related to learner perceptions of the complexity of the second language they are learning, or of the new culture they are entering. These studies were foreshadowed by

Giles and Byrne's Accommodation Theory (1982, in Baker, 1993) which describes how the level of successful language learning is dependent on the perceived distance between the in-group and out-group. Asian cultures and languages are often perceived as being very distant from those of the Western world. For example, Jorden (1991) describes languages such as Thai and Japanese as "truly foreign" and "non-cognate" with those in the Indo-European group.

Various studies have drawn links between perceptions of the level of cultural difference and other factors. These include the level of success of language learners (Ellis, 1993); the degree of cross-cultural shock (Sharif, 1994); and negative affective responses which were found to correlate with a high level of attrition in courses (Samimy and Tabuse, 1992). In addition, the results of these investigations would indicate that there is a higher level of difficulty for Asian students who might be trying to learn English, or to live in an English speaking environment. This difficulty goes past script differences to the perceived degree of cultural and cognitive distance (Dong, 1990). On the other hand, it has also been noted, that while American culture focuses on modifying the classroom environment, Japanese culture encourages students to adapt to the learning environment (Hess and Azuma, 1991). It is possible that this factor could cause Japanese students to be more flexible in new learning/teaching situations, thus reducing the impact of cultural distance on some Asian learners.

Finally, there are several studies which link cultural perceptions with particular beliefs related to role expectations and other aspects of the learning environment. It has been suggested that teachers' perceptions are frequently biased because of their cultural background (Iram and Malovaty, 1994: 35). These biases can create conflicting expectations of teacher and learner roles in "foreign" cultural settings. In addition, these conflicts may be highlighted as cultural distance between the target and home cultures increases. Holliday (1992) refers to this as "tissue rejection". An illustration of this is also found in the work of Hird (1996) who entitles an article on the teaching of English for Academic Purposes: "Teaching Chinese learners to be impolite".

### ***2.2.2 Cultural Perception: Influences on Teaching and Learning Styles***

Researchers have identified differences in individual learning styles (Robinson, 1985; Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991). Robinson (1985: 18) refers to these differences as “preferred perceptual modes”. It is thought that cultural preferences for particular learning styles can be “deeply ingrained” (Scarcella, 1990: 126).

Conflicts in perceptions of ideal learning/teaching styles have been identified as causing learning/teaching difficulties. Jones (1991) carried out an ethnographic study contrasting a predominantly Samoan class with a predominantly New Zealand Pakeha class in Auckland. Her findings showed that teachers were forced to shift into a more teacher-dominated style when working with the Samoan students. The conflicting expectations of the Samoan students caused frustration and non-cooperation behaviour patterns, finally effecting change from the teacher who was effectively in a minority situation. However, in the process, the teacher also formed negative perceptions of the students. Robinson (1985: 54) states that “numerous studies have shown that perceived similarity influences liking”.

The literature reveals a number of studies which examine contrasting learning styles. One area mentioned relates to perceptions of the type of learning atmosphere. For example, Corson (1992) records that Chinese students preferred structured, quiet classrooms, while Hispanic students preferred interaction in the class. Koyama (1992: 125) suggests that activities such as games and songs may not be perceived as serious learning in some cultures. This was highlighted in Dhasmana’s (1994) study of Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi speaking mothers in a Bristol Early Childhood setting. One of the mothers is reported to comment on sand and water play : “What teachers hope to achieve by these activities, in this country, God only knows, I don’t” (Dhasmana, 1994: 26). Brick also states that, in Asian education, the text book is seen as the syllabus or “route map” and that self-directed study through libraries is not prevalent in Asian societies as it is in western societies (Brick, 1991: 159). Therefore, the type of learning activities which take place in the classroom may form conflicting perceptions of “good” learning

A further study by Oxford (1992: 20) found that culturally inculcated values “correlated with learning strategy choice, for example rote memorisation was more prevalent among Asian ESL students than their Hispanic counterparts”. The literature reveals a number of studies which support the idea that Asian students make predominant use of rote learning styles (Tinkham, 1989; Dong, 1990 ; Kember and Gow, 1991; Purdie, 1995). In addition, Beebe (1994: 191) found that, although students saw EFL lessons in terms of linguistic elements and stated the purpose as accurate reproduction, the teacher’s stated aim was to convey meaningful information. Cortazzi (1990: 60) similarly found that Chinese learners and their Chinese teachers expect that other languages should be taught using a carefully structured, memory-oriented approach:

Many students have been socialized into an academic approach based on reproducing transmitted knowledge where respect for teachers, schools and those in authority is paramount, and where to criticise publicly is culturally or politically unacceptable (Cortazzi, 1990: 61)

Contrasts have furthermore been noted in internal/external expectations of schools. Asiatic immigrants to New Zealand were found to see education as related to personal growth, while Pacific Islanders and Maori people were found to relate good test results and teacher-centredness, with education (Wood, 1992).

Ellis (1992), in studying a ‘studial’ and an ‘experiential’ learner, concluded that it may be possible for learners to adapt to a teaching style that does not suit their learning preference, but that such “adaptation is likely to be accompanied by stress and tension”. These feelings are also reported in Walker’s (1995) study of Asian students’ perceptions in a New Zealand university Business Studies course. The notion that adapting to changing perceptions causes stress is further supported by McCargar (1993), in a large scale survey of role expectations in Chinese, Korean, Persian, Arab, Japanese, Indonesian, Hispanic, Thai, other Asian, and American students. McCargar found that role expectations for teachers and students held strong similarities within individual cultural groups, and when those expectations were violated, without support being given to adjust, students could withdraw and become unhappy.

Various works cite the need for teachers to utilize the cultural preferences of their

students in their teaching, or to take a multi-modal approach (Robinson, 1985; Scarcella, 1990; Webster, 1994). However, efforts to successfully accomplish this are not always successful. Davis and Markham's study (1991) of predominantly Black institutions showed that while 87% of the faculty in their sample felt they had covered cross-cultural issues well, the students ranked highly the need to provide more emphasis on cultural issues. Jin and Cortazzi (1993: 89) reported similar findings: "more tutors claim to have given direct help (with reading and writing skills) than students believe they received". In addition, Jin and Cortazzi, commented that in China, students expect help to be offered, while, in Britain, teachers expect help to be asked for. This leads to questions about what is perceived as help, or instruction, in different cultures.

Despite strong evidence regarding culturally related differences in learning styles, there are some studies which do not reveal this. For example, Mills (1994) found that ten out of fourteen propositions put to Malaysian and Kiwi students at Lincoln University indicated no differences in perceptions between the two groups. Items on which there was agreement included: having difficulty keeping up with discussion, being scared to participate because others might laugh, liking being anonymous in class, and feeling that discussion is a waste of time. Despite some serious methodological problems in this study (See section 3.3.2), it still raises doubts about commonly held, stereotypical ideas about the perceptions of overseas students.

Another area about which there is also debate, concerns how to solve conflicting cultural perceptions in the classroom. Two opposing points of view reflect this uncertainty. The first gives advice to EFL teachers to teach in the way to which Japanese students are accustomed (Kobayashi, 1991; Shimazu, 1992), while the other gives advice from a Japanese teacher to Japanese EFL/ESL students about the value of learning in a communicative way (Samimy, 1993). It is hard to identify which of the two views just given represents a shift in perception from a more traditional stance.

### 2.2.3 Cultural Perception: Influences on Teaching and Learning Roles

Kumaravadivelu (1991) asserts that, in language teaching, recent trends towards more interaction have highlighted the need to restructure the teacher/learner roles in the classroom:

the teacher and the learner bring with them their own perception of what constitutes language teaching, language learning and learning outcomes, and their own prescriptions about what their classroom roles ought to be (Kumaravadivelu, 1991 : 99) .

The work of Nozaki (1995: 43) also demonstrates that role expectations may differ in that “Japanese students look for a teacher who will instruct their minds while nurturing their hearts”. Nozaki illustrates this through examining the Japanese ideogram *kyoiku* (education) which is created from *kyo* (to teach) and *iku* (to nurture). Nozaki (1992: 32) also notes the “more intimate, satisfying and real” nature of extracurricular contacts with Japanese learners. Koyama (1992: 122) also agrees, stating that “as teachers are looked up to, so also are they expected to look after their students in matters other than their own sphere of specialisation”. Gudykunst and Kim (1984: 70) concur with this view, describing the teacher-learner relationship as a “mentor-protégé” one, reflecting a high degree of personalness which is also found in other Japanese role relationships.

In addition to perceptions of the teacher’s role, Hess and Azuma (1991) note that Asian students may perceive their own role in the classroom differently from American students:

in Japan a child is thought to be good if he or she is ‘obedient in good grace’ (*sumao*), ‘mild and gentle’ (*otonashi*) and ‘self-controlled’ (*jiseishin ga aru*). In the United States, the ‘good child’ is more likely to be assertive, independent, courteous, and socially competent with peers (Hess and Azuma, 1991: 3).

Conflicting perceptions of role status can also be found to arise from interactions between the teacher and learner; for example, Thorpe (1991: 112) notes that Chinese students do not ask questions of the teacher. This is seen as face-threatening, since it implies that the teacher has not explained things well. Furthermore, Gudykunst and Kim (1984: 73) note that Asian students are “supposed to take notes on what the professor says and not ask challenging questions”, while Brick (1991) states that:

teachers are givers, so students are receivers. Their job is to master the knowledge that the teacher presents. ... Many students are reluctant to volunteer answers to

questions unless they are sure they are correct. 'Guessing' is not encouraged because it shows that the student in question has not mastered the material and explanations presented ... volunteering answers to questions is also discouraged by a fear of being seen as too pushy (Brick, 1991: 157).

Such role conflicts may lead Asian students to be perceived as overly passive in an English-speaking setting (Koyama, 1992: 123).

Differences in physical, contextual factors may also influence perceptions of roles in learning situations. An illustration of this appears in the work of Stevenson (1992) who notes that "the teachers' room in American schools is typically a place to rest rather than work", whereas in Asia the teachers' room is where "all the instructors have desks and where they keep their books and teaching materials" (Stevenson, 1992: 100). This may cause Asian teachers to view the teachers' desk in the classroom as professionally isolating, and to question the professional commitment of teachers in this setting.

Scarcella (1990: 138) states that "many teachers tend to communicate more with those students who share their own ethnic identity and literally *pass over* students who do not share their ethnic identity". Wyatt-Smith and Burke (1996: 115) state that when students find that specific teacher role expectations are unfulfilled, it may cause "cultural conflict and confusion". Their findings indicated that teachers in the new setting may be misjudged on the basis of incorrect perceptions; for example, Asian students perceived that their lecturers did not have much time for appointments. Thorpe (1991) concurs with this, noting that where there is a mismatch between students' expectations and those of the staff, the students are likely to be judged negatively. Furthermore, the work of Brick (1991), regarding Chinese students, demonstrates that when teachers from another culture have perceptions which conflict with those of their students, these may lead to incorrect assumptions by both participants in classroom interactions. When negative judgements are formed about the quality of the learning or teaching by teachers, students, or parents, learning may also be negatively affected.

## 2.3 SHIFTS IN PERCEPTIONS

Changes in the perceptions of overseas students may be due to three key factors: firstly, culture shock; secondly, interaction with contextual factors; and finally, educational input and the interaction of this with earlier beliefs. In this section, these factors will be examined in turn.

### 2.3.1 *Culture Shock*

Henderson, Milhouse and Cao (1993: 382) have described culture shock as “an individual’s lack of culturally appropriate frames of reference, social norms and rules to guide their actions” which can profoundly affect the individual’s ability to participate effectively in the new culture. A recent study by Sharif (1994) suggested that overseas students have different patterns of physical health from their American counterparts. Adjusting to multiple factors in a new educational and cultural environment, was seen to cause lowered self-perceptions, which in turn had an impact on the student’s individual wellbeing.

The concept of culture shock as a stress reaction to culture change, has come to be regarded as a process of *adjustment* to change. Oberg (1960) stated that “culture shock is precipitated by anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse”. Oberg’s theory indicates that there are predictable stages of culture shock, moving from elation and optimism at the “honeymoon stage”, through to a “crisis” of frustration and confusion at initial perception of differences, and finally to recovery and adjustment to the new society. These stages are similar to Lysgaard’s (1955) U-curve of adjustment (as noted in Furnham and Bochner, 1986: 131).

The stages in adjustment to the target culture are likely to be accompanied by parallel modifications in perceptions of the target culture. Mantle-Bromley and Miller (1991) support this relationship. In their study it was found that less positive attitudes identified in students of Spanish in US were related to unrealistic expectations and consequent frustration. It may be that the higher the expectations held, the stronger the negative reaction when these expectations are not met. Furnham and Bochner (1986: 176) agree

with this, noting that “the accuracy of a migrant’s expectations of life in the new country are directly related to his/her adjustment”.

It has been found that international students who came from Asian countries to US had more adjustment problems than did those from European or other Western-oriented countries (Henderson, Milhouse, and Cao, 1993). Henderson et al, in their study of 150 Chinese students in a US university cite the wide cultural and linguistic disparity between Western and Eastern settings as one of the key factors in the difficulties faced by Asian students. Their findings strengthen the results of other studies reported in section 2.2.1. The principal factors which were found to influence cross-cultural adaptations and hence the culture shock levels of Asian students (Henderson et al, 1993: 385-387) were the loss of family support roles (see also ‘family values and educational success’, section 2.2.2), racial attitudes in the target culture, a different education system; and the ‘shame culture’ all of which caused the students to expend large amounts of emotional energy in trying to predict behaviour effectively in the new environment.

Culture shock has also been found to affect the individual’s perceptions of both the target and the home culture. Furnham and Bochner (1986: 25) cite four typical reactions to culture shock:

1. passing: reject the culture of origin and embrace the second culture;
2. chauvinistic: reject the second culture and exaggerate the first culture;
3. marginal: vacillate between the two cultures;
4. mediating: select, combine and synthesize features from both cultures.

The first two responses may be seen as subtractive reactions which allow only one or the other culture to be perceived favourably. This may give rise to either racism and/or ethnocentrism. Jin and Cortazzi (1993: 85) argue that the chauvinistic position is often held by cultural groups which have a collective orientation: “when they are in Britain, Chinese students see themselves as a homogeneous group, sharply distinguished from other groups: they are Chinese above all”. The third type of reaction is an unstable reaction which may provoke identity and role conflicts. Furnham and Bochner (1986: 31) regard the final approach as the only ideal approach since it allows individuals to “bridge cultural gaps by introducing, representing and reconciling the respective societies to each

other”.

Many factors may influence the intensity of these perceptual changes, the direction they move in, their consistency, and the extent to which they persist, or alter, at different stages in the acculturation process. Furnham (1993) suggests that the solution to culture shock lies in good preparation through cross cultural social skills training which utilises role play and instruction in real life scenarios. This approach to cultural adjustment, may be initially useful for coping with role expectations and reducing the *shock* component. However, it may be too simplistic since successful cultural adaptation is a flexible, ongoing process, and it may also be too superficial, since an in-depth reflective approach to change may be needed to influence the individual's embedded beliefs and values. These issues are dealt with in more detail in section 2.3.3.

### **2.3.2 Interaction and Context**

Contextual factors which may influence the progress of acculturation are the length of stay in the new culture, the amount of interaction and the quality of the interaction. The literature reveals varied views as to whether contact with the target language group does in fact change perceptions. Gudykunst and Kim (1984) state that:

Many studies support the assumption that contact with strangers reduces prejudice and increases favourable attitudes, but there is also evidence that contact may not reduce prejudice and that it can even increase tension and cause violence (Gudykunst and Kim, 1984: 101).

Some of the literature suggests that major changes in perceptions are unlikely to be influenced by contact alone. Freed (1991: 116) supports this view, stating that “a stay abroad does not necessarily entail a radical change in communicative processes”. Guiora (in Ellis, 1986) also notes that perceptions may not necessarily change in a new environment since “the language ego clings to the security of the native language”.

Evidence that some changes in perception do occur through interaction is however present. A study by Iram and Maslovaty (1994: 41) showed that teacher interaction with students did not necessarily result in changing stereotypical views of them, but that interaction did lead to an erosion of idealized high expectations over time. It may be

deduced from this finding that positive perceptions are more easily modified than negative ones. Shifts in perceptions could also be related to the type of activity which people participate in while overseas. Furnham and Bochner (1986: 117) state that attitude change in those who are in a new culture is “primarily a function of participation, then observation and finally communication, in that order of importance”.

In the learning situation, it may be desirable for both teachers and learners to participate in a shift of perceptions. Jin and Cortazzi (1993: 93-95) use the term “cultural synergy” for the process of two-way acculturation involving both teachers and students. However, such an accommodation process is not always equal and two-way. In the case of small numbers of ESOL students in a mainstream target language setting, the shift required by students may be much greater than that required by a teacher from the target language culture. On the other hand, students from a homogenous cultural background may force a teacher from another culture to change his/her perceptions (as seen in Jones, 1991; see section 2.2.2). Accommodation of other cultural perceptions may also come more naturally for particular cultural groups. For example, Jin and Cortazzi (1991: 86) note that students from a culture with a collective orientation, such as the Chinese, will seek to achieve equilibrium with the teacher.

### ***2.3.3 Teacher Education and Teacher Beliefs***

Teachers’ beliefs have been described as ethnocentric (Cabello and Burstein, 1995: 285): “we tend to think the norms we follow represent the ‘natural’ way human beings do things ... people think their own culture represents the best, or at least the most appropriate way for human beings to live”. An illustration of this is noted in the work of Holliday (1992) reporting on the Tunisian project by Kennedy (1987):

local teachers could not reconcile their real needs with the new curriculum, and followed a ‘hidden curriculum’. They said they were using the new curriculum, but in fact, subversively, continued to do what they were doing before (Holliday, 1992: 405).

Johnson (1994: 439) states that “teachers’ beliefs have a filtering effect on all aspects of teachers’ thoughts, judgements, and decisions”. Bell (1993: 468) supports this, reporting an observation of a colleague who was experienced in modern language teaching

methods, but who reverted to traditional methods when teaching her native language of Chinese. A similar finding is reported in the work of Lamb (1995) who observed that very few English teaching ideas were taken up in short in-service programmes for staff at an Indonesian university. Lamb concluded that this inflexibility was mainly due to the mediating effects of the participants' own beliefs about learning and teaching.

Pajares (1992: 323) puts forward the view that students of such subjects as medicine and law enter their academic discipline without well developed preconceptions about these fields of knowledge, but that in pre-service teacher education, students are "insiders" by reason of their previous experiences. Freeman (1992) refers to these memories of previous learning as "de facto guides for teaching". Palfreyman (1993) adds further strength to this, finding that differences in performance between native and non-native EFL teachers were not due to competence but to different approaches in talking and thinking.

Despite the findings cited above, some studies do show that changes in perception and beliefs can be brought about through teacher education. For example, Burstein and Cabello (1989) found that education about the inadequacy of "cultural deficit" as a theory significantly changed teacher attitudes regarding the cause of minority culture failure rates. Richards and Lockhart (1994: 30) state that although teachers have their own "culture of teaching" which is synthesized from past experiences, they also develop knowledge, goals, values and beliefs in their training which form a basis for decision making and action. Johnson (1994: 445) concurs with this, stating that "teachers made sense of the course content based on their own experiences in both formal and informal learning situations". In formal teacher education, the timing, length and intensity of the programme may also be important. For example, Lamb (1995), found little change in teacher perceptions after just twenty five hours of tuition spread over ten mornings, but different results may occur following longer more intensive courses of teacher education.

It is thought that some student teachers may have a high motivation to bring about change. Johnson (1994 :445) observes that, although student teachers "projected an unrealistic sense of optimism about the type of teacher they would be and what their initial

teaching experiences would be like”, their “projected image of self as teacher” is formed partly in reaction to negative images of teachers in their own experiences. Bailey (1992: 271) agrees with this, citing that a major reason for change in teacher beliefs is dissatisfaction with the status quo. It is therefore possible that self-selected changes in perceptions may be accomplished through teacher education.

Brown (1990) observes that there are three possible levels of change resulting from teacher education: changes in observable behaviour; changes in beliefs; and changes in the way a teacher perceives the acts of teaching, that is, change in the nature of a teacher’s concepts (Brown, 1990: 89). Moreover, Bailey (1992: 275) notes that an “incubation period” occurs between teacher education and implementation of new ideas. Bailey stresses that “change is not necessarily immediate or complete”. In addition, it is uncertain which changes are most likely to come first and which must logically follow:

in some instances teachers perceive attitude changes as being instrumental in bringing about innovations, but in other cases, small changes - especially ‘first steps’ and risk-taking - engender attitudinal development (Bailey, 1992: 277).

Yet another factor worth noting, is the type of behaviour which might indicate changed perceptions. Spada and Massey (1992: 31) state that articulation is not necessary for successful implementation of new teaching ideas. However, Brown (1990: 91-95) maintains that effective use relies on a full understanding of the concept contained in the teaching theory.

The work of Martinez (1994) concludes that efficient teacher education is needed to prepare teachers for many different types of learning environment. It is possible that, not only the content of change, but also the way in which it is accomplished is significant. There are several recent advances in this area; for example, the use of *situated cognition* has been found to be successful. Studies in this area (Brown, Collins, and Duguid, 1989; The Cognition and Technology Group at Vanderbilt, 1990; McIntyre and Pape, 1993) show that, in order to be implemented, knowledge needs to be attached to real situations, rather than just examined in a theoretical setting. The work of McIntyre and Pape (1993) demonstrates this approach through the use of visual formats, including video

representations, in teacher education. Wear and Harris (1994: 45) state that such experiences provide "definitions and models" which are valuable in teacher education. However, it is also possible that these strategies may result in superficial imitation and have less retention over time.

Recently, change in teachers' perceptions has been seen as a product of reflective teacher education practices which not only examine the superficial behaviours, but also explore the underlying cognitive processes and beliefs (Bartlett, 1990; Richards, 1990; McIntyre and Pape, 1993; Wear and Harris, 1994). Freeman states that "the effects of teacher education lie less in influencing how teachers behave, than in recasting how they think about what they do in classrooms". This reflective approach is described by Richards (1996) through contrasting it with a technological approach:

The technological ... approach to instruction is deficient because it assumes the ability to teach can be characterised by knowledge and skills that are somehow set. Reflective teaching, on the other hand, assumes that our conceptions of language and learning evolve (Richards, 1996: 120).

The reflective view of teacher education is close to the 'action research' approach:

the practitioner is engaged in critical reflection on ideas, the informed application and experimentation of ideas in practice, and the critical evaluation of the outcomes of such application (Nunan, 1990: 63).

The use of stimulated recall in which teachers are asked to recall and justify their decision-making processes while replaying a video of themselves teaching has also been used to enhance reflective teacher education (McIntyre and Pape, 1993; Wear and Harris, 1994).

The techniques described above are perceived as particularly effective in that *ownership* is involved. This ensures that teachers identify their own goals for change and monitor their own progress towards that change and therefore is more likely to be effective (Bailey, 1992). The question remains whether overseas student teachers can achieve ownership in the changes of perception they are asked to make to 'fit' the new learning culture.

## 2.4 SUMMARY

The examination of relevant literature began by clarifying interpretation of the key themes in the current study, showing the crucial interrelationship between culture, perception and beliefs. It was noted how beliefs and role expectations are first influenced by socialisation and that they in turn exert influence over cultural perceptions in new settings. The area of teacher education was especially noted here.

In the second section, a close examination of the literature regarding cultural perceptions in the educational setting was carried out. A link between perception and learning was established. This was followed by an exploration of the conflicts which can result when learning and teaching styles conflict.

In the final section, the literature regarding shifts in cultural perceptions was reviewed. The particular causes of those shifts, identified for examination, were culture shock, interaction and contextual factors, and teacher education. The barriers to effective cross-cultural teacher education were shown to centre around the difficulty of changing teacher beliefs and perceptions. Recent reflective approaches to teacher education which address this issue were then summarised.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the methodology used in the research is described, looking first at the overall setting and population from which the sample group is drawn, then moving on to the subject selection and a brief introductory description of each subject. In the next section, the research design is given, beginning with an outline of the key research questions, followed by an examination of the overall approach taken in the investigation, finishing with an examination and justification of the data collection techniques used. Continuing from this, the five types of instrumentation used in the study are detailed, showing how each was developed, piloted and administered in the research. A summary of key points concludes the chapter.

#### 3.1 POPULATION AND SETTING

Although overseas students have recently made a large impact on many New Zealand tertiary educational institutions, their numbers are still comparatively small in the field of teacher education (1.3 percent of the total number of overseas students in New Zealand tertiary education in 1995; see table 3.1).

**Table 3.1**  
*Number of Overseas Students in Tertiary Education at 31 July, 1995.*

Tertiary Institutions in N Z	Male	Female	Total
Colleges of Education	26	62	88
Polytechnics	1189	902	2091
Universities	2314	2248	4562
<b>Total</b>	<b>3096</b>	<b>2471</b>	<b>6742</b>

The Ministry of Education statistics for 1995, also show that 43 students, about half of the total number of overseas students in New Zealand Colleges of Education, come from an Asian country. The Palmerston North College of Education (PNCOE), from which the sample was drawn reflects this national trend. There were a number of students from minority community cultures, scattered over a number of different programmes in the College in the year of the study. However, the enrolment of Asian students who were relatively recent arrivals to New Zealand was a new and small-scale venture.

Over the three years prior to the present study, overseas students had, on occasion, enrolled in the three year primary pre-service programme, but none of these students had completed the programme, either leaving mid-way, or transferring to non-teaching programmes within the local University. This may illustrate the high fluency levels required to teach across the whole curriculum at this level. Difficulties experienced were reported to be especially evident in the area of teaching practice where knowledge becomes applied rather than theoretical.

In the one-year secondary pre-service programme at the College, fluent speakers of Japanese were first accepted in 1994, the year before the current research project. There were no fee-paying overseas students in this first intake, but two were accepted in 1995. Both of these students agreed to participate in the research, along with the only full-fee-paying Asian student in the first year of the primary pre-service programme.

## **3.2 SUBJECTS**

In this section, the criteria for selection of subjects for the study is explained, and following this an introductory description of the characteristics of the subjects is given.

### **3.2.1 Selection**

The four student teachers in the study formed an "intact group" (Hatch and Lazarson, 1991:85) in that these were the only available subjects fitting the research criteria which are itemised below. All four subjects were:

- students in a New Zealand College of Education;
- in their first year of study;
- from Asian background;
- recent arrivals in New Zealand;
- intending to teach in New Zealand at the conclusion of the programme.

The researcher's original intention had been to investigate ESOL students in mainstream tertiary education. However, there were two key advantages in choosing to study student teachers from overseas. Firstly, the researcher, as a staff member of the PNCOE, was familiar with the structures and system within which the subjects were studying, while not being directly involved with the subjects' particular programmes. Secondly, as student teachers, the subjects would be developing the specialised English necessary to competently discuss learning and teaching situations, thus increasing the potential for an in-depth study to be undertaken.

Since the subjects were first year College of Education students it was possible to establish a starting point for subjects in the longitudinal study. It was also predicted that any shifts in perception were likely to be highlighted at the early stages of contact with the new learning environment, while the subjects were adapting to their new role as student teachers.

The researcher's prior experience with learners from Asian cultures assisted in the establishment of effective working relationships with the subjects. Moreover, there were several research advantages in having a group of students from an Asian background. Firstly, it was expected that the subjects' cultural background of learning experiences would be similar, thus facilitating the researcher's ability to draw conclusions from the research. Secondly, the choice of a group of students from cultural and linguistic backgrounds which are distinctly different from that of the target learning/teaching situation would serve to highlight culturally different perceptions. Asian learners come from a "truly foreign" (Jorden, 1991:384) language background which is "non-cognate" with Indo-European languages (Samimy and Tabuse, 1992; Jorden, 1991; see section

2.2.1). Therefore it is to be expected that the contrasts in both the language and culture of the New Zealand learning situation would be more easily distinguished by this group of students.

Although it was seen as desirable to study subjects who had recently arrived in New Zealand, *recently* had to be broadly defined as within the last three years, due to the small numbers of overseas students available.

Selecting subjects who were intending to teach in New Zealand ensured that the subjects were motivated to move towards participation in a significantly different learning context. The possibility of using their New Zealand knowledge and skills on returning to the home country was, however, also explored in the research (see section 3.3).

There was some difficulty in identifying students for the study before formal records for the new 1995 student intake were finalised. Informal contacts were utilized for this, including the Directors of particular programmes, the convenor of the selection panel for the 1995 student intake and the Assistant Principal of the College.

A letter was sent to each of the four students identified, introducing the researcher and the general aims of the research and inviting the students to participate (see appendix 1.1). The students all responded and an initial meeting was organised. This was attended individually by subjects A and B, and jointly by subjects C and D. At this meeting the purpose and procedures of the research were explained and students were able to ask questions. It was emphasized that participation in the research was voluntary and formed no part in the teaching or assessment of the PNCOE programme. Although time was offered for the subjects to think over whether they wished to participate in the research, all four students gave written permission at that point. A preliminary meeting was then set up to gather more detailed background information. Copies of subject consent forms are found in appendix 1.2.

Contingencies for possible drop-out during the year were considered, such as collecting

more extensive data from other sources (eg lecturing staff at the College of Education and Associate Teachers at the teaching practice). However all four students stayed with the research throughout the year.

### **3.2.2 *Characteristics of Subjects***

The characteristics of the subjects are summarised in table 3.2 (see appendix 2) and are only briefly referred to here. Three of the four students came from Japan and one from Hong Kong. There were three males and one female in the study, ranging in age from 20 to 32 years old at the time of the study. Three of the four students were full fee-paying. The fourth student had recently married a New Zealander and was classified as a New Zealand permanent resident.

The subjects were in two different programmes in the College of Education: one in the primary pre-service, teaching across the curriculum; and three in the secondary pre-service programme teaching of Japanese language. Only two of the three secondary pre-service students were native speakers of Japanese. Teaching one's mother tongue in a second language is an added complication in the research which may have a positive or negative influence on the task of gaining cultural fluency in a new role.

All of the students were in their first year at a New Zealand College of Education, however their backgrounds differed significantly. Only one of the students had not spent time in New Zealand prior to coming to the PNCOE, although all had been to English speaking countries prior to 1995. Three of the four students had studied in New Zealand before deciding to study for a teaching diploma. One student had included a paper in teaching Japanese as a Second Language as part of her study in 1994, so had some knowledge, although no practical experience, of New Zealand methods of teaching Japanese language, at the start of the programme. Two other students had previously had some teaching experience: one in Japan, having taught English language at a *juku* or cram school before coming to New Zealand, the other as a kindergarten teacher in Hong Kong.

At the conclusion of 1995, the year the research was undertaken, the primary pre-service student had passed his first year in the College of Education programme. Before graduation, the three secondary students had all found employment in New Zealand schools for 1996.

Two ethical procedures are used in the study to protect the anonymity of subjects. Firstly, from this point on, subjects are designated A, B, C or D. The ordering of this referencing differs from that used in table 3.2 (see appendix 2). Secondly, all subjects are referred to as *he* or *him* during this report. An introduction to each of the research subjects, based on information gathered in the initial interview (see appendix 4), now follows.

### *Subject A*

Subject A was feeling positive if a little apprehensive at the beginning of his first year at the College of Education. In the initial interview he commented:

At the moment is quite hard for me. Everyone else is Kiwi. I might not try to talk in the classes. I don't feel any confidence, so quite hard, but I think I'll be alright.

Subject A noted a number of contextual features about New Zealand schools in his first interview. He stated that he preferred New Zealand students because they "look more lovely" compared to the Japanese students who always wore uniform. He also commented that the New Zealand school lunches were unlike the more "balanced diet" in Japan. In addition, he remarked on how the New Zealand classroom differed from those in Japan. Here, he said the children sat in straight lines facing the teacher who mainly stayed at the front of the room talking to students.

### *Subject B*

Subject B began the year in a realistic frame of mind. He stated at the initial interview that New Zealand was chosen as "not the best, but certainly not the worst" country to come to, mentioning factors such as small population, space and clean air as reasons for his choice. He also talked at length about his earlier experiences as a learner in New Zealand setting, noting his confusion about teachers not teaching grammar in English classes.

Initially it looked as though this subject might pull out since he missed two initial interview appointments and arrived late for the third complaining of tiredness. When it was stressed that participation was *not* compulsory, he indicated that he did want to continue. He said that he wanted to “help” the researcher, but it was not a useful exercise for him. Once the research moved to the teaching practice setting these early problems disappeared.

### *Subject C*

Subject C appeared confident and keen to speak at the start of the year, often taking the role of the spokes-person. However, in the initial interview he admitted to early difficulties in the College programme, stating that the College lectures were too fast.

In talking about New Zealand schools, he commented that, in his first experiences in a New Zealand school, the class seemed very enthusiastic. However, he also mentioned that he felt he had not prepared well for a micro-teaching session in his College class: the “other students brought OHPs, real objects eg netball, instruments, and printed materials. I just brought cards. I need to think more about it”.

Subject C focussed on differences in teaching methodology at the initial interview, noting that the New Zealand way is “a good method to teach ... but too incompatible with Japanese style”. He also noted that academic standards in New Zealand were not so high as in Japan: “We did things earlier [eg in Mathematics] in Japan”. Nonetheless, subject C wished to be a teacher in New Zealand in order to find different way of teaching. In the first interview he described how a Japanese teacher recently killed a student by crushing him in the school gate because he was late for school. When asked if this could happen in New Zealand, he replied “I’m not sure, I don’t know, but it can’t happen in New Zealand I believe”.

### *Subject D*

Subject D was the least confident of the four students. At the first meeting, he tended to let another student speak for him where possible. He also brought an electronic dictionary

to the initial interview, although he only used it a few times, and asked at the end of the interview: "Are my answers right?". He stated that he chose to come to New Zealand because of the outdoor environment.

In talking about his experiences so far with New Zealand schools, Subject D noted the differences in the students: "In New Zealand they never sleep. It's amazing," and also, "New Zealand students have a lot of questions to teachers." He summed it up by saying: "New Zealand students are energetic ... Japanese students are very gentle I think. That's the difference". However, he also mentioned that he wanted to make some changes to teaching methods: "In Japan some teachers hit students. They think hitting students is good discipline. I don't think so ... I want students understand my thinking. I don't want angry about that".

Many of subject D's first impressions of New Zealand classrooms were to do with superficial features, for example: "Lots of naughty classes", however, he also commented that the smaller class numbers made New Zealand classes easier to teach. He noted that a "weak point" in New Zealand schools was the rubbish left in the classrooms, saying that, in Japan, classes are tidier since students have to clean up after themselves.

### **3.3 THE RESEARCH DESIGN**

This section introduces the research questions explored in the study. It also outlines the rationale for the research approach chosen, especially in the light of the limitations identified in past approaches.

#### **3.3.1 *The Research Questions***

The principal focus of this research is on exploring the perceptions of overseas student teachers and examining how these perceptions shift while they are in their first year in a College of Education. The direction of the shift in perceptions in relation to the target culture is of particular interest since it indicates the degree of acceptance of the new learning culture, and may predict the overall success of the educational programme in

which the students are participating. The specific research questions are as follows:

1. What perceptions do overseas student teachers have of learning situations in New Zealand schools?
2. How do these perceptions change over time?
3. Does the general direction of these shifts in perception tend towards the target culture or away from it?

### 3.3.2 *The Research Approach*

A case study approach was chosen to investigate the research questions. There were several influences on this choice of approach including the nature of the subjects, and the necessity of devising a holistic approach which would allow for cultural and contextual factors to be explored. Nunan (1992:76) lists three key characteristics of a case study. Firstly, it is *naturalistic*, involving the use of spontaneous speech; secondly it is *process-oriented*, or takes place over time and thirdly it is *ungeneralizable* in that it involves very few subjects. The present investigation links closely with Nunan's concept of a case study. These three aspects will now be examined in closer detail.

Case study, as a *naturalistic* form of investigation, has an ethnographic flavour. Since the subjects were to be studied primarily in the naturalistic setting of teaching practice, interactional, contextual and cultural factors were of special importance. This adds an ethnographic flavour. Nunan (1992: 76) states that ethnography is "essentially concerned with the cultural context and cultural interpretation of the phenomena under investigation". Johnson also describes ethnographic research as important for second language studies:

it not only defines what it is that learners must learn as they are socialised into a new language and culture, but it also provides a way of relating second language acquisition (which can be viewed as L2 socialisation) to acculturation (Johnson, 1992: 134).

Furthermore, a naturalistic study calls for a holistic approach. Van Leir (1988) refers to two types of classroom research, the macro view which is focused on sociocultural aspects, and the micro view which is focused on the discursal or interactive context.

Case study, as a holistic methodology, was seen as an efficient way of investigating the essential inter-relationship of both these views. The teaching practice setting which is central to this study is basically an interactive sociocultural context.

The second characteristic of case study which Nunan (1992) cites is that it is process oriented. The present study conceptualises perception as a dynamic process (see section 2.1.1) and therefore explores perceptions, and shifts in perception, over the period of a year. Spada and Massey (1992: 35) note the longitudinal research design helps “to trace the teachers’ development over an extended period of time”.

Thirdly, Nunan (1992) says that case study utilises a small number of subjects. This can be seen as having advantages and disadvantages. Nunan points out that such an approach is ungeneralisable to larger populations. On the other hand, the small number of available subjects was seen as important in the present study to facilitate the development of trust and rapport between the students and the researcher necessary to in-depth study.

One final factor which influenced the choice of a case study approach was the ecological validity of such studies (Erickson, 1991: 349). Nunan (1992) supports this. He makes the point that case study is strong in reality and therefore appeals to practitioners:

I have found that case studies are particularly suited to the types of action-oriented research projects ... where the purpose is, in the first instance, to help practitioners enhance their understanding of, and solve problems related to their own professional workplace, and where the problem of external validity is less significant than in other types of research. (Nunan, 1992: 88-89)

### ***3.3.3 Data Collection Techniques***

A critical evaluation of previous data gathering techniques in this field revealed several major limitations in the way in which cultural perceptions have been studied in the past. The data collection techniques involved in this study were designed specifically to avoid these limitations. In addition, a research approach was chosen which seemed likely to meet the situational needs of the present investigation. Elaboration of these points now follows.

Past research has often not considered the appropriateness of methodology to the ethnic background of the subjects. This is illustrated in the widespread use of written questionnaires and surveys, particularly Likert scales, in studies of perceptions of NESB subjects (eg Davis and Markam, 1991; Henderson, Milhouse and Cao, 1993; McCargar, 1993; Mills, 1994). In examining the use of Likert scales with Chinese respondents, Low, Tasker and Hong (1991) concluded that the differentiation between points on such scales cannot be clearly established in the translation to Chinese. Moreover, these difficulties may be compounded by the English phrasing of the Likert scale which may lead to complex constructions such as double negatives. For example, a study by Mills (1994; see section 2.2.2) employed a Likert scale in English and concluded that New Zealand students and Asian overseas students at Lincoln University differed very little in responses to the New Zealand learning environment. There are strong doubts about the validity of research using this tool with Asian respondents.

A major limitation of past studies of perceptions is their lack of a specific, tangible context in the examination of perceptions. For example, Mills (1994) failed to give adequate contextualization of items used in her surveys. The provision of such a context is necessary to safeguard the researcher against misinterpretation arising from overgeneralisation based on subjects' individualised responses. This was the function of the concrete, audio-visual stimuli used in the present research (see section 3.3.4).

The concentration of previous research into perceptions has tended to view this phenomenon as a one-off product rather than an on-going process, therefore research methodology has concentrated on surveys or questionnaires carried out at one point in time (eg Davis and Markam, 1991; Henderson, Milhouse and Cao, 1993; McCargar, 1993; Mills, 1994). Furthermore, although Mills (1994) did use follow-up interviews in her investigation, many studies (Davis and Markam, 1991; Henderson, Milhouse and Cao, 1993; McCargar, 1993) show no evidence of clarifying subjects' responses, something which is a key component of the present research (see section 3.4.4). Cohen (1991:136) states that while questionnaire items supply "socially acceptable data", verbal reports are more viable and effective.

In selecting data collection techniques for this research, two key characteristics of Asian subjects were taken particular account of. Firstly, Asian people are known for the indirect nature of their communication (Gudykunst and Kim, 1984). Walker (1995) refers to the difficulties of using open ended questions in interviews with Asian students. In addition, cultures with high risk avoidance behaviour (eg Japanese) are reported to employ face-saving techniques (Hillenbrand, 1989). For this reason, the present study utilizes an indirect method, transferring the subjects' perceptions away from themselves, to a parallel situation in which they could envision themselves as potential actors.

Finally, case study, as a naturalistic approach, has a broad, exploratory nature. Reynolds (1982) says that case study is data-driven research which begins with no clear hypothesis. Although an instrument was used to focus discussion (see section 3.4.3), the present study was very much intended to allow the students' perceptions to be exposed, rather than to fit an established set of hypotheses. Chaudron (1988: 46) states that: "Insofar as the categories of analysis are derived from the teachers' and learners' own perceptions, they have potential for being much more psychologically valid than externally imposed constructs". This will be further elaborated in chapter four.

### **3.4 INSTRUMENTATION**

There were five types of instrumentation used in the current study: a questionnaire, an initial interview, a semantic differential scale, stimulated recall technique and an individual final interview. This section describes how each tool was developed, piloted and administered in the study.

#### **3.4.1 *The Questionnaire***

The primary purpose of the questionnaire was to gather background information at the start of the study and to begin to establish a rapport between researcher and subject. The audio taping of this session established a routine for future interview work with the subjects. The questionnaire began with a section to gather general biographical details (see appendix 3). Subsequent sections included information regarding L2 fluency and

gave an initial indication of the self-confidence level of the subjects in the new setting. The session was planned to return to “chat mode” at times to reduce the intensity of the interaction for the subject. The final open-ended question was intended to introduce the central topic of the study.

Although subjects A and B were interviewed individually to fill in the questionnaire, subjects C and D seemed less confident and asked to take away the questionnaire and fill it in independently. Flexibility was allowed in this since it was early in the establishment of trust. Clarification of any issues from the questionnaire was included at the start of the initial interview which followed.

### ***3.4.2 The Initial interview***

The main purpose of the initial interview was to establish a baseline for the research. Some key language, which would be used later in the research, was also introduced. Each individual interview took about forty minutes and was conducted at the researcher’s home to help establish a relaxed atmosphere for the study. It was carried out within one week of the questionnaire completion. A schedule for this interview is provided in appendix 4.

The initial interview was divided into three main areas: the subject’s past experiences in the New Zealand learning setting; differences between this setting and the home country; and the subject’s notions of an ideal learning situation and an ideal teacher, along with general reactions to the New Zealand learning situation. The information from the tape transcription of this interview is included in section 3.2.2 on the characteristics of the subjects.

### ***3.4.3 The Semantic Differential Scale***

Knowledge of the characteristics of Asian students (see section 3.3.3) indicated the necessity of developing an indirect instrument to focus discussion. The development of the semantic differential scale (SD scale) was intended to be used as a stimulus to discussion rather than for the purposes of independent data collection.

Three studies using bipolar scales were found to be useful in developing the SD scale in the present investigation. The first of these was the work of Tebutt (1993) who employed an unmarked dichotomous scale in exploring students' perceptions of Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics. This scale allowed subjects to focus on the concepts rather than on the scale itself. The second study was carried out by Tran, Young and Di Lella (1994: 185) who used a semantic differential scale with seven pre-determined divisions (from -3 to +3). This model was rejected for two reasons: because it involved "forced choice", having no neutral zone, and because L2 speakers could feel that they were evaluating the learning situation on a numbered scale. It was also possible that they could feel that this numbered evaluation was being applied to the associate teacher. An unmarked semantic differential scale was seen as preferable since it would allow the subjects to define their own criteria in the placement of their perceptions on the scale. The third study, was the work of Tamir and Caridan (1993) which utilised a Learning Environment Inventory Scale involving eleven items to evaluate degrees of formality, speed, friction, goal direction, investigation, favouritism, cohesiveness, satisfaction, disorganisation, competitiveness, and difficulty within the classroom setting.

Some items were added to the SD scale which were of particular interest due to the context of the study: the perceived degree of *unexpectedness* which the specific learning situation presented; the support present for the development of *independent learning skills*; the *comfort* levels of the learners and teachers in the learning situation; the level of *challenge* in the learning situation; the level of teacher control; the closeness of the model to the subject's *ideal* model of teaching; the *ease* of learning; and the perceived level of *interest* for students. The five aspects of context identified by van Leir (1988: 8): setting, content, interaction, participants and method, were also taken into account in the development of the final SD scale used in the study.

The items in the SD scale were ordered to present less complex ideas first and gradually increased in the depth of perception demanded of the subjects as they warmed to the task. Two additional items requiring synthesis and comparison were added at the end of the scale: the perceived *usefulness* of the model for the subject's home setting and a

*comparative* perception with the College of Education setting. The latter item was included at the request of the Palmerston North College of Education who had given some financial support to the study. A number of items of quite similar meaning were also included as reliability checks. These items were kept apart on the scale. Examples of such items are *comfortable* and *relaxed*, *practical* and *useful*.

The final version of the SD scale (see appendix 5) included a total of 23 pairs of items. The scale was arranged in booklet form to enable the subjects to close the booklet if, at any stage, they felt they needed to preserve the privacy of their responses. Throughout the research the semantic differential scale was referred to as a *checklist* when talking with the subjects. The use of this term reinforced the concept of making a quick decision to capture perceptions.

The instructions for the semantic differential scale were modified and added to as a result of a pilot carried out before the procedure was used with the research subjects. Key alterations as a result of this pilot included the use of a single vertical stroke to mark the scale, rather than a cross which might have negative connotations; the addition of an instruction regarding use of L1 or L2 notes on the scale; and an instruction encouraging the subject to move to a good position for their observations. The pilot study will be further explained in section 3.4.4 since it involved the combined use of the semantic differential scale and the stimulated recall technique.

The classes in which the SD scale was used included Japanese language classes, from Form 3 to 5, and mainstream English classes from juniors to Form 1. Eleven separate schools were visited in the year of the research involving, in the main, different schools for each subject at the beginning, the middle and the end of the year (see time line, fig 3.2, appendix 6). Written consent was requested from each school. The letter (see appendix 7) was followed up within a couple of days by a telephone call from the researcher to the Principal of the school to clarify any issues. The request was subsequently referred to others concerned, for example the Head of the Department, the teacher who was teaching the class concerned and in some cases the Board of Trustees

at the school and the parents of the pupils. Next a convenient time was negotiated with the Head of Department concerned, and finally the teacher. Finally, a fax confirming the details was sent to the Principal, the teacher concerned and the research subject.

#### **3.4.4 *The Stimulated Recall Technique***

As mentioned in section 3.4.3, the SD scale was designed to be used in conjunction with a stimulated recall technique. In addition, it was thought that a visual stimulus would assist in the discussion phase. Alternatives, such as pictures, photographs and computer generated graphics, were considered for this purpose. However these options were rejected due to their decontextualized and static nature. In the end, it was decided that video taping the teaching practice setting would provide a meaningful and rich environment for “situated cognition” (Brown, Collins and Duguid, 1989; and the Cognition and Technology Group at Vanderbilt, 1990) to take place.

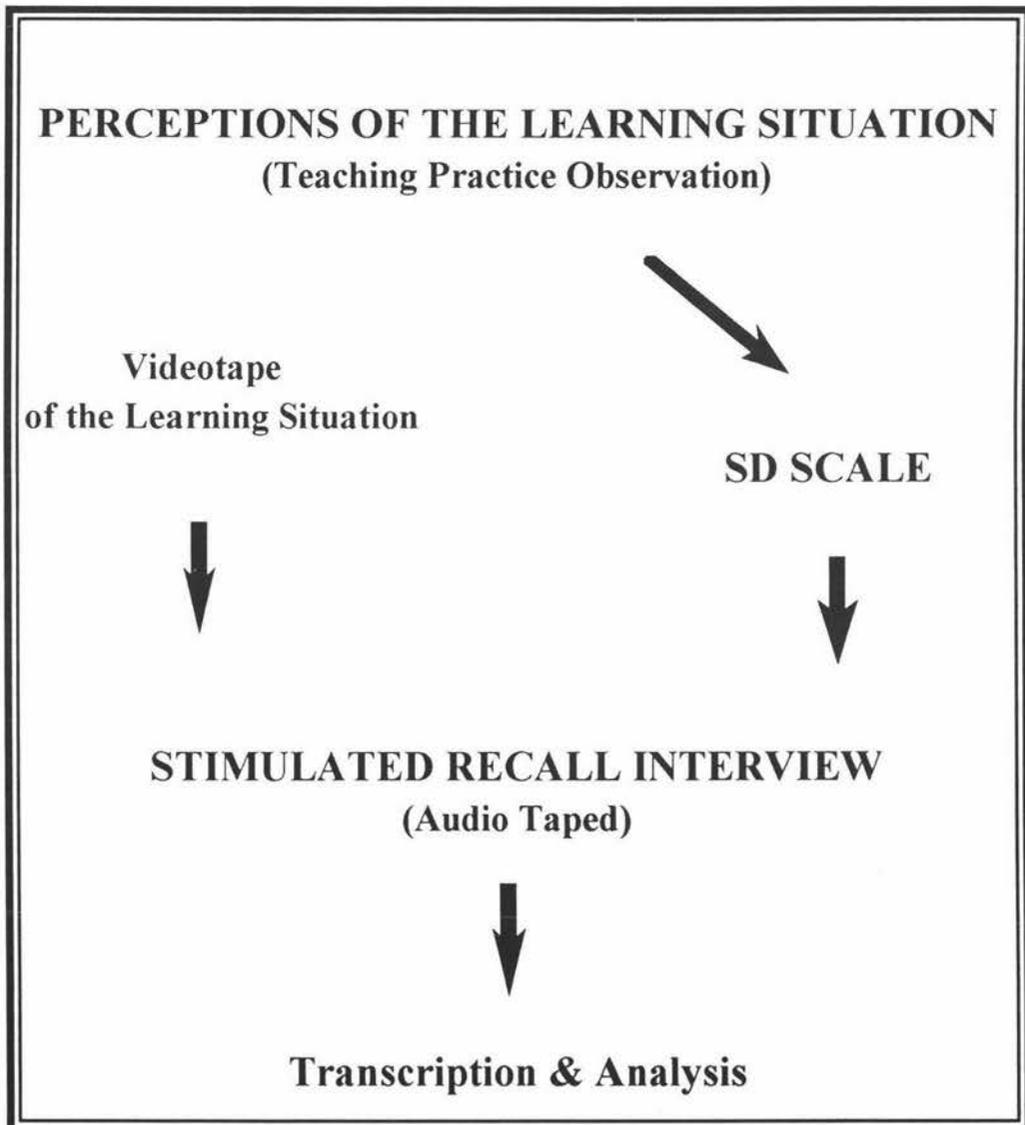
The stimulated recall technique was selected since it had been found to be useful in the process of self evaluation and reflection with student teachers in an L1 setting (MacIntyre and Pape, 1993; Wear and Harris, 1994). The stimulated recall process is described as “a self-reporting technique in which (audio and/or video) records of subjects’ overt behaviours in the task environment are used to stimulate recall of simultaneously occurring thought processes” (Marland, Patching, Putt and Store, 1984: 219). The success of this method of investigation has been confirmed in a number of studies (Kagan, 1984; Marland et al, 1984). In spite of some early concerns about the validity of verbal report data, Mangubhai (1991: 271) notes that verbal report strategies have now “gained acceptance amongst researchers” and that these instruments “go a long way towards overcoming ...problems” of gaining access to previously unobservable thought activities.

While *concurrent* think-aloud was not a feasible method of collecting data during a class observation session for obvious reasons, stimulated recall lent itself to a more retrospective methodology. There were no reports found of this technique being used with L2 student teachers observing “expert” models, as occurs in this research. However, past applications of this technique did indicate that it would be an appropriate means of

gaining insights into the perceptions of overseas student teachers.

The procedure for administration of the instrument in the teaching practice setting is summarised in figure 3.1.

**Figure 3.1**  
*The Stimulated Recall Procedure*



The subject observed and completed the SD scale while the researcher video taped the class (about one hour). The video tape was then replayed immediately after the class while

using the SD scale to guide a semi-structured interview. This focussed on the subject explaining his perceptions, as recorded on the SD scale, through making concrete links with the learning situation which had just taken place.

The stimulated recall procedure was piloted in a modification of the research situation, due to difficulties in duplicating the sample group. A Tongan lecturer, on the staff of the PNCOE, agreed to assist with the pilot study, providing the added benefits of L2 background in addition to expertise in teacher education. The pilot subject was asked to observe a video tape of an L1 student teacher involved in teaching a class while on teaching practice. At the same time, a draft version of the SD scale (see appendix 8) was completed.

The varied placement of perceptions evident on the piloted scale was satisfying in that it indicated that this instrument was likely to yield rich data. It is also evident from the pilot scale copy that some quite specific feed-back was given. The points arising from this and the discussion with the pilot subject are listed below.

1. The pilot subject found it useful to write notes on the scale itself. This was included in the instructions to the subjects.
2. The system of recording perceptions on the scale was revised to use a single vertical mark (see section 3.4.3).
3. It was decided to keep to a consistent ordering of the negative/positive paired items on the scale.
4. Subjects were encouraged to watch the video for a short time before starting each stimulated recall session, to give time to tune in to the medium.
5. The wording of some items was improved. For example, *easy for the students to understand*, seemed obvious to the pilot subject since those being observed were English speakers. This item was modified to read: *allows students to learn easily*.

As a result of feedback and reflection, it was decided that the research subjects would be given a short practice exercise (see appendix 9) to ensure that any difficulties could be resolved before the research procedure at the first teaching practice. Cohen (1991) also refers to the need to give teachers training in the type of information they are expected

to give in verbal reports and retrospection exercises. The practice exercise in the current study was carried out in about ten minutes, immediately preceding the video taped class on the subject's first teaching practice. Some subjects had expressed concerns about the time pressures which the research was placing on their already busy schedule. Therefore, the practice exercise was designed to be quick to administer, as well as representing a simplified and parallel model of the research procedure which was to follow.

Following the practice exercise, the SD scale was presented to the subject, the instructions explained, and time allowed for questions. The subject then examined the SD items carefully, ticking each off when he was sure that it was understood. Questions for clarification were encouraged during this time.

The schedule for the research at the schools was both time consuming and energetic. If possible, the class to be video taped was selected as the first of the day, or immediately following a break so that equipment (video camera with wide angle lens and zoom facilities) could be set up with as little disruption as possible. The video camera was set up as inconspicuously as possible, in one corner at the back of the classroom so as to take advantage of the wider diagonal perspective on the setting. Equipment (portable 14" TV/video player and audio tape recorder) was also set up in a small private withdrawal space for the stimulated recall interview.

Data from the stimulated recall procedure was carefully pre-labelled to avoid mix-ups and to protect the anonymity of the subjects, the schools and teachers involved in the research. A letter (A, B, C, D) was allocated for each subject and this was suffixed with the particular number of the teaching practice (1, 2, 3). This identifying code (ie A1, A2 ...) was recorded on the SD scale record, the video tape and the audio tape, and subsequently the transcriptions from the audio taped interviews.

In the stimulated recall interview, the subject and researcher sat alongside each other, facing and in close proximity to the TV/video player, with the audio tape located between the subject and researcher. One intention of this structuring was to ease the demands for

direct eye contact, since this is known to be uncomfortable for many Asian people. Marland (1984: 95) notes that "Students often feel more secure reviewing a videotaped interaction than in a face-to-face interview where they are uncertain of the up-coming material". The television monitor was placed close enough for the research subject to be able to point out people and events on the screen. The completed SD scale, the second stimulus, was either held by the subject, or placed on a table directly in front of the subject.

The stimulated recall interview was a semi-structured, informal situation and usually took about an hour to complete. Nunan (1992: 149) states that the semi-structured type of interview has been found to be particularly useful for researchers working in an interpretive context. The SD scale was used to focus and sequence the discussion, but the interview was also flexible enough to allow some exploration of interesting areas which arose.

Hudelson (in Johnson, 1992: 94) notes a change from "detached observer" to "participant observer" in her work. Some effort was made to balance the dual role of the researcher in the present study. The subjects' expectations of the researcher as a teacher educator were met through occasionally providing formal labels for concepts about teaching and learning that the subject was describing. The term "feedback" was one such term which was inserted in this way with subject D in the second teaching practice. Incorrect or partially understood concepts however, were accepted, and elaboration was encouraged to clarify the rationale underlying these.

On occasions, the video tape was rewound or fast-forwarded to find specific aspects of the lesson being discussed. This was sometimes done to see if a misunderstanding could be resolved in the second viewing, as happened with subject A when discussing the objectives of the lesson in the first video taped session.

### **3.4.5 *The Final Interview***

At the end of the year, subjects were asked to participate in a final interview with the

researcher (see appendix 10). This interview was divided into three sections to explore the subject's perceptions of the first learning situation, in the light of the year's experiences of many learning situations. Section 1 consisted of a shortened version of the stimulated recall procedure. This used a fifteen minute segment from the first video taped teaching practice, and an abbreviated SD scale of six paired items derived from the original scale after a preliminary analysis of the data. Two SD items concerning *learning* were included since this area seemed to reveal some important perceptions. The items concerning *comfortable for teacher* and *student* were combined and an item concerning the *learning situation* was also added to sum up the subject's perceptions.

Section two of the final interview centred on intercultural comparisons between schools in the home country and those in New Zealand. The key focus here was to revisit the subject's initial interview criteria for rating each country, exploring especially whether there was now less idealism in perceptions, as Oberg's cultural shock theory might suggest (1960, in Furnham and Bochner, 1986).

Section three of this last interview focussed on overall evaluation of the year's experiences and exploring whether the subject's future aspirations as a teacher might have changed.

### 3.5 SUMMARY

The trend for overseas teachers to enter New Zealand Colleges of Education is a new one, so the subjects of this study are of particular interest to study and are expected to provide directions for future professional practice and research in this area. This investigation selected a case study approach to investigate three key research questions concerned with perception, and shifts in the perceptions of four subjects during their first year of teacher education.

The methodology was developed to overcome the limitations of past research into perception, including taking into account the characteristics of Asian subjects. It

incorporates a stimulated recall technique which utilises a semantic differential scale and video taped lessons from the teaching practice setting. The validity of the research was assisted not only by the multiple methods employed in the research, but also by the addition of a final interview. This interview was seen as particularly useful in terms of provision of a cross-reference for any shifts discovered, since teaching practice settings, used as the research context, varied over the year of the study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS: ZONES OF PERCEPTION AND PERCEPTION INDICATORS

This chapter reports on the analysis of data concerning the perceptions of subjects in the study. Section 4.1 justifies the interpretation of data from the SD scale in relation to the stimulated recall procedure, rather than as a stand-alone measure. The remainder of the chapter deals with the development of the data display matrix and with results which relate to the identification of perception indicators and zones of perception.

#### 4.1 INTERPRETING THE SEMANTIC DIFFERENTIAL SCALE

The SD scale in the present study was designed as a stimulus and a framework for the stimulated recall interviews (see section 3.4.3). Accordingly, any consideration of these SD results in isolation from the interviews, has limited validity in terms of the overall aims of the investigation. In this section, examples are given of the importance of considering the SD Scale results in relation to the follow-up interview data, in order to clarify the affective and cognitive assumptions underlying the subjects' perceptions (as mentioned in section 3.3.2).

Firstly, it was found to be possible to interpret a response in the middle of the SD scale in two ways: as a *transitional zone* which represents a *combination* of negative and positive perceptions; or as a *false neutral zone* which could be a means of saving face when the subject felt that his response was inappropriately negative, such as when there was an implied criticism of the teacher. An example of this false neutral zone is taken from subject C's second teaching practice:

Researcher: What about the next one - friendly atmosphere - in the middle?

- C2<sup>1</sup>: Um, the teacher - she try - she tried to make it um - make atmosphere friendly, but um I felt, um for example, the students, they usually um don't - they - I think they, they transfer memories of my student [days in Japan], because um they, they showed less smiles ... but the teacher she um, she smiled, but just by herself [laughs].
- Researcher: So, when she smiled the others did not smile?
- C2: She tries to make umm, make it friendly, but um, quite hard.

This response indicated a negative perception rather than a neutral one. At other times, subject C was found to mark his scale in the middle to show features from each end of the scale, for example regarding *traditional* and *modern*:

- C1: English of traditional is just chalk and talk, but she didn't look like this, so, so, but not so modern.

Secondly, responses on the SD Scale could be initiated by a wide range of factors. For example, subject B indicated that a learning situation was highly *expected*. This response was not related to a growing familiarity with New Zealand learning situations. Rather, the learning situation was *expected* because the consistently routine nature of this class allowed events to be easily predicted:

- B2: she do the same thing every time, so it's expected.

In addition, subject C indicated that a learning situation was *expected* because the class seemed to react in the same way for the associate teacher as when he was teaching them.

Thirdly, changes in responses over time, did not always indicate parallel shifts in perceptions. For example, subject A placed his responses close to *expected* in the first two teaching practice observations. He justified this by explaining that he had now been in the class for about a week, therefore it was no longer surprising. However, on the third and last teaching practice he marked the scale close to *surprising*. This could have been inferred to be a *negative* shift in perception. However, the explanation referred to external factors:

- A3: Before coming to x school quite a few, ah many of my friends had

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<sup>1</sup> Direct quotes from the data indicate the teaching practice setting in which the subject is being interviewed. Thus, C2 indicates that subject C is at the second teaching practice, while Cf indicates subject C in the final interview.

been telling me that um there would be quite a few cheeky boys and girls, but this class is pretty good.

The above examples demonstrate that shared meanings for responses to the SD Scale needed to be negotiated rather than assumed. An in-depth report of the results from the SD scale would therefore be of limited use in interpreting perceptions, and even less so in interpreting cultural perceptions, or shifts in perception. Thus, the results from the SD Scale will be treated as an integral part of the stimulated recall procedure.

## 4.2 DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS

Case study data, in contrast to experimental data, has been described as “paradoxically ‘strong in reality’ but difficult to organise” (Hatch and Lazarson, 1991: 145). The stimulated recall procedure used in the current study, generated a large amount of rich qualitative data.

Data from the semi-structured stimulated recall interviews were transcribed and then coded in order to reduce the data to manageable proportions. Johnson (1982: 90) suggests that data should be examined for “meaningful themes, issues, or variables, to discover how these are patterned, and to attempt to explain the patterns and relationships”. Accordingly, the first stages in analysing data in the present study involved repeatedly sifting through the transcripts to find restated themes which could be coded consistently across all subjects. The subsequent steps entailed working back and forth between the codes and the data to confirm and refine the categories. This process is described as a “non-linear, reiterative process” or “grounded theory” (Lynch, 1996: 142).

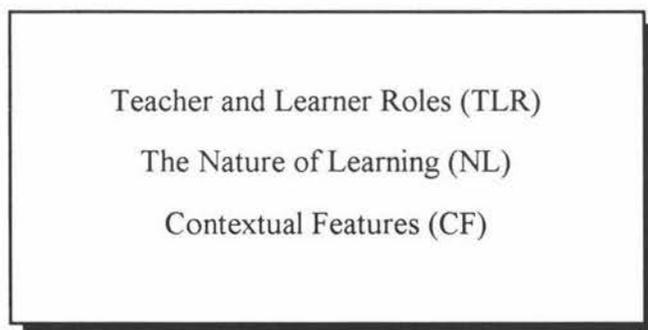
### 4.3 *Zones of Perception*

During the initial classification of the data, in seeking to answer the first research question: *What perceptions do overseas student teachers have of “good” learning situations in New Zealand schools?* three main zones, relating to the focus of subjects’ perceptions, emerged (see figure 4.1). The first of these perceptual zones revealed the subjects’ perceptions of *teacher and learner roles*. This zone embraced a continuum

from the ideal images which the subject brought to the experience, to those constructed images which were based on experiences and observations within the teaching practice. The inter-relationship of the teacher and learner roles was central to the focus of this category. The second major zone of perceptual focus identified was the *nature of learning*. This referred to learning and the degree to which learning activities were perceived as active, competitive, independent or challenging. Thirdly, a zone related to *contextual features* was identified in the data. Hatch and Lizarion (1991: 141) note that “each case turns out to be profoundly embedded in its real world situation”. There were two key features of context in this zone: the physical characteristics of the setting, which embraced resources and classroom layout; and the cultural context of the learning, which included comparisons with the ‘home’ culture and the learning situation in the College of Education.

### Figure 4.1

*Results: Zones of Perception*



These three main zones of perception described above, represented the main foci of perception identified in the data. Subsequent steps in the analysis of the data focused particularly on the second and third research questions which concerned identifying and tracing perceptual shift in the data. Nunan's (1992) statement that case study analysis should include both qualitative and quantitative results was a guideline here, and in the process of following shifts in perception, more finely grained perception indicators were also identified.

#### 4.4 Perception Indicators

At this point in the data analysis, some indicators of positive and negative perceptions began to emerge. Lamb (1995: 75-78), in his study of shifts in teacher beliefs following a short in-service course, identified seven categories which provided some support for the indicators discovered in the current investigation. These categories included one positive classification termed engagement; and six negative categories including no uptake, confusion, labelling, appropriation, assimilation, and rejection due to incorrect adaptation of ideas taught in the course.

The perception indicators identified in the present investigation represent richer, more fine-grained data gathered at intervals over a period of time. Also, in contrast to Lamb's study, the present investigation identified a number of both negative and positive perception indicators. Fanselow (1990: 190) adds support to this finding, suggesting that data should represent a balanced view of reality. The identification of positive and negative perceptions helped in tracking the subjects' orientation towards the target learning culture as the year progressed.

The perception indicators identified in the present investigation were placed in rough rank order to show the intensity of positive or negative perception in relation to the target culture. It must be noted however, that this is a theoretically based intensity ranking rather than an experimentally proven ranking. As such, it is a rough guide rather than a definitive one. Eight categories of positive perception were identified which indicate movement towards uptake of the target culture's concepts. These indicators are: *clear conceptualisation, strategy formulation, engagement with positive results, avoidance of closure, surface assimilation, positive uptake, attempt to rationalize, and idealization*. The rationale for the placement of the indicators in this rank order is embodied in the following descriptions and exemplars of the perception indicators.

The positive indicators ( see figure 4.2) are described first.

### Figure 4.2

*Results: Positive (+) Perception Indicators*

Clear conceptualization
Strategy formulation
Engagement with positive results
Avoidance of closure
Surface assimilation
Positive uptake
Attempt to rationalize
Idealization

#### 1. *Clear conceptualization (+)*

*Clear conceptualization* is used to indicate those perceptions which were found to reveal some understanding of the concepts in the target learning culture. There was usually an element of the reflective teacher in this data in that it demonstrated an understanding, not only of the concepts involved, but also of the rationale for their selective implementation. Other positive factors, such as effective models, all contribute to this process, as illustrated by subject C:

C3: She does know how to make the students work while I still doing everything for the student.

This was distinguished as an example of clear conceptualization since it showed a level of reflection about the new Learner/Teacher Role, leading to identification of a key factor relating to the subject's part in this relationship.

Clear conceptualization was placed highest in the indicators of positive perceptions, since it was predicted that positive uptake could not be sustained without this. Brown (1990: 91) states that "effective use relies on a full understanding of the concept, not just memorization", since a change in beliefs involves a change in concepts. Spada and Massey (1992: 33) also suggest that, in order to effectively implement teaching practice, one must

conceptualize the theory. Making the “tacit implicit” (Schulman in Freeman, 1992: 14) is an important part of changing beliefs through teacher education.

## 2. *Strategy formulation* (+)

The second positive perception indicator identified from the data is *strategy formulation*, or the evolution of schemata for performing the teaching role. This can be seen when subject C identifies a useful routine to begin a class (while responding to the item *organised*, on the SD Scale):

C3: First she [the teacher] gained attention from the students and said what she was going to do and then she did it according to what she said, so it was quite organised.

Lentell (1995: 7), in examining staff development of teachers, states that when students know what is required of them “intellectual excitement and contemplation are replaced by instrumentalism - ‘how to’ rather than ‘why’ questions”. This approach, Lentell says, reflects knowledge as a process rather than knowledge as a product. This indicator is therefore placed near the top of the positive perception indicators. However, it is not placed right at the top of the scale since it may reflect a training model rather than a reflective model of teacher education, as described in section 2.3.3. It does nonetheless demonstrate positive and constructive progress towards the adoption of new approaches in teaching.

## 3. *Engagement with positive results* (+)

Evidence of *engagement with positive results* in the data was classified as a positive indicator of perception since it creates motivation to try again. Bailey (1992: 272) noted that small victories encourage teachers to take further risks. In the present study, this data also revealed vicarious participation through seeing the associate teacher use new modes to teach successfully. This can be seen on the first teaching practice, when subject B comments on effective teaching of Hiragana writing:

B1: She shows the picture then the sound. She shows you slowly - use their bodies. Next day I say a word - it doesn't matter if you can't remember it. Students got ten out of ten!

However, it was also found that seeing something work did not guarantee that the student could imitate it successfully, justifying the placement of this indicator a little lower on the scale. For example, the subject above observed singing being included successfully on another occasion, but did not manage to successfully incorporate it into his teaching style on the first attempt.

#### 4. *Avoidance of closure* (+)

Attempts, by the subjects, to maintain objectivity were discovered in the data and classified as an indicator of *avoidance of closure*. Bailey (1992) describes openness to positive change as essential to ongoing teacher development. Being able to maintain an objective approach to new ideas which may conflict with prior knowledge is crucial to being able to convert input of new concepts into up-take. However, although it is a pre-ingredient for change, it is not sufficient in itself to ensure change, or motivate attempts to change, hence its position on the scale. An illustration of *avoidance of closure* is seen when subject B refused to discuss the final item (which required a comparison with the College of Education) since it was still early in the year:

B1: I prefer to be really more objective. So far I haven't - I don't want to comment.

The data also revealed that subjects engaged in saving face on behalf of the associate teacher, for example, subject D softened his criticism of a lesson in this way:

D3: I feel that her lesson is changing a little too quickly but they followed the lesson. They enjoyed it.

#### 5. *Surface assimilation* (+)

*Surface assimilation* identified in the data was placed in the positive part of the matrix since it implies a move towards identifying new roles and schemata. However, it is thought that a deeper level of cognitive understanding and acceptance of the underlying philosophy for behaviour patterns is needed in order to sustain role changes. Cabello and Burstein (1995: 287) support this in suggesting that "preparation for teaching requires more than a knowledge base or repertoire of skills; teachers must be able to make judgements about instruction, drawing from their knowledge and experience of individual

students and situations in their classrooms". The example of surface assimilation which follows illustrates that subject B has equated *active teaching* with card games, rather than noting the underlying *active learning* which it invokes:

B2: I think I would try to use more active way to teach a foreign language ... I like to use more card games.

#### 6. *Positive uptake* (+)

Perceptions seen as indicative of *positive uptake* show evidence of positive attitudes towards new ideas. However, these perceptions may not extend to implying application of new ideas. In addition, these reported perceptions may be an indication of the subject endeavouring to say the 'right' thing to the researcher through repeating rote learned information from the College course. This is illustrated when subject A is depicting the factors in the learning situation which he would find useful in his home country:

A3: group work, eye contacts, body movements, facial expression and lots of encouragement - lots of positive things.

#### 7. *Attempt to rationalize* (+)

Subjects sometimes revealed that they were reflecting on the reasons for new modes and therefore endeavouring to maintain a positive orientation. On the other hand, the rationale given for implementing these approaches was sometimes be flawed, therefore such data was classified as an *attempt* to rationalize. This is seen when subject D justifies his ranking of a lesson as *cooperative*:

D2: If they are competitive I think they might have got angry some time because they lost the game. They are more cooperative.

This association of anger with an extreme concept of competition, suggests a lack of understanding of a key principle of the target learning culture, that of displaying good sportsmanship whether winning or losing.

#### 8. *Idealization* (+)

*Idealization* was also found in the data of several subjects. This indicator relates to Oberg's (1960) initial stage of culture shock when there is an exaggerated and unrealistic view of the new culture. Oberg says that movement beyond this stage is precipitated by

participation. However, the data does not always support this. Johnson (1994: 445) also observed that pre-service ESL teachers in her study had “an unrealistic sense of optimism about the type of teacher they would be and what their initial teaching experiences would be like”. In the same way, idealism identified in the data from the present study tended to focus on the type of teacher subjects wanted to believe would eventuate from the new cultural setting:

C2: I want to enjoy teaching. I want to share studying Japanese, so when I teach I think we should be equal. I - not just teacher, not just students, but we are same, brothers.

### *Non-preferential differences (0)*

Some data did not fit into either a positive or negative orientation to the target culture. Such neutral perceptions were illustrated when subjects noted differences between the two cultures which they did not evaluate. For example, subject A, on the second teaching practice commented on the item *competitive learning* as it related to Japan:

A2: In Japan they are learning the same thing and always challenging the new thing. Like this group might be learning multiplication, but the other group may still be learning subtraction.

He did not make it clear whether he thinks the Japanese way is better, but recognized it was different.

In addition to the eight positive indicators of perception, eight categories of negative perception were identified (see figure 4.3). This data indicated withdrawal from, or inability to uptake concepts in the target culture. The indicators of negative perception which were identified in the data are *selecting and distancing, limited implementation, engagement with negative results, self doubts, rejection and closure, noting lack of effective models, overlaying and partial conceptualization*. These will now be described in detail.

### Figure 4.3

*Results: Negative (-) Perception Indicators*

Selecting and distancing
Limited implementation
Engagement with negative results
Self doubts
Rejection and closure
Noting lack of effective models
Overlaying
Partial conceptualization

#### 1. *Selecting and distancing (-)*

The data identified as *selecting and distancing* reflects an acceptance of ideas within the confines of the new setting only, while new ideas were seen as unsuitable for the home setting. These perceptions may therefore indicate a deeper level of rejection. An example of this is shown when subject A discussed the presence of teddy bears in a classroom:

D3:            If I am in Japan, I would, I would take them away, but... if I am teaching in New Zealand ... I wouldn't care what they bring ... if I am teaching in Japan I may care.

This reveals aspects of Lamb's (1995) category of *assimilation* in which new ideas could be taken in without understanding of the underlying rationale. However, Lamb saw this type of uptake as selecting and accepting only that which agreed with or elaborated on current beliefs. The current study identified perceptions which suggested limited uptake due to conflict with existing beliefs.

#### 2. *Limited implementation (-)*

Some subjects made a conscious decision to limit their implementation of new modes. Data which indicated these selective perceptions was referred to as *limited implementation*. Practical reasons were most often cited for limiting implementation. For

example, subject B, after showing lots of enthusiasm for making his own resources, decided at the final teaching practice that it might not be realistic to design *all* his own materials in the *first* year of teaching:

B3: I may not have time.

Ballantyne, Hansford and Packer (1995: 248) also note the occurrence of this with newly graduated teachers who, faced by “classroom pressures”, made changes to their ideal classroom procedures. Possible reasons for this were given as the constraints of time, the availability of resources, the work conditions and the behaviour of students. Ballantyne et al found that ideals limited at this stage were often pursued again at a later date, and so this indicator is placed quite close to the neutral zone. However, it is wise to keep in mind that, in the present study, incompatible cultural concepts/beliefs may possibly lead to ideas being more readily rejected.

### 3. *Engagement with negative results* (-)

In addition to engagement with positive results, there were indications of perceptions showing *engagement with negative results*. As with *limited implementation*, this may not be permanent in its effects, however it may be seen as potentially more damaging. An effective example occurs when subject B was keen to try singing in class after seeing his associate teacher use this successfully. However, on trying for himself in the next teaching practice, he experienced some reluctance from the class. Initially he was quite taken aback by his lack of success with the new methodology and returned to the original teacher to discuss the matter. He later concluded that it might be difficult to implement a new method, such as singing at senior levels, when the class have not experienced it before (*limited implementation*). His next attempt, on the final teaching practice, met with more success, providing positive reinforcement for his theory. Had the model been less effective, and the first associate teacher less supportive however, he may not have gone on to try again.

### 4. *Self doubts* (-)

*Self-doubts* about their new role may be experienced by all student teachers, but in this case, the particular inter-cultural problems of overseas students created an additional

burden. It would seem that it is more difficult to implement new ideas if control difficulties, due to role confusion, are present, as seen in subject B's comments on teaching practice three:

B3: I think there's some sort of language problem. We don't, we try to speak politely rather than use our authority, to instruct formally the students to get on task. It's the way we learn it.

Self efficacy was noted by Agne and Miller (1994) as an important factor in teacher efficiency. They also argue that teacher efficacy is affected by the teacher's background and experiences. The background and experiences of overseas student teachers will include different cultural beliefs and practices related to learning and teaching.

### 5. *Rejection and closure* (-)

Negative views about the target learning culture were also identified in the perceptions of subjects in the study. This led to *rejection and closure* regarding these concepts. Lamb (1995) has a similar category which he confines to a rejection of methodology which has been inappropriately adapted to the L2 setting. In the current study, rejection and closure occurred mainly in relation to teacher learner roles (in particular control issues) and contextual features. One example, at the third teaching practice, occurs when subject D notes comments on the item *formal/informal*:

D3: Formal means not relaxed. Informal means sometimes relaxed but naughty; relaxed, but sometimes naughty and noisy.

The perceptions of subjects in the present study also indicated that contextual features, such as untidy classrooms and uniforms not worn neatly, were viewed negatively.

### 6. *Noting lack of effective models* (-)

Perceptions which referred to an absence of effective and relevant models for new role patterns were also identified. This data was referred to as *noting lack of effective models*. It may be that this indicator is especially significant for overseas student teachers who are seeking to find ways to synthesize new modes with familiar teaching/learning styles. Johnson (1994: 451) notes that if pre-service teachers beliefs are to shift, they must have "successful encounters with alternative instructional practice and alternative images of

teachers". The need for "guided exposure to positive and negative instances" (Brown, 1990: 93) and "multiple ways of conceiving teaching" (Freeman, 1992: 14) is well supported by the literature on teacher education. Subjects in the present study often noted contrasts, between the new knowledge gained from the college programme, with the models found in the teaching practice setting:

- C1: She [the teacher] could have used games or something, some activities, but she didn't use any activities ... she has a talk to students and sometimes it is difficult to understand what she meant ... maybe New Zealand teachers are not as I thought - ah, [they are] chalk and talk.

### 7. *Overlaying* (-)

*Overlaying*, or the superimposing of new ideas on old belief systems, was a further indicator identified in the data. This has elements of Lamb's (1995) categories of *labelling* and *appropriation*, but more specifically relates the inaccurate interpretation of ideas to the influence of the home culture upon the new ideas. In addition, it would appear, from the present study, that overlaying occurs at an unconscious level. It is therefore seen as a stronger influence on more stable negative perceptions. A case in point is found on the first teaching practice data. Subject C is reacting to having observed deductive grammar teaching in the learning situation:

- C1: she should have showed system of Japanese grammar ... asked them to write down the rule, translate passages in Japanese style.

### 8. *Partial conceptualization* (-)

In addition to clear conceptualization, indicators of *partial conceptualization* were also evident in the data. Since it is seen in contrast with clear conceptualization, this is placed on the extreme end of the negative perception indicators. Perceptions identified as partial conceptualization related to data in which new ideas were being discussed without clear understanding; for example, at the final teaching practice both subjects B and C used the term *high level learning* to refer to the numbers of students getting correct answers, without mentioning higher cognitive levels of thought such as abstraction:

- B3: The majority of them did achieve that.  
C3: When she [the teacher] was asking, all students answer correctly.

This category is similar to Lamb's category of *confusion* in which new ideas are not well enough understood to affect teaching.

#### 4.5 DATA DISPLAY MATRIX

After refining the perception indicators, and finalizing their order, they were used in combination with the three zones of perception to create a matrix on which instances of each type of perception were tabulated (see figure 4.4). This assisted in providing more data on all three research questions, but was used primarily to examine the perceptual focus of subjects, and shifts in this as the year progressed.

The indicators of perception identified in the data were arranged vertically on a display matrix according to their negative or positive intensity relative to the target culture. The three broad categories identified earlier (*teacher and learner roles, the nature of learning and contextual features*) were placed horizontally across the top of the matrix, thereby enabling the intersection of the two axes on the matrix to form sub-categories within the matrix (see figure 4.1).

The number of times that each perception indicator occurred in the data of individual subjects was counted. This was shown on a matrix for each individual subject in the study. Three guidelines provided in the work of Lynch (1996) support the implementation of this procedure: formulate decision rules, use display matrices and count. Individual occurrences of perception indicators was recorded by noting the number of the teaching practice on the matrix. Repetition of a specific teaching practice number was used to signify further instances of that perception indicator in the data gathered on a particular occasion.

The results from the case study data on individual students, relating specifically to foci and shifts in perception, will be presented in the following chapter. This makes use of the data from the study, as presented on individual display matrices.

**Figure 4.4**  
*Data Display Matrix*

<b>Perception Indicators</b>	<b>Teacher / Learner Roles</b>	<b>Nature of Learning</b>	<b>Contextual Features</b>
+ Clear conceptualization			
+ Strategy formulation			
+ Engagement with positive results			
+ Avoidance of closure			
+ Surface assimilation			
+ Positive uptake			
+ Attempt to rationalize			
+ Idealization			
0 Non-preferential differences			
- Selecting and distancing			
- Limited implementation			
- Engagement with negative results			
- Self-doubts			
- Rejection and closure			
- Noting lack of effective models			
- Overlaying			
- Partial conceptualization			

## CHAPTER FIVE

### RESULTS: CASE STUDIES

In this chapter, the findings from the stimulated recall procedure will be related for each subject. The case studies follow on from the information gathered in the initial interview (presented in section 3.2.2) and are presented as a discussion of major foci and shifts in each of the three perceptual zones of *teacher and learner roles* (TLR), the *nature of learning* (NL) and *contextual features* (CF). Illustrations are given from the data collected in the stimulated recall procedure at each teaching practice and in the final interview at the end of the year. Each case study ends with a summation of all the data on that subject.

Although it would have been useful to link individual case study results with the biodata presented in appendix 2, it has not been done. The reason for this is the need to preserve the anonymity of individual subjects (as explained in section 3.2.2), particularly the one primary pre-service subject who is still a student in the College of Education at this time.

#### 5.1 SUBJECT A

At the start of the year, subject A showed a concern for determining the characteristics of the ideal teacher, and the relationship between such a teacher and his/her students (see section 3.2.2). This emphasis is reflected in his perceptions which were recorded over the year, while observing learning situations at varying levels in three different schools (see figure 5.1). The focus of his perceptions is primarily on TLR (43 instances of perception recorded), in contrast to NL (33 instances of perception) and CF (26 instances).

**Figure 5.1**  
*Subject A: Data Matrix*

Perception Indicators	Teacher / Learner Roles	Nature of Learning	Contextual Features
+ Clear conceptualization	3	11112	2
+ Strategy formulation	1222233	133	1
+ Engagement with positive results	22		1
+ Avoidance of closure	133		1
+ Surface assimilation	12	11123	111223
+ Positive up-take	12233	23	2222
+ Attempt to rationalize	3		3
+ Idealization	1		
0 Non-preferential differences	1	2	1
- Selecting and distancing	1	1	123
- Limited implementation			
- Engagement with negative results			
- Self-doubt	12333	13	3
- Rejection and closure	111111222	11233	13
- Noting lack of effective models	23		2
- Overlaying	233	2	133
- Partial conceptualization		11122333	

### 5.1.1 Teacher/Learner Roles

Over the year of the study, subject A's main perceptual focus in TLR showed *rejection and closure*, particularly in the first teaching practice. The data associated with this perception indicator appears to be related to deciphering the acceptable boundaries for teachers and learners in keeping control of the class. In turn, negative judgements were made about the learners when the situation was not perceived as comfortable:

A1: When the teacher was taking the roll everyone was looking in a different direction, not to the teacher. Children seem easy to lose their concentration ... They tend to make a lot of noise later

on so must be hard for teachers, must be uncomfortable for teachers. I don't think the children care seriously what they are doing. I mean they, they seldom care about their behaviours. I think they, they think they can do whatever they like.

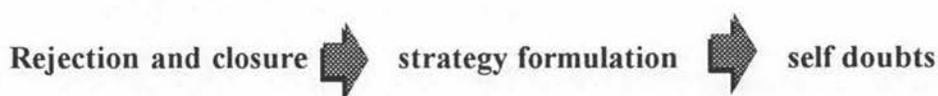
In the middle of the year, the main focus of TLR perceptions shifted in a positive direction to *strategy formulation*. The data exhibiting this, while concentrating on the development of teaching and learning sequences and schemata, also showed a continued concern for gaining classroom control; for example:

A2: Even [when] the teacher is scolding them [the pupils], but in a way she used praising, encouraging: 'I know you something, so next time I'd like to see you working tasks. I know you can do. It's - encouraging. The teachers must be expecting those children to come better.

At the end of the year, subject A's TLR perceptions were focussed mainly on *self doubt*, revealing on-going concerns about the effective implementation of strategies (see figure 5.1.1).

### Figure 5.1.1

*Subject A: TLR Shifts*



The increase in perceptions revealing *self doubts* at the end of the year could stem from a number of sources. It may have been due to a developing rapport with the researcher which allowed the subject to feel freer to express such feelings. On the other hand it may reflect a rise in anxiety over implementing roles as participation in the new situation increased. The latter seems more likely since subject A's *self doubts* centred on classroom control. Furthermore, in the final teaching practice, balancing friendliness with the pupils, against loss of respect, was revealed to be a major, ongoing concern:

- A3: That's what I was afraid of ... A teacher can be like a friend to them, but they [the teacher] are always at the higher position ... it's difficult.

Despite the strong evidence of *self doubts* during the year, subject A reported an increase in confidence in the final interview. The first learning situation was perceived as only minimally comfortable for the teacher:

- A1: I feel that if I become a teacher I will have lots of troubles, like to con - in controlling children.

However, when observing the same learning situation again at the end of the year, subject A perceived it as quite comfortable for teachers:

- Af: Firstly there are three teachers most, most of the time ... assistant teachers. Those people would probably be a big help for main teacher ... and there are not many children in this class compared with Japanese schools. Averagely they have ah forty to fifty kids to one class. So it seemed quite comfortable for me ... What else? The way they sit. They are working in a group ... more fun than working by themselves.

### 5.1.2 *The Nature of Learning*

*Partial conceptualization* was the most significant perception indicator for subject A in the NL area. The data in this category revealed perceptions at a less conscious level. This can be seen on the second teaching practice when the purpose for developing independent learning was linked with developing individuality:

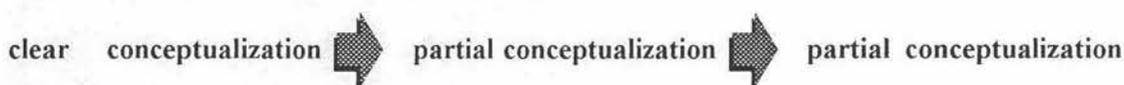
- A2: They are sitting altogether but still they have to come - they have to come their own ideas, so, and they are not talking. I mean they're not discussing things ahh that would help them to develop their individualities.

Furthermore, on several occasions, the concept of *high level learning* was connected to raising the difficulty level of the topic. This revealed an emphasis on teacher direction. The activation of higher cognitive processes in the learner was not included in the discussion of this topic by subject A.

In the light of the above findings, it is intriguing to note that the largest cluster of

perceptions in the NL category at the start of the year was *clear conceptualization*. However, by the middle of the year, the focus had moved to *partial conceptualization* where it remained in the third teaching practice (see figure 5.1.2).

**Figure 5.1.2**  
*Subject A: NL Shifts*



At first this might seem contradictory. However, on examining the NL data a little more closely, the complexity of perceptions was also found to increase during the year. This is exemplified by comparing subject A's comments on independent learning skills in the first and second teaching practice:

- A1: Although they were working in a group, they needed to have their own opinions.
- A2: They are sitting altogether but still ... they have to come to their own ideas ... they're not discussing things ahh that would help them to develop their individualities.

In the second example, from teaching practice two, subject A's ideas on independent learning were expanded further and the gaps in conceptualization were therefore clearer. From this it could be inferred that as perceptions became increasingly detailed and complex, gaps in understanding became more apparent.

Subject A's *partial conceptualization* was confirmed in the final interview, when asked whether a modern or traditional learning situation would be best for independent learning. He observed that the Japanese style was more independent since such learning is really about silent, individual study at a desk:

- Af: Japanese style. I mean, known for their own desk and without any talking. That allows more independent work.

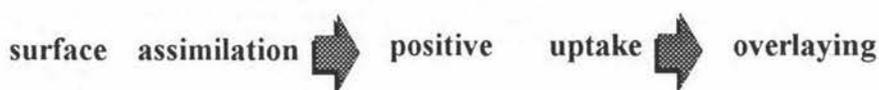
The above incident depicts subject A's ambivalence in endeavouring to combine the concept of Asian individual study with the western ideal of independent learning. It could be inferred that it was difficult to reconcile these two beliefs.

### 5.1.3 Contextual Features

In the CF zone, *surface assimilation* was the most noticeable perception for subject A. Many items were described in terms of the physical factors rather than related to learning and teaching processes. For example, *modern* was related to the architecture of the building. In addition, *friendly* was linked to the circular sitting arrangement, while *formal* was connected to the wearing of uniform which would be familiar in a Japanese learning situation.

Subject A's data shows an interesting shift pattern (see figure 5.1.3). It moves from a focus on *surface assimilation* in the first teaching practice, to *positive uptake* in the second teaching practice. *Overlaying* seems to be the most dominant perception in the third teaching practice, although there were relatively few instances of this in the CF data.

**Figure 5.1.3**  
*Subject A: CF Shifts*



The shift pattern over the year indicates an attempt to identify features of the target culture, then to adopt them. While the final perceptions showing *overlaying* are not significantly numerous, they do reveal how subject A's first culture and early learning experiences influenced or filtered his perceptions of the new learning situation, making it difficult to move beyond superficial understandings. One example of *overlaying* in the

CF zone reveals subject A's expectations for a classroom were largely based on his learning environment in Japan which would not include as much visual stimulation as the western classroom:

A3: It's not a primary classroom. You will see charts on the walls, but not many pictures, a lot of writing.

#### 5.1.4 Summation

Over the year of the study, subject A expressed many anxieties about the new TLR. The persistence of self doubts regarding classroom control are of particular concern, since it is hard to implement new ideas about teaching while worrying about controlling the class. Subject A reflects this concern about identifying and implementing new role relationships on the first teaching practice:

A1: If the teacher let them work, learn individually, they will start to talk.

Subject A began the year with feelings about teaching in New Zealand which he described as "mellow" (see section 3.2.2). His picture of an ideal teacher was "approachable, friendly, well prepared, patient and humorous". However, as the year went on, he found this model quite difficult to realise. *Rejection and closure* emerges as the strongest perception, with sixteen separate instances recorded in the data. This reflects the cognitive and affective difficulties that subject A had in moving towards the new learning culture during the year of the study. In addition, the high level of *surface assimilation*, combined with the low levels of *clear conceptualization* would suggest that although subject A's perceptions did become more detailed he did not achieve real depth of understanding of the target learning culture during the year.

In the final interview, subject A noted that neither the learning situations in New Zealand nor those in Japanese schools were perfect. His closing remarks show a combination of *rejection and closure*, in addition to *positive up-take* regarding the new setting:

Af: [in Japan] teachers are diligent, very hard working and organised. Sometimes they give us, they give students too much work to

do... There are some stupid school rules ... length of hair, length of socks, length of skirts, length of bag, bag ah - strap. We had to wear a hat. Ah not, we're not allowed to eat in the school ... even fruits.

Af: I would also like the New Zealand teachers to look at how Japanese teachers deal with the naughty kids with physical punishments. They still work - it, it works... in ten years, twenty years time they would appreciate what the teacher had done ... that's how we have been disciplined.

Subject A also reported in the final interview that he felt his confidence in the new situation had grown since the beginning of the year. However, when asked if he would still be teaching in New Zealand in ten years time, some doubts were expressed:

Af: I doubt it. In ten years time? I'd love to but I wouldn't stay in New Zealand ... I might try another thing. I might even teach in another country. I might go back home.

## 5.2 SUBJECT B

At the start of the year of the study, subject B had a realistic perception of the advantages and disadvantages of New Zealand (see section 3.2.2). He also saw being a teacher in New Zealand, as a job to return to after more travel. His lack of idealism may indicate his more advanced level in the acculturation process and may be reflected in the constructive focus of his perceptions.

During the study, subject B observed classes at varying levels in three different schools. As the results on the data matrix (figure 5.2) show, subject B's perceptions were very strongly focussed on TLR (71 instances of perceptions), in contrast to NL (43 perceptual instances recorded) and CF (33 instances). The perception indicators and shifts in each of these three zones of perception will be examined next.

**Figure 5.2**  
*Subject B: Data Matrix*

Perception Indicators	Teacher / Learner Roles	Nature of Learning	Contextual Features
+ Clear conceptualization	2333	2333	333
+ Strategy formulation	222233333	11111233	12223
+ Engagement with positive results	12	123	
+ Avoidance of closure	11222	2	11222
+ Surface assimilation	112	12	1
+ Positive up-take	1222223	12223333	112223
+ Attempt to rationalize	1223	2	
+ Idealization			
0 Non-preferential differences	13	2	11113
- Selecting and distancing	33	3	3
- Limited implementation	2	2	3
- Engagement with negative results	123	2	3
- Self-doubts	222223333		3
- Rejection and closure	112333	1	12
- Noting lack of effective models	2223		2
- Overlaying	112222	13	
- Partial conceptualization	1112	111222223	2

### 5.2.1 Teacher/Learner Roles

There are two strong perceptual indicators in the TLR data for subject B. These are *strategy formulation* and *self doubts*. Subject B's efforts to overcome the difficulties encountered in the new learning situation may be reflected in this equal weighting of negative and positive perceptions. Furthermore, although *strategy formulation* did not appear until mid-way through the year, subject B's strategies reveal a high level of reflection about the TLR:

B2: I can say my voice pretty low so I have to really use my voice a

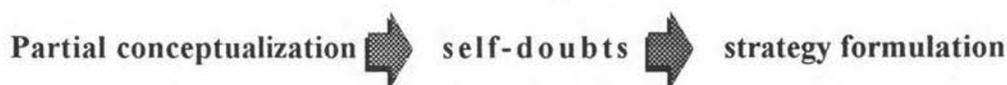
little bit. So a small class is OK, a bigger class I have to be really strict with the students.

Subject B's strategies centred not only on teaching/learning issues, but also on reducing the amount of work involved in preparing lessons to a realistic level :

B2: She write everything on OHP, so she can produce every year. It save her time and this is more systematic.

The pattern of TLR shifts over the three teaching practice begins with a focus on *partial conceptualization* in the first teaching practice. This focus moves to *self doubts* in the second teaching practice, and then to *strategy formulation* at the end of the year (see figure 5.2.1). Such a pattern may indicate that subject B's awareness of partial conceptualization led to feelings of self doubts later in the year. This is further supported by evidence that initial instances of *self doubts* and *strategy formulation* in TLR occurred simultaneously at mid-year, revealing a constructive approach to the difficulties encountered.

**Figure 5.2.1**  
*Subject B: TLR Shifts*



As with the examples of strategy formulation mentioned earlier, much of the data showing *self doubts* demonstrates a level of reflection on the new role relationships to be mastered. These perceptions show how English fluency levels which are less than those of a native speaker may cause a loss of face in the New Zealand classroom. Specific references to cross cultural factors are also included, such as the smaller stature of Asian teachers as well as the differences in teaching style:

B2: I'm small. I'm certainly small and also my voice - sometimes I'm not really speak that clearly.

B3: I think there's probably some sort of language problem. We [other overseas student teachers and self] don't, we try to speak politely rather than use our authority, to instruct formally the students to get on task. It's the way we learn it ... We learn in the polite way and the students feel you're too soft ... A person not born in New Zealand, no matter what their race is, but if they're born in New Zealand it's quite different ... It make me feel really embarrassed, subservient to the teacher who may not have the accent ... I think they [Kiwi teachers] know how to use their language better, you know, so they be really strict.

In the final interview, subject B reiterated the perception that his difficulties with classroom control may be linked to not being a native speaker of English:

Bf: Some sort of language barrier ... They may expect that you are too soft ... In my point of view I may be quite tough, yeah, but from their [the students'] point of view they may not think so.

The final interview data reinforces the finding that subject B exhibits a positive shift in perceptions. In the stimulated recall interview at the first teaching practice, subject B rejected the model of teaching put forward in the video taped lesson as too traditional:

B1: That's the way I learned, same as her [the teacher], but I don't want to repeat the same.

By the end of the year, subject B had become more realistic about his ability to be a more modern teacher, while at the same time trying to maintain control of the students:

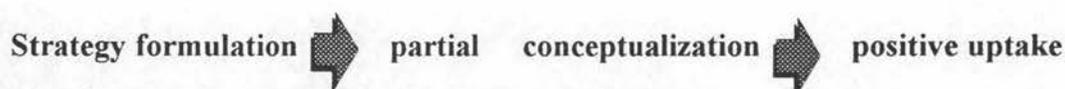
Bf: You can say, or you can write beautifully what you are going to do. Whether the student is going to cooperate with you is another thing.

### 5.2.2 *The Nature of Learning*

The data from subject B shows that *partial conceptualization* is the most significant perception in the NL zone. It is worth noting however, that this indicator is the only negative NL perception for subject B. In contrast, *positive uptake* and *strategy formulation* are two significant indicators of positive perceptions in this zone. The positive inclination of subject B's perceptions is seen even more clearly when the shift pattern for the year is examined (see figure 5.2.2).

The shift pattern above may reveal some insights into the process of subject B's learning about the target culture. It was noted earlier, in the TLR data, that *strategy formulation* may be a response to an awareness of gaps in knowledge. *Partial conceptualization* may also signify that learning is in progress. In much the same way as grammatical errors indicate experimentation with new forms, *partial conceptualization* may indicate emerging cognitive processing of new perceptions.

**Figure 5.2.2**  
*Subject B: NL Shifts*



One example, of the progression in subject A's perceptions is related to the concept of *developing independent learning*. Initially, this concept was perceived as purely individual study or memorisation of previously taught content. However, by the end of the year, there is some evidence of subject A's progress towards the target culture understanding of a set of skills which it is possible for the teacher to facilitate:

B3: She's quite often pass the responsibility to the students themselves. Some of the girls write some sort of things that are not related with the class content - make the students think. Make their own sentences rather than just give them all examples you want to give to them.

Furthermore, *positive uptake* may reveal a more conscious level of perceptions related to new learning. It may also reflect the increased level of input from the College programme by that stage in the year, as seen in this example:

B2: I think I would try to use more active way to teach a foreign language ... is more practical to use more latest methods and which widely or globally are set up as good way of learning a foreign language.

The notion that the data on subject B shows progress in learning about the target culture

is further supported by the significant positive shifts found between the start and finish of the year in the final interview. In the first teaching practice interview, subject B's perceptions are more superficial; for example, he noted that the teacher turns her back therefore she must be *comfortable*. In contrast, the final interview shows that subject B's perceptions are enhanced by more recent course work. He now perceives that this class may have some special needs and therefore his data involves *strategy formulation* related to NL to overcome the teacher's discomfort in the class:

Bf: More card games and more um useful. Instruction is not only doing what they tell her ... What I mean is more resources like poster and card games ... Make it more um occupy their time I think, so I change the background all the time rather than they looking at me ... remove the focus from my face, sometimes tiring ... no matter what age group, always the picture much easier than a whole group of words.

As with TLR strategies, subject B formulated a range of NL strategies, ranging from classroom based strategies to those with a wider school focus. At the beginning of the year his perceptions were more classroom focussed:

B1: the Kiwi way is the best way [to teach Hiragana]. Easy symbols first, then complex. One stroke before two strokes, then build on this. Don't need to teach the alphabet order.

In the third teaching practice interview, a broader focus appears, as seen in the following example when subject B discusses the school's system of giving merit slips towards a certificate:

B3: Some schools have those marks systems and some don't. Um, I think I will, even though I make my own, even in front of their class, not in front of everybody like that formal assembly with whole school, that sort of thing ... I think it's more challenging ... while I may place a student in front of the rest of the class they may not feel the same cause they see everybody every day... even though I'm not knowing the name, ah standing there may be quite different.

### 5.2.3 Contextual Features

The strongest perception in the CF zone of subject B's data, is *positive up-take*. This can be seen in the gathering of useful ideas on how to organise the physical learning

environment effectively. In the example which follows, subject B discusses the benefits of arranging the students' seating into a horseshoe shape rather than groups or straight rows:

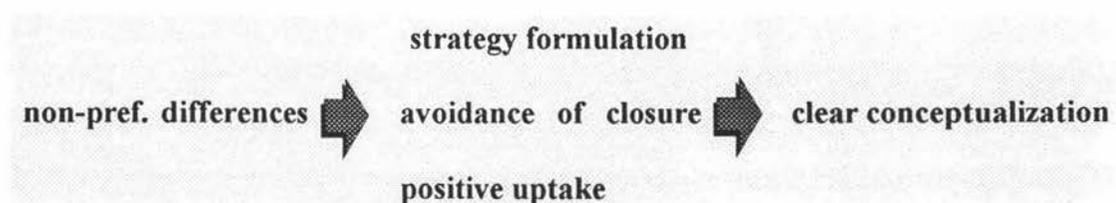
B2: the horseshoe's even better. I like that way because you can reduce the barrier between the student and yourself. With this model [straight rows] you're always in front. I'm standing, you're sitting, and you have tables between the students and the teachers. ... [With horseshoes] the teacher can move more freely to have interaction with the students.

The CF data for subject B is located predominantly in the positive zone of perception. It is of note that there was very little evidence of a shift away from the target culture in the CF zone of subject B's data. This may suggest that physical factors of the learning environment are more readily conceptualized than those factors of the learning situation which involve more in-depth understandings.

The pattern of perceptual shifts in the CF zone, as with perceptions in the TLR and NL zones, shows a developmental pattern. In the first teaching practice, CF perceptions related mainly to *non-preferential differences* in the neutral zone. This reflects subject B's tendency, early in the year, to include perceptions which demonstrated *avoidance of closure*. In the second teaching practice, subject B's perceptions were focussed in three positive areas: *strategy formulation*, *positive uptake* and *avoidance of closure*, while in the third teaching practice *clear conceptualization* is the focus (see figure 5.2.3).

### Figure 5.2.3

*Subject B: CF Shifts*



As revealed in the NL data, *strategy formulation* in the CF zone reflected the learning

process through the development of a range of strategies, including how to deal with larger classes and how to deal with uncomfortable learning situations:

- B2: It's good to settle them down, it's such a big class. Just calm them down. Maybe do a little revision, or have dictation or listening activities.
- B2: This is the first period after lunch time. You shouldn't be eating [your] sandwiches so openly. Otherwise I say "I will stay at school late, till four thirty" or "If you eating you can have lunch with me". They say "Oh, I don't want".

In the third teaching practice, subject B's perceptions were centred on the *clear conceptualization* area. In terms of the rank order of the perception indicators presented on the data matrix, subject B's perceptions in the CF zone, show a consistently positive shift over the year of the study, moving from the neutral zone in the middle of the matrix to the top of the positive zone.

#### 5.2.4 *Summation*

In the initial interview at the beginning of the study, subject B had few illusions. He described New Zealand as "not the best, but certainly not the worst" country to be in. He also exhibited a level of confidence at the start of the year, stating quite strongly that his participation in the study was "to help" the researcher rather than himself (see section 3.2.2). This level of confidence was supported by a strong trend towards positive perceptions and evidence of the development of learning in the data. *Positive uptake* is the most significant perception indicator (24 recorded instances). *Strategy formulation* (22 instances), also in the positive zone of perception, is close behind. This reveals subject B's strong inclination towards adopting the ideas of the target learning culture, accompanied by the formulation of practical strategies to enable this to happen. The final interview also revealed elements of *positive up-take*:

- Bf: I like the friendly teachers, umm, ah, more subject validity, ahh I like ... the, the encouragement from the teachers to work.

However, despite the positive indications in the data during the year, subject B did not perceive New Zealand schools as an *ideal* learning situation. Negative factors mentioned

included low levels of government funding and the greater emphasis on sports in New Zealand schools, and, in particular, the low level of New Zealand students:

Bf: I think some of the subjects are really easy, compared with [the]Asians' level ... I was wonder what went wrong. Is it the students themselves not putting um too much effort into their study, or, or because the curriculum is limited? ... Lots of New Zealand born students they can't spell, right up to university ... They also speak with quite limited politeness ... so whose fault is this? ... Something we learn in Form Two, you are learning in Form Four, Form Five ... we learn it in English at higher level and you learn it in your own language at lower level. Why?

The rejection and closure revealed above seems more serious than subject B's criticisms of the home country schools:

Bf: push too hard. If you don't up to what the school expected ... then you are out... New Zealand is quite different. New Zealand is more lenient. We have to provide own text book. In New Zealand the school provide but you have to return at the end.

At the end of the year, subject B still showed some *self doubts* related to English fluency factors about the time ahead as a teacher. This is shown in the following example which notes those things that intending students at the College of Education could expect:

Bf: The schools may challenge you very much. Scary to think about how many students use first language .

Furthermore, subject B comments, at the final interview, that teaching in New Zealand may become boring after a few years. However, this may be just a way of saving face should events not turn out well:

Bf: In the long term I may try to teach at different type of school ... more challenging, otherwise too boring, I mean after fifteen years you still teaching the same subjects - only one subject, not two ... just see what sort of thing I can do for the community.

### 5.3 SUBJECT C

As indicated in the initial interview, subject C began the year with the expectation that New Zealand would provide him with a better teaching/learning model than that which he had experienced in Japan (see section 3.2.2). It is not surprising therefore, to find that

subject C's perceptions (see figure 5.3) showed a strong bias to TLR (51 instances). In contrast, NL (32 instances) and CF perceptions (31 instances) were less frequent.

**Figure 5.3**  
*Subject C: Data Matrix*

<b>Perception Indicators</b>	<b>Teacher / Learner Roles</b>	<b>Nature of Learning</b>	<b>Contextual Features</b>
+ Clear conceptualization	233	223	33
+ Strategy formulation	23333333	22	233
+ Engagement with positive results	233	3	
+ Avoidance of closure	3		2
+ Surface assimilation	11111233	12	11233
+ Positive up-take	11333	122333	12233333
+ Attempt to rationalize		1	23
+ Idealization	12		
0 Non-preferential differences noted	2		13
- Selecting and distancing			
- Limited implementation			
- Engagement with negative results			
- Self-doubts and confusion	23		123
- Rejection and closure	1	1	
- Noting lack of effective models	1111122223	122	133
- Overlaying	111233	133	1
- Partial conceptualization		1111112233	1

In this study, subject C observed a variety of class levels and teaching/learning styles, in schools which were located in three different lower North Island locations. The results will be considered in each of the three major zones of perception: TLR, NL and CF. Following this, data from the initial interviews, the stimulated recall procedures and the

final interview will be drawn together in the summation section.

### 5.3.1 *Teacher/Learner Roles*

*Noting lack of effective models* emerged as the largest cluster of perceptions in TLR. This reflected the predicament experienced by subject C in endeavouring to find teaching models which were not only close to his ideals but which also exemplified those put forward in the College of Education programme. Subject C's frustration in this may have been due to the idealistic expectations of TLR which he held on to, well into the year:

C2: When I teach I think we should be equal... not just teacher, not just students, but we are same, brothers.

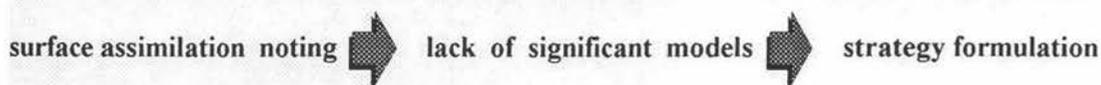
These expectations created a base against which other models were compared during the year:

C1: Not boring, but not so interesting. I mean if she had a sense of humour. Students not laughing or smiling, enjoying the lesson ... Maybe New Zealand teachers are not as I thought, ah [they are] chalk and talk.

Subject C's perceptual focus on a *lack of effective teaching models* reached a crisis in the middle of the year when he had a disagreement with his associate teacher. This indicator then diminished significantly. It is possible that his perceptions reflect the problems which he had, and are also causally linked to his persistent idealism. The lack of effective teaching practice models was noted by several subjects in the study and will be discussed further in chapter six.

During the year of the study, subject C's perceptions in the TLR zone underwent several significant shifts (see figure 5.3.1). These shifts showed some contrast between positive and negative perceptions. In the first teaching practice the most outstanding perception indicator was *surface assimilation*. As mentioned earlier, this focus shifted to *noting lack of significant models* in teaching practice two, while in the third teaching practice interview, subject C's perceptual focus shifted again, to *strategy formulation*.

**Figure 5.3.1**  
*Subject C: TLR Shifts*



*Surface assimilation* formed quite a large cluster of perceptions in the TLR category of subject C's data, but was predominant in the first teaching practice. Data in this area reveals the efforts of subject C to relate his initial ideals about becoming a friendly teacher, to his immediate perceptions:

- C1: I want to become a teacher like her. It means I want to make a atmosphere friendly ... In Japan ... I can't remember teachers ask us so many questions. I have to do that. I want to ask students lots more questions when communicating because I want to become friendly to students.

These early perceptions show a positive inclination towards adopting features of the target learning culture. However, these perceptions are also lacking in depth of understanding of the pedagogy which underlies the schemata observed.

There is evidence that subject C made a positive shift towards the target learning culture in the increased *strategy formulation* evident in subject C's TLR perceptions. At the same time, perceptions which showed *surface assimilation* decreased. *Strategy formulation* also became a dominant feature in the TLR data from the third teaching practice at the end of the year. At this stage, the idealistic perceptions of earlier interviews seems to have been abandoned as subject C focussed on identifying practical teaching sequences for the future:

- C3: Maybe we need a lot of presence - authority. I'm teaching, you're learning and we cooperate with each other. Makes it better for learning.

### 5.3.2 *The Nature of Learning*

In the NL zone, the key perception indicator for subject C is *partial conceptualization*, as revealed in the following comment which relates to *high level learning*:

C1: Students answering so many questions.

In the target learning culture, the *quality*, rather than the *quantity*, of questions and answers would be more likely to be perceived as indicative of high level learning. Later in the same interview, subject C shows his misunderstanding of *high level learning* quite clearly. The example below resembles a scatter-gun type of approach, ie when not sure, try saying everything you have learned recently:

C1: It was useful, but not so high level learning because if she want to give them high level learning she should have done some more work such as writing, or listening, listening a tape; more resources and text book, well planned lesson.

In the second teaching practice interview, subject C still used the scatter-gun approach, but moved a little closer to the target. He linked his examples of *high level learning*, in this instance, with students trying hard in a variety of contexts:

C2: They did well, students did well. They tried to speak Japanese and they tried to think, they tried to write Japanese.

At the end of the year, subject C realigned his perceptions of *high level learning* with the more visible phenomenon of the number of students learning:

C3: When she was asking, all students answer correctly.

Unlike the previous examples of partial conceptualization, subject C shows some progress in understanding the item *allows students to develop independent learning skills*. In the first teaching practice, understanding was limited to the concept of 'study' or 'practice' in relation to previously taught knowledge :

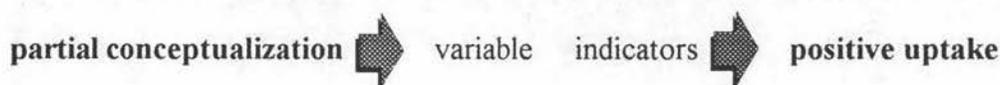
C1: they're working by themselves ... because students try to answer and they didn't ask other students to help.

In the final interview, similar perceptions were expressed, but this time subject C captured the idea that *independent learning* challenged the learner to learn alone:

Cf: Because they can't really ask questions to the teacher and ah they aren't really sure how to express in Japanese.

Despite the level of *partial conceptualization*, some evidence of positive progress can be seen in the data from subject C. Firstly, between the first and second teaching practice interview, there is a marked decrease in the number of incidents of *partial conceptualization* in the NL zone. Furthermore, although there was no definite focus for perceptions in the middle of the year, there was a move to *positive uptake* in teaching practice three (see figure 5.3.2).

**Figure 5.3.2**  
*Subject C: NL Shifts*



Positive uptake was especially linked to the use of singing in the class which subject C perceived positively enough to consider using in his home country:

C3: I think songs is quite useful to remember ... I think enjoyable.

Despite these positive indications, however, the examples of *positive uptake* in subject C's NL data do not generally show a depth of understanding, or reflection on underlying pedagogy.

### 5.3.3 Contextual Features

In the CF data collected on subject C, there was strong indication of *positive up-take*, but this was often connected to moving away from the previous learning culture, rather than wholeheartedly embracing the target learning culture, as seen below:

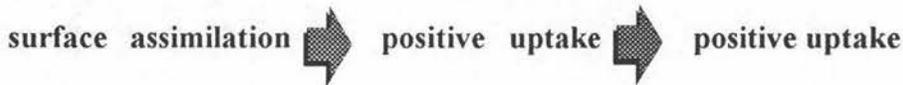
C1: Japanese teachers don't want to be friendly or assertive or ah-mm friendly because they want students to get good marks, so just remember, de, de, de [taps on desk]. Don't talk, never talk, do homework. If you don't you can't get good scores, good high schools, or enter good universities ... He [the Kiwi teacher] might not get many people to achieve such good academic standards, but they can be kind and helpful, assertive in the work.

On the other hand, some aspects of Japanese culture were still valued as part of the learning situation:

C3: It's good to learn parts of the Japanese culture and she said "*Minasen, konichiwa*", "hello everyone", or "good afternoon everyone". That's good.

Data in the CF zone for subject C revealed a narrow shift pattern from a small cluster on *surface assimilation* in the first teaching practice interview, to *positive uptake* in the second and third teaching practice interviews (see figure 5.3.3).

**Figure 5.3.3**  
*Subject C: CF Shifts*



CF data identified as *positive uptake* revealed positive comparisons with the home learning culture. A similar connection occurred in the *surface assimilation* items identified, as seen in this example:

C3: Perfect class. No one gets sleepy, no one gets bored, everyone is enjoying.

The perceptual foci in subject C's CF data reveal that there is little depth of reflection in this zone of perception. This is further reinforced by the late development of positive perception indicators in the CF zone. In particular, the higher level indicators of positive perceptions, such as *strategy formulation* and *clear conceptualization*, emerged late.

#### 5.3.4 Summation

It is possible that the strong idealistic views, which subject C held on to for a large part of the year, may have inhibited early development of reflective perceptions. Initially he was very enthusiastic about the style of teaching which he observed on the first teaching practice:

C1: I want to become a teacher like her. It means I want to make an atmosphere ah friendly.

However, by the final interview, the same model was being evaluated in the light of more diverse learning experiences. The model was now thought to be *ideal* only because of the physical advantages:

Cf: Very ideal because of the small number of students, very ideal [laughs]. Yeah, and it easy to teach and but um - but if I - if I teach maybe I will use more um ideal teaching resources, not just text books. I - I will. That's why half way [on the SD scale].

At the end of the year, subject C was still somewhat disillusioned by the *lack of effective teaching models* he had seen:

Cf: New Zealand schools should have lot more ... teaching resources, I think, and should have ... good quality of learners, teachers ... sometimes teachers teach Japanese ahh, not very well ... they should have good quality teachers.

Both *lack of effective teaching models* and *surface assimilation* had a high number of instances noted in the data and may possibly be linked. It is feasible that subject C's frustrations with the teaching models during the year may have been caused by his inability to perceive the new learning environment in a more than superficial manner. This, in turn may have been connected to his reluctance to let go of more idealistic perceptions. As mentioned previously, subject C had a strong desire to perceive the new situation as better than his early learning experiences. Furthermore, the data shows that subject C is later in developing higher levels of positive perception which involve a measure of reflection. This can be seen across all three categories of TLR, NL and CF, but is especially evident in *strategy formulation* in TLR. It can perhaps be hypothesized that, given more time, subject C's perceptions may have moved further up in the positive zone.

While *positive uptake* was the perception indicator with the highest number of instances recorded over the year, subject C still shows elements of *rejection and closure* of both the target and home cultures in the final interview. His comments on the level of learning in New Zealand schools reflect those made in the initial interview at the start of the year (see section 3.2.2). However, he has made some positive movement in that he now sees

that neither the learning situation in New Zealand nor that in Japan is totally ideal:

- Cf: In Japan, students really study compared to New Zealand kids ... I think society needs the students to do study, umm lots more I think because when I was on teaching practice I gave students homework, just a little bit. Even a little bit of homework they don't do. It's - it's amazing ... Just one minute's homework they get, but in New Zealand they don't, they tend not to do homework.
- Cf: Sometimes students who are bullied they kill themselves. It's a big problem in Japan, but in New Zealand I don't see.

As the year came to a close, subject C revealed some *self doubts* when explaining what he would tell overseas students intending to study at the College of Education in the future. In particular, he highlighted the difficulty of identifying teaching schemata in the new learning setting:

- Cf: Kids are very active and ah, not shy. They are not shy and ahh, mm, in small numbers, so easy to teach; but sometimes though, it's difficult to think *how* you teach.

At the end of the final interview, subject C, was positive about his experiences during the year of the study. Nonetheless, he admitted to finding the year hard. This may relate to his final perception of himself as a student of English rather than a teacher of Japanese:

- Cf: Not easy, no, very hard, mm; but I have enjoyed, I have enjoyed it. At the moment I would like to, to stay here as long as possible to, to study English, yes, maybe.

#### 5.4 SUBJECT D

Subject D began the year as the least confident of the four subjects studied (as noted in section 3.2.2). Although it appeared to the researcher that he seemed to be coping much better in the stimulated recall interviews, another staff member commented near the end of the year that this subject was not as successful as others since his English was the most limited.

**Figure 5.4**  
*Subject D: Data Matrix*

<b>Perception Indicators</b>	<b>Teacher / Learner Roles</b>	<b>Nature of Learning</b>	<b>Contextual Features</b>
+ Clear conceptualization		1112	12
+ Strategy formulation	12333	223333	133
+ Engagement with positive results		3	23
+ Avoidance of closure	33	33	1223
+ Surface assimilation	1123	2233	111122333
+ Positive up-take	1122333	1123333	11122222333 3
+ Attempt to rationalize	3	12	133
+ Idealization	22	2	2
0 Non-preferential differences noted	122	11	1123
- Selecting and distancing	2	13	12
- Limited implementation			22
- Engagement with negative results		2	33
- Self-doubts and confusion			22
- Rejection and closure	123	12	223
- Noting lack of effective models	13	33	223
- Overlaying	11122233	1	
- Partial conceptualization	2	2333333	2

Over the year of the study, subject D observed a range of class levels and teaching styles. While all subjects showed a positive bias towards the target learning culture, subject D's data (see figure 4.5) shows the most decisive positive inclination (83 positive instances recorded, as opposed to 45 negative instances). However, unlike the other subjects in the study, his perceptions centred least of all on TLR (40 instances). In comparison, NL had 44 instances and the largest number of perceptions by subject D were focussed on CF (55 instances). This ordering is significant since it is the opposite to that found in other

subjects. It is worth considering that this may be related to his more limited success in the College programme, thereby limiting his perceptions to more physical factors.

#### 5.4.1 *Teacher/Learner Roles*

In subject D's data in the TLR zone, the indicator with the largest number of perceptions was found to be *overlaying* which remained in evidence throughout the year. Examples of this reveal how subject D's perceptions were influenced by his earlier learning experiences in his mother culture; for example, at the start of the year, he noted that testing was important as a motivator for more study, rather than for providing information on learning:

D1: It is important because kids don't know how to study language by themselves.

In the middle of the year, a further illustration of *overlaying* occurs which reflects the concept of teachers *nurturing* learners (Gudykunst and Kim, 1984; as detailed in section 2.2.3):

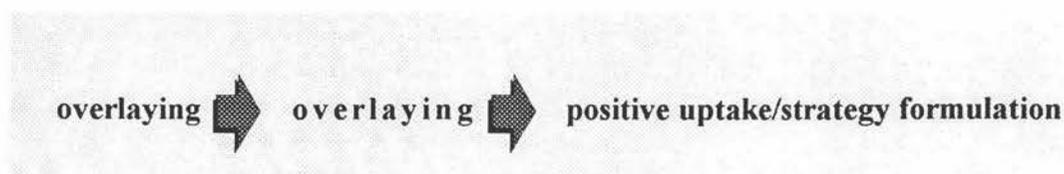
D2: The purpose of education is ah, how do I say, improve their personality, compared with just learning skills - Japanese or Mathematics.

At the end of the year, *overlaying* revealed that subject D's perceptions still reflected his previous cultural understandings. For example, when discussing how the objectives were made clear in a learning situation, he observed that putting these on the board guaranteed the students' understanding:

D3: She put them here [indicates the blackboard] - what they learn today, so I think is clear.

The pattern of shifts revealed in subject D's TLR data over the year of the study, shows that his perceptions predominantly indicated *overlaying* in teaching practice interviews one and two. However, in the teaching practice three interview, subject D's TLR perceptions were mainly focussed on *positive uptake* and *strategy formulation* (see figure 5.4.1). This revealed a positive shift, perhaps related to the imminence of the real teaching role in the near future.

**Figure 5.4.1**  
*Subject D: TLR Shifts*



Subject D's strategies in TLR particularly revealed his perception that the more active learning style in the New Zealand classrooms was intended to keep learners interested and prevent them from becoming bored:

D3: Today she [the teacher] prepared a variety of lessons. They were not bored about the lesson ... Usually in Japan, the lecturer, teacher takes Japanese to students ... I mean the student does, students don't participate as a class ... In Japan, usually just listen to teacher and write down from blackboard.

This was still evident in the final interview, showing that subject D's perceptions were not so related to the learning situation observed, as they were indicative of the stage of adaptation to the new learning situation which subject D was at :

Df: You have to play, ah act. You have to become actor actually [laughs] - new for Japanese teacher.

In addition to more superficial uptake, subject D's perceptions at the end of the year showed that he was constructing *strategies* which would enable him to move away from a more intensive correction and accuracy model of language learning, to a more fluency based model:

D3: If teacher correct pronunciation, it's good; but in this case, the purpose to make student speak, speak, try to speak, so if teacher correct on this case they would be embarrassed, so just try, even may mistake, just speak out.

This may show that he is a late starter in developing the new schemata for this situation, rather than being a non-starter.

### 5.4.2 The Nature of Learning

Subject D's data in the NL zone, demonstrated two major clusters: *positive uptake* and *partial conceptualization*. Subject D stated at the beginning of the year that he was aware of the shift in his ideas:

D1: There never was a lesson, just thinking and playing ... Every day she [the teacher] used songs for kids. I thought at first just for fun for them, but now I am thinking this is the best way to learn Japanese - very useful for remembering ... so singing is the best way for student.

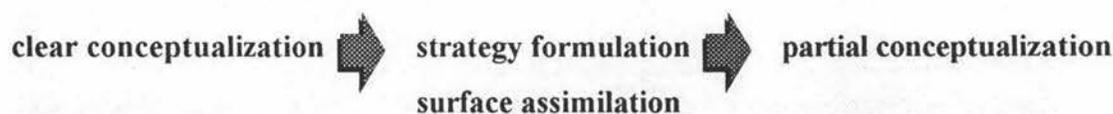
*Positive uptake* became increasingly noticeable as the year progressed, but the data from subject D did not show any further instances with this type of reflection, as this example from the third teaching practice interview shows:

D3: The lesson she [the teacher] taught today is very useful ... Greeting and number are fundamental things.

The pattern of shifts in subject D's perceptual focus revealed a move from *clear conceptualization* in the first teaching practice to a combination of *strategy formulation* and *surface assimilation* in the second teaching practice. However, in the third teaching practice, subject D's perceptions indicated a strong emphasis on *partial conceptualization* (see figure 5.4.2).

**Figure 5.4.2**

*Subject D: NL Shifts*



The following examples, from the start of the year, show *clear conceptualisation* of the SD items *useful learning* and *competitive learning* respectively:

D1: It is good for them because they are practical conversations for students. If students go to Japan, maybe the word keeps going. They are useful for them.

D1: In this situation they are not worried about score. Just for their making sure to remember or not. Not so much pressure for them.

In designing the data matrix, it was hypothesized that subjects would move positively towards *clear conceptualization*. It was therefore surprising to discover that *clear conceptualisation* in NL had disappeared from subject D's data at the end of the year to be replaced by a larger number of incidences of *partial conceptualization*. One example of this can be seen in subject D's comments on *high level learning* at the end of the year. He links this concept with the *number* of things learnt rather than the *quality* of the learning:

D3: Especially high level, they learn many things.

*Developing independent learning skills* was also an area of confusion for subject D. In the following example, independent learning is perceived as similar to creativity in Western learning:

D3: Basically they [the students] are doing the same things, so if I make- ah, if they learn Hiragana - if I make students draw picture, independent picture, so they are doing the same thing, it's not independent.

Subject D also described the learning situation at the third teaching practice as *not competitive* since there was no exam. Furthermore when role play was offered by the researcher as an example of group work it was rejected by subject D, since this notion was perceived as "drama" rather than group work.

On closer examination, the early instances of *clear conceptualization* of NL in subject D's data relate to less complex ideas, eg *useful* or *competitive learning*. As noted in subject C's results, *partial conceptualization* may not become evident until perceptions become more complex. This may follow from greater participation in the new culture. The increase in *partial conceptualization* may also be connected to early perceptions of more "foreign" concepts and may be evidence of positive attempts to conceptualize these new ideas.

### 5.4.3 Contextual Features

In the CF zone, the most significant cluster of perceptions appeared in the area of *positive up-take*. This centred largely around the idea that students appeared to find learning in New Zealand more enjoyable:

D2: When I was a student in Japan, I didn't want to cooperate with them, [other] students. I ... make other students do this game. Just I pause because it kind of troublesome for me. Maybe I don't know how enjoys English was - language - because I thought English means just answering the question, the examination paper ... so I didn't know how I enjoyed English.

In the TLR data, subject D tended to link his perceptions of new ideas with preventing students from becoming bored. This also occurred in the CF zone. The following excerpt relates to the associate teacher showing students in the class how a Japanese magazine is arranged from back to front:

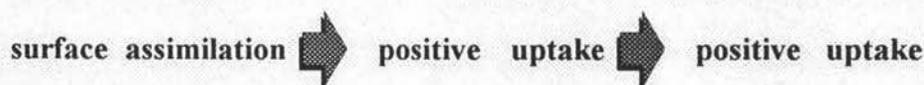
D3: This is a good resource - to use Japanese book. On this time they are not bored. Their eyes were concentrating on the book. It is good.

The final interview also revealed CF instances which reflect this concern to keep students interested. It is possible that concerns about control of the class underlie such statements:

Df: You have to ... prepare heaps of resources, like game or singing a song. Not to make students bored is the most important.

The pattern of perceptual shifts in the CF zone for subject D reveals that *positive uptake* was dominant in the last two teaching practices, while *surface assimilation* was the strongest perception indicator in the first teaching practice interview (see figure 5.4.3).

**Figure 5.4.3**  
*Subject D: CF Shifts*



As seen in the TLR data, and earlier CF data on *positive uptake*, the instances of *surface*

*assimilation* reflected a preoccupation with not allowing students to become bored:

D1: When I peer at kids' face they are quite relaxed. They are not bored with the class.

Overall, the CF data revealed a lack of depth in subject D's perceptions. It may be significant that there was very little shift distance in the CF category, perhaps revealing that subject D was unable to move past his superficial perceptions of the new learning situation.

#### 5.4.4 *Summation*

The difficulties which subject D experienced may be due to the level of perceived cultural difference. In addition, subject D's limited English skills may also have prevented him from utilizing the College input to reflect sufficiently on his experiences. In the middle of the year, unable to follow the theoretical lectures, he decided to concentrate on the practical situation. His comments refer to the SD item on the *usefulness of the College of Education programme*.

D2: I can't tell [due to not understanding the lectures] ... but probably it's a waste of time. I mean, sometimes it will not help me because getting experience is the most important.

Despite these difficulties, there are still signs in the data of positive progress by subject D. In the final interview, subject D marked his perceptions of the teaching model a little further away from the ideal. This may indicate that his perceptions had become more realistic over the year. There was also an upsurge in subject D's levels of *strategy formulation* in the third teaching practice interview. This was further supported by the evidence of *strategy formulation* in subject D's expression of his ideal teaching model in the final interview:

Df: If I was there, I was - I was walking around more. I taught students individually and I didn't sit down and stay in chair for a long time. [If] I talk to all of the students individually, it's good. ... If I walked around, [I would know] how much ... they listen to the work I explained.

In the second section of the final interview, subject D reiterated several earlier ideas about

the reduced stress levels in New Zealand schools allowing students to enjoy games in class, rather than focussing on memorising many things. Subject D also showed awareness that his former idealism had weakened:

Researcher: What did you expect when you came to New Zealand?

Df: Mmmm, maybe ten out of ten, everything here was good.

At the end of the final interview subject D admitted that he no longer intended to stay in teaching for ever:

Df: I think I am happy, but five or six years - just in my opinion, five or six years is long enough. Maybe I might leave New Zealand and pick up another - ah get another job ... something quite different.

It is hard to know whether this change was always what subject D had in mind, or whether the difficulty of the task resulted in modification to his plans. It is also possible to interpret this final comment as a way of saving face should things not work out in the future.

## 5.5 SUMMARY

All of the subjects in the study were found to be positively inclined towards the target culture. It can be seen that for each person, there were significantly more instances of positive perceptions than there were negative. A (62+, 47-); B (81+, 58-); C (67+, 45-); and D (83+, 45-). This demonstrates the positive motivation of each subject to succeed in adapting to the new learning culture. However, positive motivation alone may not be sufficient for successful synthesis of new cultural concepts, as demonstrated by subject D in the study. Moreover, despite the generally positive inclination of all subjects in the study, each subject was found to have an individual pattern of shifts in perceptual focus over the year within the TLR, NL and CF zones.

Of the three major zones, CF was found to be the only one which showed evidence of an overall positive perception by all four subjects. This may indicate the relative ease of acceptance of the more physical aspects of a new setting. It is possible that perceptions in the TLR and NL zone are more closely connected with beliefs formed in early

socialization and are consequently harder to change.

In examining particular perception indicators, evidence was found that negative perception indicators, such as *overlaying* and *partial conceptualization*, may not always indicate a move away from the target culture. These indicators may show positive cognitive processing of new or “foreign” concepts in the target culture. There may in fact be one continuum on which adjustment to and learning about the target culture can be tracked. Moreover, it can be said that the development of the perceptions of each individual did not represent a linear progression on the matrix. Varying degrees of fluctuation, between positive and negative perceptions, emerged during the year. The different points at which individual subjects in the study seemed to be at on this hypothetical continuum possibly relate to their different prior experiences as well as personality factors.

The study also found evidence of different levels of perception. For example, some perceptions were more superficial, while others showed more in-depth reflection. Some perceptions were simple and straight forward, while others demonstrated more complex thought processes. Subjects were also consciously aware of some perceptions, while being unaware of others. These findings have further implications for interpreting the matrix, especially in the light of the discovery of a non-linear progression of perceptions over the year.

The findings of this study may have specific implications for institutions. In particular, these concerns include distinguishing effective models for teaching practice and developing ways to make unconscious perceptions more transparent for overseas students. These issues, along with others raised in this section, will be examined in more depth in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER SIX

### DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This chapter interprets and discusses the findings on the research questions in the study. These questions relate to the nature of the perceptions of overseas student teachers with regard to New Zealand learning situations; the shifts in these perceptions over time; and the direction which any shifts in perception take in relation to the target culture.

#### 6.1 QUESTION ONE:

*What perceptions do overseas student teachers have of learning situations in New Zealand?*

The perceptions of subjects in this study were classified at macro and micro levels. At the macro level, perceptions were found to be focussed variably on three zones which were identified as the teacher/learner role, the nature of learning, and contextual features. These zones revealed where subjects chose to focus their observations of the learning situation and indicated which features of that environment were perceived as salient and important in relation to items on the semantic differential scale. At the micro level, the perception indicators showed the complex nature and orientation of the subjects' perceptions. The discussion which follows, examines the significance of the nature and focus of the perceptions identified, taking each of the three major zones in turn.

##### *6.1.1 Perceptions of Teacher/Learner Roles*

The most decisive number of perceptions which were recorded, regarding teacher/learner roles, occurred in *strategy formulation* (58 instances), showing that the subjects' perceptions were strongly focussed on how to interact successfully in the new learning situation. However, the effectiveness of these strategies may be questionable in the light of the accompanying low levels of *clear conceptualization* (8 instances). This is further compounded by even lower levels of *partial conceptualization* (5 instances) which it has been suggested may indicate the development of understanding of the target culture (see

section 5.5). The generation of strategies with little in-depth cognitive understanding of the target learning culture, may affect successful adaptation to new roles and schemata in the long term. For example, low English fluency levels have been cited as a possible influence on subject D's ability to make use of the course input in generating effective teaching strategies (see section 5.4.1).

The findings from the present study reveal the simplicity of Spada and Massey's (1992) claim that articulation is not necessary for successful implementation (see section 2.3.3). Such articulation may be necessary to assist conscious awareness of perception. Furthermore, the present study adds support to Brown (1990), who holds that effective use relies on full understanding, and to those who advocate a more reflective approach to teacher education (Bartlett, 1990; Nunan, 1990; Richards, 1990; McIntyre and Pape, 1993; Wear and Harris, 1994; see section 2.3.3). The necessity of conscious reflection may be particularly important in the case of overseas student teachers who are engaged in 'foreign' pre-service education. The implications here will be explored further in chapter seven.

Three additional indicators, related to teacher/learner roles, highlight the difficulty which the subjects experienced in both identifying and accepting the new roles in the target learning culture. These indicators were *rejection and closure* (34 instances); *overlaying* (34 instances); and *noting lack of effective models* (32 instances). The prevalence of these perception indicators implies a conflict between the new teacher/learner modes and the subjects' role expectations for teachers and learners. Such expectations are strongly reinforced in the tight role structure of Asian society (see section 2.1.3).

In this study, perceptions of teacher/learner interactions in the new situation were influenced in three separate ways. Firstly there was *overlaying* of new ideas on old beliefs. *Overlaying* may be seen to have a parallel in the early stages of L2 acquisition, when rules from the L1 are overgeneralized in the L2 interlanguage. In a similar way, the early stages in the process of acquiring new cultural knowledge may involve unconscious overlaying of assumptions from the first culture, on perceptions of the second culture. In this study,

the effect of *overlaying* prevented subjects from clearly perceiving roles and role relationships in the new culture. For example, learners were often viewed as noisy and difficult to control. This perception was also linked to a notion that the new methods of teaching and learning were to prevent pupils from becoming bored and would thus assist with keeping control in the class (see subject D; section 5.4.1). Secondly, when new role patterns were first observed, they were often evaluated as negative or ineffective and *rejected*. One illustration of such rejection is found in subject A's final comments regarding the ineffectiveness of discipline in the target learning situation (see section 5.1.4). Furthermore, although the subjects in the study were positively oriented towards learning their new roles, some reported difficulty in finding role models which formed an acceptable synthesis with existing role expectations (for example, subjects B and C). Subject B was particularly explicit about these difficulties, perceiving that Kiwi teachers were louder and more aggressive in their teaching style. These factors, combined with the larger physical stature of the Kiwi teacher - also noted by subject B - may have made such a model appear incompatible with the Asian teaching style. In addition, subject C noted that neither Japanese nationals nor the older Kiwi teachers which he was placed with were useful models since both were too traditional in their teaching style. It was hard for subjects to find a model which was acceptable, and which matched the ideal put forward by the PNCOE courses. Such models could however be seen as a vital part of successful implementation of new roles in the target learning culture. The implications of these outcomes will be explored more fully in chapter seven.

The conflicts created by the pressure to adopt 'foreign' role relationships is further supported by the *self doubts* expressed by all subjects, to a greater or lesser degree, at varying points in the year. Although all student teachers are faced with difficulties in learning new roles, these perceptions were seen to be intensified for the subjects in this study and were often directly linked (eg by subjects A and B) to the inter-cultural nature of the task.

### **6.1.2 Perceptions of the Nature of Learning**

Since the move to a more reflective style of teacher education (see section 2.3.3) indicates

that a clear understanding of underlying pedagogy is essential to implementation of new roles, perceptions related to the nature of learning were particularly interesting in this study. In particular, the high rate of *partial conceptualization* (41 instances overall) in this zone, reveals that the subjects had difficulty perceiving learning in the ways which predominate in the target culture. Perceptions of all the semantic differential scale items which concerned *learning*, revealed these discrepancies. Discussion on these items follows.

Both subjects A and D revealed an expectation that *competitive learning* could be identified by the presence of aggression or arguing in group work. This illustrates how the subjects' beliefs on striving for harmony, as a characteristic of Asian culture (see Gudykunst and Kim, 1984), set up negative expectations about a different belief system. Thorpe (1991) suggests that when there is a mismatch in belief systems, negative judgements are made. This is seen here in the attachment of negative expectations to a culturally opposing learning behaviour.

Subjects B, C and D each connected *high level learning* with the number of students who succeeded in learning the subject matter taught by the associate teacher. This perception highlights the predominance of the Asian value for the *quantity* of the learning, or the perfect memorisation of many facts (see section 2.2.2). On the other hand, Western education is more likely to value the *quality* or the *process* of learning; hence the present debate on loss of quality in the move to a system which is more centred on results. None of the subjects showed evidence of understanding the value which Western education places on developing cognitively *higher levels* of learning. Subjects in the study explained that learning was a more *level* concept in the Asian system. This belief may have blocked the perceptual input of culturally different values regarding learning.

A further example of the way in which subjects' perceptions of the nature of learning differed from those expected in the New Zealand learning situation relates to *independent learning*. This was perceived by many subjects as individual study, practice, or memorisation of previously taught information. The Western concept of students being

encouraged to generate their own learning was a “foreign” one. Subject A explained that *learning* is related to developing proficiency in skills, such as writing, at an early age, in contrast to *studying* which is regarded as an activity for older students (see section 5.1.2). Hence, learning and studying are cognitively more distant in Asian perceptions than they are in Western educational understanding. This is further heightened by the more rigid Asian role expectations for learners and teachers. In Asian perception, the teacher’s function is to teach, while the learners’ function is to learn. Learning of new information is therefore difficult to conceive of without a teacher. This belief would make it hard for the subjects to understand how learners might move out of their normally perceived roles, and cross over formerly discerned teaching boundaries, to become independent learners.

### **6.1.3 Perceptions of Contextual Features**

The two dominant perception indicators, which were found to occur mainly in the perceptual zone regarding contextual features, were *positive uptake* (76 instances) and *surface assimilation* (51 instances). The prevalence of these indicators implies that, despite their overall positive orientation towards the target learning culture, the subjects’ perceptions regarding the learning environment were focussed largely on immediate and visual features of the environment. The unfamiliar aspects of the learning situation, such as pupils without uniforms, and the use of audio visual learning/teaching supports, tended to dominate the subjects’ perceptions. It may be that more time is needed in a new environment to take perceptions past this superficial point to more in-depth and complex perceptions. It could also be that the lack of depth in the subjects’ perceptions of contextual features may relate to their cultural background. Due to the high context nature of the subjects’ own society (Gudykunst and Kim, 1984; see section 2.2.3), contextual features may have been dismissed as merely ritualistic facts of a culture. This underlying belief may have caused the subjects to overlook the significance of the interrelations between the contextual features of the New Zealand learning culture and its learning pedagogy.

### **6.1.4 Perceptions across Zones**

In addition to those significant perception indicators already discussed, it is notable that

some perception indicators recorded very few instances in any zone. *Engagement with negative results* (8 instances) is one example of this. Although Bailey (1992) states that small successes motivate student teachers to try again, most teachers would agree that small mistakes are also great learning tools. The low number of reported incidences of *engagement with negative results* may be due to face saving behaviour. However, there was a high level of self revelation in other data which had a potential for loss of face, such as *self doubts*. It is possible that while endeavouring to articulate strategies regarding the adoption of the new models, the subjects had not taken many risks in thoroughly trying out their new strategies. Furthermore, they do not seem to have reflected on ways to overcome the problems of implementing those new strategies which were observed and learnt. Many of these problems, it has been seen, may centre on the cross-cultural difficulties of implementing new roles, a topic unlikely to be covered in College classes. The high levels of superficial perceptions of contextual features, and the evidence of lack of clear conceptualization in the nature of learning zone, may also relate to the need for more constructive cross-cultural reflection. Chapter seven will consider possible ways to address this.

One further indicator, *limited implementation* also recorded only a very small number of perceptions (5 instances). Two subjects had previously taught in their own setting before coming to New Zealand, and were searching for a *better* way of teaching which may also have been seen as being *universally* better. Although there was some mention of particular learning activities not working with the large classes in the home country, there was little emphasis overall on analysing the culturally specific nature of the new models. This will also be discussed further in chapter seven.

## 6.2 QUESTION TWO:

### *How do these perceptions change over time?*

As seen in chapter five, each subject showed an individual pattern of perceptual shifts over the year of the study. In this section, the discussion centres on the commonalities between these individual shift patterns, as seen in each of the zones related to the

teacher/learner roles, the nature of learning, and the contextual features of the target learning culture.

### ***6.2.1 Shifts in Perceptions of Teacher/Learner Roles***

Over the year of the study, several positive shifts in perception emerged. Firstly, there was a move from the more imitative sequences of behavioural schema, in the earlier stages of the year, to more in-depth perceptions on strategies regarding teacher/learner roles towards the end of the year (see sections 5.1.1, 5.2.1, 5.3.1 and 5.4.1). There was also a movement away from the more superficial perceptions (such as *surface assimilation* and *positive uptake*) which were noted at the start of the year. In addition, the first instances of *strategy formulation* did not appear until near the end of the year. The progression in the acquisition of teacher/learner roles, which culminates in the refining of strategies, can be traced in the perceptual shifts of each subject. Subject A began the year with a strong indication of *rejection and closure* related to the observed teacher/learner models, but was seen to move into a significant perceptual focus on *strategy formulation* in the middle of the year (see section 5.1.1, figure 5.1.1). His subsequent return to a focus on *self doubts* at the end of the year can be seen to imply that he was aware that his initial strategies needed some modification. Time, however, may not have permitted this to occur effectively that year. The perceptions of the three other subjects, regarding teacher/learner roles, also began the year with a more negative focus, notably *self-doubts* (subject B), *noting lack of effective models* (subject C), and *overlaying* (subject D). These three subjects did not move to a focus on *strategy formulation* until the end of the year (see figures 5.2.1, 5.3.1 and 5.4.1). This allowed little time for the successive modifications which would be needed to formulate effective strategies. The lateness of the emergence of a focus on *strategy formulation* may be especially significant for the three secondary pre-service student teachers who were on a one year course. They would appear to have had insufficient time to develop quality strategies which would persist after the year of the study.

It is of course possible that at the time at which data was collected, perceptions were at a different point, and a previous or subsequent focus on *strategy formulation* may have

been missed. Nonetheless, the existing data would seem to indicate that some subjects may have been pressured into *strategy formulation* by factors such as the pressure of the teaching practice requirements, or the imminent reality of the first year of teaching. Especially in the case of subjects B, C, and D, *strategy formulation* may have been premature and ineffective. This has added significance in the case of subject C, whose *idealism* regarding teacher/learner roles was also very late in eroding (see section 5.3.1). Lentell's statement that, in normal schemata development, *how* questions occur after *why* questions (1995; see section 4.2.3), together with the strong indications of lack of *clear conceptualization* in the nature of learning, may be further indication that these subjects needed longer to generate strategies which were effective and which therefore would be more likely to persist over time. The implications and recommendations arising from this will be considered more fully in chapter seven.

### **6.2.2 Shifts in Perceptions of the Nature of Learning**

On first examination, many of the perceptions, in the zone related to the nature of learning, underwent little if any development over the year of the study (see section 6.1.1). Subject B was the only subject to be seen to have made some progress in ability to articulate a more western perception of independent learning (see section 5.2.2); but, at the end of the year, this subject still described independent learning as 'time out' for the teacher.

Over the year of the study, it was noted that two subjects (subjects A and D; see sections 5.1.2 and 5.4.2) showed a shift in perceptual focus from *clear conceptualization*, to *partial conceptualization* of the nature of learning. As mentioned in chapter five, this was an unexpected finding, since perceptions were originally predicted to move positively up the matrix towards clear conceptualization. It had to be considered at this point that the instances of *clear conceptualization* of the nature of learning which were initially identified, might not be indications of a deep understanding of the target learning culture. Bailey (1992; as reported in section 2.3.3) stresses that "change is not necessarily immediate or complete" (Bailey, 1992: 275). To extend the hypothesis, although perceptions indicating *clear conceptualization* may not illustrate full understanding,

*partial conceptualization* may be indicative of learning taking place. *Partial conceptualization* may be seen as a parallel to the way in which errors in interlanguage are taken to indicate learning in action, or the stage which the learner is at in the development of fluency. In the same way, achieving *cultural* fluency may undergo a similarly identifiable perceptual process. Furthermore, *partial conceptualization* was found to occur in the shift pattern along with *positive uptake* (of course content), *strategy formulation* (which increased in reflectivity) and *clear conceptualization*, in the progression of perceptual shifts through the year. The collocation of these indicators appears to parallel the process of channelling new learning into cognitive processing, trying it out in a practical sense, then incorporating it with existing concepts.

As the year advanced, further evidence of perceptual progression towards cultural fluency was seen in the increasing complexity of reported perceptions (for example, subject A; see section 5.1.4). This was noted with particular reference to perceptions of teacher/learner roles (see section 6.2.1). Wertsch (1991) claims that perception of the whole comes before perception of its parts, implying that, at first, individuals may perceive the new setting in a more global and simplistic way. As time goes by, the detailed complexity of the new culture become clearer and initial perceptions can become less certain. Sometimes new perceptions can help to clarify meaning; but at other times, increased complexity of perceptions may add to the confusion. The latter effect can be seen with subject D, whose English language competence reportedly limited his access to the theoretical input which may have helped him to make sense of his perceptions (see section 5.4).

### **6.2.3 Shifts in Perceptions of Contextual Features**

Little constructive movement was seen in the subjects' perceptions of contextual features of the target learning culture. Only one participant in the study, subject B, was seen to exhibit some movement towards more in-depth perceptions in this zone. This subject exhibited *strategy formulation*, *avoidance of closure* and *clear conceptualization* in perceptions related to contextual features. The perceptions of the three other subjects remained centred, in this zone, on *positive uptake*, *surface assimilation* and *overlaying*. The apparent lack of progression by the majority of the subjects, may demonstrate a lack

of reflection on the underlying pedagogy of contextual features of the learning environment. As noted in section 6.1.1, the high context nature of Asian culture may have been responsible for this apparent acceptance of surface differences. However, further reasons can be linked to this result, such as the level of English fluency of subjects and the type of programme provided.

### **6.3 QUESTION THREE:**

*Does the general direction of any shifts in perception tend towards the target culture or away from it?*

Furnham and Bochner (1986; see section 2.3.1) put forward four options for change as part of the acculturation process: rejection of first culture; rejection of the second culture; vacillation between cultures; and synthesis of both cultures. This would imply that shifts in perception can reveal positive or negative orientation to the target culture. However, the current study demonstrates that the course of acculturation may not be so clear cut in terms of taking one path or another, and that a positive orientation towards some aspects of the target learning culture may co-exist or alternate with a negative orientation to other aspects of that culture. This section attempts to make sense of these directions in the shift patterns observed.

#### ***6.3.1 Cultural Orientation of the Zones of Perception***

At macro level, the retrospections of subjects revealed different orientations in perceptions in the three zones of perception. Although the perceptions of subjects in the study were more inclined towards the positive end of the matrix, indicators related to the teacher/learner roles and the nature of learning revealed a fairly even distribution of positive and negative perceptions. In contrast, perceptions of the contextual features of the target learning culture were more evidently and more consistently positive in nature. This is interesting in the light of earlier comments which imply that subjects may have accepted contextual features more readily as part of the cultural rituals (see section 6.1.3). Perhaps this finding also reflects that the subjects expected, and were therefore more prepared to accept, changes in the physical environment of the new culture. On the other

hand, the subjects may not have been so prepared to abandon beliefs which were closer to them, such as those regarding teacher/learner roles and the nature of learning.

Zeichner (1993) indicates that change is at the heart of teacher education (see section 2.1.5). In a cross-cultural sense, teacher education may involve a level of change equal to the distance between the home and the target cultures. The shifts involve not just superficial roles, but also the beliefs underlying surface behaviours and settings. Teacher education implies conscious learning, so conscious shift is required. It is evident in this study, however, that many of the subjects' perceptions were influenced at an unconscious level by their beliefs, for example in *overlaying*. Overseas student teachers need to be given guidance to become more *consciously* aware of not just the new roles and beliefs, but also their unconsciously held existing beliefs.

Although Pajares (1992) indicates that belief change is a last resort (see section 2.3.3), learning new cultural understandings may involve some erosion of existing beliefs. Gudykunst and Kim (1984; see section 2.1.4) indicate that acculturation involves a level of deculturation. Furthermore, acculturation may lead to increased awareness that certain beliefs have particular relevance to specific cultural settings. The successful uptake of such understandings may be an integral part of learning to participate as a teacher in a new cultural setting. The implications of this for teacher educators will be explored a little more in chapter seven.

### ***6.3.2 Cultural Orientation of the Perception Indicators***

Kim (1984: 366) suggests that the acculturation process may not be a "smooth, linear process", therefore fluctuations between negative and positive indicators of perception may be regarded as normal. Furthermore, Lysgaard's (1955) U curve of adjustment, and Oberg's (1960) stages of culture shock (both reported in Furnham and Bochner, 1986; see section 2.3.1) reveal an affective move from very positive to less positive, then stabilizing. The findings from this study also show that subjects followed a non-linear route of change with fluctuations between positive and negative perceptions of the target learning culture.

Participants in the study were found to move from a more idealistic perception, to a more realistic one which included some negative perceptions. Furthermore, it was found that significantly positive perceptions were not necessarily indicative of positive growth in cognitive understanding of the new setting. For example, subject D, who was thought to be the least fluent in English and also the least successful in the College course, was found to be the most positively oriented of the four subjects. This modifies Wigzell and Saif's (1993: 304) findings that the greater the perception of underachievement, the more demotivating the effect on the students. When perceptions are unclear, individuals may experience high levels of *self doubts* (see section 6.1.1), and respond by becoming more positive affectively, while cognitively making little progress. The persistence of such a positive orientation in the case of subject D may also be seen as being due to face saving efforts.

In addition to the *affective* shifts, a significant *cognitive* perceptual shift was also identified, as evidenced in the move from *clear conceptualization* to *partial conceptualization* (see section 6.1.2). This finding may add to the understanding of culture shock, for example, Lysgaard's U curve and Oberg's stages of culture shock which illustrate the acculturation process as a simple and predictable affective cycle. Cultural adaptation may however involve reiterative positive-negative shifts in perception which re-occur with each progression into new situations within the target culture. The result will be intertwined and multi-stranded perceptions which develop while the individual moves through successive perceptual cycles of certainty and uncertainty, as the complexity of the new culture is progressively unravelled. Further implications of this finding will be raised in chapter seven.

#### 6.4 SUMMARY

The results of this study would suggest that the subjects' perceptions were profoundly affected by pre-existing beliefs. Therefore, on-going learning experiences in teacher education had only a limited influence on the development of understanding of the new learning setting. The existence of long-held beliefs can influence perception by filtering

the reception of new knowledge so that it is not accurately integrated into cognitive awareness. The individual's perceptions on the *nature of learning* appear to be most deeply affected, at an unconscious level, by the filtering effect of such beliefs. This may indicate that perceptions about learning, as part of the individual's earliest experiences, are among the most difficult to change. As such, they may also be the crucial connective "tissue" (Holliday, 1992) for effective acculturation. In-depth understanding of the underlying pedagogy of a new culture may help in making sense of other key aspects of that culture, such as role schemata and contextual features.

Increased understandings of the part which perceptions play in the acculturation process may be one of the most important findings of this study. The findings in the study led to the hypothesis that a continuum of perceptual development may exist. Movements plotted in the perception indicators may reveal some suggestions for progressions along the points on the continuum. This will be examined further in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONCLUSIONS

This chapter draws the main ideas from the present study together and looks towards the future. It begins by outlining the theoretical implications of the study. Following this, there is a brief summary of the benefits and limitations of the methodology which was employed. Finally, as a result of the investigation, practical recommendations are made, and avenues for future research are suggested.

#### 7.1 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study illustrates that, through plotting the focus of perception indicators and zones of perception, the acculturation process may be tracked. The course of perceptual development in this process includes fluctuations across positive, negative and neutral perceptions of the target culture. Furthermore, it is possible to identify layers of complexity, depth and conscious awareness in perceptions. The results from this study also point to the significance of pedagogical understandings which underpin the other perceptual zones related to roles and context, and which may be crucial to effective acculturation.

One major finding of the present study concerns the developmental nature of perception in the acculturation process. Although the literature indicates that this process is a non-linear one (see section 6.3.2), previous studies do not clarify the actual steps involved in the process. The present investigation reveals that it may be possible to identify a multi-layered continuum of perception indicators. This continuum will be likely to incorporate fluctuations between negative and positive perceptions. It may also reveal layers of perception which begin with more global and physical features of the environment. These features have an immediacy of impact that is related to the level of contrast with the home culture. On the continuum, perception indicators may be linked in pairs, to show

shifts, or progressions, in the acculturation process. One example of these pairs is the affective shift from idealistic perceptions to more realistic perceptions (as suggested in Oberg's (1960) stages of cultural shock, and Lysgaard's (1955) U curve; see section 6.3.2). A further pair may be the shift from simple, superficial perceptions to more complex, finely grained perceptions; and another may be reiterative moves from clear to partial conceptualization (see section 6.2.2). A similar perception continuum may be utilized in examining, understanding and tracking the acculturation processes of overseas subjects in a number of varied settings, such as the broader social dimensions of resettlement of immigrants, or applied to a narrower focus within particular educational settings. The subjects' variable focus over the three broad zones of perception involving key role relationships, underlying understandings, and the more physical, contextual features of the target culture may also be tracked in these settings.

The results of this study confirm and extend the model of the perceptual cycle put forward by Hayes (1991), (see section 2.1.1). The perceptual cycle may in fact be more complex than this model implies. Aspects of the new culture may be positively received, unconsciously overlooked or misinterpreted, or consciously rejected. The present study suggests that while some new ideas do attract attention, concentration on these may block the reception of other, less superficial features of the target culture. In addition, it has been found that cultural knowledge from the first culture may be unconsciously generalized and applied to the target culture through *overlaying*. This may take place in the same way as linguistic rules from L1 are transferred to the L2 interlanguage in the early stages of the second language learning process. The lack of clear conceptualization by subjects in this study also strongly suggests that reception of some new knowledge from the target culture was blocked by earlier beliefs. Although the filtering effect of earlier beliefs and experiences on perception has been extensively cited in the earlier literature (see sections 2.1.3, 2.2.3 and 2.3.3), the present study indicates that this filtering effect is most profound with respect to deeper beliefs which are held at a more unconscious level. On the other hand, conscious rejection of the target culture, resulting from consciously held, idealistic expectations of the target culture, may change over time.

For teacher education of overseas students to be effective, methods must be found which allow unconscious levels of perception to be made more transparent. The present study also suggests that specific guidance may be required to assist overseas student teachers to focus their perceptions of the target learning culture at a more in-depth level. Reflective teacher education practices may facilitate this process. These issues will be discussed further in section 7.3.

## 7.2 METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

In this section, the methodological implications of the approach and design used in this study are scrutinized, and a number of key limitations noted throughout the inquiry are briefly summarized.

The indirect approach used in the design of this study has been shown to be a useful approach to carrying out research with Asian subjects. Through keeping the focus of perceptions on a separate, but closely connected situation (in this case the associate teacher's model), the tendency of subjects to employ face saving behaviour was minimised. Although there was still some evidence of face saving being applied on behalf of the associate teacher, these efforts tended to be tacked on the end of more honest observations, rather than dominating perceptions (as seen in subject C's comments in the first example in section 4.1).

The indirect approach to studying perceptions described above, was also combined with a directed approach in the semi-structured interview situation, to conform to the role expectations of the subjects in the research context. This allowed the situation to become more predictable, thereby creating a safe environment for the sharing of information.

In addition to the above approaches, the use of follow-up interviews as a primary source of data was found to be valuable. Interpretation of data provided by the SD scale by itself, without follow-up interviews, was shown to lead to ambiguous results (see section 4.1). This may be particularly so when a Western researcher works with subjects from

an Asian background. However, as mentioned earlier, the SD scale was an effective prompt and guide for discussion in which meanings could be negotiated and clarified.

As observed in section 3.2.1, the cognitive distance between the perceptions of the Asian subjects and the target culture served to accentuate the variations observed in perception. While those overseas students from cognitively closer cultures may experience the same difficulties, these may not be so pronounced in similar studies. In addition, a number of other limitations have been cited throughout the study, such as the generalizability of case studies and the wide exploratory scope of the study. It could also be said that perceptions may be influenced by the particular teaching practice in which the subject was placed. Other influences may be events which occurred outside the immediate research context. However, since the results of the study point strongly to the effects of prior beliefs on perception, the above mentioned possibilities should be seen as minimal.

### **7.3 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS**

The implications which the current study raises for institutions and practitioners involved in teaching and designing courses for overseas student teachers, are now examined. Some of these points may also be more widely applied to the teaching of overseas students in general, although extensive discussion of such issues is beyond the present scope of this study.

One of the characteristics of beliefs is their propensity for action (Pajares, 1992: 307; see section 2.1.3), so there is a likelihood that subjects will follow a path of action which is guided by their beliefs. If new understandings are not synthesized with longer standing beliefs, then student teachers may find it difficult to conceptualize and to maintain new behaviours in the long term. Therefore it will be important to provide opportunities for overseas student teachers to analyse their existing beliefs and those of the target culture, and to formulate compromises between the two epistemological systems. This process may require guidance by teacher educators who are informed in both cultures.

The discovery that there may be a perceptual continuum in the acculturation process has potential to create more effective teaching and learning practices. If practitioners are able to identify key shifts along such a continuum, positive growth in perception may be promoted. For example, since initial clear conceptualizations may be simple and superficial, overseas student teachers need encouragement to develop more cognitively complex perceptions of the target culture. Furthermore, partial conceptualizations need to be articulated so that future learning experiences can concentrate on expanding understanding through focussing on gaps in perceptions of the target learning situation.

Guiding the focus of perceptions is an important task for teacher educators. In this study, the major overall perceptual focus for the three more successful subjects was on the TLR zone, while the fourth subject focussed his perceptions on the CF zone (see section 5.4.1). This implies that in order to learn the new role relationships and accompanying schemata, perceptions have to be constructively focussed on these areas. In addition, specific theoretical input is needed to ensure that perceptions are constructively focussed. An understanding of the nature of learning is required to underpin the study of contextual features and role relationships in the learning situation. Teacher educators also have to devise ways to help students to move past surface perceptions, and to make the pedagogical and epistemological systems which underlie surface behaviours and situations in both the first and second learning situations more transparent.

The choice of relevant teaching models is also seen to be a pivotal issue in teacher education of overseas students. Although the subjects in the present study were positively oriented towards learning their new roles, they reported difficulty in finding role models which formed an acceptable synthesis with existing role expectations. The cognitive uncertainty, seen in the emphasis of *self doubts* and *noting lack of effective models* in the data (see section 6.1.1) may also be viewed as contributory to the problems which subjects revealed in devising and trialing effective strategies to implement the new roles (see section 6.2.1). It must be remembered that overseas students have been previously socialised into a different learning culture, and come with little, if any, prior experiences of western learning at the level in which they will be required to teach. At the initial

stages, and maybe before the commencement of the course, extra time may need to be provided so that overseas student teachers can observe and reflect upon the new learning/teaching roles and their interrelationship. The lateness of strategy development in the four subjects gives further indication of the importance of this preliminary time. Furthermore, reflection needs to address the degree to which the observed models duplicate those which will be presented in theory. Synthesizing an acceptable model involves firstly being able to perceive which models are good in the target culture. Students may have ideals which have been based on the deficiencies of the teaching/learning model in the home culture and which cannot be realistically be fulfilled in the target learning culture. It may also be unreasonable to expect that overseas student teachers are able to select useful aspects from a variety of models when the rationale for the ideal, and the means of identifying and implementing it, are still unclear to them.

The findings of this study suggest that a directed reflective approach be advocated to address any inherent conflicts which overseas student teachers may have with the target culture models. A training model, such as the cultural skills training approach, put forward by Furnham (1993), will not be adequate to achieve these ends since accurate and in-depth perception needs to be fostered. Students need support to focus their perceptions on less superficial aspects of the learning situation, and to relate this to the underlying theories. Students also need guidance in analysing the underlying theoretical foundations of both their own, and the new learning culture. Compromises may need to be explicitly negotiated if effective synthesizing of the schemata of the new roles is to eventuate. This involves successive cycles which proceed through observation, reflection on theory, and trialing new modes, before effective actualization can take place.

It is generally held that learning a language involves learning about the culture (Barrow, 1990; Valdes, 1990). This study indicates that such understandings may be especially vital for overseas students who wish to assume a teaching role within a different culture and who will need to understand the new culture in order to make sound pedagogical choices. However, Kramsch (1995: 84) says that "culture is always linked to moral values, notions of good, bad, right, wrong, beautiful and ugly". The current study also reveals that the

acculturation process for overseas student teachers involves a degree of cultural conflict which arises from the need to make changes in practices which have may have been regarded as successful in the home culture. Hird (1996: 29) states that such an acculturation process involves "culture bumps". Teacher educators of overseas students, in addition to being experts in learning/teaching theory, need to be fully informed in the understandings which the students bring with them in order to firstly recognize where "culture bumps" may occur and secondly to guide students over these "bumps". In seeking to empower overseas student teachers in a new learning culture, however, we should be careful not to devalue the learning culture which is an inherent part of their earlier experiences. This study confirms Scarcella's (1990: 130) conviction that "teachers may unwittingly ask language minority students to violate deeply ingrained cultural patterns". Therefore, teacher educators will need to proceed with caution and insight when moving towards belief change with overseas students, especially within the time constraints of a one year programme. Barrow (1990) contrasts the idea of cultural imperialism which *replaces* the first culture with a new one, and that which *adds* a new world view to that already established by the learner. The later should be the aim. The addition of a world view may also involve the negotiation of legitimate and acceptable compromises between opposing cultural modes. Furthermore, true internationalism in teacher education and in the classrooms of the future may require such compromises to be effected on both learners and teachers.

#### **7.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

The findings from this study have raised issues regarding the nature and process of perception, and the nature of effective and relevant experiences for overseas student teachers. Although the small sample in this case study does not allow for decisive generalizations to be drawn, the understandings gained from the study form the basis of future research. There is a need to investigate perceptions using a wider range of subjects to substantiate the findings reported in the present study. More narrowly focussed studies with different groups of subjects may provide important additional data and yield further insights into perceptions of learning situations. Avenues for such research are now

described.

There are a number of participants in the present research context whose perceptions would be useful to contrast and add to the understandings gained from the four subjects in this study. The first of these participant categories includes associate teachers and College lecturers. This group would add an “expert” dimension to the understanding of the aims and the content of the programme which the subjects were participants in, possibly enabling better tracking of perceptions, especially as these relate to the knowledge input from the teaching programme. A second dimension could include a cross-sample of the pupils in the teaching practice classrooms to look at how they perceive the value of overseas student teachers in their programme. The first two categories may shed some light on the balance of perceptual shift, showing who moves most in the accommodation process, and on what issues. At this stage, the existence of positive and negative shift indicators may imply that the subjects in this study do not agree to shifts being made solely by the teacher. A major influence on this may be the fact that two of the subjects were preparing to teach their *own* language in New Zealand classrooms. Further modifications on this theme of the two sided nature of perceptual shift could include combinations of overseas teachers with New Zealand students; and overseas students with native teachers. The latter could be pursued in the College of Education classroom setting as well as at other educational levels of learning. Thirdly, although the results of the present study would seem to suggest that many of the results are specific to overseas student teachers, a parallel study with native speakers could serve to highlight areas which are particular to the cross-cultural nature of the task.

The present study could be extended to look at perceptions over a longer period of time, tracking student teachers through their pre-service years, their first years of teaching and after a period of teaching experience. Although research already exists in some of these areas, a combination of all three areas would increase understanding of how perceptions develop over time. In this, the relationship between perceptions and classroom behaviour would also be of interest.

A further area for research into perception and perceptual shifts could involve studies outside of the educational context, for example, resettlement in relation to the target culture in general, or in specific fields such as employment, health, and business. The resettlement process of native English speakers in overseas settings could also add further elements to the understanding of perception in the acculturation process.

Finally, there is a need for future research efforts to be centred on discovering not just more about the nature of subjects' perceptions, but, and perhaps more importantly, the course of perceptual shift in the process of acculturation. In the light of the finding that there may be a continuum of shifts which vacillates between negative and positive perceptions, more research is needed to explore the order in which perception indicators occur on a multi-dimensional continuum. In a practical sense, experimental interventions, centring particularly on the *focus* of reflections in teacher education of overseas students, may also help to further the understanding of how reflective teacher education may best help these students. It may be possible in the future, to predict the developmental shifts in perception during the acculturation process, and to plan more effective programmes which facilitate positive, constructive movement along the continuum.

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## APPENDIX 1.1: Introductory Letter to Subjects



**MASSEY  
UNIVERSITY**

Private Bag 11222  
Palmerston North  
New Zealand  
Telephone 0-6-356 9000  
Facsimile 0-6-350 5633

FACULTY OF  
HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF  
LINGUISTICS AND  
SECOND LANGUAGE  
TEACHING

*20 February, 1995*

Dear

I would like to introduce myself. As you know, I am a Lecturer in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages at the College of Education in Palmerston North. I have taught for a good many years in New Zealand schools, but in the last twelve years I have worked with students from non-English speaking background and their teachers. This year I am also working with the Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages at Massey University. I am carrying out research on New Zealand classrooms and ideas about these.

As part of this research, we hope to video tape two classes taught by your associate teacher on each of your teaching sections this year. You will be asked to fill in a checklist while we are making the video. After the class, we will look at the lesson again on the video tape and will talk about your check list. If you agree, these discussions will be audio taped. I would also like all the students involved in this research to meet as a group at my house about twice a term to have coffee, to chat, and sometimes to look together at any particular video tape that is interesting.

If you do agree to take part you will have opportunities to discuss, compare, analyse and describe teaching and learning situations in New Zealand with me. This may be useful to you in your course of study.

You can ask me any questions that you want to about the research and your part in it at any time.

If you are willing to take part in this research, please sign your name on the next page.

I would value your participation in this project and look forward to the opportunity of working with you this year.

Yours sincerely,

Penny Haworth

**APPENDIX 1.2: Subject Consent Form****MASSEY  
UNIVERSITY**Private Bag 11222  
Palmerston North  
New Zealand  
Telephone 0-6-356 9099  
Facsimile 0-6-350 5633**FACULTY OF  
HUMANITIES**DEPARTMENT OF  
LINGUISTICS AND  
SECOND LANGUAGE  
TEACHING*CONSENT FORM*

I freely consent to taking part in the research as described on the attached page. I understand the purposes of the research and have had opportunities to ask questions about it.

I am willing to give the researcher access to my enrolment details and I agree to supply the researcher with additional background information. I know that I may decline to answer any particular questions in the study and am free to withdraw from the study at any time.

I understand that my name will be kept confidential and not linked to any information that I provide.

signed \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 2: Characteristics of the Subjects

**Table 3.2**  
*Characteristics of the Research Subjects*

	I	II	III	IV
<b>age</b>	20 years	28 years	29 years	32 years
<b>sex</b>	male	male	male	female
<b>ethnicity</b>	Japanese	Japanese	Japanese	Hong Kong Chinese
<b>previous education</b>	Graduated high school in Japan	BA from Japan	BA from Japan	BA from Waikato University, NZ
<b>previous employment</b>	Holiday work in take-away restaurants	Reporter and editor in Japan	English teacher at a <i>Juku</i> or Cram school in Japan	Teacher in a Kindergarten in Hong Kong
<b>previous travel overseas prior to 1995</b>	2 short visits to NZ; one year of English study in NZ	1 short visit to Singapore; one year of English study in NZ	1 short visit to USA and Canada in 1989; 1 visit to Korea in 1990	2 short visits to NZ; completion of BA in NZ prior to 1995
<b>status</b>	full fee-paying	full fee-paying	full fee-paying	permanent resident
<b>pre-service programme</b>	primary (Div A)	secondary (Div C)	secondary (Div C)	secondary (Div C)
<b>1996 status</b>	2nd year primary pre-service programme	employed in a New Zealand secondary school	employed in a New Zealand secondary school	employed in a New Zealand secondary school

### APPENDIX 3: The Questionnaire

#### *Personal Information*

Given Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Family Name: \_\_\_\_\_

M/F \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Address in Palmerston North: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (Palmerston North): \_\_\_\_\_

College of Education division: \_\_\_\_\_ College Box \_\_\_\_\_

Country of birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Home country/town \_\_\_\_\_

Educational level before coming to New Zealand: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Language(s):

spoken	written	learning time	learning method	proficiency

Language background of parents/family/close friends: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Place in family: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of arrival in New Zealand: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation prior to arrival at the College of Education: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Previous overseas travel experiences: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Reasons for coming to New Zealand: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Intended use of NZ teaching qualification: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Other people known in New Zealand: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Interests and hobbies (in home country): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Interests and hobbies in New Zealand: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Intended length of stay in New Zealand: \_\_\_\_\_

Next holiday in home country: \_\_\_\_\_

How do you feel about staying in New Zealand? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 4: The Initial Interview Schedule

### INITIAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Which schools have you visited so far in New Zealand?
2. Can you tell me any things you particularly noticed about the schools you have visited?
3. How is learning different in New Zealand?
  - What do students do that is different from your country?
4. What are the teachers like in New Zealand schools?
5. Are there any ways that teachers are the same as in your country?  
(Japan/Hong Kong)
6. Are there any differences between teachers in New Zealand and the teachers who taught you in your home country?
  - What do they do that is different?
7. What do you think about the students in New Zealand schools?
  - Is there anything in particular which makes you feel this way about the students?
8. What about the physical environment in the schools?
  - What do you notice about this?
9. Are there any things which you like about New Zealand schools?
10. How would you mark New Zealand schools out of ten?  
(10 out of 10 is excellent)
  - What do they need to get 10/10?
11. In comparison, how would you rate Japanese/Hong Kong schools out of ten?
  - Can you explain why you have given this rating?
  - What do they need to get 10/10?
12. Can you describe your idea of
  - an ideal learning situation?
  - an ideal teacher?
13. At this time, how are you feeling about teaching in New Zealand schools?
  - Do you think it will be a good experience?
  - Why, or why not?

**APPENDIX 5: Final Version of the Semantic Differential (SD) Scale***Instructions for research exercise***1. Observe**

- Sit quietly and watch the class for a while.
- If you wish, you may move to help you hear better or see what the pupils are doing, but remember not to get in front of the video camera.

**2. Fill in the checklist**

- When you have seen the main part of the lesson, you can begin on the checklist. *Remember to mark the scale as you did in the practice exercise.*
- Work steadily to the end. Don't spend too much time on any one item.
- If you wish, you may make brief notes on the paper, in English or your first language, to help you to remember particular points from the class.
- If you run out of time, you should finish the checklist immediately after the class.

*This learning situation:*

is surprising ----- is what I expected

is modern ----- is traditional

has a friendly atmosphere ----- does not have a friendly atmosphere

is organised ----- is disorganised

has a formal atmosphere ----- has an informal atmosphere

is relaxed ----- is stressful

is comfortable for teachers ----- is not comfortable for teachers

is comfortable for students ----- is not comfortable for students

shows my ideal teaching model ----- does not show my ideal teaching model

allows students to learn easily ----- does not allow students to learn easily

is interesting for students ----- is boring for students

shows high level learning ----- does not show high level learning

is competitive ----- is not competitive

is theoretical ----- is practical

allows students to develop independent learning skills ----- does not allow students to develop independent learning skills

shows clear learning objectives ----- does not show clear learning objectives

shows challenging learning ----- does not show challenging learning

has students participating in their learning ----- does not have students participating in their learning

shows the teacher in control ----- does not show the teacher in control

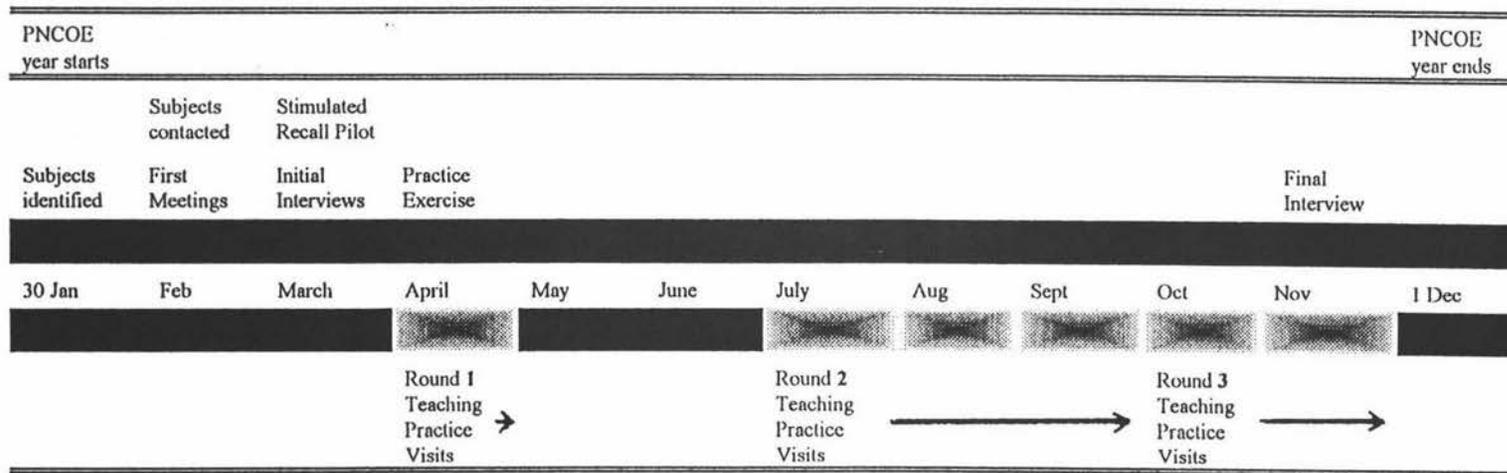
has good resources ----- does not have good resources

has useful learning for students ----- does not have useful learning for students

has ideas which I could use to teach in my home country ----- does not have ideas which I could use to teach in my home country

is the same as classes in College of Education ----- is different from classes in the College of Education

1995 Timeline for Longitudinal Study



Notes:

1. Teaching Practice for subjects in Div C and Div A did not coincide exactly, hence the time spread, especially in Teaching Practice Two.
2. Two Div C Teaching Practices were considered to be out of the researcher's reach, in Gisborne and Nelson. In these cases, the Teaching Placement was used as a substitute.

## APPENDIX 7.1: Introductory Letter to Schools



**MASSEY  
UNIVERSITY**

Private Bag 11222  
Palmerston North  
New Zealand  
Telephone 0-6-350 9099  
Facsimile 0-6-350 3633

**FACULTY OF  
HUMANITIES**

**DEPARTMENT OF  
LINGUISTICS AND  
SECOND LANGUAGE  
TEACHING**

12 November 1996

M  
The Principal

Dear M

I am writing to request your help with research I am doing towards a Master of Arts Degree in Second Language Teaching through Massey University, Palmerston North. The topic I am writing my thesis on is *Cultural Perceptions of Learning Situations: Overseas Students in Their First Year of Teacher Education in New Zealand*.

As part of the research, I would like permission to video tape one class taught by the associate teacher of M , a first year student teacher from the Palmerston North College of Education, at your school for teaching practice this term. While the video tape is being made, the student teacher involved in this project, will fill in a check list which will aim at analysing his cultural perceptions of the classroom situation. After the class, the student teacher will review the lesson on the video tape and will talk with me about his check list. The advantage of video tapes is that they provide the student teacher with real classes to discuss.

I feel it is important to emphasize that neither the school, nor the pupils, nor the individual teacher will be subjected to scrutiny. The focus of the research is on the general features of New Zealand classrooms, including interaction patterns, class structuring and typical learning and teaching activities. I would also like to assure you that all information is collected anonymously and that the names of the schools, the pupils and the teachers who take part in the video tapes will be kept confidential. If the school is interested in the results of this research I am happy to provide feedback to staff either individually or in groups at a later date.

If you should require further information on this project you are welcome to contact either Dr Noel Watts or Dr Cynthia White in the Department of Linguistics and Second Language Teaching at Massey University. I will also be telephoning in the next few days to answer any questions you may have and to discuss any further procedures which would assist in gaining your school's informed consent to carry out this research. A mutually convenient time can then be arranged with the teacher concerned.

Yours sincerely,

Penny Haworth (Mrs)

## APPENDIX 7.2: School Consent Form



**MASSEY  
UNIVERSITY**

Private Bag 11222  
Palmerston North  
New Zealand  
Telephone 0-6-350 9099  
Facsimile 0-6-350 5633

**FACULTY OF  
HUMANITIES**

**DEPARTMENT OF  
LINGUISTICS AND  
SECOND LANGUAGE  
TEACHING**

### *CONSENT FORM*

I freely consent to the school taking part in the research as described in the attached letter. I understand the purposes of the research and have had opportunities to have my questions answered to my satisfaction. I know that I can ask further questions at any time.

I am willing to give the researcher access to a class in my school for the purpose of video taping a lesson. I also consent to the student teacher filling out a checklist while the video is being made. I am satisfied that the correct people have been consulted with regard to informed consent for this project. I understand that the name of the school and that of individual teachers, student teachers and pupils taking part in the research will be kept confidential.

I also understand that the school is free to withdraw from the study at any time.

signed \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

name \_\_\_\_\_ position \_\_\_\_\_

school \_\_\_\_\_

### APPENDIX 8: The Pilot Semantic Differential (SD) Scale

Please draw an X on the dotted line to show what you think.

This learning situation:

is surprising -----+----- is what I expected

is modern -----\*-----+----- is traditional *what is traditional*

does useful work -----+----- does useless work

has a friendly atmosphere -----+----- has a hostile atmosphere

has a formal atmosphere -----+----- has an informal atmosphere

is intellectually demanding -----+----- is not intellectually demanding

is organised -----+----- is disorganised

is comfortable for teachers -----+----- is not comfortable for teachers  
*one student*

is comfortable for students -----+----- is not comfortable for students

is good for learning -----+----- is not good for learning

*teacher's* is a good teaching model -----+----- is not a good teaching model

is tense -----+----- is relaxed

is easy for students to understand -----+----- is difficult for students to understand  
*majority Eng. speaks*

is interesting  
for students      \_\_\_\_\_      is boring for  
students

is competitive      \_\_\_\_\_      is not competitive

is theoretical      \_\_\_\_\_      is practical

is the same as  
classes in  
College of  
Education      \_\_\_\_\_      is different from  
classes in the  
College of  
Education

has students  
participating in  
their learning      \_\_\_\_\_      does not have  
students  
participating

has the teacher  
in control      \_\_\_\_\_      does not have the  
teacher in control

has good  
resources      \_\_\_\_\_      does not have  
good resources

has good ideas  
to take to my  
home country      \_\_\_\_\_      does not have  
good ideas to take  
to my country

## APPENDIX 9.1: The Practice Exercise

### Practice Exercise

*This is a practice, so please ask questions if you do not understand.*

*The checklist you are going to use shows two words/ideas with opposite meaning.*

*In between the two words/ideas there is a scale for you to mark.*

Please look at the example in the box below:

<p><i>beautiful</i>————— —————<i>not beautiful</i></p> <p>If you make a mistake, cross it out, then make a new mark, eg</p> <p><i>beautiful</i>—————<del>X</del>————— —————<i>not beautiful</i></p>
---

Now you are going to try.

*First look at the example checklist filled in by someone else.*

*Next, I will show you a picture and you will mark a short checklist.*

<p>I think this picture is:</p> <p><i>like my home country</i>————— —————<i>not like my home country</i></p> <p><i>beautiful</i>————— —————<i>not beautiful</i></p> <p><i>traditional</i>————— —————<i>not traditional</i></p> <p><i>peaceful</i>————— —————<i>not peaceful</i></p>
--

After the checklist is finished, you talk about your ideas and give examples from the video.  
*Can you show me parts of the picture which made you mark one item on the scale?*

Now look at the scale on the research sheet. Please tick the items you understand.

**APPENDIX 9.2: Visual Stimulus Used in the Practice Exercise**

## APPENDIX 10: The Final Interview Schedule

### *Final interview with research subjects*

#### Section 1 - Review - 15 minutes from tape 1

This learning situation:

is modern	is traditional
is comfortable	is not comfortable
is competitive	is not competitive
allows students to develop independent learning skills	Does not allow students to develop independent learning skills
shows my ideal teaching model	does not show my ideal teaching model
is an ideal learning situation	is not an ideal learning situation

#### Section Two - intercultural comparisons

- \* How would you mark NZ learning schools out of 10? (10/10 is excellent)
  - Can you explain this rating?
  - What do they need to get 10/10?
- \* How would you mark Japanese/Hong Kong schools out of 10? (10/10 is excellent)
  - Can you explain this rating?
  - What do they need to get 10/10?
- \* What do you feel is most different/surprising about learning situations in NZ?

#### Section Three - the future

- \* Imagine that a student from your country is coming to the College of Education to study next year.
  - What would you tell them to expect at College?
  - What would you tell them to expect in the schools?
- \* At this time, how are you feeling about teaching in NZ schools?
  - in the short term?
  - in the long term?